

**BRIDGING NEWCASTLEGATESHEAD BOARD
FRIDAY 23 MARCH 2007
MINUTES**

Present:

Jim Coulter	Chair
Donald Urquhart	English Partnerships
Douglas Taylor	Newcastle LSP Representative
Sheila Johnston	Gateshead Council
Councillor David Napier	Gateshead Council
Councillor Mike Cookson	Newcastle City Council
Tom Warburton	One NorthEast
Marie Fallon	Newcastle City Council

Observers:

Diana Pearce	Government Office for the North East
Philip Stevens	New Deal for Communities

Officers in Attendance:

Anne Mulroy	BNG
Karen Anderson	BNG
Ian Mackintosh	BNG
Jonathan Dunk	BNG
Bill Carr	BNG
Michelle Playford	BNG
Julia McAweaney	BNG (minutes)

Action

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Malcolm Levi, Gev Pringle, Eric Morgan, Jim Darlington (Diana Pearce attending), Kehri Ellis (Douglas Taylor attending), Julie Jacques, Linden Watson.

The Chair welcomed Bill Carr who is covering aspects of the vacant Head of Development post.

Copies of the 360° Newsletter, BNG Communications Strategy, Guardian Supplement and responses to the Simon Jenkins article were available.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Sheila Johnston – Freight Depot: personal but non-prejudicial.

3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**

- **Asset Register** (page 3) is virtually complete. All the data is there and data matching exercise being undertaken at present.
- **Expo** (page 4) – everything is going according to plan. The meeting with BNG and One NorthEast took place this week and Tom will follow up via Anne. Councillor Cookson has concerns about security in the area immediately adjacent to the Expo land and has mentioned this to the Urban Design Team at NCC.
- **HMI Update** (page 6) – Tony Champion has provided some contact names for modeling projections.
- **Audit Commission Performance Review** (page 7) – There will be another visit 24/25 April to follow up on the previous review and scrutiny recommendations. In addition diversity and community cohesion will be looked at.
- The Chair signed the minutes as a correct record.

4. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Spending Review

- A number of meetings have taken place recently. Meetings with Housing Minister Yvette Cooper and Margaret Ford (in her capacity leading the Transition Team for Communities England) will take place in April.
- The meeting with Financial Secretary to the Treasury John Healey was positive in terms of the sub national review of regeneration. A letter has been received from Ray Shostak, Treasury Public Services Director, following up issues including strategy and linkages and seeking ideas on Communities England.
- Councillor Napier and Sheila Johnston met with David Clelland and Yvette Cooper. It was a positive meeting and the Minister was supportive of the HMR programme. The discussion had also covered integration with social housing programmes. The Minister was invited to visit Gateshead.
- The Budget framework sets 2% growth level for public spending (which is half what it was previously). Scenario planning needs to be carried out in the summer. Capital receipts/assets need to be assessed as part of this. The Stretching Resources paper written for Yvette Cooper in response to her question about how to encourage private finance was attached to the papers. Councillors Cookson and Napier commented about the recent announcement on discussions to take the NewcastleGateshead Partnership further with the possibility of a Multi Area Agreement being pursued and consideration also being given to a new City Development Company. BNG would need to be involved in these discussions.
- Discussion then took place about securing more political support for resources for Tyneside and it was suggested that BNG re-engage with MPs using the programme highlighted in the business plan as a basis for discussion.

- Councillor Napier suggested arranging a meeting with MPs and David Clelland MP be the lead for that. It was suggested that Councillors Shipley and Henry could co-host the meeting and Councillor Napier would follow up. Cllr Napier
- Communication with MPs about the 2007/8 programme is required and need to encourage the two Council Leaders to get involved. Councillor Sir Jeremy Beecham should be included in the debate. AM/JC
- One NorthEast are having similar dialogue with Yvette Cooper and Tom Warburton offered to broker discussions with BNG and One NorthEast to ensure a joined up approach and effective engagement with MPs and contribution to CSR 2007. Jim to speak to Alan Clarke. TW
JC
- James Cruddas is also leading on work in relation to the Sustainable Communities Agenda, linking with economy. It is important that this work is considered in BNG's strategy.
- One NorthEast is looking at the future of Northern Way workstreams, one of which is private sector linkage and looking at how that work can be taken forward. TW

Communications Strategy

- A copy of the Inside Housing article and response were attached to the Director's Report. Anne and Philip Stevens met with Jim Cousins MP last week.
- BNG Communications Strategy was published last year and the Chair suggested that BNG look to put more information in the public domain but still subject to protecting privacy of information which could be commercially sensitive. Discussion took place about systems used by the two Councils.
- It was agreed that BNG take a more active approach to information but reinforce commercial sensitivity. AM

Freight Depot

- Sheila Johnston updated the Board on the current position. There has been much lobbying and support. Discussions are continuing to take place with BRB with regard to the value of the site. The agents met this morning and are meeting again late morning. There does appear to be some progress in terms of agreement to the land value. It was felt that the other land would be sold once the BRB land is sold. There is a review meeting next week to look at the implications on next year's funding and English Partnerships have been very helpful in terms of allowing to roll funding forward.
- English Partnerships Brownfield Team are reworking the protocol with CLG across the whole of the public sector and have fed the Freightliner issues into this so as to avoid this situation occurring again.

