REPORT TO THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE 5 NOVEMBER 2008

PORTFOLIO: COUNCIL TAX COLLECTION, BENEFITS AND STRATEGIC HOUSING AND PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION

REPORT FROM HEAD OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF THE THAMES GATEWAY SOUTH ESSEX STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT AND THE THAMES GATEWAY SOUTH ESSEX SUB REGIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2008 - 2011

1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED

1.1 That the Council acknowledge and endorse the Thames Gateway South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment, produced by GVA Grimley, on behalf of all the constituent local authorities and also formally endorse the Thames Gateway South Essex Sub Regional Housing Strategy 2008 - 2011.

2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The Thames Gateway South Essex (TGSE) local authorities of Rochford, Basildon, Castle Point, Thurrock and Southend, commissioned GVA Grimley to undertake a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for the TGSE Sub Region. These partner authorities have also been working together to produce a Sub Regional Housing Strategy, which is now at the final draft stage.

2.2 The production of the Sub Regional Housing Strategy has had input from Officers and Members from each of the constituent authorities, and a consultation workshop event was held on 7 May of this year for a range of stakeholders, which was attended by a number of Members and officers from this authority.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

2.3 PPS3: Housing identifies the importance of understanding sub regional housing markets, and taking into account market information, when developing planning policies for housing provision and SHMAs are intended to achieve this. They are to be a key mechanism for considering the mix of housing required and, together with Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (SHLAAs), are intended to inform the level of future housing provision. For the TGSE Sub Region, the SHMA is required as a core element of the evidence base for each Districts' Local Development Frameworks and is to inform operation of the Sub Regional Housing Strategy.

2.4 The value of SHMAs in assisting policy development, decision making and allocation of housing investment resources is demonstrated by:-

- Enabling Regional Bodies to develop long term strategic views of housing need and demand, to inform Regional Spatial Strategies and Regional Housing Strategies.

- Enabling local authorities to think spatially about the nature and influence of housing markets in respect of their local area.

- Providing robust evidence to inform policies aimed at providing the right mix of housing across the whole market area.

- Supporting local authorities to develop a strategic approach to housing, through consideration of housing need and demand in all housing sectors – owner occupied, private rented and affordable – and assessment of the key drivers and relationships in the housing market.

- Drawing together the bulk of evidence required for local authorities to appraise strategic housing options.

- Ensuring the most appropriate and cost effective use of public funds.

2.5 SHMAs are intended to be prepared for “functional” Sub Regional Housing Markets, which often transcend administrative boundaries. The five local authorities in the Sub Region have come together as a Housing Market Partnership to prepare the SHMA, which in turn has provided an evidence base to be used to support the TGSE Sub Regional Housing Strategy.

2.6 Included as Appendix A to this report, is a copy of the Conclusions and Recommendations section of the SHMA. (The full document comprises of over 250 pages and if any Members wish to have a copy, please contact the Head of Community Services). The first part of this section explains the intentions of the SHMA, in that it is intended to improve the understanding of the current strategic housing provision in the Sub region, and provide an evidence base that can assist in the development of planning and housing policies and, therefore, the Council is not committing to any specific actions in endorsing the SHMA.

2.7 There are a number of recommendations within this section of the SHMA relating to a range of areas of the Strategic Housing Services, as detailed below.

Rochford Core Strategy

2.8 The Rochford Core Strategy (RCS) preferred options document was approved for consultation at a meeting of Full Council on 15 October 2008. The RCS proposes the development of an annual average of 250 dwellings over a fifteen year period to comply with the housing allocation contained within the adopted East of England Plan. It is intended that the detailed locations and quantum of development will be articulated in the Allocations Development Plan Document, but the RCS identifies general locations for the new housing development and allocates this into three phases running to 2015, 2021 and 2025, the aim being to ensure a balanced approach to the development of land and demonstrate a five year supply of housing land at all times.

2.9 RCS draft Policy H4 explains the Council's intentions with regard to the delivery of affordable housing. The SHMA concludes that the estimated level of need for affordable housing represents 52% of anticipated levels of house building, taking into account past delivery rates and the East of England Plan housing allocation. However, the RCS recognises that, taking into account the likely economic viability of development sites, this level of provision of affordable housing is not realistic and therefore the policy proposes affordable provision at 35% on sites of more than 10 dwellings. This level of provision mirrors the level of provision anticipated by the East of England Plan.

2.10 The threshold for the delivery of affordable housing has been set at 10 dwelling units; this is slightly below the threshold of 15 units proposed in national planning policy, but it is concluded this slightly lower threshold is realistic and will have the effect of delivering a greater number of affordable units.

2.11 The SHMA also comments on house size, density and design. The draft RCS proposes that new developments will contain a mix of dwellings types to cater fully for the needs of the district's population. In particular, reflecting the conclusions of the SHMA, the RCS proposes in Policy H5 that a proportion of the required affordable housing provision will be in the form of 3 bed dwellings.

2.12 The importance of the delivery of 'lifetime' homes is also recognised in the draft RCS and the expectation is that all new housing developments will comply with the standard. This should ensure that housing is more adaptable and flexible and that residents will be able to occupy the same home, with adaptations, for longer periods, taking account of changing lifestyles and mobility.

Low Cost Market Housing

2.13 The SHMA recommends the provision of a one-stop shop for households who cannot afford to buy but can afford to pay more than social rents. Such a scheme could match available properties and landlords to tenants on housing waiting lists. Partner authorities may wish to consider such a scheme but one has not been included in the TGSE Strategy at this stage.

2.14 Decent homes has been highlighted in the TGSE Housing Strategy and is being addressed through our own draft local Housing Strategy. Financial assistance is already being given to vulnerable households to help them make their homes decent. The TGSE Sub Region has recently been awarded

£4.3million to address the issue of decent warm healthy homes. This money will be allocated for 2 years. The amount of funding to be allocated to each authority has yet to be decided.

Older Persons Housing

2.15 The TGSE has a target for developing a sub regional quality design standard, including meeting “lifetime homes” and is included in our own draft local Housing Strategy.

2.16 The Council also helps elderly persons to adapt their homes by providing assistance through grant schemes such as Disabled Facility grants.

2.17 Additional extra care housing has recently provided in the District through partnership working with a Registered Social Landlord. A PFI bid is being put together by Essex CC, in partnership with Essex authorities, which includes the development of further extra care schemes across the county.

