

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 16 <sup>th</sup> December 2003	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Executive
<b>Report Title</b>		South East London Housing Strategy	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Strategic Director of Housing	

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That Executive note and endorse the draft South East London Housing Strategy (summary attached at Appendix B).
2. That Executive delegate sign-off of the final South East London Housing Strategy to the Strategic Director of Housing in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **Sustainable Communities Plan**

3. The Government published its Sustainable Communities Plan in February 2003. The Plan is a national programme of action setting out how the Government intends to achieve sustainable communities for all and is supplemented by regional plans, including one for London. The Plan signalled the setting up of Regional Housing Boards to allocate housing investment monies within the regions, with allocations based on priorities identified in Regional Housing Strategies. Regional Housing Boards announced their allocation of resources for 2004/05 and 2005/06 in October. It is clear that allocation of some of the London 'pots' of money will be via sub-regional bids.

### **London Housing Strategy 2003**

4. Particular emphasis is placed on sub-regional working to meet the priorities of the LHS. Key priorities are:
  - To increase the supply of affordable housing, including providing homes for key workers who are essential to London's public services
  - To reduce homelessness and the use of inappropriate temporary accommodation
  - To modernise the private rented sector
  - To help more people in private housing have decent homes, particularly low income/vulnerable homeowners and tenants and older people
  - To bring social housing up to decent homes standard
  - To achieve sustainable communities through housing investment and neighbourhood regeneration

5. The LHS 2003 comments that sub-regional housing strategies “will inform regional priorities for investment, reflecting the differences between housing and demand within the five areas of London, and lead to improved cross-borough arrangements for nominations.” Sub-regional partnerships are expected to:
- take a co-ordinated approach to make best use of Major Opportunity development sites identified in the Mayor’s London Plan, including developing nominations arrangements to the new homes provided
  - Analyse at a sub-regional level the housing needs of ethnic minority groups and groups requiring supported housing and develop schemes to meet identified needs
  - Develop initiatives to provide services to private landlords and tenants

### KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

6. The south east London boroughs of Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich, Lewisham and Southwark have a history of working together on housing issues. This includes the London Housing Partnership and working together on shared ownership and temporary housing programmes. This history of joint working provided a focus able to respond to the increasing imperative from the Housing Corporation, Greater London Authority and Government Office for London for London boroughs to develop sub-regional housing strategies to both identify and address sub-regional housing priorities, recognising that housing markets (and needs) are not confined to individual borough boundaries.
7. To start the process of developing a South East London Housing Strategy, officers from the five boroughs met in February 2003 to scope out potential areas for joint working across borough boundaries at both a strategic and operational level. This meeting tasked strategy officers from the five boroughs to co-ordinate drafting a strategy document which took account of individual boroughs’ housing strategies and the developing London Housing Strategy.
8. Subsequently, a structure for the South East London Housing Group has been agreed to further the aim of closer working across the sub-region, further developing the strategy and monitoring delivery of the shared objectives and targets. There are eight sub-groups, some newly established and some, which have been operational for some time, and there is a lead borough for each sub-group. The sub-groups reflect the key areas identified for joint working and meet regularly to progress the strategy and take forward the agreed tasks in the action plan.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Lead borough</b>
Housing Directors Group	All
Strategy Group	Greenwich
Development Group	Lewisham
NHS Key Worker Group (a sub-group of Development Group)	Lewisham
Nominations Group	Bexley
Supporting People Group	Southwark
Homelessness Group	Bromley

Private Sector Group	Southwark
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9. The South East London Housing Strategy is not intended to replace but to complement each boroughs' housing strategy. Key aims are to identify and share good practice and pool expertise and resources to improve housing outcomes for residents across the sub-region. Equality and diversity issues are central to achievement of the objectives of the strategy, which are:
  - To increase the supply of housing and affordable housing and promote choice
  - To ensure that all tenants of social housing in South East London have access to a decent home by 2010
  - To promote quality homes in the private sector
  - To create sustainable communities
  - To reduce homelessness and promote the use of appropriate temporary accommodation
  
10. These sub-regional objectives are entirely consistent with the strategic objectives of Southwark's Housing Strategy, which are:
  - Make the best use of existing stock and establish standards for new housing
  - Regenerate and improve the condition of housing across all tenures
  - Meet housing needs and promote affordable housing choices in the borough
  - Drive for continuous improvement in the quality and value of housing services.
  
