



# newsletter

NEWS FROM THAMES GATEWAY SOUTH ESSEX STRATEGIC HOUSING GROUP

FORUM SPECIAL NOV 08

Introduction by

## Cllr Tony Ball

Chairman of the Thames Gateway South Essex Housing Members Group



Welcome to the first edition of the TGSE Strategic Housing Group Newsletter, which I hope you find provides a useful summary of the key housing strategy and delivery initiatives taking place in the sub region.

We intend to produce the newsletter twice a year and the next publication will be in May 2009.

I look forward to seeing you at our forthcoming events.

### Forthcoming events

- Thames Gateway Forum, 26- 27 November, London Excel
- Sustainable Development Seminar, 8 December, Basildon

# New Housing Strategy launched for South Essex

Our Vision is to deliver quality housing that contributes to sustainable communities and a balanced housing market.

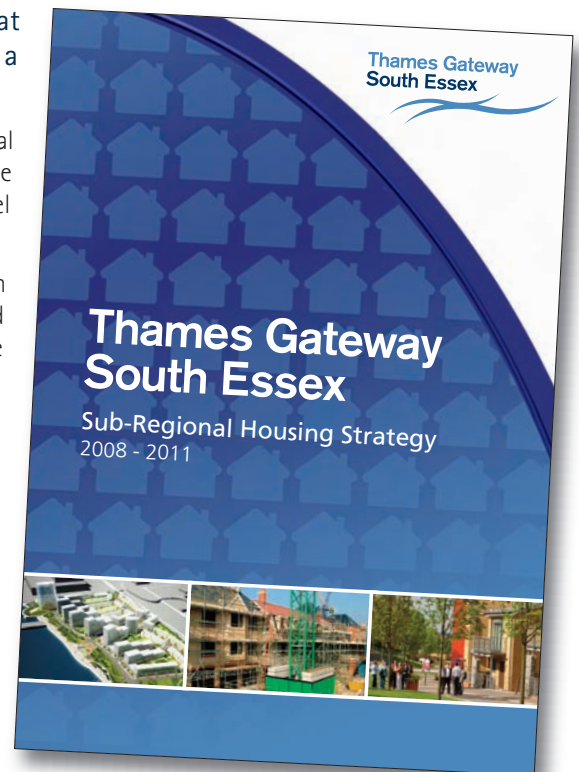
The second Thames Gateway South Essex Sub Regional Housing Strategy (2008-11) will be launched at the Thames Gateway Forum on 26 November at the Excel Centre, London Docklands.

The strategy sets out the priorities and actions which will accelerate the supply of high quality and sustainable housing to help meet the needs of people living or aspiring to live in the Thames Gateway South Essex sub region.

Cllr Tony Ball, Chairman of the TGSE Housing Members Group commented, "The strategy sets out a vision for the sub-region, the key actions that Partners wish to achieve between now and 2011 and the challenges that need to be overcome if the sub region is to achieve its aims".

The Strategy looks at the targets, issues, trends and partnership actions arising from:

- Future housing growth to ensure it is sustainable and future proof
- Needs of vulnerable groups living in the sub region
- Future of the current housing stock to ensure it is at a decent standard



## New SHMA for South Essex



A new Strategic Housing Market Assessment was completed by GVA Grimley for South Essex. Mike Taylor, Director at Grimley commented that, "It provides a sound analysis of the current housing market and considers policy implications of a downturn in the property market and its impact on the economy. It will guide local strategies in the sub region and improve the quality of housing and its overall supply.

Importantly, it looks beyond the immediate economic crisis and seeks to address the housing and economic challenges faced by the Gateway over the next 15 to 20 years."

