



Report to Cabinet
Gedling Partnership Executive

Subject Housing Green Paper “Homes for the Future: more affordable, more sustainable”

Date: Cabinet – 6 September 2007
Partnership Executive – 17 September 2007

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1. Purpose of the Report

To advise the Council and the Partnership of: -

- the contents of the Housing Green Paper ‘*Homes for the future; more affordable, more sustainable*’ and of the resultant potential implications,
- the opportunity to feedback comments to Communities and Local Government.

2. Background

The Communities and Local Government department issued the above consultation document in July 2007. It outlines the Government’s plans for delivering its agenda on housing and in particular its plans to deliver three million new homes by 2020 to meet the rising demand from an ageing, growing population. The key themes are that more land should be identified to allow more new homes to be built, including affordable housing, and that these homes should be well designed and should play a part in the fight against global warming.

3. Main Findings

The executive summary is appended to this report. The following is a summary of the key points in the document that will have implications for the Council and partners:

The full report is available at

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/homesforfuture>

More Homes to meet growing demand

The emphasis of this section of the Green Paper is on the challenges faced. The Green Paper states that demand for homes to buy and rent is growing faster than supply and house prices have grown faster than wages resulting in difficulties for young people to get a step on the housing ladder. There has also been a significant increase in the number of one-person households from 19% in 1971 to 32% today.

Proposals in the Green Paper are set out to provide:

- More homes to meet growing demand – additional 2 million homes by 2016 and 3 million by 2020 to address affordability issues. This means an additional 240,000 a year by 2016.
- Though a good proportion of these new homes are already earmarked in Regional Spatial Strategies currently being developed, the Green Paper proposes numbers of houses in excess of this provision. Further reviews of Regional Spatial Strategies may be therefore be needed to facilitate the increase in the numbers of houses required.
- A target will be set for the delivery of affordable housing in rural areas 2008-11
- Target of 200,000 new homes to be delivered on surplus public sector land
- Access to £300 million through the Community Infrastructure Fund available for growth areas, new Growth Points and eco-towns
- A new Housing and Planning Delivery Grant will direct extra resources to those councils who have identified at least 5 years worth of sites ready for new housing development. Land will need to be identified to deliver the homes needed in their area over the next 15 years by rapidly implementing new planning policy for housing (Planning Policy Statement 3) ***The Green Paper is clear here that where councils have not identified enough land and do not grant sufficient planning permissions, planning inspectors will be more likely to overturn their decisions and give housing applications the go ahead at the appeal stage.***
- Councils will have to undertake as a matter of urgency a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment for their area. Such studies should be undertaken across a housing market area. The Nottingham Core Housing Market Area, which includes Gedling Borough, has commenced work on its Strategic Land Availability Assessment. This work will form key evidence when formulating policies and proposals within Local Development Frameworks.
- Recycling homes and land – The paper emphasises the need to make the most of existing homes and buildings and disused land with –

a). Brownfield land being the priority for development with each local authority being required to set its own target and;

b). Councils, in their strategic housing role reducing the number of homes that are left empty for long periods of time.

Better Homes

The Green Paper states that the Government's target is not just to build more homes, but it is to build better homes that are part of mixed communities with good local facilities and they need to be part of the solution to climate change. New settlements should be attractive places to live with green spaces and good infrastructure (transport, schools and healthcare).

In order to achieve this the Government plans include:

- Well-designed and greener homes, linked to good schools, transport and healthcare
- Local Planning Authorities will be required to demonstrate sound infrastructure planning to support the proposals set out in their Local Development Frameworks.
- Proposed Planning Gain Supplement Bill to ensure local communities benefit from new developments (although it is recognised that discussions with key stakeholders is required to discuss alternative approaches to achieving this)
- All new homes to be zero carbon from 2016 with new minimum standards for reducing water use by 20%
- Closely monitor the effectiveness of new planning policy protecting new homes from flooding
- Eliminate poorly designed new housing, improving the environment, improving the environment creating safer and stronger communities and reducing carbon footprint.
- There is an emphasis on the importance of good design. Sites should contribute towards a housing mix, which meets the needs of *all* members of the community. This will be achieved by providing a range of housing to buy and to rent at different levels of affordability, supported by appropriate infrastructure including schools, healthcare services, shops, parks and good public transport links.

Making Housing More Affordable

The government wants everyone to have access to a decent home at a price they can afford, in a place they want to live and work and good quality affordable housing enables stable and secure family lives. To achieve this the paper sets out the following proposals:

- More affordable homes to buy or rent, including increasing the provision of family housing
- 180,000 new affordable homes over the next three years, with 70,000 a year by 2010-11.
- At least 45,000 new social rented homes a year by 2010-11 with a goal of 50,000 a year in the next spending review
- Over 25,000 shared ownership and shared equity homes a year funded mainly by the Housing Corporation
- Private sector shared equity scheme launched already offering a 17.5% equity loan product, aiming to increase both the range of private sector organisations involved and the competitiveness of products available
- Improving the way the mortgage market works by helping mortgage lenders finance mortgages, including more affordable longer-term fixed rate mortgages
- Wider delivery of affordable housing in mixed communities with a wider range of organisations bringing in resources to build affordable housing.

Green Spaces

In order to build capacity and skills and to tackle poor-performance the Government is supporting local authorities through CABI Space. CABI Space is assisting over 100 authorities with their green space strategies and, in line with Planning Policy Guidance 17 requirements, encouraging them to audit all their open spaces and assess the existing and future needs of their community for a variety of open spaces including play areas. The Government is also encouraging greater and earlier community engagement by local authorities, particularly children and young people, so that they can influence green space policies in their areas.

A renewed role for local authorities

The Green Paper places a huge emphasis on the strategic role of local authorities, with the strategic housing role at the heart of achieving the government's ambitions for housing supply.

The document stresses that local authorities' need to play a stronger role in addressing the housing needs of all their residents. Through their strategic

housing role and by aligning housing plans with the planning framework, local authorities can bring considerable influence to bear on the delivery of the supply of affordable housing.

The Government believes that local authorities are well placed, through their role in preparing Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements, to negotiate with and influence other local regional partners. They can ensure, through existing partnership arrangements, that all local partners adopt a co-ordinated approach to creating the necessary infrastructure to deliver housing growth. This is a key potential issue requiring full engagement from and with the Gedling Partnership, though the question of more and better housing is, of itself, likely to be of importance to the Partnership.

The Council has already recognised the importance of the strategic role of the authority and has reflected this in the recent re-structure, forming a Strategy and Performance team. By bringing together the Cabinet Office, Planning Policy and Housing Strategy teams there will be a more concentrated focus on the delivery of the housing agenda in the Borough, with greater cohesion between the various statutory and non-statutory plans that go together to achieve the Council's vision.

It is important to note that the proposals contained in the Green Paper have implications that stretch beyond the strategic function of the Council. Other departments including Development Control, Building Control, the housing landlord and Direct Services will also be affected.

4. Recommendation

The Government has asked for comments on the proposals contained in the Green Paper and the deadline for receipt is 15th October 2007.

It is **recommended** that **Cabinet** delegates authority to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health to agree an appropriate response.

It is **recommended** that the **Gedling Partnership** considers whether it would wish to make a response and, if so, what that response might be.