Thames Gateway South Essex

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Sub-Regional Housing Strategy

2008 - 2011



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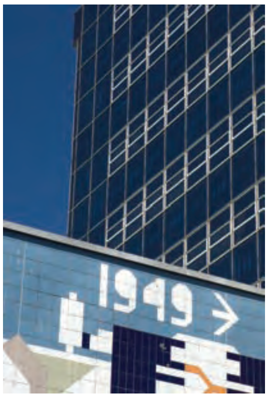
Foreword

The primary aim of this strategy is to set out the priorities and actions which will accelerate the supply of high quality and sustainable housing to help meet the needs of people living or aspiring to live in the Thames Gateway South Essex (TGSE) sub region. It will inform the East of England Regional Housing Strategy and other national and regional strategies and influence future funding decisions, across a range of bodies. This Strategy is designed to ensure the local housing strategies meet not only the local priorities but also work towards achieving the sub regional, regional, and national targets and priorities. The Strategy is "fit for purpose" in accordance with the Communities and Local Government guidelines for housing strategies.

The strategy has a lifespan of 2008 to 2011, dovetailing with the Regional Housing Strategy and covers the Housing Corporation's National Affordable Housing Programme funding bid rounds for 2008-11.

A Strategic Housing Market Assessment has recently been commissioned in Thames Gateway South Essex and provides much of the evidence base to support this Sub Regional Housing Strategy, other local housing strategies and Local Development Frameworks. It also provides a sound analysis of the current housing market and considers the implications from a policy perspective of a downturn in the property market and its impact on the economy.



The strategy aims to:

- Determine the nature and dynamics of the housing market in the sub-region and its relationship to surrounding areas; including the housing needs of people in South Essex
- Understand how existing housing is supporting or constraining the economic and social development of the sub-region
- Show how future plans for housing and regeneration is supporting the sustainable development of the sub region
- Highlight a range of actions for intervention to improve the functioning of the housing market to meet projected economic growth and the approach to achieving our wider objectives of sustainability and community cohesion
- Identify the key areas where the five Local Authorities, partner RSLs and other organisations will work together and actions required to meet these objectives

The strategy sets out a vision for the sub-region, the key actions that Partners wish to achieve between now and 2011 and the challenges that need to be overcome if the sub region is to achieve its aims.

It looks at the targets, issues, trends and partnership actions arising from:

- Future housing growth to ensure it is sustainable and future proof
- Needs of vulnerable groups living in the sub region
- Future of the current housing stock to ensure it is at a decent standard

Key priority actions that sub regional partners are currently working together on include: Increasing the supply of new social rented housing, intermediate and key worker housing, giving residents mobility across the sub region through Choice Based Letting Schemes, improving housing for vulnerable groups including people with special needs and the renewal of private sector housing. These and other priority actions are summarised at the end of each chapter and forms the basis of the action plan.

Introduction

Thames Gateway South Essex is part of the wider Thames Gateway, which includes North Kent and East London. It has been identified as the UK Government's top priority for regeneration and growth. Situated along a 43-mile stretch of the River Thames and with close links to London and the Continent, it is Europe's largest brownfield site. Investment from the government is being used to accelerate brownfield development, economic growth, environmental improvements and urban renewal.

The TGSE sub-region is one of nine sub-regions in the East of England. Sub regions were established in response to the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan 2003 to reflect the housing markets of the East of England. The TGSE sub region is made up of five local authorities: Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock Councils.

With a population of 647,100 (mid year estimates 2006) living in 284,198 dwellings, the South Essex sub region is known as the eastern playground for London offering the nearest coastal resorts and open space for the City and Canary Wharf. South Essex is a place where people enjoy life, benefiting from the local amenities, but within easy reach of London. South Essex offers great opportunities for active lifestyles. It is a place that can sustain organic growth around existing settlements, in addition to larger scale commercial and leisure development.

By 2021 an additional 44,300 homes are planned for South Essex, with a 5% increase in the population. The numbers in the map refer to new housing provision up to 2021:

East of England

Housing investment sub regions

Critical to the success of housing growth will be:

The economy - there are currently over 230,000 people employed in the Thames Gateway South Essex economy, with an ambitious target of 55,000 additional jobs to be created between 2001- 2021. Employment rates are high, but there is a significant amount of part time and low value work in sectors such as retail and distribution. Ensuring that the economy continues to grow and creates higher value jobs and prosperity for local people will help sustain a buoyant housing market.

Infrastructure - around 55,000 people commute to London every day, but in return over 70,000 commute into the area to work. The economic sustainability of the area depends on an effective transport infrastructure, and the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership has established a strategic board to ensure delivery of major schemes. A £63m programme to improve one key intersection at Sadlers Farm has received approval, and improvements to the major roads, linkage to the M25, and a new mass rapid transit system are all planned.

A wide mix of housing for sale - in all price ranges, both large and small, higher and lower densities are seen as essential to the creation of sustainable communities. Quality of design is also key to ensure their long-term viability.

Design and how it integrates with existing communities - the Essex Design Initiative, developed by the public and private sector offers a fantastic opportunity to ensure that delivering challenging targets does not preclude the quality of design, which residents deserve. The South Essex housing market has a lot to offer for those who seek urban or rural living, a first time buy or an executive home – South Essex can meet this need and is more affordable than much of the south-east.

Education and skills development - is at the heart of the vision - already Southend has invested over £50m in a landmark campus for the University of Essex and South East Essex College in the heart of the town centre. This campus is now delivering results with a 40% increase in applications. There are plans for a further £100m+ of investment in schools and colleges across the area, with Building Schools for the Future and a Learning and Skills Council / Higher Education and Funding Council for England capital programme providing the basis for new schools, colleges and university places in Basildon, Thurrock and Castle Point.

Health services - are also fundamental to supporting the development of healthy and sustainable communities. Health services are often seen as the hub of the community and vital to regeneration plans to readdress health inequalities and revitalise town centres, deprived neighbourhoods and the local economy.

In prior years South Essex has been a significant location for housing developments since the post war period. From the development of Basildon New Town through to major developments at Chafford Hundred the area has accommodated the needs of the London housing market without major investments in new infrastructure. This has led to an imbalance in the relationship between housing and employment that is unsustainable in the long term. The Housing Strategy aims to address this imbalance and develop sustainable communities by connecting to the various initiatives across South Essex: education, health, urban renaissance, transport, prosperity, leisure and the environment.

The South Essex Thames Gateway Sub-Region (TGSE) is crucial to the UK economy, has a rising population, and exhibits all the issues that are central to strategic housing policy. In recent years:

- House prices have risen rapidly but not evenly across the sub region and are now experiencing a downturn.
- Growing numbers of people, including key workers and first time buyers, are unable to afford to buy a home within reasonable reach of where they work.
- The population has been ageing particularly in the 50-64 and 64+ cohort.
- The numbers of people asking for help from Councils and housing associations is rising.
- Older housing, both in the public and private sector, needs renewal through investment.

Sub regional Members and partners have agreed the following vision and set of priorities for delivering future housing and regeneration in the Thames Gateway South Essex sub region:

Our Vision

"To deliver quality housing that contributes to sustainable communities and a balanced housing market."

Our Priorities

- Maximise Thames Gateway's number of key employment and residential sites to present an opportunity to create exemplar mixed communities.
- Ensure transport and social infrastructure is planned and focussed to open up new development sites to deliver housing growth.
- Maximise the housing development potential of the Thames riverfront, whilst enhancing its recreational use and protecting its bio-diversity.
- Encourage inward migration of skilled workers and enhance the skills of the wider workforce, ensuring that housing growth meets their diverse needs.
- Ensure Thames Gateway planned population growth benefits all residents not just newcomers by for example developing the local skills base to maximise take up of new jobs.
- Ensure programmes are in place to improve Community Safety and guarantee good housing management for the Gateway's housing stock both public and private.
- Ensure that addressing health inequalities is mainstreamed in the planning of infrastructure and through a design code for future developments.

These priorities are also within the Regional Housing Strategy to ensure the sub region and its objectives are aligned with the region.

Structure of this Housing Strategy

The sub regional Housing Strategy is structured as follows:

Chapter two sets out the key partners involved in developing the Strategy at a sub regional level and provides a brief overview of the corporate context and linkages to other related strategies,

Chapter three provides an analysis of how the Thames Gateway South Essex housing market functions in the context of the economy and will provide the evidence base for proceeding action in the Strategy,

Chapter four focuses on future housing growth and introduces the headline targets for the supply of housing in the sub region, briefly summarising the regeneration plans of its local authority / RSL partners and the actions required by partners to ensure that housing growth is joined up with the wider regeneration programme,

Chapter five explains why it is important to meet the needs of vulnerable people and the means of achieving this,

Chapter six explains how by investing in the sub region's housing stock; it can make a significant contribution to sustainable regeneration,

Chapter seven sets out how, through sub regional working, the Housing Strategy will be delivered.

2

Strategy for Housing

This updated Sub-Regional Housing Strategy comes at an important time and reflects the latest housing and regeneration position in October 2008 supported by a recently completed Housing Market Assessment (September 2008). The partners that have co-operated in drawing the strategy together have done so in the light of:

- Recent developments in Government policy around planning and funding for affordable housing
- The policy framework of Regional Planning Guidance and the development of Local Authorities' Local Development Frameworks
- The likely availability of funding to support affordable housing provision for both general needs and for Supported Housing
- The sub regions local regeneration partnerships:
  - Basildon Renaissance Partnership
  - Castle Point Regeneration Steering Group
  - Renaissance Southend Ltd
  - Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation

Like all strategy documents, this has to be seen as work in progress, given the pace of change, where new policy announcements are made regularly. Proper review and monitoring arrangements mean that actions can, and will, be revised to take account of the latest intelligence. However, it sets out clear actions for addressing current issues and gives a sub-regional view about spending priorities.

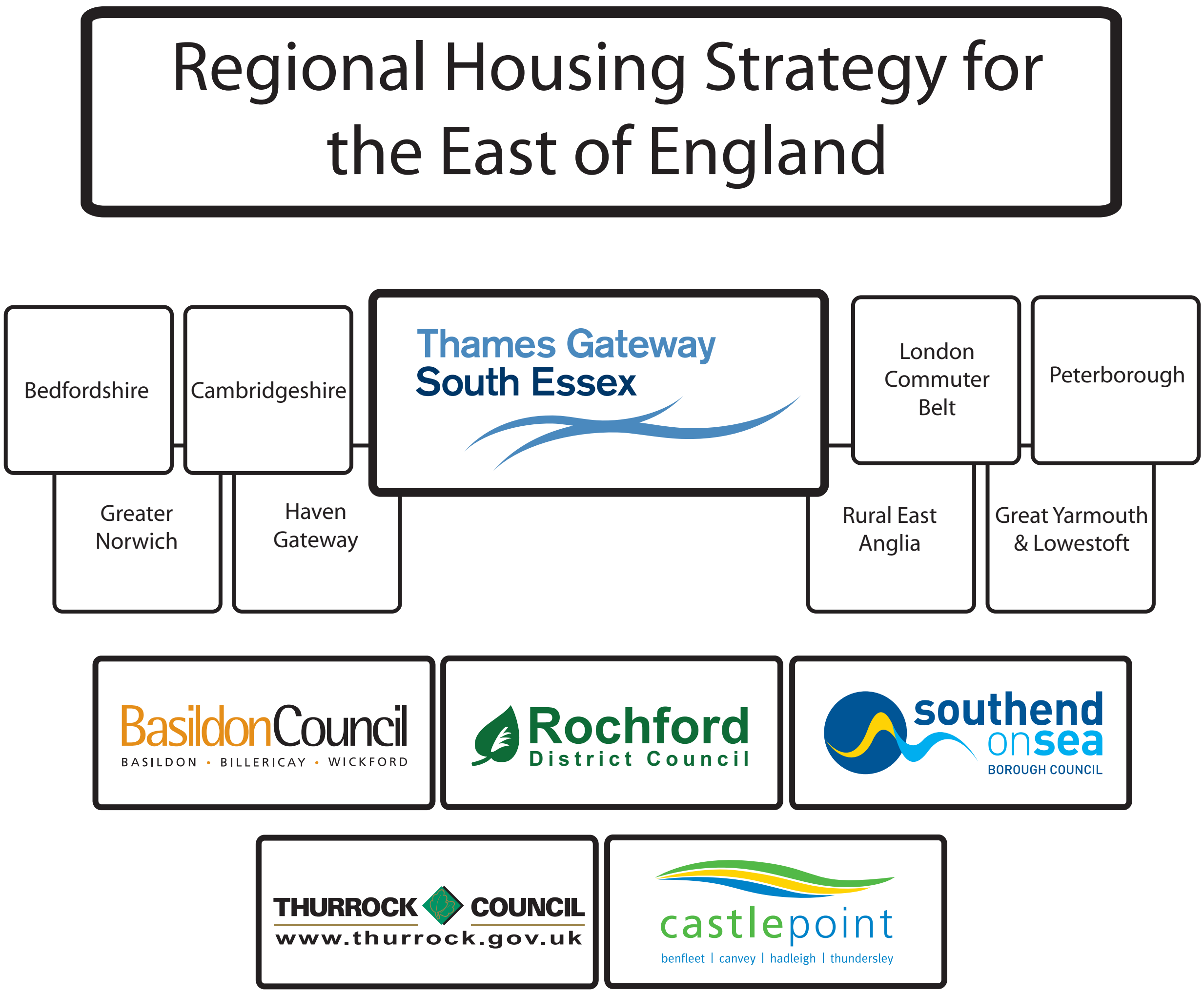
The sub region recognises that housing markets do not respect boundaries set for administrative, geographical, political, financial or other purposes, and are committed to working together to address cross-boundary issues. We aim to create the right balance of new housing options across TGSE as well as regenerating existing areas. We will continue to involve partners and residents to develop a meaningful, useful and inclusive strategy.

We know that good quality housing can contribute to healthy neighbourhoods, but conversely poor housing conditions can lead to a wide range of physical and mental health problems. High quality housing can also be a determinant for the relocation of companies and families.

The Strategy seeks to improve the quality and choice of the sub region's housing and influence primarily the new supply of affordable and social rented housing, intermediate and key worker housing, housing for people with special needs and the renewal of private sector housing. It sets out actions that we believe will create the right balance of new housing options across TGSE as well as regenerating existing areas.

The Strategy has been subject of extensive consultation through partnership working groups and wider consultation events on 1 October 2007 where the Action Plan was first conceived and 7 May 2008 at Stock Brook Country Club where seventy people attended from a range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations. Facilitated workshops formed part of this latter consultation event to discuss in greater detail the three key priority areas of the Strategy. Feedback from the workshops was invaluable and has been used to shape the final Strategy.

