

BNG Key Facts February 2008

Why we were established?

- The Housing Market Renewal (HMR) programme aims to restore sustainable communities to those parts of the North and Midlands where demand for housing has been relatively weak and which have seen significant decline in population, dereliction, poor services and, as a result, poor social and living conditions. Its objective is to renew failing or weak housing markets and reconnect them to regional markets. Nine pathfinders are turning around neighbourhoods to transform them into places that people want to live and work in once again.

What have we achieved?

- Bridging NewcastleGateshead is working for the transformation of neighbourhoods with our partners. In the last year:
 - Some 2,400 homes were improved
 - Work is well underway to develop high quality homes at River's Gate in Walker
 - The Scotswood Housing Expo advanced, as did the masterplanning for Science City
 - Renewal works started in Bensham and Saltwell
 - At Sunderland Road, Gateshead, work has begun on 195 new homes
 - Work on the first phase of the groundbreaking Boklok homes development in Felling is now well underway
 - Neighbourhood management support, environmental action, funding construction skills development and private landlord teams have also continued... and much more besides.

Summary

- **£64 million** of Housing Market Renewal funding has been allocated to Bridging NewcastleGateshead (BNG) for the years 2006-8 - this is complemented by a range of further funding, from the public and private sector, estimated at **£412 million**, which will enable us to create great places to live in Newcastle and Gateshead
- The BNG area lost around **20,000** people between 1981 and 2001, we are working to reverse this by making sure local neighbourhoods offer enough quality housing options to keep existing residents and attract incomers to the BNG area
- Although **6.6%** of all properties in the BNG area are lying empty (around **5,300** homes) vacancy rates have remained relatively steady and with proposed demolition, this is expected to reduce over the next couple of years.
- The average house price for the BNG area is currently around **£119,000**¹. However, this average masks large differences in prices between different BNG neighbourhoods - some of which average only **£66,500**²
- Around **40%** of homes are owner-occupied and **45%** social rented in the BNG area, compared with **64%** owner-occupied and **28%** social rented for the North East as a whole. We want to correct this imbalance and help more people who want to achieve and sustain owner occupation.

¹ BNG average for April-June 2007, analysis from Land Registry data

²Neighbourhood figure from analysis of Land Registry data for April-June 2007

Population Loss

	2001 population	Population Decline Since 1981
Newcastle City	266,200	-3,032 (-1.1%)
Gateshead Borough	191,151	-19,783 (-9.4%)
Newcastle BNG	132,261	-9,059 (-6.4%)
Gateshead BNG	49,451	-10,800 (-17.9%)
BNG Total	181,712	-19,859 (-9.9%)

Source: Census – best fit to wards, figures differ to other population analyses based on changes in housing stock

Empty Homes

Area	Number	Vacancies		Vacant for 6 months or more		
		Rate*	2006 Rate**	Number	Rate*	2006 Rate**
BNG	5,252	6.6%	6.8%	3,422	4.3%	4.7%
Gateshead BNG	1,964	7.5%	6.5%	1,203	4.6%	3.0%
Gateshead Outside BNG	2,275	3.5%	2.9%	1,355	2.1%	1.2%
Gateshead Overall	4,239	4.6%	3.9%	2,558	2.8%	1.7%
Newcastle BNG	3,288	6.4%	6.9%	2,219	4.3%	5.6%
Newcastle Outside BNG	3,541	5.1%	5.0%	1,808	2.6%	3.4%
Newcastle Overall	6,829	5.6%	5.8%	4,027	3.3%	4.4%

*As a % of all residential properties, numbers and rates at Sept 2007

**As a percentage of all residential properties, numbers and rates for April 2006

Source: Local Authority Analysis of Council Tax Data

- We aim to reduce the proportion of vacancies and long term vacancies so they are closer to Regional Housing Strategy and Regional Spatial Strategy targets

House Prices

- Average house prices have **more than doubled** in the BNG area since 2001/2; currently averaging around **£119,000**³ compared to £136,500 for the North East as a whole⁴
- However this rise in averages masks wide differences between local markets. Average prices in Walker Riverside were **£90,000** between April and June 2007 while in Elswick and the Discovery Quarter, where significant new build has taken place, prices averaged **£153,500** - a difference of **£63,500**⁵

