

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND PARTNERSHIP BOARD  
REGIONAL HOUSING AND REGENERATION BOARD**

Date: 9 March 2010

Subject: **The London Plan Response and the London Housing Strategy**

Report of: Regional Housing and Regeneration Board Manager

**Recommendations:**

The Board is requested to:

1. Review and discuss the response submitted by the Planning Panel in relation to housing delivery; and,
2. Review the summary information on the Government's response to the London Housing Strategy.

## 1. The London Plan Response

1.1 The Planning Panel proposed the response to the draft London Plan issued for consultation in October 2009 with the response approved by the Partnership Board on the 9 February 2010.

1.2 The housing section included the following detail:

**The plan aims to make provision for the housing needs of Londoners and proposes a 'plan, monitor, manage' approach to housing provision (Policy 3.3). This is heavily reliant on 'windfalls' which is to be expected given the nature of London's land supply. However, this will have an impact on affordable housing provision which is proposed as an absolute number and not a proportion of housing provision (Policy 3.8). There is therefore no certainty about the amount of affordable homes that will be provided and any under provision will impact on housing needs in the South East, particularly the local authorities adjoining London. This will be compounded by the relatively high threshold being proposed for sites that would require an affordable housing contribution (15 dwellings or more).**

**The plan also aims to address the imbalance between small apartments and family housing by promoting better choice (Policy 3.8). This has been a concern to the South East for some time as the undersupply of family sized housing in London has had an impact on demand in the South East. Whilst this approach is welcomed, this needs to be implemented in a robust way through both the planning process and the Mayor's Housing Strategy.**

1.3 There is some concern that these changes within the plan lead the way to a much more 'laissez-faire' approach to delivery of affordable housing leaving behind percentage targets for sites and introducing a threshold that will only apply to larger developments rather than maximising the opportunity for affordable housing on all sites regardless of size of development.

## 2. The London Housing Strategy

2.1 This was published on the 24 February 2010 and covers the period 2008-11. This means the strategy will be reviewed later this year in light of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

2.2 Particular areas of concern highlighted by John Healey in the Government's response are:

- ✦ Plans to provide only around 13,200 affordable homes a year;
- ✦ Moving away from the strategic target that 50% of new homes in London should be affordable to a numeric target making it potentially harder for the Mayor to use his planning powers to ensure the need for affordable homes is met across the city;
- ✦ Plans to reduce the number of new social rented homes provided by councils and housing associations by an equivalent of 2,755 homes a year compared to current plans;

- ✦ Plans to increase the annual household income limit for families to qualify for support to buy a home through the Government's Homebuy programme from £60,000 to £74,000.
- 2.3. Under to powers granted in the 2007 GLA Act Ministers can exercise their power to direct the Mayor to change his housing strategy if any part is in conflict with the national policy.
- 2.4. At this stage they are proposing to deal with any conflicts through the Examination in Public for the London Plan due in the summer as the key elements are dependent on changes to the London Plan.

**3. Recommendations:**

**The Board are requested to:**

- 1. Review and discuss the response submitted by the Planning Panel in relation to housing delivery; and,**
- 2. Review the summary information on the Government's response to the London Housing Strategy.**

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3 March 2010

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