To get your copy of the Housing Strategy or the SHMA, please contact the TGSE Strategy Coordinator, Alastair Pollock on 01268 294327 or email [alastair.pollock@basildon.gov.uk](mailto:alastair.pollock@basildon.gov.uk)

## New Housing and Regeneration Act 08

The Housing and Regeneration Bill was given Royal Assent on 22 July 2008. It will help to deliver the commitments set out in the Housing Green Paper to provide more and greener homes, in mixed and sustainable communities.

The Act also implements the changes proposed in the Green Paper which includes proposals to create a new Homes and Communities Agency and plans to give councils more freedoms and incentives to build new homes. It makes the environmental rating against the Code for Sustainable Homes mandatory for all new homes.

### Did you know?

TGSE has a combined population of 647,100 (Based on mid year population estimates 2006) living in 284,198 dwellings.

## New Homes and Communities Agency

The new Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) will become operational on 1 December 2008 and will be the single national housing and regeneration agency for England. The new Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) combines English Partnerships, the Housing Corporation and delivery functions from Communities and Local Government including growth areas such as the Thames Gateway and its Delivery Plan. It will focus on delivering more new and affordable homes across all tenures and will drive and invest in regeneration. Sir Bob Kerslake has been appointed as the first Chief Executive and Terry Fuller has been appointed as the Regional Director for the East of England.

# Latest on the mortgage rescue package

The UK Government recently announced at the beginning of September, a package of measures aimed at addressing some of the current housing market challenges. Here's a brief summary of what that package comprises:

- A one year freeze on stamp duty for purchases of residential property of £175,000 or less.
- Reforms to the system for paying

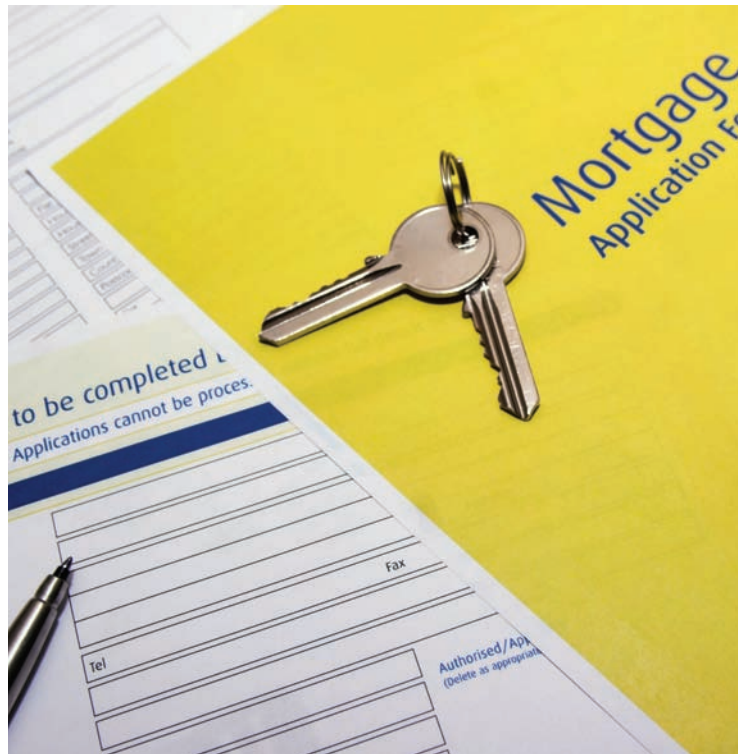
role in this scheme, helping to assess applications. Depending on their circumstances, eligible home owners will be offered one of three options:

- Shared ownership: a registered social landlord (RSL) buys a share and converts the property to shared ownership by issuing a shared ownership lease
- Shared equity: an RSL provides

government and the developer, and free of charge for five years (see section on Moat Housing opposite for further information).

- Bringing forward £400 million from existing budgets for affordable housing schemes, with the aim of delivering up to 5,500 affordable homes over the next 18 months. The Government has announced that, for the first time, local authorities with existing housing stock will be able to apply for this grant to build social housing, alongside RSLs.

