

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – COMMUNITY 4 SEPTEMBER 2007

EXECUTIVE 18 SEPTEMBER 2007

HOUSING STRATEGY 2007 – 2012

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Members' views on the content of the revised Housing Strategy 2007 – 2012 and to brief Members on the results of the Exeter and Torbay Housing Market Assessment.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Government Office South West (GOSW) asks local authorities to produce a five year housing strategy and review it regularly. This reflects the importance of the Council's strategic and enabling role in meeting housing needs in the city. We have conducted a thorough review of the current 2004 – 2009 Housing Strategy to:

- ensure it is up to date and relevant to changing circumstances;
- take account of the results of the Exeter and Torbay Housing Market Assessment;
- ensure it is in line with the Local Development Framework.

- 2.2 The 2004 – 2009 Housing Strategy was developed in consultation with GOSW to ensure that it complied with the Government's 'fit for purpose' criteria. The revised Strategy should continue to meet these criteria and will be submitted to GOSW for assessment. The revised strategy is informed by extensive public and stakeholder consultation and the comprehensive cross-tenure evidence base provided by the Exeter and Torbay Housing Market Assessment study (ETHMA). GOSW have recently been in discussion with district authorities regarding the need for sub-regional housing strategies. The revised Strategy includes a chapter on sub-regional issues and proposals, based upon the conclusions of the ETHMA. A copy of the revised Housing Strategy document is available on the website and in the Members' Room.

3. CONSULTATION

- 3.1 Public consultation was conducted using a questionnaire and leaflet distributed to a cross-tenure sample of Exeter residents and displayed in GP surgeries, libraries, community centres and the Civic Centre. Efforts were made to reach groups who may often be marginalised in consultation such as black and minority ethnic (BME) groups, people with physical disabilities, older people, young people, homeless people and people with mental health problems.

- 3.2 Consultation with partner agencies was based upon a Summary for Consultation of the Housing Strategy 2004-2009. Presentations on the Strategy were made to the Local Strategic Partnership, the Social Health and Inclusion Partnership and the Exeter Older People's Partnership Group. Council staff were also invited to take part in the consultation.
- 3.3 A Housing Strategy Review Working Group including council officers, Members, tenants and a representative of a local housing association met regularly to oversee the review process and shape the structure and content of the revised Strategy.
- 3.4 Consultation results showed public support for existing priorities with emphasis on the need for more affordable rented housing and low cost home ownership. There was strong support for improved environmental standards in housing. The partners' responses were varied, although there was some common ground regarding flexibility on affordable housing requirements.
- 3.5 An Equalities Impact Assessment of the Housing Strategy has been carried out as part of the review. As a result the revised Strategy places more emphasis upon diversity, equality and accessibility.

4. RESULTS OF THE EXETER AND TORBAY HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT

4.1 The ETHMA focuses on the Housing Market Areas of Exeter and Torbay as previously defined by government. It then identifies six further sub-markets within the sub-region. There is a main report on the sub-region as a whole and separate district reports. The Exeter report gives results for the city of Exeter as defined by the district council administrative area – this is not the same as the area covered by the Exeter Housing Market Area, which extends into East Devon, Teignbridge and Mid-Devon. The research was based on 3,470 personal interviews with households across the two Housing Market Areas, coupled with a range of secondary data sources.

4.2 Additional Housing Requirement 2006-2011

The ETHMA considers the interaction of housing requirements and supply across all sectors of the housing market and identifies future housing requirements for different types of properties and tenures in the city of Exeter as follows:

- 5,256 additional dwellings, across all tenures, would need to be provided over the 5-year period to sustain the existing supply/demand balance.
- The tenure split for these 5,256 would need to be; market housing 2,068 (39.9%); intermediate* housing 981 (18.7%); social rented housing 2,207 (42%).
- Thus unmet need is around 60% affordable housing: 40% market housing

* Intermediate housing includes a range of dedicated low cost home ownership products such as shared ownership and a proportion of housing in the private rented sector with low rents (within the lowest quartile).

4.3 Predicted Completions

- The number of completions within Exeter city, across all tenures, is expected to be around 500 dwellings per annum, 2,500 across the 5-year period.
- Social rented completions are predicted to be between 675 and 845 dwellings over the 5-year period, well short of the 2,207 requirement.
- Intermediate housing completions are predicted to be between 130 and 260 dwellings over the 5-year period, again short of the 981 requirement.
- Market housing completions are predicted to be around 1,600 over the 5-year period, short of the 2,068 requirement.

4.4 Migration and households

- Inward migration to the city is significant in increasing housing demand. Exeter's population in 2005 was 117,600. This is estimated to rise to 143,900 by 2029,
- 29% of households in Exeter contain only 1 member.
- As many as 30,350 (70%) of households are currently technically under occupying their property, nearly half of these by 2 or more bedrooms.
- Net migration into Exeter during 2000-2005 was 4620 people – of these 3,500 were in the 16 – 24 age category

4.5 Tenure and housing conditions

- The current housing tenure in Exeter is - owner occupied 66.5%; private landlord 14%; housing association 6.4%; and Council 13.1%.
- The current house type mix in Exeter is - detached 15%; semi detached 27%; terraced 35%; flats 23%.
- 1429 households are currently living in technically overcrowded housing
- 2586 households believe they have a serious problem with the condition of their houses, 1334 of these have no fixed heating and 1839 believe they are suffering from disrepair.

5. PROPOSALS

5.1 The ETHMA indicates a growing housing requirement but there is limited land available for housing in Exeter and completion rates are unlikely to reach the levels required. The Housing Strategy sets out a strategic approach to improve the use of existing stock and future investment to ensure that “Everyone has the opportunity of a home that they can afford”. Proposals are organised around the themes of:

- **Everyone** – outlines how we will meet the diverse needs of different communities covering issues such as supported housing, older people's housing, accessible housing, particular needs of BME groups and gypsies and travellers. Action points include a commitment to increase the availability of accessible housing and for all new affordable housing to be built to Lifetime Homes* standard.

* The Lifetime Homes Standard sets out a minimum specification that new properties should meet that gives a high degree of flexibility to adapt the property to a household's changing needs. By building to this standard it is expected homes will remain sustainable for the longer term.

- **Home** – sets out our strategy for the most effective use of housing stock, both social and private sector and measures to encourage development of sustainable, mixed communities. Action points include developing affordable housing on Council-owned land, higher environmental standards for new affordable homes and the use of downsizing initiatives.
- **Opportunity** – deals with access to housing, homelessness, housing advice and allocations. This section seeks to increase the requirement for affordable housing on private developments to 35% (from 25%) on developments of fifteen dwellings or more – 70% of which should be social rented housing and 30% intermediate affordable housing. It also seeks to introduce, through the Local Development Framework and Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Documentation a level of developer contributions to affordable housing on sites where the number of units provided is 14 or below.

5.2 The Strategy also makes recommendations for joint working with neighbouring authorities to develop a sub-regional strategy to accommodate predicted household growth.

6. **RECOMMENDED** that Scrutiny Committee – Community supports and Executive agrees:

- 1) to adopt the revised Housing Strategy document 2007-2012
- 2) that an annual report is submitted outlining progress against the Strategy's action plan.

HEAD OF HOUSING SERVICES

S:LP/Committee/907SCC13
23.8.07

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:

Exeter and Torbay Housing Market Assessment – Main Report and Exeter City Report
Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3)