Cruddas Park

- The Evaluation Panel have selected a preferred developer and an announcement will be made following approval by NCC Procurement Committee.

CLG National Evaluation of HMR Pathfinders

- The report produced independently is positive and confirms that Pathfinders have made a strong start but that there is still much work to be done to achieve the long term policy aims.

Neighbourhood Management

- The workstream is moving forward. There will be a report to the Board next time on key areas and the response to the evaluation report.

Information and Learning

- There will be a joint CIH and Pathfinder Learning Event on 11/12 October in Sheffield.

Land Valuation / Gap Funding

- There has been an issue in terms of land value in Walker. DTZ are currently finalizing their report. Anne has shared the results with Marie Fallon and there is now a need to review Walker Riverside Funding Plan. NCC to commission the work to take this forward.

Board Membership Matters

- Eric Morgan has indicated that he would like to step down as Board Member because of an appointment to a housing association Development Board and to prevent any possible conflict of interest.. The 18 May Board will be his last meeting. The Board recorded thanks for Eric's input and agreed the Chair should talk to him further about potential involvement with the Advisory Panel where on conflict would arise.
- There are currently 2 vacancies for independent Board Members. Jim is meeting Sarah Green from the CBI in May and both Anne and Jim have met with Alison Lander from Coutts – further discussions to take place. Alison Maughan has started to assist in the Appraisals Panel and Jim has asked to meet her again re possible Board membership.
- It was proving difficult to find an independent Member with property knowledge and Jim asked for any suggestions.

JC

All

5. BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGET 2007/08

The Board commented as follows:-

Our Operating Environment

- Social Political operating environment, not economic – doesn't say what will happen if interest rates rise etc. or deal with changes in operating environment. These are risk elements and should be covered within risk management. IM

Our Places

- Achieving continuity of resident support in Respect and community cohesion has been added. AM
- Contribution to Regional Housing Strategy to be included. This would need to feed into Regional Housing Strategy update by summer. AM

Improving Organisational Performance

- Should reflect key learning organizations and good practice mentioned in the Audit Commission report. Also OECD – vision and leadership. AM
- Representation on Area Boards within areas BNG is working and strengthening links with local governance will be added. AM

Our Programme

- Need to convey that existing programme framework is going on and just need to add elements to that. AM
- 'Ongoing' deadlines to be more specific – applies to all sections. AM
- Bolam Coyne start on site to be put back from September, as this project is still under consideration by the LA. AM
- More Gateshead projects to be added within programme implementation section. AM
- May need a separate section on alignment of funding. AM

Our Priorities

- Review of Strategic Commissions outcome will also start to highlight the financial situation. Re-state vision, record change and take account of financial implications to be added. AM
- Public Annual Report outcome of what has been achieved in 06/07 not 07/08. AM
- Business Planning deadline would be Autumn, not March 08. AM

Financial Appendices

- Capital receipts have not been factored in for this Business Plan. Sheila and Marie to see what can be done to finalise estimates internally. SJ/MF
- Appendix 2 – the information has to feature in the Deed of Variation in terms of match funding.
- Should read Single Housing Investment (not improvement) Pot. IM
- Housing Corporation funding is shown separately but should be with SHIP.
- Ian to check contributions to Walker Riverside. IM
- English Partnerships total needs adjusted in terms of Fright Depot figure. IM
- BNG has had confirmation of £41m from CLG. The Deed of Variation was sent to CLG yesterday.

- Business Plan to be completed by 31 March. AM
- Jim to sign off Business Plan with Anne and copies will then be circulated. JC/AM

6. PROGRAMME AND FINANCIAL UPDATE

- Ian Mackintosh apologized for having to table the report. This was to ensure the most up to date information was included, given the financial year end.
- Allocation of £23m in 2006/7. Claimed £18.3m as at 28 February and on target for budget spend. Additional £4.7m to put through in March and confident spend will be achieved.
- A letter will be sent by all Pathfinders jointly to CLG raising concerns about the lack of flexibility with funding, ie BNG had to spend £23m exactly, anything over that would count as overspend. This has been confirmed in writing by CLG. Funding swaps between Pathfinders have been allowed.
- In terms of capital revenue expenditure, £2.945m revenue expenditure will be achieved.
- All output targets will be hit and will be exceeded on refurbishments. Ian has included the 5 contractual outputs in the report; others will be included in the 'wrap up' report. IM
- With regard to match funding, the Deed of Variation specifies that the two local authorities have to sign to indicate their commitment to deliver match funding. In both cases the match funding has been delivered over and above the amounts required.
- All items will be achieved in the reasonable endeavours section.
- Donald said well done to everyone and asked, as the output targets have been exceeded significantly, would this cause problems in the years to come.
- This over-achievement compensates the under achievement in private sector renewal. Need to increase private sector renewal next year and ensure any under-performance is picked up. IM/JD
- A report will go to 18 May Board to ensure the issues identified at the Appraisal Panel are clear between BNG, NCC and Gateshead Council. IM

