

Collaboration and successful partnerships

Delivering homes and communities



Introduction

The key to collaboration and creating successful partnerships

The long established approach to development whereby local authorities provide the land and a private sector partner contributes the money is becoming less common and less clear cut. Local authorities want their own slice of the pie and the lines between public and private are blurring. Delivery partners are looking at new ways to harness their combined strengths to work together more successfully. Collaboration doesn't need to be complicated or overly structured – it just needs to work.

We hosted a roundtable at London Real Estate Forum (LREF) with key industry figures from both the public and private sectors with a wealth of experience in setting up and working in partnerships.

Trowers & Hamlins' Partner Rebecca Wardle led the discussion to explore what enables better collaboration, and successful and productive partnerships to deliver much needed development and infrastructure in the Capital.



List of attendees

Trowers & Hamlins	Rebecca Wardle – Partner (Chair)
Trowers & Hamlins	Adrian Leavey – Partner
Barton Willmore	Justin Kenworthy – Planning Director
British Land	Emma Cariaga – Residential Development Director
Galliford Try	Sara Parkinson – Planning Director
Greater London Authority	Debbie Jackson – Assistant Director of Regeneration
Ing	Tom Elliot, Associate Director
JLL	Catherine Raynsford, Director Residential
Legal & General	Pete Gladwell, Head of Public Sector Partnerships
London Borough of Ealing	Tony Clements, Executive Director of Regeneration and Housing
London Borough of Redbridge	Sharon Strutt, Head of Regeneration
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government	Laura Hurley, Head of Regeneration
Soho Housing	Vivienne King, Chief Executive
Swan Housing	Geoff Pearce, Executive Director of Development and Regeneration



Themes

Alignment

“Shared alignment is central to a successful partnership” was a key theme of the discussion. Often overlooked, this includes identifying shared values, expectations and priorities for a project and pragmatic recognition of the financial motivations of all parties involved and is key to establishing a long-term partnership. To achieve this, consultation and due diligence needs to take place throughout a project and be directly linked to what is

delivered. Creating an alignment of interests through pooling land can give local authorities a chance to invest the capital they can afford, providing them with a seat at the table alongside other stakeholders and making them investors, beneficiaries and profit takers of a scheme. Build-to-rent schemes have demonstrated how the interests of local authorities and the private sector can align when an income stream relies on a long-term partnership.

“Everything is shiny at the beginning but you can get fatigue... There needs to be a realism of expectations about collaboration, if you have a long relationship. If you have two engaged parties, the project will include change as well as the climate it is in. Parties change and although you might be aligned at the beginning you might not be aligned at the end.”

Geoff Pearce, Executive Director of Development & Regeneration – Swan Housing Group



Community engagement

Early community buy-in is essential for the success of a scheme. Not only community buy-in but a collective engagement from all stakeholders is needed to achieve a shared outcome. Local authorities have a powerful understanding of social responsibility and for successful collaboration this needs to be shared by all involved parties to drive the wider development. Housing is important but it's only part of the picture. Clear and positive communication at the outset is key. Unless thorough consultation has taken place and the correct message

is portrayed, the PR battle will be lost and the scheme will not receive the endorsement it needs from the local community. Emma Cariaga spoke of the work British Land has undertaken at Canada Water where Southwark introduced a Social Regeneration Charter to set targets and track improvement in education, health and well-being. This enabled them to go beyond community engagement and make positive interventions in the community to improve the lives of the residents such as tackling obesity.

“It is important we have an on-going dialogue with a place as it evolves so you don’t find yourself delivering something that was relevant 5 years hence and don’t adapt. It’s quite a dynamic world and you need to be constantly listening and changing as you go.”

Emma Cariaga, Residential Development Director – British Land



Local authorities: stewards of place

Local authorities are far more commercially and financially astute than they are often given credit. They embrace their role as stewards of place and realise that their land holdings are incredibly important assets to use to address some of their socio-economic responsibilities. In achieving social value, it was discussed whether the Best Value Consideration is the most effective way to track the success of delivery. Examples were given of Transport for London (TfL) and the Crown Estate adopting alternative models to take into account long term societal value. With societal

value increasingly becoming a point of focus, there is a realisation that the relationship between local authorities has to be far more dynamic. Placemaking and the wider impact of the regeneration must be at the forefront of discussions with strategic partners in addition to housing. Local authorities are less naive about which parts of the private sector they can collaborate with successfully and during the procurement stages are striving to find partners who can demonstrate their commitment to obtaining broad social and societal value.

“Local authorities have acknowledged that they are actually revenue poor and they can use their assets to generate revenue. They have really embraced their role as stewards of place. Their land holdings are incredibly important assets to use as leverage to address some of their responsibilities.”

Debbie Jackson, Assistant Director of Regeneration – Greater London Authority



Funding

There is a lack of visibility of available funding for regeneration and development. Access to funding is vital for many projects to plug gaps in the infrastructure or housing provision. This can be exacerbated by the strings attached to funding. All development partners may agree on the correct course but their actions can be inhibited by funding and grant conditions.

Public bodies, and in particular health authorities who may have a better insight and access to the various funds available could consider regeneration and development

as tools to tackle major issues they are facing. However, tough budgets and a focus away from their primary goals make this a low priority. It was suggested that a bridge to smooth the process between public bodies and development industry would be helpful. A directory on the MHCLG website could be one of the solutions to creating transparency over the funding available, the eligibility requirements and the geographic areas it covers in terms of products and this could contribute to the speed of housing delivery and smooth the process for collaboration.

“At the moment there’s no one-stop-shop on the MHCLG’s website that tells you what funding is available or whether you are eligible for it and what geographic areas it covers in terms of products. It would be great if there was a central resource of guidance to help everyone. It would be one of the factors that could really speed up housing delivery.”

Sara Parkinson, Planning Director – Galliford Try





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