



Sustainable
Development Commission

The Sustainable Communities Plan

reviewed by Professor Anne Power on behalf of the Commission

Raymond Young, SDC Commissioner

University of Glasgow 3 September 2004

what is the SDC?

- An independent advisory body (NDPB) with 24 members from business, NGOs, local and regional government and academia.
- Reports jointly to the Prime Minister and the leaders of the devolved administrations.
- Established in late 2000.
- www.sd-commission.gov.uk

the Communities Plan

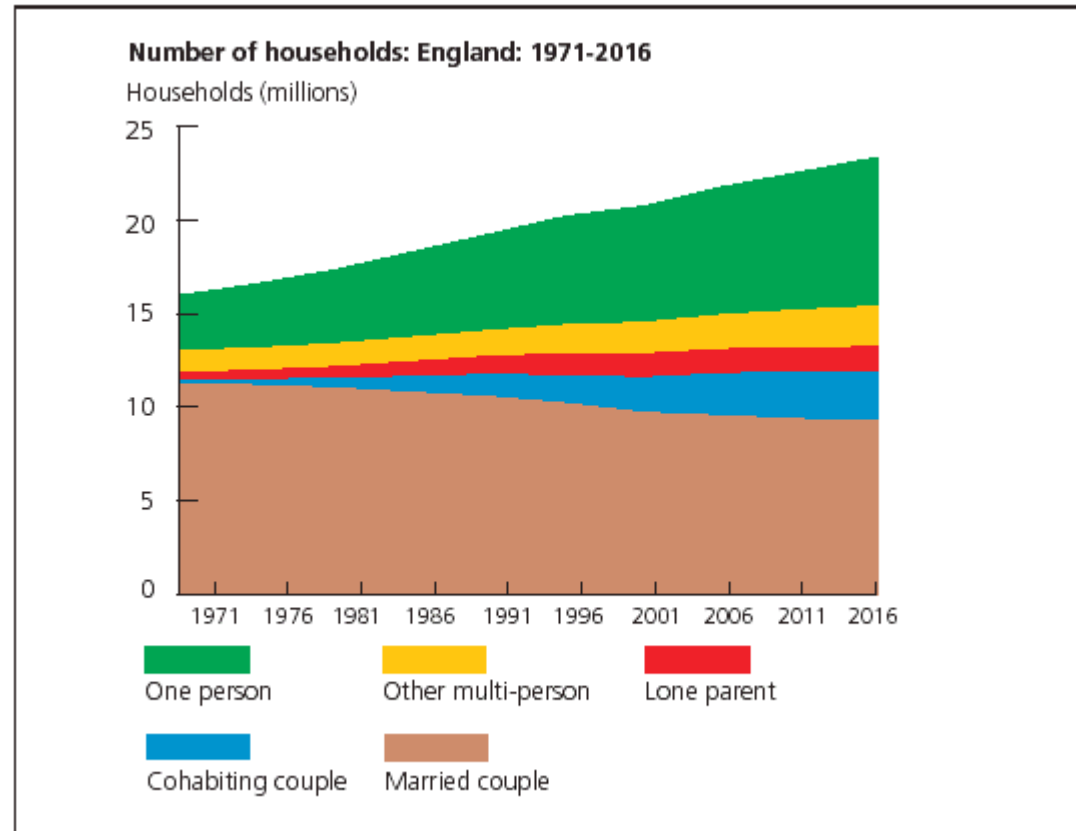
