

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSING ADVISORY GROUP**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 15 September 2006**

<b>Present:</b>	Leigh Herington	Chairman
	Alison Bailey	Regional Assembly
	Cath Stubbings	Regional Assembly
	June Cass	Regional Assembly
	Paul Abey	Housing Corporation
	Adrian Maunders	Guildford Borough Council
	Barbara Thorndick	West Kent Housing Association
	Chris Kenneford	Buckinghamshire County Council
	Gerry Wyld	Slough Borough Council
	Graham Ashworth	New Forest District Council
	Ian Haynes	Milton Keynes Council
	Michael Crofton-Briggs	Oxford City Council
	Pete Errington	Home Builders Federation
	Robin Edwards	Demography Sub Group Chairman
	Sharon Smith	Regional Housing Forum Chair
	Yvonne Edgar	Thames Valley Housing

In opening the meeting the Chairman thanked Ian Haynes, Milton Keynes Council for hosting the meeting and arranging a tour of Milton Keynes.

**1. Apologies for absence**

Barbara Compton, Affordable Housing Task Group Chair; Dick Feasey, Kent County Council; Peter Shadbolt, Surrey County Council; Sunethra Mendis, GOSE; Edward Dawson, SEPS/CPRE.

**2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**

- i) There were no corrections to the Minutes of the 28 July meeting.
- ii) Item 4(ii) – see Agenda Item 9.
- iii) Item 5 Regional Housing Strategy Review: A revised project plan will be considered by the Regional Housing Board on 6 October. The final agreed version will be circulated to the Housing Advisory Group in due course.
- iv) Item 5(ii) – see Agenda Item 8.

### 3. EIP Matters and Participants

- i) The Group discussed the Preliminary List of Matters and Participants and commented as follows:
- General: The Roger Tym work for GOSE will form part of the background.
  - Data Meetings: The Panel have confirmed that they will be holding three preliminary data meetings: Projections/Forecasts and Jobs/Homes Alignment on 16 October; Water on 17 October; and Land Supply on 18 October.
  - A paper on NHS reform relevant to sub-matter IF is due to be published.
  - Matter 4A.3: The Group's RSL representatives indicated that they might be able to provide information to assist the discussion on this aspect of affordable housing provision.

**Action: Alison Bailey to contact Yvonne Edgar and Barbara Thorndick regarding affordable housing delivery.**

### 4. Financial Viability of Affordable Housing Provision

- i) Cath Stubbings updated the Group on this item. She reported that as advised at the previous meeting a questionnaire had been sent out to local authorities and the response rate had been very good. The results indicated that 70% currently use or are planning to use an existing financial viability model. A high proportion feel that a regional model would be worthwhile and a number of local authorities would be prepared to make a financial contribution towards this.
- ii) The Assembly is in the process of writing a report to the Regional Housing Board for the 6 October meeting, with a recommendation that a regional model be developed.

Group discussion highlighted:

- Any model should not be an academic exercise but needs to be based on a practical understanding of how markets work.
- A model can be no better than an experienced person. There is need for training and sharing of experience on modelling.
- Planners do not always understand economics of development.
- A regional model might be difficult to interpret on a local level.

- There is scope for improving negotiation skills on Section 106.

## 5. Housing Market Areas

- i) Cath Stubbings pointed out that the Group has not so far been actively involved in this. She explained that the Assembly has been working with GOSE over the summer. It was originally intended that the pilot studies would report their findings and contribute to guidance planned for September 2006. However, as the pilots are at differing stages of completion, prior to putting out guidance, a letter has been sent to Heads of Housing to advise progress and reinforce the message. The Regional Board will be updated on progress on 6 October.
- ii) There are various issues around boundaries, and the emphasis Housing Market areas will have in future will not be clear until Planning Policy Statement (PPS3) is finalised (expected October 2006). It is intended to bring this back to the Advisory Group at a later meeting in the context of PPS3.
- iii) A meeting with DCLG, GOSE and representatives from the pilots will be scheduled.

## 6. Regional Housing Forum Update

- i) The Chairman thanked Sharon Smith for the report on the work of the Regional Housing Forum.
- ii) Sharon Smith explained that as the Forum is currently reviewing its Terms of Reference, no work plan is available at the moment, although it is anticipated that the focus of the work will be to assist the review of the Regional Housing Strategy.
- iii) Work on overcrowding is being taken forward.
- iv) The Group discussed Local Area Agreements. The Chairman stated that in Kent the LAA pilot had achieved very positive results. However, there was a general feeling within the Group that although LAAs had made a good start there was concern in terms of the top-down approach that had been adopted.

**Action: The Chairman requested the RHF findings on overcrowding be shared with the next meeting of the Group.**

## 7. Demography Update

- i) The Chairman of the Demography Sub Group updated the meeting on the 2005 Mid-Year Estimates and the 2004-based population projections.

## 8. Research Update

**Buy-to-Let:** Alison Bailey reported that the Regional Assembly had commissioned a short piece of work on the extent of buy-to-let activity in the South East, its impacts on the market and future prospects. The work is being carried out by Savills and is due to report by mid-October. The findings will be reported back to the Group in due course and will feed into the Regional Housing Strategy.

**Housing Type and Size:** Alison Bailey reported that a joint piece of work is to be commissioned with SEEDA on housing type and size. The project is currently out to tender. The project is timetabled to complete end of November 2006.

**Rural Affordable Need in South East:** Cath Stubbings informed the Group that the research report had moved on considerably, drawing on advice from HAG. There will be three workshops at the Regional Housing Board review on 6 October: private sector renewal, rural, and supported housing. The report on rural affordable need will be published after the Board meeting on 6 October.

**Action: Members of the Advisory Group were asked to contact Alison Bailey if interested in becoming a member of the project steering group for the research on house type and size.**

## 9. Gypsies & Travellers Update

- i) Since the last meeting a Project Plan has been published for consultation. Hard copies have been dispatched and an electronic version is available on the Assembly's web site. The deadline for comments is 13 October.

## 10. Any Other Business

There were no other items.

## 11. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on 3 November at Reading Town Hall and will be a joint meeting of HAG/RHF/AHTG to discuss the Regional Housing Strategy.

---

The meeting was followed by a presentation by Ian Haynes on the development of Milton Keynes and current issues confronting the area, and then a very informative study tour.