

# sustainable placemaking *forum*

**A seminar series linked to [www.sustainable-placemaking.org](http://www.sustainable-placemaking.org)**

**Thursday 19 September 2002 at the University of Dundee, Perth Road,  
Dundee.**

## **Placemaking through Stock Transfer**

Please find below a summary of the points made at this seminar:

### **Ben Derbyshire – Introduction**

#### **Lisa Trickett - Head of Strategy, Birmingham City Council**

Lessons learnt

Didn't have strategy, no vision for Birmingham

Have achieved Stock Transfer through Optima and Castle Vale HAT

The is local needs and local requirements

Tried one solution fits all, so was going to fail

Lost before David even came to the city

No coherence – city centre strategy had clarity

There is no political clarity

Bad service, didn't reflect need to change

Change in Birmingham is difficult

Wanted it to be a catalyst, now there is change within

Not a celebration for Housing Associations as tenants don't trust them either

All need to work effectively together to improve the service and understand the need

Commission – not having council housing

Robust view

Listened to partners, understand where to take it forward

Starting to shape interesting argument

New approach – launched on Friday

Honesty – how we need to improve and work with partners

Vision – where we want to go

Homes, not just house

People, focus on them

The importance of neighbourhoods

Strategic Framework – work with residents

9 housing areas

Dynamics of local areas and drivers for change

Priorities – sustainable, transition, peripheral

Secure market – need good secondary schools in the suburbs

Transition – inner cities, mixed demand issues, market renewable area

Peripheral – borders and north of city

Low demand, monolithic, no diversity

Needs significant redevelopment

Housing and investment to create community

Devolution – localise services  
Housing department – devolve, local management services, accountability  
Respond to needs  
Housing Associations – part of the problem  
Partnership – needs it this time  
Draw in expertise  
54 Housing Associations  
Concern of older tenants – where future going  
Have we got expertise?  
Stock Transfer has a future  
Not only ones to not succeed  
Sheltered stock – problems  
Client based services  
Develop different responses for different areas  
Residents will then say yes  
Engagement

### **Housing Association**

Thank Lisa for her honesty and frankness and lessons learnt  
Need strong political support – was lukewarm  
A lot of work went in to this by many people  
Partnerships  
Birmingham typical of other cities  
If no one wants to live in areas, then it won't succeed  
Need mixed tenure and facilities  
Housing can be at centre if we get our act together  
Education – is spot on. If good schools, people will live there  
These are all critical factors

### **Housing Association**

Chief officers disappearing everywhere  
Recognition of programme policy picked up again, what impact has No had on policy of city and who is behind it  
Not corporate city, so how will it work?

### **Lisa Trickett**

Birmingham post – was a leadership challenge  
Need to bring group together  
Not huge political drive, desperate to find new approach  
Engaged broadly with partners  
Draw together left and right – looking for something to link on to  
Trick – maintaining this  
Interested to see how it works

### **Ben Derbyshire**

Political vacuum not always an impediment  
In David Thompson's time at Hackney - significance of political support?

### **Housing Association**

Hackney was interesting – promising everyone a bit of the action and David Thompson provided support for people to do their own fighting  
Grammar schools enable regeneration  
People seek exclusive education, a variety of schools allow this (government idea)

Existing Housing Associations – a lot of critical civil servants said Housing Associations competitive

In central government don't encourage that at all

Should lure Housing Associations to invest in area, what can we offer you to do that?

### **Ben Derbyshire**

How do local RSLs feel about scope of involvement?

### **Housing Association**

Optimistic

No doubt that Birmingham has capacity and can see long term strategy already, of private and public sectors, Roads, landuse etc

Housing suffered too much short term strategy, too many people fighting over it (54 RSLs)

Need to get long term commitment to apply skills and resources

Birmingham social housing partnership – resource for this but city not able to use this profitably

Moving toward it and willing RSLs to do this

### **Ben Derbyshire**

Birmingham is a hotbed of talent and entrepreneurialism

City can demonstrate that – first to build a ringroad and then to cover it over

### **Housing Association**

Our success – neighbourhood approach

Building trust and maintaining it

NDC – strategy decision-making falls away

Take strength if you deliver agenda and the residents stand back

Take your agenda forward and improve on it

Keep going back to it on a regular basis

PR important 'small p'

Local high profile way

Series of neighbourhoods with different needs

Establish agenda (Charter), bring in delivery agent

Regenerational agent – wider agenda now – social, economic, education etc

It will evolve, have faith in what Lisa is saying

### **Ben Derbyshire**

What are seeds?

