



Homes & Communities Agency and The Crown Estate

A NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR
SUSTAINABLE HOUSING DELIVERY

AIMS

The aims of this Agreement are:

1. To develop a strong working relationship between the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and The Crown Estate to support the delivery of commercially viable, sustainable communities that provide opportunity for a high quality of life for all, where people will want to live and work.
2. To identify specific locations where joint working between HCA and The Crown Estate could facilitate and accelerate housing and other development to help meet the strategic objectives of both organisations.
3. To bring together the intelligence and skills of HCA and The Crown Estate to pursue this Agreement.

This Agreement is intended to provide a framework from which both organisations can maintain a collaborative strategic relationship at a national level whilst exploring opportunities to align activities at the regional, sub-regional and local levels.

ORGANISATIONAL ROLES

The Crown Estate

The Crown Estate is an actively managed portfolio, including significant blocks of urban property, substantial marine assets and agricultural land in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Crown Estate has two main objectives. The first is to benefit the taxpayer by paying the revenue from its assets directly to the Treasury. The second objective is to enhance the value of the Estate and the income it generates.

The Crown Estate's objectives and responsibilities are reflected in its core values of commercialism, integrity and stewardship; values that guide the way the organisation does business. These underpin its ongoing approach to acting as a responsible corporate body; one that balances commercial business concerns with good management of the environment and the many historic assets with which it is entrusted.

The Crown Estate's **rural estate** is one of the largest in the UK and represents 13 per cent of the total property value of The Crown Estate. The estate comprises a broad range of interests including approximately 108,000 hectares (267,000 acres) of agricultural land, 11,000 hectares (27,000 acres) of forestry, 26,000 hectares (64,000 acres) of common land and mineral rights covering about 115,000 hectares (285,000 acres).

The marine estate includes more than 55 per cent of the UK's foreshore, tidal riverbeds and almost all the seabed out to a 12 nautical mile limit. In this context, The Crown Estate is responsible for helping deliver the UK's offshore renewable electricity capacity.

The urban portfolio comprises one of the largest office, retail and residential estates in London - including almost all of the property in London's Regent Street – together with office, industrial and retail investments across the UK.

The Crown Estate is an environmentally and socially responsible landowner. It has a strong track record of working in partnership with community and political stakeholders and aims to develop successful projects that are commercially viable, meet local needs and enhance the environment. On a number of its estates, it has taken steps to support the local economy more directly, for example partnering with local businesses to co-fund investment projects.

The organisation is at the forefront of sustainable building and has brought forward developments where building standards well in excess of minimum regulatory requirements have been achieved. To deliver safe, mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services, The Crown Estate encourages innovative approaches in design, looking not just at the design of individual buildings but holistically at the design of whole neighbourhoods.

The Crown Estate regularly reviews its rural portfolio in order to identify land which has potential for development. Such sites are promoted through the planning process, often involving close working with developers and other landowners. It also works closely with local authorities and the communities in which the development is being considered. The scale of development opportunities on The Crown Estate's land ranges from relatively small scale sites up to major new settlement opportunities. The Crown Estate is currently actively promoting key sites in many regions in England where there are opportunities for partnership working.

Homes & Communities Agency (HCA)

The HCA brings together the functions of English Partnerships, the investment functions of the Housing Corporation, the Academy for Sustainable Communities and a range of work carried out by the Department for Communities and Local Government, including delivery in the areas of decent homes, housing market renewal, housing PFI, housing growth and urban regeneration.

The HCA is the national housing and regeneration agency for England. Whilst it will make an active input into the development of policy, its primary focus will be on delivery.

The essential role of the agency is creating opportunity:

- for people to live in affordable homes in places that they want to live in
- for local authorities and communities to deliver the ambitions they have for their own area.

The central tasks of the HCA are to:

- support the delivery of 2 million homes by 2016 and 3 million homes by 2020, achieving a new build rate of 240,000 homes each year

- secure the delivery of at least 180,000 new affordable homes over the next three years with a new build rate of at least 70,000 affordable homes by 2010/11, of which 45,000 should be socially rentable
- ensure that the above targets are met in a way that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable, promotes good design and provides value for money
- support and accelerate the physical regeneration of underperforming cities, towns and neighbourhoods, including rural communities, working closely with local authorities and other agencies involved in the wider regeneration task.

Working in partnership with others to deliver physical regeneration is critical to the Agency's success. This encompasses both urban renewal and development of new growth areas.

HCA also has a number of roles and responsibilities specific to the Government's Surplus Public Sector Land Programme and although The Crown Estate is not a public sector landowner one of its main objectives is to benefit the taxpayer by paying the revenue from its assets directly to the Treasury. Because of this public interest it is both logical and desirable for The Crown Estate and the HCA to work together in progressing development opportunities. HCA's role includes:

- programme Management & Co-ordination - working closely with public sector or major national land owners
- strategic Support – exploring opportunities for partnering and developing the wider role of HCA
- delivery – providing support to landowners where appropriate to accelerate delivery of strategic sites.