Linkages



Regional Housing Strategy for the East of England
Bedfordshire
Cambridgeshire
Thames Gateway South Essex
London Commuter Belt
Peterborough
Greater Norwich
Haven Gateway
Rural East Anglia
Great Yarmouth & Lowestoft
BasildonCouncil
BASILDON • BILLERICAY • WICKFORD
Rochford District Council
southend onsea BOROUGH COUNCIL
THURROCK COUNCIL
www.thurrock.gov.uk
castlepoint
benfleet | canvey | hadleigh | thundersley

Core Strategy Group

There are five local authorities and five Housing Associations elected onto the Core Strategy Group:

- Basildon District Council
- Castle Point Borough Council
- Rochford District Council
- Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
- Thurrock Borough Council
- Estuary HA Ltd
- Family Mosaic
- Guinness Trust
- Moat Housing Group
- Swan Housing Group

A wider group of RSLs meet quarterly through a Forum and include the five representatives above and the following additional organisations:

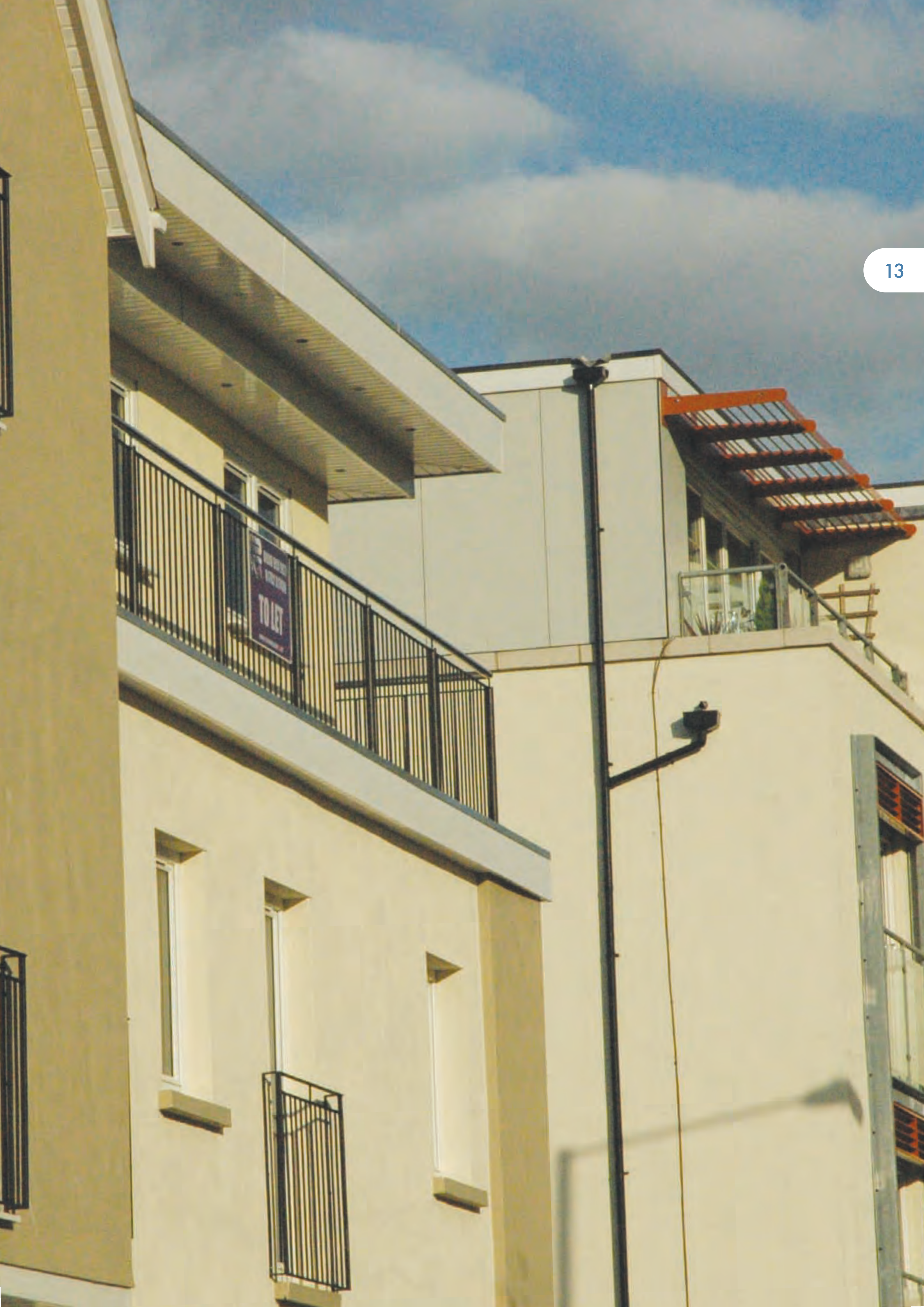
East Thames Group, Gallions HA, Flagship Housing, London and Quadrant, Circle Anglia, Sanctuary Group and Southern Housing Group.

A number of sub groups have been set up to develop and deliver specific areas of the Strategy; these include: Housing Market Assessment, Homelessness, Private Sector, Affordable Housing, Registered Social Landlord Forum and all report to the Core Strategy Group on a regular basis.

The three Supporting People Service administering authorities are: Essex County Council, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock Borough Councils.

The following section sets out the strategic context for building sustainable and inclusive communities at three levels:

- National
- Regional
- Sub regional / local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National

The Local Government White Paper "Strong and Prosperous Communities" (October 2006) placed an expectation on Local Authorities to take a much stronger strategic lead for their areas. Linked with this is a requirement for Local Authorities to develop a clear strategic housing vision that supports the wider community strategy for their area.

The Housing Green Paper, 'Homes for the Future: more affordable, more sustainable' was published for consultation in July 2007. It outlines how the Government intends to deliver three million new homes nationally by 2021, and address housing affordability. It was accompanied by a policy statement on zero carbon homes by 2016, and an invitation to submit proposals for "eco-towns".

Government has sought to draw together urban policy, regeneration and housing agendas under the Sustainable Communities banner, which can be defined as follows:

"Sustainable Communities meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, their children and other users, contribute to high quality of life and provide opportunities and choice. They achieve this in a way which makes effective use of natural resources, enhance the environment, promote social cohesion and inclusion and strengthen economic prosperity ." [1]

The Egan Review, Skills for Sustainable Communities, sets up the following, as characteristics of successful places and ambitions for regeneration and place-making activities:

- Governance – Effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership
- Transport and Connectivity – Good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services
- Services – A full range of appropriate, accessible public, private, community and voluntary services
- Environmental – Providing places for people to live in an environmentally friendly way
- Economy – A flourishing and diverse local economy
- Housing and the Built Environment – A quality built and natural environment
- Social and Cultural – Vibrant, harmonious and inclusive communities

The approach at a national level draws together the physical 'urban renaissance' and more community-focused 'neighbourhood renewal' strands of urban policy and is encapsulated in two five year plans. These are Sustainable Communities: Homes for All and Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity which were published by ODPM in 2005, and updates the initial 2003 Sustainable Communities Plan, Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future.

[1] ODPM (2004) The Egan Review: Skills for Sustainable Communities.

The latest proposals are incoporated in the Housing and Regeneration Bill which was laid in parliament on 15 November 2007 and completed its Commons Committee stage on 31 January 2008 and given Royal Assent on 22 July 2008. It will help to deliver the commitments set out in the Housing Green Paper to provide more and greener homes, in mixed and sustainable communities.

The Housing and Regeneration Act, as it is now referred to, establishes the new Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) combines English Partnerships, the Housing Corporation and delivery functions from Communities and Local Government including growth areas such as the Thames Gateway and its Delivery Plan. It will focus on delivering more new and affordable homes across all tenures and will drive and invest in regeneration. The HCA will support regeneration and provide decent places as well as decent homes, i.e. by grant funding social housing and investing in infrastructure. It will give local authorities a clear strategic partner to work with on housing and regeneration delivery in their areas. It is expected to start work in April 2009.

The Act also implements the changes proposed in the Green Paper to give councils more freedoms and incentives to build new homes, and makes rating against the Code for Sustainable Homes mandatory for new homes.

Other Key Government Housing Policies include:

- Planning Policy Statement 3 – Housing
- The Hill Review: Ends and Means: The Future Roles of Social Housing In England
- The Cave Review of Social Housing Regulation
- Respect Agenda
- CLG – Homelessness Strategy
- Independence and Opportunity: Our strategy for Supporting People

This housing strategy aims to be fully integrated and address wider strategic plans and guidance, such as those set out above as well as recent Government plans in relation to race equality, community cohesion, health and social care, neighbourhood renewal and the tackling of multiple deprivation. In line with good practice, we aim to provide sound evidence upon which our strategic priorities have been based.

Regional

Regional Housing Strategy (RHS)

The RHS has three main themes that reflect housing's central role in promoting sustainable communities:

- More sustainable housing provision
- High quality homes and environments and
- Creating inclusive communities

The RHS describes itself as the "glue that holds national and local priorities together", seeking not to replace the local housing strategies produced by District and Unitary Councils but adding value by, for example, co-ordinating activities such as evidence-gathering and the sharing of best practice. While it provides the strategic context and sets out the region's priorities, it is very much shaped and informed by the sub-regional strategies that local stakeholders have a key role in developing.

The Housing Investment Plan

The Housing Investment Plan aims to give substance to the priorities in the RHS. It sets out the Regional Housing Board's recommendations to Ministers on how to allocate the Single Regional Housing Pot, including the split between existing housing and new, affordable housing.

The current Housing Investment Plan (2008) covering the period 2008-11 allocates the bulk of the investment (£711m) to delivering new, affordable housing through the Housing Corporation's National Affordable Housing Programme. £38m is allocated to the public sector to enable them to achieve the Decent Homes standard and £27m is allocated to support the delivery of new and refurbished gypsy and traveler sites. A further £49m is allocated to projects, which contribute to private sector renewal, regeneration and mixed communities.

Housing Investment Plan 2008-11 sets out four investment themes of Growth, Rural, Supporting People and BME.

The table opposite sets out the indicative regional split in funding where Thames Gateway South Essex sub region stands to receive the fourth highest share of funding across the region.

This funding forms part of the Thames Gateway Delivery Plan (2007) which sets out the Government's key ambitions and spending priorities, and a commitment to £9 billion funding over the next three years. This includes £500 million on regeneration and £100 million on local transport improvements.

The plan sets out seven strategic outcomes for the Thames Gateway, including the economy, transport, housing and quality of life. For Housing, ten locations where extra homes are most urgently needed have been prioritised for funding to support the housing growth agenda.

£69 million of Communities and Local Government's Thames Gateway Programmes Fund will go towards the provision of infrastructure and land acquisitions to help deliver housing in these areas.

East of England – Sub-regional split Sub-region Indicative share of NAHP 2008-11	
Bedfordshire	8.90%
Cambridgeshire	15.80%
Greater Norwich	8.50%
Haven Gateway	10.80%
London Commuter Belt	33.80%
Peterborough	5.40%
Rural East Anglia	4.00%
Thames Gateway	***9.80%***
Yarmouth and Waveney	3.00%

Regional Spatial Strategy (East of England Plan)

The RHS is a key mechanism for delivery of the Regional Spatial Strategy (East of England Plan), which sets out the number of new homes required across the region, including affordable housing targets. The plan sets out a requirement for 508,000 additional homes between 2001-2021, 35% of which should be affordable across the sub region. For TGSE, the minimum target is 44,300 new homes.

For TGSE, the table below indicates a breakdown of the Local Authority minimum dwelling provision targets and progress to-date. Basildon, Rochford and Thurrock must increase their provision of housing over the rest of the plan period to reach their minimum housing provision targets. Castle Point is achieving its housing targets while Southend has been exceeding its targets and could reduce its building rate and still achieve its minimum housing provision targets. However the economic downturn may reduce the number of sites brought forward in future years. The strategy recognises that housing development will need to be sequenced with necessary transport and infrastructure investment and jobs:

Figure 1: Minimum dwelling provision 2001–2021

	Minimum dwelling provision 2001-2021 (Net increase with annual average rates in brackets)		
Area	**Total to build 2001-2021**	**Of which already built 2001-2006**	**Minimum still to build 2006 -2021**
Basildon	10,700	1,220 (240)	9,480 (630)
Castle Point	4,000	1,010 (200)	2,990 (200)
Rochford	4,600	810 (160)	3790 (250)
Southend	6,500	2,130 (430)	4,370 (290)
Thurrock	18,500	4,250 (850)	14,250 (950)

Sub regional

At the sub-regional level, three Local Area Agreements exist in Essex, Southend and Thurrock and provide targeted action plans, which deliver the respective local authority's sustainable community strategies. They focus on a range of targeted outcomes, with resources directed to achieving them.

They all include priorities to improve educational attainment, ensure development is designed to promote healthier living and to improve the quality of life for people in the most disadvantaged areas. A number of housing related themes are also included such as more supported housing to enable people to live independently in their homes and better support to carers.

Targets included are chosen from the Government's 198 National Indicators for Local Authorities and Partnerships. Within individual LAAs a range of activites have been included under each Indicator. This Sub Regional Housing Strategy supports the delivery of the following key Indicators as set out in the relevant LAAs:

These targets will be used to monitor the Sub Regional Housing Strategy in terms of progress against delivery of its Action Plan.

NI154	Net additional Homes provided
NI155	Number of affordable Homes delivered (gross)
NI156	Number of households living in temporary accommodation
NI158	% (non) decent council homes

Multiple Area Agreements (MAAs) are also being considered to promote economic prosperity across the sub region as first proposed in the Local Government White Paper (2007). TGSE Partners will investigate further the opportunities of developing an MAA in the sub region.

Essex, Southend on Sea and Thurrock's Local Transport Plan (2006-11), set out the core aims to tackle congestion, deliver accessibility to key services, create safer and better maintained roads and improve air quality. It sets out that the transport network should support the economic development and the population growth of Essex and contribute to an improved quality of life. Major transport schemes in the TGSE area are set out below:

- South Essex Rapid Transport (SERT)
- A13/A130 Sadlers Farm Intersection
- A127 and A1159 Route Management Strategy
- M25 Widening junction 26 to 31
- Gardiners Lane South Access Improvements A132/A176/A127
- C2C Line Capacity Upgrades (platform extension to accommodate 12 car trains)
- Roscommon Way Extension
- Fryerns/Craylands Bus Route
- A13 Passenger Transport Corridor

Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership published its "Vision for the Future" (2001) that set out the major aims and objectives for the regeneration of south Essex.

That Vision looked forward to the creation of sustainable communities making the most of the unique characteristics of south Essex. The follow-on document, "Delivering the Future" sets out the route by which that Vision can be realised in a series of initiatives covering education, health, urban renaissance, transport, prosperity, leisure and the environment. With a plan that encompasses not only these, but also culture, the arts, sport and business innovation, Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership aims to deliver a better quality of life for all those who live and work in the area through its Quality of Life Board and initiatives such as Greengrid.

