

# **Group Exercise 'Regeneration & Renewal'**



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# Participant Instructions

## Introduction

You work for the **Department for Regeneration** and are a member of the **Regeneration Review Team**. You are about to meet up with several other colleagues who are also members of this team to work through a given issue.

Attached is a pack of materials in which you will find background information to the exercise. For the purposes of this exercise you should work with the information as it has been presented. You are encouraged to make inferences from the information, but you should not invent specific details.

**The exercise is entirely fictitious and is not intended to represent the views of the government or any other entity.**

## Preparation Time

You will have **15 minutes** preparation time during which you should read through the Background Information and plan how you will approach the group discussion. You may make notes during the preparation time that you will be able to take into the discussion with you.

## Group Discussion

During the group discussion you will have **25 minutes** to work through the three tasks fully discussing each item with the other group members.

## Assessment

This exercise is designed to assess the following areas:

- The way you analyse and use the information and data available to the group to reach decisions
- The extent to which you show awareness of the importance of the effective use of resources
- Your team-working skills in working with other group members
- The contribution you make to managing the discussion and helping the group reach decisions on all elements of the task
- The clarity and persuasiveness of your oral communication

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# Background Information

The exercise is based around a fictitious government scheme called the 'Regeneration & Renewal Scheme' run by the Department for Regeneration. The Regeneration & Renewal Scheme aims to provide community information and training centres called 'Regeneration Centres' in some of Britain's most deprived towns and cities. The scheme is currently in its pilot stage, and 5 such centres have been established in the large city of Midway in the West Midlands for the last 18 months. The pilot is due to run for another 2 years.

The Regeneration Centres currently exist to act as a focal point of help and support to provide information and access to services provided by charities and the local authority in areas such as health and wellbeing, getting accommodation, career counselling, debt management and helping with applications for grants and assistance. They also provide some training on applying for jobs (CV/application form writing), basic IT skills to help local people enter the workforce. The ultimate goal is to facilitate regeneration through helping individuals across the whole local community to contribute to its regeneration. To give them a very visible presence, the Regeneration Centres are situated in prime high street spots across the city.

## Midway city and surrounding area

Midway is a large city with many poor areas. It is a post-industrial city which went into steep decline in the 1980s and has since suffered from high unemployment and low investment. The recession at the beginning of the decade also economically damaged the area although recent growth in the service sector, including several large call centres, has shown signs of arresting Midway's economic decline. Midway has, however, a very ethnically diverse range of people living there, and recently, a large increase in individuals moving into the area from Eastern Europe.

## Staff in the Regeneration Centres

The Regeneration & Renewal Scheme pilot employs 56 staff across 5 Regeneration Centres in Midway although the full staffing level is 62. Most staff are women – many of whom are single mothers, and almost all of them are from 1 of 3 large housing estates in central Midway. So as to quickly recruit managers for the Regeneration Centres, private sector contractors are used, with a view to eventually replacing them with suitable staff on promotion over the next two years.

## Regeneration & Renewal Scheme in the local press

Initially the Regeneration Centres were viewed very positively locally, and overall numbers attending have exceeded expectations; although many less males under age 25 (the highest unemployed group in Midway) have attended than planned for. The reception has not been wholly positive however. A view in the local community has developed that the Regeneration Centres are just there to serve certain niche groups, such as recent immigrants, which has been reflected by some recent statements of outspoken local politicians. This has cultivated some local resentment towards the Regeneration Centres. There has also been some recent negative stories in the local press regarding the quality of the work of the staff at the Regeneration Centres. They point to instances where staff have made numerous mistakes in helping the unemployed to draft CVs and job applications. This has led to an accusation in the press of the '*illiterate teaching the illiterate*'.



## Extending service provision

The government has yet to decide whether to extend the scheme elsewhere but have accepted the results so far as being positive. They are making available up to £250,000 in the coming year to extend the service provision of the existing Regeneration Centres in Midway to try and increase their impact. Three possible initiatives have been identified and are listed overleaf.

