

BRIDGING NEWCASTLEGATESHEAD BOARD
FRIDAY 25 JANUARY 2008
MINUTES

Present:

Jim Coulter	Chair
Donald Urquhart	English Partnerships
Councillor Mike Cookson	Newcastle City Council
Sheila Johnston	Gateshead Council
Marie Fallon	Newcastle City Council
Geraldine Wilcox	Independent
Steve Errington	Independent
Tom Warburton	One NorthEast
Malcolm Levi	Independent

Observers:

Diana Pearce	Government Office for the North East
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Officers in Attendance:

Anne Mulroy	BNG
Karen Anderson	BNG
Ian Mackintosh	BNG
Jonathan Dunk	BNG
John Sparkes	BNG
Linden Watson	Gateshead Council
Julia McAweaney	BNG (minutes)

Action

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Douglas Taylor, Councillor David Napier, Gev Pringle and Philip Stevens.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Sheila Johnston – Gateshead Site: personal but non-prejudicial.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

- The minutes of 23 November meeting were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. **REVIEW OF TOUR**

- The meeting was preceded by a tour of new build sites. An investment map showing the 2008/11 programme was tabled to show how closely activities are linked to new build activity. It is important to place new build sites in the context of the wider plans for the area. The Oval was given as an example of complementarity of upgrading existing stock and providing a new offer, improving choice as well as quality in the whole place to avoid new build being seen as simply projects. In the case of Gateshead new build cites the context of improvements to properties on Sunderland Road private sector and Housing Company homes alongside revenue initiatives such as Neighbourhood Pride, Private Landlords licencing and support for residents had together resulted in reductions in anti social behaviour.
- One of the emerging issues from the individual Board Member Appraisals is the need for the Board to take on more active scrutiny role and take stock of what is being done to ensure BNG's delegation system is achieving the desired results.
- Boklok show flat will be open tomorrow and for the next few weeks at St James Village. Malcolm Levi would welcome feedback. He will be with Home Group until the end of February.
- Gateshead Officer Group has been reflecting on achievements at Sunderland Road in terms of refurbishments. The area now has a neighbourhood pride initiative. Gateshead Housing Company has done environmental improvement schemes and starting to see a reduction in anti social behaviour in the area. Initiatives are now being linked to targeting in terms of unemployment and worklessness across the area.
- The timing of the tours may need to be looked at for next time – possible earlier start so that Board meeting starts on time.

5. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

BNG Programme 2008/11

- There is still uncertainty about timing of funding announcement – possibly February as Iain Wright hasn't completed his visits to Pathfinders.
- It was agreed that, should the announcement start to shift considerably, there is a need to look at the practical implications of contracts and do some contingency work if necessary. Programme and scenario planning work will be picked up – focused on level of funding at present and not the timing of the announcement. The change of Housing Minister may also likely to have an impact on the situation.
- SHIP and NAHP funding – there is a significant squeeze on SHIP and Karen Anderson will be attending a meeting this afternoon to look at the allocation. BNG will be pressing for its priorities to be maintained. May need to have a special Board meeting to look at the implications of the HMR announcement when it is made alongside the SHIP 3 allocation.

AM/JD/IM

- The possibility of BNG having 'investor' status in the Expo is being given further consideration, ie what BNG's role as an investor can be and how that links to its agenda as an organization. A scoping exercise is being undertaken at the moment and an initial report will be presented to the March Board.

AM

Gateshead and Newcastle Partnership

- The partnership is moving ahead. NGI, BNG and the City Development Company in the current structure are linked as sister companies sitting beneath the Strategic Partnership. Work is underway to develop relationships between the companies and a joint report from CDC, BNG and NGI will be submitted to the Partnership at the earliest opportunity.

Growth Point Submission

- Supplementary information has been requested. Shortlisting will take place in February. 28 Expressions of Interest have been received, 5 from within the North East and responding with technical information. The consultation process is taking place via CLG. One NorthEast will be taking a view of the bids regionally to feed back to Government.

Gateshead Site

- Sheila Johnston gave an update on the current position.

Communication

- The visit by Iain Wright MP was successful. He took an interest and engaged with everyone who attended. Malcolm Levi will write to him at Hartlepool with regard to opening the Boklok scheme, which he was keen to do.
- Sounding Panel – the Community Engagement Workstream discussed how to develop the Panel and proposals will come back to March or May Board. The Board needs to sign off before the proposals are progressed any further. The Chair asked that the term 'Sounding' Panel be reconsidered.
- A Communications and Marketing Group is being developed to try to look at 'place' rather than individual developments and organizations. Peter Holt, Director of Communication and Marketing at NCC, will chair the group and will involve not just Local Authorities but development partners, ALMOS, NDC, NGI and One NorthEast. The aim is to ensure there is consistent marketing activity focused on 'place'. Discussion took place around promotion and selling of 'place'. Tom Hustler, from English Partnerships Communications and Marketing, will be invited to join the group. One NorthEast have been invited to the group. Tom Warburton will suggest a representative to Karen Anderson.
- Community Radio – a number of residents have come forward who would like to be involved.