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

- Michelle Playford gave some background to the strategy. At the last meeting Gev Pringle fed back on the Community Engagement Workshop findings. Since then the strategy has been revised from the findings and a toolkit has been designed for internal use and anyone delivering community engagement within the BNG area. The strategy leaflet was circulated and this will be sent out with the newsletter. An event will be held in the summer to launch the strategy and share best practice in the area. Michelle requested feedback on the strategy and leaflet before the workstream on Tuesday. Comments as follows:-

- A paragraph indicating the fit with NCC and Gateshead Council community engagement strategies will be added, indicating that if working in Gateshead / Newcastle the relevant strategy should be referred to. MP
- Councillor Cookson was concerned at the amount of paperwork being sent to residents, particular in the Scotswood Benwell area. He would also like to see a return slip included with every document we send. MP
- Sheila Johnston highlighted the fact that it isn't targeted to a specific area.
- An audit of the BNG newsletter will be carried out this year and will be looking at how the role of marketing the BNG area is taken forward.
- It was felt that the community engagement group has moved on a long way and got a handle on what is happening at a local level. Need to be clear that needs to be some level of community engagement across the board. The Board needs to be aware where there are programme wide issues and where there are issues emerging. May need to be more of a formal statement of that in the remit section. MP
- Should incorporate annual audit of community engagement into this. MP
- The 8 rules will be reduced to 4. MP
- Consistency with 'we'. MP
- The Strategy was then approved subject to the above changes.

8. **RESPECT DELIVERY PLAN WIP**

- BNG has Part A pro forma and Part B has been submitted.
- Formal feedback is not given on Part B but will be looking for some feedback in order to assist with the Delivery Plan which specifies how Pathfinders are going to deliver the Respect Agenda. Elevate have submitted the draft Delivery Plan to Audit Commission but have not had feedback on whether the format is acceptable yet.
- Need to start to identify KPIs.
- Delivery Plan needs to be submitted by beginning June and the draft Plan will come to 18 May Board for approval.
- The Chair indicated that BNG's objective in this should be to be judged well above the minimum requirements. KA
- Bullet point text would make the plan clearer. KA
- There will also be a line on this added into the Business Plan. AM
- The fact that Newcastle is a Respect Action Area and is doing innovative work in this area will be included. KA

9. **RESEARCH PROGRAMME**

- Karen Anderson summarized key achievements in 2006/7. Research will come in on budget and good use has been made of the findings.
- In 2007/8 BNG will be starting to build on what has been learnt already.
- Bolam Coyne market testing work to be put on hold until situation is clearer. KA

- 'Work here, like to live here?' questionnaire is out with employers at the moment. Had a good response. This will link with the NGI live work theme.
- Stakeholder events have been successful and enabled BNG to share the learning. Looking to produce 'findings' documents next.
- Item 4 (second para) 'subject to capacity' should be transferred into the contract. Question of local affordability.
- NCC are looking at affordability across the country and the possibility of BNG / NCC looking at this jointly was mentioned.
- The Regional Housing Board had an event on affordability in September. The National Housing and Planning Advisory Unit is now established and Government Office had a visit from the Chief Executive a couple of weeks ago. They intend to publish by mid summer national and regional outcomes of best way of modeling affordability and once in public domain this could be used as a starting point.
- Manchester are doing a social stock take of affordability. (Max Steinberg is member of the Board).
- Agreed in principle and Anne and Karen to review research budget and create a contingency to look at affordability.

AM/KA

10. **CREATIVE AND CULTURAL SECTOR STUDY FINDINGS**

- Presentation by Karen Anderson.
- Links with waterfront Gateshead, how regional and waterfront has happened.
- Report published end of April.
- People were consulted across the North East about their perceptions of the BNG area.
- BNG won't take forward any further work for students but would concentrate on graduates but haven't asked what area they have studied – this will be added.
- NCC are thinking of doing an event around regeneration and culture and want to showcase work that BNG has done – could be a joint event with Gateshead. This could feed into NGI Live Work theme.
- The role that Arts can play in delivering the Respect Agenda shouldn't be ignored and how arts can instill confidence in young people. Donald offered advice on this area.

KA

KA

11. **PROJECT APPRAISAL PANEL AND ADVISORY GROUP MINUTES**

- Minutes of the Project Appraisal Panel of 16 March and Advisory Group of 9 March were circulated. Any comments to be directed to Anne.

All

12. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- No items.

13. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

- 10.30am, Friday 18 May at Gateshead Civic Centre.