

Housing work programme: update

For discussion and direction

Summary

This paper provides an update on progress relating to the People and Places Board work programme on housing issues.

Recommendation/s

That the board notes progress against the housing programme area and approves the international case study publication attached at Annex A.

Action/s

As directed by the board.

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Housing

Background

1. The People and Places Board agreed to focus their activity on housing in three key areas at their meeting in June 2014. An update on each of these projects is provided below.
1. **Locally Led Housing.** This project will develop proposals for a locally led approach to housing including consideration of the approach to land disposal, encouraging landowners to bring forward land for housing and swift land release. The project will also work with councils and the development industry to understand some of the barriers to swift and viable development including the role of deferred payments on landholdings in both the public and private sector and viability assessments.

Update

- The LGA's 100 days campaign includes proposals for council-led local land trusts which would pool surplus public sector land to support swift and effective release for housing, supported by a roll out of deferred payments. The LGA has taken these proposals in Parliament and has successfully tabled amendments for debate to the Deregulation bill. We are also working with developers, HCA and local authorities to consider the opportunities to support a promotion of deferred payments and are pressing for changes to government guidance on this issue. Finally, the LGA has pressed for joint work across government, the property sector and local authorities to consider the current approach to the assessment of viability. Work undertaken through the housing projects will also inform the planning and infrastructure for growth project where relevant.
- 2. **Financial flexibilities to support local authorities to build houses.** This project includes advocacy work to press for the removal of the housing borrowing cap and the reform of the right to buy.

Update

- The LGA has continued to press for the removal of the HRA borrowing cap through submissions to the Lyons review of housing, the review of the local authority role in housing supply and our lobbying work in advance of the Autumn Statement. The LGA is also pressing for changes to lift the HRA borrowing cap and reform the right to buy through the Deregulation Bill which is currently making its way through Parliament.
- 3. **Case studies and good practice** demonstrating the role councils play to support housing that meets local needs. This project should include drawing on and exemplifying international learning and expanding the good practice case studies

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available which spotlight non metropolitan areas. The learning and case studies should highlight issues of new supply and making the best use of existing stock such as bringing empty homes back into use.

Update

- Desktop research has drawn together international examples of housing from academic research, European housing networks and the local government associations of commonwealth countries. The research was focused on a number of key themes: funding for social housing, securing land, speeding up building, building good quality homes and communities, and making best use of existing building including bringing empty homes back into use. **A copy of the draft publication is attached at Annex A for the Board's comments and clearance.** Subject to the Board's comments it is proposed that the document is published and shared with local authorities through the LGA's networks and communication channels.
- The LGA has worked with relevant local authority networks to compile a series of new case studies focused on non metropolitan areas to add to the existing collection of housing case studies on the LGA website further case studies are also in development with local authorities. The LGA has refreshed its online case study library to make it more accessible to local authorities. This work will continue to ensure that the case studies remain up to date and are refreshed periodically.