



# Great Places – call for evidence

**July-October 2018**

## 1. Background

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The National Housing Federation is launching a call for evidence to inform our [Great Places programme](#). Through the programme, we are exploring what makes a place great to live, and how housing associations can help deliver thriving and resilient communities across the country. The programme has been running for six months and we are looking for answers to some of the questions raised so far.

Our call for evidence is to housing associations and other organisations who have answers to questions on community development, place-based collaboration, local economic development and housing-led regeneration. We want to understand what works and doesn't work to inform the next stage of the programme and learn from the knowledge and expertise that exists within the housing sector and beyond.

**The call for evidence is open until Friday 12 October at 5pm.**

## 2. The National Housing Federation

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The National Housing Federation is the voice of affordable housing in England. We believe that everyone should have the home they need at a price they can afford.

We represent the work of housing associations and campaign for better housing. Our members provide two and a half million homes for more than five million people. And each year they invest in a diverse range of neighbourhood projects that help create strong, vibrant communities.

The Federation's mission is to support and promote the work of housing associations and campaign for better housing and neighbourhoods. We put our members at the heart of everything we do and we work together as one team to deliver our mission.

## 3. The Great Places programme

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The National Housing Federation's Great Places programme is addressing the specific housing challenges associated with the North and the Midlands. Unlike rapidly growing areas such as London where housing supply is in severe shortage, in these areas the housing stock may exist but there are challenges in terms of quality and location. Over many years, these towns and cities have experienced economic decline and suffered from a lack of transport links, infrastructure and opportunities.

Through Great Places, we will identify the factors that contribute to making a community thriving and resilient, and look at how housing associations can work with residents, the Government, local authorities, private companies and not-for-profit organisations to create or rebuild great places to live across the country.

This work is led by the [Great Places Commission](#), a group of leaders from across the sector with direct experience of place making and regeneration in the North and the Midlands.

#### **4. What we know so far**

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Before the programme started, we carried out a literature review to inform our thinking. We wanted to understand what existing evidence says about housing associations' impact on the economy, what makes a great place and lessons from previous initiatives to create great places.

The review found that the creation of great places may be more challenging in an age of austerity as the state withdraws from a leading role in the design and place agenda and funding from the European Union stops.

We found there is no one-size-fits-all solution to stop the decline of areas, particularly when deprived places are not heterogeneous and previous regeneration schemes, such as the New Deal for Communities and Housing Market Renewal, have been criticised for lacking the local flexibility to prioritise.

Available evidence suggests that housing associations, as anchor institutions, can play a key role in improving their local areas through collaboration, procurement and employment policies and evidencing the economic impact of their day-to-day activities.

As well as building up the evidence base, the Commission has been undertaking visits to understand what makes a great place. The Commissioners have so far visited the North West, Yorkshire and Humber and the East Midlands. The purpose of the visits is to explore how the housing crisis is playing out differently in different areas of the country, what is working and not working in terms of placemaking and to talk to residents and key stakeholders about what they think makes a great place to live and what more housing associations can do.

From these visits, four key themes for the programme have emerged:

- people
- places
- partners
- housing associations

There have also been three debates with the wider Federation membership, taking place in the early summer in Coventry, Leeds and Newcastle.

The literature review, Commission visits and member debates have informed the development of the areas of interest and questions in this call for evidence.

## **5. Why we are launching this call for evidence**

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We want to use our findings from the call for evidence to develop tangible solutions to ensure everyone in the country has a great place to live. We feel we are starting to build a consensus around what some of the key challenges are, but we want to know what works in addressing these.

We want evidence of what does (and does not) work in creating great places. All forms of evidence will be accepted. This means we are looking for written answers to questions as well as more robust evidence, such as research or evaluation reports supporting your answers.

For more practice-based questions, we will give greater weight in our analysis to evidence that is of demonstrable strength and quality. While weaker evidence does not necessarily mean an approach does not work, we believe that the stronger the evidence, such as provided by an evaluation, the more robust, reliable and replicable the approach may be. Basing our thinking on strong evidence helps us know what more can be done across England to create great places.

## **6. Who should respond?**

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This call for evidence is not limited to housing associations. We believe that to understand what works, we should be looking for solutions from housing associations, charities, local authorities, business leaders, health professionals, community groups, think tanks and any other organisation with an understanding of what makes a great place.

## **7. How to respond**

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The call for evidence will be open until **12 October 2018 at 5pm**. Please submit your answers online via the following link <http://bit.ly/GreatPlacesEvidence>. You do not have to answer all questions.