2.18 The development of shared equity models has been considered, however there is some resistance to such schemes and is not included in either the TGSE Housing Strategy or the Council’s draft local Housing Strategy, at the present time.

Affordable Housing

2.19 In addition to delivery through provision on new developments above the policy threshold, the Council also works with Registered Social Landlords, and in particular with Rochford Housing Association (RHA), on the provision of affordable housing. Within RHA’s offer they aim to provide 50 new affordable homes per year.

TGSE Sub Regional Housing Strategy 2008 – 2011

2.20 The primary aim of this strategy is to set out the priorities and actions which will accelerate the supply of high quality and sustainable housing, to help meet the needs of people, living or aspiring to live in, the TGSE Sub Region. This strategy is designed to ensure that the local housing strategies meet not only the local priorities, but also work towards achieving the sub regional, regional and national targets and priorities, and indeed, it is expected that the final draft of our own new Housing Strategy will be brought to the Executive for approval at the meeting of 26 November.

2.21 The TGSE Strategy has a lifespan of 2008 – 2011, dovetailing with the Regional Housing Strategy and covers the Housing Corporation’s National Affordable Housing Programme funding bid rounds for 2008 – 2011. The SHMA provides much of the evidence base to support this Sub Regional Housing Strategy, other local housing strategies and Local Development Frameworks.

2.22 The TGSE Strategy aims to:-

- Determine the nature and dynamics of the housing market in the Sub Region and its relationship to surrounding areas, including the housing needs of people in South Essex.
- Understand how existing housing is supporting or constraining the economic and social development of the Sub Region.
- Show how future plans for housing and regeneration is supporting the sustainable development of the Sub Region.
- Highlight a range of actions for intervention to improve the functioning of the housing market, to meet projected economic growth and the approach to achieving our wider objectives of sustainability and community cohesion.
- Identify the key areas where the five local authorities, partner RSLs and other organisations will work together and actions required to meet these objectives.

2.23 The TGSE Strategy looks at the targets, issues, trends and partnership actions arising from:-

- Future housing growth to ensure it is sustainable and future proof.
- Needs of vulnerable groups living in the Sub Region.
- Future of the current housing stock to ensure it is at a decent standard.

2.24 Included as Appendix B to this report is the TGSE Strategy's Executive Summary and as Appendix C, is the Sub Regional Action Plan. As with the SHMA, if any Members would like a full copy of the TGSE Sub Regional Housing Strategy, they should contact the Head of Community Services.

2.25 Within the Action Plan, many of the priority areas will be developed through the continued work of the Thames Gateway South Essex Housing Strategy Group that involves both Members and Officers of the partner authorities and also through the content of all the partner authorities' Local Development Framework Core Strategies.

2.26 With regard to further detail on some of the specific actions, firstly there is the development of a Sub Regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme (CBL). Members will already be aware through previous reports of the progress towards this objective and that the Council needs to implement a CBL Scheme by 2010. The Sub Regional aspect of this initiative is likely to be centred around having a certain number of properties that can be made available for cross border nominations. Each local authority will determine the number of properties to be allocated for this purpose.

2.27 With regard to the actions around vulnerable people, and in particular, the homelessness and supporting people agendas, the Council already works towards reducing the number of households and time spent living in temporary accommodation (for which there are performance indicators) and has a well established relationship with the Supporting People Services at Essex County Council.

2.28 The issues around the provision of gypsy and travellers sites are being addressed through the LDF process and bids for government funding for the Sub Region have recently been successful in respect of both the Fuel Poverty/Energy Efficiency and Empty Homes Agendas.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no specific cost implications connected directly to either the recommendations in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment or the TGSE Sub Regional Housing Strategy, although officer time will be required, particularly with regard to the partnership working within the TGSE Sub Region.

I confirm that the above recommendation does not depart from Council policy and that appropriate consideration has been given to any budgetary and legal implications.

SMT Lead Officer Signature: ____________________________________

HEAD OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

Background Papers:-

Thames Gateway South Essex Sub Regional Housing Strategy 2008 – 2011 and the Thames Gateway South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

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13. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 SHMAs are intended to improve understanding of need and demand for affordable and market housing; of the current housing stock; of market conditions; and of drivers of change both over short-term and long-term horizons. This SHMA for the Thames Gateway South Essex sub-region is intended to form an evidence base to inform planning and housing policies at both the regional and local levels.

13.2 The timing of publication of this SHMA coincides with a significant downturn in housing market conditions following a strong and sustained period of strong market growth. The recommendations address this short-term context, but also the underlying economic and policy drivers which point to continued strong housing demand over the medium to long-term.

Housing Targets

13.3 The SHMA forms one of the inputs into determining housing requirements and residential land supply in LDFs. Local Planning Authorities also need to consider what level of suitable land can be brought forward for development, informed by Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (SHLAAs). They will also need to take account of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), as general conformity with the RSS is one of the tests of 'soundness' for Local Development Frameworks (LDF). This will be tested by an Independent Inspector at the Examination in Public (EiP) into LDF Core Strategies.

13.4 Forecasts or projections of future household growth are a core output of the SHMA. The Government's 2004 trend-based projections of household growth indicate growth of 5% above current RSS levels to 2021.

13.5 However as we have set out, potential housing demand could indeed be much higher than this. If delivery of 55,000 net additional jobs is achieved, this would support housing demand for 62,100 homes – 40% above current RSS levels – if commuting patterns remain as today. This is an economic-led growth scenario but is not unrealistic in our view. From another viewpoint, if commuting patterns remain consistent to today we might expect employment growth of only 31,200 (57% of target) if current RSS targets are maintained. This highlights the reciprocal relationships between housing growth, economic growth and commuting patterns.

13.6 The East of England Plan (2008) sets out a robust and sustainable strategy for the future regeneration, development and growth of the sub-region. A central element of this is to achieve a reduction in out-commuting from the sub-region through an economic-led strategy which aims to deliver an improved balance between housing and jobs. This is intended to help to manage and reduce commuting patterns and support modal shift. It has national policy support.

13.7 Our assessment of housing and economic growth in London and East London suggests that supply constraints on housing growth in London are likely to mean that parts of the East and South East regions are likely to continue to play a role in supporting the economy in London and East London by providing residential environments which house people working in the capital. We would expect this to continue to contribute to demand pressures in areas which are accessible to London and East London.

