

Briefing: Sub Regional Housing Partnerships

May 2007



With many county councils in the throw of local government review, the role of sub regional housing partnerships, not traditionally reflecting shire boundaries, is becoming increasingly influential. This briefing introduces the role of these new organisations in the East of England.

What are Sub Regional Housing Partnerships?

The formation of Sub Regional Housing Partnerships have been encouraged by central government as a way of responding strategically to the needs of housing markets which do not necessarily reflect local authority boundaries.

In 2006, the government published Planning Policy Statement 3(PPS3) which recommended local authorities identify strategic housing markets, building upon regionally published migration studies to highlight how populations gravitated/or travelled to regional economic centres. Sub regional housing partnerships were compiled in 2006/07 by local authorities who were thought to have similar populations or problems in common.

They are increasingly seen as a way in which regional housing boards can engage regularly with a wide range of local authorities and were chosen as the way that regional housing boards distributed Single Housing Investment Pot.

What happens in the East of England?

The sub regional housing partnerships for the East of England were finalised in the publication of the regions spatial strategy, the East of England Plan(2007). Prior to 2007 the regional spatial strategy for the East of England had been written as separate three documents¹ covering areas, which were thought to have mutual concerns and/or were significantly affected by the work/investment in local authorities outside of our region.

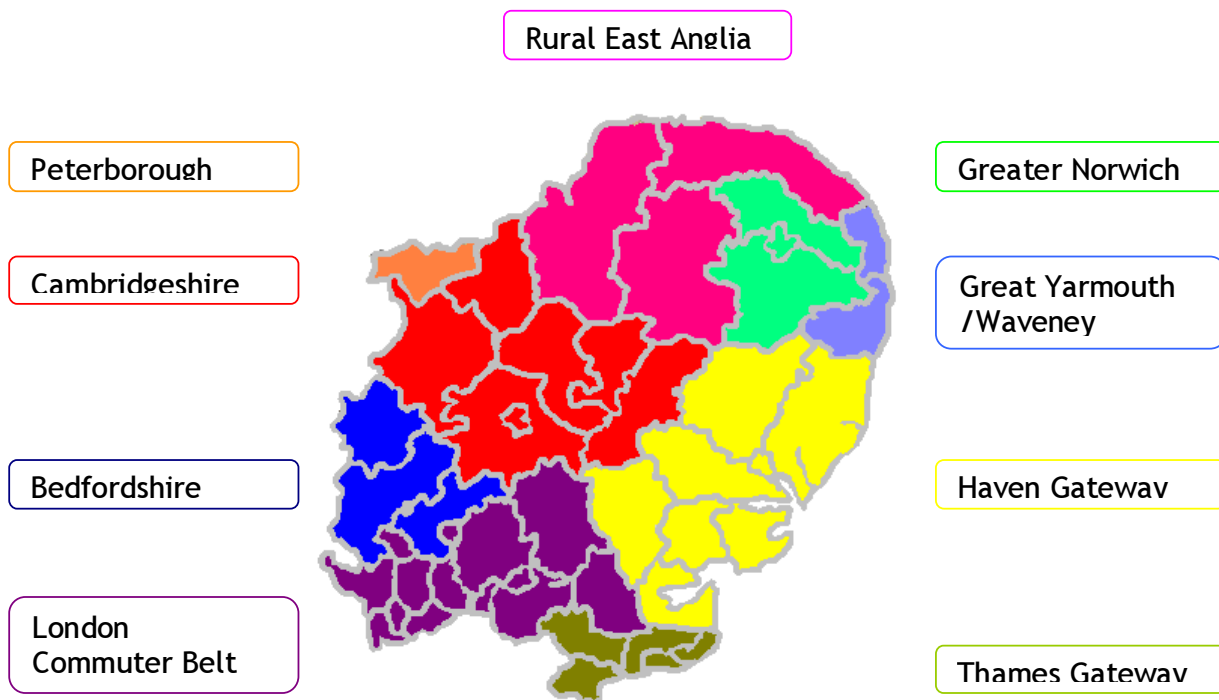
There are nine sub regional housing partnerships in the East of England (the Thames Gateway, Haven Gateway, Greater Norwich, Great Yarmouth/Waveney, Rural East Anglia, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, London Commuter Belt and Peterborough).

To date all of the nine sub regional partnerships have published their own housing strategy and in the Regional Housing Strategy 2008-2011 were encouraged to create subregional homeless strategies to reflect how the distance travelled by many homeless people to access supported accommodation. As of April 2008 sub regional homeless strategies have been produced by Greater Norwich & Yarmouth/Waveney.

Management of the subregional housing strategies varies although increasingly each partnership is seeking to appoint a sub regional co-ordinator to facilitate the partnership and speak on their behalf. Each partnership will have a host authority in charge of administering their share of the £14.3m distributed by the Regional Housing Board under the Single Housing Investment Pot (2008-2011).

