
REVISED DRAFT EAST OF ENGLAND REGIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2005-2010

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 To apprise Members of the background to the draft Regional Housing Strategy 2005-2010 and the arrangements for consultation.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The draft Regional Housing Strategy sets out the strategic direction for the delivery of housing in the East of England. It is based on a vision of a region where everyone can live in a decent home at a price they can afford, in locations which are sustainable.
- 2.2 It has been produced by the Regional Housing Forum on behalf of the Regional Housing Board and the East of England Regional Assembly and builds on an earlier version of the Regional Housing Strategy in 2003.
- 2.3 The Regional Housing Strategy shares a common understanding of housing needs and demand with the draft East of England Plan and essentially, the Housing Strategy will work to help deliver the East of England Plan. This plan was previously subject of a report to Environmental Services Committee on 3 March.
- 2.4 The completed and finalised strategy will be used to inform the Regional Housing Board's advice to Government on how housing investment funds should be distributed within the region in the years 2006–2008 as well as setting out the long term direction for the region.
- 2.5 Another short consultation covering the method by which regional housing investment funds should be distributed has also been produced.
- 2.6 A copy of the draft Regional Housing Strategy and the paper on Housing Investment in East of England 2006-2008 has been sent to Members under separate cover and a copy placed in the Members library.

3 CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

- 3.1 Responses to both documents are required to be made by Friday 8 April at the latest.

4 RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Committee considers the document and determines any comments to be made.

Graham Woolhouse

Head of Housing, Health and Community Care

Background Papers:-

None

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HOUSING INVESTMENT IN THE EAST OF ENGLAND 2006-08

**A consultation paper on how to allocate funding from the
Single Regional Housing Pot in the East of England for
2006-08**

RHB Secretariat

14 February 2005

Executive Summary

The East of England Regional Housing Board (RHB) invites views on the distribution of investment of public funds in social and affordable housing over the two financial years 2006-07 and 2007-08.

The ODPM consultation paper "Housing Investment in the Regions" gives an indicative allocation for the East of England of £445m over the 2006-08 spending period. If the proposals set out in the consultation paper are accepted, this will mean a significant increase from the current (2004-06) regional allocation of £330m. The consultation period ended on 4 February. The intention is for Ministers to announce regional allocations by the end of February.

The RHB is developing recommendations for an investment plan that will be submitted to ODPM in May 2005. The investment plan will determine the pattern of local allocations from the Single Regional Housing Pot (SRHP) for 2006-08.

The current Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) for 2003-06 is being updated and will set out the scale of the region's housing needs and its key priorities. These priorities will guide the RHB in making its investment recommendations for the period 2006-08.

The RHB proposes an allocation process (with various options) that operates in three stages:

Stage One - supporting projects designed to tackle specific housing issues:

- This stage would identify funding for strategic or innovative projects or other priorities that would not attract support if the SRHP was wholly distributed for local allocation.

Stage Two – making the split of SRHP funds between Local Authorities (LAs)/Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), and the allocation to individual LAs:

- **Option 1** - This option seeks to maximise the funds available for RSLs – and therefore new affordable housing – by allocating to LAs only what is necessary to enable them to meet the Decent Homes target for 2010 in their own and the private sector stock.
- **Option 2** - This option is a development of Option 1 but which provides further funding to LAs for purposes in addition to meeting the Decent Homes target.

Stage Three – targeting of the remaining SRHP through the Housing Corporation’s new investment programme:

- Geographic and thematic targeting of resources to RSLs, via the Housing Corporation, based upon sub-regional and regional priorities as set out in the RHS.

The RHB seeks views on the options and methodology presented in this document by 8 April 2005. This consultation runs in parallel to consultation on the updated RHS.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Public investment in housing is largely undertaken by Local Authorities (LAs) and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). Their capital programmes are funded partly through their own resources (mainly rental income and receipts from property sales) and partly through government support.
- 1.2 The funding provided to LAs is mainly for work to improve the condition of the existing housing stock – council housing or poor condition private sector housing. The funding allocated to RSLs is primarily for the provision of additional affordable housing.
- 1.3 The Sustainable Communities Plan (SCP), published in February 2003, introduced a number of changes to the way in which mainstream funding to support LAs' and RSLs' general housing capital programmes is allocated.
- 1.4 Regional Housing Boards (RHB) were established following the publication of the SCP to advise Ministers on how the region's allocation of funding for housing capital investment should be spent. A number of separate funding streams for LAs (the Housing Investment Programme known as HIP) and RSLs (the Approved Development Programme, the Starter Home Initiative and the Challenge Fund managed by the Housing Corporation) were combined into a Single Regional Housing Pot (SRHP).
- 1.5 The East of England SRHP allocation for 2004-06 was split between individual LAs and funding via the Housing Corporation to RSLs. Following guidance from ODPM, the RHB recommended to Ministers that 70% of the former HIP funding should be allocated to each LA for 2004-06. Ministers accepted the RHB's recommendations but asked for higher funding for the provision of key worker affordable housing. The rest of the funding was allocated on a thematic basis in line with the priorities set out in the current Regional Housing Strategy (RHS).
- 1.6 The current RHS covering 2003-06 is being updated. The new RHS will set out the scale of the region's housing needs and its key priorities. The RHS will identify the strategic priorities that will guide the RHB's investment recommendations to Ministers for the period 2006-08.
- 1.7 In developing these proposals, the RHB sought advice from the Regional Housing Forum (RHF), which brings together housing interests and representatives of the sub-regions defined in the RHS. The RHF established an Allocations Methodology Sub-Group (AMSG) with representatives of the Countryside Agency, GO-East, the Housing Corporation, the Regional Assembly and the nine sub-regions. The RHB is grateful for the AMSG's preparatory work.

- 1.8 The Housing and Sustainable Communities Panel of the Regional Assembly has considered these proposals, and has endorsed this paper as a basis for consultation.
- 1.9 The RHB will need to make recommendations to Ministers by May on allocations for each LA and a total sum of money for new affordable housing to be allocated to RSLs through the Housing Corporation. The RHB will provide guidance to the Housing Corporation on how the funding for RSLs should be allocated.

2. Role of RHB

- 2.1 The RHB intends to adopt a more strategic approach in allocating funding from the SRHP for 2006-08, in line with the new RHS. The requirement to provide to each LA 70% of its former HIP allocation no longer applies, although the RHB is expected to support LAs in meeting national targets, particularly in respect of the Decent Homes standard both in their own stock and in the private sector.
- 2.2 The objective of the RHB's allocations should be to maximise, given the resources available, the contribution which housing makes to the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities.

3. Background and Guiding Principles

- 3.1 The RHB's investment plan will seek to deliver the priorities identified in the new RHS. It must also ensure that the region continues making progress towards achieving the Decent Homes standard and reflect Ministers' expectations that national priorities will be addressed.
- 3.2 Accordingly the RHB's key priorities will be: increasing the supply of social and affordable housing; improving existing social housing and private sector housing occupied by vulnerable households to meet the national Decent Homes targets; and enabling the disadvantaged, in particular the homeless, to gain access to housing. Any additional resources in the national housing pot are primarily aimed at providing more social rented housing to tackle homelessness.
- 3.3 The new RHS will be aligned with other key regional strategies. It should identify housing sub-regions, and should both inform and reflect the nine Sub-Regional Housing Strategies. The key RHS priorities are likely to be homelessness, key-worker housing, housing delivery in the Growth Areas, and the particular needs of rural areas (including the balance of need between different settlement types). The RHS must take clear account of the Supporting People programme, and the housing needs of Black and Minority Ethnic Communities and Gypsies and Travelers.

- 3.4 Ministers are expecting the RHB to recommend and explain how the region's allocation of the SRHP should be divided between LAs and RSLs, and what the spatial distribution and broad objectives of each should be, and why. The amounts allocated to LAs to meet the Decent Homes standard, and any other priorities, need to be clearly set out, along with estimated outputs and outcomes. Allocations for RSLs need to indicate the broad pattern of housing types they are intending to support. The Key Worker Living scheme and the rural housing programme should be maintained with appropriate targets. Ministers are expecting RHBs to begin to tackle the shortfall of Gypsy and Traveler pitches and to address unmet needs for supported housing as determined by the RHB and local needs assessments.
- 3.5 A precise SRHP allocation to each region has not yet been finalised. Ministers have accepted, in principle, the use of a formulaic approach, based on need, to determine how the national housing pot will be shared between the English regions, and that the new formula should include elements on affordability and Growth Areas as well as Decent Homes (DH) in both the public and private sector. ODPM has consulted on a proposed new formula. A final decision is expected in February 2005, but the RHB is anticipating a higher allocation for 2006-08 than was received in 2004-06.
- 3.6 By July 31 2005, all stockholding LAs should have signed-off Options Appraisals showing how DH standards in their housing stock will be met. ODPM has directed that where a specific level of DH funding from the RHB has been assumed in the signed-off OAs, this should be honoured and not undermined by funding below these levels. ODPM has also directed that funding for DH should not exceed historical levels.
- 3.7 To ensure that the region's pipeline of schemes is maintained, the Housing Corporation will have entered into a series of funding commitments, which must be supported from the 2006-08 SRHP.
- 3.8 The RHB realises that the level of resources needed to provide the volume of new dwellings recommended by the East of England Affordable Housing study, or to meet the housing targets in the draft East of England Plan, outstrips the likely scale of the SRHP. In the light of this, a key guiding principle adopted by the RHB is that as much funding as possible from the SRHP should go into new affordable units, except what is necessary to enable LAs to deliver the DH target for 2010 in their own and private sector stock. However, the RHB also recognises the importance of continuity in local authority funding, at least in the short term.

4. The Options

4.1 This paper sets out the sequence of decisions needed to determine the allocation of the SRHP. Each stage impacts on the next. Stage one is concerned with the potential funding of strategic projects that tackle specific housing issues but which may not be eligible for resources via mainstream funding routes. Stage two is concerned with determining the split of the remaining SRHP between the LAs and RSLs, which is achieved through a bottom-up assessment of individual LA needs for funds under two options. Stage three is concerned with the geographic targeting of the remaining (and by far the largest) part of the SRHP - that allocated to RSLs for additional affordable housing. A single methodology for stage 3 is proposed: this consultation seeks your views on this methodology and its content.

5. ***Stage One – supporting projects designed to tackle specific housing issues***

5.1 The RHB would consider using some SRHP funds to support innovative projects that address specific housing-related issues in the region. These would be projects with the potential to make a significant difference toward building sustainable communities, but which are not likely to be viable if the only source of support is individual LAs or RSLs under existing funding arrangements. It would be essential that any regionally-funded project was in line with the new RHS and/or sub-regional housing strategies. It should also add value at a strategic level and, ideally, complement wider regional objectives, such as pertaining to regeneration, sustainability, rural housing, etc, with a view to developing new approaches that might later on be rolled out more generally.

5.2 It is not possible to say exactly how much of the SRHP should be set-aside for this purpose until the broad number and scope of appropriate projects is known. However the RHB suggests that no more than 5% of the SRHP should be used to support such projects. Further consideration will need to be given as to how projects will be selected for funding.

Views are invited on:

- **Should a portion of SRHP funds be used to tackle specific issues and problems outside existing local funding arrangements? If so, what is the ideal proportion of the SRHP that should be earmarked for this purpose?**
- **What type of projects should be supported in this way? Do you have any other ideas about how this proposal could be most effective?**

6. **Stage Two – Making the Split of SRHP Funds Between LAs/RSLs and the Allocation to Individual LAs**

- 6.1 The RHB proposes to establish a needs-related allocation for LAs' responsibilities with the bulk of the SRHP going to RSLs to provide additional affordable housing. This is a departure from the 2004-06 methodology, in which LAs' allocations were set by formula at 70% of the historic HIP level. This development reflects three factors: the more strategic approach expected of the RHB; ODPM policy on stockholding LAs' investment in their own stock; and the guiding principle that to address the region's pressing need for more new affordable dwellings requires that as much resource as possible goes to RSLs for new build.
- 6.2 Furthermore, the RHB proposes not to make allocations to debt-free LAs. It is currently anticipated that allocations to LAs for 2006-08 will take the form of Supported Capital Expenditure (Revenue) or SCE(R). (The ODPM is considering whether allocations should take the form of grant instead: if this happens, the RHB will revisit its preferred allocations methodology accordingly.) Past experience suggests debt-free LAs would be unlikely to use SCE(R) allocations. Despite the advent of prudential borrowing in 2004 and the elimination of financial incentives for being debt-free, there is little evidence that the region's debt-free LAs are planning for increased levels of debt in the period up to 2008. In view of this, unused allocations are considered a wasted resource that could be used more effectively to support the delivery of new affordable homes in the region.

Views are invited on:

- **Do you agree that the formulaic basis of calculating LAs' 2004-06 allocations is not appropriate for 2006-08?**
- **Assuming the current funding regime is still in place, do you agree allocations should be withheld from debt-free LAs in order to augment resources to RSLs for new affordable units?**
- **Should the allocations that would have gone to debt-free LAs be ring-fenced to fund new affordable units in the sub-regions where the debt-free LAs are located?**

- 6.3 **Option 1** - This option seeks to maximise the funds available for RSLs – and therefore for new affordable housing – by allocating only to with-debt LAs, and only what is necessary to enable them to meet Decent Homes targets. The allocations comprise two distinct, separately identifiable elements. The first, made available to stockholding LAs only, would be the level of resource identified and signed off in Options Appraisals (OA) to meet the DH targets for 2010 in LA-owned stock. (Where LAs have not completed their OA in time for the May submission, the RHB secretariat will submit provisional figures, substituting the OA figure before final allocations are made.) Ministers have specified that the amount of SRHP

resources offered to meet the Decent Homes standard in an LA's own stock should not exceed the amount allocated in previous years.

6.4 The second element of the allocations, made available to all LAs except debt-frees, would be support to meet the 2010 DH targets for private sector properties. (The targets are concerned with dwellings occupied by vulnerable people including those with families.) LAs' private sector allocations would equate to individual estimates of the amount required to meet the DH target, derived from ODPM national data on the number of vulnerable households in non-decent private housing and the cost of making these homes decent. In line with ODPM policy, it would not be open to the RHB to increase the allocations for DH in the LA stock, but it could do so for the private sector stock.

6.5 Although this option maximises the resources available to build new affordable homes, it could mean that even with-debt LAs receive considerably less from the SRHP than they did before if their OA indicates less use of SCE(R) than previously. It also removes support to LAs for works beyond what is required to deliver the DH standard.

Views are invited on:

- **Is a steep reduction in funds going to LAs appropriate in some cases, given that it could release funds to help meet the region's pressing need for new affordable housing?**
- **Is it acceptable to limit funds to LAs for their own stock to the amounts required to deliver the DH standard? Are OAs the best source for this amount?**
- **Is it acceptable to limit funds for LAs to invest in their private sector stock to the amounts estimated as necessary to deliver the DH standard? Would it be better to offer allocations for this purpose which are higher than the estimated minimum required? If so, by how much above the minimum and on what basis?**

6.6 **Option 2** – This option would extend Option 1 to provide support to LAs for other purposes over and above the level needed to deliver the DH standard. These purposes could be for housing-related regeneration schemes that go beyond DH standards. Or they could be for purposes not historically supported by former HIP funding – for example, cash incentive schemes or local projects to deal with empty homes that would in effect boost the supply of existing affordable housing. Whether these additional allocations are made to all LAs or to with-debt LAs only will depend on whether they are made as grant or as supported borrowing.

Views are invited on:

- For what additional purposes, over and above simply meeting the DH target, should LAs receive funding from the SRHP?
- How much do you estimate would be needed from the SRHP to cover each of these purposes?
- How should these resources be shared out between LAs?

Views are invited on:

- Which of Options 1 and 2 do you prefer for deciding the allocation of funds to LAs and why?
- Do you have a preferred alternative approach?
- Do you think that the new funding arrangements should start immediately in 2006-07, or that there should be a transition period with transitional funding to allow a degree of continuity? If so, what arrangements would you suggest?

7. *Stage Three – The Geographic Targeting of the Remaining SRHP through the Housing Corporation's New Investment Programme (ADP)*

- 7.1 Once funding has been identified for the purposes set out in stages one and two, the bulk of the SRHP would be allocated for RSLs to develop additional affordable housing across a range of tenures and including key workers, in line with the new RHS. The level of key worker support will be set by the ODPM. The Housing Corporation will be responsible for managing this funding so as to secure delivery in line with the priorities of the RHS.
- 7.2 To guide the Housing Corporation in targeting these funds, it is proposed to use a model that brings together factors to be taken into account when making strategic decisions over the use of resources, and supports the explicit use of judgement in that decision-making. The output from the model is a set of geographic allocations, which is considered to make the best use of resources in pursuit of strategic objectives, taking into account all relevant factors.
- 7.3 The model is currently set up to provide sub-regional allocations reflecting the strategic view at regional level, as embodied in the RHS. This reflects estimates of housing need, the costs and deliverability of potential housing supply, regional spatial priorities and targets, and the collective priorities and objectives of the sub-regional housing strategies. The distribution of each sub-regional allocation within the sub-region

concerned would be made in accordance with the relevant sub-regional strategy. This allows sub-regional groupings to have more influence on what happens in their areas, while at the same time placing a greater responsibility on them to ensure that a more targeted and effective approach prepares the ground for strategic use of resources.

7.4 The use of judgement means that this model is not a mathematical tool to provide a distribution of funds simply on the basis of the input data. Although the model contains a lot of data, its operation is not driven by the data, but by judgements taken in the light of it. The model is a framework to help decision-takers arrive at the best use of resources, given the information available, and which is both transparent and accountable. A degree of judgement will be needed from the RHB in order to determine final sub-regional allocations, with advice from the RHF. The model's structure offers considerable flexibility, with potential for amendment as additional factors emerge.

7.5 The data to be input into the model take various forms:

1. hard data as empirical "facts";
2. forecasts and estimates of the future situation (e.g. indicators of need, land supply);
3. value judgements relating to strategic objectives and priorities; and
4. operational judgements to establish a "best fit."

7.6 Key principles underpinning the operation of the model currently include:

- resources allocated to a sub-region will not exceed the anticipated capacity for development activity to bring schemes forward;
- current needs and future plans provide explicit reference points for a balanced targeting of resources;
- while subsequent allocations within a sub-region should pay full attention to its prioritisation of its own investment themes, the overall allocation of regional funds to the sub-region will need to reflect its fit within the region's overall thematic priorities;
- relative procurement costs and related value-for-money considerations will need to be taken into account to ensure the most responsible use of the limited funds available to the region (although there is no suggestion here that resources should gravitate toward the least costly areas or housing types/schemes).

7.7 The model is still work in progress, and is being tested through the use of data as it becomes available. Nick Reed from the Housing Corporation designed the model on behalf of the AMMSG and has demonstrated its operation at meetings of the AMMSG, RHB, RHF, as well as presenting it to some sub-regional steering groups. If you wish to understand how the model will be able to support the process for strategically targeting resources, you should contact your representative on these bodies. If you have specific questions on the model or require guidance on its use, please contact Nick directly at nick.reed@housingcorp.gsx.gov.uk or by telephone on 0116-242-4828 or 07889-796687.

Views are invited on:

- **Which indicators should be included within the model and why?**
- **Are there any additional key principles or information that should be considered, or that should be used to 'test' or review the model's outcomes?**
- **Do you favour an alternative approach to the geographic targeting of resources for RSLs?**
- **Do you think that the RHB is best placed to make the strategic judgemental allocation decisions?**

8. Monitoring of Regional Housing Investment

- 8.1 The RHB is concerned about delivery and ensuring that its funding allocations are actually making a difference, and having the greatest possible impact in addressing housing issues across the region.
- 8.2 The RHB will want evidence that its funding decisions have had quantitative and qualitative outputs and outcomes and are delivering its investment priorities, which will be underpinned by the (new) RHS.
- 8.3 The RHB needs to be capable of identifying risks, of sending early warnings and, where necessary, proposing remedial action in order to ensure its investment priorities are being met. The RHB will want to know whether LAs and RSLs are delivering against planned outcomes, or if they are falling behind. The RHB will be working with the Housing Corporation to establish clear ground rules for managing the funding of new affordable housing across investment themes and sub-regions, to ensure the region makes full use of available funding in 2006/07 and 2007/08.
- 8.4 The RHB will be receiving comprehensive reports from its Secretariat on housing activity and how the funding is being deployed to maximum effect. The RHB will be able to consider the information when deciding future strategic investment priorities.

9. Additional Comments

- 9.1 To enable us to give your responses the fullest consideration, please explain any disagreements you may have with what is proposed in this paper. The Board would welcome any suggestions you have for alternative approaches that you feel should be considered.

10. Next Steps

- 10.1 Before finalising its investment plan, the RHB wishes to benefit from comments on its proposed approach. Where concerns are raised, it would be particularly helpful if comments could suggest workable alternatives.
- 10.2 This paper has been sent to key regional organisations, all local housing authorities in the East of England and a range of other stakeholders. The paper is also available on the GO-East website.
- 10.3 A proforma has been produced to help you provide feedback on the options in this paper. Your comments, which need to be provided by **Friday 8 April 2005** please, should be sent, preferably by e-mail, to Maxine Bilcock in the RHB Secretariat:

mbilcock.go-east@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

- 10.4 If you have any questions, or would like to discuss the paper, please contact:

Maxine Bilcock
RHB Secretariat
GO-East
Eastbrook
Shaftesbury Road
Cambridge CB2 2DF
Tel: 01223-372932

- 10.5 Please indicate if you do **not** want your comments to be made public. (An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your organisation's IT system will not be respected unless you specifically include a request to the contrary in the main text of your response.)
- 10.6 Following the consultation period, the results of the consultation will be collated and published by the RHB Secretariat. The AMSG will consider the responses and recommend to the RHB the preferred approach for allocating the SRHP. The RHB will make recommendations for an investment plan setting out what and where the investment priorities are, reflecting the new RHS. The investment plan must be submitted to Ministers by 31 May 2005. Ministers are expected to confirm their agreement to the investment plan and its recommendations in July 2005.
- 10.7 You may also wish to comment on the parallel consultation on the draft RHS. The draft RHS and response proforma can be found on the East of England Regional Assembly web site, www.eera.gov.uk .

HOUSING INVESTMENT IN THE EAST OF ENGLAND 2006-08

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON HOW TO ALLOCATE FUNDING FROM THE SINGLE REGIONAL HOUSING POT

This proforma has been developed to help you provide consultation feedback and assist us with the collation of comments received. In answering all questions please be as clear and specific as possible including a full explanation for all the comments you make and where appropriate what alternatives you think should be considered.

Please do not hesitate to contact the RHB Secretariat if you wish to discuss any issues within the consultation paper. The proforma should be returned by Friday 8 April 2005, preferably by e-mail, to:

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RHB Secretariat

14 February 2005

1	Should a portion of SRHP funds be used to tackle specific issues and problems outside existing funding arrangements? If so, what is the ideal proportion of the SRHP that should be earmarked for this purpose?

2	What type of projects should be supported in this way? Do you have any other ideas about how this proposal could be most effective?

3	Do you agree that the formulaic basis of calculating LAs' 2004-06 allocations is not appropriate for 2006-08?

4	Assuming the current funding regime is still in place, do you agree allocations should be withheld from debt-free LAs in order to augment resources to RSLs for new affordable units?

5	Should the allocations that would have gone to debt-free LAs be ring-fenced to fund new affordable units in the sub-regions where the debt-free LAs are located?

6	Is a steep reduction in funds going to LAs appropriate in some cases, given that it could release funds to help meet the region's pressing need for new affordable housing?

7	Is it acceptable to limit funds to LAs for their own stock to the amounts required to deliver the DH standard? Are OAs the best source for this amount?

8	Is it acceptable to limit funds for LAs to invest in their private sector stock to the amounts estimated as necessary to deliver the DH standard? Would it be better to offer allocations for this purpose which are higher than the estimated minimum required? If so, by how much above the minimum and on what basis?

9	For what additional purposes, over and above simply meeting the DH target, should LAs receive funding from the SRHP?

10	How much do you estimate would be needed from the SRHP to cover each of these purposes?

11	How should these resources be shared out between LAs?

12	Which of Options 1 and 2 do you prefer for deciding the allocation of funds and why?

13	Do you have a preferred alternative approach? If so, please give details.

14	Do you think that the new funding arrangements should start immediately in 2006-07, or that there should be a transition period with transitional funding to allow a degree of continuity? If so, what arrangements would you suggest?

15	When constructing the model which considers the geographic targeting of resources for RSLs, which indicators should be included and why?

16	Are there any additional key principles or information that should be considered, or that should be used to 'test' or review the model's outcomes?

