

**TITLE OF REPORT: REFERRAL FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17 JUNE 2008 – ADOPTION OF A NEW HOUSING STRATEGY FOR 2008-2013**

*The following is an extract from the Draft Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 17 June 2008.*

**13. ADOPTION OF A LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY FOR 2008-2013**

The Housing Strategy & Renewals Manager presented a report of the Head of Housing & Environmental Health to the Committee which provided details of the proposed North Hertfordshire Housing Strategy for 2008-2013. The report was due to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting to be held on 24 June 2008.

The Committee was advised that the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) wished to see all Local Housing Authorities embracing sub-regional working, including the development and adoption of sub-regional housing strategies. This followed the recommendations contained within the Local Government White Paper published in November 2006, and following consultation with Go-East, the London Commuter Belt Sub-Region (LCBSR) proposed that all local authorities within the sub-region produced up-to-date Housing Strategies which would be used to inform the development of a sub-regional housing strategy. The LCBSR had agreed a Housing Strategy and Action Plan template for each member local authority (namely, all the local authorities in Hertfordshire and 5 in Essex) to follow. The proposed Housing Strategy and Action Plan were contained within Appendices A and B to the report respectively, and adhered to these agreed templates.

It was noted that the proposed Housing Strategy 2008 – 2013 took account of the current issues for housing in the district and contained six priorities:

- To work towards balancing local housing markets;
- To create inclusive sustainable communities;
- To improve access to, and choice in, housing;
- To provide dwellings suitable for the diverse needs of the community;
- To maintain and improve the quality of the current stock; and
- To protect the environment.

The Housing Strategy & Renewals Manager stated that the Strategy incorporated an Action Plan setting out the activities and outcomes for housing between 2008 and 2013 in the district. It was proposed that the Action Plan be reviewed on a six monthly basis by the Housing Strategy Monitoring Group (an officer group, comprising officers from the Housing, Planning and Policy Teams). The Strategy would be updated in 2009 and 2011 to bring it in line with changes in circumstances, which would include the publication of a new sub-regional housing strategy (expected early 2009), new national policies and initiatives and changes in the local housing market.

Members debated the strategy and, whilst generally supportive, suggested a number of amendments.

**RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:** That the North Herts Housing Strategy 2008 - 2013 be recommended to Council for adoption, with the following amendments:

- (1) Page 4 The Vision and Priorities for Housing  
Vision heading to read: *“To meet the community’s needs for decent, high quality, affordable homes in sustainable locations”;*
- (2) Page 4 The Vision and Priorities of Housing  
Vision 6 to read: *“To protect the natural and physical environment”;*

(3) Page 32 Action/Strategic Objective 26

First bullet point to read: "*Set up a Housing Strategy Action Group*".

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To comment on the report, prior to its consideration by Cabinet on 24 June 2008.

**[The report to which the above referral relates is Item 9 on this agenda]**