

## **MINUTES of a meeting of the STRUCTURE PLAN AND REGIONAL ISSUES PANEL held on 6 MAY 2004**

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### **ATTENDANCE**

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

Additional Members: N Agar, D Peek, R Mays, B Engel  
Officers Attending: Anne Fisher, Jonathan Tiley, Steve Bailes, Colin Haigh, Dave Wells, Steven Marsland

Members of the Public: Iain Vellacott – West Stevenage Consortium

### **MINUTES**

1. **Apologies** – there were none.
2. **Minutes** of the meeting held on 8 March were agreed.

#### **Matters Arising**

Jon Tiley reported that following the session at the EIP on the South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy, there were still a number of concerns on which EERA needed to respond. The County Council intended writing to the Panel setting out its concerns about the unresolved issues.

#### **3. Regional Planning Update**

This report updated Members on events since the last Structure Plan Panel and the progress on the Growth Area and the Hertfordshire Studies. Jonathan Tiley took Members through the report.

##### Infrastructure Bids

The Panel expressed concern that the draft submission :

- Did not address the current infrastructure deficit;
- Did not recognise the importance of educational and road provision;
- Did not fully recognise Hertfordshire's needs and the limited funding is unlikely to meet it;
- Any EERA prioritisation of our submission should echo Hertfordshire's priorities.

##### Stansted M11 Growth Corridor Study and Hertfordshire Study

The Panel asked officers to write to Buchanan expressing their concerns about :

- The Study assumptions behind Buchanan's work;
- The lack of links Buchanan are making to the Hertfordshire Study by Tyms;
- A potential conflict of recommendations as a result Members would like a presentation by Buchanan and Tyms of their findings and for EERA to be made aware of their concerns.

The Panel was advised that RPP papers were available on the EERA website. The Panel asked to be alerted to the publication of the papers and to any papers of particular significance.

An officer meeting concerning Harlow/A120 would take place on 7 May and officers agreed to update local Members following that meeting.

### **Buchanan's Study on Stansted M11 Growth Area**

Steve Bailes gave a presentation on the Buchanan study for the ODPM.

The study will provide recommendations on the spatial distribution of jobs and houses to 2021 to settlements and districts. It will also offer additional recommendations on the scale of growth that could be achieved and on the implications.

- RPG requires 166,500 dwellings in the total Growth Area of which 111,000 are already 'committed'. In the four districts in Hertfordshire, total growth of 35,000 would be required for RPG compared with the Draft Structure Plan figure of 26,800.
- In addition Buchanan's are looking to distribute in the Growth Area an additional 18,000 dwellings as required by Lord Rooker.
- New settlements have not been ruled out. There is potential for a large 'new settlement' in South Cambridgeshire (Duxford) and clusters of smaller 'new settlements' such as along the Thameslink railway line around Royston.
- The Study will assess critical thresholds in the interactions between land use and transport. It will also examine the market capacity to accommodate additional dwellings and the building industry to build houses. Buchanan's have stated that the building industry doesn't foresee any problems with building this number of houses though Peterborough is a less favoured location.
- Several weaknesses of the study were identified, Sustainable criteria has not been defined within the report. The study assumes the banked distribution of the Draft RPG and it assumes 5,000 dwellings West of Stevenage and 2,000 on the ASR's at Bishops Stortford are 'committed' development.
- The Panel requested that presentations of both studies (Buchanan's and Tym's) should be provided when the draft reports are available.

## **4. Update on Aviation Planning Issues**

Steve Bailes introduced the report, which updated Members on issues relating to the implementation of the White Paper, The Future of Air Transport, and on the Government's consultation on aircraft movement limits at Stansted Airport.

#### Legal Challenge

The preliminary views of the Judge are still awaited.

#### **Transport**

The guidance on the airport master plans from the Government has not yet been published.

#### **Government Consultation on Aircraft Movement Limit at Stansted**

The 'Draft' consultation response to Government is attached.

### **5. Draft Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1: Creating Sustainable Communities.**

Colin Haigh introduced the report, which set out the Government's national land use planning policies for England. It sets out the key underlying principles, which the Government considers should underpin the planning system.

- The panel noted that 'regionalisation' occurs on the continent, France, Spain and Germany were given as examples
- Sustainability is important in the planning process, however under PPS1 most decisions would be taken at local not county level.
- PPS1 has a wide scope; this runs the risk of strategies becoming unwieldy and more likely to become out of date.
- The County Council could have limited influence over the 'Local Delivery Vehicles'.
- PPS1 could improve Hertfordshire's voice in London as regionalism covers areas bigger than counties.

### **6. The Barker Report – Final Recommendations**

Jon Tiley introduced the report and it informed members of the main recommendations of the Barker Review published in March 2004. The review examined the issues underlying the lack of supply and responsiveness in the U.K housing market.

- The review concentrated on the role of competition, capacity, technology and finance of the house building industry and their interaction with the planning system and the Government's sustainable development objectives.
- The Review appears floored by concentrating its analysis on the supply side of the housing market, rather than examining the factors influencing demand.

- The 'Barker Review and Recommendations' have made some very challenging statements for both national and local government, as well as the house building industry.
- It was pointed out to members that some of the messages and statements from the 'Barker Review and Recommendations' particularly affordable housing will inevitably be debated as part of the progression of the emerging RPG14.
- The Barker Recommendations for increased house building are unlikely to be reflected in the emerging RPG but could influence its future review.

## **7. The Egan Report – Skills for Sustainable Communities**

Jon Tiley introduced the paper to inform members of the contents of the recently published 'Egan Report' on skills requirements for the Built Environment professions.

- It is still open to question, whether the building industry can meet the demands expected of it.
- Apprenticeship schemes have dwindled and that system has been going for centuries. Wage controls and a changing 'service led' economy are factors in the lack of apprenticeships offered.
- Egan does not come up with answers to some of the key aspects of his brief and the Government may be forced to commission further work in order to find a way forward.

## **8. Quality of Life Report**

Dave Wells introduced the report and gave a presentation to the panel to detail and clarify the report and its findings. The Quality of Life report has been annually updated by HEF since 1992 and is published in March each year.

- The Quality of Life report highlights several areas in which the county is performing well. Crime in Hertfordshire is well below the national average, a strong economy and a long life expectancy are some of the benefits of living in Hertfordshire
- However, living in Hertfordshire has a price, the county is one of the most expensive places to live in the country whilst the county's environment remains under tremendous pressure.

The report was well received and members were given the opportunity to take a copy of the report and have a copy of the notes from the presentation.

## **9. Any Other Business – There was none.**

### **Date of Next Meeting**

2.00 p.m. 1 July 2004 in the Ashbourne Room.