17	Do you favour an alternative approach to the geographic targeting of resources for RSLs?

18	Do you think that the RHB is best placed to make the strategic judgemental allocation decisions?

**Revised regional housing strategy
for the East of England:
Strategy Document 2005-2010**

**Revised Regional Housing Strategy for the East of England:
Strategy Document**

1 Version control

Version	Status
0.1	Draft for discussion at Regional housing forum 5 th Jan 2005 and Regional assembly Housing and Sustainable Communities panel 7 th January 2005
0.2	Draft for discussion at Regional Editorial Group meeting on 17 th January 2005
0.3	Draft for EERA Housing and Sustainable Communities Panel Group Leaders 21 st January 2005.
0.4	Draft for consultation

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4 Introduction

- 4.1.1.1 To be written by Cllr Simon Woodbridge as Chair of the EERA Housing and Sustainable Communities Panel and Caroline Bowdler, Chair of the Regional Housing Board.

5 Sustainable Communities: Homes for All

- 5.1.1.1 A five year plan extending opportunities for home ownership was announced by the ODPM on the 24th January, just before the Regional Housing Strategy went out to consultation.
- 5.1.1.2 The new measures proposed by the ODPM to help people into home ownership include:
- A new first time buyer's initiative using publicly owned land for new homes
 - Homebuy – a new scheme allowing tenants of local authority and housing associations to buy a stake in their home
 - A competition to build a home for £60,000, delivering quality homes at lower costs
 - Changes to the planning system to ensure more affordable housing for key workers and young families in rural areas
- 5.1.1.3 The 5 year plan also includes proposals to deliver housing growth responsibly in the “wider South East”, with continued investment in homes, jobs and infrastructure in the four Government Growth areas, of which 3 are all or part in the East of England. This includes:
- New measures to protect the environment including density regulations
 - New powers to protect the greenbelt
 - Introducing a code to create more sustainable buildings
- 5.1.1.4 The 5 year plan also unveils “MoveUK”, a new online system bringing together nationwide information about jobs and housing opportunities, and giving people the chance of a fresh start in a new area.
- 5.1.1.5 The ODPM guidance to Regional Housing Boards on preparing their investment strategies contained no reference or early

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acknowledgement of the new policies in this five year plan. It is not clear who will have responsibility for delivering some of the new measures, and hence the impacts for the East of England are not yet fully understood.

- 5.1.1.6 The Regional Housing Forum will consider the ODPM five year plan during the Housing Strategy consultation period, and will incorporate into the Strategy as necessary.

6 Reader's notes

- 6.1.1.1 This is a consultation document. It is set out with paragraph numbers to enable readers to feedback on particular references. Such numbering will not be the format of the final version.
- 6.1.1.2 There is an accompanying context document that gives a broad picture of housing and related issues across the East of England. The context document also contains guidance on how public investment in housing is made, and by whom, as well as a glossary of terms used.
- 6.1.1.3 For the first time the East of England has a spatial plan that is exclusive to the region, the Draft East of England Plan¹ This is currently subject to consultation, and there will be a public examination later this year.
- 6.1.1.4 The Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) has been developed alongside the Draft East of England Plan and the two documents share underlying research on housing needs².
- 6.1.1.5 The Plan is therefore an essential source document dealing with the number and location of new housing in the East of England.
- 6.1.1.6 Regional examples are “pepper-potted” throughout the document. These are intended for illustrative purposes only.

7 Executive Summary

- 7.1.1.1 This is not the first housing strategy to be produced for the East of England. It builds on the earlier document published shortly after the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan (SCP) was launched. This second document therefore has more clarity about the implications of the SCP for the East of England.

¹ The East of England Plan is the draft revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the East of England. It is currently the subject of a public consultation before being tested at an Examination in Public in autumn 2005. Once adopted it will replace the current RSS which is provided through RPG 6 (East Anglia) covering Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Peterborough and Suffolk, and RPG 9 (South East) as it relates to Bedfordshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Luton, Southend and Thurrock.

² Cambridge Housing and Planning Research – Affordable Housing Studies 1&2 contained on the East of England Regional Assembly's website, under housing documents – www.EERA.gov.uk

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- 7.1.1.2 The passage of time has also allowed the nine housing sub regions to develop and establish partnerships so that the revised RHS can be based on a better understanding of housing markets and delivery across the region.
- 7.1.1.3 The document is being consulted on at the same time as the Draft East of England Plan. The two documents share a common understanding of housing need and demand in the East of England, based upon the two Affordable Housing Studies completed in 2003 and 2004.
- 7.1.1.4 Both the Draft East of England Plan and the Draft Regional Housing Strategy are making proposals for housing delivery in the East of England. These proposals are subject to consultation and, in the case of the East of England Plan, will be tested at an examination in Public in Autumn 2005.
- 7.1.1.5 Policy SS13 in the Draft East of England Plan provides the detail on overall housing provision. During the period 2001 to 2021 an overall provision of 23,900 net additional dwellings per annum is established, with a target that at least 7,200 should be social rented units or 30% of provision. In addition it requires that at least 760 net additional units per annum should be for key worker housing.
- 7.1.1.6 Phase 2 of the Affordable Housing Study identified the need for 2,400 units each year for the intermediate housing market, of which the key workers element has been specifically identified as a requirement in policy SS13. The phase 2 study indicated that about 1,320 units per year over ten years are needed to meet the backlog of unmet needs. It also acknowledged that this is a rolling target that will be difficult to address and monitor. The Draft East of England Plan therefore requires local authorities and housing providers to seek additional supply over the base figure to meet these needs.
- 7.1.1.7 The Draft East of England Plan makes it clear that the 30% target for social rented housing is a minimum. At the local level the Draft East of England Plan sets a target for affordable housing as a whole (not just social rented) of at least 30% of housing supply in all local authority areas, with an aspiration of 40% where housing stress warrants higher provision. The higher targets apply to the period up to 2015 in order to meet subsidised social renting, key worker and intermediate needs, and to reduce the level of unmet need.
- 7.1.1.8 For the life of this strategy (to 2010) this higher figure will apply.
- 7.1.1.9 In the draft East of England Plan (7.14) affordable housing is defined as “housing accessible to households who cannot afford to rent or purchase on the open market. It includes subsidised social renting, key worker housing, shared home ownership, equity sharing, sub-market renting and discounted market ownership”.

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- 7.1.1.10 The Draft East of England Plan provides the district level distribution of dwelling provision. Within this strategy they have been aggregated to provide a breakdown on the basis of housing sub regions. What is notable is that some of the sub-regions planned to receive relatively high rates of growth are not in the “Growth Areas” designated by the Government in the Sustainable Communities Plan. This is neither surprising, nor, necessarily problematic: the distribution of growth in the East of England Plan relates to a regional view of priorities, and also to internal factors within the region; whereas the new Growth Areas have been designated as points of accelerated growth within the greater south east of the country around London. There are therefore clear implications for the planning and funding of infrastructure provision to support the additional growth, and for longer- term sustainability.
- 7.1.1.11 Problems associated with this level of growth are sustainability, in particular the impact on the environment, and the capacity of the construction and development industries to deliver. The strategy must focus not only on “how much” housing is delivered, but also what type of housing, where and of what quality. The recently founded Regional Centre for Excellence, provides a catalyst for co-ordination and taking some of these issues forward in partnership.
- 7.1.1.12 The average rate of addition to the region’s stock in the first three years of the period – i.e. between 2001-2004 – was about 19,300 p.a. Completions of new build affordable housing have averaged around 2200. Clearly there is a way to go to deliver the “step change”
- 7.1.1.13 In gearing up to deliver this change those operating the planning system will need to ensure that it delivers the development sites necessary throughout the region to deliver the spatial strategy of the East of England Plan. The RHS itself must ensure that the new housing produced can match as far as practicable the needs for different types of housing – i.e. a balanced market
- 7.1.1.14 At present the supply chain for sites to deliver affordable housing does not match planned provision in terms of either scale or distribution. Further work will be required to turn this around.
- 7.1.1.15 The inter-relationship between housing and planning policies is crucial, in particular the use of Section 106 agreements. The more clarity and certainty that can be achieved through this process, the more likely to deliver the “step-change”.
- 7.1.1.16 The RHS establishes priorities on which the Regional Housing Board (RHB) can base its investment decisions, initially for the financial years 2006-08 and subsequently up to 2010. For the earlier period investment will clearly be guided by what is already coming through the pipeline based on the earlier strategy. Ongoing analysis of the

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affordable housing supply chain indicates where these schemes will be.

- 7.1.1.17 The Government has set out what it expects to see from public investment in housing to tackle disadvantage, achieve a better balance in the housing market and provide decent homes. The RHF has already consulted both through the housing sub regions and across the region as a whole to identify regional priorities and how they should be met in order to inform this draft.
- 7.1.1.18 The ODPM consultation paper “Housing Investment in the Regions” gives an indicative allocation for the East of England significantly above the current level. Final decisions will be known during the period of consultation on this draft strategy.
- 7.1.1.19 In order to make choices between schemes, eight “investment themes” have been identified. Unless schemes fall under one of these headings they will receive no investment from the Single Regional Capital Pot in the investment period 2006-08.
- 7.1.1.20 The proposed themes and their relevant percentages are
- Growth (32%)
 - Local Housing need and homelessness (18%)
 - Regeneration (10%)
 - Rural (12.5%)
 - Key workers (4%)
 - Supported Housing (8%)
 - Existing Stock (12.5%)
 - Black and Minority Ethnic Communities (3%)
- 7.1.1.21 There is no longer a national target for rural schemes in small communities, and the region must propose its own target based upon appropriate regional evidence.
- 7.1.1.22 A number of research projects are due to be completed before the Regional Housing Strategy is finalised. The final version will need to take the findings into account. This covers research into the development pipeline for affordable housing; the housing needs of refugees; the needs of Gypsies and Travellers.
- 7.1.1.23 The strategy identifies a number of areas where policy should be developed to move beyond short- term investment decisions. These

policies are closely linked to other regional strategies and actions. The RHS will not be able to deliver long - term change alone, it requires the willingness and capacity of other agencies to shape the future for housing.

- 7.1.1.24 Finally, under the new arrangements to bring housing and planning closer together EERA will have responsibility for overseeing the delivery of the strategy and the Annual Monitoring Report will be expanded accordingly.

8 Background to the Regional Housing Strategy

- 8.1.1.1 This Regional Housing Strategy for the East of England has been prepared by the Regional Housing Forum (RHF) on behalf of the Regional Assembly's Housing and Sustainable Communities Panel (H&SCP) and the Regional Housing Board. It builds on the very first Regional Housing Strategy issued in June 2003, and addresses many of the inevitable shortcomings of this earlier document.
- 8.1.1.2 The Regional Housing Forum has been in existence for some years, and is a broadly drawn group of housing and related professionals from across the East of England.
- 8.1.1.3 The Regional Housing Board was established when the Sustainable Communities Plan (SCP) was introduced, as a means of Regional Delivery of the Plan. It has also been given the responsibility of recommending to Ministers the strategy for public investment in housing from the "Single Regional Housing Pot" (SRHP) provided by the Government.
- 8.1.1.4 The Regional Assembly's Housing and Sustainable Communities Panel was similarly established following the SCP as a regionally accountable mechanism to deal with issues arising from the SCP and housing delivery more generally.
- 8.1.1.5 Following the proposals in the Barker Review to bring housing and planning closer together, consultation has been underway on proposals to merge the housing and planning bodies in the East of England, with the Regional Assembly assuming future responsibilities for the Regional Housing Strategy and for strategic advice to Ministers on housing investment.

8.2 *The Government's Expectations*

- 8.2.1.1 The Government expects the Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) to deliver the Sustainable Communities Plan in a way that is appropriate to the East of England. In particular it should support the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Public Service Agreement targets – PSA1 on

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disadvantage, PSA5 on housing supply and demand and PSA7 on decent homes.

8.2.1.2 The Housing Minister has also said that he expects the RHS to move towards a longer- term planning horizon that will ultimately bring it and the Regional Spatial Strategy (The East of England Plan) together. This will mean a change for housing. The RHS will need to adopt a “bi-focal” vision, incorporating shorter- term strategic planning and actions within a longer- term framework of policy choices that will shape housing provision into the future.

8.2.1.3 Housing policy development at the regional, sub regional and local levels will therefore become more significant in underpinning the selected strategic options.

8.2.1.4 The Government expects the RHS to cover:

- All tenures of housing, plus travellers’ sites
- All options for addressing identified housing needs, including low -cost home ownership and equity release products
- Sub- regional strategies related to sub regional markets
- An assessment of need shared with the Regional Planning Framework
- Means of tackling homelessness
- Adequate provision of housing, especially affordable housing, to address the growth agenda
- Analysis of the need for Key Worker housing to determine the additional support that the Single Regional Housing Pot will need to complement the Key Worker Living Programme
- Analysis of the need for rural housing across market towns and villages
- Cross linkages with other funding streams and programmes, particularly Supporting People
- Identification of the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic Communities and Gypsy and Traveller Communities

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- Demonstration of consultation with regional stakeholders.

8.3 Regional Expectations

- 8.3.1.1 The Revised RHS must now be seen in the broader context of the Integrated Regional Strategy (IRS) – **Sustainable Futures: The Integrated Regional Strategy for the East of England**³. See figure 5 in the context document.

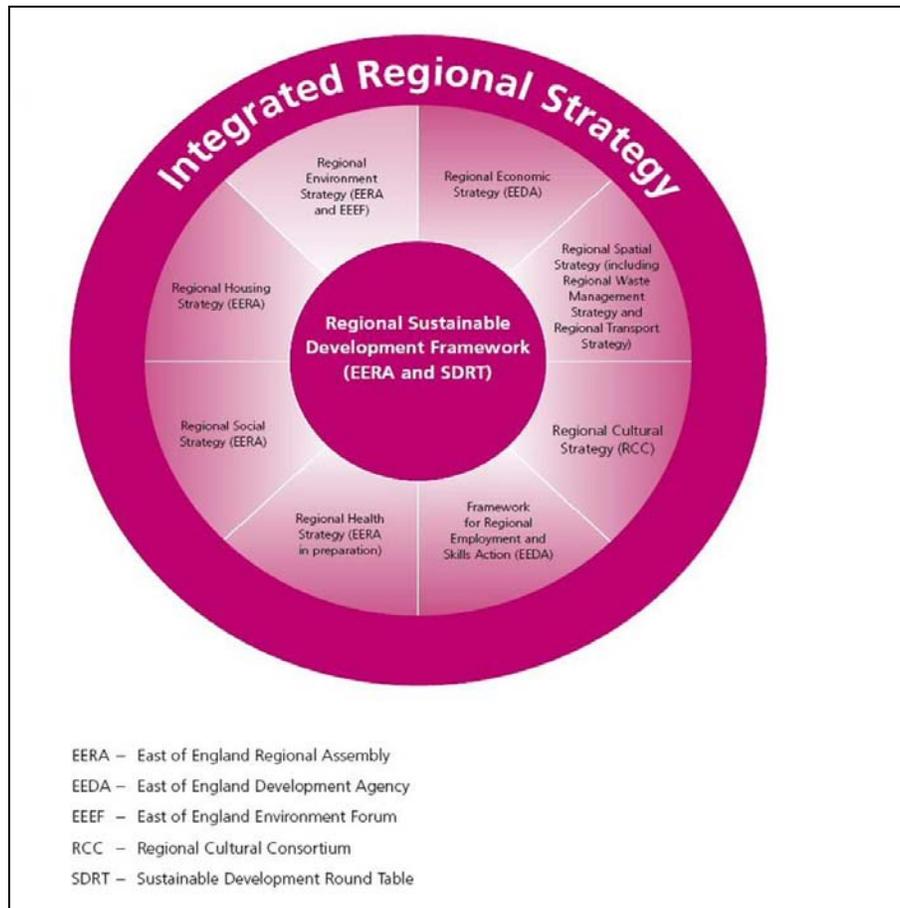


Figure 1: Integrated regional strategy

- 8.3.1.2 In particular the RHS must deliver on the challenges posed by the East of England Plan.
- 8.3.1.3 The **Vision** for the IRS is to improve the quality of life for everyone who lives or works in the East of England by delivering the following **High Level Outcomes**

³ Available on EERA website, www.eera.gov.uk

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- An exceptional knowledge base and a dynamic economy in the region
- Opportunities for everyone to contribute to, and benefit from, the region's economic dynamism
- Strong, healthy and culturally rich communities
- A high -quality and diverse natural and built environment
- A more resource efficient region

8.3.1.4 In seeking to achieve the Vision and High Level Outcomes, Priorities for the East of England are to

- Achieve high quality and sustainable solutions in Growth Areas and other parts of the region facing growth pressures
- Harness fully the region's strengths in science, research and development and in surrounding commercialisation processes
- Address the causes and implications of persistent deprivation and social exclusion
- Effect a step-change in the efficiency of resource use and management of the region's distinctive natural and built environmental assets
- Capture the benefits from, and manage the impacts of, the region's international gateways and transport corridors.

8.4 Sub Regional and Local Expectations

8.4.1.1 The RHS is not a substitute for local and sub -regional housing strategies that identify localised needs and markets. Local housing authorities produce their strategies within the context of their community strategies and local strategic partnerships to ensure that housing priorities are closely linked to economic, social and environmental needs.

8.4.1.2 The RHS will only be acceptable to those working at local and sub regional levels if it is seen to add value to what they are doing. It does not substitute for their own strategic thinking but must complement it,

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providing a regional framework to guide and support their work. Ideally, local strategies will nest within the respective sub regional strategy, and sub regional strategies within the regional.

- 8.4.1.3 The RHS is the “glue” that holds national and local priorities together. The relationship between strategies at the three levels is neither simply “top-down”, nor “bottom-up”: it must be both at the same time, with influence in the form of strategic guidance, evidence for policy formation, coordination, support in resolving conflicts and inconsistencies, and so on. In all these ways the RHS can be expected to add value.
- 8.4.1.4 Two specific ways in which the RHS should provide additional value is for those operating at the regional level, by providing:
- guidance in how activity in the housing sector can and should influence other sectors, and vice versa.
 - Strategic underpinning for those charged with the difficult decisions in how best to use the limited resources available for housing investment – particularly in the RHB’s next public investment strategy for 2006-08.

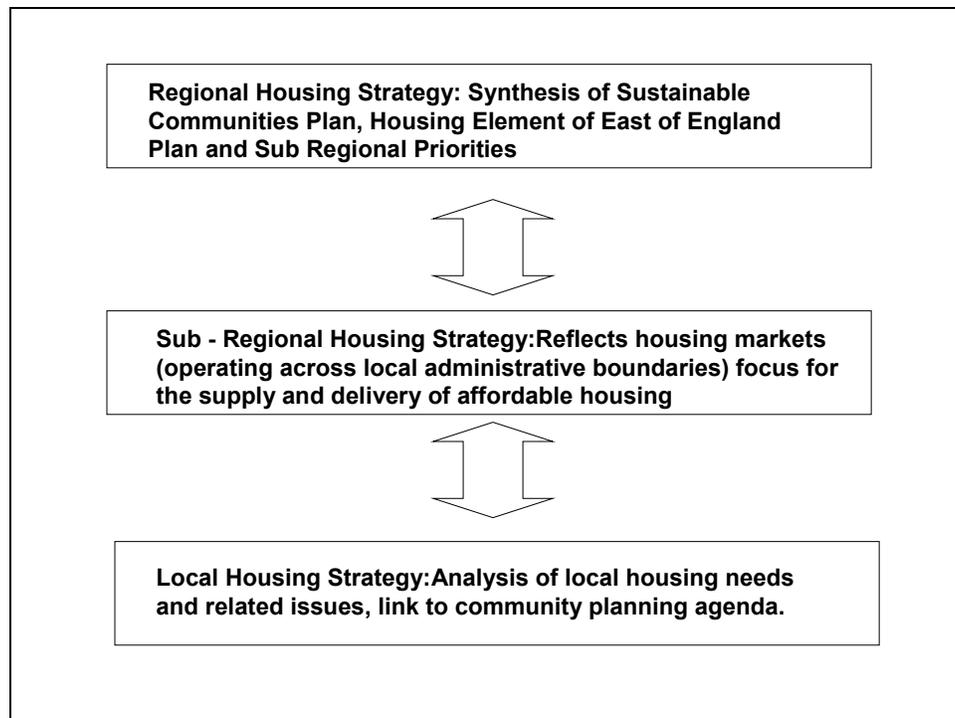


Figure 2: Relationships between Regional, Sub Regional and Local housing strategies

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- 8.4.1.5 The nine sub regions in the East of England have been established to better reflect the different housing markets within the East of England. The map below shows the location of the sub regions, and the local authority areas covered.

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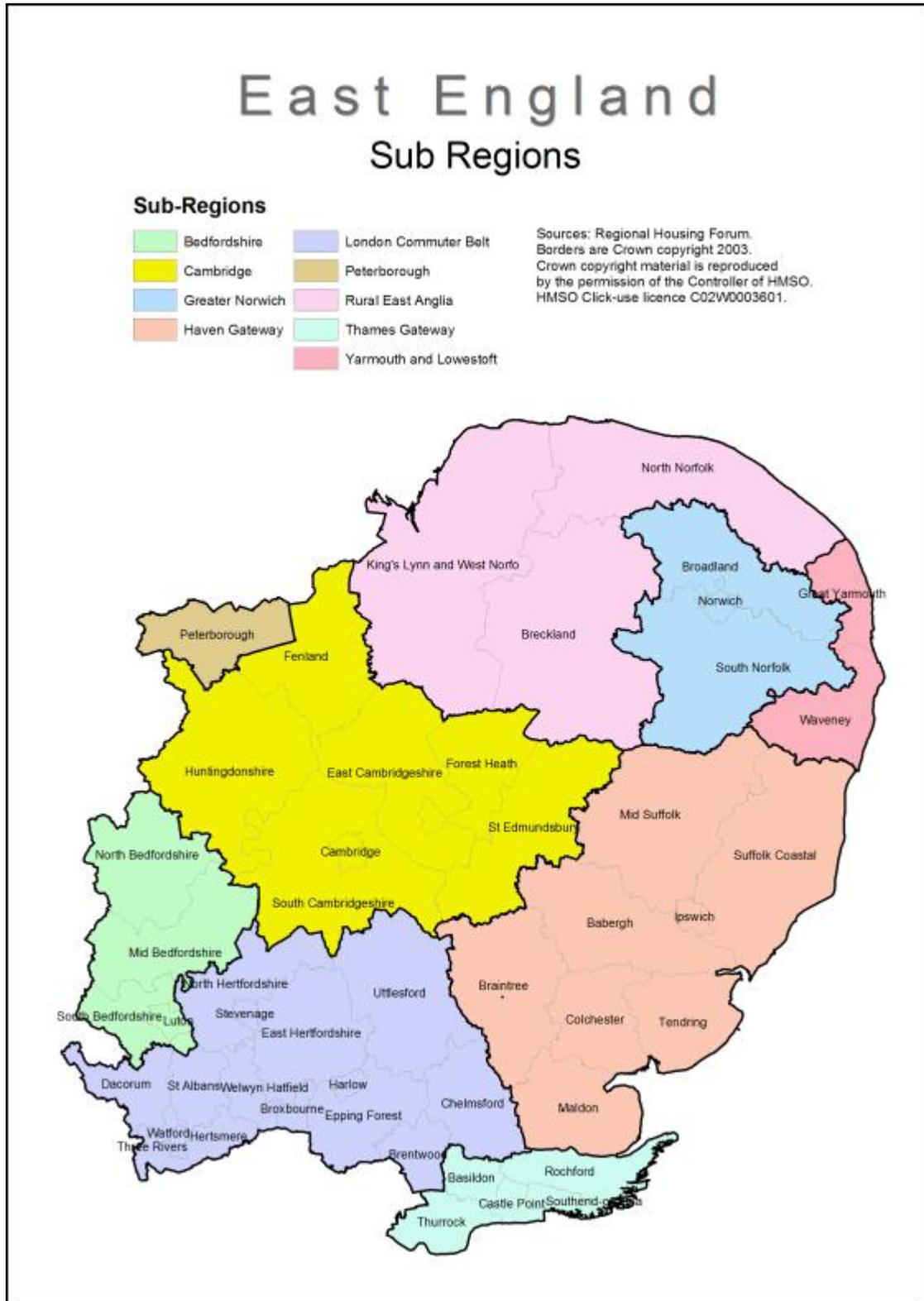


Figure 3: Housing Sub regions in the East of England

9 Sub Regional viewpoints

- 9.1.1.1 The Region has taken a strong line in developing the regional housing strategy (RHS) through the strategic development of its housing sub regions. The initial strategy included the broad aims and objectives for each sub region within the regional framework. Sub regions have subsequently taken these further to produce sub regional strategies based on partnership working and local consultation.
- 9.1.1.2 The rationale behind this activity is not only that the sub regional strategies should contribute to the RHS, but also that they provide a framework for addressing housing issues and delivering solutions at a local level. The strategies are based on those key areas where joint working across administrative boundaries is a high priority to deliver effective solutions. They are standalone documents and some details of how they can be accessed are given in the relevant paragraphs below. As documents are finalised a more comprehensive list will be included in the final RHS.
- 9.1.1.3 The following paragraphs are not an attempt to summarise these comprehensive documents, but rather to illustrate some of the differences between the sub regions and thereby show the complexity of housing markets across the region.