A key piece of work that has informed this Sub Regional Housing Strategy is the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. This provides a key mechanism for establishing the mix of housing required and together with Strategic Land Availability Assessments will help inform the level of future housing need. It includes an assessment of housing needs in the context of the sub regional housing market and future housing requirements across tenures (owner occupation, social rented, private rented, intermediate etc). Reference will be made to the findings of the SHMA throughout this Strategy. However, a summary of the key recommendations is set out below:

- Total housing numbers / targets - In the short term, it is forecast that levels of housing delivery will fall due to the current housing market and associated "credit crunch", however, over the medium / long term, notable demand pressures are forecast for additional housing above the Regional Spatial Strategy target. Local authorities need to adopt a comprehensive and proactive approach to managing housing supply.

- Affordable Housing - Common target of 35% to be encouraged across the sub region, but needs to be subject to commercial viability testing. Local authorities need to work together to maximise the supply of new affordable housing utilising a range of policy tools.

- Type of housing - The SHMA identifies that the majority of existing housing provision is of two and three-bedroom properties. It sets out that demand is predominantly for entry-level family housing to the south of the A127 with stronger demand for larger properties in areas with a high quality of place, particularly to the north of the A127. This should remain the mainstay of housing delivery in the sub-region. There is potential for the managed development of an urban living offer, particularly associated with flatted development in town centres, but this needs to be carefully phased.

- Special needs housing - It is recommended that local authorities promote delivery of 'Lifetime Homes' through planning policies, and work to develop support services for older persons housing including advice services and provision of direct or financial support to help older households adapt housing to their changing needs.

  There is clear demand across the sub-region for additional housing for older people, including additional extra care housing over the next twenty years. This is the case in each of the local authorities. Planning policies should also support provision of specialist and extra care housing across the sub-region.

- Private Rented Sector – The increasingly important role of this sector needs to be recognised and developed through for example landlord accreditation schemes and support to vulnerable households by bringing homes up to decent dwelling standards.

- Green Homes - Opportunities exist for renewable energy, and low carbon schemes drawing experience from the Eco Homes initiative. Improving energy efficiency in existing homes also needs to be addressed.

- Waiting Lists, Monitoring and Review - Local authorities need to work together, with affordable housing providers, to improve the quality and robustness of information on housing needs by developing a common waiting list for general needs and older persons housing (linked potentially to a sub regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme).

  The market dynamics based on experience over the last five years indicates that the situation can change fast. A 'plan, monitor and manage' approach becomes particularly important in this context. A framework for monitoring change in the housing market is recommended.

Local

At the local level, Sustainable Community Strategies, Housing Strategies, Local Plan or LDF Core Strategies and Regeneration Frameworks (where available) exist or are in the process of being prepared in each of the five local authority areas. Contact should be made with the relevant local authority to access further details of these local strategies and plans.

Other key strategies which the Sub Region Housing Strategy has taken into consideration include:

- Integrated regional strategy (IRS) –Sustainable Futures 2005
- Regional Economic Strategy
- Spatial Development Strategy & Draft London Plan, Regional Spatial Strategy
- East of England Housing Strategy 2005-10
- DCLG Homeless Strategy
- Local Area Agreements & Sustainable Community Plans
- Williams Report – Thames Gateway

A summary list of the key strategies and policies showing the strategic fit with Thames Gateway South Essex and what is being done to take the policy objectives forward is listed in appendix 1.


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Housing Market Characteristics / Key Drivers

Housing market characteristics

The Thames Gateway South Essex sub region has above average private sector ownership at 85%. Three quarters of resident households are owner-occupiers. A below average affordable housing sector makes it difficult to meet housing need under current market conditions. Currently, there are 43,373 social sector and shared ownership properties in the housing market, which represents 15.3% of the total housing stock.

TGSE household profile has slightly higher levels of single persons and married couples than the region as a whole. 29% of households are one-person, 30% families with dependent children, and 25% pensioner households.

Deprivation is above the national average for parts of the TGSE housing market. Sub-standard education and skills is a key contributory factor to this, although it is also influenced by the poor housing-quality of place. School performance is below average and will need to be improved as part of any strategy to diversify the housing offer. This is reflected in the sub region's socio-economic profile, which is narrower than in other areas, and is biased towards lower-paid socio-economic groups as well as skilled trade occupations and affects the housing-quality of place offer and socio-economic profile. Planned housing growth and wider regeneration activities provide an opportunity to address this.

An ageing population may have an influence on the future housing provision as aspirations of older people change in terms of the type and quality of living space being sought. The design of homes will need to be adaptable to changing demands and lifestyles and schemes will increasingly need to meet Lifetime Home Standards.

Within the sub-regional housing market, different areas play different roles in providing housing choice. There are clear relationships between the three primary urban areas (Basildon, Thurrock and Southend) and the smaller settlements and rural areas. These provide a different housing and quality of place offer.

Southend is characterised as having more 1 and 2 bedroom flats and above average private rented sector, while Rochford has a number of larger 3 and 4 bedroom semi detached and detached houses, which tend to complement each other. Castle Point is in a similar situation with a pre-dominance of 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings. The housing offer in Thurrock and in Basildon New Town is skewed more towards 3 bedroom terraced properties with above average social rented sector. Across the sub-region, the trendy flatted and urban living offer that appeals to younger households is considered under-developed.

Housing market key drivers

A hierarchy of housing market drivers can be identified which operate at different levels, ranging from macro-drivers which influence the housing market nationally through to local level drivers which affect the popularity of different places at a local level.

A strong housing market, at the macro-level, has been supported by a sustained period of stability and growth in the national economy coupled with low interest rates in a historical context. However, recent quarters have shown the impact of interest rate rises in reducing housing demand and cooling house price inflation. Evidence points to first-time buyers currently holding off from buying property because of market uncertainty.

The TGSE sub regional housing market offers housing at a noticeable discount when compared to other parts of the greater South East region. This makes it attractive to households from outside of the area looking to upgrade; and to first-time buyers priced out of other housing markets (and particularly London). However, current market conditions have caused a slowdown in the market. In the short-term this is supporting demand in the private rented sector as prospective purchasers defer from buying.

Key economic centres in the sub-region are Basildon, Southend and Thurrock and these form the foundation of the sub-markets identified. A strong relationship with London in terms of migration and travel to work is an important component of the Sub Regional Housing Market. 19% of travel to work journeys are to London, whilst 71% are self-contained within TGSE. Measures of productivity in terms of Gross Value Added (which are below average) reflect this.

There is however strong economic growth potential in the sub-region, supported by the Thames Gateway programme. Potential is greatest in west of the sub-region: in Basildon and Thurrock. Accelerating employment growth will be important as a demand driver for the housing market.

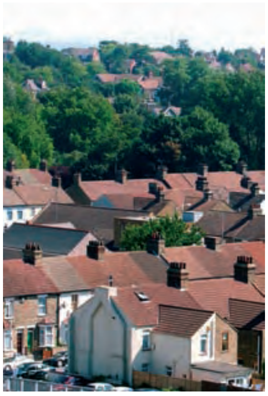
Key economic sectors in the sub-region are wholesale/retail trade; transport, storage and communication; health and social care. The business activities and manufacturing sectors are also large employers. Key growth sectors are construction, education, healthcare, and retail. Each offers key opportunities for growth going forward. There is also potential to develop the transport, storage and communication, and financial intermediation sectors. This strong economic base across a variety of sectors; will support supply-led efforts to develop the housing offer.

Sub-Markets: Characteristics and Drivers

Thurrock has a narrower housing offer and socio-economic profile than other parts of the sub-regional housing market. It comprises predominantly family households but focused towards lower socio-economic groups. The supply of suitable housing development land in Thurrock has however been strong; and the area benefits from good accessibility (particularly by road). Rates of housing development and (related to this) population growth have hence been stronger than in other areas. The area has been particularly attractive to families relocating from East London.

Thurrock's economy has restructured towards a lower-value base. It has a strong concentration of employment in transport, storage and communications; electricity, gas and water supply; and retail, which is likely to be reinforced around these lower/mid-value sectors. With major economic proposals, most notably London Gateway, the economy is likely to provide a significant impetus to housing demand this includes the proposed deep port at Shell Haven.

There are strong inter-relationships between Southend and Rochford, Rayleigh, Hockley and Benfleet housing sub markets. These areas appear to function collectively to provide a fairly comprehensive housing offer. The Southend sub market has a higher older population compared to a younger family focus in the Basildon and Thurrock areas. The challenges that these factors bring are that while the population in the east of the sub region is relatively affluent it is ageing, where as in the west, the problems are more socio-economic.



Southend's economy has seen a slight upward trend in relative performance; it has grown more strongly than the UK though from a lower base. It is service orientated, with above average representation in health and social work; financial services; and public administration. There is also potential for high-tech industrial growth associated with London Southend Airport, which is considered to play a significant role in boosting the local economy in Rochford as well as in Southend and forms the focus of a Joint Area Action Plan. Regeneration schemes focusing on Southend's Town Centre and seafront with the development of educational facilities and development of the tourism and retail sectors will continue to drive the local housing market. In addition, masterplanning for regeneration and growth in Shoeburyness will impact on local markets. These will support demand for a broad range of housing products.

Economic activity is below average in Castle Point with high levels of out-migration and commuting outside the area, however there has been a recent increase in the number of businesses trading in the Borough. Proposals to strengthen the education and employment opportunities in Canvey Island include plans for two state-of-the-art mixed Secondary Schools and a vocational centre, upgrading of industrial estates and improved local access and to bring forward a new 8 hectare employment site at nearby Northwick Road.

The housing offer and socio-economic profile in Basildon are similarly narrower than other areas. There are above average family and lone parent households. These characteristics reflect particularly the New Town housing stock in terms of type and tenure. School performance is correspondingly below average.

Basildon is the strongest economy in the sub-region and has witnessed the most significant growth. However it needs to restructure the housing offer to capture the benefits of its higher-skilled jobs. A significant proportion of job growth will be mid/low skilled reinforcing demand for existing housing. Regeneration schemes focusing on, for example, Basildon Sporting Village, Basildon, Wickford and Pitsea Town Centres, the A127 Corridor and the Nethermayne Gateway encompassing the Basildon and Thurrock University Hospital and the new Essex Cardio Thoracic Centre will help diversify the local housing market.

Priority One - Managing Future Growth

Targets	
National	• 3 million new homes by 2020, 2 million by 2016 • 200,000 new homes to be delivered on surplus public sector land by 2016 • Ensure that all social housing is decent by 2010 • At least 45,000 new social homes a year by 2010-11 • All social housing should be accessed through a Choice Based Lettings system by 2010
Regional	• 508,000 new homes with a 35% affordable housing target for the sub region as a whole by 2021 • 225,000 new jobs in the whole Thames Gateway • Maximise Thames Gateway's number of key employment and residential sites to present an opportunity to create exemplar mixed communities • Ensure Thames Gateway's planned population growth benefits all residents not just newcomers • Encourage inward migration of skilled workers and enhance the skills of the wider workforce, ensuring that housing growth meets their diverse needs • Ensure transport and social infrastructure is planned and focussed to open up new development sites to deliver housing growth
Sub regional	• 55,000 net new jobs and 44,300 new homes to be delivered by 2021 • 20 Local Authority Lettings to be made available sub regionally • Three Homebuy events to be held in the sub region to maximise take up • Improve the skills of planning, regeneration, housing professionals by holding three design training events in the sub region. • Maintain 5 year supply of housing sites for each local authority • Monitor progress of LAA Targets for the sub region (covering Essex, Southend and Thurrock) relevant to future housing growth (NI 141, 154, 155, 156 and 258)

New Homes

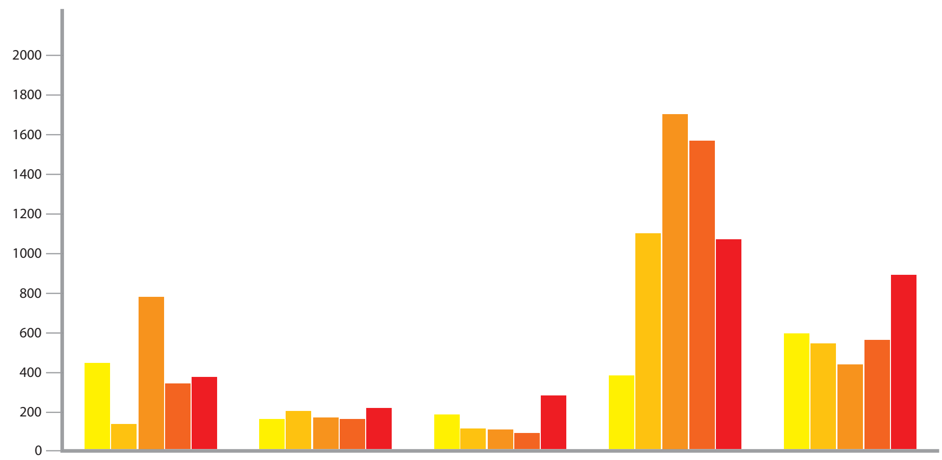
Issue and Trends

The challenge for sub regional partners is to manage this growth to ensure it is affordable and accessible to both existing and future residents. Partners are committed to working together to achieve increased housing provision and secure the necessary resources to enable targeted growth across the sub region. We need to match resources to this growth, to tackle both new infrastructure, jobs and housing across all tenures.

The Thames Gateway sub regional housing market has grown steadily, with over 5% population growth in the last 15 years, although not to the same extent as the region as a whole, which has seen growth of 9.5%. In the last six years (2001-2006) the sub region's population has grown by 9,580 comprising natural growth (more births than deaths) and domestic migration. Interestingly, the net number of migrants from overseas actually fell. Similarly, household numbers in the sub region grew by more than 10% between 1991-2001, starting at around 240,000 growing to around 265,000.

In terms of household growth in future years, for the sub region, growth of over 8% is projected in the next ten years with a total growth of 16.4% by 2026. Whilst this is below average for the East of England region (22%), it still represents a significant amount of growth, which needs to be

Figure 2: Five Year Housing Trajectory



	Basildon	Castle Point	Rochford	Thurrock	Southend
2007/08	443	164	184	379	596
2008/09	136	195	114	1095	535
2009/10	780	165	106	1697	436
2010/11	334	163	91	1558	557
2011/12	372	219	280	1062	883

Source: Local Authority Annual Monitoring Reports

planned for, particularly through the provision of infrastructure and job creation.

Figure 2 shows the predicted housing completions between 2007 and 2012 across the TGSE sub region based on local authorities' existing Annual Monitoring Reports. This is based on delivery assumptions in early 2007, before the impact of the credit crunch took full effect or downturn in the economy and housing market. Considering projected completions with this caveat, the expectation was of significant enhanced housing delivery between 2009/10 and 2011/12. Over the five-year period, expected completions total 12,500 of which Thurrock was expected to contribute 46%, Southend 24% and Basildon 16%.

Housing completion figures have been compared to the dwelling provision targets set out in the East of England Plan. In 2007, Southend-on-Sea was the only local authority to have been delivering above targets (from a 2001 base date). Castle Point and Rochford had been delivering over 90% of their requirements. Housing trajectories indicate that in 2012, Southend's performance should have continued to improve, while Thurrock should be meeting its targets. Delivery in Castle Point was expected to continue to fall slightly below average but not to the same degree as in Rochford (80%) or Basildon (59%) albeit that Basildon's performance was expected to improve on its current position.

