



England's cities and the HCA

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Centre for Cities

- Independent research group - set up 2005
- Mission: economic performance of UK cities
- Focus: business, people, infrastructure, l'ship
- Recent reports: *City Links*; *Cities Outlook 2008*
- Coming up: financial and business services; innovation; place-based research programme



Centre for Cities: housing work

Previous:

- *City People* – city centre living (2006)
- *Would you live here?* – Growth Areas (2006)
- *Delivering Urban Homes* (APUDG, March 2008)

Forthcoming:

- *The Future of the Private Rented Sector* (June 2008)
 - *Housing and City Economies* (June 2008)
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Today's presentation

- 1. HCA and cities: what's on the agenda?***
- 2. All-Party Urban Dev't Group: HCA priorities***
- 3. Generic challenges facing the HCA – in cities and the Gateway***



What does the HCA face in cities?

- City centres: sagging market for flats (e.g. Leeds)
- ‘Doughnut’ areas: regeneration & housing needs
 - Low demand/HMR, unsuitable properties
 - Social tenants concentrated in cities: monotenure areas; need for mix, management; links to jobs and training
- Brownfield sites: increasingly complex, expensive
- Density: deliver in cities, or in new settlements?
- *City-regional agenda: how link housing plans more closely to transport, economic dev’t?*



All-Party Urban Dev't Group (March 2008)



All Party Urban Development Group
promoting sustainable development and urban renewal





APUDG recommendations

Rec 1: HCA must help deliver locally-specific solutions, not just a national programme

- Balance national and local objectives – quantity/quality tensions
- Increasingly complex brownfield sites (EP expertise)
- Match tenure, type to needs – no more city centre apartments!
- City-regions – economic development, transport changes
(Greater Manchester, Leeds, Bristol...)



APUDG recommendations

Rec 2: ‘Ringmaster’ and ‘expert adviser’

- **‘Ringmaster’:**
 - Bring together key stakeholders, strategies – city-region level
 - Enable cross-boundary working, clearer delivery structures
- **‘Expert adviser’:**
 - “Local government’s best delivery partner” – Bob Kerslake
 - Capacity: national pool of expertise for cities to draw on
 - Advice: what constitutes a mixed community in a Northern city?
How avoid creating more monotenure areas?



What should the HCA do?

Rec 3: Local Delivery Vehicles

- Advise city-regions – is an LDV appropriate?
- Linking up to viable private-sector partners
- Forward funding for major infrastructure

Rec 4: Local Housing Companies

- Less prescriptive approach required
- Cannot just be about social housing
- Affordability targets – 50% ok in the SE, but not the North!



Challenges facing the HCA – in cities and the Gateway



1) Economic Slowdown

- During period of growth - focus on *housing delivery*
- Now – how respond to economic conditions?
 - Credit crunch – differing effects in North and South. How far will development plans be delayed – and what are the resulting economic impacts, North and South?
 - Mortgage squeeze – are cities (or the Gateway) still an option for first time buyers? How could shared equity help?
 - Public finances – heavy focus on London, South East, Gateway. Will there be enough money to support cities' housing markets (infrastructure, incentives, etc) in future?



2) Housing offer

- Slowdown – less private house-building. What risk to dev't of 'mixed communities' in big cities?
- How can the HCA broaden out the housing offer *outside London and the South East*?
 - Intermediate market: are there mechanisms, products that would work in e.g. Manchester, Leeds, etc?
 - Private-rented market: high quality private rented housing, with professional / area-based management
 - Further improvement of existing stock...



3) Improving perceptions

- How can HCA, councils, developers boost public and investor confidence in big-city housing?
 - Reducing (outward) complexity
 - Increasing speed of delivery – ‘quick wins’
 - Quality of place, design – making better suburbs
 - Links to city centres and other employment-rich areas
 - Similar issues to those facing the Thames Gateway!
- Transferable lessons between cities, Gateway, GSE?



Concluding challenges...

- Complexity – what we're always talking about
- Politics – 'baby elephant' in the room
- Economy – 'mama elephant' in the room



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