

THAMES GATEWAY SOUTH ESSEX (TGSE) HOUSING STRATEGY

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 To consider the draft TGSE housing strategy, proposed priorities and action plan, and to make comments if considered appropriate.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The development of housing strategy is now a two-way process, with local strategies at District/Borough level, strategies covering wider housing market areas or sub-regions and regional strategies. Each informs the level above and, conversely, is guided by higher level objectives, including from national level.
- 2.2 Rochford is within the TGSE housing sub-region. Over the last few months work has been undertaken by the TGSE Housing Group of officers on two major pieces of work.
- The commissioning of a joint housing market and needs assessment.
 - The drafting, with assistance from consultants Housing Quality Network Services, of a TGSE Sub-Regional Housing Strategy 2005-2008.
- 2.3 The draft sub-regional housing strategy has sought to identify the principal issues that face the local housing authorities and their partners. Common themes have been identified, but the extent to which those are reflected in local housing strategies and in Community Plans will vary between authorities.

3 SUB-REGIONAL STRATEGY DETAIL

- 3.1 A copy of the draft strategy has been placed in the Members' Library.
- 3.2 The draft strategy contains a profile of the TGSE sub-region and information on the strategic context, including the Sustainable Communities Plan/Sustainable Communities in the East of England, the regional housing and economic strategies and planning guidance.
- 3.3 It identifies four priorities:-
- Providing new homes.
 - Supporting vulnerable people.
 - Improving our homes.
 - Building sustainable and inclusive communities.

Each of these is considered in detail and action points developed which are brought together in an action plan, which is appended to this report, as is the proposed allocation of resources against funding categories that are being developed through the Regional Housing Board. These may need some further consideration once the results of the sub-regional housing market and needs assessment becomes available in December 2004.

4 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Comments have now been invited on the draft strategy from a wide group of interested organisations, and it is likely that there will be a conference later this year, with the intention that the sub-regional housing strategy will be finalised in the early part of 2005.

5 OFFICER COMMENTS

- 5.1 The development of this Council's replacement housing strategy, which is close to achieving 'fit for purpose' status, has been carried out in tandem with the work on the sub-regional housing strategy. There is good correlation between the strategies and the strategic housing priorities identified in both are similar.
- 5.2 Some additional entries are required in Appendix 3 of the draft strategy, which lists future and potential affordable housing sites, to include, for example, the former Hardwick House and Tylney Avenue sites, which have been omitted. With this proviso, and subject to any further comments from Members, it is recommended that the draft sub-regional strategy be endorsed.

6 RISK IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Risk/Resource Risk/Reputation Risk

- 6.1 It is important that there is synergy between the District housing strategy and the sub-regional and regional housing strategies otherwise the Council will not be considered a full partner in the TGSE, funding will be allocated elsewhere and local housing needs will not be addressed.

Regulatory Risk

- 6.2 Housing strategy is one of the core parts of the strategic framework for the Council and is assessed as part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The priorities identified in the sub-regional strategy will influence regional housing priorities, which guide the funding decisions of the Regional Housing Board.

8 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 It is proposed, that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That, subject to appropriate amendments to Appendix 3, as indicated in the report, and to any comments from Members, the draft sub-regional housing strategy be endorsed.

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Background Papers:-

Thames Gateway Sub-Regional Housing Strategy 2004-2008

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Appendix 1 Investment Priorities			
Theme	Sub Regional Investment Priorities	Definition	Justification
Growth	40%		
a) SCP Growth areas	(25%)	Growth areas identified in SCP, development on strategic sites such as those identified in RSS or LDF's	Imperative that Region is seen to deliver SCP. By breaking this down allows us also to meet the regionally arising need for growth as witnessed by evidence of pressured housing markets. 1 2 3 <i>Some development in growth areas must come through regeneration to ensure sustainability in existing settlements</i>
b) Pressured housing market growth	(5%)	Growth in pressured housing markets to meet housing need across a range of tenures	
c) Regeneration through growth	(10%)	Regeneration schemes in growth areas	
Homelessness and Housing Needs	10%	To tackle high and rising levels of homelessness and housing need	
Regeneration	10%	Investment for new housing provision as part of a holistic package to deliver sustainable regeneration. Outputs to be evidenced by sub regional strategy.	.
Rural	2.5%		Need to consider the change in the rural target to be determined by ODPM/ DEFRA/ RHB's.
a) Market towns and service centres		As defined in RES and RSS	
b) Smaller communities	2.5%	Where a sustainability check can confirm the viability of the scheme	
Key Workers	10%	ODPM definition	Non- ODPM definition workers should be picked up under intermediate tenures in Growth b)
Supported Housing	10%	Capital schemes linked to confirmed	This is capital funding only. SP revenue

