

**CAMBRIDGE SUB-REGION HOUSING STRATEGY**  
(Report by the Head of Housing Services)

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To note and seek endorsement of the Housing Strategy for the Cambridge sub-region.

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 The Cambridge sub-region comprises the seven local authorities of: Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire, Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury, working together on housing issues. It is one of nine sub-regions within the East of England. Each sub-region has been asked to develop a Housing Strategy to inform the Regional Housing Strategy, which in turn, informs the Regional Housing Board's<sup>1</sup> investment decisions.

- 2.2 The Regional Housing Strategy must be supplied to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in Spring 2005. The ODPM will use the Regional Housing Strategy to inform its bidding in the government spending review later that year, and its prioritisation of resources after the review. The document will therefore inform regional priorities, and ultimately influence not only the distribution of resources within the Eastern Region, but also the allocation made to the Eastern Region from central government.

- 2.3 The sub-regional Housing Strategy is therefore an important document. If developments in this sub-region are to receive adequate funding in future, the Council must make sure that the sub-regional strategy adequately presents the case for investment.

- 2.4 To develop the Strategy, the views of a wide range of stakeholders have been sought through events attended by council officers and housing association representatives (March 2004), and a wider event including members and developers. The draft Strategy has since been endorsed by the Infrastructure Partnership.

**3. IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The themes that have been identified are those where the seven authorities can achieve more by working together than independently. Areas in which investment from the Regional Housing Board are required are:

**Growth:**

The Cambridge sub-region lies in a designated "growth area" and significant investment in both infrastructure and housing is needed to ensure affordable housing is available to people coming to live and work here, as well as to existing local populations including key workers.

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<sup>1</sup> Regional Housing Board consists of the Housing Corporation, Government Office, East of England Development Agency, Regional Housing Forum, East of England Regional Assembly and English Partnerships.

**Meeting housing need/ Homelessness:**

A number of joint initiatives are helping to provide better services across the sub region. The strategy proposes further work on how people move around the sub region, and whether joint work on allocations would improve access to housing.

**Decent Homes:**

This concerns both the private and public sectors, and seeks to address targets for Council housing (only three out of seven authorities still have stock) as well as properties with vulnerable households in the private sector. The strategy makes recommendations for further joint working but does not seek regional investment for this area of work.

**Supported Housing:**

There is a real shortage of supported housing for some groups. The sub regional strategy seeks to influence future decisions on supported housing for schemes which have a revenue commitment from Supporting People.

**Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups including travellers:**

There has been very little work on the housing needs of BME groups across the whole of the Eastern region and the current research project on the circumstances of travellers intends to inform this discussion. Nationally, housing of BME groups is a priority, and we are likely to lose investment if we cannot demonstrate effective working in this area.

- 3.2 The most critical proposal concerns the future distribution of capital resources. It is possible that the Regional Housing Board will give a capital allocation to the sub-region to invest according to its own priorities. The Strategy proposes that investment directed into the sub-region should be top-sliced to a maximum of 20% for supported housing projects that have a guaranteed revenue stream, with the remainder distributed to District Councils according to Structure Plan allocations.

**4. CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 The sub-regional Housing Strategy has been developed by the seven local authorities in consultation with other stakeholders. The document is important because it influences the government's investment in the Eastern Region and the Regional Housing Board's investment in the Cambridge sub-region.

**5. RECOMMENDATION**

- 5.1 Council is asked to approve the Cambridge sub-region Housing Strategy 2004-8/9.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- Draft Sub Regional Housing Strategy 2004-8/9

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