

# Press Release...

Wednesday 25 March, 2009

## Stronger Communities, Stronger Economy?

NATIONAL – Today, the Council on Social Action, set up to advise the Government on how to promote social action, is engaging community groups nationwide in a first round of chain discussions to develop ideas about creating social renewal alongside economic renewal.

The discussions will start with ideas set out in the Council on Social Action paper 'Stronger Communities, Stronger Economy'. The paper proposed the inclusion of a Common Good clause in bank bail out arrangements, a National Talent Bank to manage work related volunteering, support for businesses to engage in high level peer mentoring and fiscal incentives for volunteering.

David Robinson, Vice Chair of the Council on Social Action, and Senior Adviser at Community Links says,

*"Recession could drive division and exclusion or it could unite us extracting greater value from all that we have, embracing new ideas and working together on common goals. We would not have chosen the circumstances but there are opportunities in recession. What are they and how might be realised for the benefit of us all? The Council is eager to hear and progress the answers to these questions"*

Self organised discussion groups are taking place in London, Birmingham, Stoke on Trent, Liverpool, and Sheffield, and communities are being encouraged to also hold their own meetings in their communities.

*"Effective communities benefit from the engagement of the many, not the few. We are encouraging national debate, and one way to actively involve your community is to hold your own meeting. Anyone can get involved with minimal organisation"*

The thoughts and ideas generated in these discussions will be fed directly back to the Council on Social Action, who will then make recommendations to the Prime Minister and government departments.

These events will also feed into the we20 project, a new public initiative which runs alongside the G20, to find short and long term solutions to the global economic crisis.

Full write ups of the feedback received will also be available on the Chain Reaction website.

To receive more information about Chain Reaction please contact Laura Hyde at [laura.hyde@community-links.org](mailto:laura.hyde@community-links.org)

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

**1. Stronger Communities, Stronger Economy?** is the proposed paper by the Council on Social Action which seeks to answer the questions Does the recession provide an opportunity to rebuild a better, fairer society? What can we do now to ensure that we emerge from the current economic challenges with stronger, more connected and more caring communities? To download a summary of the thinking so far please visit <http://bit.ly/oukld>

**2. Chain Reaction** is a project bringing together community activists, policy makers, businesses leaders and young people from across the world to: **Connect:** We are all connected. Meet different people and make new connections to share learning and ideas for building a better world **Collaborate:** We succeed when we work together. Work with others to develop new ideas for social action. **Commit:** We all have power: Commit to taking forward new actions for positive social change and to making a difference together. Chain Reaction is a project of **Community Links** and forms part of the programme of the **Council on Social Action**  
[www.chain-reaction.org](http://www.chain-reaction.org)

**3. Community Links** is an innovative charity running community-based projects in east London. For 30 years we have helped thousands of children, young people, adults and the elderly in deprived neighbourhoods. The national team **linksUK** leads our programme of national work of training, consultancy, research, publications and demonstration projects sharing the local lessons across the country to widen the impact of our projects; inform policy makers and practitioners and generate lasting social change.  
[www.community-links.org](http://www.community-links.org)

**4. The Council on Social action (CoSA)** is a unique cross sector body that brings together leaders from Private, Public and Third sector to act as an advisory body to the government around the area of Social Action, where David Robinson serves as the Vice-chair. The Council was announced by the Prime Minister in 2007 and is currently studying a range of subjects as diverse as obstacles and incentives for volunteer engagement to social clauses in procurement. [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social\\_action.aspx](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_action.aspx)

**5. we20** is a new project, inspired as a public initiative to run alongside the G20, creating a bridge between the G20 leaders and you. The current objective for we20 plans is around finding short and long term solutions to the global economic crisis. [www.we20.org](http://www.we20.org)

**6. Self-organised discussions** are an important part of the response to the paper Stronger Communities Stronger Economy. We are encouraging nationwide discussion and anyone may organise their own local discussion group and feedback to the Council on Social Action. [www.chain-reaction.org](http://www.chain-reaction.org)

**7. Background information** about the event can be found on the website [www.chain-reaction.org](http://www.chain-reaction.org). We will also be streaming notes from the discussions – using the hashtag **#scse** - live via our feed <http://bit.ly/iRIN3>

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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