

**BRIDGING NEWCASTLEGATESHEAD BOARD
FRIDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2007
MINUTES**

Present:

Jim Coulter	Chair
Councillor Mike Cookson	Newcastle City Council
Councillor David Napier	Gateshead Council
Sheila Johnston	Gateshead Council
Marie Fallon	Newcastle City Council
Donald Urquhart	English Partnerships
Tom Warburton	One NorthEast
Douglas Taylor (rep Kehri Ellis)	Newcastle Partnership

Observers:

Tom Smyth (rep Jim Darlington)	Government Office for the North East
Julie Jacques	Housing Corporation
Geraldine Wilcox	Independent: prospective Board Member
Steve Errington	Independent: prospective Board Member

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 Philip Stevens, Malcolm Levi, Gev Pringle, Kehri Ellis (Douglas Taylor attending) and Jim Darlington (Tom Smyth attending).

Gev Pringle has missed 3 meetings due to several senior members of staff being on long term sick. The Board agreed to grant him special leave of absence given the circumstances.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Sheila Johnston – Gateshead Site: personal but non-prejudicial.

Jim Coulter – Audit Commission Baseline Report – personal but non-prejudicial.

The Chair welcomed Geraldine Wilcox and Steve Errington who were attending as observers and are the proposed independent Board Member replacements.

3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**

- The Green Paper – BNG's response has been submitted.
- The minutes were then signed as a correct record by the Chair.

4. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

BNG Board Membership Matters

- Geraldine Wilcox and Steve Errington were formally appointed as independent Board Members, with effect from 1 December, for a three year term.
- It was also reported that, as Jim Darlington was moving to One North East on a secondment basis, GONE Observer membership would be changing. The Board expressed its thanks for Jim's help and support in his former role.

Gateshead Site Update

- An update on the current position was given by Sheila Johnston.

Scotswood Expo

- Continuing to make good progress. An invitation to engage in competitive dialogue has been issued to the 9 first round bidders. BNG are involved in discussions with English Partnerships to ensure the appraisal and approval process is worked through jointly and resources are pooled.

Local Housing Company Pilot

- Newcastle is one of 14 national pilots and is currently scoping the potential of a Local Housing Company. Guidance was issued 2 weeks ago and has been considered by a workshop of partners including BNG. There are still some questions to take back to English Partnerships. Newcastle would like to be in a position to make a decision about the pilot by January.

Research

- The Professor Glen Bramley research (Modelling Future Housing Markets) will be finalised by Christmas. This is a very important piece of work for BNG given Growth Points. The data used has been part of the Growth Points Expression of Interest work and incorporates assumptions Professor Bramley has made. Impact assessment takes account of the possibility of step up in number of houses. The results are positive. The critical issue for BNG will be the need for aligning in regions.

- It was noted that fieldwork had been completed before the 'credit crunch' had started to impact on housing transactions and it was not possible to make a judgment about what impact that will have at this stage.
 - In order to share learning there will be a research event and a local Pathfinder learning event early February around Strategic Commissions and progress on this.
 - Karen Anderson will email the Board for comments on the proposed research programme. Suggestions included looking at;
 - other aspects of housing markets and looking more critically, either alone or with other Pathfinders, at the regeneration outcomes that are being achieved to show more of the golden thread in relation to integration;
 - where BNG can pick up any of the questions asked in the NAO or Audit Commission scrutiny and appraisal reports.
 - Proposals will be taken to Advisory Group in January.
- KA
KA

Community Engagement Update

- The first BNG radio show has invoked a huge response from residents in the area interested in becoming involved.
- The Community Engagement Workstream is holding a workshop on 11 December.

Regional Housing Allocation

- The Housing Board meeting this afternoon to discuss SHIP has been cancelled as information is not required by CLG centrally until January. There remain a series of concerns about the impact of the priority to the National Affordable Housing Programme on the resources available for local authority capital programmes. At present the best estimate is a reduction of 20 per cent on the current programme. Housing Corporation timescale for bids is closure 19 December to make the regional recommendations which will be presented to Regional Housing Board 10 January and then be reviewed in a bi-lateral with CLG 16 January.
 - The Corporation was concerned, among other things, at the rapid rise in the share of the home ownership programme. However, from a BNG perspective, the allocation balance proposed could provide an opportunity to widen market access. The challenge would be to engage the right providers in the housing and finance supply chain.
 - BNG has an Affordability Task Group which is looking at these issues.
 - NCC are also looking at how to achieve affordability and want to make progress on that shortly and pull together with BNG work.
 - There is a real issue of marketing that has not been challenged. Marketing needs to be approached in a different way.
 - The Chair asked that the roof tax in Milton Keynes as proxy for tariff based approaches be picked up in this work.
- KA

