

Audit Commission Performance Review September 2008 – Action Plan

Recommendations	BNG Lead Officer and Governance	Update
<p>R1 Refine the evaluation framework to better demonstrate the cumulative impact and additionality brought about through HMR intervention.</p> <p>(to be completed within 12 months)</p>	<p>Karen Anderson and Jonathan Dunk to draft brief and agree with PIT</p>	
<p>R2 Agree and implement systems for capturing information on who is taking up the new build housing offer on future new build schemes.</p> <p>(to be completed within 12 months)</p>	<p>Karen Anderson and Jonathan Dunk to draft brief and agree with PIT</p>	
<p>R3 Review governance arrangements to take account of changes including the establishment of the city development company, the formation of a local housing company for Scotswood, and the joint venture partnership approach in Gateshead.</p> <p>(to be completed within 6 months)</p>	<p>Anne Mulroy</p>	

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<p>R4 Enhance the approach to efficiency through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing a timetable for moving from grants to loans for relocations in all HMR intervention areas • enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency model through the inclusion of targets for cash savings <p>(to be completed within 6 months)</p>	<p>Ian Mackintosh and standing item at PIT may need wider involvement.</p> <p>Anne Mulroy to speak to Ian Slater at Manchester Salford about Performance Review Report.</p>	<p>IM to review all published Performance Reviews to determine good practice by 25th of November. Training course on Identifying Efficiency Gains attended. Finance Forum scheduled for 26th of November to discuss efficiency plans. Programme Management Group to review the programme and identify cashable efficiency gains in December.</p>
<p>R5 Comprehensively evaluate the housing market impact of grant-funded private sector refurbishment activity.</p> <p>(to be completed within 12 months)</p>	<p>Jonathan Dunk and Private Sector renewal then PIT</p>	
<p>Para 27 An operationally focussed research plan has been produced for 2008/09, with a particular emphasis on assisting delivery, design enhancements and sustainability. The operational focus of BNGs research plan will assist continuous improvement, although it would benefit from consideration of longer-term research priorities beyond 2008/09, including identification of complementarities between BNGs and partners' research.</p>	<p>Karen Anderson, then PIT.</p>	

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<p>Para 43 CABE has been involved on individual schemes through undertaking design reviews, and both of the local authorities can demonstrate a commitment to raising design standards. The design standards and principles for new development, introduced by BNG in June 2008, are providing a more consistent approach: Partners are now required, through the pathfinder's project appraisal processes, to demonstrate that these design standards are being met.</p>	<p>John Sparkes</p>	<p>The BNG Design Standards and Principles adopted in June 2008 by BNG are now embedded in the Appraisal Process. Partners have been made aware of these new standards which align with EP Quality Standards (November 2007). The standards will be applied to all new build schemes receiving in excess of £500K funding. This includes new build schemes where gap funding or investment is proposed and also advance ground works where BNG funding is used to de-risk sites by providing advance infrastructure. The standards will be reviewed in due course once the Homes and Community Agency is fully operational to ensure that BNG standards are aligned with those of the new agency. Given market conditions, no new build schemes have been brought forward since the adoption of new standards in June 2008.</p>

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<p>Para 60 The pathfinder does not currently have a formal policy on equality and diversity. However, BNGs project appraisal and approval processes ensure that equality and diversity implications are considered. Plans are also at an early stage of development to produce a statement and approach to monitoring equality and diversity for BNG which would complement the policies of the two local authorities.</p>	Anne Mulroy	Equality and Diversity Statement to 23 rd January 2009 Board.
<p>Para 71 BNG is working closely with the local authorities, developers and housing associations to consider approaches to assist continued delivery, bearing in mind the need to maintain an overall focus on improving quality and increasing levels of owner occupation: The involvement of a private sector representative in the BNG Board has provided insights in this regard, allowing the pathfinder to quickly begin working on potential solutions. It is crucial that further work is undertaken to consider the implications of different economic and housing market scenarios on the overall funding plan and delivery of BNGs strategic aims and objectives: A planned update to modelling of future markets by Heriot-Watt University may provide an opportunity to do this.</p>	Karen Anderson	Heriott Watt University to start work on an update to the model to reflect Growth Points and Credit Crunch (with Caveats) by January 2009.