11. The Housing Strategy is agreed by Members and has been assessed by the Government Office as Fit For Purpose (to date only 25 housing authorities in the country have achieved the Fit For Purpose standard). The Housing Strategy in turn contributes to delivering the Council's strategic priorities.
  
12. The South East London Housing Strategy objectives are also consistent with the priorities of the London Housing Strategy 2003 (see Background above).
  
13. An action plan to further develop and deliver the strategy has been agreed, and this is included in the summary attached at Appendix B. The full draft strategy is available on request. The South East London Strategy may be subject to further minor changes before the final document is agreed by the Housing Directors' Group. It is planned to launch the strategy in January 2004 and the launch will include Members from each partner borough.

### **Consultation**

14. Consultation has been carried out extensively as part of the development of individual borough strategies. Priorities identified from borough consultation informed the development of borough strategies, which in turn have informed the South East London Housing Strategy.

15. Southwark's Housing Strategy Review Board (HSRB) meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> May 2003 received a report of the five borough officers' meeting of February; and discussed the outline objectives and proposals for joint working. The Executive Member for Housing sits on the HSRB, which also includes representation from Southwark Housing Association Group (SOUHAG), Southwark Action for Voluntary Organisations (SAVO), Bellenden Renewal Area Management Committee and Council tenants and leaseholders. The HSRB will receive regular reports on developments of the strategy and progress against the action plan.
16. The draft South East London Housing Strategy was launched with housing associations, the Housing Corporation and representational groups such as the Association of London Government and London Housing Federation at a sub-regional seminar hosted by Lewisham on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2003. The event was well attended and the draft strategy was well received. Comments on the draft were invited and subsequently further copies of the draft strategy have been sent to other partners for comment.
17. The draft strategy was circulated in September to Southwark Chief Officers, including the Assistant Chief Executives, for comment. Development officers and planners from south east London boroughs met on 7<sup>th</sup> November to look at the scope for achieving greater consistency in dealing with S106 agreements (generating affordable housing through planning). The South East London Housing Group has agreed a list of 21 housing associations which boroughs will work with in the sub-region. The first meeting of the South East London Housing Association Forum took place on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2003.

#### **Effect of proposed changes on those affected**

18. One of the priorities of the South East London Housing Strategy is to look at the potential to meet the housing needs of smaller BME communities and people with special/supported housing needs on a cross-borough basis. The strategy is therefore likely to have a beneficial effect on these communities.
19. In addition, there will be increased opportunities for Southwark residents to take up housing options in other boroughs in the sub-region and to benefit from new affordable housing developments on the larger opportunity sites in south east London. There is a draft nominations agreement between the boroughs that allows for addressing the need to balance housing development activity across the sub-region with different levels of housing need.

#### **Resource implications**

20. The impact of sub-regional strategies on external funding from the Housing Corporation and the London Housing Board is as yet unspecified, although there is a clear expectation that such strategies should be in place. It is likely that investment resources will increasingly be directed at sub-regional schemes. We know that to access the funding top-sliced for private sector renewal 2004-2006, we will need to bid for resources as a sub-region and that bids will have to be submitted early in 2004.

21. To date the strategy has been developed and drawn together using existing officer resources of the five boroughs. The boroughs have recently agreed to resource further co-ordination of and work on the strategy, each borough contributing £10k. Southwark can meet this contribution from existing resources.

### Legal/Financial Implications

22. There are no direct legal or financial implications.

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background papers	Held at	Contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft SE London Housing Strategy</li> <li>Minutes of SELHS groups</li> </ul>	9 Larcom Street, SE17	Ann Pettifer 020 7525 1218

### Audit trail

### Appendix A

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Rachel Sharpe, Head of Strategy and Regeneration	
<b>Report Author</b>	Ann Pettifer, Principal Project Officer (Strategy & Policy)	
<b>Version</b>	final	
<b>Dated</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> November 2003	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS/DIRECTORATES/EXECUTIVE MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments Included</b>
Borough Solicitor & Secretary	No	No
Chief Finance Officer	No	No
Other Officers: Circulated to Chief Officers	Yes	No
Executive Member	Yes	No
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Support</b>		8 <sup>th</sup> December 2003