



Press Release

TUESDAY 13 MARCH 2007 – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Parliamentary inquiry to debate development of deprived areas

A parliamentary committee will hear from private and public sector experts on how the public sector can attract businesses and developers to invest in deprived areas.

The All Party Urban Development Group's oral evidence session will take place on 20 March at the House of Commons, where MPs and Peers will hear evidence on the causes of low business investment and development in deprived areas, and how the public sector can encourage private sector investment.

Topics for discussion will include:

- Planning and deprived areas - how does the current planning regime impact on business development in deprived areas? Was the Barker Review helpful for deprived areas?
- Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) - how successful have they been? How could they be more effective and viable in more areas?
- Business premises - Is providing or subsidising business space a good policy for deprived areas?

The inquiry comes a day before the Budget and four months ahead of the government's 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review, which will examine the effectiveness of current economic development.

Initial research has found that current policy is not well targeted. The relationship between business investment and deprivation is not straightforward. Some deprived areas have higher rates of business activity than the average for their region (eg Preston).

Some deprived areas with low business activity do not necessarily need more businesses (eg Lewisham, which is close to areas with good employment opportunities). But in other areas, low business investment may need to be addressed through policy measures.

Witnesses appearing before the inquiry include:

- Jackie Sadek, chief executive, Park Royal Partnership
- Chris Brown, chief executive, Igloo Regeneration
- Christina Howick, partner, Roger Tym and Partners
- Andy Godfrey, public policy manager, Boots PLC
- Julie Grail, director, Partnership Solutions
- Bill Boler, director, Underserved Markets project, Business in the Community
- Tony Baker, director, Ashcroft Estates
- David Kennedy, deputy chief executive, Barnsley MBC
- Michele Giddens, executive director, Bridges Community Ventures
- Patricia Seex, economist, Centre for Cities

Clive Betts MP, chair of the All Party Urban Development Group, said:

“With the Comprehensive Spending Review looking to rationalise and improve economic development and regeneration schemes, we need a smarter approach to encouraging business investment and development in deprived areas. We must find a better way to target areas where low investment is a problem, with policies which effectively address the cause of these problems. Our inquiry will review current policies and make practical recommendations on how the public sector can create the conditions which encourage the private sector to invest in deprived areas.”

The session takes place in House of Commons Committee Room 14, 20 March from 4.00 pm to 5.30 pm and will be open to the public.

Ends

Notes to Editors

1. The All-Party Urban Development Group was established to provide a forum for MPs and peers from all political parties to promote urban renewal and sustainable development. The British Property Federation, together with the Centre for Cities at ippr, provides the secretariat for the Group.
2. The Group is chaired by Clive Betts MP (Labour, Sheffield Attercliffe). The vice-chairs are Andrew Pelling MP (Con, Croydon Central), Baroness Scott of Needham Market (Lib Dem), and Lord Richard Best (cross-bench, former chief executive of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation).
3. The Group will hold an oral evidence session where it will hear testimony from key public and private sector experts in House of Commons Committee Room 14 from 16.00 to 17.30 on 20 March. The session will be open to the public.
4. A report, including recommendations for change, will be issued by the Group in June 2007

Media

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For further information about the group go to: www.allparty-urbandevelopment.org.uk

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