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**From Jonathan Shaw MP**  
Minister for Marine, Landscape & Rural Affairs and Minister for the South East

Thank you for your e-mail of 15 November. I am sorry that unforeseen circumstances prevented me from attending your Social Enterprise Day. I am pleased to know that the tour of social enterprises went ahead as planned. I am still keen to see for myself the social enterprises that you had planned for me to visit and I am hopeful that an alternative date can be arranged for early in 2008. Please contact my diary secretary, Rob Davies, on 020 7238 6573 or by email: [rob.davies@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:rob.davies@defra.gsi.gov.uk) to arrange a suitable date.

Please pass on my thanks to the group for raising some key issues. I am more than happy to respond to the questions set out in your e-mail. I have set out my answers below.

**Can you give more detail about your role as Minister for the regions and what your priorities are within the role and what does your role as Regional Minister provide in terms of added value to the region?**

Regional Ministers were asked by the Prime Minister on 28 June 2007 to represent regional interests in the formulation of central government policy, to act as a champion for the region and to facilitate a joined up approach across government. In this role, I will be involved with the development of the new Single Regional Strategy that was announced in the review of sub national economic development and regeneration (also known as SNR). I will also represent central government policy when raised during relevant Parliamentary debates and other business.

I am very excited at the opportunity to take on this role and represent the South East region. I was born in Kent and have lived in the area all my life, so I can understand some of the balances that need to be struck between various competing demands in the region. Housing is one such example and, together with promoting sustainable economic development and a sharp focus on skills, this will be among my priorities.

As Minister for the South East, I will be both an advocate and representative of central government in the region. It will be important for me to maintain close relationships with all the key regional stakeholders, as well as helping to promote national policies regionally. I will look to offer leadership in relation to specific issues but also be able to broker local and regional engagement in the important areas of concern.

The Government Office for the South East (GOSE) is working closely with me to support my role and we look forward to working with partners across the region over the coming months.

**What difference do you think the abolition of Regional Assemblies will make?**

The Sub-national economic development and regeneration review, recommended a number of changes to sub-national governance arrangements and strategies. The aim behind these changes is to secure sustainable economic growth in every place in every region. The proposed changes are of course significant, and the Departments of Communities and Local Government (CLG) and Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) will jointly be publishing a consultation paper over the coming months, seeking views on the key issues. Within the South East, I hope that we will build on existing good examples of effective partnership working.

**Where do you see the differences in the Labour and Conservative agenda on social enterprise?**

My focus is on the Government's agenda, taking forward the vision set out in the 'Social Enterprise Action Plan: Scaling New Heights'. This focuses on four key areas; fostering a culture of social enterprise; ensuring the right information and advice is available to those running social enterprises; enabling social enterprises to access appropriate finance; and enabling social enterprises to work with Government. This is reflected in the Third Sector review consultation and final report 'The future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration' published in July 2007.

**Do you have examples of partnership working across government or other organisations that your role has been involved with?**

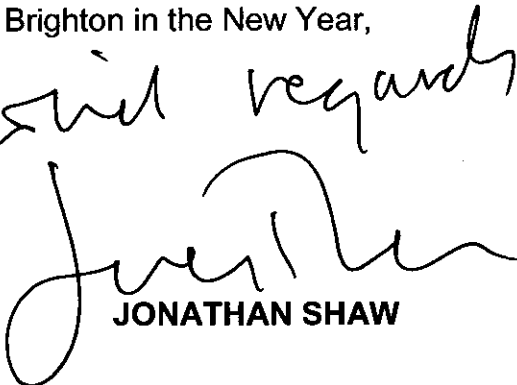
The Government, as you know is committed to partnership working and as Regional Minister my role is to be the advocate for the South East. If partnership is to work, I believe, it must build on local commitments.

The Partnership for Urban South Hampshire is an excellent example of partners working together for the common good across eleven different Local Authority boundaries. The partnership transcends both public and private bodies where all share the same ambitions to ensure that growth will be sustainable, realistic and deliverable.

**How do you see the social enterprise approach contributing to sectors that may impinge on your Defra role e.g. rural and environmental social enterprises such as Thames Valley Energy, Milton Keynes Parks Trust and Housing Trusts?**

Many of the challenges Defra faces – such as climate change, improving the local environment and support for rural communities - cannot be tackled by the Government alone. Defra recognises social enterprises have a significant role to play in combating climate change, protecting the natural environment and supporting rural communities. We have recently published a consultation document *Towards a Defra Third Sector Strategy*, (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/thirdsector-strategy/index.htm>) I do hope you will respond to the consultation with your views on the issues raised, and any other comments which you would like to make.

I look forward to coming to Brighton in the New Year,

Kind regards  


**JONATHAN SHAW**

