

**BRIDGING NEWCASTLEGATESHEAD BOARD
FRIDAY 16 MAY 2008
MINUTES**

Present:

Jim Coulter	Chair
Councillor Mike Cookson	Newcastle City Council
Donald Urquhart	English Partnerships
David Slater (until 11.30am)	Newcastle City Council
Geraldine Wilcox	Independent
Steve Errington	Independent
Tom Warburton	One NorthEast
Councillor David Napier	Gateshead Council
Sheila Johnston	Gateshead Council

Observers:

Tom Smythe (rep Diana Pearce)	Government Office for the North East
George Curry	New Deal for Communities
Bill Carr (rep Julie Jacques)	Housing Corporation
Michelle Bell	Housing Corporation

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 Kehri Ellis, Diana Pearce (Tom Smythe attending) and Julie Jacques (Bill Carr attending).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Sheila Johnston – Gateshead Site: personal but non-prejudicial.
Donald Urquhart - Item 7: personal but non-prejudicial.

The Chair welcomed David Slater, Executive Director of Environment and Regeneration, NCC as a new Board Member and Michelle Bell, new Investment Manager with Housing Corporation, who was observing the meeting.

3. **BYKER ESTATE**

- John Lee from YHN gave a presentation on the challenges and potential solutions for Byker Estate which was followed by a walking tour.
- Byker Investment Options Group is looking at a series of options. A visit to Park Hill, Sheffield is being arranged to see how they are dealing with similar funding issues. It is apparent that there are several comparisons between Byker Estate and Park Hill.
- There was a general discussion about sustainability issues.
- John Lee was thanked for the useful update and tour.

Memory sticks were distributed to the Board containing key BNG documents and other useful information. This is the Board Members' information pack agreed following the Chair's Board Member appraisal meetings.

4. **MINUTES OF THE 14 MARCH 2008 MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**

- The updated Operational Plan was circulated electronically.
- The minutes were then signed by the Chair as a correct record.

5. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Audit Commission Arrangements 2008/09

- Yvonne Taylor has taken up the post of Head of Housing Markets. Rob Hack is BNG's new assessor.
- There will be a performance review in September which will take up to 5 days. In addition there will be a site visit in the Autumn to focus on value for money.
- Both reviews will be used to assess the performance element of the award for the next two years.
- A report will be published by Audit Commission on Respect which will consider all of the Pathfinder performance. Also producing a general HMR Good Practice Guide which will be available on the Audit Commission website and has a number of examples from BNG.

Growth Point Submission

- No further announcement likely until the end of June. Submitted further detailed information on infrastructure costs.
- CLG will be in touch over technical details shortly.
- The delay was initially down to infrastructure but there are also wider issues.

Gateshead Site

- An update was given by Sheila Johnston.

Board Awayday

- Will be held 2 July at the Live Theatre. Discussion will focus around BNG's future and the operating environment.
- Any items for discussion should be forwarded to Anne Mulroy by the end of the month to give time to discuss with Ian Cole who will be facilitating the event.

All

Deed of Variation

- The Deed of Variation will be for one year only.
- The draft is with the local authorities to complete match funding details and targets. Discussions are taking place with CLG regarding investment proposals detailed in the Business Plan for Scotswood. Awaiting a response from CLG but likely to be a Memorandum of Understanding between LAs, BNG and CLG.

Year End Celebration

- Will take place on 1 July at BNG offices - mainly focussed on project officers to mark the successful completion of the programme and targets for the year.

6. THE CITY DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

- John Rundle from the City Development Company (CDC) was welcomed to the meeting and gave an update on the economic masterplan being prepared as well as the possible operating structure of the CDC and how the connections between the three 'sister' partnerships within the Gateshead and Newcastle partnership might interconnect. This was followed by a general discussion.
- A question was asked in relation to how the surrounding areas to the CDC boundaries (low income households) will benefit from CDC resources. CDC boundaries cover the whole of NewcastleGateshead and the economic masterplan will cover that area as well.
- CDC will have a clear role in economic development. The economic analysis will show growth in particular sectors and that is where the economic masterplan starts and the partnership comes into it. Whilst it is a NewcastleGateshead masterplan it can't be looked at in isolation from the sub region. Would have to be set in the wider context.
- Need to be clear who will be doing what, ie leading and steering.
- Some of skills and transport issues to link in to wider City Region debate. Needs to co-ordinate with the urban core as well as wider economic area. This may be a matter of discussion at the Board Awayday. As the MAA develops there is a greater focus on how it fits 'place' into growth, transport and economic development opportunities. CDC are already forming links with City Region.
- The overarching Gateshead and Newcastle Partnership and 3 sister partners have to work in a way that produces value for money developing the synergies that are there to maximum effect.

JC/AM

- John Rundle was thanked for the update.