ML

KA/MP

KA/PH

TW

- **Media:-**
 - NAO report - Karen Anderson gave a response on Radio Newcastle.
 - Jonathan Dunk will be appearing on 'Around the House' on Tyne Tees which has been delayed for a couple of weeks. It is likely that Iain Wright will feature on the programme as well. It was a positive interview.
 - A full page article on Cruddas Park featured in Property Week.
- **Forthcoming events:-**
 - 20 February Officers Learning Event will take place including St James Village and Walker Riverside to examine issues around affordability.
 - 20 March (provisional date) – Research Event. Professor Ian Cole will Chair. To be held at the Live Theatre. Looking at recent research Modelling Future Housing Markets, Work Here, Like to Live Here? Officers invited are free to suggest other invitees from their organizations. Karen Anderson to contact Government Office to ensure invites are widely distributed. There are 150 places. Need to think about who target audience is. IPPR are co-ordinating some work for BNG as a follow up on Glen Bramley work and a range of people are involved in that who may be a potential target group. Board Members to email Karen Anderson with suggested invitees. KA
 - 22 April Officers' Event on Changing Place and Business Plan. All

Research Programme 2008/9

- This was discussed at the Advisory Group. The proposed revenue budget of £100k would need to be confirmed formally when the government's funding announcement was made. The Board agreed the programme. BNG to consider the 'rebalancing communities' wording to ensure there was no scope for misinterpretation. KA

One NorthEast Corporate Plan Consultation Response

- The response was attached as an appendix. It has picked up some of the themes emerging in the Strategic Reviews, for example how to achieve a retail offer in regeneration areas. Tom Warburton will ensure that the response is fully considered in the Plan. TW

Strategic Review Updates

- Following the full Strategic Review by the Advisory Group it is important that the review documents are kept as up to date as possible to continue to reflect what is happening in the areas. Karen Anderson has organized review updates for each of the commissions and further updates will take place in May and September of each year and will be reported to Anne Mulroy and Sheila Johnston.

Audit Commission Respect Review

- Visit took place in January to measure BNG's influence on partners to deliver the Respect Agenda in the BNG area. Feedback was positive. The Review document will only be a 4 page summary and will be published at the same time as the baseline report as part of the funding allocation process.

HMI Update

- Interim update. Figures quoted are up to June 07. Overall house prices are still rising across BNG but to a lesser extent than in the past. Walker Riverside is still the cheaper area. All areas are on a gradual rise. Vacancies are steady, slightly up in Gateshead BNG and down in Newcastle BNG. Long term vacancies are slightly up overall but the Council Tax basis of the calculation is not up to date.
- A request was made that the HMI map be broken down into Strategic Commission areas and include tenure breakdown as a percentage to get a better understanding of potential impact. KA
- As 2010 is approaching it would be useful to have a commentary so there is some indication of BNG in relation to CLG targets for the HMR programme targets, ie variance and Pathfinder numbers compared to regional prices, vacancies and turnover. KA
- Estate and Lettings Agents Survey Summary has only ever been published, not the full report which goes into detail on area issues. The date of the survey was questioned as it shows a lot of confidence in the market, particularly around relative affordability of stock in the BNG area. Full copies of the report are available to the Board on request.

Board Matters

- The outcome of the Chair's 1:1 appraisal discussions will be reported at the March meeting. JC
- If anyone hasn't updated the register of interests please do so.
- The Board formally approved the appointment of Geraldine Wilcox to the Advisory Group and Judith Ozcan (Bank of Scotland) to the Project Appraisal Panel. Approval was also given for Steve Gawthorpe (English Partnerships) be invited to join the Appraisal Panel and for Diana Pearce to replace Jim Darlington as Government Office Board Observer and to become a member of the Advisory Group. JC
- Philip Stevens has stepped down as Board Observer and the Chair and Anne Mulroy will talk to Philip and his Chair regarding another New Deal for Communities Board representative. JC/AM

6. PROGRAMME AND FINANCIAL UPDATE

- The report has been updated since going to Appraisal Panel last week. Steve Errington has offered to advise Ian Mackintosh and Jonathan Dunk on streamlining the information. SE/IM/JD

- Jonathan Dunk reported that development of the 2008/11 programme will start now on the basis of the funding bid to ensure we are in a good position to start delivering as soon as possible. Newcastle and Gateshead are meeting regularly around managing any financial risks towards year end and have steps in place to balance out any risk.
- Have an approved programme this year of £46m and an allocation of £41m currently. Forecast spend likely to be between £42m-£43m. Will involve monitor closely to ensure target is not exceeded.
- BNG is working closely with the accountancy teams at both Local Authorities on minimizing risk. As part of the project process, where it is known that certain projects won't need their full allocation, the amount of money committed to these projects is being formally reduced now.
- The Chair requested that the risk register needs some interpretation / live assessment to be incorporated. IM/JD
- Other risk issue is to make sure we continue to meet appraisal timetable.
- BNG has been holding discussions with partners about performance monitoring and are looking to report on key milestones (Key Performance Indicators). Amendments to the process will be considered by the Appraisal Panel.
- A question was asked about how much of the spend is legally committed. 'Approved to date' isn't necessarily 'legally committed'. There was some discussion about risk and recognition that partners were taking risks in the delivery of the programme.

