

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND  
REGIONAL HOUSING BOARD**

Date: 5 September 2007

Subject: **Items for Information**

- 1. South East Homeless Forum**
- 2. Regional Sustainability Framework – consultation**
- 3. Housing Green Paper**

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Board note the contents of this report.

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**1. South East Homeless Forum (SEHF)**

- 1.1 The South East Homelessness Forum (SEHF) was formed in autumn 2006 as a key element of the Regional Homelessness Action Plan for 2006/07. SEHF is a sub-group of the Regional Housing Forum (RHF), and is chaired by Peter Morton, Chief Executive of Elmbridge Housing Trust.
- 1.2 Ahead of the RHS update, the Forum submitted a short paper, *Homelessness: Actions for the Future*, to the Regional Assembly which highlighted some key actions for consideration. The Forum then formally responded to the consultation on the RHS review.
- 1.3 A key priority identified was the need to tackle youth homelessness at a regional level, in particular those aged 16 and 17, recognising that homelessness in this age group is higher here than in other regions. We have set up a Youth Homelessness sub-group, to look at early intervention measures and to consider how we can identify and share good practice. A regional conference was held in July 2007.
- 1.4 We have also incorporated the work of a small group looking at the role housing advice can play in preventing homelessness. A third sub-group has just been established to look at the role of the Private Rented Sector in addressing homelessness. Other topics recently discussed include links with the Supporting People agenda and Homelessness in the RSL sector.
- 1.5 The following topics are scheduled for discussion at future Homelessness Forum meetings either for information/feedback, in line with our dissemination role, or for consideration of further work through time-limited sub-groups:
  - Preventing homelessness of ex-offenders
  - Local connection policies

- Intentional homelessness
- Rural homelessness
- Health and social care of vulnerable homeless
- Access to housing for homeless households

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## 2. The Regional Sustainability Framework

- 2.1 The goal of sustainable development is to enable everyone to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising it for future generations. All regional bodies support this principle and it is vital that we work towards our shared goal in a joined up and transparent fashion. The Regional Sustainability Framework (RSF) will help achieve this. The RSF updates the 2004 Integrated Regional Framework.
- 2.2 Achieving these aims will require commitment and contributions from everyone – Government, businesses and individuals. The Sustainable Futures Group (SFG) has been created to lead the South East's approach to sustainable development and the RSF is their first major piece of work. As part of the consultation on the RSF we are keen to hear the views of the Regional Housing Board members.

**RSF consultation runs from 3 September to 26 November 2007**  
**Respond online at [www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/rsf](http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/rsf)**

- 2.3 The RSF sets a common vision, two regional goals, four priorities and 24 objectives that will help guide sustainable development in the South East. All regional strategies and policies should follow RSF principles to ensure the actions of all South East organisations contribute to a consistent vision of our sustainable future. The RSF also contains a Sustainability Appraisal guide that aims to encourage regional and local organisations, businesses and community groups to review their own plans and strategies against the framework. This enables the sustainable development objectives to be integrated into our actions. Regular monitoring of RSF objectives enables progress towards sustainable development to be measured.
- 2.4 The RSF vision for the South East is a strong, healthy and just region that respects the limits of the global environment. Achieving this will require the active involvement of all individuals to deliver a society where everyone, including the most deprived people, has an equal opportunity to benefit from and contribute to the region's sustainable prosperity. At the same time the impact of current high levels of resource use will be reduced and the quality of the natural environment will be maintained and enhanced for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations to come.

2.5 The RSF vision is broken down into two key regional goals for sustainable development in the South East:

- Achieving a strong, healthy and just society, supported by a world class sustainable economy.
- A region that lives within environmental limits.

These goals are divided into 24 objectives, each one further broken down into a number of targets, which can be measured to check progress.

2.6 Using the information contained within the RSF the SFG has identified four priorities for action:

- Achieving sustainable levels of resource use.
- Reducing the region's carbon footprint.
- Ensuring that the South East is prepared for the inevitable impacts of climate change.
- Ensuring that everyone, including the most deprived people, has an equal opportunity to benefit from and contribute to the region's sustainable prosperity.

2.7 We can only deliver the South East's priorities, goals and objectives if regional and local bodies and individuals work together to ensure RSF principles are reflected in their behaviour, plans, decisions and actions.

2.8 Members of the RHB are encouraged to contribute to the consultation, via:

- the web: the consultation document can be downloaded from [www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/rsf](http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/rsf) and an online questionnaire is available for you to complete;
- email: questions or feedback on the consultation can be emailed to the Assembly at [secretariat@southeast-ra.gov.uk](mailto:secretariat@southeast-ra.gov.uk);
- telephone: hard copies of the consultation document and questionnaire can be ordered by ringing 01483 501309 or if you have specific questions contact Patrick Feehily or Greg Pitt on 01483 555200;
- regional workshops: two regional workshops will be taking place during the consultation period. If you would like to attend a workshop then please contact the Regional Assembly on 01483 555200.

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### 3. Housing Green Paper

The Government published proposals for increasing both the supply and quality of new housing in a Housing Green Paper - 'Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable' - issued on 24 July. The Green Paper (<http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1511890>) focuses on three key principles and sets out measures and funding to ensure:

- an increase the supply of new homes;
- provision of more affordable homes; and
- building greener, better designed homes.

Views on the Paper's proposals are invited by 15 October.

It expands on the Prime Minister's earlier announcement about raising the target for new housing in England to 240,000 a year by 2016, with an additional 3 million homes being delivered by 2020. This is needed to address the shortages of affordable housing, improve housing affordability and support economic growth. The Paper announces the continuation of targeted funding for infrastructure for Growth Areas/Points and invitations to submit for further new Growth Points and 5 new Eco-Towns schemes. It also:

- invites views on options other than the proposed Planning Gain Supplement for capturing more of the value uplift generated from the planning system to fund infrastructure.
- Indicates that there will be consultation on a new Housing and Planning Delivery Grant to provide more resources to those council, delivering high levels of new housing and identifying 5 years worth of sites ready for development.
- sets out a range of initiatives to ensure more unused public sector land is made available for housing.

The Green Paper announced a planned £8 billion for funding for affordable housing in the next 3 years – an increase of £3 billion on the 3 years to 2007/08. Decisions have still to be taken on the regional split of this funding. This funding is expected to provide at least 70,000 affordable houses a year by 2010-11. This includes 45,000 new social homes a year - more than doubling the amount built each year compared to 2004, and a goal of 50,000 social homes a year in the next spending review. The Paper seeks views on a number of options for local authorities to play a greater part in the provision of new affordable housing.

There is a strong emphasis in the Paper on the importance of good design and building to the highest environmental standards, reflecting the aim for all new homes to be zero-carbon by 2016. Several documents, many relating to environmental issues, were published alongside the Green Paper:

- Eco-towns Prospectus – a vision and specification for local authorities and developers, including an invitation to propose at least five new eco-towns;
- Building a Greener Future, with associated Regulatory Impact Assessment – a strategy and timetable for achieving zero-carbon homes by 2016;

- Building Regulations, Energy Efficiency Requirements for New Dwellings, with associated Regulatory Impact Assessment - a forward look at what the standards may be in 2010 and 2013;
- Water Efficiency in New Buildings – a joint CLG/DEFRA statement;
- Improving the Sustainability of New Homes – making a rating against the Code for Sustainable Homes mandatory;
- Strategic Land Availability Assessment: Practice Guidance – advice for local planning authorities on identifying land for housing and assessing deliverability;
- Impact Assessment for the Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable; and
- Draft Guidance on Planning Performance Agreements.

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