



DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

PROPOSED INDIVIDUAL DECISION BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

TOPIC – RESPONSE ON THE DRAFT REGIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY (FEBRUARY 2007)

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 4, Section 22 of the Council's Constitution provides for a decision to be made by an individual member of Cabinet.

In accordance with the Procedure Rules, the City Secretary and Solicitor, the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance are consulted together with Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Principal Scrutiny Committee and all Members of the relevant Scrutiny Panel (individual Ward Members are consulted separately where appropriate). In addition, all Members are notified.

Five or more of these consulted Members can require that the matter be referred to Cabinet for determination.

If you wish to make representation on this proposed Decision please contact the relevant Portfolio Holder and the following Committee Administrator by 5.00pm on Thursday 26 April 2007

Contact Officers:

Case Officer: Simon Maggs; 01962 848203; smaggs@winchester.gov.uk

Committee Administrator: Colin Veal; 01962 848438; cveal@winchester.gov.uk

SUMMARY

The South East Regional Housing Board has published a consultation draft of the South East Regional Housing Strategy. The Strategy will influence the allocation of regional funds between different areas of housing investment and the spatial distribution of the funds across the region over the period 2008/9 to 2010/11.

The Regional Housing Strategy will support the Corporate Strategy Objectives of *Economic Prosperity, High Quality Environment, and Safe and Strong Communities*.

Consultees have been asked to consider, and respond to, a number of questions.

The Draft Strategy can be found at:

http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/our_work/planning/housing/strategy.html;

and the accompanying questionnaire at:

http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/our_work/planning/housing/rhs_consultation_form.php.

The Council's proposed response to the questions is attached as Appendix 1.

PROPOSED DECISION

That the response to the Draft Regional Housing Strategy contained in Appendix 1 be submitted to the South East Regional Housing Board.

REASON FOR THE PROPOSED DECISION AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

See summary

FURTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

N/A

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY THE DECISION MAKER OR A MEMBER OR OFFICER CONSULTED

[CLICK AND ENTER TEXT]

DISPENSATION GRANTED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

[CLICK AND ENTER TEXT]

Approved by: (signature)

Date of Decision

Councillor Tony Coates – Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities

Appendix 1

Draft South East Regional Housing Strategy 2007

Comments of Winchester City Council

Question 1: In selecting areas for investment in affordable housing, should the Regional Housing Board (para 5.3)?



Measure homelessness, overcrowding and affordability, as it does now?



Focus on areas that deliver sustainable development by supporting the regional priorities in the South East Plan ([see map](#))?

Any additional comments / reasons for choice: (max 600 characters)

The current measure places overemphasis on homelessness and penalizes areas with successful prevention initiatives. There should be more emphasis on affordability as a measure of need.

Investment in the sub-regional strategy areas is needed. The Strategy must recognize the diverse ways by which housing can be delivered, including urban extensions/ SDAs. However, levels of need must be taken into account and it is important to meet needs close to where they originate. Therefore, in order to sustain existing settlements, avoid a polarised housing market and create mixed and balanced communities there also needs to be investment in secondary towns and in villages.

Question 2: Should the Regional Housing Board allocate funds based on (para 5.3):



A percentage of the total funding available?



The number of homes to be delivered?

Additional Comments: This would reflect the higher costs of delivery in some areas.

Section 3: Funding for different types of project

Question 3: How much affordable housing funding should the Regional Housing Board invest in large strategic sites (para 2.8.1, 5.7)?



5% (around £22m a year)?



10% (around £44m a year)?



Other (please state):

Question 4: The Regional Housing Board plans to spend 1% of its budget (around £5m a year) on providing and refurbishing Gypsy and Traveller sites (*para 11.1-11.3*). Is this:



Too low?



About right?



Too high?

Question 5: How much should the Regional Housing Board invest in improving the condition of private sector housing (*para 12.1-12.5*)?



3% (around £12m a year, below the current level)?



5% (around £20m a year, the current level)?



7% (around £30m a year)?



9% (around £40m a year)?



Other (please state):

Question 6: What should be the criteria for funding to improve public sector homes (*para 12.3 - 12.4*)?
(max 900 characters)

Additional Comments: *NB the RHS paragraph this question refers to relates to **private** sector homes*

- Levels of vulnerable households in homes that do not meet Decent Homes Standards.
- Numbers of properties scoring poorly in terms of HHSRS/energy efficiency ratings
- Need/opportunities to utilize private investment from asset rich/cash poor households.
- Levels of Houses in Multiple Occupation

Question 7: Do you support the Regional Housing Board using funds for loans or equity release schemes as a way to improve the condition of private sector housing (*para 12.5*)?



Yes



No

Question 8: What should be the Regional Housing Board's minimum target for rural affordable housing in small settlements (*para 4.10 and 15*)?



360 homes per year (the current level)?



500 homes per year?



Other (please state):

Question 9: The evidence base for the draft South East Plan suggests that 70% of new affordable housing should be social rented. A proportion of this is likely to be achieved without public subsidy. How many of the Regional Housing Board's affordable homes should be social rented accommodation (*para 3.2, 16*)?



70%



60%



50%



Other (please state):

Question 10: To emphasise the need for large, family-sized affordable housing, should the Regional Housing Board adopt (*para 16.3 - 16.6*):



A single regional target applied to the total of all affordable housing?



Separate regional targets for social rented and shared ownership housing?



Other suggestion (please state and add reasons below)

Any additional comments / reasons for recommending an alternative approach: (max 600 characters)

In absolute terms figures often suggest the need is greatest for housing for single people, however this ignores that waiting times for family housing are often longer and families are often housed in overcrowded situations. Also when able to households will consume more housing than they

theoretically need to, hence the significant discrepancy between household size: rooms ratios in affordable and market sectors. More should be done to reduce these inequalities and the consequent inequalities for health/wellbeing of overcrowded/cramped accommodation. Support para 16's emphasis on sustainability rather than just outputs.

Question 11: Should the Regional Housing Board fund low cost home ownership for 'essential' local workers (*para 17*)?



Yes



No

Question 12: If the Regional Housing Board decided to fund shared ownership homes for essential workers, what type of workers at what income levels should be eligible (*para 17*)?

Additional comments:

This should only happen if it is part of the key worker living programme in order to provide flexibility. Essential workers should be locally defined.

Section 4: Infrastructure and land

Question 13: How important is infrastructure to support new affordable homes (*para 14*)?



Very important?



Important?



Not at all important?

Question 14: Do you support the Regional Housing Board's intention to use a proportion of its funds (approximately 2%), on a recyclable basis, towards creating a Regional Infrastructure Fund that will ensure infrastructure is delivered alongside development (*para 14*)?



No

Question 15: Do you support the Regional Housing Board's aim to buy surplus public sector brownfield

land for affordable housing developments (*para 13*)?



Yes



No

Section 5: Additional general comments

If you have any further comments, please add them below (max 900 characters)

In making investment decisions greater account should be taken of existing affordability hot-spots. In many cases hot-spots exist in secondary towns such as Winchester, and create existing imbalanced housing markets. It is important that such the sustainability of such towns/housing markets are not compromised because they fall between the priority themes.

The conclusions regarding an economic case for investment in villages are based on a narrow view of rural sustainability and fail to given due weight to the social benefits of rural housing.

There should be long term funding commitment given to strategic sites, in particular in strategic growth areas.

Infrastructure should be funded from planning gain supplement/other sources.

The Board should provide an innovation fund/support to help smaller authorities develop new initiatives, such as equity release.

Building for Life principles/Lifetime Homes should be encouraged.

Public sector bodies should be required to carry out asset reviews to encourage early release of surplus land.