

# The North West Regional Housing Strategy

Review of the North West Regional Housing Strategy  
Consultation Responses – Summary Analysis

January 2009



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# Consultation Responses -

## Summary Analysis

### **Background**

Throughout 2008 much progress has been made with the Review of the North West Regional Housing Strategy (RHS), including the publication of a discussion paper, consultation paper and consultation events at a regional and sub-regional level.

On 8th December, consultation for the final phase of preparation came to an end. This paper provides an overview of the responses received.

### **Responses**

In total 49 responses were received following the consultation period, a full list of the respondents is appended to this paper. Of these, the split was as follows:

- 15 Local Authorities
- 8 Housing Associations / RSLs / ALMOS
- 6 Third Sector Organisations
- 3 Government Departments / Agencies
- 3 Private Developers
- 1 HMR Pathfinder
- 1 Consultancy
- Northwest Development Agency
- Homes and Communities Agency
- 10 other organisations (including special interest groups, representative bodies and charities)

The overall reception to the Draft RHS has been positive with the majority of stakeholders declaring their general support for the document. Over a fifth of responses declared no formal position regarding their support for the document while only a handful provided significant criticism for the publication.

### **KEY MESSAGES**

#### **Credit Crunch and the Wider Economic Downturn**

The bulk of consultation responses addressed the impact of the current market conditions on the RHS. The common message was that while there was a degree of uncertainty regarding the current economic situation, the RHS could provide more leadership on the short-term response to the credit crunch and wider recession. Rather than 'riding out the storm', the Strategy should also provide greater leadership in moving forward long-term through the financial difficulties.

#### **Sub-Regional Working**

While there was broad agreement for sub-regional working, there was a general consensus that further understanding was required for strategy and delivery at the sub-regional level. Many respondents identified that Sub Regional Partnerships required further development to provide the detailed allocation of resources/ implementation of policies. Specifically, greater coverage was needed in the document including the challenges sub-regional working faces.

### **Social and Economic Inclusion**

There is generally wide support for the overall vision whereby the housing offer is framed within regional economic growth. However some housing associations and special interest groups aired their concerns that issues of social inclusion were not receiving the necessary focus. With this, issues surrounding sustainable communities, the environment and health could then be acknowledged in the overall vision.

Added to this, some stakeholders have called for greater emphasis within the RHS on policy towards BME communities.

### **Changing Demographics**

Several special interest groups have flagged up the need for greater acknowledgement to changing demographics with an emphasis on an ageing population. This in turn, would require a greater focus on vulnerable households and associated provision of supported housing.

### **Sustainability**

A shared consideration among some stakeholders is the need for greater recognition of issues of sustainability. Due to the high proportion of environmentally based special interest groups, this issue is identified on numerous occasions. In some cases, stakeholders call on the incorporation of the recommendations of the Sustainability Appraisal so far, or to provide justification for not including each individual recommendation. In other cases, there is a call for more direct recognition of fuel poverty, low carbon homes and other environmental concerns.

### **Rural Homes**

Similar to sustainability, due to a high proportion of rural based interest groups producing responses, a common message which has come out is the inadequate coverage of rural housing issues.

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