The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) is the professional body for people working in housing. Our purpose is to maximise the contribution that housing professionals make to the wellbeing of communities. The CIH South East Region is one of the largest regions of the CIH in England with over 2,000 members. The CIH South East is pleased to produce its second housing manifesto which outlines our key priorities and aims to meet the current challenges that the region faces. The region is currently struggling with affordability pressures, financing constraints and housing delivery barriers that make for a difficult and complex environment in which housing professionals work. Housing professionals face the challenge of meeting customer needs without compromise to economic, social and environmental impacts.

The CIH South East is committed to working with a range of partners across the housing sector and will continue to forge relationships with other sectors to deliver on housing and wider economic issues. With support of our strong membership and partners, we aim to deliver on housing issues through a range of regional activities and events. This manifesto is embedded with the CIH South East Corporate Objectives which are:

- Linking housing and other sectors-social, economic and environment.
- Raising the profile of the South East through activities undertaken by the CIH SE regional committee.
- Be a credible, highly recognised brand for the South East Region.
- The first point of contact for reliable housing information related to the South East Region.

We do believe that together we can make real difference to the communities that we serve and be at the forefront of building sustainable communities that will drive the South East Region forward.

MEETING AND SUPPORTING THE NEEDS OF THE AGEING AND OTHER VULNERABLE PEOPLE

SOME KEY ISSUES

- The SE Region demographic profile is changing, with increased migration, BME and other minority groups, disabled people, and a significantly higher proportion of elderly people.
- Meeting the needs of the elderly and other vulnerable groups presents many pressures, but is critical to the delivery of sustainable communities. The Lifetime Neighbourhoods agenda is a vital part of delivering that goal.
- The main issues are of transparency and fairness in allocations and in rent setting, to contribute positively to community relationships, so that these systems minimise the myths about the process of the allocation of social housing.

THE FACTS

- The population is ageing at a fast pace, projected to increase by 58% between 2006 and 2031.¹
- An estimated 49,000 households in the SE are under-occupying a social rented property with three or more bedrooms.
- Approximately 25,000 social tenants are living in overcrowded conditions, with 20,000 seeking three or more bedroom accommodation.²

CIH SOUTH EAST ACTIONS – SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

- Review existing and future housing options (Shared Ownership, Choice Based Lettings, Lifetime Homes, cultural needs and supported housing) and the accessibility of these for vulnerable groups.
- Explore and promote other measures to tackle over-crowding and under-occupation by providing solutions tailored to suit different customers’ needs. These needs may include the use of empty properties, appropriate downsizing incentive packages and quality alternative housing with support and care options.
- Promote Equality and Diversity and the ageing population agenda, through the dissemination of good practice and developing relevant and timely events and seminars.
MANAGING THE EFFECTS OF THE CREDIT CRUNCH – DRIVING THE ECONOMY INTO RECOVERY

SOME KEY ISSUES
• The credit crunch has increased the affordability gap, repossessions, waiting list numbers, unemployment, homelessness, and has resulted in a huge number of people experiencing extreme personal difficulty.
• The financial crisis has led some people to be exposed to illegal lending and difficulties in making repayments, locking families into poverty and deprivation.
• There is an ongoing battle to repair the broken financial system that has had a detrimental impact on the housing sector, as lenders tighten lending terms making financing options costly and difficult to access for house buyers and housing providers.
• With such significant external factors social housing providers need to quickly gear up to the huge challenge of seeking alternative funding opportunities and private financing needed to ensure future development.
• Tackling worklessness will be even more pressing as many people find themselves unemployed and pulled into the cycle of poverty, deprivation, and limited choice.

THE FACTS
• Average house prices are well above the average income, 12 times more than the average income of £22,100 in 2008. 3
• Over the ten years to 2008, the house price to earnings affordability ratio has more than doubled from 3.78 to 7.18 in 2008.4
• 203,161 households were on the waiting list in 2008; 6,320 were in temporarily accommodation, while 5,510 were homeless households in priority need.5
• SE councils spent an estimated £40 million on housing homeless households in temporary accommodation in 2007/08.6
• An estimated £25-30 billion of private finance* is required to fund social housing providers in the next five years.

SOUTH EAST ACTIONS – SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS
• Encourage and facilitate better understanding of financial/funding issues and their implications for housing activities.
• Provide training and good practice material around financial inclusion strategies.
• Facilitate events and workshops that provide locally based training opportunities around tackling worklessness.
• Influence and lobby government, private financing institutions, and other investors on matters relating to funding.
• Promote the importance of social housing products and services such as shared ownership as key investment options.
• Work with housing providers including those in the private sector to develop other schemes (such as deposit help for first time buyers) that help to manage affordability gaps and waiting lists numbers.

HOUSING AND THE ECONOMY – IDENTIFYING AND UNDERSTANDING THE LINKAGES

SOME KEY ISSUES
• Housing has a huge impact on the economy. Good housing is paramount for economic growth and capital generation through investment, but more importantly as a basic need that facilitates stability, allows service provision, and facilitates labour market flexibility and opportunities needed for creating better standards of living for communities.
• The SE economy is driven by the strength of business enterprise, which requires adequate skills which are currently seriously compromised by the recession.
• The region’s skills gap/shortages is growing. This will continue to have a profound impact in the longer term, as potential recruits such as graduates struggle to access employment which in turn will hinder economic development.

