

REVIEW OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES' ROLE IN HOUSING SUPPLY

SUBMISSION FROM THE HOUSING FORUM

ABOUT THE HOUSING FORUM

The Housing Forum is the only cross sector, industry wide organisation that can properly claim to be the voice of the housing industry.

It has over a hundred member organisations from both public and private sector and throughout the supply chain, collaborating to inform, network and influence with the shared objective of more homes and better homes for the nation. The cross sector representation of our membership equips us especially to investigate issues that require collaboration for successful outcomes.

The current membership and board members of The Housing Forum, who prepared the response at their meeting on 15th May 2014, are set out below.

SUBMISSION

- There is a critical need to plan for our future housing supply. The role of local authorities must be part of the "big picture" of annual supply requirements of over 240,000 homes a year - and not as part of "niche" provision. There is scepticism over the emphasis on self build numbers as this approach will not deliver housing supply at scale.
- The Housing Forum sees the role of local authorities as
 - achieving a balanced housing market
 - encouraging investment in housing
 - supporting provision of housing of all tenures
 - creating the "tools" for housing investment and fully applying the planning framework
- To achieve this, The Housing Forum considers that local authorities should be encouraged to sweat every possible asset to bring forward housing supply
- There is concern at internal skills levels in local authorities and investment in skills are critical for both the short and long term; experienced consultancy support and good Joint Venture Partnerships can cover skills and capacity issues in the medium term.
- Experience is that the process around Local Enterprise Partnerships involvement in housing supply needs reform as it can add years to unlocking schemes
- The linkage to institutional investment is of extreme importance and the review should examine whether rent restrictions would be a barrier to institutional investment. There are a number of housing associations who have taken up sale and

lease back options with pension providers (Stratford Halo in London is one example) the review could investigate whether local authorities could take on such projects.

- There is great variation in the performance of the local authority role in the supply of housing and this review needs to highlight where local authorities are not doing as much as they could. The basis of evidence by which local authorities plan for housing numbers should not be based solely on housing need but judged to take account of demand.

CASE STUDIES

Manchester City Council and the Kent Councils have achieved great success in delivering housing through shared arrangements with neighbouring councils - both to access land and share finance. Examples are included in The Housing Forum 2014 report "Making a place for low cost housing" (attached).



Shelagh Grant
Chief Executive
The Housing Forum

DD: 020 7648 4068

Main: 020 7648 4070

Email: shelagh.grant@housingforum.org.uk

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ABOUT THE REVIEW

The Review is not limited to social and affordable housing it is looking at all tenures through 4 themes.

1. Deliver of new house building and partnership
 - Leadership roles
 - Where the approach of local authorities have facilitated opportunities e.g.– encouraging developers/builders to look at certain areas for development
2. Partnering arrangements
 - Financial / investment issues
 - Are the frameworks user-friendly or prohibitive in their practice?
3. Use of land and assets
 - How easy is it to use
 - Access – procurement
 - Planning – does it help or hinder
 - Looking at the accessibility of local authorities' financial opportunities through Government intervention
 - Freedoms and flexibilities - what have local authorities done or not done with new opportunities
 - Have they fulfilled their remit – delivery and implementation?