9.2 Bedfordshire

- 9.2.1.1 Parts of Bedfordshire have been identified within the Milton Keynes South Midlands Growth Area. The sub region acknowledges the importance of the growth agenda and the need to make a creditable case for investment in community infrastructure and affordable housing. Additionally it recognises that this cannot be achieved by housing partners alone, but must be done with existing colleagues in planning, health etc.- along with the emerging delivery vehicles.
- 9.2.1.2 The main priority is to minimise the shortfall in provision of affordable housing, delivered via a range of tenures. The existing demand is not being met- and new growth will only add to the pressure if solutions are not brought forward quickly.
- 9.2.1.3 There is a need for balance between investment in new communities and continued investment in regeneration and renewal in existing communities. There are pressing regeneration issues for areas of poor private sector housing occupied by people suffering significant deprivation, with the most pressing area being the inner Luton wards.
- 9.2.1.4 The strategy emphasises the underlying importance of sustainability, particularly in creating new communities – “liveability” is a key component. To achieve “liveability” it will be necessary to engage with communities to identify “success factors” and secure funding to realise

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parity in “liveability” and quality of life for all residents across the sub region.

- 9.2.1.5 The Bedfordshire sub regional strategy can be viewed at <http://www.bedford.gov.uk/bedford/housing/regional.htm>

9.3 Cambridge

- 9.3.1.1 The sub region is part of the London- Stansted- Cambridge- Peterborough growth corridor. Whilst this was announced in the Sustainable Communities Plan of 2003, sub regional work was already underway. The Cambridge Sub Region has now produced its second strategy. An earlier start to the development of a sub regional strategic approach was prompted by the Structure Plan review in Cambridgeshire and the determination of a more managed approach to growth. Maturing relationships have seen the development of an affordable housing liaison group along with resource and delivery plans for affordable housing provision at a sub regional level.
- 9.3.1.2 An Infrastructure Partnership has been established for the Cambridge Planning sub region (the five Cambridgeshire authorities) as a delivery vehicle for growth. Discussions include the further development of the sub regional strategic housing function to co-ordinate housing development and in particular the delivery of key worker and affordable housing.
- 9.3.1.3 Cambridgeshire authorities are also negotiating, through Cambridgeshire County Council, a Local Public Sector Agreement (LPSA) with government for the delivery of some of the required affordable housing without grant from the Single Regional Housing Pot through the Housing Corporation. To deliver housing without grant, Housing Associations have agreed to flexible approaches to sites, and local authorities will work closely with them to identify other mechanisms for supporting affordable housing.
- 9.3.1.4 Sub regional work is also extending beyond new provision to the use of existing stock. One of the issues identified for potential joint work through the sub-regional strategy is to examine lettings to ensure wide access to affordable housing across the sub region- promoting choice and more sustainable communities.
- 9.3.1.5 The Cambridge sub region strategy is available on <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/housing/housing-strategy-research/>

9.4 Greater Norwich

- 9.4.1.1 The Greater Norwich Housing Partnership (GNHP) was launched in July 2003. In some ways the partnership formalised existing working arrangements between the three authorities, but it has also resulted in

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a higher rate of cross authority working. So, for example, there is now cross authority co-ordination of Supported Housing and Homelessness, with a move to activity under allocations and nominations.

- 9.4.1.2 Greater Norwich is not within a designated “growth” area, but it does experience the problems of a “growing” area with increasing unaffordability of house prices etc.
- 9.4.1.3 In order to pump prime the development of new affordable housing each authority has transferred land at nil value to housing associations. In addition South Norfolk and Norwich have ring fenced capital receipts from land sales for housing activity.
- 9.4.1.4 Shared ownership is becoming increasingly unaffordable and GNHP is currently researching alternative forms of intermediate tenure to meet needs. Allocations within the social sector are falling and homelessness is becoming the predominant route into social housing.
- 9.4.1.5 In Norwich much of the development is on previously developed land, thus contributing to regeneration within the city.
- 9.4.1.6 The Greater Norwich sub regional strategy is currently being revised and will be posted on an appropriate website in late February. In the meantime the contact for this work is dl.smith@broadland.gov.uk

9.5 Haven Gateway

- 9.5.1.1 The Haven Gateway comprises local authority areas in north east Essex and south east Suffolk. Since the publication of the last regional housing strategy the two areas have come together to form a housing sub region and achieve synergy with land use and economic planning.
- 9.5.1.2 The sub region contains a number of innovative regeneration projects aimed at meeting housing need and building sustainable communities, examples are the Waterfront project in Ipswich, Jaywick in Tendring, the Colchester Garrison and the Earls Colne Foundry site in Braintree. In addition Babergh District Council has been awarded beacon status for its innovative work on neighbourhood renewal.
- 9.5.1.3 The opportunity to learn from beacon status authorities also extends to good practice in homelessness where Colchester has been recognised for its innovative work, and Suffolk County Council has the status for its Supporting People work. In addition both Colchester and Suffolk Coastal have entered into leasing arrangements with Annington Homes and the MOD to use surplus stock as temporary housing for homeless households.
- 9.5.1.4 The sub region is developing a strategy to deal with unauthorised camping that will use local specialist services to address some of the cultural issues in service delivery.

- 9.5.1.5 Ipswich has been a cluster area receiving asylum seekers from London and the South East since 2001. The impact of refugee households settling in and around Ipswich is being researched as part of a regional project. Homelessness and advice services have seen increased numbers of refugee households. The Suffolk Refugee Support Forum has identified the need for outreach housing support for refugees settling in small towns and villages outside Ipswich.

9.6 *London Commuter Belt*

- 9.6.1.1 The London Commuter Belt is the largest of the sub regions- spanning 15 local housing authorities and two counties. The area is a mixture of urban and rural but 14 of the 15 are included in the “prospering UK” super group on the ONS Census based classification. There has been a growing similarity between local authorities in terms of their socio-economic profiles between 1991 and 2001.
- 9.6.1.2 The “London effect” is quite evident with the most urgent priority for the sub region to deal with the growing crisis of affordability. Among the many challenges for the sub region is to deal with the tensions arising from the need to protect the greenbelt whilst supporting housing growth. This growth arises both from the trend based population growth and the policy led growth as the London-Stansted-Cambridge- Peterborough growth corridor passes through the sub region. Indeed the future development of Stansted airport itself poses its own challenge for the sub region.
- 9.6.1.3 The sub region will need to consider how the Growth Areas will meet the housing needs of those locations where development opportunities are insufficient to meet local need, and to what extent housing growth will stimulate further demand from London.
- 9.6.1.4 The former new towns have an additional problem as much of the original housing and infrastructure is reaching the end of their useful lives- regeneration and neighbourhood renewal are essential.
- 9.6.1.5 The London Commuter Belt sub regional strategy is available from <http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/council/default.asp?pid=770&step=4&id=549>

9.7 *Peterborough*

- 9.7.1.1 Peterborough is unique as a housing sub region in that it comprises a single authority – albeit a unitary one. It sits at the northern end of the London- Stansted- Cambridge growth corridor. Its inclusion within the growth area has given a new focus to gearing up for redevelopment and housing delivery. A regeneration strategy for the area is being prepared, and the local plan has been revised.

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- 9.7.1.2 Its position as a unitary authority and a standalone sub region has meant that it has been relatively self contained with “less demonstrable” connections to other areas. This will change as work on the analysis of the housing market will necessitate improved connections with other areas. Indeed consultation on the housing strategy has resulted in a new vision for Peterborough within the region – the housing strategy has changed from what the city “needs” from the region, to what the city can contribute to the wider strategic objectives.
- 9.7.1.3 A number of building blocks have been put in place to target and improve delivery of new homes.
- Use of Geographical Information System (GIS) mapping to identify housing market factors at a local level to inform future investment decisions. The system maps key factors down to neighbourhood level, and is being rolled out to cover rural areas as well as the urban core. Future investment in affordable housing can be directed at meeting the most pressing needs.
 - Market analysis of the need for sub market housing options, including for key workers
 - Refreshed approach to deliver affordable housing through planning agreements and an aim to increase performance through S106 agreements.
 - Examination of the potential of new delivery mechanisms for affordable housing that will bolster existing practice, including involving private sector partners and negotiating more flexible S106 agreements.
 - Developing a partnership with a private finance organisation to release investment into new affordable housing.

9.8 Rural East Anglia

- 9.8.1.1 As the name implies, the sub region is intrinsically rural in nature. It has 337 parishes and towns with 319 having a population of 3000 or less. Fifty three percent of the population lives in villages and rural parishes.

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- 9.8.1.2 The make up of the housing market compared with the national picture shows a higher rate of owner occupation and lower rates of renting both in the private and social sectors. In addition the type of dwelling differs from the national picture, with a higher proportion of detached and a lower proportion of terraced dwellings and flats- therefore less choice of lower priced dwellings. The proportion of second homes is six times the national average. The private rented market tends to be concentrated in the market towns and some coastal areas.
- 9.8.1.3 The impact of the Right to Buy has seen a loss of mainly three bedroom family homes that have not been replaced.
- 9.8.1.4 Minority ethnic groupings are largely Portuguese, Chinese and Gypsies and Travellers. The sub region has many migrant workers in search of seasonal employment on the land or in food processing. King's Lynn has been designated as a dispersal area for asylum seekers, with around 100 households in private sector accommodation in the area. The sub region has identified a need for short term stopping places for Gypsies and Travellers, along with advocacy and support services.
- 9.8.1.5 The Rural East Anglia (REAP) sub regional strategy is available from <http://www.breckland.gov.uk/nwia/az.nsf/BreCategories/55AED5D25D40D7E6802566390043B234?OpenDocument&Site=Bre&Display=Bre>

9.9 *Thames Gateway- South Essex*

- 9.9.1.1 South Essex is part of the Thames Gateway growth area, and as such is of both regional and national priority. It has the potential to make a major improvement to the region's economy, the Thames gateway South Essex Partnership (TGSEP) was launched in 2001 to establish South Essex as a focal point for major economic regeneration and to draw in investment.
- 9.9.1.2 Historically the sub region has seen housing developments to meet the additional needs of the London housing market, but these have not been accompanied by jobs. Therefore an imbalance between housing and employment has seen high levels of commuting out of the area to work.
- 9.9.1.3 In economic terms the sub region is to achieve regeneration through jobs led growth, with a number of regeneration "hubs" identified throughout the sub region and delivery through special purpose vehicles. A key element of the growth agenda is to increase the local housing provision in a co-ordinated way with economic expansion, providing a more sustainable balance of local jobs and workers.
- 9.9.1.4 A key element of the sub regional approach is to achieve growth through regeneration and the re-use of previously developed land and

buildings. In Basildon, for example, the Renaissance Partnership has been formed to co-ordinate strategic development and regeneration.

- 9.9.1.5 The Thames Gateway South Essex sub regional strategy is available from www.tgessex.co.uk/downloads.php

9.10 *Yarmouth and Waveney*

- 9.10.1.1 These two coastal districts straddle the boundary between Norfolk and Suffolk. The sub region is characterised by challenging urban problems of deprivation, concentrations of poor housing and dereliction in inner urban neighbourhoods. But it also has significant rural populations, historic market towns, and settlements. The sub region suffers from severe and growing problems of affordability, a reducing supply of affordable housing and increased levels of homelessness. There are high levels of disability in the population and significant gaps in special needs housing provision.
- 9.10.1.2 Geographical isolation brought about by poor road and rail links has been a major issue, but the turning point is that local authorities no longer see the area as “end of the line”, but about east coast revival. The sub region has benefited from significant special investment projects in recognition of its economic and social problems, and has a very strong focus on regeneration.
- 9.10.1.3 The sub region is concerned that the focus on revival and regeneration should not be lost in the region’s need to deliver growth. The sub region has seen 5 Single Regeneration Budget schemes and 3 Sure start programmes. Both areas have Objective 2 and Assisted Area status, and Great Yarmouth is in receipt of Neighbourhood Renewal funding. Housing renewal has been a crucial element in these initiatives. Both districts have successfully bid for funds to redevelop their major town centres in partnership with delivery stakeholders, and are attracting innovative investment and development opportunities particularly around renewable energy. There are plans to form an Urban Development Regeneration company to focus on the renewal of derelict and underused urban land.
- 9.10.1.4 Whilst many local people have low incomes and changing circumstances throughout the year that take them in and out of benefit, there is evidence that people on middle incomes from Norwich are seeking the more affordable property in reasonable commuting distance within the sub region.

10 Lessons from the First Strategy and what has changed

- 10.1.1.1 The first RHS was launched at the beginning of June 2003, following the publication of the Sustainable Communities Plan. It was the first step in moving from largely descriptive Regional Housing Statements to a more strategic document.
- 10.1.1.2 However, most commentators would agree that in common with other regions it took a small strategic step, as might have been expected from a new document.
- 10.1.1.3 A short review of the RHS was carried out for the Forum in March 2004 by the Chartered Institute of Housing in order to discover what could be improved.
- 10.1.1.4 Among the recommendations were
- Improving the evidence base to include a better understanding of housing markets; the relationship between urban, market towns and rural; black and minority ethnic groups
 - Better synergy between RHS and other strategies and programmes
 - Better linkages of aims and objectives with the action plan
 - SMARTER action planning
- 10.1.1.5 Addressing these issues a number of research projects have now been completed or are currently underway to improve the region's knowledge of the housing needs in specific communities, and housing market relationships. The region's housing sub regions have produced their own sub regional strategies based on knowledge of housing markets and needs. The RHS has been a factor in working towards an integrated regional strategy.
- 10.1.1.6 In the intervening period since the first strategy was published a number of changes have appeared in the strategic environment
- A focus on the Government's Public Service Agreements, specifically the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's numbers 1, 5&7
 - The protection of capital (HIP) funding for individual local housing authorities which was established in the SCP comes to an

end in 05/06, meaning that all funding from the SRHP is discretionary from 06/07 onwards.

- Local authorities are conducting “Options Appraisals” on how they will achieve the Decent Homes Standard within their stock. All are to be completed by July 2005
- Regional research has been completed on affordable housing, now covering the backlog of need and key- worker housing needs⁴. This work underpins both the RHS and the Draft East of England Plan
- The Draft East of England Plan, with its implications for housing supply, has entered a period of public consultation.
- The Barker Review has set out how the Government expects housing and planning to be brought closer together at the regional level
- An Integrated Regional Strategy has been produced and agreed for the region.

11 Spatial and Housing Policy Implications of the East of England Plan

11.1.1.1 The East of England Plan proposes a policy framework for the East of England over the period 2001-2021. Policy SS13 in the Plan sets the overall target for the increase in the region’s dwelling stock for that period. In practice, this is a key driver in planning the release of land for residential development. The strategy behind the plan aims to ensure that this development takes place in locations providing the most sustainable pattern with respect to employment and infrastructure.

11.1.1.2 An explicit aim of the RHS is to complement and act as an instrument for delivering the East of England Plan. This requires the policies and other provisions of the RHS to address the need for strategic guidance and support for those engaged in planning new residential development.

⁴ See the research on EERA’s website under “Housing”

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- 11.1.1.3 In the East of England as a whole, strategic and operational land-use planning will need to be undertaken to ensure the provision of a total of 478,000 dwellings over the period 2001-2021. This indicates an annual average rate of completion of 23,900 net additional dwellings each year. The Plan acknowledges that the delivery of this scale of housing is dependent upon the timely delivery of infrastructure and job growth, and that the housing completions, infrastructure delivery, job creation and other economic and demographic factors will require close monitoring. Clearly, these changes will need to be monitored throughout the implementation period; in the meantime, the average rate offers a useful guide. As a reference point, the average rate of addition to the region's stock in the first three years of the period – i.e. between 2001-2004 – was about 19,300 p.a.
- 11.1.1.4 The East of England Plan breaks down the housing provision figures geographically into the county council and unitary authority areas of the region. Due to the RHS's adoption of sub-regions as the basis for housing investment and policies it is necessary to have a breakdown of regional provision figures for the same geographical areas. The following table shows a provisional sub-regional breakdown of the total new housing provision to 2021 in terms of percentages - this is based on a piece of work currently being undertaken for EERA.

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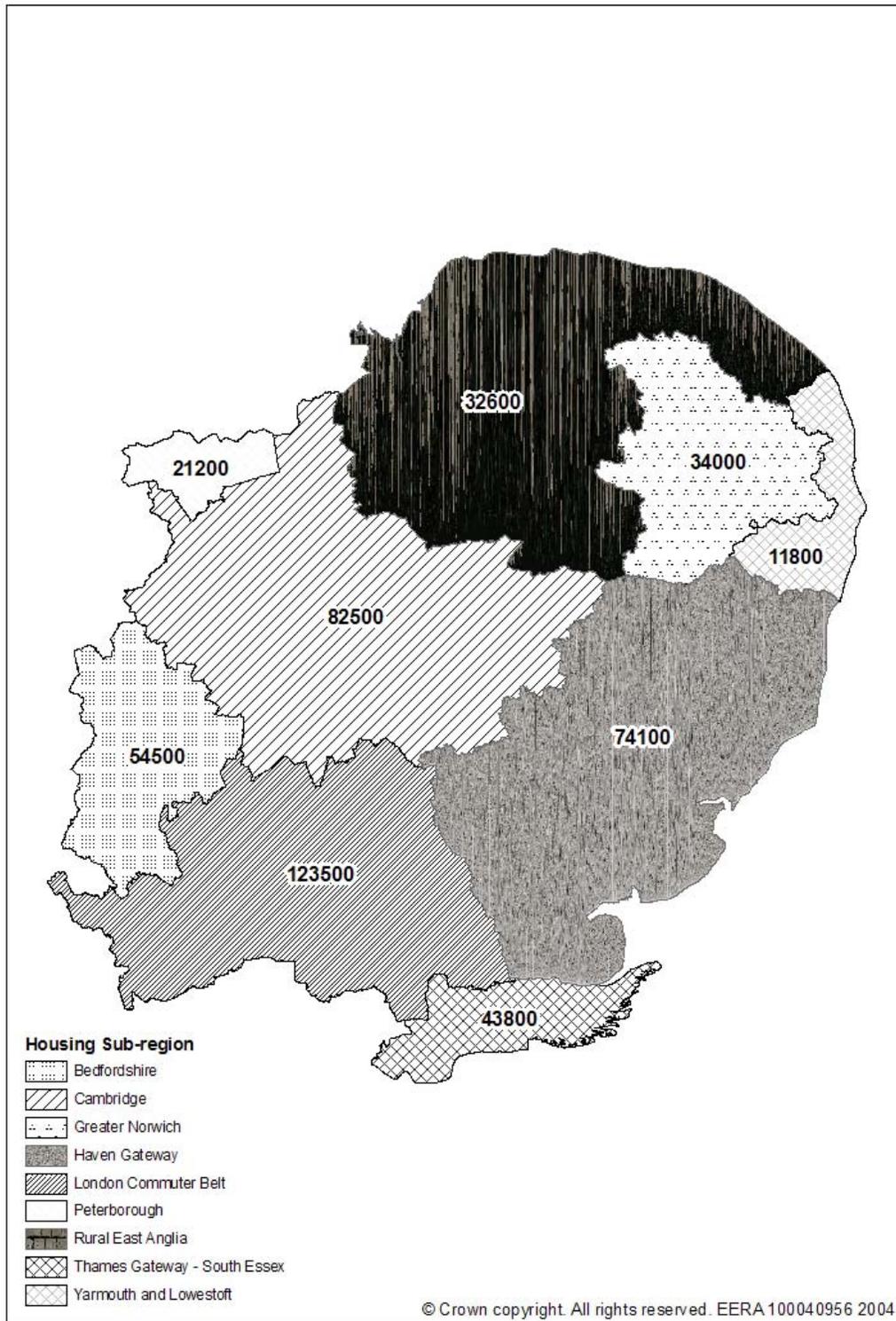


Figure 4: Distribution of new housing provision by sub region (mapped)

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Housing sub region	Wholly or partially in Growth area (Y/N)	Share of Regional Housing Stock	Share of planned increment in housing provision (2001-2021)	Planned increment in housing as a % of current housing stock
Bedfordshire	Y	10%	11.4%	24%
Cambridge	Y	13%	17.3%	28%
Greater Norwich	N	7%	7.1%	21%
Haven Gateway	N	17%	15.5%	19%
London Commuter Belt	Y	27%	25.8%	19%
Peterborough	Y	3%	4.4%	31%
Rural East Anglia	N	7%	6.8%	20%
Thames Gateway	Y	12%	9.2%	15%
Yarmouth and Waveney	N	4%	2.5%	12%
Total		100%	100% (478,000)	-

Figure 5: Distribution of new housing provision by sub region (tabular)

- 11.1.1.5 As not all sub-regions are the same size (Peterborough is one local authority, the London Commuter Belt is fifteen) the column showing the proportion of the existing stock is important to ensure a sense of proportion. What is notable is that some of the sub-regions planned to receive relatively high rates of growth are not in the “Growth Areas” designated by the Government in the Sustainable Communities Plan. This is neither surprising, nor, necessarily problematic: the distribution of growth in the East of England Plan relates to a regional view of priorities, and also to internal factors within the region; whereas the new Growth Areas have been designated as points of accelerated growth within the greater south east of the country around London. There are therefore clearly implications for the planning and funding of infrastructure provision to support the additional growth, and for longer term sustainability.
- 11.1.1.6 In preparing the East of England Plan, EERA commissioned an Affordable Housing Study in 2003. Information from this study informed the development of Policy SS13 on overall housing provision. Within the average provision for 23,900 additional dwellings each year, social rented housing should, based on this study, account for around 7,200 dwellings to accommodate the anticipated net additional need within the growing population of the region. This amounts to some 30% of overall provision, and therefore this proportion has been set in the Plan as the target for each local authority area, and as the minimum level for affordable housing provision on all but small residential developments.

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- 11.1.1.7 A second Affordable Housing Study (Phase 2 - 2004) has calculated that a further 1,320 units per year over 10 years will be needed to deal with the backlog of unmet need for social housing which is currently manifest in homelessness statistics and households trapped in overcrowding or otherwise unacceptable conditions. This is a rolling target that is difficult to identify precisely, and will require ongoing monitoring.
- 11.1.1.8 The phase 2 report also attempted to quantify the volume of the region's "intermediate market" – i.e. those households which would not qualify for social rented provision, but could not afford access to housing through the open market. The need for affordable housing provision for this group was estimated to be a further 2,400 dwellings per year. A key element of this is the provision of 760 dwellings per year for Key Workers as defined under the Government's Key Worker Living initiative; many of the others can be assumed to represent other categories of employee recognisable as key workers for local communities and economies within the region.
- 11.1.1.9 Adding all these elements of future need for affordable housing results in a volume of about 11,000 dwellings per year, or in excess of 45% of the total. As a consequence, the East of England Plan has set an aspirational level of exceeding 40% of new provision being affordable housing in the period up to 2015, to provide dwellings for social renting, key workers, and other intermediate needs, and to reduce the backlog of currently unmet need.
- 11.1.1.10 Although affordable housing must constitute at least 30% of housing supply in all local authority areas, authorities should set a higher target to secure at least 40% where housing stress warrants such higher provision. Provision in excess of 30% will be defined and justified in local development documents and housing strategies, informed by local housing assessments. These should also be provided for in the emerging sub-regional strategies, built upon an evidence base.

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11.1.1.11 A second table indicates the number of new homes required in each sub region using 30% and 40 % as minimum targets for affordable housing.

Housing sub region	Wholly or partially in Growth area (Y/N)	Percentage share of planned increment in housing provision 2001-2021	Share of planned total increment in housing provision-number of units	Indicative Share of new affordable housing at 30%	Indicative share at 30% 2001-2021 annualised	Indicative share at 40% 2001-2021 annualised
Bedfordshire	Y	11.4	54500	16350	817.5	1090
Cambridge	Y	17.3	82500	24750	1237.5	1650
Greater Norwich	N	7.1	34000	10200	510	680
Haven Gateway	N	15.5	74100	22230	1111.5	1482
London Commuter Belt	Y	25.8	123500	37050	1852.5	2470
Peterborough	Y	4.4	21200	6360	318	424
Rural East Anglia	N	6.8	32600	9780	489	652
Thames Gateway	Y	9.2	43800	13140	657	876
Yarmouth and Waveney	N	2.5	11800	3540	177	236
Total		100	478000	143400	7170	9560

Figure 6: Indicative share of new housing provision

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11.1.1.12 The third table compares these indicative targets to annual completions of affordable housing achieved over the last 3 years, giving an idea of the size of gap to be bridged in terms of affordable housing delivery in each sub region.

