

**TEES VALLEY LIVING BOARD**

**Meeting held at Cavendish House, Thornaby at 10.00am on Friday, 10<sup>th</sup>  
October 2008**

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ATTENDEES

Neil Etherington (NE)	Tees Valley Living	Chair
Alison Thain (AT)	Tees Valley Housing/Fabrick	
Cath Purdy (CP)	Housing Hartlepool	
Angela Lockwood (AL)	Endeavour HA	
Cllr David Budd (DB)	Middlesbrough BC	
Cllr Lynn Pallister (LP)	Redcar & Cleveland BC	
Stuart Drummond (SD)	Hartlepool BC	

OBSERVERS

Peter Scott (PS)	Hartlepool BC
Claire Butterfield (CB)	Redcar & Cleveland BC
Julie Nixon (JN)	Stockton BC
Kevin Parkes (KP)	Middlesbrough BC
Hilton Heslop (HH)	Government Office North East
Jim Darlington (JD)	One NorthEast
Jim Johnstone (JJ)	Tees Valley Living
Mike Mealing (MM)	Tees Valley Living
Jennine Robson (JR)	Tees Valley Living
John Lowther (JL)	Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit
Sarah Johnson (SJ)	Stockton BC

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APOLOGIES

Diana Pearce	Government Office North East
Ian Wardle	Redcar & Cleveland BC
Steve Gawthorpe	English Partnerships
Donald Urquhart	English Partnerships
Julie Jacques	Housing Corporation
Cllr Steve Nelson	Stockton BC

**1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chairman indicated that guidance on Declarations of Interest would be developed and presented to a future meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

**2 NOTES OF THE TEES VALLEY LIVING AWAY DAY 23<sup>RD</sup> JULY 2008**

The notes of the Tees Valley Living Away Day on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2008 were considered by the Board. It was explained that most of the actions identified in the notes had been absorbed into ongoing work since the meeting.

RESOLVED that the notes of the Tees Valley Living Away Day on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2008 be noted.

**3 TRANSITION TO TEES VALLEY UNLIMITED HOUSING BOARD**

The Chairman gave a verbal update on matters relating to the transition to Tees Valley Unlimited Housing Board. It was noted that a number of House Builders were interested in taking a position on the Board in place of the HBF who no longer had any employees in the North Of England. There was also interest in taking part in a TV Developers Forum.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

**4 HOUSING MARKET RENEWAL QUARTER 1 AND QUARTER 2 OUTTURN**

The Board considered a report that provided a record of progress on Tees Valley Living (TVL) assisted HMR schemes prior to the end of the second Quarter of the current financial year.

The report had been produced prior to the deadline for Quarter 2 returns from Councils. However, the report was able to provide an outline of the anticipated outturn for Quarter 2 based on an interim Quarter review that had been completed.

It was noted that an end of Quarter 2 report would be provided for the next TVL Board meeting and this would cover details on match funding.

It was explained that each Council was on target to achieve the annual outputs as revised and agreed with the funding bodies at the end of Quarter 1. Progress was good and there were no concerns raised by the Councils at the interim Quarter 2 stage. It was noted that there were some marginal variations between projected outturn for Quarter 2 and actual outturn. Any expected slippage in Quarter 2 was expected to be picked up in Quarters 3 and 4.

Members of the Board were provided with a table that set out the annual target for TVL funded outputs for the two different funding streams as agreed with the two funding bodies at the start of the financial year.

It was explained that as a result of Council re-profiling at the end of Quarter 1, there was some variation between target outputs agreed with funding bodies at start of financial year and anticipated end of year outturn. The Board was provided with a table which reflected the variations.

It was noted that funders had approved the revised output targets, recognising that there was a need for some flexibility. TVL would continue to liaise with the Councils on a regular basis to avoid any further variation from the targets agreed with funding bodies.

The Board was provided with a summary of how the programme was performing against output targets and a table displaying how the programme was performing against original profile agreed with funding bodies.

The Board discussed the information and considered that the report format was appropriate but agreed that the report needed to highlight any concerns going forward in terms of the current economic climate.

In terms of Registered Social Landlords it was noted that there were blockages throughout the whole system as a result of people not being able to access shared ownership schemes due to the mortgage situation. It was noted that this issue should be picked up through the Credit Crunch Task Force.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

## **5 CONFIRMATION OF HMRF ALLOCATION FOR 2009-10**

The Board considered a report relating to the confirmation of HMRF allocation for 2009-10.

It was explained that the Communities Department aimed to confirm funding allocations for 2009-10 by January 2009.

The Department did not require submission of new or updated Business Plans, but had provided TVL along with the other Pathfinders an opportunity to submit a short update to confirm how next years funding allocation would be used, what this would deliver and how the programme was being managed in the light of current housing market conditions.

It was noted that the update should be submitted to the Department by 28<sup>th</sup> November to allow the Department, in liaison with Government Office and the Homes and Communities Agency, to consider any new material, alongside the Audit Commission's assessments.

It was suggested that TVL should produce a short update as this provided an opportunity to highlight the pro-active approach the sub-region had taken to addressing the issues presented by the credit crunch. It provided an opportunity to make specific reference to how the market renewal and growth strategy were being co-managed in the current climate.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

## **6 10% FLEXIBILITY OF CLG HMRF ALLOCATION**

The Board was advised that TVL had received a copy of a draft letter from Andrew Vaughan (the civil servant at CLG who co-ordinated the HMR programme nationally), which in the context of recent discussions between CLG and the Tees Valley in relation to the Multi-Area Agreement, set out details of an amendment to conditions on spending housing market renewal funding for 2008-09.