Please give as much detail as you can in your responses, but note we will limit each question response to 500 words to aid later analysis.

We collect information on your name and the name of your organisation. This is so that we may contact you with any further questions and reference you in any examples of practice given. If you would prefer your response to be anonymous, please indicate this in your submission.

If you have an issue with submitting your response online and would like an alternative way to contribute, [please let us know](#).

Please be sure to include supporting documents, such as evaluations or reports. If any supporting document is over 2MB, please email it to [greatplaces@housing.org.uk](mailto:greatplaces@housing.org.uk).

## **8. What happens after the call for evidence closes**

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We will review all responses and produce a summary document of evidence submitted. We will review the submissions to determine which sources have the greatest relevance to the programme and strength or quality of evidence. We will analyse responses for common themes and produce a report on what we have learnt. The summary of evidence and analysis report will inform later stages of the programme.

When submitting evidence, you have the option to stay informed about the programme and be invited to a launch at a later date.

## **9. Who to contact**

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For queries about the call for evidence, please contact Bekah Ryder, Senior Researcher at the Federation, who is leading on this piece of work. She can be contacted on [bekah.ryder@housing.org.uk](mailto:bekah.ryder@housing.org.uk) or 020 7067 1074.

For general enquiries about the programme, please contact Nick Yandle, Policy Leader on [nick.yandle@housing.org.uk](mailto:nick.yandle@housing.org.uk) or 0207 067 1092.

# Great Places: call for evidence

We have divided our questions into four topic areas: community development, place-based collaboration, housing and the local economy, and housing-led regeneration.

Please remember that you do not have to answer all questions. We are looking for all sources of evidence from experience to evaluations. We would like as much detail as possible, but each question response is limited to 500 words.

We collect information on your name and the name of your organisation. This is so that we may contact you with any further questions and reference you in any examples of practice given. If you would prefer your response to be anonymous, please indicate this in your submission.

Please submit your answers online via the following link <http://bit.ly/GreatPlacesEvidence>. Documents in support of your responses should be submitted via this link, but if they are over 0.5MB then please email them to [greatplaces@housing.org.uk](mailto:greatplaces@housing.org.uk).

The call for evidence is open until **28 September 2018 at 5pm**.

## A. Background information

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1. What is your name?
2. What is your email address?
3. What is the name of your organisation?
4. Would you like your submission to remain anonymous in reporting of our findings?

## B. Community development

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5. What does being a social landlord mean to you?
6. If you are a landlord, in what ways do you consider neighbourhoods and community relationships when letting homes?
7. When working with local communities, what have you found to be the most effective ways to engage hard to reach groups?
8. Are you aware of community-led initiatives to address local challenges in the area(s) you work in? Please give details of what the issues were and solutions to address this.
  - a. How did this initiative come about?
  - b. What were the results?
  - c. What, if anything, did your organisation do to support the initiative?

## C. Place-based collaboration

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9. In which ways do you work with schools, universities and other local anchor organisations<sup>1</sup> and how do you find such partnerships work in practice? We are particularly interested to know how successful or otherwise these partnerships are in delivering intended outcomes.
10. Do you work with housing associations in your area? If so, how?

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<sup>1</sup> We define local anchor organisations as organisations based in and committed to local areas. They may be major employers, spenders or service providers in a local area. Examples include schools, libraries, hospitals, community groups, local authorities, housing associations and universities.

11. Can you give examples of where non-local authority partners have collaborated to improve an area?
  - a. How has this worked in practice?

#### **D. Housing and the local economy**

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12. Can you give examples of where an issue related to housing in your area(s) of operation has affected the local economy?
13. Do you conduct analysis to understand how your organisational spending affects the local area?
  - a. How do you measure this?
  - b. Have you made any changes in response to the analysis?
14. How much of your organisation's expenditure is spent locally or with small or medium enterprises? Please give details of what this spending is and what percentage of your budget this represents. We would also like to know about any policies or procedures that encourage local or SME businesses.

#### **E. Housing-led regeneration**

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In this section of the call for evidence, we are looking at specific examples of undertaking housing-led regeneration to change an area.

15. Please explain the need for regeneration of the area – what were the issues?
  - a. What was the proposed solution?
  - b. How well did the proposed solution work?
  - c. What has changed in the area following the regeneration? Please explain how you know this relates to the regeneration and provide details of any evaluations.
  - d. If you were to do it again, would you do anything differently?

For queries about the call for evidence, please contact Bekah Ryder, Senior Researcher at the Federation on [bekah.ryder@housing.org.uk](mailto:bekah.ryder@housing.org.uk) or 020 7067 1074.