Housing sub region	Wholly or partially in Growth area (Y/N)	Indicative share at 40% annualised 2001-2021 (to nearest whole number)	As %	Completions ⁵ of new build affordable housing 2001-04 Average annual rate	As %	Difference between the indicative share and new build completions 2003/04	As %
Bedfordshire	Y	1090	11.4	225	10.3	865	11.7
Cambridge	Y	1650	17.3	436	19.9	1214	16.5
Greater Norwich	N	680	7.1	207	9.4	473	6.4
Haven Gateway	N	1482	15.5	313	14.3	1169	15.9
London Commuter Belt	Y	2470	25.8	756	34.5	1714	23.3
Peterborough	Y	424	4.4	36	1.6	388	5.3
Rural East Anglia	N	652	6.8	105	4.8	547	7.4
Thames Gateway	Y	876	9.2	57	2.6	819	11.1
Yarmouth and Waveney	N	236	2.5	56	2.6	180	2.4
Total		9560	100	2191	100	7369	100

Figure 7: The gap between indicative target and recent completions of affordable housing

11.1.1.13 Clearly there is a way to go to bring the amount of new housing that is required through to completion: the desired “step-change” in delivery.

11.2 The RHS Response

11.2.1.1 It is incumbent on those operating the planning system to ensure that it delivers the development sites necessary throughout the region to deliver the spatial strategy of the East of England Plan. In other words, the RHS takes as a given that, over the planning period, the desired volume of new housing can be produced in the region, distributed in accordance with the strategy.

11.2.1.2 The RHS itself must address the objective of ensuring that the new housing produced can match as far as practicable the needs for different types of housing – i.e. a balanced market. To do this, the RHS needs to set out policies and actions for those active in the housing sector, but also guidelines feeding back into the planning system to ensure that its operation facilitates the achievement of the appropriate housing supply.

⁵ Housing Corporation Completions data

12 Where are we going now? - Vision, Aims and Priorities for the Regional Housing Strategy

12.1 *RHS Vision and contributing aims*

12.1.1.1 Following a period of stakeholder consultation in November and December 2004, the original vision and aims have been recast as

12.1.1.2 **Vision: To ensure everyone can live in a decent home at a price they can afford in locations that are sustainable.**

12.1.1.3 **Contributing aims**

- To use housing investment to support economic development and ensure that the capacity of the housing sector can deliver
- To provide a sustainable environment and attractive places to live
- To promote social inclusion within sustainable communities
- To ensure that housing serves to improve the region's health and well-being and reduce inequalities.

12.2 *Priorities*

12.2.1.1 The RHS cannot attempt to do everything to resolve housing and related issues in the East of England. Its role is to provide a common framework for all the organisations –public private and voluntary- to relate to their own planning and other activities. Delivering the desired change is clearly the responsibility of these organisations. In any event, if the strategy is to be effective and properly strategic it should focus on those areas where it can make the most tangible difference and add value to the organisations' activities.

12.2.1.2 There are various "tools" available for public agencies charged with implementing the RHS

- the public investment in housing through the Single Regional Housing Pot and from agencies' own resources
- leverage over the use of private resources, e.g. through Section 106 agreements

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- use of the existing housing assets that are owned by housing providers; and
- the influence that the RHS has as part of the developing integrated regional strategy.
- It is vital that none of these resources is wasted, obtaining value for money.

12.2.1.3 The starting point for RHS priorities are the challenges identified within the context document. For each of these we need to ask “can the RHS do anything about this, if so –what?”

The “Challenge” facing RHS

Providing the 478,000 new homes required in the Draft East of England Plan by 2021

Providing them in the right places to ensure that the jobs/housing balance can be met through growth and regeneration

Providing the minimum 30% and the aspirational 40% affordable housing

Aspiring to higher (40%) provision of affordable housing in the period up to 2015 to meet subsidised social renting, key worker and intermediate needs and reduce the level of unmet need.

Providing a climate of greater certainty for the funding and land availability for affordable housing

Aiming to minimise environmental impact of new development by developing on previously developed land, at higher density rates and with improved design wherever practicable

Ensuring that existing housing stock is of a decent standard and within decent environments

Identifying and addressing “mis- match” in housing through over and under occupation

Maximising the use of existing stock by bringing empty homes and space back into use, and

What can RHS do?

Create a framework which will motivate housing developers to provide homes in accordance with the Draft East of England Plan

Support planners in guiding developers to the areas where homes are planned for., providing policies which will help create sustainable communities

Provide guidance to identify the required outputs and also on areas where public investment might be needed to ensure that affordable housing can be produced.

Set out priorities for public investment and other action to provide for a range of needs and gear up for more rapid development

Help to develop a longer- term view at the local and sub regional levels of what plans and actions will be needed to implement the overall strategy and also to develop more effective relationships between housing and planning and between public and private sectors.

Take forward the sustainable construction agenda with developers, provide exemplars and set targets

Set out targets and expectations and provide means for local housing authorities to work with the private sector.
Guide local action to support owners (private and public) in maximising the benefit of their assets

Provide a framework for local action to identify appropriate solutions in terms of policy or investment

Set out targets and expectations, prioritise investment where possible

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encouraging renewal and rehabilitation where appropriate	
Supporting the reduction in health inequalities by providing safer, warmer and more secure housing	Work with the developing Health Strategy to identify if and what regional interventions are necessary, for example in investment and design
Supporting sustainable and inclusive communities by providing more choice in housing provision and mixed developments	Set out expectations for mixed developments and prioritise investment arrangements. Support sub regions to consider wider application of choice-based lettings.
Ensuring that people receive appropriate support to stay at home if that is their wish	In dialogue with the Supporting People East Region Group (SPERG) group ensure co-ordination with the emerging strategies for Supporting People funding.
Ensuring that rates of homelessness are reduced through more effective prevention and access to more housing	Establish targets; provide policy guidance and investment priorities.
Ensuring that inclusion is based on better knowledge and awareness of the housing, cultural and social needs of our communities	Take account of the findings from current research projects in the final version of RHS. Identify areas where other research is needed in conjunction with other parts of the integrated regional strategy (particularly the social, cultural and health strategies). Prioritise investment
Ensuring that housing provision contributes to sustainability in rural as well as urban areas	Establish policies to be applied in planning and delivering housing to meet rural needs, based on research and involvement of stakeholders, particularly rural housing enablers
Planning for the future based on better intelligence and more effective involvement.	Identify potential areas for future research and use consultation processes effectively
Ensuring that housing investment achieves synergy with other public funding streams to provide better value for money	Develop the dialogue through IRS at regional level
Supporting the Regional Centre of Excellence to provide the skills and knowledge we will need to build a more sustainable future.	Develop dialogue at regional level
Addressing these challenges within the Regional Sustainable Development Framework.	Identify areas for improvement through the sustainability appraisal

Figure 8: Challenges for RHS

12.2.1.4 From the above analysis the priorities for the RHS are threefold

- More sustainable housing provision
- In high quality homes and environments
- To meet the needs of regional communities

13 More, sustainable housing provision

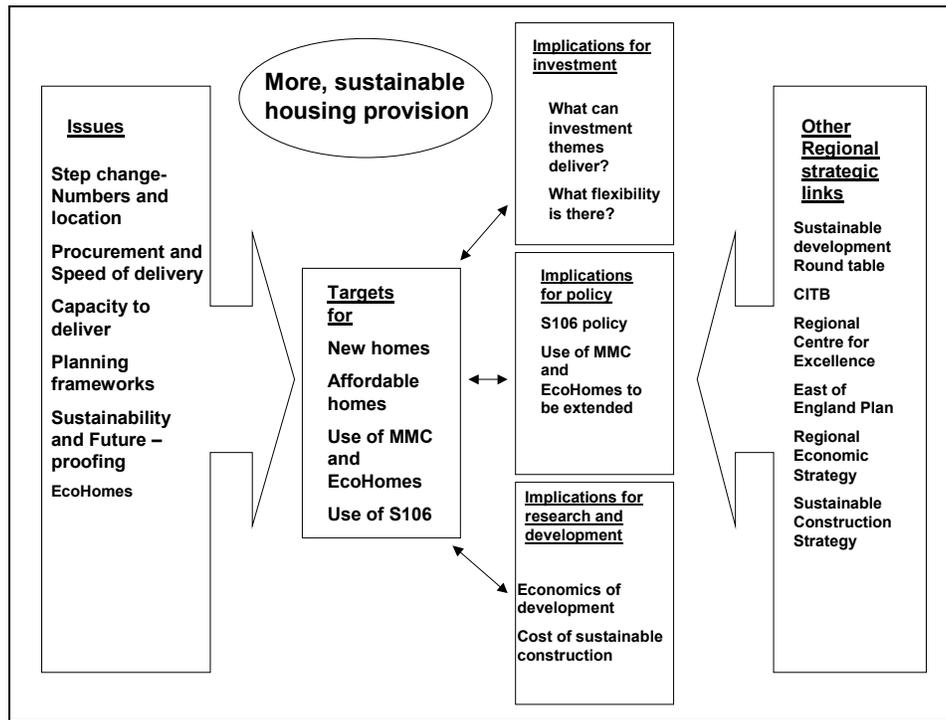


Figure 9: Elements of more, sustainable housing provision

13.1 *Bringing about the step-change in delivery*

- 13.1.1.1 Probably the key challenge for the RHS is to provide an effective strategic approach to ensuring that there is sufficient affordable housing of the right types within the new stock.
- 13.1.1.2 By its very nature, affordable housing is provision for those who cannot access suitable accommodation through supply on the open market, and therefore it requires intervention in that market. Although this can be achieved through specific control mechanisms helping to reduce the price to the consumer – typically through the levers of land ownership or the land-use planning system – there is inevitably a need for subsidy of some type to allow the reduction in price. In other words, even where direct financial subsidy is not applied, a reduced price for affordable housing produced through control mechanisms can only be achieved within overall financial arrangements that make business sense to the producers.
- 13.1.1.3 To achieve the required step-change to a regional production of affordable housing at a level of 7,200 up to 11,000 dwellings will clearly pose an enormous challenge to those involved in the housebuilding industry in the region. The complexity of this challenge predetermines that there can be no single policy solution. The

strategic approach will therefore need to consist of a bundle of measures whose aggregate effect is aimed at achieving the objective. Some options are set out here in a list – not necessarily exclusive – indicating areas for action. Following sections then address possible strategic approaches for guiding this action.

Public capital subsidy

- The volume of resources provided to the region through the Single Regional Housing Pot (SRHP) is at the discretion of Government. Regional action consists of ensuring that the Government is fully appraised of both the need for investment – e.g. to fulfil the objectives of the designated Growth Areas – and also the capacity in the region to deliver effectively and efficiently.
- Local authorities and other public bodies can supplement the SRHP resources with capital funding of their own. Although such funding will typically be aimed at their own local rather than strategic needs (e.g. funding for key worker schemes accommodating their own employees), the effect is to reduce the demands on the SRHP for subsidising the overall need for affordable housing.
- RSLs are able to recycle capital grant which is released from their sale of equity in existing subsidised housing.
- Capital subsidy from public programmes which are not housing-specific can sometimes be used where the provision of additional affordable housing also meets the objectives of the respective programmes – e.g. regeneration schemes.

Other capital subsidy

- Arrangements might be created through which private sector employers in areas of housing stress in the region could ensure affordable housing for key employees through the provision of capital subsidy for their housing. This would be attractive where other means of dealing with recruitment and retention problems are more expensive. (Revenue funding might be a further alternative in this area.)
- Voluntary sector funding of affordable housing is a practicable proposition where this fits the charitable purposes being pursued by the organisation in question. This is most likely to apply where the needs being addressed require care and support.

Land subsidy

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Land costs in the region are sufficiently high that the provision of land at reduced or nil cost can alone provide the subsidy needed to make the housing built on the land affordable to some or all need groups.

- Public, voluntary or private sector organisations owning land can provide it on a subsidised basis in pursuit of their own objectives.
- Private landowners are sometimes willing to sell their land below market value where the affordable housing that can be produced is of direct benefit to their communities. Although this is most common in villages, it need not be assumed to be impossible elsewhere.
- Public sector organisations – notably English Partnerships and EEDA – can finance the purchase and assembly of land to be provided at subsidised cost for projects including new affordable housing.
- Control through the planning system – mainly through Section 106 agreements - can be operated to make a condition of development that land for affordable housing is provided at subsidised cost.

Cross-subsidy

- Where affordable housing is to be provided within a development scheme involving open market housing – or retail or other forms of commercial land use – there is scope for part of the profit arising from the other developments being used to subsidise the affordable housing element in the scheme. Section 106 agreements can be used to ensure that cross-subsidy results in low procurement costs making housing affordable. This can be operated through the land price, building costs, or the cost price of the completed dwelling.
- RSLs and other not-for-profit organisations can develop mixed-tenure or mixed-use development schemes in which the potential profits on some elements are voluntarily recycled as subsidy for affordable housing.

Lower procurement costs

- By creating a more robust framework for longer-term planning, the regional, sub regional and local strategies for housing and land-use planning are facilitating housing development to be planned on a larger scale over a longer period. The resulting economies of scale should enable procurement costs to be reduced, and hence the need for subsidy too.

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- Strategic partnerships created between developers, builders, suppliers, landowners and funders can equally provide a framework for confident planning, lower “frictional” costs, and further economies of scale.
- By building up a “pipeline” of strategically planned development schemes throughout the region, the partnerships would provide a framework within which both commercial and grant funding arrangements can operate at lower cost.
- Modern methods of construction, product design and manufacture, and supply-chain management can all contribute to lower costs and need for subsidy, specifically if combined with the scale of operations which could be achieved through greater partnership working within more robust strategic planning frameworks.

13.2 The Affordable Housing Pipeline

- 13.2.1.1 Within an improving strategic framework it should be possible to direct work to bring forward the right housing schemes at the right time in the right place. Effective planning and management of the resulting pipeline should bring benefits to all players in the housing sector in the region, and the lower procurement costs needed to achieve the step-change in production.
- 13.2.1.2 In order to establish the present position with regard to schemes coming forward under the existing strategic arrangements, the “Housing Pipeline Project” was commissioned by the Regional Housing Board and carried out by members of the Regional Housing Forum. It looks at how much affordable housing is needed in the region, how much is likely to come forward, and the barriers in bringing housing schemes forward. The group’s final report is due in January 2005.
- 13.2.1.3 One of the key pieces of desktop research was “Improving the delivery of Affordable Housing in London and the SE: ODPM August 2003” This was commissioned by ODPM in April 2002 to identify ways of improving the delivery of affordable housing through the development process. It is based on action research in ten case study local authorities (four in London and six in the Greater South East, including Chelmsford and Bedford). Key stakeholders were also consulted.
- 13.2.1.4 The background information for the pipeline study looks at the need for affordable housing as evidenced by recent studies and highlighted in the Regional Housing Strategy, and at how this need can be broken down into various types. Information about development activity in recent years shows differences between different areas.

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- 13.2.1.5 Subsidy requirements will be forecast on the basis of the best available estimates. Similarly, this will be translated into requirements for capital grant from the RHP where other forms of subsidy will be insufficient.
- 13.2.1.6 One issue of interest will be to consider strategic decision making over resources where there is a mismatch between the development opportunities and the strategic priorities i.e. land is coming forward but in the “wrong places”.
- 13.2.1.7 One task of the Pipeline Project is to see how much these factors are affecting development in the East of England, and whether the earlier report, and the work of Kate Barker⁶, have resulted in improvements to the processes.
- 13.2.1.8 Part of the project is to identify the amount and status of sites in the supply chain to try and bring about the longer-term certainty that housing associations, developers and planners have been calling for. Work is already underway to gather information from housing associations about sites they know of and which are likely to come forward in the coming years. This work is being led by the Housing Corporation using information on site availability from housing associations, developers and local authorities. Once established, this will become an on-going process to inform and support delivery of the Regional Housing Strategy
- 13.2.1.9 The survey work on the present pipeline is on-going and incomplete. The table below sets out the results so far in terms of development sites in the pipeline which should be available for the 2006-08 investment programme from the next SRHP. These are sites whose actual development should be in the period covered by that programme, and therefore which could benefit from grant funding from the SRHP. When the survey is completed in March, the results will play a key role in informing the strategic allocation of SRHP resources for 2006-08, on the basis that the use of these resources will be aimed at confident delivery and maximising the value deriving from the investment. Both these aims are best served through investment in schemes whose planning and design have been strategically directed and have had to mature into plans for sustainable communities.
- 13.2.1.10 The table at figure 10 below shows the difference between the planned level to meet need at the lower rate of 30%, and the currently known pipeline.
- 13.2.1.11 Information on the pipeline will inform future investment programmes in a similar manner. However, directed by the RHS itself, the nature of the pipeline in future should be following the desired allocation of

⁶ The “Barker Report” for HM Treasury April 2004

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resources, rather than the tendency in 2006-08 for the influence inevitably to be in the other direction.

Housing sub region	Annualised share of indicative new affordable housing in EoE Plan (at 30%)	Current view of supply chain for 2006-08 SRHP investment	2006-08 supply chain "annualised"	"Shortfall" between current supply chain and annualised need (at 30%)
Bedfordshire	817	1410	705	112
Cambridge	1237	1754	877	360
Greater Norwich	510	395	198	312
Haven Gateway	1111	122	61	1050
London Commuter Belt	1852	1641	821	1031
Peterborough	318	686	343	-25
Rural East Anglia	489	793	397	192
Thames Gateway	657	992	496	161
Yarmouth and Waveney	177	124	62	115
Total	7168	7917	3958	3210

Figure 10: Sub Regional breakdown of the supply chain (provisional position January 2005)

13.2.1.12 A comparison of percentage shares between the planned increment in affordable housing and the current total supply chain information shows the following sub-regional picture.

Housing sub region	Percentage share of planned increment in housing provision 2001-2021	% Share of the supply chain (from current view of supply chain figure 10 above)	Difference
Bedfordshire	11.4	17.8	+6.4
Cambridge	17.3	22.2	+4.9
Greater Norwich	7.1	5.0	-2.1
Haven Gateway	15.5	1.5	-14.0
London Commuter Belt	25.8	20.7	-5.1
Peterborough	4.4	8.7	+4.3
Rural East Anglia	6.8	10.0	+3.2
Thames Gateway	9.2	12.5	+3.3
Yarmouth and Waveney	2.5	1.6	-0.9
Total	100	100	

Figure 11: Comparing the planned increment of affordable housing to the supply chain

13.2.1.13 In neither the overall scale of supply, nor its geographical distribution, does the supply chain revealed through the current information match

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the need for new affordable housing in the short term. It is anticipated that further work will bring the scale of the chain into line, however there can be less certainty that this will apply to its distribution across the sub-regions. As a consequence, there will be a particular need for local action in some sub-regions to bring forward additional schemes for their pipelines to produce the strategically required outcomes. This will be in addition to work across the region in the immediate future to develop the pipeline for subsequent years.

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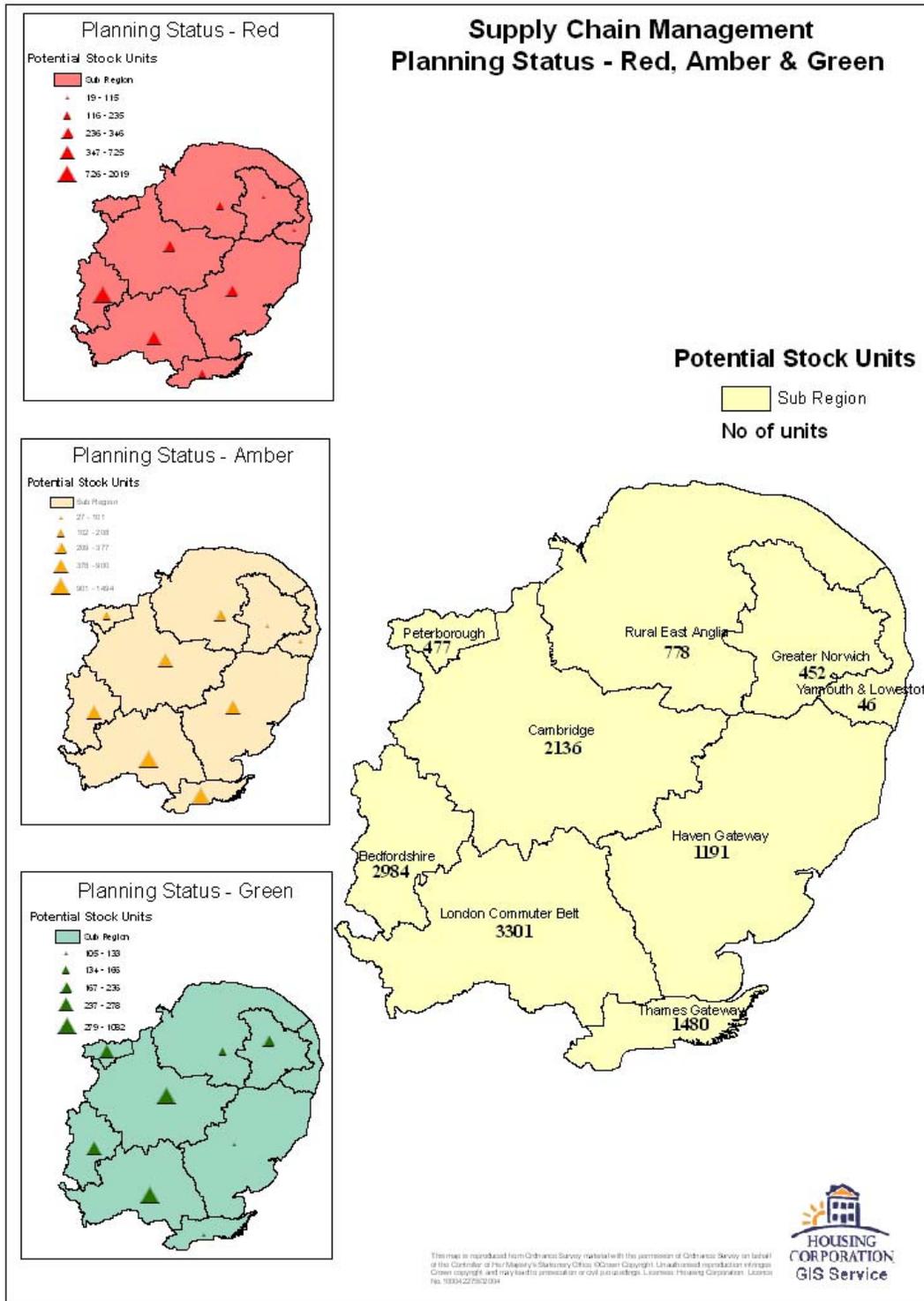


Figure 12: The potential supply chain mapped

13.2.2 Recommendations for Regional process, policy and investment decisions

- 13.2.2.1 RHF will work with the Sub Regions to bring forward additional schemes to develop the pipeline, particularly in those areas where additional schemes are required to produce the strategic outcomes of planned provision.
- 13.2.2.2 RHB investment increasingly strategically targeted towards planned provision.

13.3 Procurement and speed of delivery

- 13.3.1.1 There is a clear need to increase the speed of delivery to address the need for housing in the East of England. Both the Sustainable Communities Plan and the more recent Barker report highlight the issue.
- 13.3.1.2 The government is encouraging Modern Methods of construction (MMC) to achieve a step change in the quantity and quality of housing we need. MMC primarily involves the manufacture of homes in factories, with the potential benefits of faster construction, fewer housing defects and reductions in energy use and waste.
- 13.3.1.3 Because of the economic, social and environmental benefits of MMC the Government has established initiatives to encourage its use, focusing on the social housing sector. From 2004 the Housing Corporation required at least one quarter of new houses to be built using MMC. In the East of England 58% of the allocations for the investment years 2004/06 will use some form of MMC. A higher target may be used in the future.



Peddars Way Housing Association, part of the Flagship Housing Group, has provided ten family homes using affordable modular homes. Houses are manufactured in a factory and delivered to the site fully furnished, including all services, decorations, windows and fittings. The houses are craned into position onto the prepared foundations, ready for a traditional outer shell and roof to be added.

