

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

HOUSING ADVISORY GROUP

Minutes of the meeting held on 16th October 2007

Present:

Leigh Herington	Chairman
Alison Bailey	Regional Assembly
Barbara Compton	Southampton City Council
Barbara Thorndick	West Kent Housing Association
Cath Stubbings	Regional Assembly
Catriona Riddell	Regional Assembly
Chris Kenneford	Buckinghamshire County Council
Chris Woolf	GOSE
David January	Waverley Borough Council
Dick Feasey	Kent County Council
Genevieve Haywood	Regional Assembly
Gerry Wyld	Slough Borough Council
Graham Ashworth	New Forest District Council
Ian Haynes	Milton Keynes Council
Ian Walker	Oxfordshire City Council
Mark Williams	Regional Assembly
Paul Treadgold	Demography Sub Group Chairman
Pete Errington	Home Builders Federation
Reniera Graham	IDeA (for Item 3)
Yvonne Edgar	Thames Valley Housing

1 Introductions and Apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Genevieve Haywood, Housing Co-ordinator, Regional Assembly; Paul Treadgold, Chairman of Demography Sub Group; David January, Waverley Borough Council; and Reniera Graham from IDeA.
- 1.2 Apologies were received from Edward Dawson, SEFS/CPRE; Michael-Crofton Briggs, Oxford City Council; Paul Abey, Housing Corporation; Ricky Taylor, NHPAU; Sharon Smith, Regional Housing Forum Chair.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 26th July

- 2.1 The minutes were agreed as a true record. There were no matters arising not otherwise on the agenda.

3 Presentation from IDeA: Reniera Graham

- 3.1 Reniera Graham gave a presentation on the IDeA Strategic Housing Programme.
- 3.2 Several members of the Advisory Group had not heard of the programme and it seems that invitations for events and training are not always reaching the relevant people.
- **Action: Catriona Riddell to send IDeA a list of relevant people to invite to events.**
 - **Action: Genevieve Haywood to send IDeA the Housing Advisory Group distribution list.**
 - **Action: Catriona Riddell to circulate the Heads of Planning update to the Group.**
 - **Action: The Assembly to feedback to the Group on any future meetings with IDeA.**

4 South East Plan and Panel Report

- 4.1 The Panel Report had been discussed at a joint Regional Planning Committee, Regional Housing Board and Regional Transport Board workshop on 26 September. The Executive Committee have agreed an initial response to the Panel Report. The Panel Report will be debated at the Plenary on 14th November.
- 4.2 The Advisory Group discussed the Panel Report and the likely onward process in the light of the Housing Green Paper and the Sub-National Review. The Group noted that NHPAU is expected to publish its response to the Housing Green Paper later in October.
- 4.3 The Regional Assembly reported that they have commissioned Prof. Christine Whitehead to explain, examine and evaluate the arguments on the relationship between housing supply and affordability. Prof. Whitehead is due to report early in December.
- 4.4 Catriona Riddell updated the Group on the sub-national review and discussions about the function and content of integrated regional strategies. It is anticipated that Government will publish consultation proposals in December.
- **Action: Catriona Riddell to circulate the ERN preliminary response to CLG on the sub-national review.**
 - **Action: Genevieve Haywood to circulate Paul Bevan's recent letter.**

5 PPS 3 Follow Up

- 5.1 Mark Williams introduced the draft brief on strategic housing market areas, noting that not everyone had the paper in time to read it before the meeting. The potential purpose of the study is to look at what role SHMAs should play in the development of regional tier policies and programmes, whether the boundaries should be refined, how the SHMA boundaries can be kept up to date and how much the information can be used to assist in policy formation.
- 5.2 The Group questioned the relevance of the SHMAs given their potential fluidity and questioned whether they have improved the way local authorities work together.
- 5.3 It was agreed to add to the brief to test how SHMAs are being used and to consider which groupings of local authorities are working together.

➤ **Action: Any further comments to Mark Williams by 23 October.**

- 5.4 A report on housing type and size was considered by RPC on 26th Sept.
- 5.6 There was a discussion on the difficulties of delivering larger units in terms of the levels of grant going into RSL delivery and the effect that has on financing. For this year's bidding round the Housing Corporation have introduced a grant index which prioritises bids but doesn't take into account the size of the dwelling. The Housing Corporation will be assessing each bid independently.
- 5.7 Cath Stubbings responded that the issue about the mismatch between rents and large units was made during the consultation on the Housing Strategy. The Housing Board's decision to set a target for the proportion of the affordable housing programme to be delivered as larger homes was intended to encourage housing associations to focus on resources to achieve this. This issue may require further examination in the coming months. In terms of funding the Assembly are in the process of putting together a Making the Case document for south east regional funding.
- 5.8 It was suggested that the proposed update to the Councillors Toolkit raises issues about the funding of more larger affordable homes.

6 Regional Housing Board Forward Programme

- 6.1 The RHB met on 5th September. The minutes of the meeting are on the Assembly's website. The main business had been to agree priorities for the Board's work programme for the next two/three years. As well as existing commitments to further work on supported housing, the Board agreed to look at sustainability, the ageing population, the cost of increasing standards and the potential of retro fitting energy saving measures.

7 Gypsies and Travellers Update

- 7.1 Mark Williams introduced the preliminary findings of the GTAAAs. Most local authorities produced their evidence by the mid-October deadline. The next stage is preparation of options for consultation.

8 Other Business

- 8.1 Yvonne Edgar informed the group that the National Housing Federation is launching their South East Home Truths report at the House of Commons on 18 October.

- 8.2 Alison Bailey reported that the 06/07 housing completions data was currently being finalised and would be made available shortly. Affordable housing monitoring data was still awaited from a number of authorities, but is due to be reported to the Regional Housing Board in December. The Assembly intend to commission an evaluation of its affordable housing survey monitoring form which had been newly introduced to monitor completions in 06/07. The local authorities who completed the survey will be asked to feedback their views.

➤ **Action: The Regional Assembly will circulate the headline monitoring data once it is finalised.**

- 9 **Date of Next Meeting:** Genevieve Haywood is looking at alternatives dates in February to fit in with the anticipated timetable for publication of the Proposed Changes to the South East Plan.