### **Housing Association**

Top 10 words of deprivation – rock bottom situation

Optima – residents on roof of Underwood, conservative leaders in despair

Clear agenda – and positive consultation makes a positive solution

How big? – 3000 properties using ERCF fund

Need to understand what is needed and is it sustainable

Look for long term revenue funding to maintain community involvement

### **Ben Derbyshire**

Are these models possible with increasing value?

### **Lisa Trickett**

Not possible in all areas

Optima model – not across the city

Best planners, best services

On the edge of the city centre  
Challenging area, more difficult

### **Housing Association**

Started off talking about places and ended up talking about housing  
How do we deliver?  
Want a nice, safe place with a good school  
In Newcastle it is completely different  
Funding is not available for everyone  
Needs to get private money for community  
Impressive example – a practical set of deliverables

### **Consultant**

Successful ones – 3000 homes each  
It is wonderful that ballot failed  
An exciting opportunity  
Demonstrate how it is done  
Monolithic transfer not the answer and it would have been disaster if it had gone through  
What is a good size  
Using resources for smaller communities

### **Lisa Trickett**

Give Birmingham opportunity to look at what it needs to do  
Need more engagement  
Look forward now – honest from the start  
Best job in the country

### **Keith Carey – Regeneration Director, HTA**

Major benefit – government would have written off debt  
PWC can take it forward in business plan

### **Private sector**

Glasgow – looking at 60 years time and sustainability  
This is a model, Glasgow working toward it  
Trying to convince Scotland that we can do it  
'Yes' – there is a timescale, it is conditional  
Makes it more challenging

### **Housing Association**

Optima model – level of subsidy not available for others  
Was high risk at the time  
Difficult to get funding  
Now one of the best deals that was done  
Created value and refinanced project so can repay funding  
Think about need to establish fund that can be repaid when proved it has worked, then use the money again.

### **Ben Derbyshire**

Can we create dowry?

### **Lisa Trickett**

Yes and No

## **Consultant**

Vision

Focus on Stock Transfer but challenge is broader

Future of housing markets in Birmingham

Birmingham reaching critical point

RSLs with stock east of city, no point putting more money in – becoming obsolete

Don't get sense within city of what want Birmingham to look like

Vision in 2020 – 2030

Impressions of what will look like

Need visions for neighbourhoods not just 'canal living'

Need handle on it to move forward

Tough decision to make

Who decides? What replace it?

What look like?

Fundamental questions

## **Housing Association**

Size and complexity of city a challenge

Optima model won't work

Movement to areas is the start

Need sub-process – 9 areas still vast

Ladle Estate – SW Birmingham

Vision provided sale housing more than social

Dowry not the answer, funding not there now

Engaging private sector is the solution

Encourage them – need degree of certainty

Phasing

Engaging partners not round this table

## **Consultant**

Agree with Richard

1960 – factories from then all gone now

How predict such radical change

What in next 30 years?

Lack of vision – physical regeneration vision

Way forward to be ambitious

Physical vision can be offered to tenants in offer documents

Greater influence and power

## **Ben Derbyshire**

Anne Power going with Regeneration, increasing people on the street etc

But still requires vision

## **Housing Association**

Vision is critical

Not secured by public funding alone

CVHAT criticised for public money going in

Could do it again a lot cheaper

Birmingham good at starting things but not finishing them

Patch based approach

Local Authority is massive

Weakest link if the Local Authority – dependant on understanding of what delivering

Before vision – do local authorities know what they are doing?

Marketing job – create a possible image

But with the vision need change taking place  
Private housing starting to move  
First £100,000 house in Castle Vale, before couldn't shift a house – this is critical in Birmingham  
Funding – if do properly need money to invest  
Flexibility of using money is key driver  
More ingredients for success

### **Housing Association**

Leverage of private sector – in landbanking, target raised (education, sales homes)  
Released land for executive homes, money used for affordable homes

### **Ben Derbyshire**

Need to transfer land too

### **Lisa Trickett**

Strategic point of view, that is right  
Need business plan and release land a right opportunity  
Tie in receipt of this  
Political ongoing debate  
We don't understand our neighbourhood  
Birmingham is vast  
Establish strategic housing partnership  
Can't deliver in old ways  
Certainty where moving to – developer in leading role  
Selecting a partner now  
Needs vision for area now  
A38 area, good for Worcester, Birmingham needs to benefit too  
Need to deliver