- Working with Regional Development Agencies and the new Homes and Communities Agency to identify projects to support the most critical regeneration schemes with the most potential to transform their communities. The Government acknowledge that housing market conditions have led to some regeneration schemes slowing down or stalling and the projects will be aimed at alleviating these effects.



Income Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI). For new working age claims from April 2009, the waiting period before SMI will be paid will be shortened from 39 weeks to 13 weeks and, in addition, the upper ceiling for the size of mortgage that will be met will be raised to £175,000.

- £200m for a mortgage rescue scheme aimed at those families who can no longer afford their mortgage repayments and who would be eligible for homelessness assistance. Local authorities are to have a major

an equity loan enabling the householder's mortgage payments to be reduced.

- Sale and rent back: a RSL clears the mortgage debt completely, and the resident accepts a tenancy and pays rent to the RSL
- £300m for a "HomeBuy Direct" scheme to assist first time buyers into affordable home ownership. Eligible buyers, with household incomes of under £60,000, will be offered an equity loan of up to 30% of the value of a newly built property, co-funded by the

### Did you know?

2-3 bed properties are the most abundant in sub region.

Southend with 38% has the largest amount of 1-2 bed properties.

Thurrock with 57% has the highest concentration of 2-3 bed properties.

Rochford with 23% and Castle Point with 21% have the largest amount of 4 bed properties.

# Get a foot on the property ladder with Moat

With the pressures of affordability rising, the difficulties that first time buyers face in buying a home are well documented. However, there is help at hand. There are real opportunities available for first time buyers to get on to the property ladder and Moat can explain the extensive benefits of the products available in order to help local people purchase affordable homes.



## What is the role of the HomeBuy Agents?

There are HomeBuy Agents covering all areas of the country. Their role is to offer a one-stop shop for home buyers wishing to find out about low cost home ownership products by offering a professional and experienced information service. As the Government appointed HomeBuy Agent for Essex, Moat is able to explain and talk through any questions or concerns regarding eligibility, application procedures and information about all of the HomeBuy products that are available.

## Where do I go for further advice?

Moat should be your first point of contact if you have any questions about any of the schemes or programmes.

Telephone: 0845 3596161  
Website: [www.moat.co.uk](http://www.moat.co.uk)  
Email: [marketing@moat.co.uk](mailto:marketing@moat.co.uk)



## What options are available?

- OpenMarketHomeBuy offers two options of products: MyChoiceHomeBuy including New Build Shared Equity and Ownhome.
- New Build HomeBuy offers homes on a part rent/part buy basis.
- Resales allow buyers to buy an existing part rent/ part buy property from the owner and take on their share in the property.
- New Build Discounted Rent provides brand new homes available for subsidised rent, predominantly for public sector key workers.
- Rent to HomeBuy provides brand new homes available to rent at a subsidised rate, with the opportunity to purchase a share in the property after two to three years.
- Social HomeBuy offers the opportunity for housing association residents and local authority residents to purchase shares in their home.
- First Time Buyers' Initiative offers first time buyers the opportunity to buy their own new build home with an affordable mortgage and the government help with a grant for the rest.

## Is TGSE on target with housing delivery?

An additional 44,300 new homes planned for South Essex by 2021 to cater for a 5% increase in the population. Between 2001 and 2006 a total of 9,420 dwellings were completed, leaving 34,880 to be built by 2021. In summary net housing building completion rates have been slow since 2001 and net affordable housing completions been slower still.

GVA Grimley comment in the SHMA "there are clear delivery risks to the current development pipeline associated with current market conditions, and we would expect delivery over the next five years to actually fall short of current projections set out in the housing trajectories".

However, the TGSE sub regional housing market still offers housing at a noticeable discount, when compared to other parts of the greater South East region. This makes it attractive to households from outside of the area looking to upgrade; and to first-time buyers priced out of other housing markets (and particularly London). Further, average house prices in TGSE are still relatively stable and to date are not falling as sharply as national figures.