13.8 It is important that local partners recognise the reality of demand pressures across the greater South East linked to strong economic performance and demographic growth. However the appropriate policy response is at the national and regional levels. A national and regional solution is required.

13.9 The National Housing and Planning Advice Unit has highlighted that a significant increase in housing delivery will be necessary in the East of England and other south east regions to meet market demand and to stabilise and improve affordability over the longer-term.

13.10 The appropriate forum to address this is through the review of the East of England Plan. Partners should proactively engage in the process to establish a sustainable strategy for the development of the sub-region, which takes account of environmental and infrastructure capacity. Any increase in development targets must be supported by investment in supporting physical, social and community infrastructure.

13.11 While we expect effective demand over the long-term to remain strong; in the short-term however, we would expect levels of housing delivery to fall.

Maintaining Housing Delivery Rates

13.12 In the short-term the potential to maintain or improve rates of housing delivery may be curtailed by the current housing market and economic climate. The reasons behind this have been explored and catalogued. While the affordability of market housing may remain stable or improve, there is likely to remain a continued need to maintain housing supply to address the structural imbalance between housing supply and demand.

13.13 There are limited tools available to local authorities which will allow them to maintain or drive forward delivery rates in the short-term given the current economic climate and housing market conditions. We recommend that local authorities adopt a comprehensive and proactive approach to managing housing supply, through:

1. Working to bring forward a clear and coherent planning policy framework through LDF Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPDs as quickly as possible to provide a strong policy framework to support planning applications;

2. Proactive annual monitoring of delivery progress and timescales at a site level, including through *proactive engagement* with developers;

3. Maintaining a five year supply of *deliverable* sites as required through PPS3, and working proactively with landowners and developers to address site and infrastructure constraints to development;

4. Seeking to deliver a range and mix of sites through LDFs which allow different housing products to be brought forward by different developers across local areas. This is also advisable given policy and infrastructure requirements which can hold up the delivery of larger sites;

5. Potentially taking a more proactive approach in the housing market, including through use of public sector land and joint ventures partnerships with developers.

13.14 We would recommend that a co-ordinated approach is adopted to driving forward housing delivery, recognising inter-dependencies between housing, infrastructure and quality of place. Investment in quality of place and regeneration, in social and community infrastructure and in cultural and leisure facilities helps to create attractive places to live and sell houses. The local authorities should work to ensure that this approach is embedded within and across proposed development schemes.

13.15 We would also argue that there is a case for 'contingency planning.' This is being taken forward by local authorities elsewhere in the greater South East, and looks to identify additional contingency sites to support housing delivery where there are notable delivery risks.

Affordable Housing Policies

Context

13.16 An assessment of housing needs is a statutory requirement to inform policies for affordable housing. Its purpose is to establish that the 'need' for affordable housing cannot be met by existing or planned supply; and hence that new affordable housing must be built to meet needs.

13.17 Over the last five years, the growing differential between house prices and earnings has made access to the market housing sector increasingly difficult. This has been reflected in growing levels of 'need' identified through Housing Needs Studies nationally.

13.18 The current situation in the TGSE sub-region is one in which the estimated level of need represents 54% of anticipated levels of house building, taking into account past delivery levels and RSS targets. It is unlikely that the existing market and funding context will support this level of affordable housing delivery.

13.19 We recommend that local authorities across the sub-region work to maximise the supply of new affordable housing. There are a range of policy tools which can be used to achieve this:

1. Direct delivery of affordable housing by RSLs and potential Local Authorities (or ALMOs) once more;

2. Using public sector land to bring forward new affordable housing, based on land value subsidy (e.g. the local authority accepts a reduced site receipt for enhanced delivery of affordable housing);

3. Looking to require affordable housing provision below national site size thresholds (15 dwellings) where it can be demonstrated that it is viable to do so;

4. Maximising developer contributions to affordable housing through planning policies in LDFs and S106 negotiations;

5. Identification of exceptions sites in rural areas specifically for affordable housing to meet local needs; and

6. Use of Empty Dwelling Management Orders to bring vacant private sector housing back into use to meet housing need.

13.20 The local authorities should set out clear policies for affordable housing in their Local Development Framework Core Strategies and Affordable Housing SPDs as the basis for securing affordable housing on (private) development sites through planning obligations. PPS3 provides clear guidance that:

"Local planning authorities should ...

Set an overall (i.e. plan-wide) target for affordable housing to be provided. The target should reflect the definition of affordable housing [in PPS3]. It should also reflect an assessment of *the likely economic viability of land for housing within the area, taking account of risks to delivery and drawing on an informed assessment of the levels of finance available for affordable housing.*

Set out the range of circumstances in which affordable housing will be required. .. Local planning authorities will need to undertake an informed assessment of any thresholds or proportions of affordable housing proposed, including their likely impact on the overall level of housing delivery and creating mixed communities."

13.21 Affordable housing policies must be justified in terms of the level of need identified through the Housing Needs Assessment. They however must be realistic and deliverable; and set against wider objectives of maintaining an adequate supply of market housing to meet demand and delivering mixed income and tenure communities at a local level.

13.22 PPS3 sets out that targets should be informed by the level of funding available through the National Affordable Housing Programme administered by the Housing Corporation, and a realistic assessment of their effect on residual land values.

13.23 Current affordable housing policies are for 15-30% provision of sites of 25 dwellings/1ha in Basildon; for 20% on sites of 15 units or more in Castle Point; of no less than 15% on sites of 25 dwellings/1ha or more in Rochford; and of 20% on schemes of 10-49 dwellings and 30% on schemes of over 50 dwellings in Southend. Thurrock Council is currently looking to increase its affordable housing target to 33%.

13.24 It is for local authorities to consider appropriate affordable housing policies in their areas. We are however of the view that a consistent approach across the housing market would be advisable. The sub-regional target set out in the Thames Gateway Delivery Plan is for 35%.

13.25 We believe that a consistent affordable housing target should be implemented across the functional sub-regional housing market. In our view, evidence of housing need could justify the adoption of a 35% affordable housing target across the five local authorities if it could be provided that this would not jeopardise the viability of residential development. PPS3 is clear that affordable housing policies must reflect the economics of residential development in the area.