- Published by ODPM in February 2003

goals

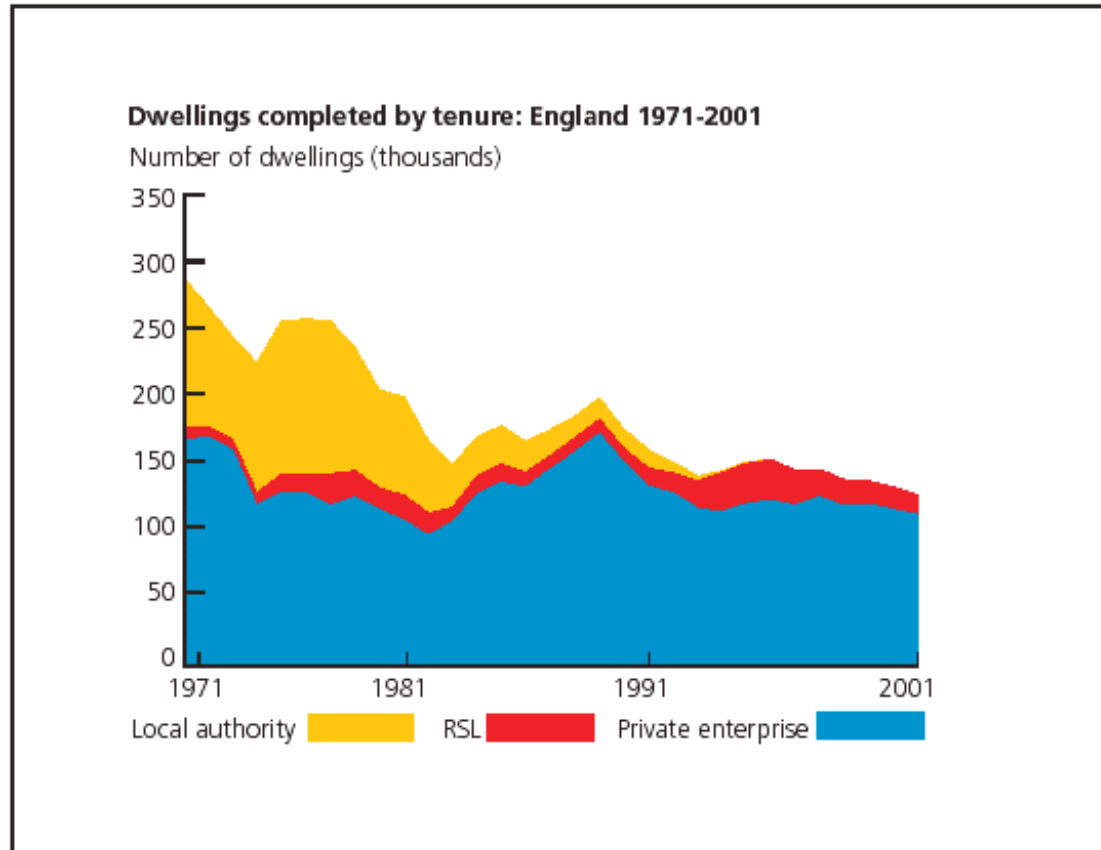
- Provide more, high quality affordable housing - vital in delivering including homes for key public services workers
- Design attractive towns, cities and public places
- Regenerate declining communities
- Tackle social exclusion and homelessness
- Make the planning system faster, fairer and more efficient
- Empower local and regional government and drive up performance standards



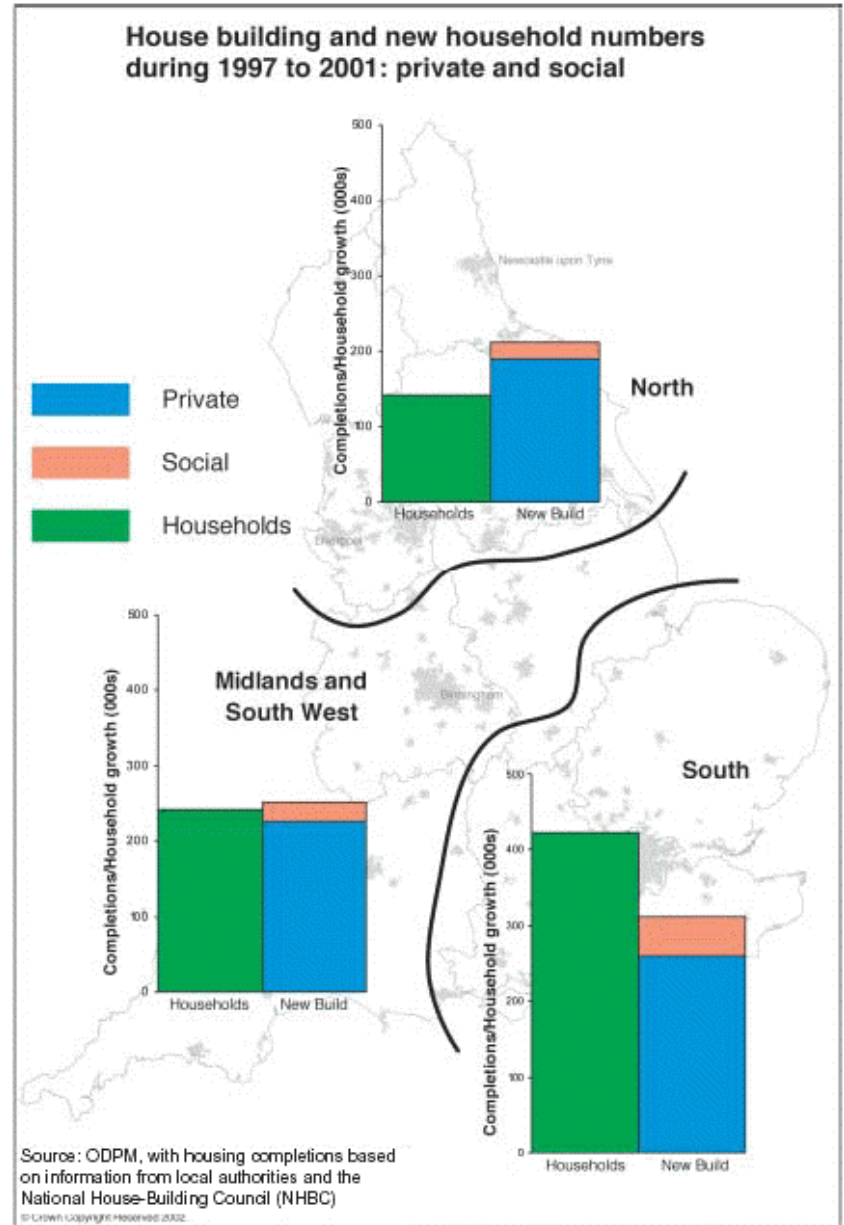
why?