³ BNG average for April-June 2007, analysis from Land Registry data

⁴North East figure from DCLG Live Table 581

⁵ From analysis of Land Registry data for April-June 2007

BNG Activities

Activity*	April 2003 to March 2007	Projected, Apr 2007 - Mar 2008	Projected, 2003 – 2018**
Homes refurbished, repaired or otherwise improved	2,567	1,482	11,375
Land acquired - hectares	9.37	4.18	25.18
Land made available for final use - hectares	7.49	11.83	up to 114.5
New homes or conversions built, facilitated by BNG	103	361	around 7,040
Houses demolished using HMR funding	1,560	216	up to 4,300

*Definition of outputs consistent with proposals for funding agreement targets for 2003 to 2006

**Subject to change and dependent on funding

BNG Targets

Working with local communities and partner organisations we aim to:

- Increase the BNG population from around **160,200** in 2005 to around **175,500** in 2018
- Increase owner-occupation in the BNG area to **53%** by 2018 (from around **40%** in 2005)
- Increase the net dwelling stock by around **8,000** units in the Pathfinder Intervention Area between 2006 and 2018
- Indirectly help to reduce concentrations of benefit dependency and worklessness within the BNG area
- Narrow the gap between neighbourhood satisfaction (very or fairly satisfied) in BNG and the averages for the rest of Newcastle and Gateshead
- Increase the level of BNG residents believing that their neighbourhood has improved
- Increase the percentage of people who feel safe in their neighbourhood after dark while bringing about a fall in the percentage of people who think that anti-social behaviour is a problem in their area (as part of BNG's work in support of the Respect Agenda)

Our Places

It is clear that Tyneside has the potential to become ever more the motor of the North East's growth and dynamism. The heart of the conurbation – a function shared by Newcastle and Gateshead – has many assets.

Opportunities and assets

- Riverside and river slope neighbourhoods
- A striking built heritage - the quiriness of Gateshead's arches, the unique Tyneside flats or the Byker Wall
- Parks and open land stud the landscape – the formal urban parks like Saltwell or Walker, the "Bankies" woodland on the slopes between Felling and Deckham.
- Convenient housing areas surround the urban core – some, like Elswick or Bensham right next to it and only a short walk away; others, say Saltwell, Benwell, Byker or Deckham, a 5-minute bus or Metro trip. Beyond that, as in any city, an array of suburbs of all sorts can be found, stretching to and beyond the two Councils' boundaries and the green belt.

The Need for Change

These are great assets – but many parts of the conurbation need to change to make the most of them. Bridging NewcastleGateshead's special role is to help bring about that change in the Market Renewal ("Pathfinder") Area.

This involves a complex mix of responses. **Housing** first, more than that, though: **local services** are often not good enough, in range or quality; the local **environment** may be degraded, whether as a result of a former industrial history, or through dereliction resulting from earlier interventions; the **green space** is often boring, windswept expanses of hard-mown grass, or dangerous-feeling pockets of tucked-away space.

And there are **social problems** and **poor perceptions**: people rejecting localities which have (or seem to have) more than their share of problems like crime and anti-social behaviour. Only a careful mix of the Respect agenda, community policing and general neighbourhood uplift can turn this around. **Educational achievement, worklessness** and a **lack of skills** can also hold people back from achieving their potential. **Connectivity**, too, can be surprisingly poor: both locally, so that areas feel isolated despite their closeness to the urban core, and in terms of public transport links to key opportunities.

And all of this is reflected in **people's relative reluctance to choose these areas** - in the lowest prices in the conurbation; in relative ease of access to tenancies in both the private and public sectors; and in what households tell survey researchers when they are asked.

So the potential sketched out earlier is seriously undershot. The task of Bridging NewcastleGateshead is to bring together all the relevant actors and agencies to turn this around, and to make the whole Pathfinder area a successful, popular part of a thriving conurbation: to create "great places to live, work & learn".