13.26 It however may not be advisable to revise policies against the context of the current market downturn, recognising these will further impact upon development viability in a context in which build costs and infrastructure requirements have been rising, and returns from the sale of homes are now falling.

13.27 GVA Grimley's research for ODPM on Planning Obligations (ODPM, 2004) identified that the package of Section 106 contributions could realistically result in a reduction in land value of up to 20% without deterring development.

Considering the Viability of Residential Development Schemes

13.28 To inform revisions to affordable housing policies, partners across the sub-region will need to explore and consider the development economics of affordable housing provision.

13.29 Affordable housing targets will primarily impact on the value of land suitable for residential development. Requiring or increasing levels of affordable housing required from development schemes will affect the value of development sites and the viability of schemes. Critically it is the landowner who has to 'pay' in most cases for increasing affordable housing requirements in a context in which the level of public funding available for affordable housing remains static.

13.30 It is important that affordable housing policies do not reduce the supply of land being brought forward for residential development. An appropriate policy must therefore strike a balance between increasing delivery of affordable housing, and maintaining incentives for landowners to release land and for private developers to bring forward schemes. This will maximise affordable housing delivery.

13.31 The impact on land value of affordable housing policies should be seen in the context of residual development appraisal. The residual development appraisal method for a residential development scheme can be summarised as follows:

Gross Development Value (from Sales)
-
Construction Costs, Financing Costs, Professional Fees and Section 106 Costs
-
Developer Profit
=
Residual Land Value

13.32 Increasing affordable housing requirements are likely to reduce the value of private units sold on a development scheme. The revenue from affordable housing to the developer is also likely to be significantly below that which could be achieved from market housing. Social rented units are for instance commonly sold at build cost (on a free and serviced land basis). The value of intermediate units varies depending on the product, but is usually higher than social rented (for instance at 66% Open Market Value). Increasing affordable housing requirements hence reduces the 'gross development value' of a scheme (the financial return from sale of properties).

13.33 Based upon current evidence, the signs are that land values are likely to fall as costs increase and revenue falls. It appears likely that house prices will fall or at best remain stagnant in the short-term. Build costs are increasing as a result of inflation and shortages of construction skills. Public policies are also likely to impact upon build costs, including through the phased introduction of the Code for Sustainable Homes and through other infrastructure requirements. Introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) would also have an impact if applied locally. The impact of the Credit Crunch is also being felt by developers and RSLs and is increasing finance and borrowing costs.

13.34 There is little scope to alter developer profit, which ultimately is paid to developers' shareholders. Increasing market uncertainty may indeed lead to higher profit assumptions being made, to take account of the increased risk.

13.35 In the context of potentially increasing costs and declining revenues the potential to increase affordable housing requirements is fairly constrained. This assumes that current affordable housing policies have fed through into land values locally.

13.36 In the prevailing market and funding context, there is a strong potential for too stringent affordable housing targets to deter development activity. Essentially if land values fall too low, landowners may not sell the land, may continue with an existing use or may consider alternative uses for the land. Affordable housing policies in this context hence have the potential to actually reduce levels of market and affordable housing delivery.

13.37 We recommend on this basis that local authorities undertake an Affordable Housing Viability Study to consider and assess what level of affordable housing provision could realistically be required of private developers without deterring development activity.

13.38 This Study should also consider the potential thresholds at which contributions are required and the scope to lower thresholds or establish graded affordable housing requirements (either directly or in kind) for different sizes of site.

Recommended Indicative Affordable Housing Policies

13.39 We consider that a standard 35% affordable housing requirement across the TGSE sub-regional housing market could be justified based on the evidence of housing need. However an appropriate and robust policy will also need to be supported by evidence that this is economically viable on most sites, taking into account the prevailing funding context. A Viability Study will be required to inform and support this.

13.40 In the application of the policy, local authorities may need to exercise some flexibility, taking account of site specific factors which influence the economics of residential development (where it can be proven that the affordable housing policy makes development unviable), as well as potentially mixed community objectives relating to the existing tenure mix in the locality. Some flexibility is necessary to take account of these site and locality specific circumstances and changes in the market.

13.41 The housing needs analysis undertaken indicates significant and acute need for social rented housing. Further analysis also points to a significant potential market for intermediate home ownership. However actual demand for these products is somewhat unproven. This is a symptom of a relatively embryonic market. In this context, we are of the view that subject to further testing through the recommended Development Economics Study, partners should adopt a policy an 80:20 split of affordable housing between social rented and intermediate provision as a starting point for negotiations.

13.42 We would further recommend that more detailed research is undertaken to explore the potential target market and pricing for intermediate products and that this is used to structure eligibility criteria. We would also encourage partners with the Zone Agent to enhance knowledge of the products available and encourage take-up of them.

13.43 The local authorities should look to set out specific policies regarding the size of affordable housing provision required. We set out below recommendations regarding the sizes of affordable housing to be sought. This is based upon an appraisal of both the scale of current waiting lists for different property types together with levels of lettings and turnover for different property sizes.

13.44 GVA Grimley considers that it is appropriate to plan for a range of different sizes of affordable housing. Whilst the majority of households on waiting lists often require smaller properties, those in need of larger properties often have to wait much longer for a home, often reflecting limited current supply of larger properties and lower rates of turnover. Provision of larger, family-sized affordable homes both meets this need and often allows social housing providers to better use existing stock by creating a chain of lettings.

Figure 13:1 Indicative Affordable Housing Provision by Bedroom Size

	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+ bed	Total
Basildon	35%	30%	20%	15%	100%
Castle Point	25%	35%	30%	10%	100%
Rochford	25%	30%	35%	10%	100%
Southend-on-Sea	30%	25%	30%	15%	100%
Thurrock	40%	35%	15%	10%	100%

Low Cost Market Housing

13.45 Many households with insufficient income or equity to purchase housing may choose to meet their needs in the private sector, rather than seek affordable housing provision. There is anecdotal evidence of individuals sharing housing, and the private rented sector plays an important role in the housing market alongside specific intermediate housing provision. It plays a particular role in catering for the needs of younger households, or those who are attracted by the flexibility which renting provides. Private renting is an attractive option for many households who cannot afford to buy across the sub-region.

13.46 We have recommended that partners undertake further work to assess how the role of intermediate housing could be developed to meet the needs of households who cannot afford to buy but can afford to pay more than social rents. There are a range of housing options available to this group, which includes intermediate rent, private renting, shared ownership models and discounted market sale housing. Of these the private rented sector is the largest and is likely to continue to play an important role.