The homes are developed as part of the “Folio” partnership, developing, improving and expanding the range of modular home types.

Figure 13: MMC Gypsy Road Norwich

- 13.3.1.4 In the private sector the government sponsored “Rethinking Construction” programme has been encouraging the use of MMC through promoting best practice and providing more information. It is estimated that about 10% of new UK homes are built using timber frames and 5% using other MMC⁷.
- 13.3.1.5 There is on-going research to assess the benefits of MMC. The Housing Corporation commissioned the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) to evaluate the use of MMC in homes built for its Challenge Fund. Nationally, further work is being carried out to consider cost; industry capacity; environmental benefits and quality.
- 13.3.1.6 This is an area that The Regional Centre for Excellence may be able to take forward with regional partners.
- 13.3.1.7 It may also be possible to link into the local authority work on public service excellence. New centres of procurement excellence have been established across the country, with Norfolk County Council hosting the centre for the East of England.
- 13.3.1.8 Harlow, which is a Pathfinder Authority on the ODPM’s Strategic Partnering Task Force, is currently moving towards a strategic Service Delivery Partnership (SSDP) for works and procurement related activities. Through this partnership they hope to produce significant

⁷ “Postnote” parliamentary briefing number 209.

cost and service improvements in delivering a range of works services, including repairs, maintenance and improvement of Council owned homes. They have also entered into a partnership with a uPVC window/door manufacturing and installation company to supply and fit new doors and windows as part of the Decent Homes and Energy Efficiency works programmes.

13.3.2 Recommendations for Regional process, policy and investment decisions

- 13.3.2.1 The Housing Corporation should continue to require Housing Associations to expand the use of MMC. The principle should also be extended to developers of market housing through work with the Regional Centre for Excellence.

13.4 *Industry Capacity to deliver*

- 13.4.1.1 The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) in its report “Another Brick in the wall” relates that the East of England has the largest construction output outside London and the South East. Repair and maintenance, including improvements in the housing sector, constitute 48% of the region’s total construction output.

- 13.4.1.2 However, the report concludes with a forecast that output needs to grow further, combined with an ageing workforce and an inadequate supply of new entrants, the East of England construction industry is likely to experience increased skills shortages. This poses a threat to delivery of the step-change increase in housing output. It also suggests that costs might rise to make the achievement of affordable housing even more difficult.

- 13.4.1.3 In order to address these issues the CITB is working with regional partners to improve the construction labour market. One example of a local initiative is CEMENT, a project being carried out in Dacorum Borough Council has secured £1.5 million of EU funding to address the skills shortages in the region’s construction industry. The scheme aims to find construction jobs for marginalized groups and pursue better ways of working.

13.4.2 Recommendations for Regional process, policy and investment decisions

- 13.4.2.1 The development industry, the CITB, Learning and Skills Councils and the Regional Centre for Excellence should determine a policy and action plan to deliver the skills that will be needed to increase the quantity and quality of homes in the East of England. Development partners should seek to develop local labour in construction arrangements wherever possible.

13.5 Planning frameworks

- 13.5.1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides a framework for reform of the planning system, aiming to address concerns that the system was too complex and hard to understand; perceived to be preventing development and was slow; with varying degrees of performance between local authorities and that it failed to engage communities.
- 13.5.1.2 The system of unitary, local and structure plans is replaced by a new system of regional spatial strategies (the draft East of England Plan for example) and local development documents prepared by local planning authorities.
- 13.5.1.3 There is currently consultation on proposed changes to planning obligations through S106 agreements via a revised draft circular. This is highly significant for the East of England as it is currently estimated⁸ that 52% of affordable housing schemes have some dependence on S106 agreements, and that the proportion of housing is much greater than this.
- 13.5.1.4 Furthermore this topic generated more discussion than any other during the initial round of consultation. The need for clarity and longer-term certainty is top of the list for housing providers and their partners.
- 13.5.1.5 Affordable housing is often one of a list of potential requirements under planning obligations that might also cover transport improvements, health and education facilities, conservation and biodiversity to name but a few. Moreover, housing is normally different from the other requirements in that its handling within agreements has potentially two significant but different dimensions.
- 13.5.1.6 It is becoming increasingly normal practice for planning authorities to set targets for the volume or proportion of affordable housing on development sites covered by s106 agreements. This is a welcome development given how important it will be as a mechanism for achieving the 30-40% targets for affordable housing over the 2001-2021 period set out in the East of England Plan. However, necessary as this might be to achieve the targets, it is clearly not sufficient.
- 13.5.1.7 What is also needed is for obligations in s106 agreements to require that due consideration is given to the use of planning gain as subsidy for the affordable housing planned for each site. Clearly, the use of planning gain in this way must be balanced with the competing needs for it to be used to fund other infrastructure and amenities. However, if these always dominate, and no subsidy is provided for affordable housing, it appears certain that the alternative sources of subsidy

⁸ Source the Housing Corporation

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available to the region will be quite insufficient to ensure the volume of affordable housing required by the East of England Plan.

- 13.5.1.8 In future, when the process for planning and delivering housing through the RHS has had time to mature - and, particularly, when this has been integrated into the process for strategic and local land-use planning – it can be expected that the RHS sets out clear and integrated policies and proposals for the use of s106 to achieve both sustainable communities and the requisite supply of affordable housing. In the meantime, the RHS needs to provide as much practicable guidance as possible for those grappling with the challenge of making s106 to work effectively on the ground.

Urban capacity studies may be able to give a picture of physical capacity but may not take market viability into account. In London the Greater London Assembly has developed a methodology to assess this economic viability alongside physical capacity. The methodology that has been developed and tested uses information from studies of physical capacity supplemented by planning and development information to provide a description of the quality and type of dwelling that may be built on identified sites. Market information and estimates of building and development costs are also combined. Total development costs are deducted from expected revenue to provide guidance to developers.

Figure 14: GLA model of site viability

Within the Cambridge Sub Region “SmartLIFE” (Smart innovations for our Environment) is an innovative pilot project to address the three challenges to housing delivery in growth areas

- Affordability
- Sustainability/ Energy Efficiency
- Skills/ Capacity shortages in the Construction Industry – line spacing

The pilot is to deliver a regional pilot of 80 new, quality affordable homes using MMC combined with construction training of local people. The pilot is expected to run from 2004-2007.

Figure 15: SmartLIFE initiative Cambridge

13.5.2 Recommendations for Regional process, policy and investment decisions

- 13.5.2.1 There is a role for the RHS to clarify the principles on achieving affordable housing provision through the use of S106 agreements, and promoting the co-ordination at sub regional level. There is also a role to improve the understanding of site economics and scheme viability and bring together examples of good practice at the regional level.
- 13.5.2.2 The region should develop a robust policy for the use of s106 agreements and the rest of the land-use planning system as a means for better implementation of the regional housing strategy.

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Proposed Policy Framework for Developing Section 106 agreements

A robust s106 policy will need a better understanding of the way the housing market operates and how site economics work. Nonetheless, available knowledge points to several guiding principles which can be used immediately:

No “one size fits all” approach	Significant variations in land prices, construction costs, variety in housing needs and property sale prices across the region and through time mean that there is no “one-size-fits-all” in the shape of a simple policy for setting rules for subsidy levels. Each scheme or area will need to be dealt with separately.
Subsidy from planning gain	All typical uses of planning gain subsidy – open space, roads, housing, etc. – are <u>all</u> necessary for the sustainability of the new communities, and can <u>all</u> be funded from alternative, finite resources. In each case, therefore, a balance needs to be struck between the competing uses of subsidy, and this needs to be informed by a dialogue with those responsible for managing the alternative resources. It would be short-sighted and counterproductive for those negotiating s106 agreements simply to assume that capital funding from the SRHP would be automatically available for subsidising affordable housing in their schemes. Since investment from the SRHP will normally be used in schemes which have been planned as part of the evolving pipeline, there is every opportunity to consider and negotiate the possible use in any particular scheme well in advance of the final commitment of tendering, and before a s106 agreement is finalised.
Grant funding	No “standard” levels of grant funding should be assumed to apply to investment from the SRHP, with or without the benefit of planning gain subsidy for any particular scheme. The future scale of affordable housing provision in the region predetermines that a large proportion will have to be created without the benefit of capital grants from the SRHP. It is therefore recommended that SRHP funding is used in all cases as “gap funding” – i.e. to provide a top-up where all other possible sources of subsidy have been exhausted in setting up a strategically selected project. By implication, this requires the use of planning gain through s106 to be established <u>before</u> the final decision on levels of public grant subsidy, not vice versa, as was often the case in the past.
The process	Each new housing scheme has a number of legitimate stakeholders. For different reasons, all have interest in the scheme being a success: although success may be defined in different ways, there will ultimately be but one scheme, and therefore all will need to be able to claim a degree of success. Against this background, the processes of design and negotiation which result in the final scheme – which are sometimes approached as battles between opposing forces – could equally and more profitably be approached as partnerships. All parties have a legitimate interest, and, more importantly, all depend to a degree on the others, and on the others’ cooperation. Negotiations over section 106 agreements should therefore be approached as exercises in which all can be winners, and where no party needs to be a “loser”. In this context, the mix of different sources of subsidy for affordable housing could be a matter of jointly striking a balance between the alternative options for each resource’s use.
Mix of tenure	New housing schemes need to be sustainable, and this will normally result in there being a mix of tenures and building sizes and types in the scheme. Except in the rare case where these mixes are rigidly predetermined, there will be scope for adjustments to be made during the detailed design of the scheme. Equally, adjustments can be made in its initial planning, and these can be used to modify the overall amount of capital subsidy required (from any source) due to the differential

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economics of different housing/tenure types.
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Figure 16: Proposed policy framework for S106 agreements

13.6 Sustainability and future-proofing

- 13.6.1.1 The region’s sustainability framework is a template for guiding partner organisations in the Region when drawing up their own strategies and action plans. The framework identifies nine high level objectives and a number of relevant indicators for each of these. This is designed to be compatible with the government’s UK strategy for sustainable development “A Better Quality of Life”.
- 13.6.1.2 An East of England Toolkit has been developed by the UK Centre for Economic and Environmental Development (UK CEED), an independent not-for-profit foundation, as a first step to help assess and guide projects and strategies by public and private sector bodies within the region to help ensure their compatibility with the SDF. It is a web-based toolkit designed for use under *A Sustainable Development Framework for the East of England’s* 21 high-level environmental, social and economic objectives. The provisional RHS assessment is included within the context document in section 20. It is expected that consultation responses will inform this assessment.
- 13.6.1.3 Investing in schemes to meet “growth” will obviously help to deliver the proposed level of growth to 2021. However, delivering this level of growth will have an impact on the environment and so the emphasis must also be on the density, design and quality of schemes to minimise environmental impact.
- 13.6.1.4 The “EcoHomes”⁹ standard is an environmental assessment method and the Housing Corporation has set targets for housing associations in new developments. For current allocations none have yet achieved the EcoHomes “excellent” standard, but 8% are “very good”, 67% “good” and 24% “pass”.
- 13.6.1.5 There appears to be limited evidence¹⁰ on a cost-benefit approach to building at higher rates of growth and securing a move to “excellent” EcoHome design across the house-building sector. Although clearly the issue is being considered under the “sustainable construction” work being carried out by CITB (See context document for more detail).
- 13.6.1.6 Two of the issues are
- The length of time over which any additional cost may be discounted.

⁹ See the reference in the context document under delivery

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- Customer perspectives and choice

13.6.1.7 It may be that customer perspectives will change over time as people take environmental issues more seriously. There is a role, perhaps for the Regional Centre for Excellence, to co-ordinate the activities of regional partners and lead a regional initiative on EcoHomes.

13.6.1.8 Research and development and innovation are likely to be features within the process, learning from experience elsewhere in the UK and the world.



These bungalows have been provided by Peddars Way Housing Association in Honingham, Norfolk and are the first earth-sheltered social housing to be provided in this country. The principle is that they will maintain a consistent internal temperature within the home without the need for any additional cooling or heating mechanisms.

Figure 17: Earth dwellings, Norfolk.

13.6.2 Recommendations for Regional process, policy and investment decisions

13.6.2.1 The Housing Corporation should continue its progress with Housing Associations to achieve EcoHomes standards. Such standards should be extended to the private sector through development work with the Regional Centre for Excellence and the Sustainable Construction Forum. As the Region's Planning and Housing Body, EERA should take a co-ordinating role that is linked to the responsibility for the Annual Monitoring Report

¹⁰ There was a DEFRA report to investigate this published in June 2004

14 High quality homes and environments

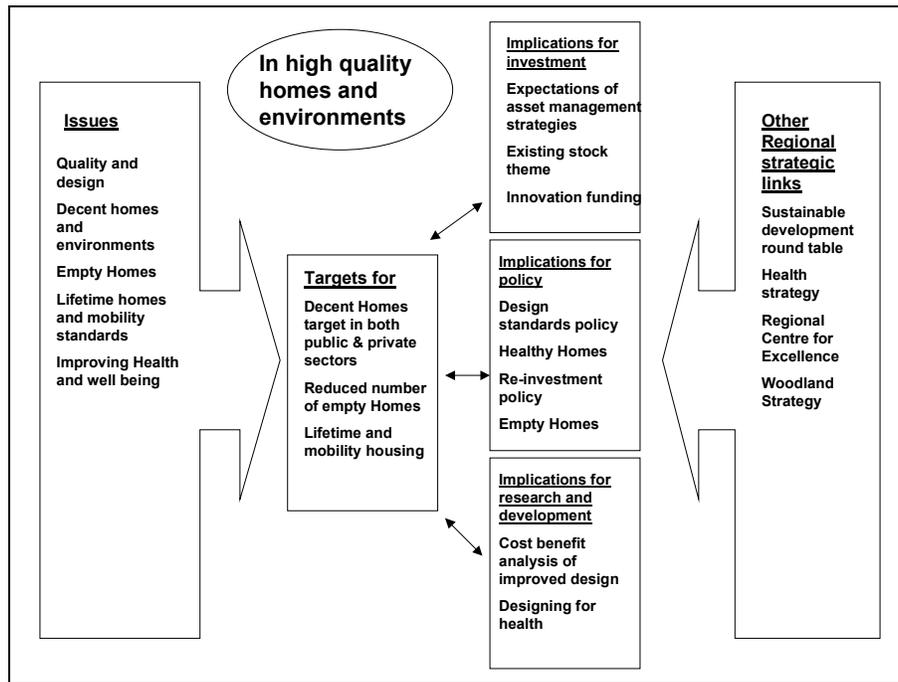


Figure 18: Elements of high quality homes and environments

14.1 Quality and design

- 14.1.1.1 The Sustainable Communities Plan emphasised that the step-change was not only about the delivery of more homes, but also about creating communities and attractive places to live and work. High quality design is vital.
- 14.1.1.2 The Government has funded the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) to provide greater support to delivering high quality housing.
- 14.1.1.3 CABE is working with English Partnerships to promote urban regeneration training and development, and with the Housing Quality Forum to disseminate best practice within the housing growth areas.
- 14.1.1.4 CABE, the House Builders Federation and the Civic Trust have developed a new “Building for Life” award to mark high standards in volume development. In conjunction with the Housing Corporation CABE has published “Affordable Housing: Better by Good Design”, and as part of this “design champions” have been established in housing associations.
- 14.1.1.5 In the East of England CABE has established a post jointly with EEDA to work on housing and design across the region. A number of

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regional initiatives are under way, including an Urban Place Supplement to the influential Essex Design Guide.

- 14.1.1.6 The recent Housing Audit¹¹ carried out across London, the South East and East of England found that compared to the overall results, results in the East of England were not encouraging. “Fewer schemes achieved a “very good” score in the East of England region, with a higher proportion achieving a “poor” score. But where there were “very good” schemes, it was their simplicity of design in terms of imaginative handling of parking and access, and their overall architectural quality which appeared to be distinguishing factors; the Essex Design Guide clearly continues to have a strong influence on housing layout and approaches to highway design”
- 14.1.1.7 Two schemes with a “very good” and “good” scores are in Chelmsford. They are a Bellway Homes scheme at Willow Court and a David Wilson Homes scheme at Beaulieu Park respectively.



Figure 19: Willow Court Chelmsford

- 14.1.1.8 The scheme at Beaulieu Park contains 20% affordable housing (in line with policy at the time). It is a large scheme of 102 units and was subject to a master-planning process.

¹¹ “Housing Audit: Assessing the design quality of new homes” CABE October 2004.



Figure 20: Beaulieu Park Chelmsford

- 14.1.1.9 The ODPM has described the prize-winning Abode development in Harlow as setting “new standards of design excellence”. The landowners had a vision for an interesting sustainable community, rejecting car dominated formula housing estates. A design competition ensured high quality standards from the start.
- 14.1.1.10 The average density will be 40 dwellings per hectare, with 25% of homes affordable. 40% of the site will be dedicated to open spaces and community facilities. The latest stage of affordable housing is Moat Housing Group’s development of 26 homes, and this too has been awarded a Housing Design Award in September 2004 for a “deceptively simple piece of design, with highly effective internal planning. The project includes a mix of flats and houses for rent and shared ownership, and includes three homes with integral garages for wheelchair users.



Figure 21: New Hall Farm, Harlow.

- 14.1.1.11 Greater public participation in the planning system also offers an opportunity to consult more widely about design and change for the

future. More involvement and better quality housing development may ameliorate some public opposition to development, particularly when public benefits can be effectively demonstrated.

14.1.2 Recommendations for Regional process, policy and investment decisions

14.1.2.1 The Regional Housing Forum will address the “design deficit” within its current structure, and work more closely with CABE regionally.

14.1.2.2 In order to encourage better design and quality across the board the Forum will seek to develop “Regional Recommendations” on quality and design from the Regional Centre for Excellence.

14.2 Decent homes and environments

14.2.1.1 Whilst there is no doubt about the need to build more homes in the region to meet present and future needs, there can be little doubt either of the necessity to make the best of what we already have. Doing this will not contribute to “growth” but has a much more limited impact on the environment.

14.2.1.2 The existing housing stock at 2.3 million homes is bigger than the overall growth proposed – a significant asset and we ignore the condition it is in at our peril.

14.2.1.3 Properties may be unsuitable/ unavailable to live in for many different reasons, the main ones being

- They are in need of repair to meet “decency” standards
- They are in need of repair or renovation to make them fit for modern day use, to better suit the needs of their occupiers or to change their use if “redundant”
- They are in unattractive neighbourhoods
- They are left empty by their owners

14.2.1.4 Significantly the Government requires homes to be brought up to the “Decent Homes Standard”, with different targets for the public and private sectors. Within the public sector housing associations are expected to attain the standard through their business planning processes, ensuring that needs are assessed and the necessary funds are made available through their own financial management.

14.2.1.5 Local authorities are currently conducting “Options Appraisals” to identify whether they have the capacity to achieve the standard within their current arrangements. These options are considered in

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consultation with tenants and the outcome of the appraisals for all local housing authorities will be known by July 2005. When allocating funding the Regional Housing Board must not undermine options appraisals.

- 14.2.1.6 Local authorities are also expected to have in their business plans targets for both public and private sector decent homes.
- 14.2.1.7 Disrepair in the private sector is not the problem that it is in some parts of the country, where it contributes to large areas of low demand and abandonment. However, it remains a concern for many local authorities trying to bring homes up to a decent standard for vulnerable groups. The Decent Homes target for private sector housing occupied by vulnerable households is to increase to 70% the number of such households living in decent housing by 2010.
- 14.2.1.8 The map shown at figure 35 in the context document is based on the “ready reckoner” using derived information on conditions in the private sector, giving a broad-brush picture. It illustrates that this tends to be a problem around the “fringes” of the region, particularly in some the coastal areas.
- 14.2.1.9 Other areas where deteriorating condition is likely to be a particular problem are in the older “new town” areas such as Basildon, Harlow, Stevenage, and to some extent Peterborough where people bought the Commission for New Town stock and they, like their homes, are becoming increasingly vulnerable. This presents a particular problem as high numbers of homes reach a vulnerable stage at the same time.
- 14.2.1.10 Finally pockets of multiple deprivation such as in Luton and Great Yarmouth are likely to demonstrate problems of disrepair.
- 14.2.1.11 Local authorities have to carry out private sector stock surveys and have private sector renewal strategies with powers to encourage or coerce private landlords to improve their properties. These powers have recently been extended by the Housing Act 2004. Among other requirements it has introduced the responsibility for local housing authorities to assess the condition of stock using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, which considers the risks that occupiers face in their homes.
- 14.2.1.12 Knowing the scale of the problem is one thing, having the resources to deal with it is another. Most sub regions agree that the scale of the problem is beyond the scope of current resources to resolve, however the “Decent Homes” target remains to be achieved. The Regulatory Reform Order of 2002 has provided local housing authorities with additional powers to tackle these issues such as by providing loans and working in partnership with others.
- 14.2.1.13 One of the difficulties for local authorities is accessing alternative funding for repairs through loans. “Equity release” is one model that

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has been used, but is not universally popular because of the requirement for a charge on the property and the tendency to release large sums of money when the need might actually be for small sums.

- 14.2.1.14 There are a number of other models that could be used, for example Community Investment Trusts or working with housing associations in their capacity as “social investment agents”. These solutions have tended to be used in urban and metropolitan areas with significant stock condition problems. However, the Suffolk Regeneration Trust was established in 2004 using the model established by Community Finance Solutions at the University of Salford that has been adopted in areas such as Portsmouth and Salford. Among its aims the Trust seeks to work with partners to tackle debt and financial exclusion.
- 14.2.1.15 Problems of condition and disrepair may not be limited to single dwellings, but extend into neighbourhoods and impact on quality of life. Local environments are important in shaping people’s attitudes and delivering opportunities for greater involvement and opportunity. The term “Liveability” has been coined to encompass environmental quality, the use and management of public and open space, that can in turn be allied to a community safety agenda.
- 14.2.1.16 Furthermore there are significant links between “liveability” and health—both physical and mental. Children are disproportionately affected by the quality of the local environment since they are the ones who spend most time in parks and play areas.
- 14.2.1.17 Poor quality environments are also associated with increased fear of crime. Empty and/or boarded up homes are a wasted resource, but can also be an “advertisement” for neighbourhood decline.
- 14.2.1.18 Policy SS11 in the East of England Plan identifies priority areas for regeneration “to secure sustainable economic, social and environmental development across the whole of the East of England” It identifies areas with weak economic performance and high deprivation with examples, and areas with high deprivation with examples. Priority areas are concentrated on some of the larger urban areas and on the more peripheral north and east of the region. Local Development documents will set out the local policies to deal with these problems.
- 14.2.1.19 A final but very important point is that regeneration, particularly when it includes rehabilitation of existing dwellings or change of use, contributes significantly to the “previously developed land” target.

14.2.2 Recommendations for Regional process, policy and investment decisions

- 14.2.2.1 The RHB must continue to provide funds for local authorities to improve the condition of stock in the private sector. In addition

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- earmarking “innovation” funding to encourage new initiatives will underpin good practice.
- 14.2.2.2 The RHF should work with the National Housing Federation to promote a wider understanding of its members’ social investment capacity.
- 14.2.2.3 Regional partners should work with EEDA to evaluate the Suffolk Regeneration Trust and whether the approach could be replicated elsewhere in the region.
- 14.2.2.4 The RHB must also ensure that investment for regeneration can underpin Policy SS11 in the draft East of England Plan, and that housing investment can play its part alongside other funding for regeneration activities.
- 14.2.2.5 RHS should ensure that “green space” has a place in plans to improve liveability of areas in developing work/ recommendations on design and quality for existing neighbourhoods.

Proposed Policy Framework for Decent Homes	
Public Sector Stock	Local Authorities and housing associations should ensure that their work on options appraisals and asset management produce solutions that are appropriate to their area and client groups to meet the Decent Homes Standard, and implement them according to the timetable.
Private Sector stock	<p>Emphasis will be placed on supporting schemes which reduce the proportion of vulnerable people living in non-decent housing within the private sector, and areas where there is a clear appreciation of local conditions, both in terms of the built environment and social factors. Innovation and the use of Interest-free loans and equity-release schemes will be encouraged. RHB will work with EEDA to develop more manageable equity release programmes- perhaps taking forward the model in Suffolk and seeking to expand elsewhere.</p> <p>Private landlords will be encouraged to develop their role in meeting housing need. For Private rented sector landlords Housing Benefit administration is a major issue. RHB should consider whether there should be recommendations on benefit administration as part of all round performance and subsequent investment in private sector renewal. The 2001 English House Condition Survey of Private Landlords also highlights the rise in lettings by private individuals and the need for health and safety information from local authorities. There may be a co-ordinating role for the RHF with ARLA .</p> <p>It is important to review coverage of private sector stock condition surveys, share regional knowledge and good practice.</p>
Empty Homes	Regional research and developing regional good practice perhaps through the adoption of an Empty Property charter are important areas to develop. In addition to seek pilot schemes such as private sector leasing with a managing agent partner.