7. BUSINESS PLAN QUARTER 3 UPDATE

- There are no 'reds' in this report which records progress against the Business Plan. Any 'ambers' will be achieved by year end:-
 - 'Review Partnership Management Structure' arrangements will be in place before end March. AM
 - 'SLA to be delivered March 08' – agreed rather than difficult methods before of managing revenue and staff costs, will move into an SLA that will be ready to implement with the revenue allocation next year. Will give more flexibility to respond to different situations. JD
 - 'Develop Design Principles between BNG and LAs' – John Sparkes (Head of Development) is committed to agreeing Design Protocol by the end of this financial year. JS
 - Gateshead and Newcastle Partnership – Issues are ongoing and mentioned in Director's Report and will move ahead before the end of the year. AM
- In Appendix 2 of the Business Plan the Housing Corporation funding is included in SHIP – this will be broken down in future reports. IM
- A draft of the 2008/09 Business Plan will come to the next meeting and last Quarter of 2007/08. JD

8. **BNG EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY MODEL**

- This report sets out what BNG is doing in terms of effectiveness and efficiency and arises from the Audit Commission score of 'performing adequately'.
- It was agreed that 'who' and 'when' columns would be added to the action plan. IM
- The Chair suggested a sentence about what the outcome is in each of the areas so the result is measured. Ian Mackintosh will meet with Steve Errington and talk about how impact measurement could be expressed as part of the aim to improve the quality of information. SE/IM
- It was recognized that it can sometimes be the target that doesn't measure efficiency. An example was given of timescale and whether the appraisal process is done quickly enough and is the fact that there are three organizations working together making it more or less efficient.
- Once the Audit Commission Performance Monitoring Reports are out with the allocation, it would be useful to look at the 9 Pathfinders and learning from each other on shared issues.
- One of the outcomes of the Board appraisals was to interact more informally. The possibility of holding an Away Day towards the middle of the year, to look at how we can learn from each other was mentioned.
- This was approved.

9. **CALCUTT REPORT – CONSTRUCTION PROCUREMENT AND LINKS TO BNG**

- The Chair had requested a report which examines the Calcutt report in relation to BNG. The report outlined the issues for BNG. Examples were given.
- At Scotswood Expo BNG is looking to move forward with NCC, English Partnerships, Housing Corp and One NorthEast to develop a Local Asset Backed Vehicle (LABV) and is entering into competitive dialogue with bidders for the development. Arrangements are likely to take the form of an LABV and limited liability partnership.
- Gateshead have commissioned GVA Grimley with BNG to consider putting land assets into a pot in order to get the maximum value and returns to make it more attractive to the private sector. Further discussions with Strategy Group will take place as they are looking at a number of delivery vehicles. The principle has been accepted and will be moving forward to Cabinet.
- The draft procurement strategy includes the principles of the Calcutt report and is about making the best use of opportunities as they arise. The draft strategy has not been shared beyond Programme Management Group as it stands at present. Consultation on the draft will now be brought forward. Steve Gawthorpe from English Partnerships (who will be invited to join the Appraisal Panel) will be involved in discussions on the JS/IM

draft strategy. This will also be an early issue for the cross partnership group.

10. **INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2008-2011**

- The report was tabled and introduced by Jonathan Dunk.
- The investment map has been sent to Iain Wright's office as an MP has requested a meeting to talk to him about BNG's Business Plan. It is not known when the meeting will take place.
- Tom Warburton asked if it would be possible for some of the key sites which the Council is working on with ONE to be added to the map to get a better idea of linkage. Partner investment as well as BNG investment will also be shown.

11. **PROJECT APPRAISAL PANEL MINUTES**

- 18 January minutes were tabled. Items discussed included Cruddas Park, Programme Performance and Walker Riverside land values.

ADVISORY GROUP

- 11 January minutes to follow.

12. **REVISED SCHEDULE OF BOARD MEETINGS 2008**

- A revised schedule was circulated with the papers incorporating the tours. Meeting dates remain the same.

13. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- No items.

It was Malcolm Levi and Marie Fallon's last meeting and the Board recorded great thanks for their contribution to BNG.

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

- 10.30am, Friday 14 March at Newcastle Civic Centre.