7. **BNG RESPONSE TO PROSPEROUS PLACES**

- Deadline for response is 20 June.
- The Board were asked to agree the general approach taken to the response and for delegated authority to be given to the Chair and Director to sign off the final response.
- In terms of the response, it was proposed that we highlight that the relationship between economic and social outcomes is under-stated.
- In terms of measuring impact, it is very light touch. Perhaps build on Professor Glen Bramley work.
- Little substantive mention of Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) in the paper and explanation of regional governance arrangements and how they will work and how that links with Integrated Regional Strategy.
- There is no mention of the need to have a shared and robust evidence base and need to have models that can look forward.
- Should get across what is different about each region, ie quality of life in the North East etc. Link to how social capital can be grown.
- Focusses on the supply of new homes, whereas most of the homes for the future will be the ones we have now.
- Skills and training missing from the paper. Focusses on the jobs but local people need to be 'skilled up' to take advantage of this.
- Priorities for regional investment need to be realistic and small enough in number to be able to have the desired impact.
- Even when strategy is agreed there can be gaps in funding plan so seeking flexibility in grant usage to ensure there aren't gaps.
- There will be a formal regional response by Jonathan Blackie. Tom Warburton will feed BNG views into that. TW
- Karen Anderson to talk to ANEC who lead the Leader's Forum. KA
- The Board were happy for the Chair and Director to sign off the final response. A copy will also be sent to the Minister for the North East. KA

Presentation on the Emerging Homes and Communities Agency by Donald Urquhart

- Donald Urquhart gave a presentation on the HCA's vision and challenges.
- One NorthEast leads on CLG issues for RDAs and their Chief Executive has been leading on working relationship with HCA. North East is a pilot but trying to build up a working relationship with the set up team.

8. **SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT**

- The Service Level Agreement was discussed briefly. While the general principles were agreed, there remained some detailed process issues to be finalised. The Partnership Executive Team is meeting to look at it in further detail and the Director was authorized to finalise the SLA terms.

9. **ANNUAL REPORT**

- Innovation to be added to the suggested themes, otherwise proposals agreed and delegated authority given to the Chair and Director to sign off to meet deadline targets for information to CLG, including year end audit results.

10. **RESIDENTS' PANEL**

- There was some discussion about the process for recruiting Panel members. BNG don't want this to become a bureaucratic process and want to tie in with other organizations whilst maintaining independence.
- The Community Networks and NCVS's expertise will be used to help with recruitment and ensure links into communities whilst also giving opportunities for other people, eg street committee reps to be involved.
- The 'links to the Board' section will be re-worded so that the wording reflects the positive statement it is, ie the Panel having a real influence on policies etc. as they are being developed.
- The proposals for the Residents' Panel were agreed, subject to the amendments above.

KA

11. **HOUSING OPTIONS AND AFFORDABILITY UPDATE**

- Karen Anderson gave a presentation highlighting the Task Group's main findings to date.
- The PM has just made an announcement on shared equity / ownership schemes for first time buyers as well as earmarking £200M for private sector acquisitions. This would come out of the existing Housing Corporation development programme.
- Updates given on new Home Buy schemes and PfP work with Co-operative Bank - 60% shared ownership and loan on the remainder.
- There will also probably be some flexibility coming from Housing Corporation to ensure recently developed homes are lived in as soon as possible.
- Grant to buy up properties - where appropriate and on a case by case basis. RSLs can bid to Corporation and they will consider supporting with grant.
- LAA for NewcastleGateshead will have challenging target figures for next 3 years on affordable homes and net new build.

- Investment for private developers difficult if not going to see investment return for some time.
- Steve Errington highlighted market issues.
- Tom Warburton gave an update re Financial Services Authority.

- New build is only a small percentage of housing stock each year. Need to look at where initiatives to diversify tenure can also generate capital receipts that can be used for capital investment.
- BNG has started work with ALMOs and Strategic Housing to get a better handle on choice based lettings.
- Professor Glen Bramley will be approached in relation to the impact of the credit crunch on the housing market model. KA
- Consideration of SSP's research into S106 tariff system was suggested.
- Karen Anderson to re-jig the report to remove sensitive and confidential information so can be shared with partners more openly. KA
- The Chair suggested that further work was required to explore the introduction of affordable mixed tenure within the existing social sector stock, perhaps through a local version of the Rowntree SAVE programme.

12. **BUSINESS PLAN**

- Gateshead and Newcastle Partnership shown as red but is work in progress and only appears 'red' as a result of set-up delays.
- Other red in relation to exploring interest in self build and consider opportunities for small scale pilot project is being considered further by Gateshead Council.
- Noted.

13. **FINANCE AND PROGRAMME 2007/08 YEAR END REPORT**

- The Board recorded their thanks to BNG staff and delivery partners for their work in achieving spend and hitting targets. The Director was asked to ensure a suitable message was passed to all concerned. AM

14. **RISK REGISTER REVIEW**

- Report received.

15. **ADVISORY GROUP**

- 25 April minutes received.

PROJECT APPRAISAL PANEL

- 2 May minutes were tabled.
- The Panel has had a discussion about the potential impact of the credit crunch and team and delivery partners are looking at expanding the number of reserve projects to manage risk. The Panel had also asked for a three year cashflow to be brought forward to an early future meeting.

IM/JD

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor Cookson has been appointed NCC Sheriff and is leaving the BNG Board. He was thanked on behalf of the Board for his membership and contribution.

17. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Friday 11 July – **Meet 8.45 at Gateshead Civic Centre rear (car park) entrance for 9.00am tour of Cruddas Park.** Meeting at 10.30am in the Whickham Room, Gateshead Civic Centre.