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CHAPTER 1

1

Summary of the Department's Aim, Objectives and Key Achievements during 2001–02

Our aim is:

better transport and thriving, prosperous, safe communities.

Objectives

Nine objectives support our overarching aim. They are interrelated and we have to deliver them in an integrated way to improve quality of life. We list our objectives below alongside significant achievements in 2001–02.

Achievements

OBJECTIVE 1: RELIABLE, SAFE AND INTEGRATED TRANSPORT FOR EVERYONE, WHICH RESPECTS THE ENVIRONMENT

- Over 1,000 units of new railway rolling stock were brought into use during 2001.
- Section one of the Channel Tunnel rail link (from the Channel Tunnel to North Kent) is nearly complete. It is expected to be in use in 2003. Construction of section two, which will



All new buses and coaches are required to be accessible to disabled people. There are 3,000 compliant vehicles now in service.

run into St Pancras Station, began in July 2001 and is due for completion in 2007.

- We have halted the long-term decline in bus use. The number of local bus passenger journeys in England increased by 1 per cent in 2000/01 over the previous year.
- We required new buses and coaches to be accessible to disabled people, and 3,000 compliant vehicles are now in service.
- We have agreed the SRA's first strategic plan for long-term investment in the rail infrastructure.
- We approved 94 major local road and public transport schemes, including six new light rail lines.
- There are now 51 major trunk road improvements in our programme as part of our commitment to improve the trunk road network

and relieve congestion. Seventeen of these are currently under construction, with the first opening later in 2002.

- In December we announced £1.5 billion for local authorities in England (outside London) to implement the local transport plans 2002–03. This total included £1.2 billion for small-scale measures such as road safety, bus priority schemes, and measures to encourage cycling and walking.
- We doubled spending on local road maintenance on our way to our target of halting the deterioration of local road condition by 2004.
- We approved the development of a fifth terminal at London Heathrow airport.

OBJECTIVE 2: A SUSTAINABLE PATTERN OF LAND USE, PROMOTED BY AN EFFICIENT PLANNING SYSTEM

- Last year 57 per cent of new homes were provided on brownfield sites and we are on track to achieve our target of 60 per cent by 2008.
- Our green paper, *Planning: Delivering a Fundamental Change*, set out proposals for the biggest reform of the planning system since 1947. Key proposals are to simplify national planning guidance and the development plans system, and to speed up development control. Our aim is a planning system that is simpler, faster and more accessible to all.

OBJECTIVE 3: A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL IN OUR TOWNS AND CITIES

OBJECTIVE 4: SUCCESSFUL REGIONS, WHICH DEVELOP A STRATEGIC VISION FOR THE FUTURE

- We established five new urban regeneration companies in Corby, Leicester, Sunderland, Swindon and Tees Valley. These will help to regenerate some of the most neglected areas in our towns and cities.

- A further three millennium communities in Allerton Bywater, Manchester (Cardroom) and Kings Lynn (Nar Ouse) provide practical examples of well-designed, environmentally responsible communities in a wide range of urban settings.

- We have provided funding of £3.4 billion from the European regional development fund to support regions which are growing less quickly than the EU average.

- The Urban Green Spaces Taskforce has established six demonstration projects to show how its vision for urban parks, play areas and green spaces could be achieved.

- The regional governance white paper sets out how we will decentralise power and strengthen existing regional structures. It offers people living in England the chance to have an elected regional assembly, which will make government more effective and efficient, enable regions to build on their unique strength, and improve economic performance and quality of life.

- The white paper also announces more responsibilities for the voluntary regional chambers and the Government Offices, improving arrangements for regional planning, and ensuring a stronger regional input into national policy-making and spending decisions.

- We committed £1.2 billion to regional development agencies (RDAs) in 2001–02 and simplified financial control to give them flexibility to deliver their economic strategies in ways which meet local priorities.

- £5 million was provided to the voluntary regional chambers to help them enhance their scrutiny of RDAs and to develop their role as strategic focal points for their regions.

OBJECTIVE 5: THE RENEWAL OF OUR MOST DEPRIVED COMMUNITIES

- We set up 39 partnerships under the New Deal for Communities projects. Results from these diverse projects include a 25 per cent drop in

burglaries in Walsall, and an 80 per cent reduction in burnt-out cars dumped in Leicester.