There are clear delivery risks to the development pipeline associated with current market conditions, and it is anticipated that delivery over the next five years will actually fall short of current projections in the housing trajectories set out.

Partnership Action

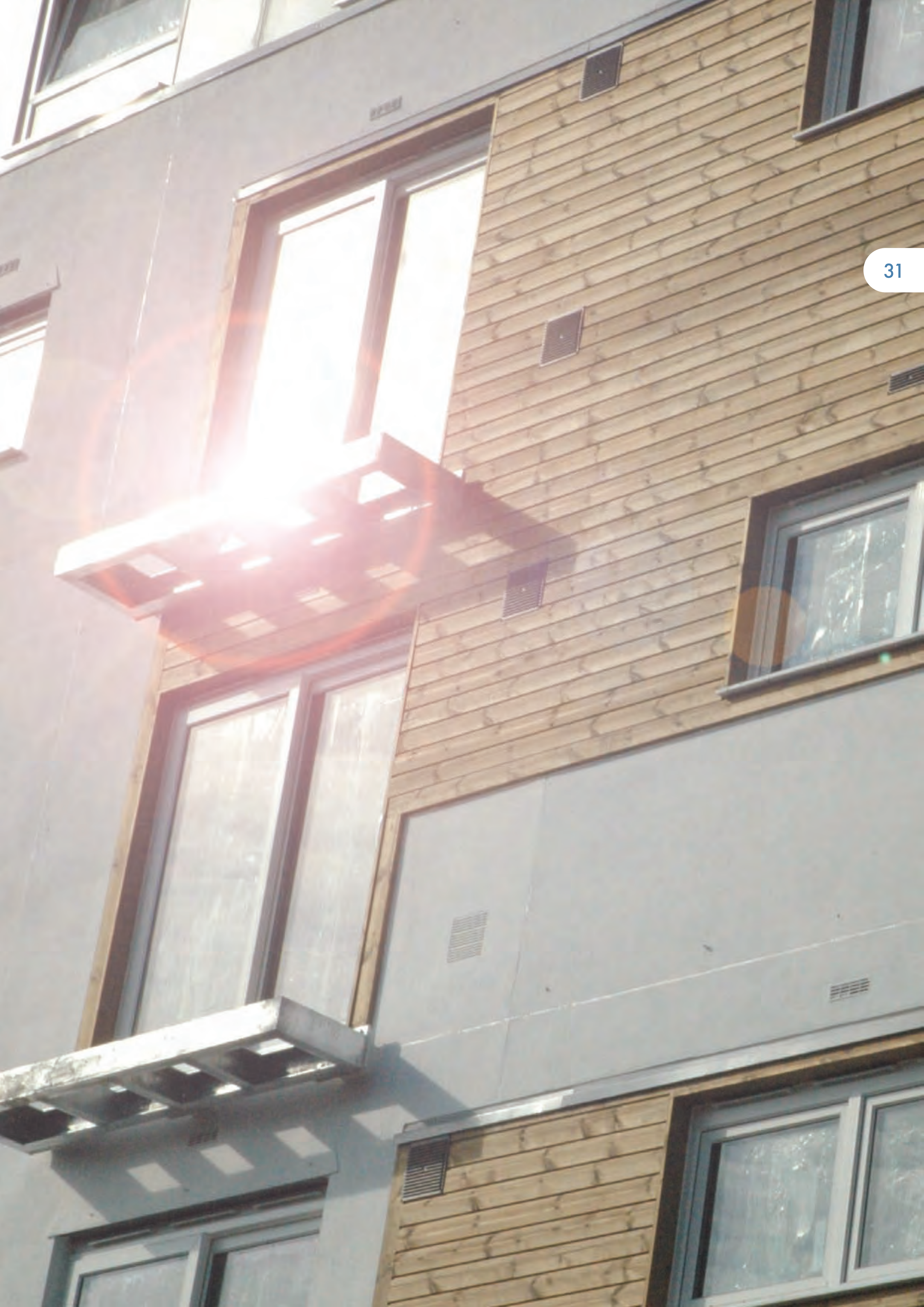
Partners jointly commissioned a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for the sub region of Thames Gateway South Essex to inform the level of future housing provision. A final report was produced in August 2008 and its key findings have been incorporated in this Strategy.

Local authority partners are working together to plan through their Local Development Frameworks the strategic release of land to enable future housing to be developed to meet the sub regional housing target. Schemes should be of mixed tenure and housing types and provide for the range of needs of the population.

Examples of current strategic sites or areas where schemes are being considered are as follows: (further details are set out in appendix 3)

Basildon: Fryerns / Craylands, Royal Court, Five Links, Vange, Laindon School
Castle Point:The Chase (Thundersley), Long Road (Canvey Island)
Rochford:No sites identified to-date
Southend: Southend Town Centre, Southend Seafront, Shoeburyness
Thurrock:Wouldham Rd (Grays), Hillside (Grays) St Chads (Thurrock), Purfleet TC

Provision of affordable housing through S106 Agreements is a vital way of both developing mixed communities and helping to provide new homes for people on low to average incomes. The East of England Regional Spatial Strategy indicates an expectation that 35% of all new homes provided across the region should be affordable. The recent SHMA calculates that on average across the sub region, 50% of newly formed households cannot



meet their needs in the market. This will require a step change from the current figures of 18% affordable housing provision for the region. TGSE Partners will work together to also maximise the amount of affordable housing in the sub region using Housing Corporation Grant monies where applicable, assisted by viability appraisal models such as the Housing Corporation's Economic Appraisal Tool. However, Partners recognise that the amount of affordable housing will vary between each local authority area, reflecting local circumstances, developer profit, and in particular the need to balance priorities for other requirements such as infrastructure.

Choice Based Lettings

Increasing choice in housing provision will support the objective of delivering sustainable and mixed communities. TGSE Partners are committed to developing a sub regional Choice Based Lettings scheme to ensure that housing applicants across the sub region have the widest possible choice at their disposal. This would facilitate a system of cross boundary nominations to share housing stock across the five local authorities. Whilst some local authorities already have local Choice Based Lettings systems all five councils could be connected through a hub allowing for greater choice. Each council will determine the number of properties available for cross-boundary transfers and monitoring so that it is understood how this sub-market operates compared to the wider housing market.

Key Workers

Targeting Key Workers is another initiative that seeks to ensure that housing provision is sustainable and affordable to identified target groups. It can also facilitate the mobility within and between other sub regions. Research undertaken in Basildon District (Key Worker Housing Project March 2008) provides evidence to support the notion that key worker accommodation is still in demand and is not being met by employers. The sub region has potential to provide the range and type of housing particularly to key workers. Partners should agree a common definition for key workers and a central database for nominations should be developed.

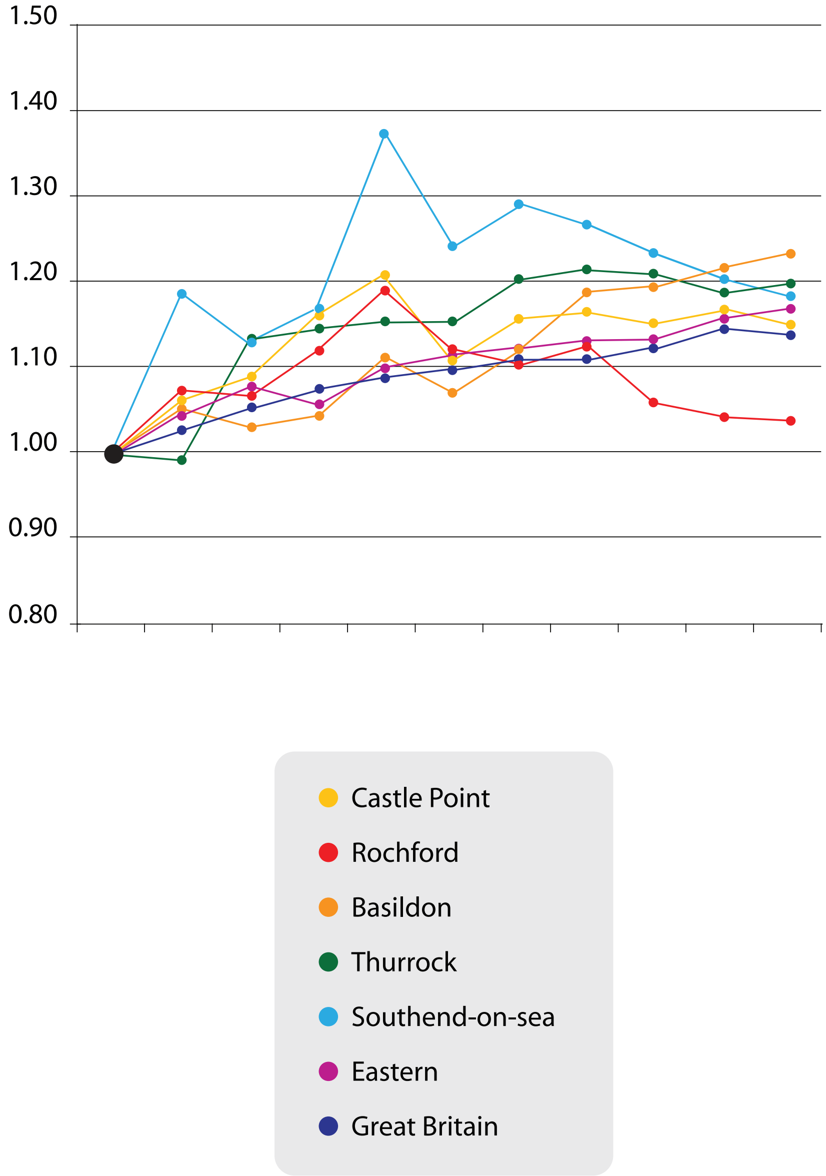
Shared Equity – MyChoiceHomeBuy

MyChoiceHomeBuy is a government funded low cost home ownership scheme, which helps social tenants, key workers and other first time buyers who cannot afford to buy a suitable home in the area where they live or work. As of 1 April 2008, the initiative was re-launched with an enhanced funding package, which includes a shared equity loan of up to 50% towards the cost of the property and access to a limited number of £1,500 grants to help qualifying buyers with costs such as solicitors' charges and furniture. TGSE Partners will work closely with Moat Housing Group as the HomeBuy agent for the Essex region to promote the opportunities available through the shared equity products. Mixed tenure schemes must be of high quality whether they are for private sale, affordable rent or intermediate housing.

Partnership action

- Taking the recommendations of the SHMA forward.
- Releasing strategic sites for housing.
- Maximise inward investment through linking housing growth with regeneration.
- Seek minimum affordability rates of 35% net across the sub region, whilst giving due consideration to local circumstances.
- Maximise the use of S106 and other mechanisms to enhance affordability.
- Develop a sub regional Choice Based Lettings scheme to cover affordable rented stock by 2010.
- Promote opportunities for Key Workers through HomeBuy initiative.
- Create a single gateway for those seeking affordable housing in the sub region.

Figure 3: Indexed Employment Growth 1996-2006



Source: ABI

Regeneration

Issues and Trends

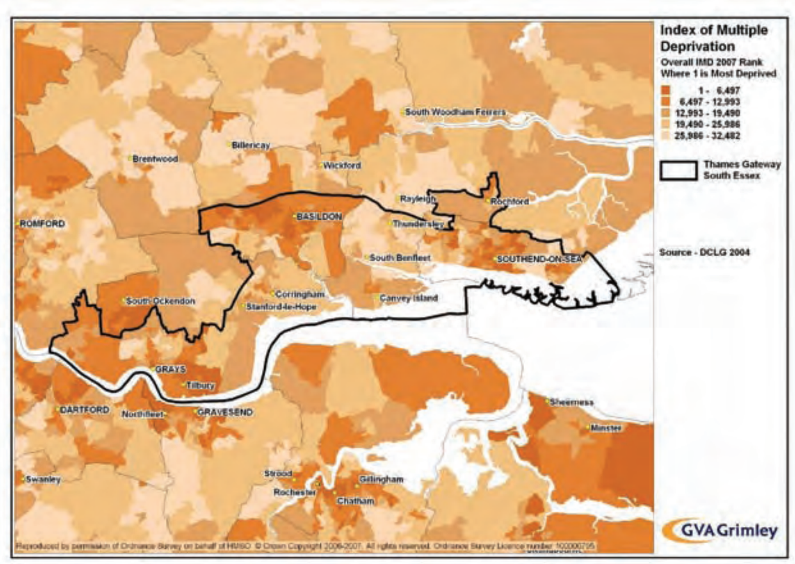
Significant regeneration plans are being developed in the sub region by local regeneration partnerships which will contribute to job creation and better quality housing and drive the economy / local housing market. However the performance of the economy and the impact of deprivation are key factors which will shape future regeneration.

Economic analysis, confirms that the key economic hubs in the sub-region are Basildon, Southend and Thurrock and these form the foundation of the sub-markets identified. There were 230,500 jobs across the Sub-Regional Housing Market according to the 2006 Annual Business Inquiry representing 10% of total jobs in the East of England. Basildon District contains the greatest concentration of employment (33% jobs across the five local authorities) followed by Southend-on-Sea (27%) and Thurrock (24%). These represent the major economic centres; with levels of employment in Castle Point and Rochford Districts notably lower.

Employment growth in percentage terms between 2001-2006 was strongest in Basildon and Thurrock followed by Southend. In absolute terms these economies witnessed the greatest levels of jobs growth.

The chart provides an indexed analysis of employment growth over time. It indicates that total employment in Rochford and Southend has actually fallen since 2000, whilst Thurrock has seen a slight drop since 2002 with Castle Point remaining relatively stagnant over this period. It affirms that Basildon has indeed been the recent best performer.

Map: Index of multiple Deprivation



Source: GVA Grimley 2008

Productivity, as measured by GVA per capita, is 85% of the UK average across the Essex County Council area, 84% in Thurrock and a lower 79% in Southend. Whilst the TGSE Housing Market appears less productive than wider regional and national comparators this is due in part to the commuting patterns, with more people commuting out of the sub-region than commuting in. It is also influenced by the sectoral composition of the local economies.

71% of travel to work trips are contained within the sub-regional housing market, with a significant 19% of trips to London and 10% to other destinations. There is hence a significant flow of labour from the sub-region to London, totaling 55,600 persons across the sub-region. Therefore, the influence of London is significant across the sub-regional housing market.

Across the sub-region the largest sectors in terms of total employment are wholesale and retail trade; business activities; health and social care; and manufacturing. The analysis indicates that the sub-region has an above average representation of employment in wholesale and retail trade; transport, storage and communication; and in health and social care relative to the region as a whole. The strongest growth in proportional terms has been in construction, education and healthcare. In absolute terms, wholesale and retail trade has seen the strongest growth – each adding 12,000 jobs over the last decade.

