

CHESHIRE EAST

ADVISORY PANEL - PLACES

Date of meeting: 12 NOVEMBER 2008
Report of: JOHN KNIGHT – PROSPERITY BLOCK LEAD
Title: DRAFT SUB-REGIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider the recently published draft Sub-regional Housing Strategy and the implications for Cheshire East. The Strategy has been published on behalf of the Cheshire Housing Alliance, representing Registered Social Landlords and Local Authorities across Cheshire.

2.0 Decision Required

- 2.1 To endorse the emerging Sub-regional Strategy and the proposed housing priorities and confirm this as part of the consultation process.

3.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs

- 3.1 Officer time.

4.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond

- 4.1 Officer time.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 None.

6.0 Risk Assessment

- 6.1 The Shadow Authority should actively endorse the Sub-regional Strategy that seeks to 'lever-in' additional resources to improve the 'housing offer' for residents of Cheshire East. Failure to do so could see scarce resources being directed to the other Sub-regions of the North West.

7.0 Background and Options

- 7.1 The draft pan-Cheshire Sub-regional Housing Strategy has been published on the Ellesmere Port and Neston website, to facilitate wider public consultation. The website also contains a Consultation Questionnaire seeking views on the draft Strategy. The relevant page

on the website is:

<http://www.epnbc.gov.uk/housing/subregionalhousingstrategy.htm>

- 7.2 Though Cheshire is often viewed as being a fairly affluent area, average house prices here are substantially higher than the regional and national average and affordability has long been an issue. Many of our rural populations and historic market towns, in particular, face a growing affordability crisis, dwindling local services, ageing housing and increasing isolation.
- 7.3 Cheshire is a key part of the wider regional housing market and the sub Regional strategy complements and contributes to the developing aims of the North West Regional Housing Strategy (currently under review). It sets out the common housing issues affecting Cheshire and the wider region and identifies how we can add value by working together with key partners across geographical and administrative boundaries. The creation of two new unitary authorities for the sub-region will allow us to further streamline key partnerships and practices to maximise the opportunities available.
- 7.4 The first Sub-Regional Housing Strategy for Cheshire was developed in 2003. Much has changed, not only within the sub-region, but also on a regional and national level in the intervening years. The impact of international economic events is beginning to make itself felt and the consequences of the 'credit crunch' are likely to have a significant effect for some time to come, in terms of increasing restrictions on lending, rising repossessions and falling sales. Many developers are already cutting back on their build programmes, which could have serious consequences for new affordable housing development and Government growth targets.
- 7.5 **The vision of the Strategy is to provide a housing offer that supports the creation of balanced, sustainable communities and the regeneration of the sub-region's most deprived neighbourhoods, through effective lobbying, partnership working and community engagement, to create a sub-region where all residents can achieve independent living in good quality, affordable homes that are appropriate to their needs.**
- 7.6 The four priorities listed below have been identified as the key issues for the sub-region:

PRIORITY ONE: To increase the supply of affordable housing to support economic growth and development.

PRIORITY TWO: To make best use of the sub-region's existing housing stock.

PRIORITY THREE: To meet the housing and accommodation-related support needs of the sub-region's most vulnerable residents.

PRIORITY FOUR: To increase the supply of market housing to support continued economic growth and regeneration and to meet local housing needs.

7.7 The priorities above complement the approved Consolidated (Interim) Sustainable Communities Strategy for Cheshire East. This may need to be reviewed as a new Sustainable Communities Strategy for Cheshire East is brought forward in 2009.

7.8 The Sub-Regional Housing Strategy provides both the evidence of need and demand and puts forward a compelling case for an increase in resources to our areas of operation. The Strategy indicates a need for 978 new affordable homes to be brought forward annually in the Cheshire East area.

8.0 Overview of Day One, Year One and Term One Issues

8.1 Not applicable.

9.0 Reasons for Recommendation

9.1 The Shadow Authority for Cheshire East should actively promote the 'housing offer' for residents through effective lobbying, partnership working and community engagement to create the conditions where all residents can achieve independent living in good quality, affordable homes that are appropriate to their needs.

For further information:

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Jamie Macrae

Officer: David Sparkes

Tel No: 01625 504470

Email: d.sparkes@macclesfield.gov.uk

Background Documents:

Documents are available for inspection at: Macclesfield Borough Council website.