

Kate Barker
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Dear Ms Barker

Barker Review of Housing Supply

Thank you for your letter of 17th June 2003 requesting contributions to the Barker review of Housing Supply. While East Midlands Development Agency (*emda*) has no detailed views to offer in response to many of the detailed issues raised in your letter, I hope the following comments are of interest to you.

emda is part of the new Regional Housing Board and work is well underway to produce a Housing Strategy for the region. It is essential that housing issues are not divorced from the wider economic and social agenda. The Regional Housing Strategy, which will shape funding streams across the region, will be closely aligned with the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) and Regional Planning Guidance/Regional Spatial Strategy (RPG/RSS) to ensure a coordinated approach is taken.

Ensuring an appropriate supply and range of quality housing is essential to create a successful and competitive region. It has implications for our ability to attract and retain investment and population, but also for the region's social and environmental well-being. The Single Regional Housing Pot should help provide a more strategic and coordinated approach to social and affordable housing investment and provision. Equally, the proposed Planning system reforms, intended to simplify the processing of planning applications and make the Planning system more responsive, are expected to assist in providing increased certainty. This should help improve the performance of the planning system in allocating appropriate sites. As part of these reforms, RDAs are to be made Statutory Consultees which will enable *emda* to make comments and influence development plan preparation, and planning applications of economic significance. This will include large housing proposals.

Housing can play an important part in regeneration schemes, and contributes a great deal to the 'urban renaissance' agenda. In this way, it often helps redevelop brownfield sites in urban areas and adds to the vitality and viability of the region's towns and cities. However, one issue which your review may address is that of competition for brownfield land between housing and business (employment generating) uses. There is concern that in some urban areas there is a diminishing supply of employment land available due to the pressure from residential development. National, regional and local policies need to ensure that a balance is maintained in land supply for such essential and often complimentary uses.

I hope this helps, and await the outputs from your review with interest.

Yours sincerely

Steve Harley
Planning Advisor