THE FACTS
• The SE economy contributed over £188 billion to the UK economy in 2007. The housing and commercial property sectors employ over 375,000 people, contributing £18 billion per annum to the region.7
• The private rented sector is estimated to contribute £5.2 billion per annum to the region.8
• The recession has seen shifts in labour market activity, resulting in drops in construction output, high unemployment levels, 170,000 redundancies (July 2008 – June 2009), and over 150,000 people claiming Job Seekers Allowance.9

CIH SOUTH EAST ACTIONS – SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS
• Facilitate an event that highlights the housing and economic linkages, the gaps and barriers, and the means to tackle and promote these issues.
• Support and facilitate smaller locally driven seminars and training workshops that seek to expose labour market issues, and employment and enterprise initiatives.
• Engage with the younger generation including (students at universities, colleges and schools) by promoting housing and the benefits of their skills as an asset that can help build capacity to facilitate wider economic growth and recovery.
• Support schemes tailored to facilitate mobility to fill in skills gap and employment changes.
DELIVERING THE RIGHT TYPE AND QUALITY OF AFFORDABLE HOMES IN THE CURRENT CLIMATE

SOME KEY ISSUES
- Delivery of the right mix and quality of affordable housing has slowed dramatically as developments are strained by financial pressures, accessibility of land, difficulties with negotiating developer contributions, among other barriers and uncertainties.
- Given the scale of the SE region affordability problems, it is clear that we need to build more homes but the main priority should be to facilitate the provision of additional affordable housing.
- Developing the right type and size of housing is critical to meet the diverse and ever changing needs of the region.
- Rural housing demand is growing, however building targets for rural housing have slowed with only 351 rural affordable homes built from the projected 500 in 2008/09.10

THE FACTS
- The SE region annually needs over 38,000 new homes to be built, but only 30,170 new homes were completed in 2007/08. Housing investment is also necessary to aid economic growth: house building contributes up to £50 billion to annual GDP.11
- Affordable housing provision did not reach the projected annual targets of 11,445 affordable homes required in the South East Plan (7,926 built in 2007/08).12
- Overall housing completions in 2008/09 have fallen with only about 19,000 housing starts, a drop of 38% on 2007/08.13

CIH SOUTH EAST ACTIONS – SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS
- Facilitate and support partnerships such as the South East Housing Coalition that explore opportunities to deliver more affordable housing.
- Encourage and deliver training initiatives around development barriers (S106 negotiations, planning issues), viability, and new financial models.
- Provide the links to sources of information about grants and other funding opportunities that housing developers can seek to explore.
- Promote the requirements of the region (type, quality, and quantity) of housing needed with the government and at key regional events.

FORGING STRONG PARTNERSHIPS – BUILDING SUSTAINABLE AND COHESIVE COMMUNITIES

SOME KEY ISSUES
- The housing sector is facing many challenges and changes that need to be addressed jointly by housing professionals, but also working in partnership with other professions to tackle wider issues that impact on the wider economy and the sustainability agenda.
- In creating communities that people want to live in, homes must be of the highest standards and should take into account issues around climate change and reducing carbon emissions.
- Communities are increasingly concerned about Anti-Social Behaviour and safety. Equality and Diversity needs must be embedded in service provision to meet the needs of a changing population in order to enable cohesive communities.
- Sustainable communities need to be developed in order to tackle wider social and psychological issues that are linked to communities that are deprived and disadvantaged.

THE FACTS
- The UK housing stock accounts for about 25% of the UK’s carbon emissions. Government aims to cut carbon emissions by 80% from 1990 levels by 2050.14
- The above target presents a huge challenge in terms of funding; however it also presents opportunities to explore new forms of technology to make the changes. Retrofitting existing homes through sustainable technologies is key.
- At least 95% of social housing stock is expected to reach the decent homes standard by 2010, it is critical that the South East region continues to ensure homes reach decent.
- In 2003 the South East region had 29% non-decent homes across all tenures and 37%15 of vulnerable households in private sector non-decent housing.
- The region had over 82,000 migrant workers registered with national insurance numbers.16

CIH SOUTH EAST ACTIONS – SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS
- Develop new relationships and partnerships with key regional partners to deliver on sustainability and community cohesion.
- Promote the significance of partnerships within the sector and with external sectors (business/economy/international sustainability agendas) for a better understanding of related issues that impact on sustainability and the ‘place making’ of communities.
- Lead in collecting good practice material and on the exchange of international experiences around the sustainability agenda.
- Promote local initiatives that deliver on the green agenda, retrofitting, the Code for Sustainable Homes, and Lifetime Homes.
- Community safety is key, hence the need to support community safety projects and promote strategies to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour.
- Promote Equality and Diversity, and the ageing population agenda, through the dissemination of good practice and developing relevant and timely events and seminars.
REFERENCES:


2. South East Regional Housing Forum Data, *Releasing Larger Social Rented Homes in the South East*, 2009


5. National Housing Federation, *Home Truths – How the recession has increased housing need*, 2009

6. East Sussex in figures statistical Data website, 2009


8. CIPFA Homelessness Statistics 2007/08 (please note: this is based on figures provided to government by two thirds of local authority in the South East)


13. South East Regional Assembly, Regional Housing Strategy for the South East, 2008


* Private Finance of £58 billion has been raised by the housing association sector. Reliance on finance from now failing banking institutions means reduced lenders with increases in the price of debt. Housing Providers therefore need to seek other forms of financing options to meet future funding requirements, predicted by the TSA to be over £25 billion in the next five years. (TSA Private Finance Strategy, 2009)