

Great Places final report

Presentation facilitator notes



**NATIONAL
HOUSING
FEDERATION**

These facilitator notes are intended to accompany the presentation on the Great Places final recommendations, [available here](#).

Slide 1 – title slide

- Introduction to meeting/presentation

Slide 2 – the sector’s vision

- In 2013, the National Housing Federation launched ‘Ambition to Deliver’, a high-level vision for the future of housing associations, co-created with hundreds of people from across the sector.
- Ambition to Deliver highlights our sector’s commitment to creating not only great homes, but great places – places where people want to live.
- The Great Places Commission, launched in March 2018, was tasked with identifying the core factors of a great place, celebrating the great work housing associations do in communities, and making recommendations for how housing associations can create great places.
- This presentation provides an overview of the Commission’s findings.

Slide 3 – about Great Places

- The Great Places Commission was formed in March 2018 to understand the factors that make a place great, and consider how housing associations, working with national and local government and other partners, can create thriving and successful places.
- The Federation’s Great Places programme has been led by the Great Places Commission.
- The Commission members are:
 - Graham Burgess, Chair of Torus
 - Sinéad Butters, Group Chief Executive of Aspire and Chair of Placeshapers
 - Steve Coffey, Group Chief Executive of Torus
 - Mark Henderson, Chief Executive of Home Group
 - Helen Lennon, Chief Executive of Connect Housing
 - Angela Lockwood, Chief Executive of North Star Housing Group
 - Mary Parsons, Group Director of Placemaking and Regeneration at Places for People
 - Dave Procter, Chair of Together Housing Group
 - Kevin Rodgers, Chief Executive of Citizen
 - Sonia Thompson, former Board Member at Tuntum Housing Association
 - Ian Wardle, Chief Executive of Thirteen Group

- Dr David Walker, Bishop of Manchester and Chair of Wythenshawe Community Housing Group.
- The Commission focused its investigation on urban areas in the North and the Midlands. This means the recommendations are particularly relevant to areas facing housing challenges around quality, lack of economic opportunity, low skills, ill health, infrastructure and connectivity issues.
- However, the Commission believes its findings will resonate beyond these regions and with organisations focused on placemaking, regeneration and community development.

Slide 4 – milestones

- This slide showcases the Commission's journey and extensive engagement with communities across the country.
- The Commission visited:
 - Liverpool City Region
 - Dewsbury and Hebden Bridge
 - Nottingham and Derby
 - Middlesbrough, Seaham and Gateshead
 - Walsall, Birmingham (Castle Vale), and Coventry.
- The Commission hosted community workshops at each visit, alongside housing association workshops, and met partners from community groups, local government, the private sector and the third sector.

Slide 5 – programme objectives

- This is what we asked the Great Places Commission to do:
 - explore the key elements of a great place
 - identify and engage with the partners and stakeholders the sector needs to work with
 - showcase what the sector does well and highlight our contribution as anchor organisations within communities
 - make recommendations for how housing associations can do even more.

Slide 6 – Great Places Commission final report

- The final report makes 10 recommendations. Five of these are asks of national government and five reflect on the role of housing associations, sharing the best practice the Commission encountered over the last 18 months.
- The report is available at www.greatplaces.housing.org.uk, alongside a number of resources, toolkits and information, which will help you use the report to create great places and tell our sector story to local politicians and partners.
- There are 10 recommendations – broadly, five for the Government and five for housing associations.
- The recommendations for the Government are:

- adequate funding for (1) regeneration and for (2) local authorities
- improved (3) housing association place design standards and (4) management of the private rented sector
- a broader focus (5) for Local Industrial Strategies
- For housing associations, the recommendations are to commit to:
 - (6) cross-sector partnership in each place
 - (7) asset-based community development
 - (8) boards should review their approach to property sales and transfers to ensure the best outcome for communities
 - (9) best use of procurement
 - (10) engagement with Local Industrial Strategies.

Slide 7 – recommendation one

- Simply put, the scale of the challenge in places with the most need requires much greater resources than have been available in the past decade.
- Our ‘ask’ would restore regeneration funding to a level similar to that of the previous decade, and would focus on those people and places in greatest need – unlike much recent funding.
- It would be in addition to current funds, including European Structural and Investment Funds, and should support housing investment alongside related economic, social and physical activity.
- The new strategy and resources should be:
 - long-term – a minimum of 10 years
 - delivered locally by a diverse range of partners who are guided by meaningful community input
 - additional to existing programmes and spending (including EU Structural Funds, which need to be fully matched by their replacement – the long-promised Shared Prosperity Fund)
 - holistic – spanning economic, social and physical priorities (including housing, health and wellbeing), and with the flexibility to deliver solutions tailored to local requirements
 - designed with monitoring and evaluation built in from the outset.

Slide 8 – recommendation two

- The impact of local authority cuts is magnified in the kinds of places the Commission visited. Urban areas have been hit twice as hard by these cuts as elsewhere, and in the North and the Midlands, overall public spending fell by £6.3bn between 2010/11 and 2017/18 – at the same time, spending in the South grew by £3.2bn.
- Statutory services – notably social care – are consuming greater shares of local spending. Consequently, 79% of councils have reduced their housing spend – a third by over 50%. In economic development, local authority net spending fell by 68% between 2010/11 and 2015/16.

- As with overall spending, the North has been hit hardest by cuts to placemaking services: housing spend fell by 84% in real terms between 2010/11 and 2017/18, compared with 43% elsewhere.