13.47 There is a potential enhanced role of the private rented sector in the housing market in the future. However action is required to improve the condition of private rented properties, to address overcrowding (particularly in Southend) and to maximise the role which the sector plays in meeting housing need. To support this role, we recommend that:

- Partners explore examples of best practice in providing a one-stop shop service which brings matches available properties and landlords to tenants on housing waiting lists The "Opening Doors" scheme in Worthing has been identified as a possible example of good practice.

- Improving standards of housing in the private rented sector, bringing homes up to the Decent Homes Standard through targeted investment, through the licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation; through Landlord Accreditation Schemes; and through enforcement action where appropriate.

13.48 Through the research undertaken, we have explored the role of the role which expansion of Universities and FE Colleges in the sub-region might have. Our conclusions are that the impacts are likely to be focused in Southend but likely to be relatively small in scale and localised to the London Road area. We do not consider that there is a need for a particularly proactive policy response given the scale of expansion proposed by the University and its current plans for new student accommodation. This is however something to keep under review.

13.49 Overcrowding in Southend is notably more significant than elsewhere in the sub-region and likely to be focused particularly in the private rented sector. This is partly a function of the profile of stock. We would recommend that partners consider undertaking further research to understand the scale and nature of overcrowding through primary survey work.

House Size, Density and Design

13.50 As we have established, there is not a direct relationship between household size and housing size, particularly in the market sector. It is appropriate to establish requirements for different types and sizes of new market housing in relation to the existing stock context, taking account of existing pressures and market signals of shortage; as well as broader economic and demographic changes.

13.51 The majority of household growth is expected to result from increasing single person households. However a high proportion of these are existing older households who already have housing. There is some, albeit somewhat limited, potential to support older households to downsize, releasing supply of larger housing for other groups. We recommend that Local Authorities establish specific policies through Local Development Frameworks which support provision of bungalows and specialist housing for older persons, through both public and private sector provision. This will help to release supply of larger housing for younger households and improve use of the existing stock.

13.52 We do not consider it appropriate to provide specific targets for the sizes of general market housing required through Local Development Frameworks. In the market sector, the market itself is quite effective at matching the size of dwellings to market demand at a local level.

13.53 The SHMA identifies that the majority of existing housing provision is of two and three-bedroom properties. It sets out that demand is predominantly for entry-level family housing to the south of the A127, with stronger demand for larger properties in areas with a high quality of place, particularly to the north of the A127. This we feel should remain the mainstay of housing delivery in the sub-region.

13.54 We consider that there is potential for managed development of an urban living offer, particularly associated with flatted development in town centres. The market for flats is however an area which has been particularly affected by the market downturn, linked particularly to a decline in investor purchasing and first-time buyers. Furthermore the market for town centre/ urban living in the sub-region is somewhat under-developed in the sub-region. There is however a strong rationale for implementing a suitable strategy to address this over time, to enhance the housing offer and support town centre renaissance.

13.55 We consider that provision of flats in the future will need to be phased carefully, with suitable floorspace standards to create stable populations and to be supported by broader regeneration and place-making programmes which create attractive residential environments, and develop the leisure offer and local amenities. These will be critical to the success and delivery rates of this market. It should support an uplift in values over the course of town centre regeneration programmes.

13.56 A range of different types of sites will be required to provide for the range of housing requirements needed. The TGSE Development Sub-Group should work to improve the supply of land and enhance the development pipeline across the sub-region.

13.57 PPS3 sets a national minimum density for residential development of 30 dwellings per hectare but provides some flexibility in the application of density standards at the local level. Density policies, in our view, should reflect the role and function of the local area and aspirations for how the local authority would wish the housing offer to develop.

13.58 Development densities relate to the character and setting of the site and surrounding area. We assess that a density of 60 dph or more is appropriate for urban locations with high public transport accessibility and strong access to services. This includes town centres. In urban and suburban environments density standards of 30 – 40 dph should be achievable and provide a suitable benchmark. However in locations where provision of higher value/ detached housing (including bungalows) is appropriate and achievable, greater flexibility will be required. It will though be possible to achieve a high proportion of detached housing whilst still achieving a density of 25-30 dph across a development on larger sites.

13.59 We would recommend that on larger sites local authorities look to achieve a mix of housing to deliver mixed communities and support regeneration. This would include a mix of house types and sizes, as well as housing for older persons. Design should include integrated planning of community facilities, service provision, open space and other infrastructure.

13.60 Planning policies may also need to look to protect certain elements of the housing offer. Local Development Frameworks should, where appropriate, look to limit the scope for subdivision of properties or redevelopment of plots where could be considered detrimental to the local character of an area or to the mix of housing available locally.

13.61 Local authorities across the sub-region should also look to embed policies regarding the environmental credentials of new development in their Local Development Frameworks. Thames Gateway has been designated an Eco-Region with a national priority attached to increasing standards of energy, water and waste water efficiencies through implementation of the Code for Sustainable Homes. Deliver of sustainability standards is likely to be most realistic in the short-to-medium term on larger housing sites.

Older Persons Housing

13.62 With changes in the demographic structure it is likely to be particularly important to provide suitable housing to support an increasing older population. We would recommend that local authorities promote delivery of 'lifetime homes' through planning policies, and work to develop support services for older housing including advice services and provision of direct or financial support to help older households adapt housing to their changing needs.

13.63 Planning policies should also support provision of specialist and extra care housing across the sub-region. This should be provided at locations where there is good access to local facilities and services and where public transport is strong.

13.64 Based upon the research undertaken, we consider that there is clear demand across the sub-region for additional housing for older people, including additional extra care housing, over the next twenty years. This is the case in each of the local authorities. We note that currently there is no Extra Care housing provision in Castle Point.

13.65 The local authorities may wish to consider developing specific registers of accessible housing; and managing a separate waiting list for older persons on a consistent basis. This could be fed into future iterations of the housing needs analysis.

13.66 New provision for older persons accommodation should be supported in both the market and affordable sectors. Specific housing provision for older persons should be integrated into major development schemes across the sub-region and into existing monitoring of the sub-regional supply pipeline.