More recently, national growth in interest rates between mid 2006 to the third quarter of 2007 has had an evident effect on the housing market in cooling levels of house price inflation. Market commentators broadly expect the recent reductions in interest rates to provide some support to the housing market. There has also been an evident recent slowdown in economic growth, much of which can be attributed to the service sector.

Deprivation in the Thames Gateway South Essex sub region is relatively widespread with 15.7% of Local Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the most deprived areas of the country (bottom 20% of areas nationally). The areas where overall deprivation is most severe tend to cluster around the major settlements in the TGSE housing market, particularly Basildon, Southend and Thurrock. Parts of these areas suffer from an extreme circle of poverty where people's lack of education, skills and training tend to lead to high levels of unemployment and subsequent low incomes. The high levels of deprivation in these areas are exacerbated by the higher levels of crime and disorder associated with more urbanised areas. Although in the sub region as a whole reported crime is declining in line with national trends.

Conversely the more rural areas and smaller settlements in TGSE such as Corringham, Benfleet, South Thundersley and Stanford-Le-Hope are evidently much less deprived than the larger towns surrounding them. These areas also break the TGSE into three distinct groups in terms of deprived areas clustered around the more urbanised areas.

Education, Skills and Training Deprivation is the most widespread and most severe in parts with 35% of LSOAs in the most deprived 20% of areas and with one LSOAs in the sub region ranked 11th worst out of 32,402 for this deprivation index. This is of particular concern, as an increasingly skilled workforce will be needed to match future jobs growth in an expanding knowledge economy.

Types of intervention

The evidence base supports the need for regeneration in the sub region. In response, local regeneration partnerships with the support of Communities and Local Government and other funding partners have developed regeneration frameworks and implementation plans. Ambitious plans are being put in place to deliver sustainable housing and jobs across south Essex.

These include: major town centre improvements, development of the London Gateway super port and logistic hub at Shell Haven, a new Sporting Village in Basildon, plans for a new passenger terminal at Southend Airport, investment in supporting infrastructure including public transport and roads, schools and Further / Higher Education provision, health and community facilities and the environment. Further information on these exciting plans can be found by contacting the relevant local regeneration partnership.

Sustainable communities

One of the biggest challenges in the sub region is to ensure that all growth and regeneration adhere to the ethos of sustainable communities. Partners have identified that to improve housing choice; more mixed tenure dwellings need to be delivered in the sub region. Policies need to ensure that housing sites provide an appropriate mix and tenure, in the right location, to meet both the existing needs and future aspirations of the sub region. To inform decision-making on future housing need, a Strategic Housing Market Assessment was undertaken. To improve the quality of design and sustainable development, an accredited training programme, designed to "Make Places Work", is being run for local authority housing and planning professionals and Registered Social Landlords (RSL). This will ensure that the sub region delivers high quality and well designed homes providing greater choice, contributing to sustainable communities in the Thames Gateway for both existing and future residents.

Partnership Action

Sub regional partners are committed to improving the quality of life for residents in the sub region. All regeneration schemes will be implemented in partnership with key local stakeholders and residents through the consultation and planning process.
The housing sub region is committed to working with and supporting local regeneration partnerships with the delivery of their Regeneration Frameworks and Local Authorities in the preparation of Local Development Frameworks to meet the identified housing needs and priorities. This will be particularly relevant when considering land use opportunities to meet housing need and achieving the best deals possible for our communities.

Partnership action

- Build communities that meet the aspirations and needs of the community.
- Continue to develop a sub regional quality design standard, meeting for example Lifetime Homes, Building For Life and Secure by Design Standards.
- Estate regeneration and renewal.
- Focus on bringing regeneration, planning and housing together through co-ordination of activity, maximising funding and sharing best practice.
- Inputting to the Local Development Framework process to ensure the needs arising from future housing growth are met.
- Maximise the funding opportunities available to support future housing growth.
- Working in partnership to maximise the benefits of specific regeneration schemes in Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend and Thurrock.
- Promote local employment / training schemes.

Greener homes

Targets	
National	• All new homes to emit 25% less carbon by 2010 • All new homes to emit 44% less carbon by 2013 • All new homes to be carbon neutral from 2016 • All new homes to reduce water consumption by 20% • For existing homes, a target in the Housing Act 2004, requires the Secretary of State to take reasonable steps to improve residential energy efficiency by at least 20% by 2010
Regional	• Thames Gateway to become an Eco Region by 2016
Sub regional	• Develop 3 exemplar new build schemes in the sub region to guide future development

Issues and trends

The Government's Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 makes increasing housing supply a national priority, and sets out key policy and funding parameters:

Climate change is particularly relevant to housing; since around a quarter of the UK's current carbon emissions (around 150 million tonnes of carbon dioxide each year) arise from the way we heat, light and run our homes. Yet we need more homes so it is imperative that they are built in a way that minimises carbon emissions. There is a need to improve the energy efficiency of our existing homes, particularly in the light of the recent increase in fuel prices. We also need to tackle other aspects of sustainability, such as water efficiency and flood risk.

Delivering zero carbon new homes will need a revolution in the way we design and build our homes. It means new skills, supply chains, partnerships and business models, including those for builders, energy suppliers and other stakeholders. We acknowledge the demands this change places on the industry and its partners but we are certain that we can work together to deliver the twin ambitions.

To achieve these targets the government will introduce the necessary energy efficiency requirements in the Building Regulations in 2010 and 2013. By 2010 standards will be set to achieve a reduction in carbon emissions of 25%; in 2013 standards will be set to achieve a reduction of 44% and by the time we reach 2016, and are building 240,000 new homes, each year all new homes will be zero carbon.

The government has also published its Code for Sustainable Homes; which measures the sustainability of a new home, covering energy and other aspects of sustainability too.

Demand for water is also growing. Water use in buildings needs to be reduced to maintain an acceptable and sustainable balance of demand and supply. A new building performance standard for new homes (to be set out in Building Regulations) will be introduced and will require all new homes to be built to a standard which supports a maximum daily usage of 125 litres per person per day, representing an improvement of almost 20% on current national usage levels.

Appropriate measures also need to be put in place to mitigate against the threat of flooding for example through ensuring flood risk from all sources (not just from rivers and the coast but also surface water flooding that can occur in urban areas) is taken into account at all stages in the planning process.

Partnership action

- Partners will share best practice across the sub region when developing low carbon schemes. A number of exemplar schemes will be promoted to guide future development.
- Advice and training should be sought from local and regional bodies such as Renewables East on how best to incorporate renewables in new housing schemes and existing housing areas.
- Partners should seek to explore grant opportunities for schemes designed to reduce carbon emissions and incorporate renewable energy saving features.
- Develop exemplar 3 schemes in the sub region to guide future development.
- Create a training programme and advice network to promote best practice in renewables in new housing schemes and existing housing areas.
- Maximise funding opportunities available in the Thames Gateway to promote the area as a zero carbon region.

Priority Two - Meeting Needs of Vulnerable Groups

Homelessness

Issue and trends

In contrast to the managing future growth priority, this relates directly to the need of the existing population in South Essex and concerns the mixture of housing types and tenures. A key emphasis should be on prevention by addressing the underlying causes of homelessness.

Whilst homelessness, as determined by the number of people registering with local authorities, is going down, this is largely due to the preventative measures being introduced. The current downturn in the housing market combined with the "credit crunch" is likely to increase the number of homeless applicants registering with local authorities. This is supported by anecdotal evidence, which suggests that re-possession notices are on the increase.

Further pressure will come from a forecasted growth of 8% in the number of households in the TGSE Housing Market in the next ten years and 16.4% by 2026. This will be from a combination of newly forming households and from changing family patterns for example following relationship breakdowns.

While affordability issues are clearly affecting levels of homelessness, there are a number of vulnerable groups consistently over-represented in the homelessness category. Mental health is recognised as a key issue that spans across all vulnerable groups and is estimated to affect one in six people. Tackling social exclusion by improving access to stable accommodation is now widely accepted as a critical step to modernising healthcare. Too often, people with mental health difficulties find themselves homeless or living in temporary accommodation, which exacerbates their mental health issues. People with mental health problems are particularly likely to have unstable housing. Stable appropriate housing is therefore critical for people to work and to take part in community life. Support is vital to meeting the needs of all vulnerable groups to sustain tenancies and maintain independent lives. We will continue to work closely with Essex County, Southend and Thurrock Councils to ensure that appropriate Supporting People Services are provided to all who need it.

Rough sleeping is an issue in some parts of the sub region, but the phenomena of 'hidden homelessness' or 'homeless at home' is a challenge for all local authorities. We will work together to meet local housing need and tackle hidden homelessness by improving access to the private rented sector and developing more affordable housing.

Local authorities are focussed on prevention work with victims of domestic violence, through the Essex wide support and outreach work and through domestic violence good practice and training protocols. We will continue to share ideas, and build on these two approaches across the sub region to further improve the quality and effectiveness of these services. There is an opportunity to share good practice and innovative working around homelessness and homelessness prevention with other sub regions in the East of England.

Partnership Action

Action will be developed under local homelessness strategies to:

- Develop cross boundary nominations through a sub regional Choice Based Lettings scheme and developing joint protocols with the aim of sharing housing allocation registers.
- Implement Local Authority partners' homelessness strategies and identify any opportunities to work across boundaries and share good practice.
- Prevent and tackle homelessness, including amongst 16 and 17 year olds, through the use of mediation services, home visiting and education through schools.
- Increase the amount of private rented housing available to homeless families and people at risk of homelessness through partnership working with private landlords and use of rent-deposit and rent-in-advance type schemes.
- Work in partnership to stabilize the level of households in temporary accommodation.
- Further research / monitoring to understand the impact of preventative measures on homelessness performance.

- Proposals for "reverse stair casing" through equity release as part of a rescue package to pre-empt re-possession notices to be developed. The cost to the public purse should be weighted up against the cost of providing temporary accommodation should re-possessions notices be implemented resulting in people becoming homeless.
- Help households obtain and sustain private tenancies by working in partnership, to develop with the private rented sector an Accreditation Scheme, building on existing good practice on for example rent deposit schemes and lease schemes.
- Consider the potential for developing loan / equity release schemes.

Supporting People (SP)

Issues and trends

A substantial and growing proportion of the population needs housing support as the proportion of elderly people increase in the sub region. Revenue funding needs to be strategically targeted to help provide this through a range of services branded under the name of Supporting People (SP). Where future provision needs capital investment in new schemes, this will be a strategic objective for use of the Single Regional Housing Programme (SRHP).

The Supporting People Programme was introduced by the Government on 1st April 2003 to change the way housing related support is funded, commissioned and monitored across England and Wales. It has replaced the cost of those parts of supported housing not related to housing management / repairs or to personal care that used to be paid though Housing Benefit.

The Supporting People Programme is committed to ensuring that vulnerable people have the opportunity to live more independently. It promotes housing related services which are cost effective, reliable and which complement existing services and support independence.

Examples of housing related support are: benefits advice, teaching life skills, budgeting, and assistance with finding permanent accommodation. SP provides assistance to all vulnerable groups in the community.

There are two types of services: accommodation based and floating support. Floating support services visit people in their own home. In accommodation based services the support is linked to specific accommodation e.g. a warden based on site in a sheltered house.

Supported housing needs to be developed on the basis of the planned provision of appropriate support; underpinned by revenue funding through SP Strategies. Care needs to be taken also in terms of design and location, relating to physical appropriateness and the need for integration into surrounding communities. In Thames Gateway South Essex the Supporting People Programme is being delivered via three SP Strategies commissioned by Essex County Council and the Unitary Authorities of Thurrock and Southend. SP Teams are responsible for monitoring all the support services funded in the respective local authority area. This is done in partnership with the Health Authority, the Probation Service, other stakeholders and service users.

From April 2009, SP will be delivered through LAAs. It is vitally important that changes in local structures to manage the programme consider how support will contribute to preventing homelessness and addressing social exclusion. Other at risk groups includes people with disabilities both mental and physical, domestic violence cases, families of offenders and young single homeless.

Partnership action

Common areas for future action and investment include:

- Expanding and improving the availability of floating support for vulnerable people, particularly those at risk of repeat homelessness.
- Co-ordinating services for care-leavers and young people.
- Improving and re-modeling the provision of housing for older people, including sheltered, very sheltered and extra care housing both for rent and for lease.
- Creating temporary and move-on accommodation for all homeless households.
- All local authorities are working on improving partnerships with agencies and providers to ensure best use of resources, supported by effective referral processes for all supported housing.

- Sharing good practice on the development, planning and programming of supported housing and support services. Working together to improve partnerships with agencies and providers to ensure best use of resources. Sharing of data bases, supported by effective referral processes for all supported accommodation.
- Integrate schemes into the sub region's pipeline and consider if services can be provided across boundaries.
- Quantify the need for different types of supported housing and housing support for a range of client groups, in partnership with Supporting People administering authorities, social care and health agencies. Examples include coordinating services for care-leavers and young people, and improving and re-modeling housing provision for older people.
- Explore and develop funding opportunities sub regionally.

Housing needs of Black & Minority Ethnic Groups (BME)

Issues and trends

A key principle of regeneration is the need to promote community cohesion and social inclusion across the sub region. All communities must be able to access housing, housing services and support and benefit fairly from each of the regional investment themes. This may not always be the case for BME communities. There may be linguistic, cultural or other factors, which mean specialist schemes, are needed.

To receive regional investment under the BME theme, schemes must have been planned and designed in collaboration with community members in mind. A strategic approach to BME housing is always needed.

Despite the fact that people from BME backgrounds often feature disproportionately in the more vulnerable groups in our society, they are often under-represented among those who access housing and support services. Tackling discrimination is one of the ways to address this issue, and we are committed to working in partnership with representative groups to listen to and act on the views of BME households including the needs of migrant workers.

To do this, we need to ensure that language does not operate as a barrier within our sub region by providing high quality translation services

wherever required. The sub region is committed to ensuring the work we undertake and the image we present is inclusive, non-discriminatory and welcomes diversity.

As a sub region we recognise the value of developing a range of measures to encourage fair access to mainstream housing provision, housing services and support for all communities. These might include cluster lets, robust racial harassment policies, appropriate design and community involvement. Although these measures attract no additional funding, we will encourage a commitment to community cohesion and social inclusion from all our housing partners.

According to the 2001 Census, overall 96.7% of the TGSE population was white, compared to 92.1% in the UK, 87% in England and 95% in the East of England region.

In 2001, the largest non-white ethnic group was Asian and Asian British. In terms of spatial distribution, there were concentrations of Black and Minority Ethnic populations in Central Southend, Purfleet, Grays and Chafford Hundred.

More recent figures taken from the 2005 mid-year population estimates (ONS) show that the BME population has significantly increased in the sub region. Thurrock recorded the largest percentage at 11%, followed by Southend at 10%, Basildon at 8% and Castle Point and Rochford both with 6%.