¹ RPG6-East Anglia (Cambridgeshire, Norfolk ad Suffolk), RPG9-South East (Bedfordshire, Luton & Hertfordshire) and RPG9a-Thames Gateway(Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock)

Details of the partnerships and their relevant strategies are shown below:



1. Thames Gateway: including Basildon District Council, Castle Point Borough Council, Rochford District Council, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and Thurrock Borough Council

Reason for partnership: the Thames Gateway is a national focus for regeneration and the provision of affordable housing for London. The region is going to be supported by the new Cross Rail train service and extension of the Channel Tunnel.

Strategy

Thames Gateway Strategy 2005-2008

www.tgessex.co.uk/downloads.php

2. Haven Gateway: including Barbergh District Council, Braintree District Council, Colchester City Council, Ipswich City Council, Maldon District Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and Tendring Borough Council.

Reason for partnership: the economy of the Haven Gateway is central built around the ports of Harwich and Felixstowe and expanding tourist/leisure services on the coast.

Strategy

The Greater Haven Gateway: housing strategy for the sub region 2006-2010

www.ipswich.gov.uk

3. Greater Norwich: including Broadland Borough Council, Norwich City Council and South Norfolk District Council

Reason for partnership: Norwich has a population of 200,000 and is one of the largest urban areas in the East of England. Norwich City has the highest job density of any local authority in the UK with a large proportion of its employees commuting in from the surrounding areas.

Strategy

Greater Norwich Housing Strategy 2005-2010

http://www.norwich.gov.uk/webapps/atoz/service_page.asp?id=1395

Greater Norwich Homeless Strategy 2007-2010

www.norwich.gov.uk/intranet_docs/A-Z/Housing/Strategies/GN_Homelessness_Strategy.pdf

4. Great Yarmouth/Waveney: including Great Yarmouth District Council and Waveney Borough Council

Reason for partnership: The two principle towns have had similar problems in recent years (resulting in relatively high unemployment and a number of pockets of deprivation) with the positive attributes of a coastal environment and strong maritime industries.

Strategy

A Sub regional housing strategy for Great Yarmouth & Waveney 2005 and beyond

www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/housing/housing_policy.html

Great Yarmouth & Waveney Sub region Homeless Strategy 2008-2013

http://www.waveney.gov.uk/Consultations/past_consultations/consult_homelessness_sep07.ht

5. Rural East Anglia: Including Breckland Borough Council, Kings Lynn & West Norfolk and North Norfolk District Council

Reason for partnership: The three local authorities are joined by their wide geographic area and the difficulties this provokes strategically planning housing. The authorised are characterised by their diversity of income and affordability.

Strategy

Rural East Anglia: A Sub regional housing strategy 2005-2009

<http://www.breckland.gov.uk/nwia/az.nsf/BreCategories/55AED5D25D40D7E6802566390043B234?OpenDocument&Site=Bre&Display=Bre>

6. Cambridgeshire: including Cambridge City Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Fenland District Council, Forest Heath District Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council

Reason for partnership: Cambridge university is internationally recognised and has led many technical and computer companies to locate themselves nearby. Cambridgeshire is one of the fastest growing sub regions in the country with a higher than average level of unemployment but severed lack of affordable housing

Strategy

Cambridgeshire Housing Strategy 2005-2009

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/housing/housing-strategy-research/>

7. Bedfordshire: *including Bedford Borough Council, Luton Borough Council, Mid Bedfordshire Council and South Bedfordshire Council*

Reason for partnership: Whilst the sub regional strategy agrees that there is a lot of immigration between Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire making it difficult to identify a housing market for all of the county, the four authorities have common concerns about affordable housing, small private rented sectors and high BME populations

Strategy

Bedfordshire Housing Strategy 2005-2010: Seizing Opportunity (Delivering growth and meeting needs)

<http://www.bedford.gov.uk/bedford/housing/regional.htm>

8. London Commuter Belt: *including Brentwood Borough Council, Broxbourne Borough Council, Dacorum Borough Council, East Hertsfordshire Borough Council, Epping Forest District Council, Harlow District Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, North Hertsfordshire District Council, St Albans District Council, Stevenage Borough Council, Three Rivers District Council, Uttlesford District Council, Watford Borough Council and Welwyn Hatfield Council*

Reason for partnership: The London Commuter belt is the largest of the nine sub regions with a combined population of over 1.5m; the region includes one of the growth areas under the Sustainable Communities Plan for the South East of England and is characterised by a transient population.

Strategy

A housing strategy for the London Commuter Belt Subregion 2005-2008

<http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/uploads/documents/lcb-strategy-final111004.pdf>

9. Peterborough: *including Peterborough City Council only*

Strategy

Peterborough Housing Strategy 2005-2010

<http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/page-163>

Chris Cornell
20th May 2008