

# HousingNorthwest

**Workshop 2 AFFORDABLE HOMES: Developer's perspective**  
**Leader: Trevor Gee, Bramwell/Keepmoat**

**REASONS FOR DIFFERENCE**  
**25 JANUARY 2008**

• Social Engineering – considerations may be necessary but may affect affordability	
• Too many consultants but part of our culture – delays / costs	
• Recognise diversity and need to respect locality – can locals afford these “affordable” houses –possibly not.	
• Also respect local democracy – <b>but</b> different opinions can delay / add to costs	
• Concentrate on good design	
• Also aspirations – which have increased and will continue in future – do we build for the future, but people need to buy now!	
• Value for money? More Important	
• Learn from past mistakes – pre 1919 houses – low demand	
• Consider the neighbourhood	
• Lengthy process adds £10k to cost of house – Many stakeholders are consulted but <b>not</b> a typical “affordable” home buyer!!	
• CABE influence designs early. Add costs reduce affordability (one car space, etc).	
• Many organisations all want an input to ensure “right” outputs – “Camel” results not really for likely buyers	
• Can LAs trust developers? Can their standard designs be accredited by CABE – EVERYONE AGREED WITH THIS!!	
• Still may need variations <b>but</b> if near standard is adequate (and “approved”) process will be quicker / cheaper.	
• Developers could approach LAs with a portfolio of houses	
• The process – 2 years. How can we reduce this?	
• The longer the process the less chance of S.106 as developer has to absorb delay costs!	
• CPO and legal issues are lengthy.	
• Can we take a longer term view to start the process earlier? i.e. CPO / Services diversions currently these wait until final orders / agreements.	

[www.housingnorthwest.co.uk](http://www.housingnorthwest.co.uk)

Housing NW is a partnership between RENEW Northwest, Government Office for the North West, North West Housing Forum, North West Regional Assembly, National Housing Federation (North) and Chartered Institute of Housing (North West Branch).

• The above depends on up front funding by Local Authority?	
• Now 3 years so can look at CPOs and persistent issues?	
• Developers can assist affordability with retained equity	
• LAs need to be prepared to bring land forward – however many LAs do not have land + 7% cut in LA funding	
• Competing LA priorities – depends on local situation – is there enough leadership?	
• Some LA’s will dispose of land at less than market value? – out of competition	
• Two tier systems – County Councils will not release land	
• LA Depts and neighbours still working in silos? - Need to have more joint working	
• Mix the teams up to area based. LA team to be “Project” or “Area” based to improve communication / commitments - speed, reduce costs.	
• Can developers be involved in the LA strategic role?	
• Developers get more involved with the communities? - look at long term sustainability	
• Layout of scheme more critical than building design? .	
• For the house-builder the critical issue is being able to sell the property. Affordability / Desirability	
• Marketing info used by developers would be useful to other partners, e.g. LAs. This should be made available during consultation with examples from other areas if possible. This will avoid planners enforcing unnecessary expensive variations. People want affordable starter homes.	
• The meeting saw the number of stakeholders involved in the process increasing <b>not</b> decreasing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cost / delays therefore increasing cost further.</li> <li>○ Impact of government falling back into ‘bricks and mortar mentality’</li> </ul>	
• Partnerships need to be formed as early as possible, to be as informed as possible and committed.	