In 2004 an Essex wide study called 'Facing the Facts' was carried out by the University of Salford to assess the housing and other related needs of minority groups. At the time of the study very few service providers had a high level of understanding of the composition, profile or size of the ethnic minority communities that resided in their area. It was discovered that access to services was lowest amongst the BME groups. There were also misconceptions about local authorities and whom they helped. Overall, the results showed that more work was needed to understand the needs of BME groups. The BME Action Group (formed to take forward the recommendations from the study) employed a Development Officer to set up a website for the BME communities to engage with BME groups across Essex.

Partnership Action

- Engage with BME communities to identify housing and support needs of BME communities and take action to ensure these are met through working with communities and partner agencies.
- Continue to improve information about BME communities' needs, including the issues in future assessments of housing markets and housing need.
- Sharing good practice on engagement of minority communities and tackling harassment and hate crime.
- Monitoring migration flows and any resulting impact on local service provision

Figure 4: Ethnic Breakdown

Area	% White	% Mixed	% Asian or Asian British	% Black or Black British	% Chinese and Other
Basildon	96.95	0.92	1.04	0.67	0.49
Castle Point	98.28	0.58	0.72	0.20	0.33
Rochford	98.44	0.59	0.50	0.22	0.37
Southend-on-Sea	95.83	1.10	1.69	0.69	0.74
Thurrock	95.37	0.92	2.00	1.16	0.63
TGSE	96.68	0.88	1.31	0.67	0.55
East of England	95.12	1.08	2.26	0.90	0.65

Source: Census 2001

Gypsies and Travellers

Issues and trends

Local authorities are required to include Gypsies and Travellers in local housing needs assessments, under the Housing Act 2004.

The sub region is committed to ensuring provision of appropriate sites where there is an identified and established need, and working in partnership to tackle homelessness and social exclusion among Gypsy and Traveller communities, as well as addressing tensions between Gypsies and Travellers and settled communities. However, members of Gypsy and Traveller communities are often reluctant to approach local authorities for help and then it is usually as a last resort. This disinclination is due to suspicion of official organisations and because they are likely to be offered settled accommodation in the form of 'bricks and mortar' when they would prefer land or mobile accommodation.

To respond to this and other legislation we need to recognize the particular issues faced by each local authority whilst harmonising our work across the sub region. We also plan to learn from examples of good practice in Fenland and Norfolk and a needs assessment of Gypsies and Travellers commissioned by the Essex Planning Officers Association, published in 2006, which is currently being supplemented by further research commissioned in 2008. This research will provide robust evidence for action to meet the housing needs across Essex and the rest of the sub region.

We recognise from the research conducted to date that there is a shortfall in authorised pitches in some local authority areas. To tackle unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller encampments we will work together to assess need and form a strategy to deliver adequate authorised pitches, where need is identified and address unauthorised camping using local research where appropriate. Although Gypsies and Travellers do receive support from local services available to all residents such as the Essex Fire Service, in practice some are unlikely to do so. As a result, they may rely more on specialist services that do not always have a local base. There are specialist services available in the sub region. We will work collectively to deliver adequate authorized pitches and assist gypsies and travellers in accessing local services.

Partnership Action

- Assess the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers within the sub region with planning colleagues by bringing together countywide data sets from Essex, Thurrock and Southend.
- Work with planners and other partners to review the Regional Planning Policy in respect of the provision of Gypsies and Travellers sites in the sub region (when adopted) and the recommendations of sub regional research into their housing needs.
- Monitor across the sub region migration patterns and consider the implications for future housing policy.

Key Priority Actions

- Help households obtain and sustain private tenancies working in partnership with the private rented sector.
- Improve partnership working between local authorities and other key stakeholders to ensure best use of resources, supported by effective referral processes for all supported housing.
- Quantify the need for different types of supported housing and housing support for a range of client groups, in partnership with Supporting People administering authorities, social care and health agencies.
- Integrate schemes into the sub region's pipeline and consider if services can be provided across boundaries.
- Engage with BME communities to identify housing and support needs and take action to ensure these are met through working with communities and partner agencies.
- Work with planners and other partners to review the Regional Planning Policy in respect of the provision of Gypsies and Travellers sites in the sub region (when adopted) and the recommendations of sub regional research into their housing needs.

Priority Three – Investing in the Housing Stock

Targets	
National	• Help over 80,000 people into home ownership who are currently renting privately or living with family • Increase the proportion of vulnerable households living in decent homes from 57% in 2001 to 65% in 2006, 70% by 2010 and 75% by 2020 • All social housing will be built to Lifetime Homes Standards by 2011 with an aspiration that all new housing will be built to these standards by 2013
Regional	• 35% affordable housing target for the sub region as a whole by 2021 • Thames Gateway to become an Eco Region by 2016
Sub regional	• Steps to improve residential energy efficiency by at least 20% by 2010 • Bring 30 empty dwellings back into use by 2011

Why focus on existing homes?

Whilst new investment and the challenge to increase the supply of homes are key priorities for the region and the sub region, we need to balance this work with investment in existing homes and communities.

The strategy has identified the following key areas for action:

- Decent Homes activity
- Energy efficiency of our housing stock
- Independent living
- Empty homes activity
- Landlord accreditation
- The private rented sector

Decent Homes

Issues and Trends

Homes across all sectors are required to meet the Decent Homes Standard.

Until very recently, Public Service Agreement 7 was the principal measure of decency in private sector housing i.e. increase the proportion of vulnerable households living in decent homes from 57% in 2001 to 65% in 2006, 70% by 2010 and 75% by 2020.

Under the new performance framework, there is now a new focus on housing supply and any specific target for private housing renewal activity has since been absorbed into the Government's Departmental Strategic Objective 02 which aims to:

"Improve the supply, environmental performance and quality of housing that is more responsive to the needs of individual, communities and the economy".

There is also a range of other agreements and objectives, which are directly or indirectly, influenced by activity around the improvement of private sector stock i.e. supply and affordability, fuel poverty and independence factors.

The sub regional focus continues to prioritise private sector vulnerable households. Local sub regional targets continue to be in place to increase the proportion of vulnerable households living in decent homes.

Across the sub region, at April 2006 there were more private sector dwellings (239,037) compared to social sector dwellings (42,722). Overall, 85% of the housing stock was in private sector ownership compared to 84% across the East of England and 81% in England.

The proportion of private sector stock varies across the sub region from 94% in Castle Point to 77% in Basildon.

Figure 5 below, based on local housing private sector stock condition surveys of dwellings, shows that Southend in 2004 had the most Non Decent dwellings at 13,800. Basildon in 2007 had 6,769 Non Decent Dwellings, while Rochford had the least Non Decent Dwellings at 5,524. Since the surveys were undertaken, work, notably in Southend, is underway to turn this around.

In terms of the proportion of properties that are occupied by vulnerable households, using the Communities and Local Government Ready Reckoner for Decent Housing, a much higher proportion of vulnerable households (in excess of 30%) are estimated to live in non decent homes in the sub region. Without early intervention, this figure is expected to rise as the housing stock gets older and the proportion of vulnerable households rise as the result of the changing demographic profile of the area.

Figure 5: Total Non Decent Dwellings by Area

Private Sector	Basildon	Rochford	Thurrock	Southend	Castle Point	Overall
Total Dwellings	61,635	32,104	51,594	68,600	34,500	248,433
Non Decent	6,769	5,524	7,987	13,800	8,310	42,390
Percent not Decent	11%	17.2%	15.4%	20.1%	24.1%	17.1%

Source: Based on lateset available LA Private Sector Stock Condition Survey data

Partnership Action

- To meet the Government's decent homes targets significant levels of investment are needed. The way forward for individual authorities will be addressed through options appraisal and private sector housing renewal programmes. Basildon has recently transferred its stock to an Arm Length Management Organisation and Rochford transferred its stock to Rochford Housing Association in September 2007.
- Continually monitor stock condition survey data across the sub region, using in-house expertise where possible, and explore options with the Building Research Establish (BRE) to provide a continual update to this information.
- Monitor progress against the government's decent homes target to improve housing conditions for vulnerable private households.
- To successfully bid for regional monies to ensure a continued programme of private sector renewal works over 2009-11. To work with external partners to ensure the success of future operations.


ISTM

Energy efficiency of our housing stock

Issues and trends

The average SAP rating for the private sector dwellings in the five local authority areas is 60, which is higher than the average for the UK, which is 52.5 (English House Condition Survey 2005 Headline Report, January 2007). However, fuel poverty still remains a significant issue in the sub region, particularly, amongst vulnerable groups such older people.

Essex County Council have launched a major Carbon emissions reduction strategy across the county and wish to further enhance this with practical delivery. The Sub Region in partnership with other agencies already operates a substantial home energy efficiency grant programme, as part of its Housing Renewal Assistance Policies.

The need for home energy efficiency support will inevitably grow in the light of rising energy costs and the credit crunch. This Strategy aims to promote energy efficiency and renewable / sustainable energy measures in the sub-region, with a focus on tackling fuel poverty and bringing non-decent homes up to the Decent Homes Standard. Measures will include: home repairs, home safety check, benefit entitlement check, energy efficiency check, plus additional assistance as practical and appropriate to the household.

Partnership action

- The focus for partners will be on installing insulation measures and heating systems for residents who have been assessed as 'fuel poor'. Key partners include Essex Energy Efficiency Centre, Warm Front, Home Energy Conservation Forums, The Carbon Trust, Utility Companies and Local Contractors.
- Further developing innovative partnerships using managing agents, some of which have already been recognised nationally with Green Apple Awards, for working with the fuel poor, landlords and homebuyers.

Independent living

Issues and trends

Issues affecting vulnerable groups and in particular older people, are supported by the Government's new National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society (Dec 2007). This sets out the challenges posed by an ageing society where by 2026 it is projected that older people will account for almost half (48 per cent) of the increase in the total number of households. It acknowledges that today, most of our homes and communities are not designed to meet people's changing needs as they grow older. Older people's housing options are too often limited to care homes or sheltered housing.

Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs) help homeowners and private sector tenants who are older or disabled to remain in their own home, living independently, in safety and comfort.

HIAs advise on improvements and adaptations that their clients may need in their homes and help them to apply for local authority grants or loans needed to carry out the required work. They also help to identify reputable local contractors to do the work, and oversee the work to ensure that their clients are completely satisfied.

Many agencies also run handyperson/independent living advisor services to carry out small jobs around the home, to operate specific schemes to improve home safety and security, prevent falls in the home, improve energy efficiency, or to work with the local health authority to provide home from hospital services.

HIAs are usually small, locally based not-for-profit organisations; some are independent organisations, some are local authority in-house agencies, and some are run by a managing agent, such as a housing association or charitable body. All partners in TGSE remain committed to the principal of the HIA and have local agencies in place. Future discussions will explore the potential benefit of a joint HIA.

Partnership action

- Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) are available to fund the installation of adaptations for private residents and similar adaptations budgets are provided for adapting council housing. Partners need to work towards the future reforms proposed for DFG's i.e. changes to the grant funding process, the further use of HIA's and the development of individual budget models. All changes contribute to the National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society.
- Partners need to ensure that their Choice Based Lettings Service are further developed to ensure information is made available to residents, highlighting where properties have been designed or adapted. Assisting people with access needs to decide whether a property is suitable for them.
- Monitor demographic trends for older people and prioritise adaptations, home safety and repairs to property in accordance with need. Partners need to work more closely with the local health authorities to ensure funding streams are maximised and assessment processes and priorities are continually reviewed.

Regeneration and Empty homes

Issues and trends

There were a total of 8,627 vacant dwellings across the TGSE sub-regional housing market as at April 2006. Southend-on-Sea contained the largest amount of vacant dwellings, with 3,653 and Castle Point had the least amount of vacant dwellings with 950. Across the TGSE area more private sector dwellings were vacant (7831), compared to public sector dwellings (796).

Basildon contained the largest proportion of vacant public sector housing (336) representing 42% of the total vacant public sector housing stock (796) in the sub-region due to its high percent of social rented stock. Southend-on-Sea had the highest amount of private sector vacant dwellings (3,400) representing 43% of the total vacant private sector housing stock in the sub-region.

Making better use of homes is a key objective of sub regional partners, and the focus to date has been at bringing back to use, those long-term empty homes. Specific government targets for this work have now been absorbed into the overall provision of more affordable homes, and partners continue to adopt local empty property targets to ensure this activity remains a priority.
Grants or loans can sometimes be used to help bring empty homes back into use. These require the owner to accept a nomination arrangement so that local people in housing need can occupy the property for a set period. Leasing schemes are also being explored to provide temporary accommodation to homeless households.

Partnership action

- Exploring options for sub regional leasing schemes to assist with homelessness and bring properties back into use (lead by Homeless sub-group).
- Continue to monitor and share good practice on empty homes across the sub region, through the private sector housing sub group using Empty Dwelling Management Orders where applicable.
- Link work to bring empty homes back into use to revitalise our town centres and any other regeneration initiatives.

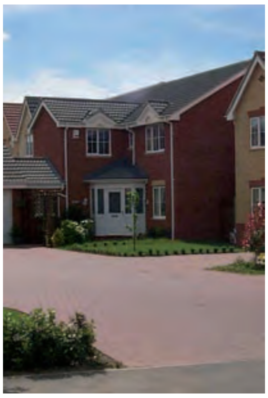
The Private Rented Sector – working in partnership

Issues and trends

The Housing Act 2004 introduced new responsibilities and powers, including new a property assessment process, licensing of larger Houses in Multiple Occupation and tenancy deposit schemes.

The private rented sector contributes to the supply of housing and meets a range of housing needs. As ease of access to owner occupation and social housing/renting has reduced over the years, the role of the private rented sector in providing accommodation to many household is now widely recognised and valued. For the sub-regional authorities it has been a major contributor to the resolution of homelessness.

Private rented housing needs to be considered separately from the rest of the private housing sector because its role, management, and impact on the housing market and economy is different from owner occupied housing. The way in which regulatory agencies interact with the sector will influence the quality of housing provided.



Partnership action

Engaging with landlords and tenants will impact on core housing targets, such as decent homes, but will also link to the part housing plays in delivering e.g. health outcomes. Improving household warmth, fire safety and reducing falls are some of the housing related outcomes that the private rented sector can help to deliver.

- To continue to engage with private landlords and improve on existing rent deposit/bond schemes, lease schemes, tenancy support schemes. Linking all schemes to property standards.
- Work in partnership to achieve the government target of reducing use of and need for temporary accommodation by 50%, by 2010.
- To ensure the resources and the work of the private sector housing services are linked into Local Authorities area-based regeneration programmes.
- Inclusion of the private rented stock in the choice based lettings process is still in the early stages in the sub-region, but consideration needs to be given in exploring options as to whether this can be an attractive option for landlords/agents in finding potential tenants.
- The local authorities will continue to balance partnership working between enabling and regulation. All local authorities have signed up to the government's principles of better regulation and will continue to work together to ensure activity is planned, targeted and risk-based.