13.67 We consider that there is also a role for developing shared equity models targeted at older households who may wish to release some of the equity in their home. We recommend bespoke research is undertaken to explore the potential market for this and to develop the right product, marketing strategy and support mechanisms. We are of the view that shared equity models are more likely to be successful than shared ownership as rental requirements will be difficult to manage for those with a limited regular income.

Improving Standards in the Private Sector

13.68 Existing housing is likely to continue to comprise the majority of the housing stock for the foreseeable future. In this context it is important that investment is made in ensuring that it is fit-for-purpose. Local partners should work to achieve this through the implementation of the Sub-Regional Housing Strategy. This includes through actions to:

- Improve existing dwellings to Decent Homes Standard.
- Invest in improving energy efficiency in existing homes.
- Supporting adaptations to existing homes to meet the changing needs of residents throughout their lifetime.
- Using existing tools such as Empty Home Management Orders, grants and loans to bring vacant properties back into use.

Waiting Lists, Monitoring and Review

13.69 We consider that the Councils across the sub-region should work together, and with affordable housing providers, to improve the quality and robustness of information on housing needs. We advise that housing providers should work together across the sub-region to consider and potentially develop a common waiting lists for general needs and older persons housing (linked potentially to a sub-regional choice-based lettings scheme). Waiting lists should be improved to record households incomes to assess the ability of households to meet their needs in the market sector. We recommend that they be updated annually (e.g. on the anniversary of application).

13.70 Implementation of Choice-based Lettings across the sub-region should provide a conduit to improve the quality and robustness of waiting list information. It ideally would be based on a common register with RSLs and allocations policy.

13.71 We would recommend that the local authorities continue to work together to monitor development activity and the housing pipeline. This should address both market and affordable housing, and provide details on the type of housing, including details on the number of bed spaces and specialist housing provision. Planning application forms and monitoring systems may need to be improved to address this.

13.72 We would recommend that the local authorities engage with developers in compiling and maintaining housing trajectories, particularly in the current market climate. Judgements regarding the phasing of development schemes should be based on discussions with developers regarding their intensions and intended build-out rates. This is now best practice in other Growth Areas.

13.73 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment provides an overview of the current dynamics of the housing market and projections of future housing requirements. However, as the current market dynamics and experience over the last five years indicate, the situation can change fast. A 'plan, monitor and manage' approach becomes particularly important in this context.

13.74 GVA Grimley has set out in the following section a framework for monitoring change in the housing market. Partners will need to assess appropriate mechanisms to take this forward.

Executive Summary

Thames Gateway South Essex (TGSE) is part of the wider Thames Gateway, which includes North Kent and East London. It has been identified as the UK Government's top priority for regeneration and growth.

The primary aim of this strategy is to set out the priorities and actions which will accelerate the supply of high quality and sustainable housing to help meet the needs of people living or aspiring to live in the Thames Gateway South Essex sub region.

A Strategic Housing Market Assessment has recently been completed in Thames Gateway South Essex and provides much of the evidence base to support this Sub Regional Housing Strategy, other local housing strategies and Local Development Frameworks. It also provides a sound analysis of the current housing market and considers the implications from a policy perspective of a downturn in the property market and its impact on the economy.

The strategy sets out a vision for the sub-region, the key actions that Partners wish to achieve between now and 2011 and the challenges that need to be overcome if the sub region is to achieve its aims.

It looks at the targets, issues, trends and partnership actions arising from:

- Future housing growth to ensure it is sustainable and future proof
- Needs of vulnerable groups living in the sub region
- Future of the current housing stock to ensure it is at a decent standard

This is set within the context of an additional **44,300 new homes** planned for South Essex by 2021 and a 5% increase in the population. There has historically been a strong housing market at the macro-level, which has been supported by a sustained period of stability and growth in the national economy, coupled with low interest rates. However, recent quarters have shown the impact of interest rate rises in reducing housing demand and cooling house price inflation. Evidence points to first-time buyers currently holding off from buying property because of market uncertainty supporting demand in the private rented sector.

Nevertheless, the TGSE sub regional housing market still offers housing at a noticeable discount, when compared to other parts of the greater South East region. This makes it attractive to households from outside of the area looking to upgrade; and to first-time buyers priced out of other housing markets (and particularly London).

Managing Housing Growth

The challenge for sub regional partners is to manage this growth to ensure it is affordable and accessible to both existing and future residents. Partners are committed to working together to achieve increased housing provision and secure the necessary resources to enable targeted growth across the sub region. We need to match resources to this growth, to tackle both new infrastructure, jobs and housing across all tenures.

Significant regeneration plans are being developed in the sub region by local regeneration partnerships which will contribute to job creation and better quality housing and drive the economy / local housing market. However the performance of the economy and the impact of deprivation are key factors which will shape future regeneration.

Deprivation in the Thames Gateway South Essex sub region is relatively widespread with 15.7% of Local Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the most deprived areas of the country (bottom 20% of areas nationally). Education, skills and training deprivation is particularly severe, with 35% of LSOAs in the most deprived 20% of areas. The areas where overall deprivation is most severe tend to cluster around the major settlements in the TGSE housing market, particularly Basildon, Southend and Thurrock.

The new Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 makes increasing housing supply a national priority, and sets out key policy and funding parameters.

Climate change is particularly relevant to housing; since around a quarter of the UK's current carbon emissions (around 150 million tonnes of carbon dioxide each year) arise from the way we heat, light and run our homes. Yet we need more homes so it is imperative that they are built in a way that minimises carbon emissions. There is a need to improve the energy efficiency of our existing homes, particularly in the light of the recent increase in fuel prices. We also need to tackle other aspects of sustainability, such as water efficiency and flood risk.

Delivering zero carbon new homes will need a revolution in the way we design and build our homes. It means new skills, supply chains, partnerships and business models, including those for builders, energy suppliers and other stakeholders. We acknowledge the demands this change places on the industry and its partners but we are certain that we can work together to deliver the twin ambitions.

Key Priority Actions

- Develop a sub regional Choice Based Lettings scheme.
- Promote opportunities for Key Workers through the HomeBuy initiative.
- Continue to develop a sub regional quality design standard, meeting for example Lifetime Homes, Building For Life and Secure by Design Standards.
- Focus on bringing regeneration, planning and housing together through coordination of activity, maximising funding and sharing best practice.
- Develop the green agenda through the provision of training and advice, maximising grant opportunities to deliver low carbon schemes.

