

Integrated Appraisal of North West Regional Housing Strategy Scoping Paper

Introduction

The Communities Plan¹ has altered the whole basis of the housing system nationally and in the regions. Regional Housing Boards are now tasked with advising Ministers on regional priorities, directing housing investment funding, and bringing together housing, economic and spatial strategies. The implications are potentially far-reaching, enabling regions to give Ministers a clear view about where investment needs to be directed for maximum impact, and placing obligations on regional bodies to get their own collective heads together more effectively.

In May 2003, the North West Regional Housing Board published a 'scoping paper' as a step toward the production of the first Regional Housing Strategy for the North West. This scoping paper is intended to set out some of the key issues and questions facing the North West, helping the North West Regional Housing Board to develop the first Regional Housing Strategy for the region. It sets out the Board's initial views about regional priorities, and invited comment from regional stakeholders.

It is intended that the concept of **sustainable development** will run throughout the strategy. Sustainable development encompasses economic growth, environmental protection/enhancement and social inclusion. The regional housing strategy will seek to complement sustainable patterns of spatial development and physical change as set out in Regional Planning Guidance² and the economic development framework set out in the Regional Economic Strategy³. As such all three documents will contribute to the delivery of the Regional Sustainable Development Framework "*Action for Sustainability*"⁴.

To ensure that sustainable development principles are embedded within the Regional Housing Strategy, the Regional Housing Board is committed to undertaking a sustainability appraisal of the Regional Housing Strategy using the methodology and criteria contained within the "Integrated Appraisal Toolkit". The criteria, which cover a range of economic, social and environmental issues, reflect the regionally agreed objectives and priorities detailed in "*Action for Sustainability*".

¹ *Sustainable communities: building for the future* (Office for the Deputy Prime Minister, 2003)

² *Regional Planning Guidance for the North West* (Government Office for the North West, 2003)

³ *Regional Economic Strategy 2003* (North West Development Agency, 2003)

⁴ *Action for Sustainability* (North West Regional Assembly and Government Office for the North West, 2000)

The toolkit, developed by the North West Regional Assembly in partnership with a number of regional and local partners, aims to help planners, investors and decision makers throughout the region assess the contribution of their work to the regional priorities for sustainable development.

Integrated appraisal delivers a number of benefits to the strategy making process including:

- Enabling decision makers to make better informed decisions, by embedding sustainability considerations into the strategy making process from development through to implementation, monitoring and review;
- Providing evidence of a comprehensive and systematic approach to appraisal process that promotes accountability and transparency of the decision making process;
- Developing a more sustainable strategy which maximise economic, social and environmental benefits, whilst mitigating against potentially negative impacts;
- Promoting “joined-up” working across sectors / agencies by identifying areas of overlap or omission, avoiding duplication of effort and resources and adding value to the strategy.

In accordance with the "Integrated Appraisal Toolkit" methodology an initial quick scan appraisal of the five priorities set out in the “scoping paper” was undertaken, with each priority being assessed against the criteria within the toolkit. This document represents the completion of this first stage of the process and outlines where the priority issues have a potentially negative or positive impact upon the criteria. It also highlights potential gaps in the strategy and offers ideas for its improvement or further debate that will be used to inform the further development of the strategy.

A more detailed appraisal of the emerging strategy, engaging key stakeholders, will then be carried out and a report published to accompany its publication in the summer of 2003.

Key

-- = strong negative impact
 - = negative impact

O = No impact
 ? = impact unknown

++ = strong positive impact
 + = slight positive impact

	Priority 1.1 Maximising the positive impact of the market renewal Pathfinder in their local housing markets.	Priority 1.2 Developing a targeted programme of strategic investment in the prevention of market failure in other areas at risk from low demand, applying and adapting lessons from the Pathfinders and elsewhere for use in other areas suffering from low demand. These activities should form part of comprehensive neighbourhood renewal strategies, specifically in: 1.2.1 the remainder of the North West Metropolitan Area; 1.2.2 the North West's coastal towns; and 1.2.3 other Neighbourhood Renewal Fund areas.	Priority 2.1 Tackling the shortages of affordable housing in areas of the North West where demand is unsustainably high, where this impacts adversely on social inclusion and the sustainable growth of local, sub-regional and regional economies. Action will focus specifically on: 2.1.1 continuing to deliver the Housing Corporation's special investment programme for rural settlements below 3,000 in population; and 2.1.2 parts of the region where demand is high and there is a demonstrable need for additional affordable housing.	Priority 3.1 Providing appropriate capital funding for specialist housing provision to meet clearly identified needs, in line with local strategic priorities.	Priority 4.1 As part of broadly based regeneration strategies, improving the condition of housing stock with a sustainable future, particularly in areas of concentrated unfitness and disrepair.
1. Will the initiative improve the competitiveness and productivity of businesses	+	+	+	n/a	n/a
	Would do if local businesses were supported		Indirectly through the provision of housing for the local labour market		
2. Will the initiative exploit the growth potential of business sectors?	++	++	++	++	++
	Directly via the housing industry and indirectly through supply chain of other industries and support for local labour markets				

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3. Will the initiative develop and exploit the region's knowledge base?	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	+
	Would do if new methods of design and construction technology were used in refurbishment				Would do if new methods of design and construction technology were used in refurbishment
4. Will the initiative deliver urban/rural renaissance?	++	++	++	+	++
			By helping to maintain rural communities		
5. Will the initiative secure economic inclusion?	++	++	++	+	++
	Need to flag up the opportunity to provide local opportunities for training and employment				
6. Will the initiative develop and maintain a healthy labour market?	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Not directly, but may have positive benefits indirectly the opportunity to provide local opportunities for training and employment				