- To encourage landlords/agents to commit to meeting legal standards and follow good practice, by offering training and development opportunities. To explore the option of introducing a sub-regional accreditation scheme. This work will be in line with the findings of the consultation carried out by the Law Commission in 2007, which explored the way forward for responsible letting.
- Develop local supply chains relating to refurbishment and maintenance of housing stock.
- Continually monitor stock condition survey data across the sub region and explore options with the Building Research Establish (BRE) to provide a continual update to this information.
- Monitor progress against the Government's Decent Homes target to improve housing conditions for vulnerable private households.
- Work to reduce the number of private residents in fuel poverty.

Key Priority Actions

- Bid for regional monies to ensure a continued programme of private sector renewal works over 2009-11, targeting vulnerable private households and monitor progress.
- Address fuel poverty across the sub region, hand in hand with improving energy efficiency and securing affordable warmth.
- Make better use of private sector homes by bringing empty homes back into use as affordable accommodation.
- Monitor demographic trends for older people and prioritise adaptations, home safety and repairs to property in accordance with need.
- Explore options for sub regional leasing schemes to assist with homelessness.
- Develop a landlord accreditation scheme.
- To ensure the resources and the work of the private housing services are linked into Local Authorities' area-based regeneration programmes.

Delivering the Strategy

The Strategy will be delivered through the Thames Gateway South Essex Sub Regional Housing Group comprising representatives from the five local authorities and five key housing associations in the area. The Group reports to a Members group with representation again from the five local authorities. A number of sub groups, reporting to the Housing Group, have been set up to assist with developing sub regional initiatives drawn on best practice. A small funding pot provides an opportunity for the Housing Group to directly deliver initiatives such as research work, feasibility studies, training and pilot projects. It is also available to the sub groups to help drive forward sub regional initiatives.

Key actions from the Strategy have been incorporated in an Action Plan (see Appendix 4), which sets out the key deliverables, anticipated outcomes and lead partner(s). A full time Strategy Coordinator has been employed by the Housing Group to develop sub regional initiatives, oversee and monitor progress against the Strategy, and act as the point of contact for all information.

Framework for Monitoring and Review

The sub regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment establishes a framework for monitoring and review, which sets out a range of indicators to be monitored. This will enable the TGSE Housing Group to capture the overall impact of the collective priorities and evaluate them, both to measure success and to inform the continuing development and refinement of the Strategy in latter years. A coordinated approach is suggested for monitoring change in the housing market, together with demographic and economic drivers, at a sub regional level, which is linked to and informs the preparation of Annual Monitoring reports across the Districts and monitoring of Local Area Agreements.

Through a proactive monitoring process it will be possible to maintain and develop an understanding of the housing market and build on the outcomes of the SHMA. It will help facilitate the smooth delivery of the Action Plan and the implementation of policies to be tailored to evolving circumstances and inform future policy evolution.

It is important that the monitoring does not just become a "data collection exercise" but through use of time-series analysis to identify trends and distil what it is telling us and the implications for policy development and implementation.

In using such data, it should be noted that such information should only be used as a proxy for change and more detailed bespoke analysis may be required.

Sub regional projects should also be subject to programme management, which will monitor financial expenditure, completion of milestones and outputs on a quarterly basis. Reports should be prepared from the lead partners for consideration by the Housing Group and or its relevant sub groups.

A Gantt chart should also be prepared to show progress against key milestones over the three-year lifetime of the Strategy. Headline information relating to progress on delivering sustainable communities should be set out in an e-newsletter for wider circulation.

Key Priority Actions

- Action plan to be delivered and monitored by the Housing Group with the support of the Strategy Coordinator.
- Establish a framework for monitoring progress against key indicators as set out as targets in the Sub Regional Housing Strategy based on the recommendations in the SHMA.
- Training to review the Strategic Housing Market Assessment via consults (GVA Grimley) will provide the Sub Region with the technical and human resources to monitor progress on an annual basis.
- Establish a light touch project monitoring system of reporting to ensure initiatives which partners are directly engaged with are meeting the needs of the Strategy.
- Progress on delivering sustainable communities should be set out in an e-newsletter for wider circulation on a 6-monthly basis.

Appendix 1 Strategic Fit

Strategy/Paper	Summary/Purpose
The sustainable Communities Plan 2003	The Plan set out a long-term programme of action for delivering sustainable communities in both urban and rural areas. It aims to tackle housing supply issues in the South East, low demand in other parts of the country, and the quality of our public spaces
Housing and Regeneration Act July 2008	Sets out the way forward on delivering more homes in the future, with emphasis on the delivery of affordable homes. The challenge is to provide more homes to meet the growing demand, well-designed and greener homes, linked to good schools, transport and healthcare more affordable homes to buy or rent
East of England Housing Strategy 2005 – 2010	This document sets out the housing strategy for the East of England region for the period 2005 –10. Its main vision is: 'To ensure everyone can live in a decent home which meets their needs, at a price they can afford and in locations that are sustainable' It provides strategic context, guides future public investment in new and existing housing stock for the region
Regional Housing Strategy Update Policy and context 2007	Released by EERA in February 2007 this document bridges the gap between the East of England Housing Strategy 2005-2010 and the changes introduced by central government that affect the strategy and funding issues surrounding these changes

Strategic Fit with Sub Region	Pro Active Actions
As a designated Growth Area, Thames Gateway South Essex (TGSE) Housing sub region has been part of the success in increasing sustainable development across the South East - a number of completed developments being seen as blueprints for communities of the future	Developing mixed communities through the regeneration of strategic housing sites across the sub region
TGSE Partners have ensured that its new Housing Strategy is closely aligned to the key objectives of the new Housing and Regeneration Act	The sub region re-evaluated its supply chain in August 2007 to ensure maximum levels of deliverable affordable housing were identified due to expected higher funding of affordable homes. Partners are also exploring the opportunities of setting Local Housing Companies
Partners have been collaborating on joint initiatives, which have a strategic fit with the Region	Key objectives of the Housing Strategy have been referenced in the TGSE Sub regional Strategy
As a sub region of the East of England this update has been noted by TGSE and responded to in terms of the investment plan for 08-11. The sub regional strategy will interface with this document to ensure compatibility	Partners have ensured that the Sub Regional strategy is “fit for purpose”

Appendix 1 Strategic Fit (contd.)

Strategy/Paper	Summary/Purpose
Regional Housing Investment Plan 08 -11	The purpose of the East of England Housing Investment Plan 2008-11 is to provide the basis for EERA's advice to Ministers on the East of England's housing investment priorities for 2008-11
Planning Policy Statement 3 – Housing	Planning Policy Statements (PPS) set out the Government's national policies on aspects of planning in England. PPS3 sets out the national planning policy framework for delivering the Government's housing objectives. The key themes of PPS3 are as follows: Sustainable Development, Visionary and Strategic Approach, Market Responsiveness, Collaborative Working, Evidence-Based Policy Approach, Outcome and Delivery Focus.
A Shared Vision – Regional Economic Strategy for the East of England	The framework within which many different organisations can work with businesses, communities and individuals to improve the region's economic performance and the quality of life of those who live and work here
Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)	The RSS, published May 2008, sets minimum housing and employment targets for the sub region. 43,300 dwellings by 2021 is the target for TGSE. It recommends that 35% of dwellings should be affordable across the region

Strategic Fit with Sub Region	Pro Active Actions
As a sub region TGSE was actively involved in the drawing up of this investment plan and fully support the changes made	The Sub Region has identified a number of strategic sites which will require long term funding and which once delivered will create exemplar sustainable communities (See chapter 4)
Partners have commissioned a sub regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to provide the evidence base to support their Strategy and Local Authority LDFs	Partners will take forward the recommendations of the SHMA and also review it in response to changes in the market
Partners in housing, planning and regeneration are seeking to work together linking economic development with housing growth	Partners have contributed to the "refreshed" RES due to be launched September 2008
The Sub Regional Strategy will adopt the targets set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy	Partners have contributed to the sub regional chapter of the RSS

Appendix 1 Strategic Fit (contd.)

Strategy/Paper	Summary/Purpose
DCLG Homelessness Strategy 2005	A national document aimed at reducing homelessness focusing on preventative services, improving housing options and increasing the supply of social housing
Local Area Agreements and community plans	LAAs are targeted action plans, which will deliver the local sustainable community strategy. LAAs consist of targeted outcomes, with resources directed to achieving those outcomes. There are four strands, all relevant to homelessness: 1. Healthier communities and older people; 2. Safer and stronger communities; 3. Economic development and enterprise; 4. Children and families
Thames Gateway Delivery Plan	The Thames Gateway Delivery Plan (2007) sets out the Government's key ambitions and spending priorities, and a commitment to £9 billion funding over the next three years. This includes £500 million on regeneration and £100 million on local transport improvements. The plan sets out seven strategic outcomes for the Thames Gateway, including for the economy, transport, housing and quality of life. The Plan identifies ten housing locations, where extra homes are most urgently needed
Code for Sustainable Homes	The Code for Sustainable Homes has been introduced to drive a step-change in sustainable home building practice. It is a standard for key elements of design and construction, which affect the sustainability of a new home. It will form the basis for future developments of the Building Regulations in relation to carbon emissions from, and energy use in homes, therefore offering greater regulatory certainty to developers

Strategic Fit with Sub Region	Pro Active Actions
The sub regional strategy seeks to address homelessness by providing more homes - meeting the needs of vulnerable people - tackling homelessness - improving choice in housing	The Sub Region has become an active member of RHAP (Regional Homelessness Action Panel) and has set up a TGSE Homeless Sub Group to monitor best practice and develop new initiatives within the sub region (see Chapter 5)
Affordable housing targets are now part of the new National Performance Framework of 198 indicators	Partners have supported the inclusion of specific housing targets in LAAs
The sub region's strategic sites are included within the Delivery Plan and a number of our housing and regeneration policies, strategies and schemes are closely related	Partners have fed into the production of the Plan and are working with Local Regeneration Partnerships to assist with its delivery
A special emphasis has been put on the sustainability of homes within the Thames Gateway and the sub region is looking to lead the way in ensuring that all new homes built within the sub region conform to at least Code Level 3 in compliance with Housing Corporation requirements	The sub region has consistently built new affordable homes to Eco Homes Very Good Standard and will continue to pursue the sustainable agenda by only supporting schemes, both public and private that conform to a least Code Level 3 with additional support given to those that achieve higher levels (see Chapter 4)

Appendix 1 Strategic Fit (contd.)

Strategy/Paper	Summary/Purpose
John Hills: Ends and Means: The Future Roles of Social Housing In England	This report was commissioned to help the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government "stand back and ask what role social housing can play in 21st Century housing policy". Its aim is to provide the background and analytical framework against which the implications of different answers to such a fundamental question can be debated both inside and outside government

Strategic Fit with Sub Region	Pro Active Actions
The contents of the report has been noted and referenced in the Sub Regional Housing Strategy	The SHMA was commissioned to provide a better understanding of the housing market and the housing needs of the area

Appendix 2 Social Economic Profile

Demographics – Overview

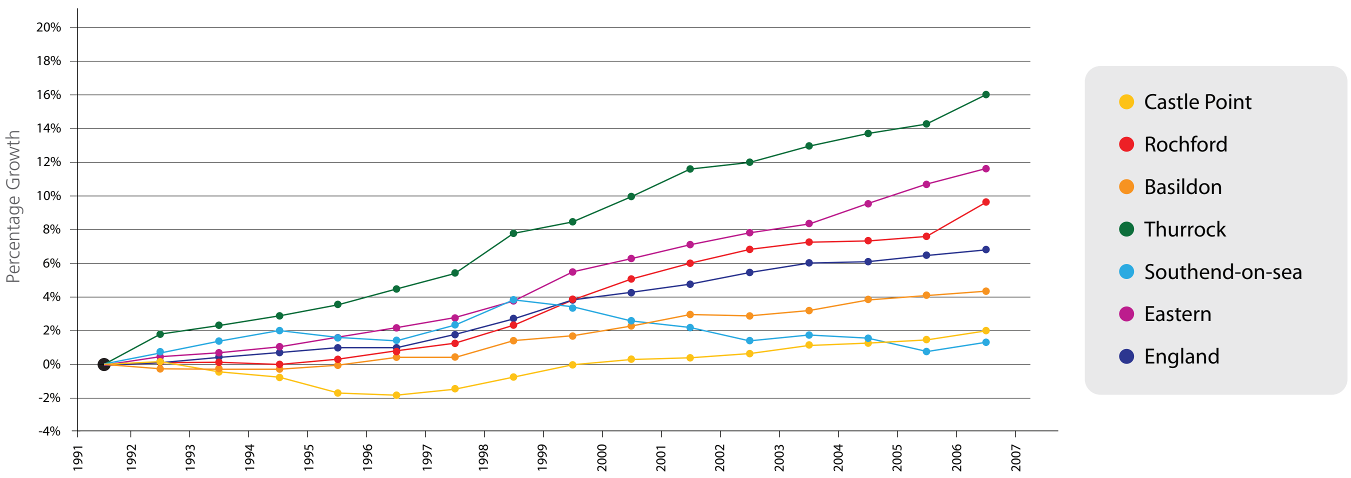
The sub region is diverse geographically, economically and socially, with combined population of 647,100 (mid year population estimates 2006), living in 284,198 dwellings. The sub region as a whole has experienced steady population growth with an increase of 12,950 since 2001, however this has been below average for the region.

People and Households

Over the last fifteen years the sub region's population has grown by 5% compared to 9.5% regional growth. Household growth has been a consistent 10% per decade since 1981. Going forward, 8% household growth is expected per decade to 2026.

Population growth has resulted from a combination of natural growth (more births than deaths) and domestic migration, particularly from East London. Since 1999, net migration from East London to the TGSE housing market has averaged a considerable 7,825 per annum. The sub region has hence been fulfilling a key role in meeting demand from households looking to move out of London, supporting the London housing market.

Figure 6: Population Growth 1991–2006



Source: Mid-year Population Estimates

The population structure is average across the sub regional housing market. It is not particularly ethnically diverse, although this is understood to be changing. The profile of households is similar but with slightly higher levels of single persons and married couples than the region as a whole. 29% of households are one person, 30% families with dependent children, and 25% pensioner households.

The age makeup of the combined Thames Gateway South Essex districts closely matches that of the rest of the region however, there are local variations.

In the period 1996 -2006 the Thames Gateway South Essex Districts have seen the older age cohorts (35-49, 50-64 and 65 and over) grow by around 12% in total, although this is much less than the national figure for these age groups which stands at 26%.

Although the total population has grown, certain age groups have actually reduced in size: both the pre-school (0-4) and young workers (20-34) age group have declined in both real terms and as a percentage. This reflects the ageing population in the area (Figure 4.3). The 20-34 age group is particularly important, as it includes a high proportion of newly forming households.

Appendix 2 Social Economic Profile (contd)

There are 284,198 dwellings in the TGSE sub region; Southend-on-Sea (76,282) and Basildon (72,849) have the largest amount of total dwellings, together representing 53% of the housing stock in the TGSE area. Alternatively Rochford, with 12% has the least amount of dwellings.