Meeting Needs of Vulnerable Groups

In contrast to the managing future growth priority, this relates directly to the need of the existing population in South Essex and concerns the mixture of housing types and tenures. A key emphasis should be on prevention by addressing the underlying causes of homelessness.

Whilst homelessness, as determined by the number of people registering with local authorities, is going down, this is largely due to the preventative measures being introduced. The current downturn in the housing market combined with the "credit crunch" is likely to increase the number of homeless applicants registering with local authorities. This is supported by anecdotal evidence, which suggests that re-possession notices are on the increase.

Further pressure will come from a forecasted growth of 8% in the number of households in the TGSE Housing Market in the next ten years and 16.4% by 2026. This will be from a combination of newly forming households and from changing family patterns for example following relationship breakdowns.

A substantial and growing proportion of the population needs housing support as the proportion of elderly people increase in the sub region. Revenue funding needs to be strategically targeted to help provide this through a range of services branded under the name of Supporting People (SP). Where future provision needs capital investment in new schemes, this will be a strategic objective for use of the Single Regional Housing Programme (SRHP).

The Supporting People Programme is committed to ensuring that vulnerable people have the opportunity to live more independently. It promotes housing related services which are cost effective, reliable and which complement existing services and support independent.

A key principle of regeneration is the need to promote community cohesion and social inclusion across the sub region. All communities must be able to access housing, housing services and support and benefit fairly from each of the regional investment themes. This may not always be the case for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities. There may be linguistic, cultural or other factors, which mean specialist schemes, are needed.

The sub region is also committed to ensuring provision of appropriate Gypsy and Traveller sites where there is an identified and established need, and working in partnership to tackle homelessness and social exclusion among this group.

Key Priority Actions

- Help households obtain and sustain private tenancies working in partnership with the private rented sector.
- Improve partnership working between local authorities and other key stakeholders to ensure best use of resources, supported by effective referral processes for all supported housing.
- Quantify the need for different types of supported housing and housing support for a range of client groups, in partnership with Supporting People administering authorities, social care and health agencies.
- Integrate schemes into the sub-region's pipeline and consider if services can be provided across boundaries.
- Engage with BME communities to identify housing and support needs and take action to ensure these are met through working with communities and partner agencies.
- Work with planners and other partners to review the Regional Planning Policy in respect of the provision of Gypsies and Travellers sites in the sub region (when adopted) and the recommendations of sub regional research into their housing needs.

Investing in the Housing Stock

Whilst new investment and the challenge to increase the supply of homes are key priorities for the region and the sub region, we need to balance this work with investment in existing homes and communities. The strategy has identified the following key areas for action:

- Decent Homes activity
- Energy efficiency of our housing stock
- Independent living
- Empty homes activity
- Landlord accreditation
- The Private Rented Sector

The sub regional focus continues to prioritise private sector vulnerable households. This Strategy supports the National target to increase the proportion of vulnerable households living in decent homes. It is estimated that in excess of 30% of vulnerable households are living in non decent homes in the sub region.

Fuel poverty is being tackled across the sub region, hand in hand with improving energy efficiency and securing affordable warmth. Focus is principally on installing insulation measures and heating systems for residents who have been assessed as ‘fuel poor’.

Issues affecting vulnerable groups and in particular older people, are supported by the Government’s new National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society (Dec 2007). This sets out the challenges posed by an ageing society where by 2026 it is projected that older people will account for almost half (48 per cent) of the increase in the total number of households. It acknowledges that today, most of our homes and communities are not designed to meet people’s changing needs as they grow older. Older people’s housing options are too often limited to care homes or sheltered housing. The Challenge for this Strategy is to begin planning for this change.

Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs) help homeowners and private sector tenants who are older or disabled to remain in their own home, living independently, in safety and comfort. All partners in TGSE remain committed to the principal of the HIA and have local agencies in place. Future discussions will explore the potential benefit of a joint HIA.

Bringing empty homes back into use contributing to the supply of affordable housing is also a priority in the sub region. There were a total of 8,627 vacant dwellings across the TGSE sub-regional housing market as at April 2006. Across the TGSE area more private sector dwellings were vacant (7831), compared to public sector dwellings (796).

The private rented sector contributes to the supply of housing and meets a range of housing needs. As ease of access to owner occupation and social housing/renting has reduced over the years, the role of the private rented sector in providing accommodation to many household is now widely recognised and valued. For the sub-regional authorities it has been a major contributor to the resolution of homelessness.

Private rented housing needs to be considered separately from the rest of the private housing sector because its role, management, and impact on the housing market and economy is different from owner occupied housing. The way in which regulatory agencies interact with the sector can influence the quality of housing provided.

Key Priority Actions

- Bid for regional monies to ensure a continued programme of private sector renewal works over 2009-11, targeting vulnerable private households and monitor progress.

- Address fuel poverty across the sub region, hand in hand with improving energy efficiency and securing affordable warmth.
- Make better use of private sector homes by bringing empty homes back into use as affordable accommodation.
- Monitor demographic trends for older people and prioritise adaptations, home safety and repairs to property in accordance with need.
- Exploring options for sub regional leasing schemes to assist with homelessness and bring properties back into use.
- Develop a landlord accreditation scheme.
- To ensure the resources and the work of the private housing services are linked into Local Authorities area-based regeneration programmes.

Delivering the Strategy

The Strategy will be delivered through the Thames Gateway South Essex Sub Regional Housing Group comprising representatives from the five local authorities and five key housing associations in the area.

Key actions from the Strategy have been incorporated into an Action Plan (see attached), which sets out the key deliverables, anticipated outcomes and lead partner(s). A full time Strategy Coordinator has been employed by the Housing Group to develop sub regional initiatives, oversee and monitor progress against the Strategy, and act as the point of contact for all information.

A framework for monitoring and review will be established, which sets out a range of indicators to be monitored. This will enable the TGSE Sub Regional Housing Group to capture the overall impact of the collective priorities and evaluate them, both to measure success and to inform the continuing development and refinement of the Strategy in latter years.

