

Press Notice.

EMBARGOED UNTIL MIDNIGHT ON THURSDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY.

**Many lessons to be learned from the Housing Market Renewal Programme says new report.**

The Housing Market Renewal ( HMR )Pathfinders were a success on the ground and generated many lessons for any future regeneration programmes, stated a report out today. The report, by Professors Philip Leather, Ian Cole, Brendan Nevin and Mr Will Eadson, was commissioned by the chairs of the Pathfinders to describe the performance of the Pathfinders and to ensure that lessons are learned for regeneration in the future. It was funded from the surpluses of the HMR best practice seminars.

The report notes that 108,000 homes were refurbished during the life of the programme whilst 31,000 obsolete homes were cleared and 32,000 new homes constructed in the same areas of which 15,000 were the direct result of the programme. Besides the raw figures the report points out that the Pathfinders developed a range of solutions to the problems of empty homes and used innovative approaches to the refurbishment of Victorian terraces in order to retain the character of the neighbourhoods wherever this was practical.

The authors also point to the fact that over £4bn of private sector investment in new build has occurred in the HMR areas since 2002 but suggest that continuing private investment, and similar amounts of public investment, are now at risk.

Amongst the lessons which the authors believe should inform future regeneration policy are the need for long term continuity of funding: ‘regeneration is not a quick fix’ says the report. It also emphasises the importance of strategic planning and regeneration operating in tandem, the value of local planning and public participation based on clear evidence at the neighbourhood level and the integration of housing renewal with training, wealth creation and investment in services such as education and health facilities. The significance of the small sums of ‘early wins’ money at the start of the programme is also endorsed, This allowed careful planning of the major expenditure as well as the immediate implementation of some projects to register the local commitment of the programme..

The authors stress that cross authority working was important to the success of the programme as was the hands off but close relationship between central government and the Homes and Communities Agency on the one hand and the Pathfinders and local authorities on the other. ‘Without this many of the innovative approaches of the programme might not have taken place’ they say.’

Professor Philip Leather commented, “I have been monitoring the progress of the Pathfinders since their inception. There is no doubt that they achieved a great deal in regenerating some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the north and midlands of England and it is sad that their work was ended prematurely. It is, however, important that the lessons learned over the ten years of the programme are not lost. I hope this report will help to ensure that this is the case.”

End

**Note for editors.**

Under the Housing Market Renewal Programme nine Pathfinder areas were announced by Government in 2002 and an additional one in the Tees Valley was added in 2008. They are:

Area name	Local authorities which included parts of the HMR area
<i>HMR Pathfinder areas</i>	
Bridging	
NewcastleGateshead	Newcastle-on-Tyne and Gateshead
Elevate East Lancashire	Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley, Hyndburn, Pendle and Rossendale
Gateway Hull	Kingston upon Hull (but see note 1)
Manchester-Salford Partnership	Manchester and Salford
NewHeartlands	Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral
Partners in Action	Oldham and Rochdale
Renew North Staffordshire	Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire Moorlands and Stoke-on-Trent
Transform South Yorkshire	Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham, and Sheffield
Urban Living	Birmingham and Sandwell
Tees Valley Living	Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar, Stockton-on-Tees

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