Figure 7: Dwelling Numbers

Area	All Dwellings	% of TGSE area
Basildon	73,133	25.7%
Castle Point	36,642	12.9%
Rochford	34,063	12.0%
Southend-on-Sea	77,124	27.1%
Thurrock	63,236	22.3%
TGSE Boroughs	**284,198**	

Source: HSSA (Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix) 2006/07

Household numbers in the TGSE Sub Regional Housing Market grew by more than 10% between 1991-2001, starting at around 240,000 and growing to around 265,000. This is consistent with the rate of growth in the previous decade.

Sub Regional Household Projections show that household numbers are expected to continue to grow with estimates showing around 22% growth for the region in the period up to 2026 and 11.6% to 2016 from a 2006 base.

Household growth of over 8% is projected in the TGSE Housing Market in the next ten years with a total growth of 16.4% by 2026. This is below average for the region.

Thurrock is expected to have the largest percentage change over the next 20 years growing by 21% to 2026. Castle Point is expected to have the slowest level of growth of just under 14%.

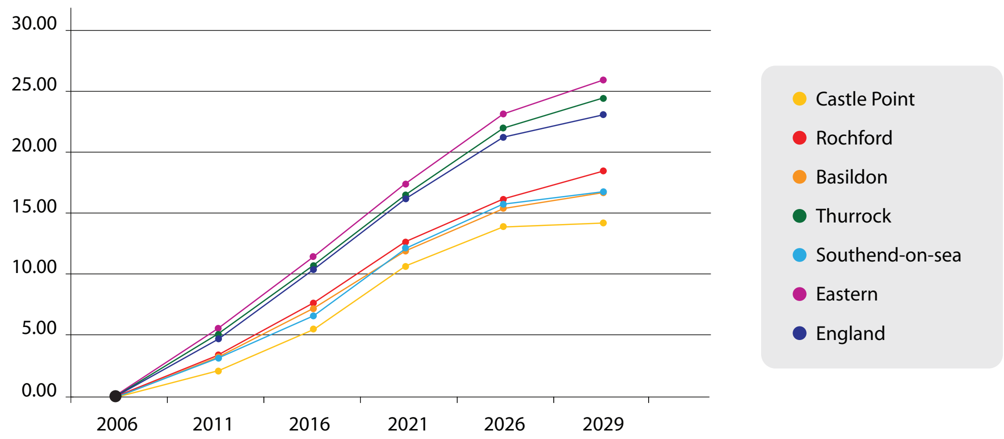
Socio-economic

The socio-economic profile (which is influenced by the sub region's housing offer) is however more narrow than in other areas, and is biased towards lower-paid socio-economic groups and skilled trade occupations. This reflects the housing "quality of place" offer and socio-economic profile. Planned housing growth and wider regeneration activities provide an opportunity to address this.

CACI publish an alternative ACORN socio-economic classification. It shows that 50% of households in Basildon and Thurrock are either "hard pressed" or of "moderate means." This is significantly higher than average for either the sub-region or the UK at 35%. The levels of households in these socio-economic groups are dramatically lower in Castle Point and Rochford (at 10% and 11% respectively).

For the sub region as a whole, levels of households in the urban prosperity group are most notably below average. These would typically be younger households engaged in professional occupations. They support demand for an urban living offer, which is currently somewhat under-developed.

Figure 8: Housing Projections



Source: DCLG 2004-based Sub National Household Projections

There is an above average proportion of households in the mid-market, "comfortably off" group. The level of wealthy achievers, which can be associated with executive housing, is highest in Castle Point (42%) and Rochford (36%). It is notably lower in Basildon (22%), but above levels in Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock. The level of households in the "urban prosperity" group (e.g. associated with good quality flatted and suburban housing) is higher in Southend at 14.5% than elsewhere in the sub regional housing market.

Castle Point and Rochford both have high levels of detached and semi-detached housing and this is reflected in their high levels of "wealthy achievers" and "established families". Conversely their low levels of flats mean they struggle to attract the youthful wealth of the "urban prosperity" classification.

Appendix 2 Social Economic Profile (contd)

Tenure

Across the TGSE Sub Regional Housing Market at April 2007 there were more private sector dwellings (240,725) compared to social sector dwellings (43,473). Overall 85% of the housing stock was in private sector ownership compared to 84% across the East of England and 81% for England.

Basildon and Thurrock had the highest concentration of social sector properties. Basildon contained 16,592 public sector dwellings, representing 38% of the total sub-regional public sector housing stock. Thurrock contained 11,751 social sector dwellings, equating to 27% of the total sub regional social housing stock. The largest amount of private sector housing was located in Southend-on–Sea, with 66,979 private dwellings, representing 28% of the total sub regional private housing stock.

In proportional terms the level of social housing is greatest in Basildon (23%) and Thurrock (19%): these two local authorities being the only ones with a level of social housing above the regional (16%) and England (19%) averages. Castle Point has the lowest proportion of social housing at only 6% of its housing stock. Private ownership is particularly high in Castle Point (94%) and Rochford (91%).

Figure 9: Tenure Profile, April 2007

Location	Public Sector	Private Sector	Total
Basildon	16,592 (23%)	56,541 (77%)	73,133
Castle Point	2,034 (6%)	34,608 (94%)	36,642
Rochford	2,951 (9%)	31,112 (91%)	34,063
Southend-On-Sea	10,145 (13%)	66,979 (87%)	77,124
Thurrock	11,751 (19%)	51,485 (81%)	63,236
TGSE Total	43,473 (15%)	240,725 (85%)	284,198

Source: HSSA (Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix) 2006/07

House size

Across the TGSE area 2-3 bed properties are the most abundant and this pattern is consistent with the proportion of stock across the region and nationally. On a more local level, Southend has the largest amount of 1-2 bed properties. Thurrock with 57% has the highest concentration of 2-3 bed property. Lastly, Rochford with 23% and Castle Point with 24% have the largest amount of 4 bed properties.

The TGSE housing market has a similar profile of housing stock by type to England and Wales. It has a below average level of detached housing at 23% compared to the region (30%) but a higher level of flats and maisonettes (19% compared to 14%).

Within the sub-regional housing market, Castle Point and Rochford have a higher proportion of detached and semi-detached properties. 43% of the housing stock in Castle Point is detached and 40% semi-detached. Half of Rochford's housing stock (49%) is semi-detached with a further third detached (33%).

Basildon with 36% and Thurrock with 35%, have the highest amount of terraced housing.

Finally, Southend has the highest proportion of flats and maisonettes with 31%, compared to 19% across the sub-region. However, this high proportion is common with other seaside resorts across the country (see for example Brighton).

Appendix 3 Strategic sites / Areas 2008-11

Sites	Units	Private	Intermediate Market	Rented
Thurrock				
Wouldham Road, Grays	194	134	18	42
Hillside Grays	67	47	6	14
St Chads	235	165	35	35
ESSO Sports Field	49	170	25	24
Purfleet Town Centre	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
Basildon				
Fryerns / Craylands	390	239	12	139
Royal Court	127	36	18	73
Five Links	186	81	20	85
Willow Court	48	20	12	16
Ballards Walk	20	0	11	9
Lourdes Hall	17	tbc	tbc	17
Fauners	tbc	tbc	20	21
Vange	120	0	90	30
Laindon School	192	138	21	33

Sites	Units	Private	Intermediate Market	Rented
Castle Point				
The Chase	tbc	tbc	17	37
Long Road	tbc	tbc	15	15
Southend				
Southend Town Centre	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
Southend Seafront	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
Shoeburyness	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
Rochford				
None identified	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc

The sites have been derived from recent submissions under the Housing Corporation's Regular Market Engagement (RME) process as part of their National Affordable Homes Programme 2008-2011.

This table represents a snapshot of housing delivery activity as of June 2008 and the figures should be treated as indicative; the table will be updated as further Continuous Market Engagement takes place.

A strategic site is defined as: a development which can realistically start on site by 31 March 2011 and deliver a housing scheme which makes a significant contribution to the district's supply of quality and sustainable housing in which it is located.

Appendix 4 Action Plan

Priority Area	Action
Future Growth	
New homes	
Develop a sub regional Choice Based Lettings scheme to cover all affordable rented stock by 2010.	• Joint working group established with CLG funding • Agree joint protocols • Assess feasibility and cost of creating a "bolt on" service to cover the whole sub region • Secure partnership agreement to a CBL service across the sub region
Promote opportunities for Key Workers through HomeBuy initiative.	• Targeting employers and potential key workers • Facilitate Homebuy events to promote new product • Share best practice being developed by LAs and other partners.
Continue to develop a sub regional quality design standard, meeting for example Lifetime Homes, Building For Life and Secure by Design Standards.	• Implement and monitor quality design standards across the sub region through the CABE Compact in Thames Gateway • Build on previous design training events in the sub region

Target	Lead Partner	Timetable
20 number of Local Authority Lettings to be made available sub regionally	Housing Strategy Group through CBL Sub Group	March 2011
3 Homebuy events to be held in the sub region to maximise take up	Moat Housing Association Ltd	Ongoing
3 design training events to be held in the sub region to improve the skills of planning, regeneration, housing professionals	Housing Strategy Group with CABE and Regeneration Partnerships	Ongoing

Appendix 4 Action Plan (contd)

Priority Area	Action
Regeneration	
Focus on bringing regeneration, planning and housing together through coordination of activity, maximising funding and sharing of best practice	• Joint commissioning of research and activity • Support the development of strategic sites for both housing and employment
Greener Homes	
Develop the green agenda through the provision of training and advice, maximising grant opportunities to deliver low carbon schemes	• Share best practice when developing low carbon schemes by develop training programme and advice networks • Deliver an energy efficiency project in private homes (subject to funding)

Target	Lead Partner	Timetable
Maintain 5 year supply of housing sites for each local authority Monitor progress of LAA Targets for Essex, Southend and Thurrock relevant to future housing growth (NI 141, 154, 155, 156 and 258)	Housing Strategy Group and Regeneration Partnerships	Ongoing
25% reduction in CO_2 emissions by 2010 Develop 3 exemplar new build schemes in the sub region	Housing Strategy Group and Regeneration Partnerships	March 2010

Appendix 4 Action Plan (contd)

Priority Area	Action
Vulnerable Groups	
Homelessness	
Help households obtain and sustain private tenancies working in partnership with the private rented sector	• Develop rent deposit and rent in advance schemes • Develop an Accredited Landlord Scheme • Monitor number of homeless applicants registering in the sub region
Supporting People	
Improve partnership working between local authorities and other key stakeholders to ensure best use of resources, supported by effective referral processes for all Supported Housing	• Work with partners to ensure appropriate accommodation is provided to support the needs of vulnerable groups • Quantify the needs of different supported housing and housing support for a range of client groups • Share best practice and innovative working around homelessness prevention • Explore and develop funding opportunities sub regionally

Target	Lead Partner	Timetable
Stabilise the level of households in temporary accommodation Hold 3 Private Landlord Forums in the sub region	Housing Strategy Group through Homeless and Private Sector Sub Groups	March 2011
Increase the number of vulnerable groups receiving support Increasing the proportion of the most socially excluded adults back into settled accommodation	Supporting People Services with support of Housing Strategy Group	Ongoing

Appendix 4 Action Plan (contd)

Priority Area	Action
Vulnerable Groups (contd)	
BME Groups	
Engage with BME communities to identify housing and support needs and take action to ensure these are met through working with communities and partner agencies	• Monitor migration flows and the needs of the BME community in relation to future housing requirements • Support the work of the Essex BME Action Group
Gypsies & Travellers	
Work with planners and other partners to review the Regional Planning Policy in respect of the provision of Gypsies and Travellers sites in the sub region (when adopted) and the recommendations of sub regional research into their housing needs	• Respond to specific housing needs through provision of specialist services • Share best practice in future planning • Develop a data base of authorised pitches across the sub region

Target	Lead Partner	Timetable
Reduction in harassment and hate crime	Housing Strategy Group with Essex CC	Ongoing
The target for the sub region will be determined by the outcome of RSS Single Issue Review of Regional Planning Policy in respect of Gypsies and Travellers	TGSE Strategic Housing Group through Essex Planning Officers Association	March 2011

Appendix 4 Action Plan (contd)

Priority Area	Action
Existing Housing Stock	
Decent homes	
Bid for regional monies to ensure a continued programme of private sector renewal works over 2009-11, targeting vulnerable private households and monitor progress	• Submit proposals to the Regional Housing Pot • Deliver home improvement / renovation project (subject to funding) • Monitor private sector housing stock condition data on a sub regional basis • Monitor progress against the Government's Decent Homes Standard
Independent Living	
Support older people and prioritise improvements to support their needs (to cover all vulnerable people)	• Monitor demographic trends for older people • Prioritise adaptations, home safety and repairs to property in accordance with need

Target	Lead Partner	Timetable
Ensure at least 70% of vulnerable groups in the private sector live in decent homes by 2010	Housing Strategy Group through Homeless and Private Sector Sub Groups	April 2009 - March 2011
Ensure at least 70% of vulnerable groups in the private sector live in decent homes by 2010	Supporting People Services with support of Housing Strategy Group	Ongoing

Appendix 4 Action Plan (contd)

Priority Area	Action
Existing Housing Stock (contd)	
Energy efficient homes	
Address fuel poverty across the sub region, hand in hand with improving energy efficiency and securing affordable warmth	• Deliver improved energy efficiency in homes project (subject to funding)
Empty Homes	
Make better use of private sector homes by bringing empty homes back into use as affordable accommodation.	• Deliver Empty Property project with a RSL partner (subject to funding) • Use of voluntary or compulsory Empty Dwelling Management Orders
Private Sector Homes	
To ensure the resources and the work of the private housing services are linked into Local Authorities area-based regeneration programmes	• Identify local area based regeneration programmes • Engage with Local Regeneration Partnerships on initiatives to meet decent home targets

Target	Lead Partner	Timetable
Steps to improve residential energy efficiency by at least 20% by 2010	Housing Strategy Group through Private Sector Sub Group	March 2010
Bring 30 empty dwellings back into use by 2011	Housing Strategy Group through Private Sector Sub Group	April 2009 - March 2011
Ensure at least 70% of vulnerable groups in the private sector live in decent homes by 2010	Private Sector Housing Sub Group and Local Regeneration Partnerships	March 2010

Appendix 4 Action Plan (contd)

Priority Area	Action
Delivery	
Effectively monitor progress against delivery of the Sub Regional Housing Strategy based on the recommendations in the SHMA	• Establish a framework for monitoring progress against key indicators and targets set out in the Sub Regional Housing Strategy. • To be developed with proposals to review the SHMA
Communicate progress against delivery to partners	• Regular reports to Sub Regional Meetings • Communication to wider partners via an e-newsletter on a 6-monthly basis

Target	Lead Partner	Timetable
Monitoring Framework in place by December 2008	Housing Strategy Group	Quarterly from December 2009
4 reports per annum 2 newsletters	Housing Strategy Group	Ongoing

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