

RESPONSE PROFORMA

Transforming places; changing lives: A framework for regeneration

Respondent Details:

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Please return by: **Friday 31 October 2008** to:

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Or by hard copy to:

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Is your response confidential?

Yes **No**

Comments:

Provision is made throughout this questionnaire for you to provide additional comments. If, however you wish to provide more detailed comments on any aspect of the consultation then please feel free to append additional materials and supplementary documents, clearly marked and cross referenced to the relevant questions, as necessary.

Organisation type (tick one box only)			
Architects	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neighbourhood Manager	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commercial Developers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Departmental Public Body	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consultancy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other non-governmental organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing Association (Registered Social Landlords)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Private individual (unaffiliated)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individual in practice, trade or profession	<input type="checkbox"/>	Research/academic organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Journalist/media	<input type="checkbox"/>	Specific interest or lobby group	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	Third sector	<input type="checkbox"/>
Manufacturer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trade body or association	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Other (please specify): Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Questions in Chapter One

Q1. Is this analysis right?

Yes No

Comments: We welcome the analysis that states that "it makes sense that housing and regeneration activities are planned, led and delivered jointly". BNG has consistently made the link between housing market renewal and economic regeneration, particularly within our Strategic Objectives, our 2005 Business Plan, and our Changing Place document and Business Plan from 2007. Long term, sustainable change of people and place cannot be achieved without this combined approach.

Our Strategic Objectives aspire to improve the skills of local people, but acknowledge that new, more economically active people need to be attracted to live closer to work, in the inner urban places that we are active, to provide sustainable communities.

Q2. What further analysis is needed to ensure the needs of different demographic groups are properly reflected in our regeneration priorities?

Comments: Like the national situation shown in the chart on p33, in NewcastleGateshead, the proportion of BME communities, especially young BME people, in more deprived communities is higher than the conurbation average, and is continuing to increase. Further analysis, guidance or best practice with regard to particular BME aspirations, cultural attitudes to links to forms of training and employment would be welcomed, in advance of targeting specific schemes. BNG completed a study into the housing aspirations of BME communities in Newcastle and Gateshead in 2007, which may be of assistance. This showed great inequalities within the BME communities in one geographical area, especially in terms of income and employment.

Understanding of private rented tenants, and information on their socio-economic situation and access to training and employment is limited. Young people and households with past records of ASB are more likely to access this tenure, two groups (for differing reasons) with the greatest requirement for help into training or employment. Suggestions for overcoming this barrier would be welcome.

Questions in Chapter Two

Q3. Are the outcome measures proposed helpful? Will they ensure regeneration benefits the poorest people and places in society?

Yes No

Comments: The 'satisfaction with local area' indicators will be very useful to BNG as we seek to create sustainable communities, and focus on places as apposed to housing schemes

Q4. Have we proposed the right measures?

Yes No

Comments: It would be difficult to agree a HMR specific indicator as there are so many facets to low demand and differences across the pathfinders but given the document's later emphasis on churning neighbourhoods (3.29, 3.30) perhaps a proxy for turnover of residential properties could help (although concentrations of students will need to be factored out).

Q5. Should we measure the scale and rate of private investment in deprived areas, and how could we do so?

Yes No

Comments: If private investment is match funded with public sector investment, this should be relatively easy to record, as they are fundamental components of public sector and/or regeneration appraisal and project monitoring requirements. This information should be available from monitoring returns to grant funding bodies, e.g. BNG submit private sector investment information in our area to CLG on a 6 monthly basis.

Q6. What can central Government do to give communities a stronger voice in shaping regeneration? How can other agencies help?

Comments: Government can commit to providing the relevant skills or training for residents to take a genuine role in shaping changes to their community and this can take a variety of forms, not just funding. Within the deprived communities of BNG, the primary barrier to community involvement in regeneration is lack of confidence in making their opinions heard or understood. This has been overcome with various community capacity building exercises. Our neighbourhood management initiatives have sought to bring communities together and provide training in setting up and facilitating residents groups. Gateshead residents are taking part in sessions organised by Planning Aid to learn new skills and gain an understanding of design issues that will help them to work with the Council to select the developers for the new development. English lessons and IT training for adults and older persons have also been identified as ways of increasing community involvement and reducing tensions, as well as greatly increasing their chances of employment.

Q7. What else can we do to ensure regeneration is responsive to environmental change?

Comments: BNG has developed a Sustainability Action Plan that sets out our commitment to responding to environmental change, linking to national, regional and local agendas. This document provides an example of how the policies and activities of a regeneration body can meet the requirements of environmental as well as social and economic sustainability. In order to ensure that BNG interventions meet sustainability requirements a Sustainability Audit will be completed for all schemes receiving funding in excess of £500k as part of the BNG Appraisal Process. Through this checklist we aim to:

- Promote sustainable design and construction
- Limit risk and impacts of flooding and other changing weather patterns
- Increase locally produced energy from low carbon and renewable resources

Q8. How can we further strengthen sub-regional partnerships to deliver regeneration outcomes?

Comments: There are a number of ways to strengthen sub regional partnerships. There should be a clear governance structure, with partners aware of their role and responsibility. Private sector involvement is key, acting as sounding board and injecting commerciality and delivery into discussions and policy. A clear set of priorities need to be developed and kept in focus. These priorities should be based on sound and shared evidence bases. To maintain standards and outcomes, there needs to be independent or peer reviews of performance and output. Overall, members should sign up to a non-silo mentality, promoting joint working, and specifically by joining up housing and economic development.