5. BUSINESS PLAN

- Officers at the local authorities and stakeholders have been briefed on The Changing Place. More selectively (as it is a bid document) some will get the Business Plan. On stream for a January statement of what the resources are.
- Iain Wright MP will be visiting mid December to go through what the Business Plan represents and wants to meet some residents as well.
- The outcome of the Audit Commission Baseline Report was shared with the Board and remains confidential until published by the Audit Commission.
- The Chair and Anne Mulroy have had discussions with Chief Executives and Leaders of both local authorities and approaches are likely to be made to Nick Brown and Iain Wright.
- There was some discussion about Growth Points. A decision will be made in January but it is too soon to say how many there will be in the North East. Some regional partners may be asked for their opinions in the process. One North East is undertaking work to review bids that have gone in from this region to form one opinion.
- The Chair again thanked Donald Urquhart for leading the Strategic Commission Review and Karen Anderson for leading the team's work on all of this.
- The Board formally noted and approved the documents submitted to CLG supporting the bid for £105M for 2008-2011.

6. NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE REPORT

- Summaries were circulated.
- The Public Accounts Committee Hearing took place on Monday and was less adversarial than the Press portrayed. There are some issues that are likely to receive more attention as a result of the report and CLG's response, in particular to look more clearly at the linkages between outcomes and inputs and how they are integrated. More work is also likely to be needed on value for money and efficiency indicators. IM
- BNG will work through the report and make an appropriate assessment of the work required and will respond to some questions asked at the Public Accounts Committee. Mgt Team
- BNG needs to ensure that its Community Engagement Strategy incorporates the key principles for community engagement mentioned in page 9 of the report. KA/MP
- Report noted.

7. PROGRAMME AND FINANCE UPDATE

- Confidence remains that the £41m spend will be achieved although there is currently a shortfall in Scotswood, Walker, Bensham and Saltwell.
- Targets are higher this year than before. Land acquisition has been achieved, as has 80% of the overall demolition target and 50% of the refurbishment target. With regard to refurbishment, funding swaps will be made at year end. All but one of the refurbishment contracts are now let and will continue to deliver. A third of the acquisition target has been achieved and a further third is with legal teams being completed. There is more uncertainty around acquisitions but BNG continues close discussion and consultation with partners.
- New Build – Boklok is on site and independent appraisal report with BNG. Given the change in membership of the Board it was suggested that a tour of new build sites takes place before Christmas.
- Programme delivery will continue to be managed by Programme Management Group and the group will meet more frequently in the New Year.
- A more detailed report on the areas of concern will be produced for the next Project Appraisal Panel. JD
- Quarter 3 report will be available for the next Board but may need to be tabled. IM
- In the financial risk table the underspend and overspend description and impact will be split in future reports. Also need to look at whether the reports identify which one – theoretical risks. IM
- In response to a question about the revenue situation, BNG is in the same position as last year, looking to do funding adjustments at year end. There will still be a 10% cap for 2008-11 year programme.
- The Board asked for the report in future to contain more summary analysis of performance trends, future outputs and outcomes and not only those indicators which met CLG target reports. Mgt Team
- The Director undertook to review the reporting format with the Management Team. AM
- Report received.

8. QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE REPORT (Business Plan 2007-2008)

- The only red relates to recruitment of new Board Members which will now turn to green on the next report as a result of recruitment.
- Other elements of the report were briefly highlighted and noted.

9. AUDIT COMMISSION BASELINE REPORT (CONFIDENTIAL)

- Discussion took place about this confidential report and the proposed Action Plan. The Board noted the 'performing strongly' classification and congratulated the Director and staff team in the achievement.

- The Calcutt Report came out earlier this week and the Chair suggested examining the document to see what BNG might need to implement in terms of construction procurement outcomes required.

AM/JS

10. **IRF RESPONSE**

- BNG response noted.

11. **PROJECT APPRAISAL PANEL MINUTES**

- 12 September and 24 October minutes received.

ADVISORY GROUP MINUTES

- 12 and 18 September minutes received.

12. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- LAA – there is new guidance on creating strong, safe and prosperous communities and how LSPs should relate to special vehicles like BNG. It is a consultation document and it is worth talking about how BNG relates to the new duties in the future – all about placemaking.
- Visits - the Board agreed that visits to schemes were useful, particularly those involved with the Advisory Group Strategic Commission Review. The January Board will be preceded by a tour at 9.30am with the meeting starting at 10.30/11.00am and alternate Board meetings after that.
- Project Appraisal Panel minutes 12 September – Gateshead Site – resolution to make a CPO was approved, not the CPO approved.
- The Chief Executives of the new Agency and the new Regulatory Office should be in post by Easter.

13. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

- Friday 25 January - 9.15 for 9.30am tour, 10.30am meeting at Gateshead Civic Centre.