### Your task:

A meeting has been scheduled in which your team has **three tasks**:

**Task 1:** To determine what **criteria** you will use to select a scheme.

**Task 2:** To recommend one of three schemes to the minister for the **Department for Regeneration**

**Task 3:** To identify how the selected scheme may be **promoted to engage people** onto the scheme.

### Criteria:

There are a number of criteria that may be used to select the scheme. You should decide which criteria should be chosen - you may reduce this list or add additional criteria if you wish:

1. **The best overall benefit to the community** for as many people as possible;
2. **Will achieve a positive reception** amongst the community;
3. **Will provide an innovative approach** that represents an engaging solution;
4. **Be a scalable project** that could be replicated outside of Midway, in other areas requiring regeneration;
5. **Demonstrable value for money.**

They have asked Regeneration Review Team to make a recommendation to them about which option to take forwards.



### **Scheme 1. ADULT LITERACY INITIATIVE**

The communities that live in the city centre and immediate areas generally have a poor level of literacy and education. Furthermore, a significant minority of people in Midway do not have English as their first language. On the basis that poor literacy can contribute to many social problems, the City Council have recently run a relatively successful campaign to improve adult literacy across Midway. As part of the campaign local colleges offered a small number of evening classes which were highly oversubscribed.

This initiative would offer evening courses similar to those run by the colleges in the existing Regeneration Centre facilities, and provide a range of printed adult learning material. Market research indicates that there would be a high level of interest, primarily from older people in the community who want to improve their English language skills. There is confidence that this scheme would be popular.

Total scheme cost would be: **£180,000, catering for 700 training places per year.**

### **Scheme 2. LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED TRAINING INITIATIVE**

Currently, the level of unemployment in the city is above the national average. There is also a large core of long-term unemployed young white males in Midway, many of whom have been unemployed for over twelve months. Although the centre will target those who have been unemployed for over twelve months it will, where practicable, support any unemployed person looking for help or advice.

This initiative would go beyond teaching basic IT skills and applying for jobs and would teach vocational skills qualifications useful in the industrial sector. It is known that such practical courses would be much more popular for young unemployed people in the area. Regeneration Centres would be expanded to accommodate suitably equipped classrooms and additional staff would be recruited to provide tuition. The vocational courses would be suitable for anyone and do not require any previous knowledge or qualifications.

It is known that care professionals are worried about the level of unemployment in the City and its long-term effect upon the community. In particular, they are concerned about the large number of disaffected long-term unemployed young people who show no interest in looking for work or in contributing to society.

Total Scheme cost would be: **£250,000 catering for 850 training places per year.**

### **Scheme 3. BUSINESS RESOURCE INITIATIVE**

Despite recent economic difficulties for the City, there remain many small or family run businesses in Midway particularly in the service and retail sectors. Many of those running these businesses have stated that although the Regeneration Centres are intended to serve the entire local community, they do not see any assistance or help for them despite positively contributing to the local economy.

A recent survey revealed a significant lack of business skills amongst the majority of those running these small family businesses. In particular, many struggle with information technology and do not seek basic professional business, legal, or accountancy advice because of the cost. The survey also showed that those wishing to start or expand businesses feel there is very little help or guidance to help them do so, and little interest from local banks.



Under this initiative, the existing Regeneration Centres would be expanded to provide more business orientated facilities and business experts employed to provide advice. The initiative would provide a focal point to bring the local small businesses together, offer practical business skills courses and advice. It would also offer advice on drafting business plans and applying for business loans and grants that businesses could come back to time and again.

Total cost of the initiative: **£200,000, catering for 800 business clients per year.**

### **Your Role**

You are due to meet with your colleagues at the **Department for Regeneration**, who are also part of the Senior Leadership Team, for a **25 minute meeting** to work through the the three tasks above. You should contribute your ideas and arguments to the discussion and help the group to reach a consensus.