Figure 22: Proposed Policy Framework for decent Homes

14.3 *Empty and unoccupied housing space*

- 14.3.1.1 Unoccupied household space includes second residences/ holiday accommodation as well as vacant household space.

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- 14.3.1.2 Second residences and holiday accommodation are understandably a feature of the region's coastal areas, with the heaviest concentration in North Norfolk (see figure 14 of the context document). Whilst they may represent an under-use of the region's housing stock, they are also likely to be fundamental to the local economy via the tourist trade.
- 14.3.1.3 Vacant household space includes "unoccupied household space" and relates to empty homes, but there is also an issue with "under-occupation". Very often "under-occupation" will be a function of older people remaining in the family home when children have left. This is an issue for the RHS if this is a result of lack of choice to move rather than desire to remain. (see following notes on communities)
- 14.3.1.4 Bringing empty homes back into use will not only provide homes but contribute, albeit in a small way, to the target of previously developed land and buildings.
- 14.3.1.5 The Government Office for the East of England (GO-EAST) has recently been working with a group of local authority officers and the Empty Homes Agency to research the scale of the problem in the region- getting beneath the reported statistics to identify real issues of concern.
- 14.3.1.6 This will build upon the efforts made by local authorities across the region to reduce the number of empty properties, the region has seen a reduction of almost 4,000 empty homes to 59,467 in the last year.
- 14.3.1.7 The 2004 Housing Act has enabled local authorities to secure occupation of long-term empty private sector homes by applying to make Empty Dwelling Management Orders. The legislation operates alongside existing procedures by providing a back up to voluntary leasing arrangements and an alternative to enforcement action under other legislation

Ipswich Borough Council is in the process of compulsorily purchasing a property that has been empty for at least 17 years, the bungalow sits on a site that also contains 20 derelict garages. Ipswich Borough Council's Private Sector Housing Service has made many attempts to persuade the owner refurbish the property and to bring it back into use. This was unsuccessful and the site continued to attract fly-tipping and became an ever increasing eye-sore blighting the local environment and quality of life for people living, working and visiting the neighbourhood. In accordance with the Council's Empty Homes Strategy compulsory purchase of the site commenced. Once the site is purchased it will, in partnership with Anglia Housing Group, be developed to provide a supported housing project for young single homeless people, this will be a mixture of shared housing for 10 young people and a further 4 self contained units. Capital funds from the sale of the site to Anglia will be reused for the purchase of other long term empty properties.

The Council has also voluntarily purchased a derelict empty property which will be demolished and the land sold for development. Due to voluntary purchase being quicker and therefore cheaper than compulsory purchase all costs in purchasing and clearing the site will be recovered when the site is sold for redevelopment.

The Borough Council has also set up a loan scheme with the local credit union to help private owners to refurbish their homes. The council has put in £60,000 to underwrite the Ipswich Credit Union loans so that people can borrow straight away.

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Figure 23: Private sector renewal in Ipswich

- 14.3.1.8 Whilst this activity like other forms of rehabilitation can be seen as expensive in immediate payback, avoiding longer term environmental costs may well make it worth-while.
- 14.3.1.9 Empty property in the social housing sector is not the problem experienced elsewhere due to the overwhelming need for affordable housing. It does exist, however, and may reflect local market changes, or may be a function of management, for example if properties are kept empty for refurbishment or estate improvements.
- 14.3.1.10 An emerging feature in common with other regions is difficulty letting older sheltered housing stock. The changing aspirations of older people, and the increasing ability to remain living at home if properly supported mean that providers have to look more closely at market requirements. Many housing authorities have conducted a review of their sheltered housing provision in conjunction with social care and health to arrive at a housing mix that better suits the needs of older people locally. In some instances this has meant “remodelling” sheltered housing schemes for other uses. (see the later section on Supporting People)

14.3.2 Recommendations for Regional process, policy and investment decisions

- 14.3.2.1 The regionally initiated Empty Homes project would benefit from a regional policy to encourage adoption of “Empty Homes Charters” across the region.

What an Empty Homes Charter might contain	
Local authorities should have	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An empty property strategy as part of their housing strategy A clear and consistent method for reporting empty homes A dedicated empty property officer A fund of empty property grants to owners A regular survey of empty property owners and publicity about “carrots and sticks” A private sector leasing scheme with managing agents partners Clarity on what enforcement powers will be used if all else fails

Figure 24: An outline Empty Homes Charter

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- 14.3.2.2 There are a number of strands that could be included within a regional policy on Empty Homes. These include
- Raising the expectations of what local housing authorities could be doing by establishing an Empty Homes Charter for adoption by local authorities
 - Pressing for changes to Council tax on Empty Homes
 - Providing pump-priming for innovative schemes to bring empty homes back into use. These could be linked to performance on BVPFI64.

14.4 *Lifetime homes and mobility standards*

- 14.4.1.1 Accessible housing is critical for the independence of people with a disability. According to the Disability Rights Commission one in five of Britain's adult population has a disability. Demographic changes and the ageing of our society mean that this will become an increasingly significant issue.
- 14.4.1.2 Housing needs surveys undertaken for local authorities often identify housing that is "unsuitable" to the needs of the occupants. Very often this is attributable to the need for housing that offers a greater degree of mobility, and the results feed into local authority policies on Disabled Facilities Grants.

"Pathways to Accessible Housing in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire" was an assessment of the supply of wheelchair accessible housing and the needs of wheelchair users that was completed in 2004. The study estimated that 2.5% of the population in the study area were wheelchair users.

Figure 25: Pathways to accessible housing

- 14.4.1.3 The needs of wheelchair users are not automatically translated into targets for new housing. The London Plan has established targets for the London Boroughs for Lifetime Homes and wheelchair accessible housing.

14.4.2 Recommendations for Regional process, policy and investment decisions

- 14.4.2.1 During the consultation period on draft East of England Plan the RHF should promote the adoption of Lifetime Homes and at least 10% of new homes to be built to wheelchair accessible standards.

- 14.4.2.2 RHF should consider the advantages and opportunities of developing adapted housing registers with the sub Regions.

14.5 *Improving health and well-being*

- 14.5.1.1 This should be seen within the context of the region's emerging health strategy, which aims to reduce health inequalities and encourage healthier lifestyle choices. It will focus on addressing the wider issues that affect the population's health such as the environment, economy, housing and transport, as well as taking action to encourage and enable healthier lifestyle choices. It will seek to do this by raising awareness of health and promoting the notion that health is everyone's business, not just the role of the NHS.
- 14.5.1.2 Poor housing has long been associated with a range of physical and mental health conditions. Improving people's housing can reduce health inequality and make a significant contribution to their sense of health and well-being. Housing and housing services can be an effective tool in the prevention and control of disease and the promotion of good mental health.
- 14.5.1.3 Housing in poor condition can damage the health of those who live in it. The effects of poor housing fall disproportionately on older people and children. Cold housing leads directly to hypothermia and may contribute to winter deaths. Whilst the region has seen a 10% fall in the percentage of all households experiencing fuel poverty between 1998 and 2001, 6.1% of households continue to live in fuel poverty. DEFRA's recently announced 5 year strategy contains action on energy efficiency that will need to be taken into account.
- 14.5.1.4 Children living in poor housing conditions are more susceptible to higher rates of accidents, infectious and chronic disease. Achieving the Decent Homes target will focus resources on the most vulnerable stock/ residents. In addition the Housing Health and Safety Rating System will target risk factors.
- 14.5.1.5 There is increased emphasis on promoting independence and housing choice for people in vulnerable groups. Housing developments and housing services can prevent or delay the need for costly intensive services and can improve quality of life and engagement with the community. Housing agencies make a contribution to preventing delayed transfers of care by ensuring people receive the equipment, repairs, adaptations and improvements their housing may need in a timely way. Home improvement Agencies play a crucial role in supporting vulnerable people and enabling them to stay at home.
- 14.5.1.6 Home Improvement Agencies are funded by the Supporting People programme and are a vital resource to assisting elderly and disabled owner occupiers to tackle disrepair in their properties. They are able to

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support people through the DFG process. This is a clear link with other programmes and strategies such as Supporting People strategies, the developing health strategy and the social strategy.

- 14.5.1.7 Disabled facilities grants are ring-fenced mandatory grants with 60% coming from the Government and the remainder from local authorities. The 2004 Housing Act has extended DFGs to all those occupying caravans as their only or main residence.
- 14.5.1.8 Sub regions identify a clear need for top- up funding due to the demand led nature of these grants. Such funding would previously have come through the HIP route.
- 14.5.1.9 Aids and Adaptations funding is only available to Housing Association tenants on an exceptions basis, i.e. when other sources such as DFG and HA internal resources are not practicably available.
- 14.5.1.10 The assessment process for DFGs includes a recommendation from an Occupational Therapist. There is a dislocation between the agency making the recommendation and the agency allocating the funding- albeit this is usually overcome with effective working practices.
- 14.5.1.11 Strategies for building healthier communities share many similarities with those for sustainable development and there is an increasing focus on the 'liveability' of an area to maintain physical and mental health.
- 14.5.1.12 There is a strong correlation between overcrowding and ill health. Recent research³ shows there is a body of evidence that suggests a relationship between overcrowding and aspects of both child and adult health including long-term effects such as the impact of overcrowding in childhood on aspects of adult health. Therefore, failure to make adequate provision for the needs of the whole community can have potentially detrimental, long-term effects that in turn could affect an individual's life chances and opportunities in the future. People suffering from a limiting long-term illness have an incidence of overcrowding significantly higher than the general population. (The regional distribution is shown in the context document).
- 14.5.1.13 For those without a permanent home, access to health care and the health and safety risks associated with living on the streets or in poor quality temporary accommodation are critical. A recent briefing from the Chartered Institute of Housing says "It can be hard to demonstrate whether homelessness causes health problems or if the health problems themselves lead or contribute to someone becoming homeless. Almost half of the single homeless applicants applying to local authorities as vulnerable have mental health problems and associate this with the loss of their home".

³ ODPM (2004) The Impact of Overcrowding on Health & Education: A review of the evidence and literature

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In March 2004 Cambridge University published research funded by EEDA showing that Emmaus Communities offer large social and economic benefits both in the context of homelessness services and as social enterprises

They concluded that reduced costs to the health service and the criminal justice system together with assistance given to other charities is of the order of £600,000 per annum.

The Emmaus community at Cambridge provides 30 accommodation units, together with support services linked to a recycling and furniture business and café.

Figure 26: Emmaus communities

14.5.2 Recommendations for Regional process, policy and investment decisions

- 14.5.2.1 RHB should continue to provide investment to local authorities to achieve Decent Homes Standards in the private sector targeted to the most vulnerable areas as well as “top up” funding for Disabled Facilities Grants.
- 14.5.2.2 Regional partners should ensure 100% Home Improvement Agency coverage across the region, and seek greater clarity and equity in the distribution of disabled facilities grant.
- 14.5.2.3 Regional Housing Strategy should promote “liveability” in new schemes and improvements, and encourage planning authorities to obtain year on year increases in lifetime homes provision.
- 14.5.2.4 There is furthermore the need to improve joint working and planning between housing authorities, primary care trusts and strategic health authorities, particularly where boundary differences occur.
- 14.5.2.5 The RHS and the Regional Health Strategy should agree a Policy on Health and Housing.

Proposed Policy Framework- Housing, Improving Health and well-being

The design and quality of new homes	<p>New housing should be provided with the occupier’s current and long-term requirements in mind. Lifetime Homes Standard should be applied to new housing provision, and 10% of all new homes should be constructed to wheelchair accessible standard.</p> <p>New Housing should be accessible to key services by public transport, cycling and walking.</p> <p>The layout should design out crime and incorporate good quality green and open spaces while creating a strong sense of place and community. Internal layout should include adequate soundproofing.</p> <p>Local people, and potential new residents should be consulted and involved in design issues.</p>
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	Materials should minimise risk to health both in construction and use.
Improving existing homes and environments	Housing authorities should use the Housing Health and Safety Rating to target the most vulnerable properties and occupants and achieve the Decent Homes target. Improvements should extend beyond the home to the surrounding environment wherever possible, involving occupants in the process.
Affordable warmth	Housing authorities should continue to promote initiatives such as “warm front” to reduce the current incidence of fuel poverty from 6%. Housing providers should raise the SAP rating of properties beyond the regional average.
Overcrowding	Housing and health professionals to be aware of the consequences of overcrowding, and participate in joint activities to alleviate the situation. To jointly ensure that needs are taken into account for new provision, including the need for larger accommodation for some Black and Minority Ethnic groups
Allocations and lettings	Health should join housing professionals in the development of any prioritisation system for Choice Based Lettings (CBL). It is recognised that vulnerable groups often find it difficult to access CBL systems and health professionals may be able to act as “advocates” on behalf of clients.
Access to health care for homeless people	Wherever possible the use of temporary accommodation and length of stay should be minimised, and where it is used ensure that it meets standards of safety, security and warmth. Ensure that homeless people have continued access to health services and support.
Co-ordinating resources	This extends beyond financial resources to staffing. Joint training will enable better referral for specific services. Protocols for referrals and sharing information will support better prevention and intervention.
	Regional partners should support innovative schemes to improve the co-ordination and employment of investment.
	NHS Trusts and their partners should systematically review their property and landholdings for opportunities to increase the provision of affordable housing.

Figure 27: Proposed Policy Framework – Housing, improving Health and well-being

15 Needs of regional communities

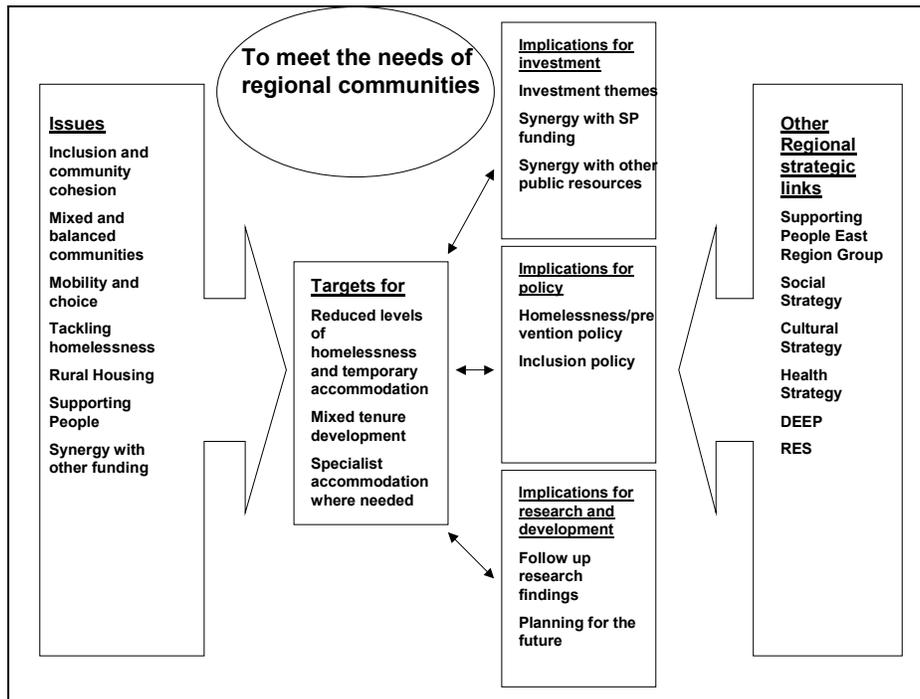


Figure 28: Elements of the needs of regional communities

15.1 *Inclusion and Community Cohesion*

- 15.1.1.1 Social exclusion has a strong spatial element which is reflected in the core spatial strategy of the RSS. In the context of the growth agenda, there are important lessons to be learned from the region's past experiences of planned new settlements some of which are now characterised by decline and deprivation, and fragmented communities.
- 15.1.1.2 Research shows that housing is a "major determinant of the shape of communities and has profound implications on the relationship between different races and cultures"¹ This is reflected in the way that communities are often both physically segregated as well as in terms of schools, social networks, languages, employment and voluntary organisations.
- 15.1.1.3 While BME communities, asylum seekers and refugees, migrant workers and gypsies and travellers are distinct groups with distinct differences, there are also some common issues such as the lack of

¹ Cante Review, Home Office, 2001 cited in Offering Communities Real Choice, Lettings and Community Cohesion, CIH, 2003).

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information on the diverse needs of these groups as well as the extent and nature of involvement in consultation exercises.

- 15.1.1.4 For gypsies and travellers, the key difference is the lack of authorised sites and the mismatch between the location of available sites and what gypsies and travellers actually need. The Housing Act 2004 has introduced a statutory requirement to include Gypsies and Travellers within local authorities' housing needs assessments. As well as joining up services at an organisational level to meet the needs of this group, it is also important to share good practice at all levels.
- 15.1.1.5 As with other groups, migrant workers are not a homogenous group, but include a very diverse range of communities. There is also an important distinction to be drawn between the immediate needs of the transient population and the longer term needs of those who intend to settle.
- 15.1.1.6 Little is known of the housing experiences of refugees but research has been commissioned to establish baseline data. Nationally, local authority policy and practice on the acceptance of refugees as vulnerable under the homelessness legislation is variable. Even if accepted as homeless, refugees are waiting several months for offers of accommodation. The findings of the regional research will be used to inform the Regional Integration Strategy.
- 15.1.1.7 Access to accommodation with appropriate levels of support is vital to the successful rehabilitation of offenders, particularly where needs arise from drugs/alcohol misuse or mental health problems.
- 15.1.1.8 Use of the medical model of disability focuses on an individual's condition and reinforces negative images and attitudes. In contrast, the social model more helpfully views disability as a potential limitation of opportunities to fully participate in society because of society's barriers.
- 15.1.1.9 Barriers to achieving more cohesive communities include:
- social housing lettings policies
 - conditions, practices and attitudes affecting private sector housing
 - lack of suitable housing, specifically houses with four or more bedrooms suitable for large or extended families.
- 15.1.1.10 Clearly, many of these issues cut across other policy areas such as Alleviating Homelessness and Health and Well-being. Nationally, BME households comprise 7% of all households but represent 53% of

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those who are the most severely overcrowded². In the East of England Mixed, Black, Asian and Chinese populations all show significantly higher incidences of overcrowding than the general population. (see context document figures 23-26). Homeless acceptances for Black and Minority Ethnic groups are higher than would be expected from their incidence in the general population (see context document figure 31-33) For the most recent year 8.63% (970) of total number of homelessness acceptances (11,230) were from BME groups.

15.1.2 Recommendations for Regional process, policy and investment decisions

- 15.1.2.1 RHS to build on the emerging regional evidence base on the accommodation needs of offenders (Regional Strategy for the Rehabilitation and Resettlement of Offenders), refugees and gypsies and travellers.
- 15.1.2.2 Ensure that partnership with Supporting People East Region Group (SPERG) is effective in integrating the capital and revenue requirements. RHB to review Supporting People strategies when they are produced in 2005 to identify changes to the framework.

Proposed Policy Framework: Housing, Inclusion and Community Cohesion

Planning for future inclusion

The East of England Plan prioritises health, education and social inclusion needs, seeking early provision in SCP growth areas and Priority Areas for Regeneration, encouraging provision for land use needs in Local Development Frameworks.

The Regional Social Strategy identifies social disconnectedness, together with poverty and poor skills, as one of the complex mix of factors that contribute to social exclusion. Therefore, in creating new communities, as well as regenerating existing ones, it is vital that provision is made for the both the *social* and physical infrastructure. There is a need to identify and plan the community infrastructure and engagement mechanisms necessary to promote social inclusion, ensuring that future development in the region creates healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities.

Housing delivery

RHS should provide a framework for delivery of housing to identify and address the diverse needs of communities in the region. Evidence shows that BME communities, for example, do not want separate provision but better understanding of and provision for their needs. There is clearly a need to take account of a community's cultural expectations and norms when designing and planning new developments, e.g. the size and type of accommodation needed.

Information and knowledge

Building on existing examples of good practice in the region, RHB should promote diversity issues through the sub regional agenda with the implementation of more sophisticated monitoring arrangements to identify the range of needs.

At present the East of England Plan does not prescribe the level of site

² CIH (2003) Offering Real Choice, Lettings and Community Cohesion, p.6

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provision for gypsies and travellers. However, in setting out how they will accommodate the East of England Plan housing allocations, LDFs will need to show how they have addressed the needs of Gypsies and Travellers. Research has been commissioned to bring together and review existing literature on Gypsies and Travellers in the region. It forms the first stage in a broader piece of work to develop agreed public policy recommendations across the region.

Building on a major study currently underway to map the skills of migrant workers in the East of England, the Regional Social Strategy contains an action to carry out research into the housing needs of migrant workers

The housing needs of refugees are also the subject of a regional research project. Findings and the implications for local housing authorities will need to be taken into account in the final version of the RHS.

These three strands will need to come together in the final version of the RHS and its associated policies.

Figure 29: Proposed policy Framework- Housing, inclusion and community cohesion

15.2 *Providing mixed communities and widening choice*

- 15.2.1.1 Mixed income communities are the key to the long term sustainability of the community and the local economy. Single tenure estates are vulnerable and unsustainable over the long term. Physical regeneration alone does not work in the main. People whose economic situation improves usually move away to fulfil their housing aspirations unless there is local choice. Mixing tenure is the most direct way to achieve mixed income communities.
- 15.2.1.2 Housing needs are diverse, and cannot be simply met by owner occupation on the one hand and social renting on the other. A feature of housing in the East of England over recent years has been the “intermediate” housing market. There is an increasing number of people who cannot afford to buy yet whose incomes would make them ineligible for social rented housing. The Affordable Housing Study (phase 2) has identified a need for 2,400 dwellings a year to meet this intermediate market. There is also a need to provide for the specific needs of key workers. The study has shown that there is a need to provide 760 dwellings per year to meet public sector key worker needs, this is in addition to the 7,200 subsidised social rented homes that are required.
- 15.2.1.3 The impact of student demand on local housing markets has not been researched at regional level. National research¹² has shown that intensive demand for investment properties from student market landlords in some locations can have knock-on effects for owner occupiers. Given the potential for new or expanded further or higher

¹² Centre for Housing Policy at the University of York, published by Joseph Rowntree Foundation December 2000

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education institutions in some parts of the region, the RHS should take account of such future changes and work with Regional Economic Strategy to manage the situation.

- 15.2.1.4 A range of “products” is required to meet these needs. Products for rent include social renting (from the local authority or housing association), private sector renting, buy-to-let renting and “specialist” renting for example student or nurses’ accommodation. Home ownership options include not only outright ownership but shared ownership, rent to mortgage, cash incentive schemes, home-buy and self- build.
- 15.2.1.5 The East of England, as part of the Greater South- East, has experienced a Government focus on the needs of public sector employees who cannot afford to buy accommodation in the area where they work. The resulting recruitment and retention difficulties that have put public services at risk have been addressed by the Government’s “Key Worker” housing schemes. The national Key Worker Living Programme is aimed at recruitment and retention in Health, Education and Community Safety.
- 15.2.1.6 The products available are equity loans for existing properties in the open market (Homebuy), shared ownership or intermediate renting at subsidized levels. Currently allocations are split with 64% Homebuy, 3% Homebuy new build, 17% intermediate rent and 16% sale.
- 15.2.1.7 The provision of “choice” is also important for those who occupy social rented housing, The Government’s 27 choice based lettings (CBL) pilot programme ran from April 2001 until March 2003 and has subsequently been evaluated with most pilots fulfilling their local objectives.
- 15.2.1.8 CBL schemes increase mobility as tenants have more say about where they want to live. As CBL becomes more widely adopted it has implications for the RHS
- Potential for movement intra-regionally through sub regional CBL development
 - Potential for movement inter-regionally between other regions – probably most significantly the rest of the Greater South-East
- 15.2.1.9 Taking the pilot programme as a whole, the development of support for vulnerable groups was an area of weakness. The dominant approach to supporting vulnerable and excluded groups was to use a representative organisation to provide support. Problems with this were that with a decentralised approach not all vulnerable groups had

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a representative organisation to support them. There may be regional or sub regional initiatives that could help.

15.2.2 Recommendations for Regional process, policy and investment decisions

- 15.2.2.1 The link with the private rented sector is undeveloped. Although there has been representation on RHF in the past it is no longer “live”. RHF should work with ARLA and other representative agencies to ensure that issues from the sector can be properly addressed.
- 15.2.2.2 Within the framework of RHS and the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) the RHF should work with the regional organisations for higher and further education (AUÉE and ACER) to determine the potential effect of future expansion and plan for provision.
- 15.2.2.3 The “balance” of housing tenure types should be monitored through the Annual Monitoring Report.
- 15.2.2.4 The RHF should support the development of CBL through the Sub Regions by providing information exchange on good practice and links to regional representative agencies for vulnerable groups.

