

Report to: Executive
Date: 26 February 2008
Report of: Executive Member for Regeneration
Subject County Durham Growth Point Bid: East and South Durham
Ward: All

Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To endorse the Growth Bid expression of interest submitted by the Co. Durham Housing and Neighbourhood Partnership Board that has a focus on the areas of East Durham (Easington District) and South Durham (Sedgefield and Wear Valley Districts).
- 1.2 A copy of the Expression of Interest is attached to this report.

Consultation

- 2.1 Proposals within the Expression of Interest were developed through the Durham Housing and Neighbourhoods Partnership Board have been discussed with individual authorities including the Director of Regeneration and Development on behalf the Council. In preparing this report, Management Team have been consulted..
- 2.2 Reference to the submission of a Growth Point Expression of Interest has previously been made in a number of briefings to Executive Members on related matters.

Background

- 3.1 Following the publication of the Housing Green Paper in July 2007, the Government announced in a letter to Chief Executives in August 2007 that it would be inviting expression of interest proposals for additional Growth Points in the North of England. These Growth Points will help the Government meet its housing delivery targets and be used to overcome worsening affordability in the housing market. The Government acknowledges that much of this Growth will be in areas where the challenge is to balance growth alongside regeneration, including continuing housing market renewal.

The Durham Growth Bid

- 4.1 The Growth Bid for East and South Durham was co-ordinated through the Durham Housing and Neighbourhoods Partnership Board. Following consideration of the bidding criteria, a proposal was developed that sought to focus new housing provision in sustainable locations able to support accelerated employment together with supporting investment in quality of place and connectivity.
- 4.2 In terms of localities, the Bid expression was the prioritised in line with the County Durham Sub Regional Housing Strategy (July 2007) to promote housing investment in the former Durham Coalfield Communities, the subject of the first phase of a planned Housing Market Renewal programme in association with English Partnerships. It was also reflective of the representations submitted by the County Durham authorities during the North East Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) process over the planned levels of house building in the county. The Growth Point submission was seen as a means to secure additional housing provision to support the regeneration proposals for East and South Durham in line with RSS policy objectives.
- 4.3 The Growth Point concentrates on two economic corridors in line with the draft County Durham Economic Strategy:
 - The East Durham A19 corridor (Seaham and Peterlee)
 - The Bishop Auckland – Darlington corridor (Spennymoor, Shildon, Newton Aycliffe and Bishop Auckland)

4.4 In summary, the Bid seeks to deliver the following outcomes:

- 14,500 net additional homes between 2004 – 2016 in the Councils of Easington, Sedgefield and Wear Valley. The target is for 30% of this provision to be affordable homes.
- Provision of new jobs through accelerated delivery of nine employment and mixed-use sites and town centre regeneration schemes.
- The encouragement of ‘urban renaissance’ initiatives including town centre improvements and better retail facilities, implementation of Building Schools for the Future programmes, enhanced recreational opportunities and improved accessibility so as to raise the environmental standards of development and improve the environmental quality and broader quality of place. Enable a transport model shift towards public transport, to reduce the impact of travel to work journeys under the County Council’s Transit 15 initiative.

4.5 Within Easington, the bid focuses on Peterlee and areas covered by the Coalfield Housing Market Renewal Programme including the priority settlements of Easington Colliery and Dawdon. A great deal of work has already been undertaken to develop the Peterlee Area Development Framework Masterplan, setting out ambitious plans for residential growth within the existing urban area and redevelopment of the Town Centre. The Growth Bid is intended to support and accelerate the implementation of these programmes and masterplans, by addressing the need for infrastructure necessary to release sites for development.

4.6 In December 2007, the Government wrote to the Durham Housing and Neighbourhoods Partnership Board requesting additional information regarding transport provision, green infrastructure and flood risk. This information has now been co-ordinated and sent to Government for further consideration.

4.7 An announcement on the County Durham Expression of Interest is expected later this month.

Implications

5.1 Financial : There are no financial implications arising directly from the bid although it is closely related closely to delivery mechanisms under consideration for the Coalfield Housing Market Renewal Programme.

5.2 Legal : There are no legal issues arising from this report.

5.3 Policy : If successful, the Growth Bid will need to be taken into account in the Local Development Framework including the implications for an accelerated rate of housing provision.

5.4 Corporate : The bid supports a wide range of corporate objectives relating to housing, regeneration, employment, sustainability, environment, transport and growth.

5.5 Local Government Review : There are no direct issues relating to the report, though the planning implications in terms of the delivery of an enhanced rate of housing development across the County will need to be addressed as a priority in the transitional arrangements.

5.6 Communication : That the Department of Communities and Local Government is informed the Council supports the submitted bid. There are no other communications issues arising at present but this would need to be reviewed were the bid to be successful.

5.7 Risks : There are no risk implications arising from this report.

Recommendation

6.1 That the Executive endorse the County Durham Growth bid Expression of Interest submitted by the Durham Housing and Neighbourhood Partnership Board.

Background Papers/Documents referred to

DCLG letter to Chief Executives, Housing Green Paper: Additional Growth Points & Eco-Towns, 2 August 2007

Durham New Growth Point Bid, October 2007

Durham New Growth Point Bid Confidential Appendices, October 2007