The letter stated that the Communities Department may be prepared to allow up to 10% of the funding allocation in the current year (which equated to £1,296,000) to be carried over into the financial year 2009-10 if the Participating Authorities were experiencing delays in projects. It was explained that this was not an option TVL would need to explore as all Councils were on course to defray all current funding allocations.

## Action

The letter also confirmed that the Department may be prepared to allow up to 10% of the funding it expected to be available for 2009-10, to be brought forward for use in 2008-09. This equated up to a sum of £1,196,000. It was noted that the Department could make no formal commitment to the availability of such sums as final confirmation of funding allocations for 2009-10 and 2010-11 was subject to review by the new Homes and Communities Agency. Members were advised that if any funding was brought forward from the 2009-10 allocation, then the respective amount would be deducted from the allocation approved for 2009-10.

It was explained that TVL must formally notify the Department of any request to bring forward funding from the financial year 2009-10 by 31 December 2008.

Board members were informed that Councils had indicated to TVL that an increased amount of funding could be defrayed in the current financial year to help with the completion of property acquisition which was necessary to fulfil commitments to local communities.

It was therefore evident that by bringing funding forward, this would help with cash flow of property acquisition. However, it had been suggested that the subject would benefit from further discussion at the next Heads of Housing meeting where Councils could confirm if this was an option they would wish to pursue.

It was explained that it would then be necessary to agree a process for agreeing which Council(s) should benefit from the funding that was brought forward, with the understanding that the amount would be deducted from the 2009-10 funding allocation for the Council(s) concerned.

The Board discussed why the opportunity to bring funding forward had come about and whether this was the function of a potential under spend elsewhere in the country. The representative from GONE was asked to research this issue.

The Board considered that a decision on this issue should be made earlier than 31<sup>st</sup> December as the average timescale for property acquisition was 8 weeks and it was considered that some form of planning would need to take place. JL advised that the decision would need to be ratified by the Programme Group and that this could be done at their meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2008, with a view to submitting on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2008.

RESOLVED that the responsibility for this matter be delegated to the Heads of Housing.

## **7 TEES VALLEY GROWTH POINT PROGRAMME OF DELIVERY**

The Board considered a report relating to the Tees Valley Growth Point Programme of Delivery.

It was explained that the Tees Valley bid for Growth Point status had been submitted to CLG on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2007. There were already 29 "Round 1" Growth Point designations in the south of England. Round 2 had generated a further 28 bids from 78 Councils in the North and Midlands. An announcement of the successful 20 "Round 2" bids was eventually made at the end of July 2008. It was noted that the successful bidders had been invited to prepare Programmes of Development (PoD) for submission to CLG on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2008.

Consultants E.C Harris had been appointed to prepare the Tees Valley PoD before the submission date of 27<sup>th</sup> October 2008. It was originally anticipated that the report would have to be sent for typesetting and printing at least one week before the submission deadline. In mid-September however, CLG had stated that "Word" document electronic submissions would be acceptable. It was noted that printed documents could be forwarded to them after the deadline.

The Board was informed that the PoD document was not sufficiently advanced for detailed consideration by the TVL Board. Significant progress needed to be made on key areas such as the list of priority sites and the bid for an allocation from the available £97m CLG fund for Round 2 Growth Points, in the period for the period to 2011. The Board was provided with the contents list for the draft report.

The Board considered the report and provided the following comments:

- It would be necessary to have strategic discussions on the key things that needed to be done before allocation of monies. It was considered important to communicate a clear and transparent message to Elected Members.
- Concerns were raised in relation to the priorities of the draft document. The Board considered that it would be

better to describe key locations rather than refer to “HMR” sites as priorities although there were HMR schemes that needed thought, the approach should be balanced.

JJ advised the Board that a draft of the document would be emailed to the Directors of Regeneration (copied to Heads of Housing and Planning) on 14<sup>th</sup> October with a view to meeting on Friday 17<sup>th</sup>. The document would set out a series of bids and what they might get for the money with a clear strategy and priorities. It was advised that the document would have some specific priorities but on the whole would be quite broad brush and flexible. It was suggested that a communication plan could be produced after the submission date to explain in order that Board Members could be kept up to date.

The Board agreed that the final draft of the Growth Point PoD should be emailed to TVL Board members with a deadline for comments/responses. The Board agreed to delegate responsibility for the final sign-off of the document to the TVL Chair in association with the Directors of Regeneration.

It was explained that further evidence of ability to work effectively in partnership to seek innovative solutions to common challenges, was presented by the Tees Valley Credit Crunch Task Force (CCTF). This was an idea conceived at the TVL Board Awayday in July 2008. Since August a group of officers from Council Regeneration, Planning, Housing and Engineering departments had met regularly with officers from RSLs, the Housing Corporation and English Partnerships to discuss ways in which local initiatives may be able to alleviate the effects of the credit crunch on the local housing market. The group has been facilitated by Lee Shostak of Shared Intelligence. It was noted that the CCTF aimed to produce a report on its findings before the end of October 2008.

The Board considered the notes of the last CCTF meeting which gave a broad indication of the ideas which were likely to form the bulk of the resulting CCTF report.

JL provided the Board with a summary of the discussions at the last Tees Valley Unlimited Leadership and Executive Boards meetings in terms of the Credit Crunch report that had been presented.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The information be noted.
2. The final draft of the Growth Point PoD be emailed to

TVL Board members with a deadline for comments/responses.

**8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

JD informed the Board that some work on Housing had been commissioned over the summer. Consultants had been appointed and a number of people inside and outside of the region had been spoken to. The report included a section on the credit crunch and it was agreed that the report should be presented to a future meeting for feedback.

The Board was provided with a summary of the discussions at the recent Regional Housing Board meeting and the Housing Market Renewal (HMR) Board meeting.

JL also gave the Board details of a recent meeting with Minister John Healey.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.