Proposed Policy framework: Providing mixed communities and widening choice

Mixed tenure	<p>Mixed tenure is an important mechanism for creating mixed communities that in turn can help enhance social connectedness and networks. The RHB should use investment to promote mixed tenure on all new developments, pepper-potting low cost home-ownership and rented homes in new developments with no segregation in location or design, including reducing the visible differences between private and social housing. Similarly, the RHB should support interventions to change the tenure mix on existing social housing developments where there is an imbalance of household types.</p>
Key worker housing	<p>Government policy on key workers has been driven by the need to address recruitment and retention difficulties amongst a particular group of workers in professions essential to the local community. As the areas with most significant problems are areas of high house prices, this has led to initiatives to address the problem through subsidised housing such as the Starter Home Initiative and more recently Key Worker Living.</p> <p>Research commissioned by EERA in 2004 has used region wide data on vacancy rates to estimate the total annual requirement to meet key worker housing needs. Based on these recommendations the draft East of England Plan proposes that at least 760 net units per year should be provided for key worker housing.</p> <p>These figures are based on an estimate of housing need amongst occupational groups that are included within the Government’s KWL criteria i.e. not the exact geographical distribution identified by Government, but same occupational groups i.e. health workers, teachers, police and certain categories of local government staff.</p> <p>Clearly other workers may have similar problems accessing adequate housing and it is argued by many that the key worker criteria should be expanded accordingly. Whilst key workers may attract government subsidy and attention because of their role in sustainable communities, other workers, and particularly other public sector workers and staff contracted out from the public sector, contribute to local economy and sustainable</p>

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	<p>communities.</p> <p>The Sub Regions will identify the further localised need for key worker housing provision, using guidance from the Affordable Housing Study (phase 2).</p>
Private rented sector	<p>The private rented sector has a significant role to play in providing products to meet a range of needs, such as temporary accommodation for homeless families and accommodation for people in the “intermediate” housing market. Dialogue through the RHF should be encouraged.</p>
Choice-based lettings	<p>Policies to achieve greater tenure diversification go hand in hand with more flexible lettings policies that promote choice. Evaluation of the Choice-Based Lettings pilots showed that schemes led to increased participation by members of BME communities. The recently announced Advisory Group on BME Social Housing will explore how the new choice-based lettings schemes affect BME groups, undertaking a full Race Equality Impact Assessment of the policy. There is scope for the region to inform the work of this group.</p> <p>The RHF should encourage Sub Regions to develop CBL to foster mobility and choice for tenants across the region. The RHF will provide the catalyst for information exchange between Sub Regions as progress develops.</p>

Figure 30: Proposed policy framework: Mixed and balanced communities

15.3 Rural Communities

- 15.3.1.1 The housing minister has notified Regional Housing Boards that there is no longer a national housing target for small rural settlements. Regional Housing Boards are being invited to put forward proposals for rural housing in both market towns and small settlements.
- 15.3.1.2 In practice local need is assessed through housing need surveys. Whilst the local housing authority has the strategic responsibility to carry out such surveys, district wide surveys are often supplemented by local information from parish plans or local village surveys. These are carried out by parishes themselves, often supported by a Rural Housing Enabler. The region has a network of Rural Housing Enablers funded by the Countryside Agency and the Housing Corporation. Rural housing enablers bring together needs information and potential sites for affordable housing provision that can be developed by housing associations.
- 15.3.1.3 The Housing Corporation has recently funded some research into the barriers to affordable housing provision in rural areas¹³. Over recent years funding for affordable rural schemes has been through the Housing Corporation's ring-fenced rural programme that has targeted small villages (below 3000 population) as well as larger settlements such as market towns and larger rural settlements in the 3,000 -

¹³ "Removing Barriers" by Flagship Housing Group and Portfolio Development Consultancy

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10,000 population range, where those larger settlements are able to accommodate housing that can't be located in the smaller villages themselves.

- 15.3.1.4 The Draft East of England Plan focuses development in market towns and key service centres, with development in other rural settlements to focus on the viability of rural economic activities and sustainability of services. The need for social sustainability is often overlooked in sustainability indicators and checklists.
- 15.3.1.5 The Countryside Agency has introduced “sites of social diversity” as a proposal to address this (see the context document section 8.3). This is also the reason why local community activity and service provision have been included in the development pipeline work that the Rural Housing Enablers have been engaged on with the Countryside Agency and the Housing Corporation.
- 15.3.1.6 This group has met consistently to develop the rural housing pipeline of affordable housing schemes. Between the year 1998/99 and 2003/04 1985 rural homes have been completed in the East of England. The effectiveness of partnership working has seen a jump from 194 homes completed in 2001/02 to 386 in the year 2003/04.
- 15.3.1.7 There are concerns that providing more homes in market towns will reduce the potential overall supply of affordable rural housing over time, as they are not provided “in perpetuity” in the same way that rural housing on village exception sites are.
- 15.3.1.8 The Government¹⁴ has also recently developed new definitions of urban-rural areas based on two components. The first identifies the form of settlement, dividing those with a population of over 10,000 and those with less. The second identifies the wider geographic context in which settlements are located as sparsely or less sparsely populated. In the East of England. There is a need to consider these changes in the context of developing a regional rural target.
- 15.3.1.9 Work is currently underway with Rural Housing Enablers and other partners to provide information that will support a regional rural target and policy for the final version of the RHS.

15.3.2 Recommendations for Regional process, policy and investment decisions

- 15.3.2.1 RHB to continue to provide investment for rural housing schemes that will in future be based on a regionally derived target and policy.
- 15.3.2.2 RHF to review any changes following Government consultation on planning obligations, and regional consultation on the Draft East of England Plan.

¹⁴ DEFRA

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Proposed Policy Framework: Housing for Rural Communities	
Housing needs	Local authorities, Housing Associations and Local Strategic Partnerships should respond to the housing needs identified in Parish Plans, Market Town Health Checks and by Rural Housing Enablers. They should acknowledge that sustainability in rural areas includes informal support networks and services provided by the voluntary and community social sectors and encourage the development of suitable projects including those that provide supported housing and access to related services.
Planning	Local Development Documents should promote the adoption of positive planning policies that improve the supply and quality of affordable housing in villages and market towns, in response to identified housing and support needs
Sustainability	Those developing housing in rural areas should maximise the contribution that such development can make to meeting social, economic and environmental needs. Housing in rural areas should also seek to be well designed, to fit the locality and to meet good standards of environmental sustainability

Figure 31: Proposed Policy Framework: Housing for Rural Communities

15.4 Homelessness

- 15.4.1.1 Rising levels of homelessness and the associated use of temporary accommodation is a feature across the East of England. Further information on the regional distribution is available in the context document section 16.
- 15.4.1.2 Local housing authorities have all produced homelessness strategies, with the emphasis as much on prevention as processing applications. Many local housing authorities have changed their teams to focus on “housing options” and advice.
- 15.4.1.3 Investment in “new” housing does not automatically trickle down to homeless families or people in the greatest housing need. The implication here is for local lettings policies that balance the range of homelessness and housing need applications.
- 15.4.1.4 Supporting People (SP) funded tenancy support and floating support have a vital role in early interventions to support vulnerable tenants and reduce risk of tenancy breakdowns; supporting people through homeless applications and providing services to families found to be intentionally homeless. SP funding also supports accommodation services for single homeless people, many of whom have complex needs, in direct access hostels. This client group has the highest level of SP funding of all the client groups.

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- 15.4.1.5 Floating support means that people can be supported in the community, without housing specifically provided for homeless people. However, services are subject to uncertainties associated with changes to SP revenue funding. Floating support schemes are particularly vulnerable due to the short term nature of schemes.
- 15.4.1.6 “Homelessness” is often the end result of other problems, financial, health or social. It is important that these other problems are tackled if homelessness is not to be repeated.
- 15.4.1.7 It is here that the RHS can be effective in linking up with other regional strategies and initiatives to tackle the range of needs. The Regional Health Strategy is an obvious link, but others are the Regional Social Strategy, the Regional Rehabilitation and Resettlement Strategy, the regional network of Drug Action Teams, the National Asylum Support Service Accommodation Strategy, the regional initiative on Domestic Violence through the Supporting People regional group
- 15.4.1.8 An emerging issue is the housing and homeless problems experienced by younger people, particularly the 16-17 year old age group. The Legal Services Research Centre has produced recent national information that demonstrates the relative exclusion of younger age groups from advice on housing and homelessness, and the link with crime.
- 15.4.1.9 RHF membership includes not only representation from statutory bodies such as local housing authorities, but also the voluntary sector through the regional Voluntary Hostels Group (VHG). This sector has identified that the biggest need is to free up spaces in hostels by ensuring swift and effective move-on via nominations to permanent housing, for people who are ready.

15.4.2 Recommendations for Regional process, policy and investment decisions

- 15.4.2.1 RHF should review the knowledge from the region’s homelessness strategies for good practice and research the incidence of youth homelessness through its membership.
- 15.4.2.2 RHF should review the links with other strategies to ensure that action on homelessness and its causes are co-ordinated at the regional level.
- 15.4.2.3 RHF should review Supporting People Strategies as they are published and ascertain the implications from any changes to Floating support.
- 15.4.2.4 The RHF should ensure that the Sub Regions make the link with Drug Action Teams in their strategies. The RHF should pilot a sub regional

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approach to tackling homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation.

- 15.4.2.5 RHB should provide investment for new housing to enable accommodation needs of homeless households to be met through an overall increase in stock.

Proposed Policy Framework: Alleviating Homelessness	
Role of RHF	The RHF cannot prescribe what local authorities should do in discharging their duties. It has an advisory and co-ordinating role and, via the RHS, it makes recommendations for investment. An investment theme for Local Housing Need and Homelessness is proposed in this strategy, and Investment (2006-08) and future spend across this theme will require monitoring.
Preventing and responding to Homelessness	All local housing authorities have produced homelessness strategies. These have been subject to a review at national level. It is important to take the good practice learning and ensure that the region's authorities and their partners have access to this, along with appropriate regional practice. The RHF aims to support local housing authorities make the shift from crisis management to prevention.
Identifying needs	There remain some causes of homelessness that are not yet properly researched and understood. Current research includes the needs of refugees and Gypsies and Travellers,. Future requirements should be identified within the RHF and taken forward with regional partners in a forward plan of research proposals.
Allocations and lettings	RHF is in a position to co-ordinate information exchange on local lettings plans to achieve balanced communities in new schemes.
Sub Regional Approach to tackling homelessness	RHF to promote a sub regional pilot on homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation to "test" the viability of this approach.
Synergy with other strategies	The RHS must take account of other regional strategies in developing future policy proposals. In particular to review the Supporting People Strategies and the finalising of the region's Health Strategy.

Figure 32: Proposed Policy framework to alleviate homelessness

15.5 Synergy with other funding streams

- 15.5.1.1 Housing investment should achieve synergy with other funding streams to provide value for money. The most immediate examples are funding for the growth areas and Supporting People funding. However, the RHS should be monitored and reviewed to ensure that housing investment plays a part in any future changes.
- 15.5.1.2 During 2004 the Government published proposals to pilot Local Area Agreements to improve co-ordination between central government and local authorities and their partners, working through Local Strategic Partnerships.

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15.5.1.3 Part of the arrangement will be to strengthen local public service agreements. The first twenty of these ran until 2004 and the second generation is being negotiated.

15.5.2 Recommendations for Regional process, policy and investment decisions

15.5.2.1 The RHB should ensure that in being kept up to date with any funding changes, housing investment remains connected.

15.6 Supporting People

15.6.1.1 It is essential to ensure that the capital and revenue (via Supporting People) spending plans are properly co-ordinated. This is especially so in relation to ensuring that future needs brought about by demographic changes, and an ageing population are properly considered.

15.6.1.2 Supporting People Service Reviews may reveal the potential for change of use of some current schemes. This is especially true for the remodelling of sheltered housing schemes as aspirations change. Many local authorities are examining their sheltered housing stock to assess whether it is appropriate to meet the future needs and aspirations of older people. There is a clear need to ensure that any changes to the need for capital or revenue funding are co-ordinated.

15.6.1.3 Early Government guidance on Supporting People (SP) strategies focused the attention of Administering Authorities (County and Unitary authorities) on the needs of groups whose needs have historically not been well met – people who misuse substances, offenders and ex offenders, victims of domestic violence, young people at risk, teenagers who become pregnant, travellers and refugees. Improving and extending services for these groups continues to be a priority.

15.6.1.4 There are unmet support needs in the larger client groups. Community based services for older people are limited outside sheltered housing. Many people with a learning disability or physical disability are inappropriately accommodated in residential care, and others are living with older carers and will need appropriate alternative accommodation at some stage.

15.6.1.5 There are structural issues over equity and access to services. The budgets which were merged into the SP programme were nearly all budgets for tenants of social housing. The needs of people in other tenures must now be included in the programme.

15.6.1.6 In some areas the pattern of support services have developed from the initiatives of individual providers with a greater or lesser degree of overall planning. This has led to unevenness of service availability, which SP teams wish to redress. New services will now be

commissioned to meet gaps in service identified in SP Strategies, normally using competitive procurement processes.

- 15.6.1.7 Visiting or floating support, where support is provided in people's homes, has expanded recently. Floating support is very successful in maintaining independence and most SP teams would like to extend services further, but the expansion of services has resulted in a wide range of providers and there is a need to check the effectiveness of current arrangements.
- 15.6.1.8 Recently announced changes to revenue funding may mean that funding for new schemes is limited.

15.6.2 Recommendations for Regional process, policy and investment decisions

- 15.6.2.1 RHF should review the Regional Supporting People Strategies with Supporting People Eastern Region Group (SPERG) and highlight any potential difficulties with the capital/ revenue link.

16 Recommendations for investment

16.1 *Background to investment*

- 16.1.1.1 Public investment in housing is largely undertaken by Local Authorities (LAs) and Housing Associations, often referred to as Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). Their capital programmes are funded partly from their own resources (mainly rental income and receipts from property sales) and partly from support provided by government
- 16.1.1.2 The funding provided to LAs is mainly for work to improve the condition of the existing housing stock – council housing or poor condition private sector housing. The funding allocated to RSLs is primarily for the provision of additional affordable housing
- 16.1.1.3 The Sustainable Communities Plan, published in February 2003, introduced a number of changes to the way in which mainstream funding to support LAs' and RSLs' general housing capital programmes, is allocated.
- 16.1.1.4 A number of separate funding streams for LAs (the Housing Investment Programme known as HIP) and RSLs (the Approved Development Programme, the Starter Home Initiative and the Challenge Fund managed by the Housing Corporation) were combined into a single funding stream – the Single Regional Housing Pot
- 16.1.1.5 The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has yet to decide how the national housing pot will be shared between the English regions.

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- 16.1.1.6 The ODPM consultation paper “Housing Investment in the Regions” gives an indicative allocation for the East of England of £445m over the 2006-08 spending period. If the proposals set out in the consultation paper are accepted, this will mean a significant increase from the current (2004-06) regional allocation of £330m. The consultation period ends on 4 February. The intention is for Ministers to announce regional allocations by the end of February.
- 16.1.1.7 The Regional Housing Board (RHB) is in the process of developing recommendations for an investment plan that will be submitted to ODPM in May 2005. The investment plan will set out the scale of the region’s housing needs and its key priorities, which will determine the pattern of funding allocations from the Single Regional Housing Pot (SRHP) for 2006-08. It will need to balance the funding between improving the existing stock and investment in new affordable housing and how the resources should be allocated spatially.
- 16.1.1.8 To help the RHB determine the pattern of funding allocations from the SRHP for the two financial years 2006-07 and 2007-08, the Allocations Methodology Sub-Group (AMSG), a sub-group of the Regional Housing Forum has been formed, led by GO-East with representatives from the Countryside Agency, Housing Corporation, the Regional Assembly and the nine housing sub-regions. The AMSG has developed allocation options and the RHB will be seeking the views from key stakeholders on these options and methodology. The eventual option chosen will apply the priorities set out in the new Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) following consultation. A consultation period on the RHB’s allocations methodology will run concurrently with the RHS, with both finishing in April to allow sufficient time for the completion of the RHS and the RHB’s submission of investment recommendations to Ministers.
- 16.1.1.9 The following diagram shows how the funding flows from central Government to deliver new affordable housing and improve the existing stock in both the public and private sectors

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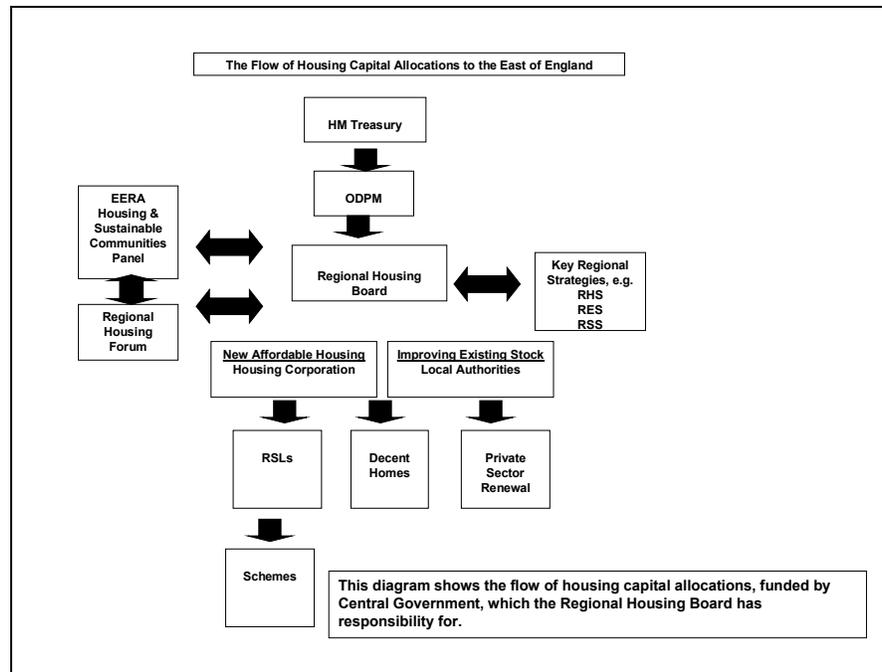


Figure 33: Illustration of the flow of housing capital allocations

16.1.1.10 The diagram below illustrates how the Regional Housing Strategy could shape the future housing in the East of England through its recommendations.

- Existing investment in housing across both the public and private sectors encompassing Local Authorities (LA), Housing Associations (HA), Private Sector Renewal (PSR), Empty Homes (EH), Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)
- New housing provision including tenure- market (MKT) and sub market (subMKT) housing - and the type of investment in new housing through the Housing Corporation, choosing between schemes to deliver Growth (Growth), addressing Housing Need and Homelessness (HNeed), Regeneration (Regen), Rural housing (Rural), Supported housing (SP), housing for Black and Minority Ethnic groups (BME) , and Key Workers (KW).

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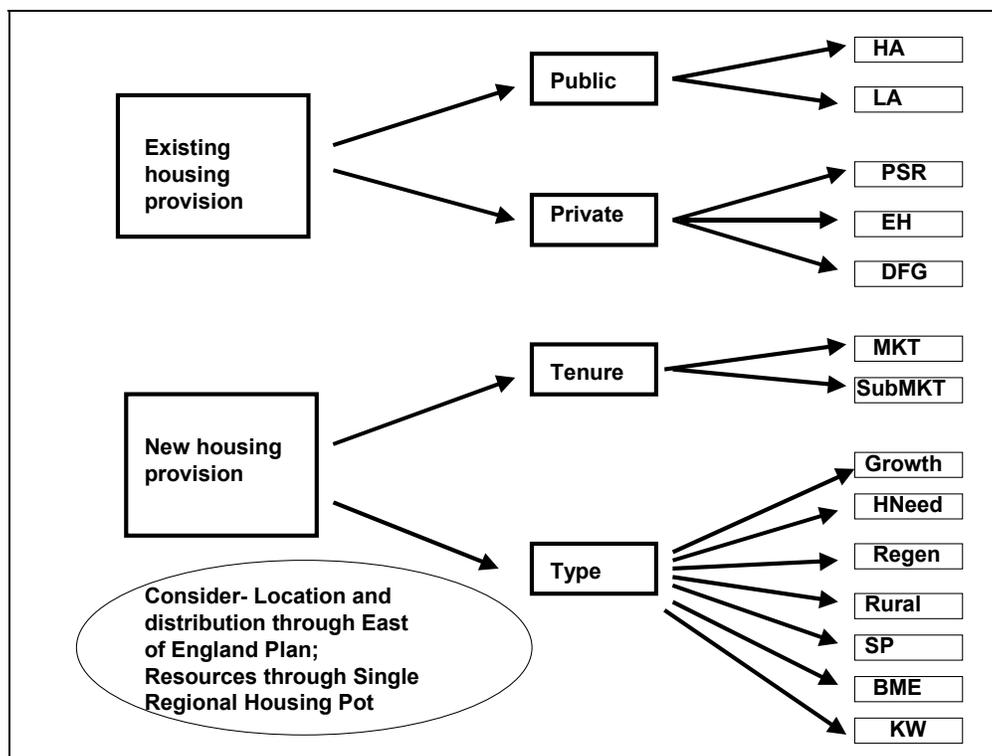


Figure 34: Potential investment interventions

- 16.1.1.11 The Housing Corporation (HC) originally targeted its investment on LA areas using a formula (the HNI). Very often, this resulted in “spreading the jam” very thinly; more importantly, it was a constraint that restricted the HC’s ability to respond to strategic initiatives and opportunities arising from the market’s operation. Therefore, for some years now, the HC has set no target levels for funding in individual areas. As an alternative, the best schemes from across the region have been selected for the HC’s investment programme, with no geographical distribution predetermined.
- 16.1.1.12 In order to structure the decision-making process, schemes have been compared and selected within “investment themes”, which represented schemes designed to address the key housing issues in the region. Where a scheme addressed more than one theme, this was viewed as an advantage, representing additional value for money.
- 16.1.1.13 The geographical distribution which resulted from this process reflected entirely the distribution of the schemes judged to offer the best value for money. Although relative costs clearly played an important role, the value added to the schemes was typically the decisive factor, since the strategic underpinning of schemes as being aimed at addressing specific local or sub regional housing challenges was crucial in their assessment. As a consequence, resources in recent years have tended to be invested in those areas where

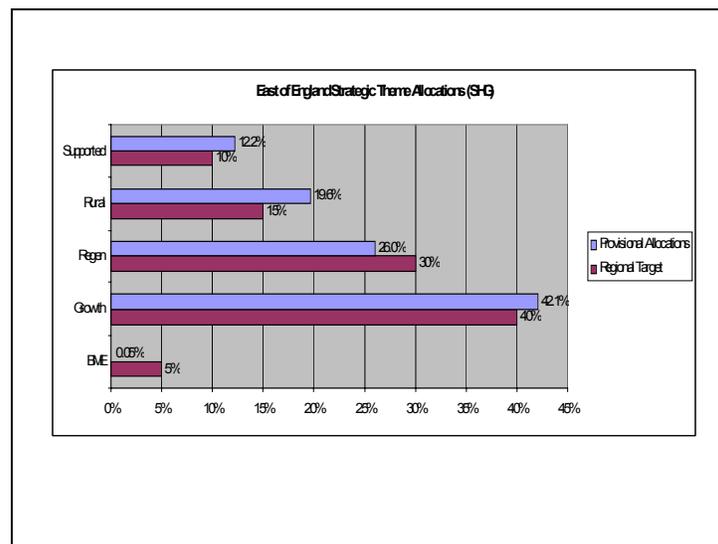
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strategic planning of housing investment has been most strongly developed.

16.1.1.14 Up to and including the 2003-2006 RHS, there were five investment themes - growth, regeneration, supported housing, rural housing and black and minority ethnic community housing. The RHS 2003-06 used these themes but changed the share they had of total investment.

- there was a clear consensus for the need to increase the percentage going to “growth” to 40% (from 20%)
- given the current uncertainty over revenue funding for Supported Housing, with the introduction of Supporting People, its percentage reduced to 10% (from 15%). –
- the Rural theme increased from 10% to 15%, to reflect the increased target in the Sustainable Communities Plan for rural homes, together with the acknowledgement that achieving new rural housing has become considerably more expensive.
- the emphasis on Growth meant a reduction in the Regeneration theme from 50% to 30%
- the BME theme remained unchanged.