However, market indicators such as mortgage approvals and house transactions show significant declines.

Whilst the TGSE Housing Group recognizes that the current market conditions create a challenging time for the sub region, they will continue to strive to meet government targets through partnership working.

# Housing schemes in the sub region



## Watt's Wood Park

<< Purfleet, Thurrock

Family Mosaic is working with Bellway Homes to deliver 49 affordable units at the former Esso Sportsfield site in Purfleet. Contracts were exchanged in July 2008 and works began on site in September 2008 to complete the development comprising 163 residential units (114 private sale, 49 affordable) together with car parking, public open space and landscaping.

The affordable units provide 24 units for social rent and 25 units for shared ownership through a mix of flats and houses, delivered with Housing Corporation grant funding totalling £1,294,684. Anticipated completion date for the affordable units is July 2009.

For further information please contact Daniel Orazulume on 020 7089 1035; email: [daniel.orazulume@familymosaic.co.uk](mailto:daniel.orazulume@familymosaic.co.uk)

## Morello Quarter

Basildon >>

Weston Homes are due to complete early summer 2009 on phase 1 of the Morello Quarter / Cherrydown East scheme. They are currently marketing 46 one and two bed high specification apartments for sale as part of the 425 flatted development following granting of full planning permission on 9/03/07. Residents will benefit from high quality planted communal terraces and garden areas, secured underground car parking and lifts to all floors.

The scheme is conveniently located close to town centre shopping and the railway station. Prices start at £140,000.

For further information, please contact the sales office on 0845 6385012 or email [sales@weston-homes.com](mailto:sales@weston-homes.com)

## Five Links Estate

Basildon

The regeneration of the Five Links Estate, Basildon moved a step closer to completion this year with the start of stage three of the estate's regeneration.

The latest stage involves selective demolition and the provision of 186 homes for affordable rent and private sale. It will also see the construction of a landmark building on site.

In partnership with Basildon Council, Swan has already completed stages one and two of the Five Links Masterplan with 369 new homes for rent and shared ownership built. Both stages have registered high levels of resident satisfaction and reduced levels of crime.





# The Icon

## << Basildon

The Icon is an exciting new development located in the heart of Basildon, Essex. The town is undergoing a multi-million pound regeneration project and this development is the epitome of style to fit with Basildon's dynamic new profile.

The Icon is situated a minutes walk from Basildon Station, leaving the city and central London only a thirty-five minute journey away. Excel, Eurostar and Canary Wharf are also easily accessed via West Ham station, which is three stations away on the National Rail network. For travel further a field, three of London's five major airports are within easy driving distance via the M25 and A13 and all of the Moat homes include secure private parking.

Moat is offering 15 two bedroom affordable apartments at The Icon in Basildon. Market values at The Icon begin at £155,000. The minimum percentage you can buy is 35% and the properties are available on a New Build HomeBuy basis. The minimum income for a single buyer is £20,400 and the minimum joint income is £26,750.

Alternatively, there are properties at The Icon available through discounted rent. The rents are approximately 20% lower than comparable rents in the area, making it more affordable. At a later stage, subject to eligibility and personal circumstances you will be able to buy a share in the property on a part buy / part rent basis. Tenancies last six months (with the opportunity to extend) and no deposit is payable, making this ideal for people in or around Basildon.

Two bedroom apartments: £640 per calendar month. All rents include service charges. Please contact Stewart Huck on 0845 359 6402 or email [stewart.huck@moat.co.uk](mailto:stewart.huck@moat.co.uk) for more information.

[www.iconicliving.co.uk](http://www.iconicliving.co.uk)

# Little Gyp's Court

## Castle Point >>

Efforts to increase access to affordable housing in Castle Point have been boosted by Swan Housing Group's Little Gypps Court development. The 18 unit scheme on Canvey Island was delivered in partnership between Swan and Castle Point Borough Council.