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<p>Para 72 The visual impact of the pathfinder's first phases of redevelopment has been significant at a local level in terms of achieving a step change to design quality and sustainability levels. At a project level, partners can demonstrate the positive impacts of intervention. Refinements to BNGs vitality indices should increasingly enable the pathfinder to demonstrate achievement of local outcomes for communities, and indeed this has already been done for a number of intervention areas. However, it is as yet unclear what the cumulative impact of intervention is at a pathfinder level, and where BNG is placed in terms of progress towards achieving its overall aims and objectives. The pathfinder's targets and trajectories model; which measures progress against key outcome measures including levels of owner occupation and net change in the housing stock; is in the process of being updated, and progress will be reported to the Board in November: This should provide a clearer demonstration of overall progress.</p>	Karen Anderson	Update to Targets and Trajectories currently being worked on. Report to January 2009 Board.

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<p>Para 77 The pathfinder is in the process of establishing a resident's panel - the first meeting of which will be in October 2008 - having successfully recruited panel members through existing community networks and local teams. This is a very positive development and should provide an effective mechanism for resident input at a strategic level. In the future the pathfinder will need to demonstrate that the resident's panel is inputting effectively to decision making. BNG has committed to invest in training and development for the panel to ensure members are able to engage effectively.</p>	<p>Karen Anderson, Michelle Playford and Anne Mulroy – Residents Panel</p> <p>John Sparkes – Planning Aid.</p>	<p>Officers from BNG have met with representatives of Planning Aid to review the opportunity for building capacity for design issues with residents groups Newcastle. This would build on earlier work undertaken by Planning Aid in Gateshead's Felling area where a design audit was undertaken by residents. It is the intention to promote this approach with Newcastle City Council through Area Based Regeneration. The opportunity to identify other conduits for engagement and capacity building with residents groups and external organisations (such as Northern Architecture and Living Streets) will be examined as part of ongoing operational activities.</p>

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<p>Para 85 The programme is well aligned with complementary programmes and initiatives. The BNG core team and local authority delivery teams will take responsibility for delivering the new growth point programme, the early phases of which will help accelerate delivery of BNGs new build sites. Work is ongoing to establish priorities for the initial phases of the growth point programme. The pathfinder is also playing a key part in plans for the NewcastleGateshead CDC. Establishment of the CDC is anticipated to have the benefit of co-locating capacity and expertise in economic development to drive forward new and existing economic development projects at a faster pace. A master plan of economic development projects is currently being produced. When this is complete further work will be required to broadly align phasing of economic development, HMR and housing growth proposals.</p>	Anne Mulroy	

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<p>Para 92 The pathfinder has an asset management plan and capital receipts policy in place, with an overage agreement built into it. Capital receipts to date have been limited. During 2007/08 receipts to the value of £664,505 being received. Forecasts of receipts are being reviewed by the BNG management team on a regular basis and factored into future years of the programme after they have been received, in accordance with the capital receipts policy. The pathfinder is undertaking further work to consider the appropriateness of the capital receipts policy with regard to managing pathfinder investment in the local housing company for Scotswood and JVP for Gateshead.</p>	<p>Ian Mackintosh, then Partners with Appraisal Panel.</p>	<p>IM then Management Team to review capital receipts policy and update as required. Estimated capital receipt to be presented to BNG Management Team and Project Appraisal Panel on a six monthly basis.</p>

Use of Resource Assessment Action Plan		
<p>Further development of the efficiency model to include time bound measurable targets for improving efficiency, including targets for cash savings.</p>		
<p>Enhancing the approach to scoring options for project appraisals such that the justification for selection of preferred options is clearer.</p>		
<p>Continuing to pursue opportunities for improving efficiency through joint procurement and partnering approaches.</p>		