

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

Item 5 – Director’s Report

Summary Report:

Items covered in this report are:-

- 1NG Economic Masterplan
- Audit Commission Inspection Report on NCC Neighbourhood Regeneration
- Resources Review Update
- Research and Evaluation Update
- Communications Update
- Board Membership
- Property Refurbishment Guidance

Recommendations:

The Board are asked to note this report.

Implications:

Financial:

Equality:

Sustainability:

Consultation:

Risk:

Strategic:

Financial:

Development:

Operational:

Reputational:

Report to: BNG Board – 10 July 2009

Subject: Director's Report

Agenda Item: 5

1. **1NG ECONOMIC MASTERPLAN**

A presentation of the draft Economic Masterplan will be made by John Lord of 1NG at the meeting. BNG have been invited to comment on the draft and have been involved recently in discussions on the draft with HCA colleagues.

BNG's response to the draft will be tabled at the meeting as a confidential item.

2. **AUDIT COMMISSION INSPECTION REPORT ON NCC NEIGHBOURHOOD REGENERATION**

This report was published in June 2009. The Council were assessed as achieving a 'fair' one star service that has uncertain prospects for improvement. The report summary is attached at Appendix 1 for information. The BNG team have been asked to work with NCC Area Based Regeneration team to produce an Action Plan which will take forward the recommendations of the report.

3. **RESOURCES REVIEW UPDATE**

Following the procurement process, consultants Ekosgen have now been appointed to carry out this review. An inception meeting has been arranged for 15 July with a view to progressing this work to inform the Board Awayday on 18 September. The brief for the Review is attached as Appendix 2 for information.

4. **RESEARCH AND EVALUATION**

The Practical Affordable Housing Solutions work is continuing; BNG has been working with local authority Treasurers and legal teams to determine the powers under which the work can be implemented. A rationale for focussing on the five priority sites and modelling of phase 2 sites has been developed, linked to the BNG Business Plan priorities and Advisory Group Strategic Reviews. Subject to negotiations with developers and further discussions with lenders, we are aiming to introduce the products from early Autumn 2009.

Professor Glen Bramley is in the process of modelling the updates to the Future Markets work in respect of the change in the economy and the five New Growth Points. A special meeting of the Advisory Group will be arranged for September/October to discuss the findings.

Ekosgen have been appointed to carry out the evaluation of the impact of the housing market renewal programme (and different elements within it). This will improve our ability to monitor the impact of our investment and the strategic added value provided through attracting complementary investment etc into the area. The work should

complete before Christmas; this work will also respond to the Audit Commission's recommendations about the cumulative impact of the programme (rec 1) and of grant/loan investment in property refurbishment (rec 5).

The Key Facts sheet has been updated to include Growth. A copy is attached as an Appendix 3 to this report. It has been added to our website, discussed at the Residents' Panel and given to various recent visitors as a useful summary document.

5. **COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE**

The BNG Residents' Panel, which has welcomed two new members from Arthur's Hill and Bensham, met on 23rd June and discussion focused on community engagement and communications. Following a presentation on BNG and an overview of BNG's strategic approach to involvement, the Panel members were asked for their views on engagement activity. General comments centred on maintaining regular engagement, being open and honest – even when things aren't happening – and providing more than just written communications. These comments will be fed into the BNG Community Engagement event on 9th July. The next meeting will take place in October and will continue the work on community engagement; the Panel will also participate in a tour of the BNG area in the summer to see work on the ground.

Work is continuing on the annual report which this year focuses on the themes of People, Place, Partnership and Potential. Due to concerns over the design which have caused some delays, the annual report will now be published and sent to the HCA and CLG at the end of July. The report will be accompanied by the short DVD which has been produced and features interviews with Anne Mulroy, a River's Gate buyer and a resident of Riverside Dene, amongst others.

The latest issue of threesixty was distributed to our key stakeholders in June. Focusing on Renewal and Growth, this edition includes an overview of how we are responding to the current market, details on schemes which share risk and reward and an interview with Pat Ritchie, HCA Regional Director for the North East.

This year's Community Engagement Event focuses on 'Innovative Community Engagement to Maintain Resident Confidence' and takes place on 9th July at Gateshead College. The event features a presentation by Pete Duncan of Social Regeneration Consultants. Pete has extensive experience of working on engagement projects with HMR pathfinders and his presentation will look at innovative engagement techniques to keep residents with us. Two workshops will take place which will see presentations by Hull Gateway and Liverpool's New Heartlands pathfinders followed by facilitated discussions on how we can apply innovative and creative techniques across the BNG area. The event will finish with an optional tour of the BNG area.

BNG has hosted a number of visits recently. On 19th June, Sir Bob Kerslake, Chief Executive of the Homes & Communities Agency met with Jim Coulter and Anne Mulroy. During the visit, Sir Bob was given a tour of River's Gate in Walker Riverside and was provided with an overview of BNG's approach and programme. On 23rd June, David Waterhouse, Team Leader- Planning and Renewal with CLG, visited BNG and met with Anne Mulroy and Karen Anderson. Also on hand was Stuart Timmiss from Gateshead Council who gave an update on plans for Field St and the Freight Depot. In addition, Karen gave an update on the Growth programme. 24th June saw a visit by Julie Pearce

and Mike Seager from HCA's Housing Markets team, together with Donald Urquhart, Director of Housing Projects with the HCA North East office. The visit gave BNG an opportunity to give an overview of our work around the Practical, Affordable Housing Solutions and the Growth programme. The visitors were also given a tour of the BNG area. We were expecting a visit by Iain Wright MP on 25th June but due to his transfer to the Department for Children, Schools and Families, this visit was cancelled. We will be seeking an opportunity to invite his replacement Ian Austin MP, to visit at a future date.

6. **BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

Councillor Angela Armstrong will join BNG Board as the Portfolio Holder for Housing for Gateshead.

Neil Barker joins the Board as an additional representative from Newcastle Partnership and Graham Davis is the additional representative from Gateshead Strategic Partnership.

Kevan Carrick of JK Property Consultants joins us as an observer and potential Independent Member of the Board.

7. **PROPERTY REFURBISHMENT GUIDANCE**

The purpose of this guidance is to set out principles of best practice for exterior and interior refurbishment works. Incorporated within the BNG Private Sector Renewal Policy, the guidance is not intended to provide a set of exacting and rigorous standards to be applied to all schemes as the impact arising from property refurbishments is generally measured by the scale of a programme. Instead, this document is intended to highlight areas of design quality and innovation which can be applied in whole or in part to any refurbishment scheme for the purposes of creating and reinforcing a sense of place and securing transformational change in our areas. When future refurbishment schemes are progressed through the BNG Appraisal Process, there will be a requirement to demonstrate how the guidance has been applied to the scheme in question.