

DRAFT**Commercial and in Confidence****County Durham Coalfields Housing Programme****Stakeholders
Memorandum of Understanding****Parties to the MOU (Signing parties)**

Durham County Council
Sedgefield Borough Council
Durham City Council
Derwentside Council
Chester le Street Council

District of Easington Council
Wear Valley District Council
English Partnership
ONE NorthEast

The purpose of the MOU

This memorandum of understanding is a statement of intent, which forms a solid and proactive commitment by the signatories to tackle the severe housing problems in the former Coalfield Settlements of County Durham. It aims to promote joint working and collaborative endeavour between the signatories. This document sets out the main principles, the ongoing work needed to progress this initiative and the intentions for interim arrangements.

The MOU is not intended to be legally enforceable, to create any legal right or obligations of any of the parties hereof and recognises that individual local authorities will seek to proceed at a pace which reflects local circumstances.

Common Understanding

- To deliver the required identified regeneration of each community, by providing a safe, functional and quality environment.
- To address a number of housing market failures, with the main aim of creating a sustainable future for the settlements.
- To improve local economic conditions for the communities, through quality homes of greater value, additional wealth being attracted to the area and a wider housing market to cater for people of all ages.
- To promote best practice and excellence in Neighbourhood Management.
- To promote the economic efficient and effective use of resources.

Stakeholder Approach

- Develop a comprehensive Business Plan, which will detail the priorities for action.
- The Business Plan will identify and address the issues relating to development funding, local housing strategies, allocation methodology and the required skills and resources from each stakeholder.

- In conjunction with this Business Plan an economic impact assessment will be progressed to clearly identify the economic and social outputs from this initiative against tested value for money criteria.
- Establish a Partnership Board to deliver the initiative with
- A balanced and fair representation of stakeholders to work in partnership with the public bodies e.g. Housing Corporation, RSL's, the private sector and community organisations to deliver the Coalfield Initiative.
- The Partnership Board will provide leadership and vision with a range of skills, knowledge and experience to provide both strategic direction and delivery solutions (*as appropriate*).
- Reviewing this Memorandum to ensure its continuing relevance.

Interim Arrangements

The existing Coalfields Housing Regeneration Steering Group will act as a Shadow Partnership Board and will continue to lead the initiative and represent stakeholder organisations.

The Steering Group will appoint staff, with the first appointment being a Programme Director. The Programme Directors key duties include:

- Take a lead role in progressing the Business Plan and Action Plan and work with Partners to establish an agreed delivery mechanism.
- To ensure the Partnership Board is fully engaged in this work.
- Maintain effective community engagement and consultation.
- Provide leadership and direction to other staff to ensure smooth operation of the initiative.

The financial implications of these staffing arrangements will be addressed by funding from the County Durham Economic Partnership (Via ONE North East's SRP allocation) the local authority partners and English Partnerships.