

BRIDGING NEWCASTLEGATESHEAD'S RESPONSE TO THE NORTH EAST ASSEMBLY'S DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN 2008-2011

Bridging NewcastleGateshead (BNG) has considered the above document and makes the following comments:

Focus

- We agree with the NEA's intentions to focus on its core role of regional housing, regional planning, scrutiny of the Regional Economic Strategy and regional strategic partnership work, as well as the transition of some duties linked to the development of the Integrated Regional Strategy.

Corporate

- We believe that the NEA should facilitate closer working of its Development and Housing Boards and, together, feed into the IRS and develop sound and shared evidence to inform future planning. These two important areas of the NEA's activity are currently not working together as they should.
- The partial review of the RSS to reflect the Housing Green Paper must fit with, not duplicate The Northern Way's and One North East's work – the three organisations, and others, need to consider and agree their roles and responsibilities in terms of evidence gathering, dissemination and strategy development.
- The NEA and other regional bodies need to take note of the findings of the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) North's review, which is considering governance at different spatial levels in the North East.
- The NEA needs to work with the other regional organisations to ensure that North East priorities are clear, what the NEA's contribution is to facilitating delivery of these priorities and – so we are able to contribute to The Northern Way - the regional bodies need to identify the region's 'USP', qualities as well as challenges – to make a better case for the region, as well as what happens within it.
- Linked to this, the NEA need to set out how it will contribute to the 'quality of place' agenda raised by The Northern Way.

Housing

- Need greater focus on ensuring RSS priorities determine the programme and more open methodology for allocations to sub-regions.
- Also – as the main advisors to the Regional Housing Board – the NEA needs to establish a clear process for moving funding between objectives in the Regional Housing Strategy (Single Housing Investment Pot/National Affordable Housing Programme) if under/over delivery of targets.
- The links with the Homes and Communities Agency are not clear in the document but as the main regeneration agency from 2009, this will be essential in the development of sustainable communities.
- Linked to this, and although mention is made of the Housing Green Paper and the need to review the RSS, New Growth Points and Eco-towns are not mentioned

specifically despite their potential impact on future planning, transport, land use, climate change etc.

Research

- The key activities annex identifies a number of very useful pieces of research/reviews. The dissemination of the findings from this work will be essential – events, not just through the website.
- The NEA evidence base must be complementary to, not duplicate, that of The Northern Way, One NorthEast and sub-regional partnerships – there is a piece of work to do to establish who is intending to do what over the plan period. We support the intention to jointly commission work with the RDA where appropriate.

We hope you find these comments useful.

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