- We are making communities safer by funding 85 neighbourhood warden schemes across England and Wales. We have also helped to fund 700 street wardens in the 125 street warden schemes which are improving the quality of people's lives by tackling anti-social behaviour and cleaning up the local environment.
- We are giving local residents in NR (neighbourhood renewal) areas the skills and knowledge they need to deliver lasting change by providing a £36 million community empowerment fund and a £21 million skills and knowledge programme.
- We established the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) to provide leadership and oversee the national strategy in our commitment to renewing our most deprived communities.

OBJECTIVE 6: A DECENT HOME FOR EVERYONE

- We reduced the number of people sleeping rough by 71 per cent between June 1998 and December 2001. Street counts in November 2001 showed that the number of people sleeping rough on any one night in England was 532, compared to a baseline figure of 1,850.
- We established the starter home initiative to help up to 10,000 key workers over the three years 2001–02 to 2003–04 at a cost of £250 million. This will enable teachers, police officers and nurses to purchase homes within a reasonable distance from their workplace in areas where high house prices are undermining recruitment and retention.
- We are on course to reduce by one-third the number of households living in social housing which does not meet basic decency standards between 2001 and 2004. Even before these standards were introduced in 2001, we had made significant progress. Between 1999–00 and 2000–01, the backlog of council house repairs was reduced by approximately 180,000 dwellings, with about 660,000 additional



Chris Henderson

Over 200 homes have been completed in the first millennium community at Greenwich. The development establishes new sustainable methods of construction for the future. (Courtesy of English Partnerships)

council houses benefiting from some new investment.

- We are on course to achieve our target to provide 100,000 new or improved homes for low-cost renting or home ownership by 2004. In 2001–02 we provided around 30,000 affordable units of social housing for sale or rent towards this target. By 2003–04, we will have nearly doubled investment through the Housing Corporation to over £1.2 billion in three years.
- We secured approval to the Homelessness Act 2002, strengthening the safety net for homeless people. This will require housing authorities to adopt a more strategic approach to tackling the causes of homelessness and to offer more choice to people applying for social housing, to better meet their long-term housing requirements.
- We have announced a new approach to tackling homelessness, backed by funding of £125 million in 2002–03. By March 2004 no homeless family with children should live in bed-and-breakfast accommodation, except in an emergency.

OBJECTIVE 7: EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND HIGH-QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES THROUGH ELECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- We have increased central grant support to local authorities by 7.8 per cent compared with 2000–01 to support improvements in local services.

- We have proposed a new national framework of standards and accountability for the delivery of local services in our recently published white paper, *Strong Local Leadership – Quality Public Services*.
- The white paper focused on delivery of high-quality public services and effective community leadership. It included significant proposals for deregulating councils (fewer plans, fewer performance indicators, more streamlined inspection), and making council performance more transparent, with a new comprehensive performance assessment.
- Recent best value data show that the average performance of 80 per cent of all councils is improving and in many areas the gap between best and worst is closing.
- We provided an unprecedented £20 million in emergency financial assistance under the Bellwin Scheme to local authorities in areas that had suffered the effects of severe weather and flooding. We also set up a further national scheme for authorities affected by the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak.

OBJECTIVE 8: IMPROVED HEALTH AND SAFETY BY REDUCING RISKS FROM WORK ACTIVITY, BUILDINGS AND FIRE

- In 2000 fire deaths in the UK were the lowest for 40 years. This is in line with our target to deliver a 20 per cent reduction in accidental fire deaths by 2004 (over 1994–95).
- The HSC/E is working with business sectors to help deliver the national targets set out in *Revitalising Health and Safety*. Industry initiatives are beginning to make a difference, for example the first year of the quarry initiative has seen a 17 per cent reported reduction in accidents.
- We introduced revised building regulations on 1 April 2002 which will improve the safety of boilers and energy efficiency of buildings, and ensure drainage systems are better able to cope with the increased flooding risks.



We aim to reduce deaths and injuries from fire, to reduce the number of fires and modernise the fire service.