16.1.1.15 Using these themes in the 2003-06 RHS enabled schemes to come forward from housing associations and allocations were made as follows.



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Figure 35: Allocations against strategic themes 2004-06

- 16.1.1.16 Consultation on the RHS 2003 – 2006 ,and the more recent consultation exercises have resulted in a longer list of cross-cutting “themes”. A theme for Housing Need & Homelessness and one for Key Workers has been introduced. Because no HIP funding will in future be excluded from discretionary decision-making over use of the SRHP there is also a need to include a private sector theme.
- 16.1.1.17 The difficulty with introducing more themes is that there is potential to spread the investment ever more thinly. However, now that the remainder of the former HIP is included within the Single Regional Housing Pot this should provide some additional flexibility. The regional allocations methodology group has been investigating the relationships between the themes.
- 16.1.1.18 The Key Worker Living (KWL) “initiative” remains a key part of the Government’s strategy to improve the quality of public services. The scheme is concentrated on public sector workers in the health, education and community safety sectors. The Government is committed to maintaining the expenditure on KWL at 2005/06 levels of funding with an uplift for inflation.
- 16.1.1.19 There will no longer be a national housing target for affordable housing in small rural settlements. The Government instead is expecting Regional Housing Boards to set regional targets for market towns and small settlements to reflect regional needs and priorities.
- 16.1.1.20 In respect of existing stock the Government will expect future funding recommendations to support the delivery of the Decent Homes target.
- 16.1.1.21 Based on housing needs assessments that must in future include the needs of Gypsies and Travellers, the Government expects that funding will be made available for pitches that will be classed as affordable housing, provided by housing associations and funded through the Housing Corporation.
- 16.1.1.22 There is also an expectation that synergy will be achieved with other funding streams such as Growth Area funding and Supporting People.
- 16.1.1.23 Land and building supply is a further resource. Where these exist in the public sector, through local authorities, other public bodies or English Partnerships, opportunities are available for their strategic use. Land or building supply owned in the commercial or private sectors must rely on the operation of planning and fiscal measures to bring them forward.

16.2 *Investment in Existing Housing Stock.*

16.2.1 Options – Private sector renewal

- Private sector renewal funding from the RHB is currently set at £2.5m per year to fund repairs and improvements to the homes of low income and vulnerable homeowners and tenants in the private sector. The Region could continue to fund at the same level whilst recognising that it is inadequate to meet the whole range of needs across the region.
- The Region could target areas with the best developed private sector renewal strategies, with clear pathways to achieve demonstrable outcomes.
- The Region could significantly increase the amount of funding available to homeowners and private tenants at the expense of investment in housing to meet other needs.
- The Region could decide not to put any investment funds at all into this area at the expense of potentially vulnerable households.
- The Region could decide to combine any of the above with a much more pro-active approach to developing a policy option for new financial products, possibly involving community re-investment trusts or housing associations as social investment agencies.

16.2.2 Options – Empty Homes

- The Region could continue to treat Empty Homes within the Private Sector Renewal heading.
- The Region could set aside funding, perhaps on an “innovation” basis to encourage more Empty Property back into use, using the Best Value Performance Indicator as an index.

- The region could combine either of the above with a policy option to encourage more Empty Homes into use.

16.2.3 Options - Disabled facilities Grants

- The Region could make funding available to local authorities at a similar rate as previously.
- The Region could develop a needs based methodology in conjunction with partners and develop a policy option to support this

16.2.4 Existing Housing Stock – A Proposal

- 16.2.4.1 There is broad recognition from the consultation we have carried out that the region should provide funding to maintain its existing stock. By and large this centres on private sector stock as council stock options continue and HIP has not been the main source of funding in this area.
- 16.2.4.2 The recommendation is that the Region should make funds available for “top up” DFG’s and Private Sector Funding (including Empty Homes) with a small set aside fund to encourage innovative schemes. For illustrative purposes, the share of the SRHP should be 12.5%.
- 16.2.4.3 Policy options should be developed to encourage longer-term change.

16.3 *Investment in New Affordable Housing provision - Types of schemes*

16.3.1 Identifying types of schemes

- 16.3.1.1 This is not about location, but a means of selecting between different types of schemes. If schemes come forward without being linked to one or more of these themes, they will not be funded.
- 16.3.1.2 A strategic approach to the provision of new affordable housing requires a structuring of the processes involved in bringing forward the necessary housing schemes in order to ensure the latter are geared to the pursuit of the strategic objectives set out earlier. By implication, the planning of new housing must be related to the desired outputs and outcomes which have been identified strategically. Similarly, the selection of schemes to be developed with financial and other support in the implementation of the strategy – obviously including use of public investment from the SRHP – will always need to be with direct

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reference to their value for money in terms of the achievement of these strategic outcomes.

- 16.3.1.3 In the previous strategy, the strategic objectives were interpreted as 5 investment themes, as mentioned earlier. Consultation in preparation for the revised strategy has added further themes. The strategically chosen themes and their objectives are now as follows:

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Strategic Outcome</u>	<u>Typical Schemes</u>
Growth	Where growth in housing numbers is planned to be significantly in excess of natural household growth in the area, measures are needed to ensure that an appropriate element of affordable housing is facilitated and properly utilised. By implication, the affordable housing must be providing accommodation for need over a larger area than what would be considered "local need".	Schemes will typically be part of strategic release of allocations for housing land required by regional or subregional plans. Consequently of mixed tenure and housing type, they will provide for the range of needs anticipated in the incoming population from a larger area. The extent to which provision for key workers and others in the intermediate market will be made will depend upon local employment circumstances and the expected role of commuting. A suitable strategy will need to provide a framework for managing the utilisation of a scheme's capacity across administrative boundaries.
Local need and homelessness	In contrast to the growth theme, this relates directly to need arising within the locality of the scheme, and hence serves the existing population	In terms of creating sustainable communities, there will need to be a mix of type and tenure to complement existing provision. Schemes should not normally be aimed at simply accommodating homeless households, but, if so labelled, be more a part of a local strategy to avoid homelessness occurring in the first place.
Regeneration	Here, the strategic outcome is typically not couched in terms of housing itself. What is required is the physical regeneration of land or buildings now redundant, and/or the social or economic regeneration of areas and communities which are unable to achieve this themselves. Investment in new housing provision is therefore a means to an end, being normally one of a bundle of integrated measures required to achieve the desired regeneration. Occasionally, housing development may be the only measure, where it is a run-down residential area that needs to be regenerated.	Schemes on "brownfield" sites will be recognised as regeneration only where there is a clear and beneficial outcome in these terms. Where the regeneration is of an area extending beyond the development site, a strategy is needed to demonstrate their interrelationship. For this reason, the detailed nature of the scheme will be designed in direct relationship with its local circumstances within the surrounding area.

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<u>Theme</u>	<u>Strategic Outcome</u>	<u>Typical Schemes</u>
Rural Needs	The objective here is the appropriate accommodation of needs arising in rural areas - i.e. where settlements are small, population density low, travel difficult, and opportunities of access to housing restricted. Although the needs to be addressed are typically from people wishing to remain in an area, they will also include those wishing to take up employment (including unpaid care) in rural areas, and hence to move to live there.	Schemes can be in suitable villages, or in larger settlements where the location is determined in a well-evidenced strategy as being appropriate. This reflects the need to ensure the sustainability of the housing schemes and settlements. Schemes also need to be located with a view to the quality of life of the future residents, given their need for access to amenities and facilities. The design of schemes in villages needs to be carefully managed to ensure the physical and social integration with the host community.
Key Workers	Where the sustainability of existing or future communities is endangered by difficulties in recruitment or retention of employees in essential activities, these can be recognised as key workers. If accessibility or affordability of housing is a factor in these difficulties, the strategy supports measures to find a housing solution.	Keyworker schemes will require the identification of key worker groups experiencing housing needs, the design of projects able to meet these – in terms of type, location and cost – and arrangements to ensure the scheme will be viable and in demand for the future. In terms of sustainable communities, they are best integrated into housing schemes serving wider needs.
Supported Housing	A substantial and growing proportion of the population is in need of housing support. Revenue funding of this activity should be strategically targeted to help provide this under the Supporting People arrangements. Where future provision will require capital investment in new housing schemes, this will be a strategic objective for use of the SRHP.	Supported housing schemes will need to be developed on the basis of planned provision of appropriate support and its revenue underpinning. They will therefore normally need to be planned as an element in the implementation of the emerging Supporting People strategies. Care needs to be taken also in terms of their design and location, relating to physical appropriateness and the need for integration into surrounding communities.
Needs from Black and Minority Communities.	Strategically, in the promotion of community cohesion, it is important that members of BME communities should have the same access to housing as members of the mainstream community, and hence that they benefit equally from provision under all the other themes. However, the strategy recognises that, for a wide variety of reasons, that this is not everywhere or always the case. Also, there are instances where linguistic, cultural or other factors lead to a need for specialist schemes to provide suitable accommodation.	Schemes will need to demonstrate that they have been planned and designed with the specific and special needs of members of a community in mind – typically this will require close collaboration with that community. Schemes not offering specialist accommodation would not normally receive support unless it could be demonstrated that there are no other means of enabling normal access for members of the BME community into housing otherwise available to the mainstream community. In all cases, a strategic approach to BME housing will be needed.

Figure 36: Proposed investment themes with strategic outcomes

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16.3.1.4 The structures being used require the categorisation of potential housing schemes under strategic themes. It is important to recognise that this categorisation applies to the schemes themselves, as defined by the nature of their outcomes. It does not apply to the area in which they are located. The themes relate to the strategic priorities for the whole region, and most will be of relevance in every part of the region. Nonetheless, for each sub region and local area, specific circumstances and its related strategy will place different emphasis on the various themes.

16.3.1.5 During our earlier consultation there has been a significant amount of discussion about the proportion of investment that should accrue to each “theme”. These are summarised in the table below.

Theme	Ranking Sub Regions	Ranking Consultation events	% Initial Sub Regional view	* % reviewing consultation feedback	04-06 investment themes %
Growth	1	1	32	40	40%
Housing Need and homelessness	2	2	18	16	0 (NA)
Regeneration	4	3	10	14	30%
Rural	=3	4	12.5	10	15%
KW	=6	=6	4	4	0 (NA)
Supported housing	5	=5	8	5	10
Existing stock	=3	=5	12.5	8	0 (NA)
BME	=6	=6	3	3	5
Total			100	100	100

Figure 37: Investment themes- comparison of percentages

16.3.1.6 The Sub Regions consulted with their stakeholders to arrive at an initial view¹⁵. The autumn consultation events included a range of regional stakeholders and were an important part of developing a regional view. It is important to note that the exercise to collect views on the proportion* of funding under each theme heading at the consultation event was not designed to produce specific numbers, rather more a broad brush approach to determine the “spread” of views, and the resulting percentages should be treated with some caution.

16.3.1.7 There is considerable overlap in the ranking of investment themes, with some differences in the proportions.

16.3.1.8 For the purpose of this consultation the figures from the sub regions (shaded) are proposed for consideration during consultation alongside the explicit descriptions in figure 36.

¹⁵ NB this was not “weighted” according to the size of each sub region. Sub regions vary in size from 1 to 15 local authorities.

16.3.2 Growth – Options

- The Region could divert a greater proportion of its resources to the designated “Growth Areas”. The issue here is to what extent the other infrastructure elements will be present to make this a success. There is a differential rate of progress in terms of site assembly for example across the growth areas.
- The Region could divert a greater proportion of its funding to schemes in the growing areas (i.e. not only designated growth areas). The issue here again is one of infrastructure and also sustainability over the longer term, where some areas have so far grown “organically”.
- The Region could fund a greater proportion of new provision through the land value rather than subsidy. The pipeline study has shown difficulties in relation to understanding site economics and partner interests.
- The Region could propose that certain sites are “designated” for affordable housing provision. There would need to be an understanding about housing mix in order to avoid problems of the past caused by concentrations of one type of housing.
- The Region could propose differential rates of investment over the time period to allow for a lower rate of provision during a period of groundwork and negotiation, with a higher rate later.

16.3.3 Growth - Proposal

- 16.3.3.1 The Government expectation that the RHS will be linked to the delivery of the growth agenda cannot be ignored, but neither can the recent decisions on infrastructure that have caused the Regional Assembly to suspend its endorsement of the East of England Plan.
- 16.3.3.2 The proposal is that the Region should move to an “illustrative” growth figure of no more than 32% for the two years 2006-08. This should be reviewed following the consultation and public examination of the East

of England Plan, and in the light of research into site economics that might allow for subsidy to be diverted elsewhere.

- 16.3.3.3 This to be coupled with policy options on developing a better understanding of site economics, designated sites for affordable housing and environmental capacity and design.

16.3.4 Housing Need and Homelessness - Options

- The Region could include this theme to provide a larger stock of affordable rented housing.
- The Region could use this theme to include more access to the private rented sector to provide more temporary accommodation
- The Region could use either or both of the above in combination with a policy option to develop more preventative measures.
- The Region could establish criteria and delegate the final decision on spend to local authorities and/ or the housing corporation

16.3.5 Housing Need and Homelessness – Proposal

- 16.3.5.1 The proposal is that the Region should move to an “illustrative” Housing Needs and Homelessness figure of 18%.

16.3.6 Regeneration- Options

- The options appear to be either draw the list of regeneration outcomes and qualifying areas tightly with a lower proportion of the investment pot, or draw the definitions more broadly with a bigger share of the pot.
- The danger with the first is that suitable schemes might be excluded and compromise the delivery of Local Development Documents. The danger with the second is that some priority areas

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with no other opportunities at their disposal may lose out on investment.

16.3.7 Regeneration- proposal

16.3.7.1 The proposal is that the region should move towards an “illustrative” figure of 10% for regeneration targeted on measured outcomes in areas outlined in policy SS11 of the East of England Plan,

16.3.8 Rural- Options

- The Region could target funding to a prioritised strategic programme regardless of settlement size based on the Rural Housing Pipeline that the Rural Housing Enabling Network has developed in conjunction with the Housing Corporation and the Countryside Agency.
- The Region could concentrate its rural funding on market towns and key service centres identified in the emerging local development documents.
- The Region could concentrate its funding on small rural settlements that are socially sustainable.

16.3.9 Rural – Proposal

16.3.9.1 Due to the many changes in this area, particularly through the National Rural Strategy (see the context document section 8.3) the Region should develop a Policy for Rural Housing based upon further research and liaison with the Rural Affairs Forum and the Rural Housing Enabling Network. This will involve more detailed research into the needs in market towns and villages than is available to the strategy at present.

16.3.9.2 Until more detailed information is available for the final version of the strategy the proposal is to retain a minimum of 12.5% funding for rural housing.

16.3.10 Key worker- Options

- The Region could broaden the definition of Key Workers to include a wider range of professions based on needs across the

region, but this would be at the expense of other groups in housing need.

- The Region could focus grant free development on key worker home ownership options, releasing resources for other priority needs.
- The Region could work pro-actively with employers to encourage more commercial funding for schemes.
- The Region could develop its policy options so that Key Worker Housing can be further developed as a concept.

16.3.11 Key Worker- Proposal

16.3.11.1 The illustrative proposal is that KW funding should be 4%. There should be a regional policy option to accompany this which investigates the possibility of the needs of key workers and other intermediate housing needs being met on sites without subsidy, linked to the work on site economics.

16.3.12 Supported Housing- Options

- The Region could maintain the current level of funding to supported housing, or reduce it with changes in Supporting People budgets- with an option for review at a later date.
- The Region could carry out an evaluation of policy led growth and service needs in conjunction with research into demographic changes.
- The Region could decide to divert any underspend on supported housing to homelessness.

16.3.13 Supported Housing – Proposal

16.3.13.1 Many housing providers have highlighted the risks within the Supporting People regime, and the close dialogue with Supporting People East Region Group (SPERG) suggests a lower capital spend on specialist housing provision is appropriate due to budget changes and increased use of floating support.

16.3.13.2 It is proposed that capital funding from the Single Housing Pot should be no more than 8% for the next 3-4 years, with a further review once the Supporting People Programme is better established.

16.3.14 Black and Minority Ethnic Schemes – Options

- The Region could continue with the same share of investment, or reduce it to reflect “undershooting” targets.
- Both of these options could be accompanied by policy guidance to help to clarify the situation.

16.3.15 Black and Minority Ethnic Schemes – Proposal

16.3.15.1 The proposal is that the “illustrative” share of the Single Housing Pot should be 3% but that this should be reviewed following the publication of regional research and accompanied by a clear policy statement to guide future bidding.

17 Implementation, managing and monitoring the strategy

17.1.1.1 Because of the proposed changes to the regional arrangements following the Barker Report there will need to be arrangements put in place to deal with the implementation and future monitoring of the Regional Housing Strategy that covers a timetable and key responsibilities.

17.1.1.2 Part of these arrangements should cover how the RHS fits with EERA’s existing Annual Monitoring Report and what changes might be necessary in the future.

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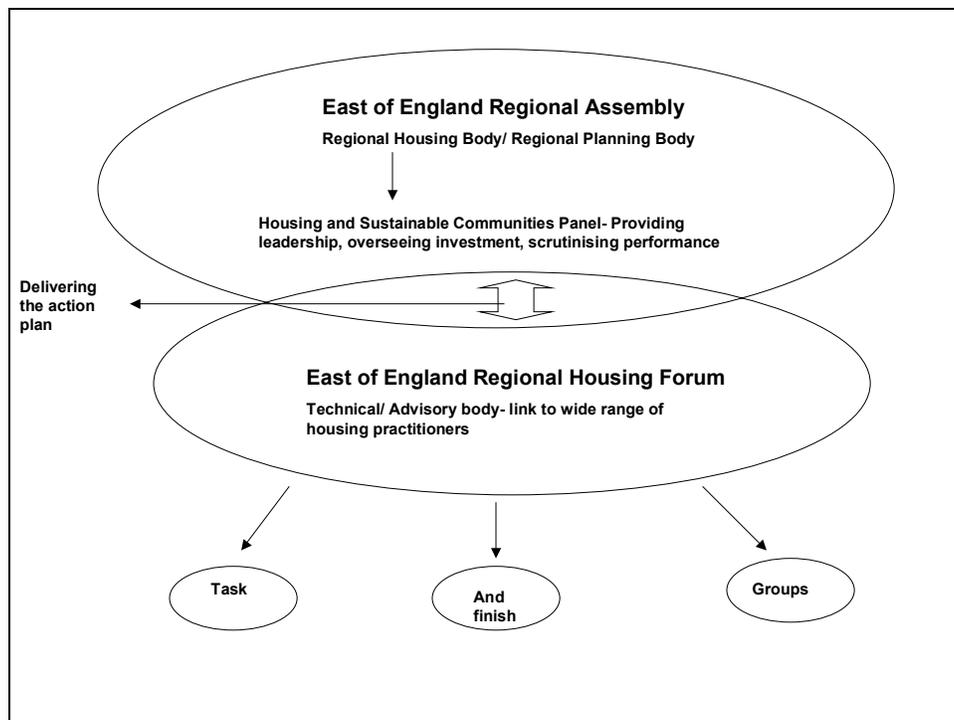


Figure 38: Managing and monitoring the strategy-roles and responsibilities

17.1.1.3 The action plan contains a number of specific actions for the Regional Housing Forum (RHF). They will form the basis of “task and finish” groups that will provide the basis of the work plan from 2005- 2007.

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18 The Action Plan

Target	Action	Responsibility	Monitored by	Timescale	Milestones
By 2010 to be providing an annual rate of completion of 23,900 net additional dwellings and <u>at least</u> 7,200 social rented dwellings distributed in accordance with the East of England Plan	2006-08 housing investment allocations on existing market distribution	Regional Housing Board	Revised joint Annual Monitoring Report	Spring 2006- autumn 2007	Ministerial announcements following RHB submission May 2005
	Delivery through the sub regions	Sub Regions			
	Following adoption of East of England Plan, review the housing numbers and distribution as necessary	EERA	EERA	Spring 2007	Adoption of the East of England Plan
	2008-10 housing investment allocations on the basis of interventions identified in RHS and informed by the adopted East of England Plan	Regional Housing Board	Revised joint Annual Monitoring Report	Autumn 2007	Adoption of the East of England Plan
	Delivery through the sub regions	Sub Regions			
Regional Research into site economics and viability conducted through RCE	RHF and RCE	Revised joint Annual Monitoring Report	Summer/ Autumn 2005 Autumn/winter 2005	Sign off of RHS to 2010	
Draft regional affordable housing policy	RHF and EERA panels				
Regional affordable housing policy (including treatment of S106) adopted by EERA	EERA – Housing and Sustainable Communities Panel and Regional Planning Panel				

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Target By 2010 to be providing at least 760 net additional units of key worker housing	2006-08 Housing investment allocations Delivery through sub regions	Regional Housing Board Sub Regions	Revised joint Annual Monitoring Report	Spring 2006- autumn 2007	Ministerial announcements following RHB submission May 2005
Target By 2010 to be achieving at least 30% of <u>all</u> new housing to EcoHomes standard “good” or above	Development industry to be engaged in developing principles of sustainable development through Regional Centre for Excellence	RHF, RCE, EEDA and Regional Business Partners	RCE and Sustainability Round Table Sustainability indicators	By winter 2005	Sign off of RHS
	Principles to be adopted with regional targets for EcoHomes and MMC	RHF, RCE, EEDA and Regional Business Partners	RCE and Sustainability Round Table Sustainability indicators	By winter 2006	Agreement of principles
Target By 2010 to have reduced the gap in the average annual replacement rate of construction workers	Identify the size of the gap in terms of numbers and skills with CITB Identify the range of actions and actors that will reduce the deficit, agree an action plan	RHF, RCE, EEDA and Regional Business Partners	CITB forecasts – to be incorporated into Annual Monitoring report	Action Plan agreed 2006	CITB Forecast 2006
Target By 2007 to have agreed Regional targets for design and quality	RHF to appoint a “design champion” to the Forum	RHF	RHF minutes	Summer 2005	Recommendations and consultation exercise
	Develop Regional Recommendations for design and quality that include the external environment such as green space and woodland	EERA – Housing and Sustainable Communities Panel with RCE and RHF	Annual Monitoring Report	Winter 2006	

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Target By 2010 to have achieved the Decent Homes target in Public and Private sector stock	RHB investment in Existing Private Sector Stock through 2006-08 and 2008-10 allocations Public sector stock investment	RHB Social housing providers through their business planning processes	Revised joint Annual Monitoring Report GO-East and Housing Corporations	2006-10 2010	Completion of Options appraisals July 2005
Target By 2010 to have reduced the number of Empty Homes from 60,000 in 2005 to 40,000 in 2010	Adoption of Empty Property Charters and associated good practice by local housing authorities Provision of "innovation funds" by RHB	Local housing authorities and Go-East RHB	Annual monitoring report	2010 from 2006	Completion of regional research 2005 Take up of innovation funds for projects
Target Adoption of Lifetime Homes Standard and 10% wheelchair standard for all new housing provision Adapted Property Registers at sub regional level	RHF promotion through the consultation process on the Draft East of England Plan RHF task group to assess feasibility	RHF, RCE RHF	Annual monitoring report EERA monitoring RHF work programme	By 2007 By 2006	Submission to EERA Inclusion in work programme
Target By 2007 to have investigated regional availability of alternative funding for private sector renewal	RHF task group to be established with input from National Housing Federation, Housing Corporation and EEDA	RHF	EERA Monitoring RHF work programme	By 2007	Inclusion in 2005-07 work programme
Target By 2006 to have agreed	RHF, SPERG and the appropriate group developing the Regional Health Strategy to establish a joint task group	RHF	EERA Monitoring RHF work programme	By 2006	Adoption of Regional Health and Housing

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a joint statement on Housing and Health as a basis for shared priorities	establish a joint task group		programme		Strategies
Target By 2006 have established a Regional Black and Minority Communities Action Plan that incorporates the findings of 2005 research projects	RHF to establish a task group that incorporates voluntary sector input from BME communities. The focus will be to build knowledge for future recommendations on public sector investment	RHF	EERA Monitoring RHF work programme	By 2006	Adoption of RHS
Target By 2007 have established the accommodation needs of future expansion in higher and further education	RHF task group with AUUE and ACER		EERA Monitoring RHF work programme	By 2007	
Target By 2006 to produce an analysis of the opportunities and barriers facing private sector rental agencies in the East of England	RHF task group with ARLA	RHF	EERA Monitoring RHF work programme	By 2006	
Target By 2007 to have piloted CBL and Homelessness at sub regional level	RHF to work with Sub Regions on a pilot framework in two separate sub regions	RHF	EERA Monitoring RHF work programme	2006 pilots to run	Establishing pilot sub regions winter 2005