

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND
REGIONAL HOUSING BOARD**

Date: 5 December 2007

Subject: **Items for Information:**

9.7 PPS3 Task Group – workshops progress report

Recommendation:

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

9.7 PPS3 Task Group

- 9.7.1 The purpose of the Task Group is to take forward the key issues arising from the Assembly's *Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 3: Housing* workshops. These principally relate to housing land supply, and in particular the role of windfalls in future housing supply. Other issues include transition from PPG3 to PPS3; and new geographic working arrangements under PPS3. The Group has met twice.
- 9.7.2 The group set out to examine the need for supplementary guidance on these aspects, to provide local authorities with greater certainty and clarity on how to proceed with their Local Development Frameworks.
- 9.7.3 It has been established that Planning Officers Society will be publishing draft advice on housing land availability in November (2007), and the group will consider the POS advice before deciding its final work outputs.
- 9.7.4 In the interim informal 'practitioners comments' based on the group's discussions will be circulated to Heads of Planning and LDF lead officers. It is also proposed to make this material available online, as the seed of a wider regional information exchange on emerging practice and experience with Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments.
- 9.7.5 Councilors Toolbox Update**
- 9.7.6 The 2004 Councillors Toolbox sought to make a positive case for higher-density housing developments. It identified a set of issues regarding higher density developments that were of concern to planning decision-makers and their constituents. The Toolbox provided guidance on how to improve the quality of higher density schemes, address identified issues of concern and

overcome public resistance, to deliver successful higher-density schemes and make more effective use of development land.

- 9.7.7 The Assembly's work on housing type and size has identified the increasing extent to which flats dominate recent housing completions, at the expense of family-appropriate accommodation. This is of particular concern for affordable housing, creating a mismatch between provision and need. RHB and RPC have agreed that the Councillors Toolbox offers an opportunity to help redress this imbalance.
- 9.7.8 The aim therefore is to update the Toolbox, to shift the focus towards securing higher – but not necessarily high - density mixed housing communities that include family housing provision (where suitable and in accordance with local need). Funding and viability aspects will also be explored, particularly in terms of affordable housing. In addition the update will incorporate 'neighbourhood' aspects of the healthy communities agenda.
- 9.7.9 The work has been scoped in detail and will be tendered to a design-focused consultancy to fast-track the update. It is anticipated work would commence early in 2008 and be completed within two months. The contract will include roll-out events, and we are exploring the potential to deliver them alongside IDeA's regional programme.

9.7.10 Strategic Housing Market Assessments follow-up study

- 9.7.11 DTZ's work established the Housing Market Area boundaries in the South East Plan and recommended on joint-working arrangements to progress SHMAs across the region. The Board contributed to 4 SHMA pilot studies, and received individual feedback which in turn fed into DCLG's work in producing the various SHMA guidance documents published in 2007. However there has not been a fuller assessment across all four pilots.
- 9.7.12 Progress with SHMAs across the region is mixed and slower than anticipated. It is likely to be at least a year until there is full regional coverage of studies either completed or underway.
- 9.7.13 We therefore will progress the follow-up study in two stages.
- 9.7.14 The first stage will be a fuller review of all four pilots to establish how useful SHMAs have been and what the information generated has been useful for. The aim is to extract lessons learned and best practice points for both the Assembly and member authorities – focussed on using the information, but also on carrying out the studies for the benefit of those yet to commence. This will be commissioned immediately for completion by Spring 2008. Outputs will include local authority workshops to disseminate best practice.

9.7.15 The second stage will be to pull together the region's SHMAs to establish a regional picture of housing markets, housing demand and housing need. This work will be commissioned when a full set of SHMAs is available.

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