- In October 2001 the Health and Safety Commission and Executive (HSC/E) published their strategic plan to achieve safety improvements in major hazard industries and in priority areas including construction and agriculture.

OBJECTIVE 9: IMPROVED TRANSPORT SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION

Railways

- The train protection and warning system (TPWS) was fitted on all trains operating into and out of Paddington by the end of 2001 and the whole programme is on target for completion by the end of 2003.
- Following the Selby rail crash on 28 February 2001, the HSC and the Highways Agency both examined incidents where road vehicles had got on to the railway to find any common and preventable features. Ministers have accepted their recommendations.
- The Health and Safety Commission published Lord Cullen's public inquiry reports into the Ladbroke Grove rail crash and rail safety management, culture and regulation.

Aviation

- We implemented enhancements to aviation, maritime, Channel Tunnel and railway security regimes in the UK in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks in the USA on 11 September 2001. We have played a leading

role subsequently in developing enhanced international security standards.

Roads

- The number of child deaths and serious injuries in 2000 was 5,202, 9 per cent less than in 1999. Overall there were 41,564 road deaths or serious injuries on our roads, 2 per cent less than in 1999. Great Britain has one of the best road safety records in Europe and indeed the world.
- We further reduced evasion of vehicle excise duty (road tax), resulting in £17 million of additional revenue for the Exchequer.
- We published proposals for tackling the problem of abandoned cars, and introduced new powers for local authorities to dispose of vehicles more promptly and economically.
- We announced a £2.4 million vehicle register investment to improve electronic links between the DVLA vehicle register and local authorities.
- We introduced internet bookings for driving theory tests, the first online booking and payment service offered by the Government.

Marine

- We introduced a code of practice for small fishing vessels in April 2001 in order to reduce the accident rate for these vessels. We are monitoring the effects closely.
- We have secured implementation by the ports industry of our Port Marine Safety Code and developed formal safety management systems for their marine operations.

Joined-up government

DTLR's wide portfolio connects us with many other policy makers and implementers within and beyond Whitehall. We continue to work hard to realise the added value of joined-up government that focuses on delivery.

Our overarching aim of better transport and thriving, prosperous, safe communities means that our work is crucial to delivery of the Government's sustainable development strategy. Transport,

housing and land use planning are core elements of that strategy, and many of our other policies and programmes also affect its headline indicators.

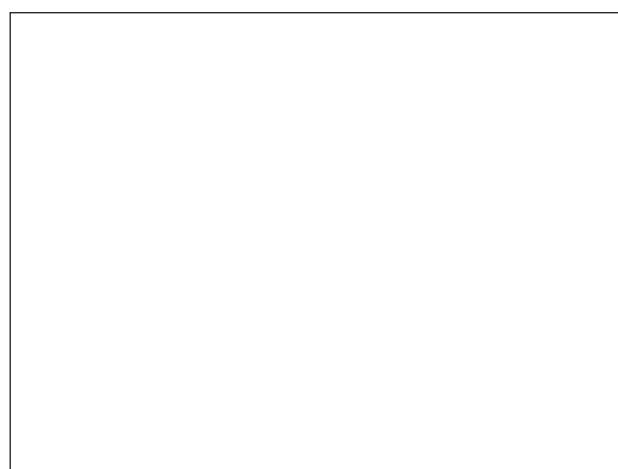
This report describes the many ways in which we are helping to deliver joined-up government. These include:

- our partnership working with local and regional bodies on urban regeneration and the reform of local government;
- our work towards better transport with operators and local authorities; and
- acting as the focus for the national strategy for neighbourhood renewal.

Our policy responsibilities also see us helping to tackle other key Government objectives. Thus our initiatives to secure more sustainable transport, better housing and thriving communities contribute importantly to delivery of the Government's public health agenda. And running through all this, we continue to play a full part in the drive to modernise policy making and service delivery, in particular through our work with DEFRA and DH to develop a framework for integrated policy appraisal and our e-business investments.

For more information, please contact Karl Murphy on 020 7944 3837.

Or visit our web site at www.dtlr.gov.uk



Our white paper on local government, *Strong Local Leadership – Quality Public Services*, emphasises the delivery of high-quality public services and effective community leadership. (Source: *Local Government Chronicle*)