Slide 9 – recommendation three

- Some places require considerable new building if they are to become successful. But to avoid repeating some of the problems of the past – and creating new ones – good design has to be made mandatory.
- At present, and despite a plethora of guidance, good design is often considered an added and optional cost, particularly by private developers who cut such costs to outbid affordable providers for sites.
- There is much more to discuss about the detail – but what is needed now is a commitment.

Slide 10 – recommendation four

- In some places, large numbers of indifferent private landlords and their properties are a focus for disrepair and antisocial behaviour, hampering housing associations' and local authorities' efforts to improve them.
- These poor quality homes can have a huge impact on the health and wellbeing of local people – and undermine strong communities. Bureaucratic barriers and lack of resources currently make it difficult for local authorities to deploy existing powers to require better standards of private landlords.
- Local licensing schemes are one of the more powerful tools available to local authorities seeking to exert more control over their local private rented sector. Around 50 are now at various stages of implementation across the country. Establishing these schemes is a complex and resource-hungry operation, however, which has deterred councils from making more use of the powers.
- National private rented sector landlord registration would achieve some of the benefits of greater visibility and legal compliance with a lower cost than full licensing schemes. Scotland and Wales have such registers. Selective licensing schemes could still be deployed where needed, with a national register providing a good foundation.
- Housing associations should consider how they can help councils establish and manage local schemes, perhaps by sharing intelligence, seconding staff or offering property management services.

Slide 11 – recommendation five

- Local Industrial Strategies will be an important vehicle for channelling regeneration funds.
- Yet some are narrow in their focus and outreach, neglecting the people and places in greatest need.

- We'd like to see the Government be clearer in requiring Local Industrial Strategy partners to embrace the role of housing and those housing providers committed to the local community.
- Current engagement between housing associations and Local Industrial Strategy partners seems to vary – there are examples of clear collaboration, such as in Greater Manchester and the West Midlands, but also instances where LEPs and housing associations are hardly connected.

Slide 12 – recommendation six

- A regular Commission finding was that partners often weren't sure which housing associations to engage on placemaking and regeneration, particularly when many were represented in an area.
- It was also often the case that associations had limited local connections with each other, despite facing similar issues.
- We want to see associations get together to offer a clearer sector view and offer in each place. This can provide vital leadership and amplify the sector's impact in each community.
- During the Commission's engagement with housing associations, there was considerable interest in the potential of a Lead, Influence, Follow, Exit (LIFE) model as a framework when developing partnerships and agreeing priorities in an area. This is a collaboration model in which different partners each play a specific role – or choose to step back – based on an assessment of their expertise and resources.

Slide 13 – recommendation seven

- Some of the most inspiring activity seen by the Great Places Commission was at grassroots level, delivered by 'hyper-local' institutions fully in tune with their place's needs.
- Rooted in the local area but also connected more widely, these organisations enjoy a level of reach and trust within the local community that others can often only aspire to. This connectedness and commitment can be invaluable when supporting people facing complex challenges.
- Housing associations have a proud history of community development, and are among the largest remaining employers of community development officers in the country.
- Asset-based community development identifies and mobilises a community's strengths and targets resources accordingly. Its objective is to ensure that services promoting wellbeing and opportunity are delivered effectively to those who need them most while also empowering local communities to develop their own, sustainable solutions in future.
- It is the opposite of a 'top down', silo, deliver-and-exit approach sometimes deployed in areas of need.

Slide 14 – recommendation eight

- One of the most emotive issues raised during Commission's visits was property disposal. This is a complex issue, with asset management decisions driven by a wide range of business considerations.
- Disposals are a legitimate tool, but one that needs to be deployed with care, and with regard for the impact on – and perceptions of – those remaining in and responsible for an area.

Slide 15 – recommendation nine

- Housing associations are often a major spender and employer in an area. They should think creatively about how they can use their financial power to support good jobs, personal development and local business opportunities through their everyday spending.
- More ambitiously, there is potential to collaborate with other 'anchor institutions' to boost wider local economies through intelligent approaches to retaining spending with local areas, and supporting desirable forms of employment and businesses.

Slide 16 – recommendation ten

- In addition to asking the Government to direct the Local Industrial Strategy processes towards us, we think associations need to move towards them. This can and does happen already but inconsistently.
- Even where Local Industrial Strategies do not give affordable housing a high priority, associations interested in holistic placemaking can secure benefits for places and people in most need through other Local Industrial Strategy activity, including infrastructure investment.
- Associations working together, as in recommendation six, can make Local Industrial Strategy engagement more efficient.

Slide 17 – what next for great places? 1/2

- These are some of the ways housing associations could get involved in the next phase of Great Places.
- The National Housing Federation is keen to support you to do this and happy to share advice, best practice and more support.

Slide 18 – what next for great places? 2/2

- The Federation has endorsed the recommendations and will take them forward in these four ways.

Slide 19 – resources to help you create great places

- To support housing associations to implement the recommendations, the National Housing Federation has produced a number of resources. These are available on the Great Places website (<https://greatplaces.housing.org.uk/about-great-places/great-places-final-report>).
- They include
 - Briefings from each Commission visit, including artwork reflecting each community workshop's feedback and films, which document each visit.
 - Local influencing toolkit, with tips, template letters and advice on how to reach out to local councillors.
 - Political/stakeholder briefing paper to inform your stakeholder discussions.
 - Research and evidence how to toolkit, which shows where you can find the data to explain the opportunities and challenges facing your community and tools, methodologies and template reports, which you can use to show how you make a positive difference.
 - Template presentations so you can share the report internally and with stakeholders.

Slide 20 – stay in touch

- How you can keep up to date with the Great Places programme as we work to embed and implement the recommendations.