

MINUTES of a meeting of the STRUCTURE PLAN AND REGIONAL ISSUES PANEL held on 12 JANUARY 2004

ATTENDANCE

- Members of the Panel: M Bayes, R Clements, A Dodd, D Drake, M Saunders, I Simpson, W Storey (Chairman), B York.
- Additional Members: R Mays
- Officers Attending: Jon Tiley, John Rumble
- Members of the Public: Iain Vellacott – West Stevenage Consortium
- Administrator: Joyce Brooks

MINUTES

- 1. Apologies** – There were none.
- 2. Minutes** of the meeting of 13 November and amended minutes of 28 January were agreed as a true record.

Matters Arising - A joint meeting of the Structure Plan & Regional Issues Panel and the Regeneration Panel is being arranged for the end of February to work on reviewing the new Economic Development Strategy as a contribution to Regional Planning Guidance.

3. Regional Planning Update

Jon Tiley advised the Panel that the two key events since the last meeting had been the Regional Planning Panel (RPP) on 21 November and the County Grouping meeting on 1 December. A series of papers had been produced for the RPP meeting bringing together a top-down approach on housing numbers. The issue, from the County perspective, is that EERA put forward a conditional figure of 73,000.

Derrick Ashley responded by putting forward a resolution stating that Hertfordshire only accepted a figure of 66,000 but supported the concept of a Study to look at outstanding issues around housing figures for Hertfordshire. Also that the issue of the shortfall should not be restricted to Herts and Essex, but should be broadened into other options across the region to meet a regional housing figure. The EERA resolution was, however, agreed with some caveats, and work is continuing on that basis.

A meeting of RPP is due to agree Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) on 23 January 2004 followed by a full meeting of EERA on 5 February 2004 at County Hall, Hertford. At RPP there will be a full draft of RPG

with a housing distribution in the regional context allocating 72-73,000 houses to Hertfordshire and will also include a district distribution of that figure. Neither figures have yet been agreed but will come with a caveat that a further Study will be undertaken for Hertfordshire to look at the best way of meeting the shortfall and to resolve issues of capacity and previously developed land.

EERA will not be signing off the final document on 5 February as there are still some outstanding issues to be resolved. These include the gap between all the housing figures across the Counties and the top down regional housing figure, work still ongoing in Peterborough, and the Hertfordshire Study over the next 3 months to resolve issues on housing matters proposed by EERA. The Study then has to be approved by an RPP at the end of April to enable it to form part of the consultation on the full RPG from the end of April through to July.

In answer to requests for copies of the proposals from County Grouping meetings and RPP, Jon Tiley agreed to circulate to the Panel the papers going to the RPP on 23 January.

4. Consultation Papers on PPS11 Regional Planning and PPS 12 Local Development Frameworks

This paper set out the proposed Hertfordshire response to the above consultation papers, to be submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) by 16 January, on new guidance and draft regulations to accompany the new planning system. The covering report highlighted specific points and Appendix 1 and 2 set out the responses to the questions set in the consultation papers by the ODPM.

The paper was generally accepted by the Panel with the following comments made:

- Concerns about the complexity of the new system;
- Should take time to get the framework in place, 32 months is not long enough;
- Concern that the County Council's planning role has been taken away;
- The new system will be more resource intensive, at a time when there are existing staffing problems;
- Councils should be able to reject the findings of the inspector.

The responses would be amended in line with the discussion at the meeting of the Panel and forwarded to ODPM by 16 January.

5. Living with Climate Change in the East of England – Implications for County Council Services

The Study into "Living with Climate Change in the East of England", commissioned by the East of England Sustainable Development

Roundtable and led by Herts County Council, will be launched on 9 March in Cambridge by the Environment Minister, Mr. E Morley.

Following the presentation given at the Panel meeting on 13 November, John Rumble took the Panel through this report which highlighted actions that the County Council will need to consider to help reduce the effect of climate change on services provided for Hertfordshire. The report sought the views of the Panel on how the different service areas should be dealt with.

Following some discussion the following comments were made:

- District councils need to have detailed information of flood plains and where houses should not be built;
- Need for open spaces to control flood water management;
- New designs for heating and ventilation in housing.

The Panel welcomed the report and thanked John Rumble for the large amount of information provided. The Panel agreed that it should be circulated widely and that the Executive Member should discuss with Cabinet how it can be broken down so that the relevant Panels can each deal with their specific areas.

6. The Aviation White Paper: The Future of Air Transport

This paper, introduced by Steve Bailes, advised the Panel of the publication of the Government's White Paper on aviation and the implications for Hertfordshire. The White Paper proposes two new runways in the south east, one at Stansted (2011-12) and one at Heathrow (2015-20), together with an expansion of the existing runway at Luton extending into the greenbelt in Hertfordshire. The Panel was advised that the proposals will be taken forward by the developers by the submission of planning applications to the relevant Councils.

The Stansted applications will apply for the full use of the existing runway to 40 mppa and for a second runway for around 80 mppa. The applications are both likely to go to Public Inquiry.

It is likely that Luton will continue to develop the airport, extending their taxiway and then put in for an extension.

In the past the County Council has consulted with districts and neighbouring authorities on aviation matters. For Stansted – 4 Authorities meetings with Essex, East Herts and Uttlesford, and Coalition meetings with East Herts and Essex. It is proposed that the 4 Authorities meetings will now continue to deal with the Stansted Issues. It is proposed that for Luton, a similar group with North Herts, St Albans, Dacorum, Bedfordshire, S. Bedfordshire and Luton Borough Council would be formed.

The Panel was advised that the public expect the County Council to make a legal challenge to the White Paper or give financial support along with other Councils to one made by local objectors.

Following discussion the following points were made.

HCC should :-

- Continue to work closely with other local authorities;
- Take legal advice on legal challenges;
- Develop a clear strategy for what we want for the long-term good of the County in terms of service infrastructure, possibly paid for by the developers or central government should planning permission be approved;

The report was noted.

7. A.O.B.

There was none.

Date of next meeting

Monday 8 March at 2.00 p.m. in Committee Room C.