

Meeting:	BNG Board
Date:	18 September 2008
Contact:	Anne Mulroy
Board Action:	For Discussion
Sensitivity:	Public

Subject: Director's Report

Items covered in this report are:-

- New Growth Point
- Audit Commission Scrutiny
- Gateshead and Newcastle Partnership
- Regional Funding Advice
- Private Sector Renewal Policy
- Community Engagement

1. **New Growth Point**

Following the successful Expression of Interest, activity has begun to prepare a bid to the Community Infrastructure Fund and Programme of Development for Growth Point funding.

BNG is leading on the co-ordination of these activities and Karen Anderson is now dedicating 4 days per week to this activity. Karen is working with Andrew Marshall from Gateshead and a small group of officers from each of the Local Authorities who form the Steering Group of the Project. The Executive Team comprises:-

- Lindsay Kirkley, Director of Policy and Improvement, Gateshead Council
- Anne Mulroy, Director, Bridging NewcastleGateshead
- Sheila Johnston, Director of Development and Enterprise, Gateshead Council
- David Slater, Executive Director of Environment and Regeneration, Newcastle City Council
- David Leeder, Head of Major Initiatives, Gateshead Council
- Harvey Emms, Director of Strategic Housing, Planning & Transportation, Newcastle City Council
- Peter Mennell, Housing Services Development Manager, Gateshead Council

The team is meeting regularly to guide this work. A further update will be given at the meeting.

2. **Audit Commission Scrutiny**

The **Audit Commission Performance Review** was carried out 1-5 September. A draft report will be forwarded during this week and outstanding information requests are being dealt with. A further update will be given at the meeting if the draft has been received.

The **Use of Resources Value for Money Review** will be carried out 24-26 September. Preparation for the visit is now completed and both Local Authorities have provided a critical friend service and reviewed the documentation required.

Need for Investment – this report is being prepared by the Audit Commission directly and will be an update on the report prepared for the Business Plan process.

All reports will be completed by end of November and a decision made by CLG in January on the aware of +/- 10% of the programme for 2009/10.

3. **Gateshead and Newcastle Partnership**

The Chair and Director attended the recent meeting of the Partnership and gave a presentation on the success and achievements of the current programme and the potential future direction of the organisation in the current changing environment. It was agreed that updates to the Board would be made in future as the relationships between the 'sister' companies progress.

4. **Regional Funding Advice**

BNG will need to consider how to respond and put forward a case for funding in the Regional Funding Advice. A summary of the guidance is set out below:-

The Government has set itself an ambitious Regional Economic Performance Public Service Agreement (PSA) to raise the rate of trend growth in every English region and to narrow the gap in growth rates between the best performing regions and others. The Government has been clear that devolved decision making is critical for meeting this ambitious target and driving sustainable economic growth.

In July 2007, the Government published the Review of sub-national economic development and regeneration (SNR). This set out a package of institutional reforms to ensure that decisions for promoting economic development sit at the most appropriate spatial level.

The SNR also announced that the Government would run a second, expanded round of the RFA following the one carried out in 2005-06, and this round will act as a step towards the implementation of the SNR.

The evidence provided in regions' advice will inform the next spending review and help the Government ensure that public finances are allocated in the most appropriate way to support sustainable economic development across the UK to deliver value for money.

Advice needs to be submitted by the end of February 2009 to Regional Ministers at the relevant Government Office. The Government will issue a response to regions' advice after it has been considered.

The major central Government decision areas where regions' advice will be valuable in informing are:

- Transport
- Housing and regeneration (Regional Housing Pot, English Partnerships Funding, Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders, Growth Funds and Thames Gateway Funding).
- Economic Development
- Skills

Regions advice should set out specific funding priorities for each year up to 2018-19. The advice submitted should contain a short evidence base, and details of the proposed programmes of investment. Advice should be no longer than 35 pages including annexes and tables. It should be free-standing and prefaced by a clear executive summary.

Regions need to consider priorities within a context of different funding and costing scenarios.

Housing and Regeneration funds will, in the main, transfer to the Homes and Communities Agency. The advice will show how resources are distributed between these headings. In addition BNG response will need to consider the Growth element of the advice and the need to influence other funding streams.

Consideration is now being given on how to bring forward BNG response to influence investment decisions and developing an appropriate strategy to influence regional priorities.

5. **Private Sector Renewal Policy**

A revised Private Sector Renewal Policy has been developed in partnership with the BNG Private Sector Renewal workstream. This group involves delivery partners from Newcastle and Gateshead private sector housing teams who are responsible for the delivery of property refurbishment projects.

The purpose of reviewing existing arrangements was to:

- Ensure that a 'whole place' approach is being adopted
- Enhance the design input into these schemes
- Avoid funding very expensive unit costs
- Ensure that the current investment approach taken by BNG is appropriate.

This revised policy was agreed at the Project Appraisal Panel on 27th of June. Copies of the new policy are available from Jonathan Dunk on request.

6. **Community Engagement**

Residents' Panel

Recruitment for the BNG Residents' panel is well underway with members of the community engagement workstream distributing the application form to members of the community already engaged in the regeneration of their areas. Through adopting this approach to recruitment, we will recruit members who have existing knowledge of our programme and aims and objectives. We are now receiving completed application forms and we will evaluate these shortly, with the final shortlist of members in place

before the end of September. The first meeting of the Panel is set to take place in October.

Community Engagement Event: Overcoming Community Engagement Barriers

The community engagement event *Overcoming Community Engagement Barriers* took place on Thursday 10th July at Newcastle College and was attended by around 50 people involved in the BNG programme. The event provided us with an opportunity to highlight recent BNG community engagement activity, including the residents' panel, the community engagement funding and the review of the community engagement toolkit. We also welcomed two external speakers – Marilyn Thornley from TPAS and Claire Tymon who is Creative Community Engagement Officer at Elevate. Finally, participants were able to take part in an hour-long workshop looking at a specific community engagement issue. Overall, feedback to the event was good and comments raised will be used in planning next year's event.

Gateshead & Newcastle Partnership Marketing Communications Group/BNG Marketing Communications Management Group

The first meetings of the Gateshead & Newcastle Partnership Marketing Communications Group and the BNG Marketing Communications Management Group took place at the beginning of August. These groups have been set up to ensure a more coordinated approach to marketing communications in NewcastleGateshead. The Gateshead & Newcastle Partnership Marketing Communications Group is the overarching strategic group looking at marketing communications across the whole of NewcastleGateshead. It is led by the two local authorities and members include the communications leads from both councils, as well as representatives from BNG, NGI and CDC. Feeding into this group is the BNG Marketing Communications Management Group. The BNG group agreed its terms of reference and workplan at its inaugural meeting and work is now underway on the group's first task, a comprehensive review of communications activity in the BNG area.