

### *Manchester's Skills and Employment Strategic Framework*

Krata is a creative think tank that runs community engagement projects focused on social, environmental and economic sustainability. Our Research Programme draws on our experiences together with others to explore the social and cultural understandings that underpin and influence community engagement.

In our response to the Skills and Employment strategy consultation we urge the Commission to put *community needs* rather than economic priorities at the centre of its vision. Economic policy should be **put into the context of** sustainable communities, rather than taking centre stage.

*"Sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all." (CLG website, 2008)*

It is this principle of sustainable communities that should provide the framework within which the Skills and Employment strategic framework is developed.

Krata recommends moreover an increasing emphasis on social enterprises as the key provider of public services. Social enterprises have sustainability rather than profitability at the core of their objectives, leading to better value for money for the government. They are usually not for profit and run by local people, keeping the money paid to them in the North West.

We have also found that fostering a sense of entrepreneurship leads to an active and engaged workforce. When people are actively involved in the management and strategy of the organisation in which they work, they care more about providing a good service.

An additional benefit of supporting social enterprise is that many such organisations are focused on environmental projects and would therefore support the city region's strategy in fostering the low carbon economy.

Krata recommends therefore that the strategy carried out the following:

- **Fosters a greater understanding of social enterprise through awareness raising both in schools and communities**
- **Provides greater support to business centres providing advice to social entrepreneurs**
- **Provides significant start-up funding specifically for social enterprises**
- **Seeks out best practice in social entrepreneurship in the region, develop an understanding of successes and promote them widely**
- **Work towards a culture of social entrepreneurship that is ground breaking and world class**
- **Specify desire within local government to eventually move all outsourced services to not-for-profit social enterprises.**

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## Response to consultation

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### About Krata

Krata is a creative think tank working on, and learning from, community engagement projects focused on social, environmental and economic sustainability. We work in collaboration with individuals and organisations, such as Creative Concern, Tyndall Centre Manchester, Food Futures, Development Education Programme and UnLtd. Our projects range from setting up a successful social enterprise, to working in schools, to supporting the opening of a community café, to the formation of the 100 Months Club.

We consider the social and cultural underpinnings of community engagement and share these insights with others. For example, through our work in the 'deprived area' of Merseybank in Chorlton, we have learned that while people may be financially challenged, many are very enterprising in their activities, particularly in how they draw benefits and through the black economy. Understanding this nuance:- the independent and enterprising nature of many people in 'deprived areas' - could significantly affect the success of public sector engagement in similar places across the North West.

### Krata associates and collaborators

Krata is connected into community facing organisations and individuals in areas across the North West. Our network ranges from AfSL and the Transition Town movement in Cumbria, Chester and Liverpool, to BITC and Manchester Community Information Network (MCIN), to many of the North West museums and art galleries, to EMERGE Recycling and Frankland Timber, to Liverpool, Salford, Manchester and Lancaster universities, to PCT Trusts, to multimedia and communication consultancies, to Striding Out and UnLtd working with emerging entrepreneurs, to notable community organisations such as CARISMA, working to reduce gun crime in Moss Side. The breadth of our network and the depth of our relationships with key individuals allows us to draw on valuable insights and perspectives from across the community spectrum.

*If you would like to find out more, check out our website, [www.krata.co.uk](http://www.krata.co.uk).*

