

Meeting:	BNG Board
Date:	10 July 2009
Contact:	Anne Mulroy
Board Action:	For discussion
Sensitivity/FOI:	Public

## Item 10 – Strategic Commissions Review Update

### Summary Report:

This paper updates Board on the recent Review by Advisory Group of the Elswick Discovery Quarter and the follow up discussion to the Reviews of Walker Riverside, Scotswood Benwell and East Gateshead and West Central Gateshead.

### Recommendations:

Board are asked to note the progress made and next steps.

### Implications:

Financial:  
Equality:  
Sustainability:

**Consultation:** Advisory Group / Appraisal Panel / Residents' Panel

### Risk:

Strategic:  
Financial:  
Development:  
Operational:  
Reputational:

**Report to:** BNG Board – 10 July 2009  
**Subject:** Strategic Commissions Review Update  
**Agenda Item:** 10

1. **INTRODUCTION**

This paper updates Board on the recent Review by Advisory Group of the Elswick Discovery Quarter and the follow up discussion to the Reviews of Walker Riverside, Scotswood Benwell and East Gateshead and West Central Gateshead.

2. **ELSWICK DISCOVERY QUARTER**

The following themes were raised by Advisory Group and it was suggested that officers further consider these themes in the implementation of this Review:-

1. Public realm (and retail provision in some cases) is critical to public perception of how areas are changing;
2. Tenure change is a critical ingredient of ensuring we integrate the opportunities for existing residents with those for 'incomers' and producing coherent and cohesive solutions to area change;
3. Scattered sites present a challenge and an opportunity, both to area management and to maximising the impact of quality development;
4. Centre West's succession/legacy strategy gives a series of opportunities for the local community but also raises the question of mainstreaming activities which will no longer receive 'external' funding;
5. Development partner contact and dialogue is vital both to the best understanding of market conditions and capacity in the private sector but also to the proper commercial approach required to produce results aligned to strategy;
6. Understanding the impact of current and prospective changes in land values will be imperative in getting clarity about public sector investment priorities and gap funding requirements;
7. Ensuring policy linkages between programmes/activities promoting employment and employability needs to be secured to ensure government programme requirements are designed with local circumstances in mind;
8. Revised governance arrangements need to take account of the diversity of interests/demands on them, including the legitimate interests of community accountability and the needs of strategic partners' accountability arrangements. In summary, the arrangements need to look outwards and not only focus on the Council's perceived or self-defined needs.

A number of specific issues were also raised:-

1. The need to look at a scenarios based approach to economic recovery to support the flexibility which all the organisations need to apply to specific decisions affecting programmes supporting the agreed strategy;
2. A review of what investment and other actions will assist value creation so as to maximise the market contribution to programmes and minimise calls on gap

- funding, which are increasing in present circumstances but which cannot be sustained beyond the short term;
3. The sequencing of development activities to ensure priorities are delivered and the risk of 'crowding out' investment opportunities, or creating unnecessary competition between area or project priorities is minimised and avoided;
  4. The role of the local authority as potential equity partner or 'guarantor' through prudential borrowing needs more exploration to maximise the LA enabling contribution.

A number of responses were made to the issues raised. Following the meeting it was agreed that these issues and various responses would be discussed at a dedicated officer workshop of both BNG and NCC officers. This will be arranged prior to September Board.

### 3. **FOLLOW UP OF REVIEWS**

#### **East Gateshead and West Central Gateshead**

- Board agreed these commissions were making good progress. There are some issues on strategic approaches in **Dunston** and **Deckham** and need to set timescales on how the story of these places will be developed.

#### **Scotswood Benwell**

The new Director for the West of Newcastle has now been appointed and an update will be arranged on the process of Strategic Review for the area. Governance arrangements for all Strategic Commission areas are now out to consultation with stakeholders and partners.

#### **Walker Riverside**

Walker Riverside Review has raised a number of issues and BNG officers have been asked to continue to work with NCC officers and feed in to the review of the Walker Business Plan, work through issues around the strategic reviews and then reconsider the business plan. Intent behind proposal is that there is a real commitment and ownership across the partnership.

BNG and NCC have already committed to a workshop session to be arranged asap (before summer holidays) to get a better understanding of how the business plan model works and the relationship with the Development Partner. The workshop will include HCA and PfP representation. BNG will make appropriate arrangements.

### 4. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Board are asked to note the progress made and next steps.