

Meeting:	BNG Board
Date:	23 November 2007
Contact:	Anne Mulroy
Board Action:	For Discussion
Sensitivity:	Public

Subject: Item 4 - Director's Report

1. Issues covered in this report are:-

- BNG Board Membership Matters
- Freight Depot Update
- Scotswood Expo
- Local Housing Company Pilot
- Research Update
- Communications Update
- Regional Housing Allocation

2. **BNG BOARD MEMBERSHIP MATTERS**

Board Members have been emailed (14 November) the results of the electronic consultation over the recommendations to appoint:

- Geraldine Wilcox and
- Steve Errington

The Board is asked formally to confirm appointments effective from 1 December 2007 to 30 November 2010 (3 years).

Board Members have also been advised previously that Alison Maughan has had to step down from the Appraisal Panel. The Chair has discussed membership with Judith Ozcan, Director of Real Estate at the Bank of Scotland, and who is, in principle, interested in helping BNG in this way. The Board is asked to confirm that a formal invitation to join the Appraisal Panel may be issued.

The Board is asked to note that NRG is continuing the search for a further Member of the Board to take up office when Malcolm Levi retires in 2008. The process and criteria used remain those previously agreed by the Board.

The Board is also asked to note that the Chair's annual 1 : 1 (appraisal) meetings with Board Members are due to take place in the immediate future. The interviews will be preceded by the circulation of a questionnaire on corporate governance performance and effectiveness.

3. **FREIGHT DEPOT**

A verbal update on progress will be given at the meeting.

4. **SCOTSWOOD EXPO**

Progress on this major project continues. Following the Pre Qualification Questionnaire the Invitation to Engage in the Competitive Dialogue process will be issued to the 8 first round bidders during the next week.

Discussions are now taking place with English Partnerships as BNG partner public sector funders on the progression of appraisal and required approvals from each organisation and the nature of the investment in the Urban Regeneration Vehicle.

5. **LOCAL HOUSING COMPANY PILOT**

As one of the 14 national Local Housing Company pilots, Newcastle City Council is currently scoping the potential for a Local Housing Company. Initial guidance from English Partnerships was issued last week and has been considered by a workshop of partners, including BNG.

A series of clarification questions have been put forward to English Partnerships and an initial potential list of sites has been prepared. Further work will be carried out during December and by January 2008 a more detailed proposal will have been completed.

6. **RESEARCH UPDATE**

Modelling future housing markets

The results of groundbreaking work carried out for us by Professor Glen Bramley of Heriot Watt University, which models the impact of various scenarios on future housing markets in NewcastleGateshead and BNG areas of change is almost complete. (Professor Bramley is also a Board Member of the National Housing and Planning Advice Unit and the linked NPHU Board Member for the North East region).

The work involves an impact assessment of a 'high intervention' new build and regeneration programme on affordability, poverty rates in local neighbourhoods and the results of the integration of economic and housing programmes. The research confirms that the scale of the future HMR programme in BNG, and its link to growth, is fundamental to the area's future. Higher intervention would result in:

- Greater impact where more activity, especially where more new build.
- A reduction in the proportion of flats, providing a better choice of homes for families who are currently leaving the area.
- Larger increase in owner occupation rather than private rent and other tenures.
- Less concentrated poverty.
- Lower vacancies, especially after 2011.
- Slightly higher prices than would otherwise be the case (related to positive economic growth) but with similar levels of affordability due to increases in incomes.

The high impact approach is also best fitted to changing the perceptions of the area according to our Estate and Letting Agents and Workers and Graduates' surveys.

Sharing our learning

Many of BNG's research projects for 2007/8 are drawing to a close with some very interesting findings. To ensure that we share what we are learning, we plan to hold a research event in March 2008. As the event is to showcase our work and our approach to research and its implementation, we anticipate that over 100 delegates will be invited from various disciplines, including other pathfinders and local and regional stakeholders. A well-respected academic/policy maker will be identified and asked to Chair the event.

We have now published our first two 'results' papers, summarising the findings of our BME and new migrants, and cultural and creative sector studies. Later this month a further 'results' paper will present the findings of the graduates and workers study, followed in December by summaries of the modelling work discussed above, the most recent estate and letting agents research and the perceptions and intentions of private landlords in NewcastleGateshead (and North Tyneside).

Research programme 2008/9

Partners have been asked for their views on what research is needed to further inform the programme. This will be considered and a report setting out a draft research programme for next financial year presented at the Board meeting in January 2008.

The Board's views are asked on the issues raised above and who should be approached to chair the research event.

7. RESEARCH UPDATE

The first BNG radio show – *Great Places* – was broadcast on Friday 2nd November. The half hour show included interviews with Carolyn Wood, North Benwell Neighbourhood Manager and Alan Sears, Project Manager of the Scotswood Expo, as well as profiles on BoKlok and the work on Sunderland Road. This pilot show was presented and produced by officers but following a huge response from residents to adverts in our newsletter as well as City Life and Council News, subsequent shows will be put together by residents. All of the residents selected for this role, which will include around ten people in total, will receive full training and support.

There has been a huge response to the last issue of our resident newsletter *Great Places*. A residents' survey and a childrens' 'spot the dangers' competition have attracted well over a hundred entries each. The responses to the residents' survey are of particular interest as they will reveal views on communication and community engagement channels as well as perceptions of neighbourhoods and housing choice and quality.

The community engagement workstream will be holding a workshop on Tuesday 11 December to look at specific challenges and opportunities relating to community engagement within the BNG area. One issue the group will be considering is the establishment of a BNG Residents' Sounding Panel and following this workshop, proposals will be drawn up to progress the sounding panel.

8. **REGIONAL HOUSING ALLOCATION**

Resource allocations to the individual Regions have been announced and indicative allocations and targets for the North East have been submitted to CLG by the North East Assembly. The indicative allocation to NAHP of £162m represents a 32% increase in the share of allocation and taken together with the required Decent Homes funding results in a significantly lower level of funding for SHIP in 2008-11 of £69.5m. This is, in effect, a 20% reduction in LA capital programmes.

At this stage the costed priorities of the sub regional partnership are being re-examined. A further update will be given at the meeting on any potential implications for BNG.