

West of England SHMA

Foreword

Dear Colleague

This is not a report to leave on the shelf. Despite the volatility of the financial systems and consequences for the housing markets, this study has some longevity; it is uniquely based on a suite of models which capture the state of, and the interactions within the current housing market, and which forecast ahead. We are confident that it delivers robust evidence for the purpose of developing planning and strategic housing policies.

Care has been taken to ensure the report complies with the Government's requirements for studies of this kind – that means that we have consulted widely and delivered the required estimates of current need and provision, and for future supply requirements for both market and social housing.

The South West Regional Assembly has ambitious housing supply plans for the region. Their recently published Annual Monitoring Report sets challenging tenure specific targets for future supply through the Regional Affordable Housing Programme; the overall target is for 6,200 new affordable homes each year for the region. Despite this, our study shows that even if these targets are met, this would only begin to address the scale of need evidenced in this study. We calculate a shortfall of 5,000 units per year in the West of England housing market alone. The take-up of ownership incentive schemes will be monitored carefully by the authorities involved. Some low cost home ownership products are growing in popularity but may not necessarily deliver affordable homes as currently defined by Government planning policy. Furthermore, moderation of these targets is likely to arise from district-level studies of the viability of delivery in local circumstances.

In the coming months the local authorities within the housing market area will be looking at the Government's proposals announced in the Budget, to assess how these might best be deployed to further provide for the housing needs of current and future residents in the West of England housing market area.

I wish to record my thanks to the people who have worked hard to deliver this study – the Project Team, the Project Manager, Professor Glen Bramley, the Housing Market Partnership and other stakeholders who contributed their knowledge and experience. The work will continue in an ongoing process of monitoring key housing market indicators.

Margaret Gibson
Chairperson of the Project Team and Housing Market Partnership