



NEWS RELEASE  
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**Government confirms housing market renewal cash for Tees Valley**

Tees Valley Living today welcomed the Government's confirmation of a crucial funding package totalling £18.25million for tackling housing market failure in Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees.

The Government has approved a recommendation initially made by the North East Housing Board in January this year for a multi-million pound package.

The Tees Valley local authorities will share over £31m between them for HMR (housing market renewal) activity, made up of the £18.25million capital grant confirmed today and over £13m from the Regional Housing Board's Single Housing Investment Pot, which was agreed last January. This is part of a total package of £64million made available to the Tees Valley for housing related activities over the next two years as part of wider regeneration proposals.

Neil Etherington, Chairman of Tees Valley Living (TVL), the local organisation set up to in the Tees Valley area to deal with the problems of housing market renewal, believes that the announcement is an endorsement of the plans put together by TVL in partnership with the area's local councils and Registered Social Landlords.

"The £18.25million cash allocation is very welcome. It is a significant figure that will still certainly start to make a real impact.

"The financial package will allow the four councils to move their housing market renewal plans along. This is the final seal of approval to the settlement from the Department for Communities and Local Government, formerly known as the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

"It is a clear demonstration that the Government has recognised the strong Tees Valley case that we have collectively presented and just how critical housing renewal is to the future of our whole area.

"It is now extremely important that TVL and its partners deliver the programme to ensure that the Government continues its support and financial backing for the period beyond 2008. The current allocation will get a range of important

schemes off the ground but there will be a need for ongoing funding to complete them – this is a major issue for which there is no quick fix solution”

TVL will now be considering how the allocated cash will be divided between the four authorities and it is anticipated that a decision will be reached within weeks.

Jim Johnson, Director of TVL said: “We’ve spent nearly three years assembling a comprehensive evidence base and analysing the scale of local housing market failure, so we are pleased that the Government has agreed the validity of the case for major intervention in the older housing market in the Tees Valley towns.

“The provision of this critically important first allocation of cash will enable Tees Valley Living and its partner authorities to progress their ambitious transformational programme, which will eventually see the clearance of almost 8,000 properties, and their replacement with 6,500 new homes by 2016.

“During the same period it is envisaged that around 13,500 homes next to clearance areas will be improved.

“I have said it before, but it is worth repeating, that it is important that we create the right balance of housing types to retain families in our town centres, as well as attracting new people to live there. This is the only way of ensuring that neighbourhoods, their schools and services, continue to thrive. At the same time, we must continue to work with developers and housing associations to deliver low cost homes for rent and shared ownership housing schemes across the four boroughs”.

“This is a crucially important issue and TVL and our partners are committed to do all that we can to improve the quality of life and the environment in the older housing areas of our town centres. This will not be achieved by a ‘patch and mend’ agenda but requires a comprehensive and determined effort from everyone involved in neighbourhood development and improvement”.