

AMENDED MINUTES of a meeting of the **STRUCTURE PLAN PANEL** held on **28 JANUARY 2003**

ATTENDANCE

Members of the Panel:	D Billing, N Brook, A Dodd, D Drake, R Sanderson, M Saunders (Chairman), I Simpson, W. Storey, B York
Additional Members:	Reg Smith
Officers Attending:	John Wood, Jon Tiley, Julian Pitt, Paul Donovan
Members of the Public:	Adam Dodgshon – Stevenage Borough Council David Lewis Hallam Land Management Iain Vellacott – West Stevenage Consortium Andrew Dutton - “ “ “ Steven Kosky – Phillips Planning Services, Bedford
Administrator:	Joyce Brooks

1. **Apologies** were received from Mary Bayes.
2. **Minutes** of the meeting of 9 January were agreed as a true record. Cllr Sanderson’s had attended the meeting but had been omitted from the minutes by mistake.
Matters Arising The minutes of the Joint Member meeting was circulated. Any comments should be fed back to Joyce Brooks prior to circulation to Districts.
3. **Sustainability Appraisal of the Pre-Deposit Plan**

The Panel was advised that Consultants had been commissioned to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal of the Development Strategy Options and Policies in the Pre-Deposit Plan. This report considered the draft results and their implications.

The report not only appraised Options A, B and C but also identified two others D and E. Table 1 summarised all the Development Strategy Options. The report concluded that all Options have positives and negatives, but that if Option C continues to be the preferred Option, plans should move rapidly to ensure concerns regarding under-provision are avoided.

Cllr York said that there had been insufficient time to fully digest the implications of this document. The Appraisal criticised Option C and highlighted the problems of under-provision of housing. He, and the Labour Group, considered Option B to be the most positive. He was not happy recommending to Cabinet and County Council something which the Panel had not full considered and said the Alterations should be twin-tracked with RPG14.

Cllr Billing supported Cllr York and said that Option C was deficient both in terms of the housing market and over-development in towns, and affordable housing. The conclusions did not support Option C and the Conclusions in the report should be set out as a caveat and attached to Option C.

Cllr Simpson said that the positives and negatives depended on whether the Urban Capacity Study is correct or not. He did not agree with the conclusions in the report that did not acknowledge that the Plan would be regularly monitored and revisited in 2005. The report had not changed his mind about Option C.

Cllr Reg Smith supported the comment that there had not been enough time to study the report in greater depth, which had highlighted the conflict between the Options and had not taken account of the economy in Herts, East of England or the South East as a whole. He said more time was needed to consider the consequences of any decision made.

The Chairman stated that in his view sustainability is a flawed concept. He had been hoping for a challenging document which would give a good argument for the concept of sustainability. He was exceedingly disappointed in the document which, in his opinion, had not stuck to the brief and had gone off on to Options D and E which had never been recognised. It was not very robust and not a good example of what he would expect from a consultant. He also contended that problems of lack of supply of affordable housing had nothing to do with sustainability. One of the fundamentals of the review of the Structure Plan was to preserve the environment, which was more important than economic and social considerations.

John Wood said he was disappointed in the document. He agreed that the performance of Option C would depend on the accuracy of the Capacity Study, however, Members had considered this issue very carefully.

Paul Donovan confirmed that there would be a further draft of the appraisal as officers had asked for more analysis on the sustainability of policies, rather than the critique of effectiveness of the policies, which had so far been received.

The paper was accepted by the Panel with the exception of Cllr York and Cllr Sanderson who disagreed with Conclusions 5.1 and 5.2.

4. Draft Deposit Structure Plan Alterations

4a Development Strategy and Housing

Introduction

The Panel was advised that officers were now drafting a full deposit version of the Alterations and the Introductory text for the Plan. Any general comments Members should be directed to Julian Pitt. Copies of the responses and

representations were available on request. The following amendments were agreed:

Point 7 – officers to consider re-wording this point.

National Level – Point 22 – 2nd bullet point - Delete “rather than new green field sites”

Regional Level – Point 28. – Make reference to particular studies that have been commissioned in relation to Harlow Options.

Policies 1-4

New Policy – Making Development more Sustainable

Page 8. – need to check with lawyers re “de minimis” – unlikely to apply to small householder developments.

