

Meeting:	Board
Date:	11 th July 2008
Contact:	John Sparkes – 2772668
Board Action:	For discussion
Sensitivity:	Public

Subject: Design Standards and Principles for New Developments

AGENDA ITEM 9

Link to BNG Vision and Objectives:

Vision : To create great places to live.

The opportunity to create high quality developments in terms of design and sustainability with high quality open spaces.

Objective: To provide an improved choice of good quality, well designed homes through new development and investment in sustainable homes whilst replacing obsolete housing.

The proposed Design Standards and Principals will enhance the quality of new developments being brought forward in the BNG area in terms of design quality and sustainability.

Recommendation:

That Board approve the BNG Design Standards and Principles for New Developments and that these are applied to all future new build schemes of five or more units which are in receipt of BNG funding.

Executive Summary:

Approval is sought for the attached BNG Design Standards and Principles for New Developments which will complement the existing policies and standards adopted by both partner local authorities through the UDP/LDF framework. The proposed standards are also aligned with English Partnerships Quality Standards (Nov 2007) which will give consistency and continuity on schemes such as Scotswood Expo and Heart of Walker and Freight Depot.

Implications

Financial:	The application of enhanced standards of design and sustainability may lead to increase in costs of new build schemes.
Equality:	The Design Standards and Principles will promote tenure blind developments and the creation of mixed sustainable communities.
Sustainability:	The Design Standards and Principles will provide for a high standard of sustainability in new build schemes. The quality of place (public realm, landscape, street furniture), high levels of accessibility by public transport and cycling, leading edge design standards (eco and lifetime homes), recycling and carbon reduction all feature within the Design Standards.
Freedom of Information:	Not subject to FOI restrictions
Report Status:	Open

Risk:			
Risk Map Element	Brief description of any material risks, including of not proceeding.	Impact	Probability
Strategic:	The Design standards and Principles are not adopted resulting in a failure by BNG to have any strategic policies in place to secure design quality and sustainability.	High	Low
Financial:	The application of new design standards and principles may lead to increased construction and development costs.	Medium	Medium
Development:	Schemes, in exceptional circumstances, may be delayed in being brought forward due to increased design lead in time and construction costs arising from the application of standards.	Medium	Medium
Operational:	Failure to apply new standards resulting in developments which do not meet BNG aspirations in terms design and sustainability.	High	Low
Reputational:	Should the standards fail to be adopted by BNG then there will be a loss of reputation at a national level amongst other pathfinders and central government. It is essential that BNG is able to demonstrate its commitment to high quality design and sustainability and the embodiment of these aspirations in a bespoke document will clearly reflect this.		

Report to:

BNG Board 11th July 2008

Subject:

Design Standards and Principles for New Build Developments

1. **INTRODUCTION**

The report seeks approval from the BNG Board for the approval of the BNG Design Standards and Principles which are appended to this report. The standards and principles will set in place a range of design standards which will enhance the design, layout and sustainability of new developments of five or more units and which are subject to BNG funding.

2. **BODY OF REPORT**

There has been a growing acknowledgement over recent years within central government and the development industry that the standards of urban design needed to be raised in terms of quality and sustainability. Through a variety of agencies and organisations such as CABE, Joseph Rowntree Foundation and BRE, quality benchmarks have been consistently raised with the introduction of new standards including the Code for Sustainable Homes, Building for Life, Secure by Design to name a few. Collectively these provide a framework of overarching guidance and advice which seek to influence design and deliver enhanced standards within new developments to the benefit of all.

Although high quality and sustainable design cannot achieve regeneration in itself, it is an integral element of any physical regeneration initiative and without measures in place to ensure good design, the prospect of long term success is diminished. The quality of place i.e. how places are designed, built and run, has a direct bearing on quality of life. Issues such as housing design and choice, access to transport, retail and leisure facilities as well as employment and education opportunities all impact upon daily lives at an individual and community level and can influence how areas function. Good design is therefore an integral element in the creation of strong and sustainable communities.

BNG champions good design and is committed to delivering high standards of design and sustainability in new developments. The Design Standards and Principles for New Developments, for which approval is sought from the Board, will be applied to all relevant schemes receiving BNG funding from 1st August 2008. This will help deliver our commitment to good design and will ensure that the all new developments meet the same high standards and that a common benchmark be applied providing certainty to our private and public sector partners.

In keeping with other key public agencies, existing independent standards which are already commonplace in the development industry have been included within the BNG Standards which will help ensure synergy with other funding regimes. Specifically, English Partnerships' Quality Standards (Revised November 2007) have been adopted as a template by BNG to ensure alignment on major projects such as Scotswood Expo. Moreover, the alignment of standards with EP will provide clarity and certainty to private sector partners and will not add an additional layer of 'design bureaucracy' within project development.

It terms of how the standards will be applied to new schemes, it is proposed that all relevant projects / schemes will be assessed against the design standards by a Project Review Group (Made up of BNG Officers, representatives from the Local Authorities and Design Professionals) as part of the appraisal process. This will be a two stage process held in advance of any scheme being presented to the Appraisal Panel, details of which are set out below.

Stage 1

Review proposals against BNG Design Standards (*abridged* EP Quality Standards, see Appendix 1) which will occur as part of the development of the BNG Submission Form, to be co-ordinated by BNG Head of Development, and assessed at a meeting in advance of the Appraisal Meeting. The Stage 1 review will essentially involve a review of the 'Design Statement' (a requirement of the Design Standards and Principles) which should include reference to the other design requirements contained in the main document. This will ensure that unsatisfactory schemes do not reach Appraisal stage. Once a scheme has successfully passed through Stage 1, it will be passed fit for appraisal through the normal BNG Appraisal Process.

Stage 2

This takes the form of a review of the scheme by the Design and Sustainable Construction Workstream's *Design Review Panel* using the BNG Checklist for Residential Development (appendix 2). The results and issues arising from the Checklist will inform and feed into the Appraisal Meeting. The Checklist includes a scoring mechanism. Rather than impose a 'pass or fail' threshold at Stage 2, it is intended that this element of the process will highlight the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities arising from new build schemes, that can be discussed and clarified at the Appraisal Meeting. For those schemes which do not score well against relevant criteria, amendments may be requested. Alternatively, funding conditions can be imposed to ensure compliance on schemes with major issues to overcome.

For clarity, the standards will be applied to new schemes being brought forward from 1st August 2008 which include five or more residential units. Those schemes which have already been appraised and / or are at an advanced stage of design will be exempt from the new standards.

NEXT STEPS

Should the Board agree the proposed Design Standards and Principles for New Developments, these will be implemented with immediate effect on all relevant new schemes being brought forward which are in receipt of BNG funding. These standards will be reviewed every 12 months to take account of emerging national policy and guidance on design and sustainability issues. Following adoption of these new build standards, it is intended to commence work on a similar set of design standards and principles for residential refurbishments.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Board approve the BNG Design Standards and Principles for New Build Developments and that these be applied to all new developments meeting the relevant criteria being brought forward and requiring BNG funding from 1st August 2008.