why?



why?



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key facts

- Over building everywhere except South – West Midlands projected to have largest over-supply problems in future
- 54% of new build in North East on greenfield land
- Brownfield target *NOT* reached in most Northern regions



key facts

- $\frac{1}{4}$ of all vacant land has been derelict for 10 years +
- $\frac{1}{4}$ of all vacant properties are in London and South East
- Vacant brown land – 66,000 hectares, equivalent to half of wider Greater London. Could provide 2 – 4 million homes, depending on density



key facts

- SE density of new build – 23 per hectare, below national average
- 1/3 of all South East housing is 4-bed executive homes in spite of main demand from single and childless households
- London Gateway funding will help provide 7,600 homes over 3 years
- Transport infrastructure – “no final decision” yet made



the challenge

- Serious housing shortages in London & South East
- Affordability for key service workers
- Low demand and abandonment in the North & Midlands with related:
 - decline of low income neighbourhoods
 - acute social and environmental decay in ex-industrial areas.

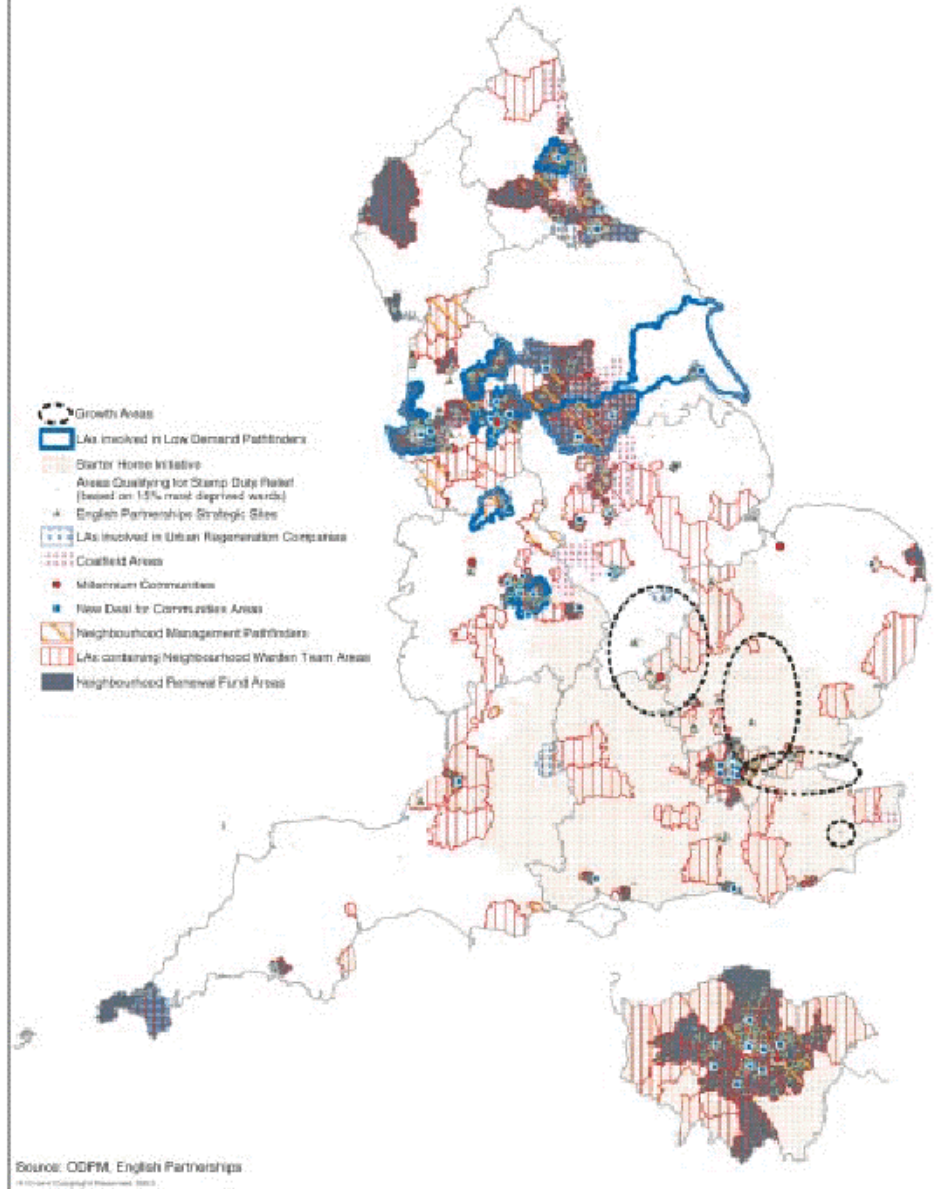


key responses

- Market Renewal Pathfinders in the North of England
 - ☞ (9 areas, 1/2 million homes) - £500m over 3 years
- Growth areas in the South East
 - ☞ (4 areas) - £610m (not including infrastructure which will cost £8 billion per area)



Actions to Achieve and Maintain Sustainability



action programme

- *“This action programme marks a step change in our policies for delivering sustainable communities for all. The main elements are:*
 - *Sustainable communities*
 - *Step change in housing supply*
 - *New growth areas*
 - *Decent homes*
 - *Countryside and local environment “*



sustainable communities

- *£22bn to improve housing and communities including over £5bn to regenerate deprived areas.*
- *A new regional approach to housing policy.*
- *£350m to speed up planning.*



step change in housing supply

- *£5bn for more affordable homes, including:*
 - *At least £1bn for key worker housing.*
 - *Support for people who wish to move into home ownership.*
 - *Action on empty properties.*
 - *New focus on helping people into home ownership.*



new growth areas

- *£446m for Thames Gateway with new development agencies.*
- *Cabinet Committee chaired by Prime Minister to plan for development of the Gateway.*
- *£164m for three other growth areas.*



decent homes

- *£2.8bn to bring council homes up to a decent standard.*