Policy 3 Community Planning

P.22 – Delete sentence “When Development Plansin its preparation.

Policy 5 – Green Belt

1st paragraph – delete “the south of the Countythe settlements, as”. Insert “Hertfordshire where”.

Delete – “The Green Belt will Green Belt.”

4th paragraph - 4th line – replace “Policy 9” with “other policies”.

Green Belt Extension – flag up in 1st paragraph.

Policy 6 Settlement Pattern and Urban Concentration

Last paragraph - insert “character and maintenance of” in the third line to read “enhancement of their character and maintenance of Green Belt boundary.”

Policy 7 – Main Development Strategy

There was some concern about peripheral development which appeared contradictory to the County Council’s urban capacity study. Jon Tiley explained that the County Council did not believe that there was a need for green belt development but, if it was considered necessary, it would be as a last resort and phased. It was pointed out that this might not necessarily be in relation to housing, it could be for something else, e.g. a hospital. However, this would only happen if communities decided it was necessary and if it met the three criteria set down.

Housing

Insert the words “County Council’s” before Assessment of Housing Capacity in Table 1 on Page 21 to clarify ownership.

Sequential Approach – Point 78 – iv) refers to work carried out by North Herts and Stevenage relating to landscape issues. Material to be made available to Cllr York and other Members on request.

**Page 27 - New Policy to supersede and replace Policy 8
Strategic Scale Green Field Housing Development**

2 additional criteria suggested on Major Transport Infrastructure and Wider Infrastructure.

Policy 9 - Dwelling Provision and Distribution

Last paragraph of policy – delete “will be” and replace with “is expected to be” reviewed.

4b The Economy and Development for Employment Needs

The Panel was advised that the County Council recognised that there was continuing objection to its proposed approach towards employment land from a number of quarters, including EEDA and Herts Chamber of Commerce and Industry. These issues would be discussed and resolved at EIP.

In answer to a question from Brian York, Julian Pitt agreed that it would be a good idea in theory to reduce out-commuting. However, he felt that this was unlikely to happen in practice, because of the important role that Hertfordshire plays in support of London.

Policy 17 – 2nd sentence – “Uses” change to “Use” and “these” change to “this”.

4c Transport Policies

John Sykes tabled a paper with amendments agreed by the Transport Panel earlier in the day.

Policy 22 – Reduction of Travel Need and Car Usage (Page 6)

2nd sentence to end at road capacity will: Delete “be designed to” and start with a new i) take into account to end of paragraph, deleting last word “whilst”.

- ii) “make” instead of “making”
- iii) “make” instead of “making”
- iv) “increase” instead of “increasing”
- v) “reduce” instead of “reducing”.

Policy 25 - Car Parking

Remove 'car' from title.

New 1st line: 'Parking policies and standards will form part of the overall policies for the management of the highway network'

iv) 2nd sentence to read '.....provision may be allowed.'

3rd sentence to read 'Car free residential development may only be considered in suitable locations subject to satisfactory site....'

vi) 2nd sentence to read 'Where such transport plans rely on such facilities suitable locations shall be considered in the preparation of local plans'

Policy 29 Traffic and Road Safety Implications of Development Proposals

Para 1 3rd sentence to read 'All types of developments.....'

4d Objections and Responses to Policies in the Pre-Deposit Plan

New Policy – Airports

Divide last criteria into iv) and v). v) to begin “opportunities to increase the proportionto the private car.”

New Policy – Cemeteries and Crematoria

1st Line “Local Plans..... additional cemetery space (insert) “which may include green cemetery space”, subject to the other policies.....Watford Districts. Delete second paragraph.

Cllr Saunders proposed that, subject to the above-mentioned amendments and any further tweaking of wording and legal advice, the Panel recommended the Policies and Explanatory Text of the Structure Plan Alterations 2001-2016 to the Cabinet and subsequently the County Council.

The Panel voted: 5 For, 2 Against.

It was noted that Cllr Brook had already left to go to another meeting.

5. Date of Next Meeting

No date arranged.

The Chairman thanked the Panel and members of the Public for attending and officers for all their hard work.

The meeting finished at 5.18 p.m.