

Urban Living Neighbourhood Pathfinder – Estate Agents Survey Case Study

BACKGROUND

Urban Living is one of nine Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder areas in the UK set up and funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The Pathfinder covers substantial areas within Birmingham City Council and Sandwell MBC. The Pathfinder aims to improve neighbourhoods where problems of low-demand housing are most acute.



Urban Living commissioned M-E-L to provide an update on current and predicted housing market trends within the pathfinder area. The research was to provide an up to date understanding of supply and demand issues across the area based on purchaser types and renter types. The aim of this was to allow for the analysis of general trends of house prices and rents in the Housing Market Renewal area to feed into Urban Living's three year Strategic Plan as well as feeding into their Audit Commission review.

METHODOLOGY

This study involved five phases of the longitudinal research, starting in June 2008 through to August 2010. Each phase provided Urban Living with an update on housing market changes that have occurred since the previous surveys.

Stakeholder telephone surveys were undertaken with up to 20 senior staff members of key Estate Agents within the Urban Living area in each phase of the project. Discussion focussed on the housing market within the Urban Living boundary.

A combination of existing contacts (obtained from the client) and new contacts (sought via desk research) were used. The interviews covered a range of questions under the following headings:



- ◆ Recent market changes and prospects for the rest of 2010
- ◆ Whether people still can't buy or won't buy
- ◆ Specific issues relating to the BME and /or terraced market
- ◆ Any changes in the new build markets
- ◆ Any private rented sector issues
- ◆ Mortgage take up

OUTCOMES

Urban Living have used this research to inform business planning, housing market intelligence bulletins, Board reports and to give Audit Commission feedback. The research has enabled them to track key trends in the housing market within the area to keep up to date on the state of the local housing market. Viv Ballinger, Research Manager for Urban Living commented:

"It has been extremely useful being able to compare survey results over the last two years when updating our programme. We have also been able to involve the network of local estate agents, built up by M-E-L, in our communication and procurement activities."

For further information about Estate Agents Surveys, please contact Vickie Pargetter at Vickie.pargetter@m-e-l.co.uk or call 0121 604 4664