

Introduction

This briefing is intended to provide a brief update on progress of the Commission for Housing in the North. Please do circulate amongst staff teams and your Boards/Councillors. For regular updates on the Commission please do visit its website – link below.

<http://commission.northern-consortium.org.uk/>

Progress since launch

As members will be aware we held a series of start-up meetings with NHC members during the last two weeks of August. We had strong attendance at the meetings and the Commission was warmly welcomed. A copy of the summary notes from the start-up meetings is available on the Commission website.

The Commission met for the first time on the 4th September and considered the findings from the start-up meetings. The meeting was extremely positive and Commissioners had a broad wide ranging discussion. It was clear that the diverse skill sets and expertise of the Commissioners will be of huge benefit to the output of the Commission.

A summary paper was produced for Commissioners which asked them to confirm the draft terms of reference but also a sub structure which will form the framework for the Commission. The Commission will have three over-arching themes

- Transforming Places and economies to support aspiration
- A private rented sector to support aspiration
- Securing investment and delivering development to support aspiration.

These three over- arching themes will be populated by evidence collation and discussion on the following sub topics

- Where next for housing in a devolution landscape
- Attracting Investment into the North:
- Delivering quality, security and flexibility in Northern rental markets

- Unlocking delivery constraints in the North
- Routes to home ownership in the North

NHC members, stakeholders and others are invited to submit evidence (both written and oral) on these themes for consideration by Commissioners (who will be meeting on a monthly basis) who will then make specific recommendations resulting in a final report published after Easter 2016

The next meeting with Commissioners will consider the topic of devolution and will include NHC analysis of current devolution proposals and wider academic input.

Engagement

We have engaged with CLG and HMT and other government departments about the Commission and will continue to update civil servants and politicians as the Commission progresses (all have welcomed the Commission's activity). We have provided an overview of the Commission to key partners including the NHF, CIH, HCA etc.

We will also seek opportunities to promote the Commission through NHC Board members, NHC members and Commissioners themselves. If you are aware of networks or other communication channels that would welcome an update on the Commission please do let me know as we are always very happy to attend meetings/present updates. I am also happy to make available our presentation material if you wish to use yourselves.

You may be aware that there is also a London Housing Commission. We have had a positive conversation with IPPR who are acting as secretariat for the London Commission. Both Commissions are operating on similar timelines although the approach undertaken by each one does differ. We have agreed to maintain contact on outcomes from both Commissions and identify if there is any opportunity for shared activity if it adds strength to both parties.

We will be holding a further round of member engagement roundtables as the Commission progresses. Please look out for invitations for these.

Submitting Evidence

Members are invited to give evidence on any or all of the themes outlined above. If you wish to give evidence on specific theme then the following deadlines would assist me in preparing papers for the Commissioners

- Where next for housing in a devolution landscape
- Attracting Investment into the North: **19th October 2015**
- Delivering quality, security and flexibility in Northern rental markets **27th November 2015**
- Unlocking delivery constraints in the North **13th January 2016**
- Routes to home ownership in the North **12th February 2016**

However, we will accept evidence outside of these deadlines and will seek to incorporate into the final recommendations.

If you would like to provide wider evidence on all topics then please do submit as soon as you are able.

You can upload evidence directly on to the Commission website or email commission@northern-consortium.org.uk Please do provide a named contact and contact details in case we have any follow up queries. Please note we may choose to publish evidence received – if you do not want evidence published please indicate in your submission.

Conclusion

The Commission has had a very positive launch. The framework for the Commission is now in place and we will provide NHC members with a regular monthly update and do keep an eye on the Commission website but if you have any queries about the Commission please don't hesitate to contact me.

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