A combination of 14 flats and four houses built to Secure by Design and Eco Homes 'Very Good' standards, has delivered a quality scheme of homes for affordable rent. Gypps Hill also comprises shared ownership properties available to households earning as little as £15,500 per annum.

For more information please contact Swan Housing Group on 01277 844 700.



## Focus on Southend

### Delivering affordable housing

Southend currently has 3 RSL's partners (Guinness Trust, Circle Anglia and Chelmer Housing) on site bringing forward 105 properties across four sites, North Shoebury Road Shoeburyness, the corner of Station Road and Palmerston Road in Westcliff, Ambleside Drive in Southchurch and Olive Avenue Leigh, which we anticipate being completed within this financial year. Of these, 63 are for rent and the remaining 42 for new build HomeBuy or rent to buy.

Details of these properties can be found at [www.southend.gov.uk](http://www.southend.gov.uk) or via the Housing Association Website.

### Jersey House, Palmerston Rd, Westcliff-on-Sea, Southend >>

This contemporary development of 16 affordable 1 & 2 bedroom apartments is the result of The Guinness Trust working closely with Southend Borough Council and the developer ISG Jackson. Situated on the corner of Palmerston Road and Station Road in Westcliff-on-Sea, the development offers easy access to rail and road links and a fantastic view of the Thames Estuary.

The apartments, 11 for general need rent and 5 for New Build Homebuy have an excellent specification to include: fully carpeted throughout, vinyl flooring to bathrooms and kitchens, gas to radiator central heating, audio / Video door entry system, private balconies on all 2-bed apartments, roof top terrace available to all residents and allocated parking in the under block with access controlled entrance.

For more information please contact David Steedman at The Guinness Trust on tel 01707 397230 or [david.steedman@guinness.org.uk](mailto:david.steedman@guinness.org.uk)



## New Homeless Strategy for Southend

Southend has recently produced its Homeless Prevention Strategy 2008-11.

Youth Homelessness is a feature of the Strategy, as the issues faced by this group are recognised to be significantly different. Preventing homelessness among young people is vital for the cross-Government Every Child Matters agenda. The strategy aims to ensure that there is a multi-agency approach to meeting the needs of young people who present as homeless or potentially homeless.

An Older Peoples Accommodation and Support Needs Strategy has also been developed. The Strategy

recognises that well designed neighbourhoods are what make people feel safe and many people feel anxious in their home environment as their needs change. Specialist housing will sometimes be required for those suffering from dementia. There is often confusion on the services available to help people to stay independent. The Strategy proposes different levels of specialist housing provision retirement accommodation, conventional sheltered housing and extra care.

The size of units and the number of bedrooms must be of consideration in the planning and design of new or refurbished schemes. The current

models do not meet the need for those who want to downsize, need separate bedrooms or have family to stay over. The Southend Design Guide for Specialised Housing Developments provides further advice to developers.

Similar strategies have been prepared by the other Local Authorities in Thames Gateway South Essex Sub Region. For further information on Southend's Strategies, please go to [www.southend.gov.uk](http://www.southend.gov.uk) or contact tel 01702 215492 [sallyfaulkner@southend.gov.uk](mailto:sallyfaulkner@southend.gov.uk). For other local authorities Homeless strategies, please visit their respective websites.

### Five key objectives of the Homeless Prevention Strategy are to:

- Prevent homelessness and provide housing options
- Promote accessibility and quality of services
- Provide support and opportunities
- Reduce the use of temporary accommodation and increase availability of long-term housing.
- Monitor performance, evaluate and review

# Design Course completed by 11 partners

11 participants from Local authorities and Registered Social Landlords in the TGSE sub region successfully completed an accredited design training course run by the Kent Architecture Centre. Feedback from the course was encouraging.