		revenue resource	funding/ packages to provide support – this will include floating support to vulnerable groups.
<p>Existing Housing Stock</p> <p>a) Public Sector Decent Homes</p> <p>b) Private Sector Renewal</p> <p>c) Disabled Facilities Grant</p> <p>d) Empty Homes</p>	<p>20%</p> <p>Apportionment subject to future detailed consideration.</p>	<p>Decent homes includes both LA's & HA's</p> <p>PSR includes renewal and provision of decent homes in the private sector to the most vulnerable groups</p> <p>The top up amount after government funding for this purpose, commitment from local authorities. To be applied to all tenures</p> <p>To bring empty homes back into use. Potentially linked to the use of Temporary Social housing</p>	<p>Assumed that this is understood</p> <p>A broader definition than decent homes to encourage innovation in the private sector</p> <p>Included here because funding is for change/ improvement to stock. Argued that funding should go into DFG across tenure rather than make a case for aids & adaptations to ensure equity and consistency across tenure groups.</p>
<p>Black and Minority Ethnic Communities</p> <p>a) Cohesive communities</p> <p>b) Specialist schemes</p> <p>c) Travellers' sites</p>	<p>2.5%</p>	<p>General family housing / larger houses based on assessment of needs and changes to local allocations policies</p> <p>Specialist accommodation eg, sheltered housing for ethnic elders</p> <p>Following changes to the Housing Bill potential extension to include travellers' sites</p>	<p>Initially felt that the region's failure to produce good BME schemes signalled that there should be no separate category for BME. Subsequent discussion/ investigation has shown that BME schemes did come forward – but heavily disguised under other themed headings eg, "growth". There is a need for greater clarity to enable schemes to come forward.</p>

Appendix 4

4 THAMES GATEWAY SUB REGIONAL STRATEGY

ACTION PLAN

5 **NOTE details within this action plan will be completed at a later date. Priority of the planned actions and indeed whether or not these should be supported or others introduced, will be determined as part of the planned consultation.**

Joint Working				
Action	Outcome	Lead	Resources	Timescale
1. Consult on the Sub Regional Housing Strategy, findings of the Housing Needs Study and the Regional Housing Strategy.				
2. Explore funding opportunities to establish a Co-ordinators Post to facilitate joint working.				

Providing New Homes				
Action	Outcome	Lead	Resources	Timescale
3. Ensure that planning policies and guidance encourage the provision of affordable housing.				
4. To deliver growth required across the sub region joint working to maximise the use of brownfield and other urban land.				
5. Co-ordinate housing development and the provision of essential supporting social, health, education and transport infrastructure.				

Providing New Homes				
Action	Outcome	Lead	Resources	Timescale
<i>6. Work towards securing consistency of policies and approach, particularly around affordable housing where reliance on Section 106 planning agreements is needed to deliver new homes</i>				
<i>7. Analyse the results of the newly joint commissioned Sub regional housing needs study that is due to be delivered in 2005.</i>				
<i>8. Develop and introduce a common approach to maintaining housing market information</i>				

Meeting the needs of vulnerable groups				
Action	Outcome	Lead	Resources	Timescale
<i>9. With Supporting People Commissioning Bodies jointly plan to meet the needs of vulnerable groups and coordinate future capital and revenue investment.</i>				
<i>10. Build upon existing initiatives to establish a register of adapted property and suitable for people with disabilities needing adapted accommodation.</i>				
<i>11. Identify funding requirements and secure investment to support private sector renewal and DFGs and funding adaptations to council and housing association homes</i>				
<i>12. Considering adopting common Lifetime Homes standards for new housing.</i>				
<i>13. Build upon Home Improvement Agencies provision to assist vulnerable people in securing improvements and adaptations to their homes.</i>				

Meeting the needs of vulnerable groups				
Action	Outcome	Lead	Resources	Timescale
<i>14. Develop sub regional joint working on tackling Homelessness</i>				
<i>15. Identify, share and promote best practice including addressing the main causes of homelessness</i>				
<i>16. Coordinate action through Supporting People Commissioning Bodies to extend floating support and specialist provision and ensuring coordination of capital and revenue funding.</i>				
<i>17. Improved joint working across agencies including Health Authorities</i>				
<i>18. Increase the supply of good quality temporary accommodation and reduce the use of B&B for all homeless households</i>				

Improving our Homes				
Action	Outcome	Lead	Resources	Timescale
<i>19. Ensure that all council and housing association homes will meet the Decent Homes standard by 2010</i>				
<i>20. Complete Options Appraisals by July 2005</i>				
<i>21. Keep future investment needs beyond 2010 under review and identify the resources required.</i>				

Improving our Homes				
Action	Outcome	Lead	Resources	Timescale
<i>22. Through joint working examine and promote best practice across all councils and RSLs in all areas to deliver effective and cost efficient improvements to the housing stock (including partnering and cross boundary procurement of capital work to achieve economies of scale/value for money.</i>				
<i>23. Develop a sub regional approach to promote energy conservation measures.</i>				
<i>24. The sub region will put in place arrangements to maintain reliable information on the condition of the housing stock. Working to agreed and common approach.</i>				
<i>25. Councils in the sub region develop and share best practice to work with private sector owners to reduce the level of unfitness and improve conditions as measured against the housing, health and safety and energy rating systems.</i>				

Building Sustainable and Inclusive Communities				
Action	Outcome	Lead	Resources	Timescale
<i>1. Social housing providers to take action on areas identified by “Key Issues for Sustainable Communities”. Coordination through sub regional working to ensure sharing and promotion of best practice.</i>				
<i>2. Though the Essex Housing Officers Group jointly implement the BME Housing and Supported Needs Study action plan</i>				
<i>3. Proposed Housing Needs Survey in 2004/5 will investigate Travellers population growth and the location of the site, inform and identify support issues under the Supporting People agenda</i>				
<i>4. Local Housing Authorities with RSLs review and consider the impact and potential to extend Choice-based Lettings</i>				