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7. Will the initiative alleviate poverty?	+	+	+	+	+
	Not directly, but may have positive benefits indirectly the opportunity to provide local opportunities for training and employment				
8. Will the initiative reduce the need to travel and develop strategic transport, communications and economic infrastructure?	?	?	?	?	?
	Indirectly maintaining housing and local community will help to support local services and hence reduce the need for travel. Similarly if people can afford to buy / rent housing where they work – travel should be reduced. This will be an important issue in considering the location of any replacement housing for clearance.				
9. Will the initiative or strategy develop and market the region's image?	+	+	+	n/a	++

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10. Will the initiative improve health and reduce health inequalities?	+	+	?	++	+
	Indirectly through improving housing and environment conditions		Very indirectly through reducing stress and enabling key workers from health care sector to live close to their workplace		Indirectly through improving housing and environment conditions
11. Will the initiative improve access to good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing?	++	++	++	++	++
	Could be strengthened through the encouragement in the use of sustainable design principles and practices				Could be strengthened through the encouragement in the use of sustainable design principles and practices

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12. Will the initiative reduce crime, disorder and the fear of crime?	+	+	?	n/a	+ / ?
	Indirectly keeping areas "liveable" helps to reduce vacancy rates and reduce the number of fires, break-ins, vandalism etc				Indirectly keeping areas "liveable" helps to reduce vacancy rates and reduce the number of fires, break-ins, vandalism etc
13. Will the initiative involve all stakeholders in decision making?	?	?	?	+	?
	Does the strategy refer to the need to engage the local community (including BME community) involved in finding and being part of the solution to housing market problems? Key stakeholders will need to be involved in the production of the strategy and its implementation? Will the strategy be sympathetic to the needs of all members of the community?				

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14. Will the initiative value diversity, improve equity and equality of opportunity?	?	?	+	+	?
	<p>Does the strategy refer to the need to engage the local community (including BME community) involved in finding and being part of the solution to housing market problems? Key stakeholders will need to be involved in the production of the strategy and its implementation? Will the strategy be sympathetic to the needs of all members of the community?</p>		<p>Strategy aims to intervene to ensure people can access housing</p>	<p>Need to take on board Lifetime homes concept</p>	
15. Will the initiative develop strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds and communities?	?	?	?	?	?
	<p>Projects could help to improve communities, but these could have positive and negative impacts across the region</p>			<p>Need to take on board Lifetime homes concept</p>	<p>Projects could help to improve communities, but these could have positive and negative impacts across the region</p>

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16. Will the initiative improve access to and use of basic goods, services and amenities?	?	?	?	++	?
Housing itself is a basic need. Seeking to retain housing can help to maintain community facilities / service centres as people rely on them, this can be especially so in town centres. Indirect impact as access to service can rely on individuals income Relocating housing will shift the need for services. Housing renewal itself probably will not improve access to basic goods and services					
17. Will the initiative protect places, landscapes and buildings of historic, cultural and archaeological value?	?	?	?	?	?
Clearance could mean the potentially negative impact through loss of housing characteristics of an area / culture / sense of community / historic value					
18. Will the initiative protect and improve local environmental quality?	++	++	?	?	++
Probably positive – by improving housing can lead to improvement in environment. Strategy does not say much about the need to relate housing improvement to broader environmental improvements of an area					

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19. Will the initiative protect and enhance biodiversity?	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	What does the strategy say about design of renewal areas – can it give general guidance eg designing green space.				
20. Will the initiative protect and improve the quality of inland and coastal waters?	?	?	?	?	?
	What about the promotion of sustainable design principles including SUDS				What about the promotion of sustainable design principles including SUDS
21. Will the initiative protect and improve air quality?	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
22. Will the initiative protect and improve land quality?	++	++	?	n/a	++
	What does the strategy say? Is there a presumption for development of brownfield sites first as per national guidance and RPG13?				

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23. Will the initiative address the need to limit and adapt to climate change?	?	?	?	n/a	?
	Close links to design and location. If sustainably designed and very energy / resource efficient – reduce amount of fossil fuel used and CO ₂ emissions. Also if located in centres – easier access to services – possibility for combined heat and power schemes / green energy?				
24. Will the initiative ensure the prudent use of natural resources and the sustainable management of existing resources?	?	?	?	n/a	?
	Re-use of buildings better than new build. Reuse of materials desirable. Use of sustainable design principles				Re-use of buildings better than new build. Reuse of materials desirable. Use of sustainable design principles

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25. Will the initiative minimise the requirement for energy use, promote efficient energy use and increase the use of energy from renewable sources?	?	?	?	n/a	+
	Close links to design and location. If sustainably designed and very energy / resource efficient – reduce amount of fossil fuel used and CO ₂ emissions. Also if located in centres – easier access to services – possibility for combined heat and power schemes / green energy?				Reuse of materials desirable. Use of sustainable design principles
26. Will the initiative ensure the sustainable management of waste, minimise its production and increase re-use, recycling and recovery rates?	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Close links to design and location. If sustainably designed and very energy / resource efficient – reduce amount of fossil fuel used and CO ₂ emissions. Also if located in centres – easier access to services – possibility for combined heat and power schemes / green energy?				Reuse of materials desirable. Use of sustainable design principles