One participant commented, "It has really opened my eyes because you always can say if you like a place, but this has helped me to identify the reasons why. In the future, we will now be able to incorporate these design objectives into our new sites. I also feel more confident briefing architects". A highlight of the course was the field trip which included a visit to the acclaimed Peter Barber Architect's scheme at Tanner Street Gateway, Barking and the Waterstone Park scheme in Greenhithe, North Kent.

Participants also learnt how to use the CABE's Building for Life criteria applying it to live sites.



## Funding – Private Sector Housing bid

Following the submission of a funding bid from the TGSE Housing Group; partners have provisionally been awarded £5.88m from the East of England regional funding pot to support private sector housing in the TGSE sub region.

This is great news for the sub-region and has only been possible because we have worked together to make it happen. Not until Ministerial approval can we consider formally progressing the work, but in the meantime, the lead / accountable authorities of Basildon and Thurrock working through the TGSE Private Sector Housing sub group will be meeting shortly to agree how to take the bids forward which will include the preparation of detailed project delivery plans.

Details of the two projects are as follows:

### Decent – Warm – Health Homes

£4.38m Funding will support the renovation of up to 11,200 private sector homes across the sub region to reduce fuel poverty and renovate private sector homes occupied by vulnerable households (low income and/or disabled). Costs will be recovered through a local land charge that is repayable on sale of the property.

### Empty Homes – Direct Assistance

£1.5m funding will help bring up to 60 long term empty properties back into use through a Voluntary Management Order. Renovation costs will be deducted at source on a monthly basis throughout the life of the lease. After management and maintenance costs have been deducted the surplus will be passed to the owner. This will not only reduce the number of empty homes but will provide medium term housing solutions.

For further information please contact Louisa Moss at Thurrock Council at [lmoss@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:lmoss@thurrock.gov.uk)

### Did you know?

85% of the housing stock within the sub region is in private sector ownership. There were a total of 8,627 vacant dwellings as of April 2006.

Over 230,000 people are employed in the Thames Gateway South Essex economy. By 2021 55,000 additional jobs are to be created.

# Estuary Housing Association receives Investment Partners Status



Estuary Housing Association have recently moved their registered office to a central location in the heart of Southend on Sea. "Our new office location will make our services much more accessible to the community and will re-enforce our customer focused approach to delivering quality housing products in the sub region". said Paul Durkin, Chief Executive.

2008 has been an extremely active year for Estuary Housing Association with the consolidation

of the structural changes to the senior management team. These changes have enabled us to focus on our priorities of improving resident satisfaction, further developing our customer focused approach and delivering exceptional services to the communities we serve.

Estuary has a clear desire and vision to be far more active in providing new affordable homes and were therefore delighted to be one of only four newly selected housing

associations across the Country to receive Investment Partner Status with the Housing Corporation this year. One of the strategic priority areas of development for Estuary is the Thames Gateway South Essex.

Contact Estuary Housing at:  
8th & 9th floors, Maitland House  
Warrior Square  
Southend on Sea  
Essex, SS1 2JY

Tel: 01702 462246 or visit our website [www.estuary.co.uk](http://www.estuary.co.uk)

The TGSE Housing Group forms a sub group of the wider Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership and is represented by Housing Strategy and Development partners from the following organisations:

- Basildon District Council
- Castle Point Borough Council
- Rochford District Council
- Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
- Thurrock Borough Council
- Estuary HA Ltd
- Family Mosaic
- Guinness Trust
- Moat Housing Group
- Swan Housing Group

A wider group of RSLs meet quarterly through a Forum and include the five representatives above and the following additional organisations: East Thames Group, Gallions HA, Flagship Housing, London and Quadrant, Circle Anglia, Sanctuary Group and Southern Housing Group.

For further information, please contact:

**Alastair Pollock - TGSE Strategy Coordinator**

c/o Basildon District Council  
The Basildon Centre  
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[www.tgessex.co.uk](http://www.tgessex.co.uk)

## Thames Gateway South Essex