- *£500m to tackle low demand and abandonment.*
- *£260m to tackle homelessness.*
- *Action to tackle bad landlords.*



countryside and local environment

- *Guarantee to protect green belt.*
- *£201m to improve local environment – parks and public spaces.*
- *Over 5,000 affordable homes in villages.*



£m					Total 2003-04 to 2005-06
Resources	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	
Housing investment for affordable housing and improving housing conditions	1,714	2,425	2,450	2,519	7,394
Arms Length Housing Management Organisations (ALMOs)	59	323	851	820	1,994
Housing Finance Reform – transitional funding	500	175	140	65	380
Homelessness	90	93	83	83	259
Other housing programmes	598	565	493	454	1,512
Market Renewal Pathfinders	25	60	150	290	500
Growth areas	0	80	256	274	610
Planning	27	73	153	194	420
Local environment/"Liveability" (inc skills)	13	41	79	81	201
English Partnerships	145	163	179	179	521
Other related programmes (see Annex A for details)	2,280	2,549	2,646	2,782	7,977
Total	5,451	6,547	7,480	7,741	21,768



SDC response



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general response

- Planning – nothing on environmental impact
- Pathfinders involve large scale clearance
- Densities proposed still too low
- Need for public transport infrastructure
- Few incentives for renovation, infill, environmental care, energy efficiency



response

- Creating decent homes
 - Excellent eco standards
 - Recycling buildings
 - Community orientated approach
- Tackling abandoned housing
 - Fast reliable transport
 - Use spare capacity in North rather than expand the South East
 - Decentralisation from London



response

- Affordable housing
 - Review growth projections
 - Use of small sites at high density
- Protect the countryside
 - Council tax second homes
 - Conserve affordable housing
 - Protect greenbelts and flood plains



response

- South East and London growth
 - Assumptions need to be reviewed
- Living at higher densities
 - Viability of community facilities, transport
- Delivery tools
 - Should ensure community viability and environmental protection
 - Should be linking with energy, waste, travel and liveability



measures of sustainable communities

- Planning, design, density, space
- Energy use, environmental impact
- Jobs, skills, services, front-line, scale
- Neighbourhood environments & community support



conclusion

- The Communities Plan is a start, but it needs to go further
- Small island, with a lot of people
- Need to conserve land, protect green spaces and enhance social cohesion - so that our children will inherit communities worth living in.