As part of its programme, HCA is able to provide the following support to public and national landowning bodies, subject to the agreement of both parties:

- acquisition of strategic sites and joint venture partnerships
- an Agency approach to provide project management resources to unlock delivery
- specific and tailored consultancy support
- support to deliver additional affordable homes through shared equity provision
- advisory services.

The Housing Green Paper, published in July 2007, outlined the overall plans for delivering 2 million new homes by 2016, including setting an ambitious target of 200,000 new homes to be delivered on surplus public sector land by 2016. It further acknowledged that in order to deliver this scale of additional housing a number of barriers to delivery needed to be addressed, and more efficient and effective systems put in place.

As well as the ambitious home building targets, the plans set out the Government's objectives to demonstrate leadership in increasing the number of affordable homes and the inclusion of a suite of minimum quality standards on surplus public sector land.

AREAS FOR JOINT WORKING

Key Activities

1. The Crown Estate and HCA to work together to identify opportunities where HCA support or intervention can help The Crown Estate facilitate the delivery of commercially viable, sustainable communities and accelerate housing provision. This activity will prioritise housing delivery including affordable housing, and will contribute to the delivery of place making. HCA's support will be prioritised to fit HCA's strategic and regional objectives and priorities, and is subject to available resources.
2. The Crown Estate and HCA to work together to identify opportunities where joint working can add value to potential development schemes currently being considered by The Crown Estate. (See Appendix A for details of locations with potential for joint working).
3. The Crown Estate and HCA jointly to identify and facilitate future new opportunities for the delivery of schemes of mutual benefit by utilising their property portfolios, skills sets, intelligence sources and relationships with other partners, etc.
4. The Crown Estate to provide HCA with housing data twice a year relating to land owned by The Crown Estate capable of supporting housing development. (See Appendix B for the process of providing housing data.)

Implementation and Monitoring

Both The Crown Estate and HCA agree to identify and direct duly authorised staff to take this initiative forward. A senior member of each team will be identified who will be responsible for seeking their organisation's approval to the relevant initiatives.

Once this has been achieved, it is proposed that quarterly review meetings are put in place to;

- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of current joint working arrangements,
- explore additional new areas of joint working opportunities, and
- prepare joint summary progress reports for both organisations.

Good Faith

Each of the parties shall act in good faith to the other parties in dealing with matters and in seeking to achieve the objectives of the Agreement.

Term of the Agreement

This Agreement is to be for an initial term of 10 years but will be reviewed annually.

Joint Review Provisions

This Agreement is not legally binding and will be reviewed on an annual basis. The projects with potential for joint working identified in Appendix A will be reviewed quarterly. It is understood that this is not an exclusive list and that projects can be added or removed dependent upon the potential and suitability for joint working and/or support.

Costs

It is recognised that various aspects of this agreement will involve The Crown Estate and HCA in additional resource and costs. Each party is responsible for bearing its own costs, but may approach the other party (or other funding sources) if it wishes to make a case for assistance with its share of these.

Non-Exclusivity

This Agreement shall not in any way constrain either party in their pursuit or progress of initiatives in partnership or co-operation with other public, private or voluntary projects. However where such opportunities arise, each party will keep the other party informed unless there are other issues such as commercial sensitivity or conflict of interest that override this.

Communications

There are several key messages that can be promoted through joint working between The Crown Estate and HCA; in particular,

- making the best use of land that increases the supply of housing and accelerates delivery,
- creating sustainable communities, quality development and place making,
- providing affordable housing where appropriate in places people want to work and live, and
- contributing towards housing delivery at national, regional and local levels.

The Crown Estate and HCA agree to jointly promote these messages in relation to projects where both organisations are working together to progress specific development opportunities.

Signed for The Crown Estate:



Date: 20 June 2009

Signed for the Homes & Communities Agency:



Date: 23 June 2009

APPENDIX A: LOCATIONS WITH POTENTIAL FOR JOINT WORKING

Priority Locations

- Gorhambury Estate, Hemel Hempstead
- Putteridge Estate, Luton
- Croxton Estate, Thetford, Norfolk
- Spencers Park, Hemel Hempstead

Other Locations

- Housing sites at Hemel Hempstead (Redbourn Road, Green Lane and Westwick Farm)
- Land adjoining RAF Newton, Nottinghamshire (RAF Newton Ecotown)
- Land at Bingham, Nottinghamshire (Tithby Road, Mill Hill, land off Chapel lane)
- Land at Taunton, Somerset.
- Land at Marlborough, Wiltshire
- Land at Cranwell, Lincolnshire
- Land at Strelley, Nottinghamshire
- Land at Delamere, Cheshire
- Land at Portland, Dorset
- Gopsall Estate, Leicestershire

APPENDIX B: PROVISION OF HOUSING DATA

The Crown Estate to provide HCA with the following information relating to housing numbers and trajectories arising from development and regeneration activities, twice yearly (in April and October each year) in order to enable HCA to assemble comprehensive trajectories of all homes to be built on public land or land (such as that owned by The Crown Estate) which is in the public interest:

- all assets likely to deliver new homes and an indication of the housing capacity for each site,
- the target or actual date of site disposals,
- detailed planning permissions granted, and
- housing unit completions.