

MINUTES of a meeting of the STRUCTURE PLAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING ISSUES PANEL held on 18 July, 2003

ATTENDANCE

Members of the Panel: M Bayes, R Clements (for M Saunders), A Dodd, D Drake, R Mays (for R J Smith), J Metcalf (for B York), I Simpson, W Storey (Chairman).

Additional Members: M Janes, A Lee

Officers Attending: Anne Fisher, Jon Tiley, Paul Donovan, Steve Bailes, Dave Humby

Members of the Public: Steve Kosky – Phillips Planning Services
Iain Vellacott – West of Stevenage Consortium

1. **Apologies** were received from M Saunders, R J Smith and B York.
2. **Minutes** of the meeting of 11 June were agreed as a true record. There were no matters arising.
3. **Structure Plan Responses**

This paper reported on some of the 259 preliminary responses to the deposit stage of the Structure Plan giving a flavour of the issues raised and the respondees. A full set of responses is available in the Members' Room. A summary is currently being prepared and will be circulated to Members of the Panel, placed in the Members' Room and made available to other Members on request.

Jon Tiley said that the Panel would be asked to look at the responses in more detail and to consider what we put forward as our response to the representations. No decisions are being made at this stage, but in the Autumn the Panel will start to consider what the response might be. The next possible stage would be to identify the issues that could be debated if there were to be an EIP.

The report was noted for information.

4. **Regional Planning Update**

Jon Tiley reported on a meeting of the Regional Planning Panel held on 9 July 2003. A morning seminar had been held to examine the progress in key areas such as the economy, housing and the spatial strategy, and identify key issues for decision.

The formal meeting of RPP in the afternoon revealed that there had been some slippage in RPG and a number of project management measures have been put in place so that the February 2004 deadline is

met, with an additional RPP meeting in September and then one a month until January.

A document was tabled on what the RPG would look like together with a paper on methodology for the preparation of district housing figures .

A presentation took place on the Harlow Options Study. Whilst questions were raised with the consultants who had prepared the Study, no decisions on the content of the Study were taken by RPP.

The Milton Keynes Study was considered by the Panel. There were a number of concerns expressed about the Study and the possible impact on Hertfordshire of proposals for the Luton/Dunstable area. North Herts and South Beds made a statement before the item was considered setting out their concerns. The outcome was that a public consultation would take place, with the proviso that it was recognised that a number of authorities had major concerns about the outcomes of the Study.

The Housing Methodology Paper tabled at the meeting asked counties to form County groupings. HCOA had met several times to make comments on the methodology and would now be meeting to find a way of generating housing figures at district level to drive this work forward.

The Panel was advised that they would be emailed copies of the RPP papers, including the methodology paper on housing which set down ranges to be tested. In Hertfordshire the range to be tested is from 66,000 dwellings for 2001-21 up to 86,000 for the same period.

5. East of England Regional Housing Strategy

This paper informed Members of the Regional Housing Strategy which is one of the many regional strategies which needs to be taken into account in developing RPG14. Members will be kept informed of other strategies as they are prepared.

The Housing Strategy is based on the Regional Affordable Housing Study which identifies a need for 7,000 affordable houses per year, if the annual housing figure is about 24,000 per year. One of the issues of concern is that proposal that the affordable housing target figure for new development is to be presented as a single regional figure. There is a huge range of affordable housing needs from the north to the south and "hot spots" within the sub-regions. Individual settlements also have particular problems. The proposed approach was therefore considered to be unhelpful.

Cllr Metcalf asked about a consultation on Affordable Housing from the Government in connection with PPG3. Jon Tiley advised the Panel

that officers would look at the consultation and bring back a response for the Panel to consider in the Autumn.

The report was noted.

6. Sub-Regional Planning: Stansted M11 Corridor Study, Harlow Options Study and Delivery Vehicles to Realise Development

This paper informed the Panel of the draft report to Cabinet setting out the issues and basis for a County Council response to the Harlow Options Study. Steve Bailes did a presentation (copy attached) on the Study which centred around Harlow, which is seen as an important town in the M11 corridor for growth and regeneration.

The Panel thanked Steve Bailes for all the hard work and the superb summary.

The Panel supported the report to Cabinet and the draft response within it and made the following comments:

1. The technical findings of the study are inadequate and insufficiently robust to be used as a basis for any development proposals in further studies.
2. The level of development necessary to meet the regeneration objectives set out in the report is not made clear.
3. The role the proposed sites could play in meeting the objectives is not adequately addressed.
4. There is no justification provided for the development of sites in Hertfordshire.
5. The public consultation process has been inadequate and the public have exhibited no confidence in the findings of the report.

The Panel is concerned that the HCC response makes it clear that any proposals for delivery vehicles should recognise the need for a democratically accountable body working within partnerships to create new sustainable communities and having the powers that any single purpose body might hold.

7. A.O.B.

There were none.

8. Date of Next Meeting

No date was set for the next meeting.