Questions in Chapter Three

Q9. Is the criteria based approach a helpful way of ensuring greater consistency in prioritising regeneration investment?

Yes No

Comments: BNG supports the four criteria. The approach reflects what the HMR pathfinders are already doing in their own areas in setting priorities and targeting investment. This process follows a number of key principles agreed with all our partners, using information that should be readily available across the country. There is therefore also the opportunity for the Government to learn from the good practice of pathfinder partnerships.

One of the lessons we have learnt is that a robust evidence base is vital to successful targeting of regeneration investment. BNG uses a Vitality Index based on, but more detailed and responsive than, the Index of Multiple Deprivation. It helps identify deprivation, which is updated annually and allows for tracking and comparisons to be made across the years. We used it to identify priorities for investment in each of our funding submissions to central government, and are now using it to analyse the impact of our interventions on residents and neighbourhoods. The Index collates Housing, Health, Income, Employment, Crime and Education statistics to provide a holistic overview of the vitality of a neighbourhood of around 1000 households. It can also be aggregated up to district level to allow for more strategic planning. This tool, or something similar, could be used to provide a more detailed and consistent understanding of deprivation across the country.

Q10. Should we ask regions to develop regional regeneration maps? What are the disadvantages of that approach?

Yes No

Comments: Maps would provide a regeneration framework that can be used as a strong rationale and evidence base for securing regional and sub-regional funding.

As an example on a smaller scale, the development of BNG's 2007 Business Plan successfully used mapping and spacial analysis to help review, prioritise and discount areas for housing market renewal funding. Plotting areas or sites of regeneration, known and planned public and private investment, employment locations, leisure and retail uses was complemented by maps of socio economic statistics. This combination provided a level of understanding at both detailed and strategic levels that was sufficiently robust to allow transparent decisions on where our funding should be targeted to be made.

The process of prioritisation for the regeneration maps will be crucial, as we try and avoid regional negotiations leading to the majority of areas becoming priorities. Strong leadership/charimanship will be vital.

Other potential disadvantages, such as highlighting of inconsistancies in approach between local authorities, or spacial gaps in investment, planning, infrastructure or accessibility, can also be viewed as positives, as they raise debate. This could lead to investment being refocused or agreement on sustainable areas not requiring funding.

Q11. Should we go further? What else can be done to align national Government investment behind local and regional priorities?

Yes No

Comments: Greater alignment and shared priorities can be delivered by ensuring regional and sub-regional bodies, especially Government Offices, regularly pass quality information and analysis to national government, and that Government monitor and review this information and respond accordingly.

Longer term funding agreements from national Government will provide far greater commitment from regional and local public bodies and, most importantly, the private sector, in delivering on regeneration priorities. Our evidence base shows that problems are deep rooted and to make our areas sustainable will require long term funding. Thinking specifically of Transforming Places, Changing Lives, a public commitment by Government to a long term, regeneration initiative will provide far greater economic benefits to local people, ensuring value for money on physical works and higher levels of construction training to be negotiated.

Q12. Will this approach give the private sector confidence and unlock long-term investment? If not, what would?

Yes No

Comments: Any policy or process that highlights public sector investment or potential improvements to an area will attract, at some stage, complementary private investment.

An understanding of where government, be it national, regional or local, has plans to invest will undoubtedly increase private sector confidence. A regional regeneration map or setting out of regional priorities will have the same effect. It is this principle that drove BNG to fund and/or support the production of masterplans or statutory planning documents across our area. They provide certainty of development, reduce development risk, and allowed for more robust discussions on planning gain and contributions that provide local social and economic benefits.

Q13. If there is a case for central government still identifying some specific neighbourhoods and targeting particular assistance at them in future in order to learn lessons, as we have done with NDCs?

Comments: Newcastle New Deal for Communities is a well respected and successful local area based initiative, especially in the fields of job creation and community involvement. BNG has worked closely with New Deal since our inception, and we continue to share learning and align our funding where possible. Therefore, if we can guarantee further initiatives providing similar outcomes and lessons, BNG would support this.

If we are moving towards outcome driven performance management and the four criteria listed in the framework document, then potentially there would still be some need for particular targeted investment. However, these may not be in traditional deprived neighbourhoods as the proposed indicators would continue to make these areas priorities. Government intervention may be required where there are particular barriers to sustainability not evident from statistics. Problems with infrastructure, physical layout of streets and buildings, or public perception are all issues that could be passed over yet have significant impact on an areas ability to strengthen and grow.

Questions in Chapter Four

Q14. Taken together, do these new and enhanced roles for different agencies equip them to deliver the expectations in the framework?

Yes **No**

Comments: Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders are not mentioned specifically in section 4, but are well placed to deliver a number of the expectations in the framework. Work between the pathfinders and Liverpool John Moores University has shown that the experience, strategies and partnerships of the pathfinders make them a ready-made vehicle for driving the Government / HCA agenda, especially in relation to regeneration and responding to the challenges of the credit crunch. Further consideration of their specific role in meeting the proposals of the framework may be beneficial.

Q15. What would be the costs and benefits of this approach?

Comments:

Q16. How should this framework be implemented in London given London's unique governance arrangements?

Comments: None

Q17. What would be the impact of this approach on different groups, according to:

- gender and gender identity;
- disability;
- race;
- age;
- religion/belief; and
- sexual orientation

Comments: None