Appendix 4 Action Plan (draft)

Priority Area	Action	Target	Lead Partner	Timetable
Future Growth				
New homes				
Develop a sub regional Choice Based Lettings scheme to cover all affordable rented stock by 2010	• Joint working group established with CLG funding • Agree joint protocols • Assess feasibility and cost of creating a "bolt on" service to cover the whole sub region • Secure partnership agreement to a CBL service across the sub region	20 number of Local Authority Lettings to be made available sub regionally	Housing Strategy Group through CBL Sub Group	March 2011
Promote opportunities for Key Workers through HomeBuy initiative	• Targeting employers and potential key workers • Facilitate Homebuy events to promote new product • Share best practice being developed by LAs and other partners	3 Homebuy events to be held in the sub region to maximise take up	Moat Housing Association Ltd	March 2011
Continue to develop a sub regional quality design standard, meeting for example Lifetime Homes, Building For Life and Secure by Design Standards	• Implement and monitor quality design standards across the sub region through the CABE Compact in Thames Gateway • Build on previous design training events in the sub region	3 design training events to be held in sub region to improve the skills of planning, regeneration, housing professionals	Housing Strategy Group with CABE and Regeneration Partnerships	March 2011
Regeneration				
Focus on bringing regeneration, planning and housing together through	• Joint commissioning of research and activity • Support the development of strategic	Maintain 5 year supply of housing sites for each local authority	Housing Strategy Group and Regeneration	Ongoing

Priority Area	Action	Target	Lead Partner	Timetable
coordination of activity, maximising funding and sharing best practice	sites for both housing and employment	Monitor progress of LAA Targets for Essex, Southend and Thurrock relevant to future housing growth (NI 141, 154, 155, 156 and 258)	Partnerships	
Greener Homes				
Develop the green agenda through the provision of training and advice, maximising grant opportunities to deliver low carbon schemes	• Share best practice when developing low carbon schemes by develop training programme and advice networks • Deliver an energy efficiency project in private homes (subject to funding)	25% reduction in CO emissions by 2010 Develop 3 exemplar new build schemes in the sub region	Housing Strategy Group and Regeneration Partnerships	March 2011
Vulnerable Groups				
Homelessness				
Help households obtain and sustain private tenancies working in partnership with the private rented sector	• Develop rent deposit and rent in advance schemes • Develop an accredited Landlord scheme • Monitor number of homeless applicants registering in the sub region	Stabilise the level of households in temporary accommodation Hold 3 Private Landlord Forums in the sub region	Housing Strategy Group through Homeless and Private Sector Sub Groups	April 2011
Supporting People				
Improve partnership working between local authorities and other key stakeholders to ensure best use of resources, supported by effective referral processes for all Supported Housing	• Work with partners to ensure appropriate accommodation is provided to support the needs of vulnerable groups • Quantify the needs of different supported housing and housing support for a range of client groups • Share best practice and innovative working around homelessness	Increase the number of vulnerable groups receiving support Increasing the proportion of the most socially excluded adults back into settled accommodation	Supporting People Services with support of Housing Strategy Group	Ongoing

Priority Area	Action	Target	Lead Partner	Timetable
	prevention • Explore and develop funding opportunities sub regionally			
BME Groups				
Engage with BME communities to identify housing and support needs and take action to ensure these are met through working with communities and partner agencies	• Monitor migration flows and the needs of the BME community in relation to future housing requirements • Support the work of the Essex BME Action Group.	Reduction in harassment and hate crime	Housing Strategy Group with Essex CC	Ongoing
Gypsies & Travellers				
Work with planners and other partners to review the Regional Planning Policy in respect of the provision of Gypsies and Travellers sites in the sub region (when adopted) and the recommendations of sub regional research into their housing needs.	• Develop a data set of across the sub region and respond to specific housing needs through provision of specialist services • Share best practice in the future planning • Develop a data base of authorised pitches	The target for the sub region will be determined by the outcome of RSS Single Issue Review of Regional Planning Policy in respect of Gypsies and Travellers	TGSE Housing Partnership through Essex Planning Officers Association	Mar 2011
Existing Housing Stock				
Decent Homes				
Bid for regional monies to ensure a continued programme of private sector renewal works over 2009-11, targeting vulnerable private	• Submit proposals to the Regional Housing Pot • Deliver home improvement / renovation project (subject to funding) • Monitor private sector housing stock condition data on a sub regional basis	Ensure at least 70% of vulnerable groups in the private sector live in decent homes by 2010	Housing Strategy Group through Homeless and Private Sector Sub Groups	March 2009

Priority Area	Action	Target	Lead Partner	Timetable
households and monitor progress.	• Monitor progress against the Government's Decent Homes Standard			
Independent Living				
Support older people and prioritise improvements to support their needs (to cover all vulnerable people)	• Monitor demographic trends for older people • Prioritise adaptations, home safety and repairs to property in accordance with need.	Ensure at least 70% of vulnerable groups in the private sector live in decent homes by 2010	Supporting People Services with support of Housing Strategy Group	Ongoing
Energy efficient homes				
Address fuel poverty across the sub region, hand in hand with improving energy efficiency and securing affordable warmth	• Deliver improved energy efficiency in homes project (subject to funding)	Steps to improve residential energy efficiency by at least 20% by 2010	Housing Strategy Group through Private Sector Sub Group	March 2010
Empty Homes				
Make better use of private sector homes by bringing empty homes back into use as affordable accommodation.	• Deliver Empty Property project with Family Mosaic (subject to funding) • Enforcement of Empty Dwelling Management Orders	Bring 30 empty dwellings back into use by 2011	Housing Strategy Group through Private Sector Sub Group	March 2011
Private Sector Homes				
To ensure the resources and the work of the private housing services are linked into Local Authorities area-based regeneration programmes	• Identify local area based regeneration programmes • Engage with Local Regeneration Partnerships on initiatives to meet decent home targets	Ensure at least 70% of vulnerable groups in the private sector live in decent homes by 2010	Private Sector Housing Sub Group and Local Regeneration Partnerships	March 2010
Delivery				
Effectively monitor progress against delivery of Sub Regional Housing	• Establish a framework for monitoring progress against key indicators as set out as targets in	Monitoring Framework in place by October 2008	Housing Strategy Group	Oct 2008 And ongoing

Priority Area	Action	Target	Lead Partner	Timetable
Strategy based on the recommendations in the SHMA	the sub regional housing strategy. • To be developed with proposals to review the SHMA			
Communicate progress against delivery to partners	• Regular reports to Sub Regional Meetings • Communication to wider partners via an e-newsletter on a 6-monthly basis	4 reports per annum 2 newsletters	Housing Strategy Group	Ongoing