

## **MINUTES of a meeting of the STRUCTURE PLAN AND REGIONAL ISSUES PANEL held on 12 October 2004**

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### **ATTENDANCE**

Members of the Panel:	M Bayes, R Clements (Sub) A Dodd, D. Drake, J Metcalf (Sub) R J Smith, W Storey (Chairman) B A York
Additional Members:	D Clayton, M Janes, R Mays, R Roberts.
Officers Attending:	Jonathan Tiley, Steve Bailes, Paul Donovan
Administrator:	Joyce Brooks

### **MINUTES**

1. **Apologies** for absence were received from Martin Saunders and Ian Simpson.
2. **Minutes** of the meeting of 7 September were agreed as a true record.

#### **Airports Update**

Steve Bailes took the Panel through a number of aviation related matters.

Legal Challenge – The Legal Challenge is due to take place on 13 December.

Luton – the County Council objected due to the lack of consultation on the extended runway. The Government has stated that there was no need to consult as it is not supported by policy which allows for a full length runway.

Master Plans – Government guidance has now been issued. Regional Airports have to produce an Interim Plan by the end of the year and a full Plan by the end of 2005. Luton is commencing the process and officers have been invited to a Master Plan Steering Group for the existing airport and runway. It will then embark on a Plan for a future full length runway.

Stansted are progressing their Master Plan for the maximum use of the existing runway to accompany their planning application expected Summer 2005. A full Master Plan for the second runway will be drawn up during Summer 2006. The County Council have asked to see a plan for the whole development but BAA say information about the second runway is with their consultants and it is likely to take a year to consider the transport issues. The planning application will accompany their Interim Plan. BAA has produced a scoping report on

environmental issues and Uttlesford have responded with a draft scoping opinion for Members. Further copies are available on request.

### **Response to Dft Consultation on Night Flight Restrictions**

This report informed the Panel of the Government's consultation on night flying at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted and the proposed new restrictions to the present regime which ends in October 2005

Appendix A set out the questions from the Consultation and the suggested responses that should be made. Steve Bailes took the Panel through the report. The Panel supported the responses made.

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

Jon Tiley updated the Panel on the following :

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) – The proposed amendments to the banked RSS will be considered by Regional Planning Panel on 15 October along with other supporting documents.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) – this will be considered by RPP and will be looking to highlight some of the key sustainability and environmental issues from water resources through to deprivation in rural areas. The SEA concludes that the policies are generally sound but strong measures need to be put in place in terms of implementation and resource efficiency if the Plan is to be sustainable. EERA will need to pick up on all these issues in the Plan.

Advice from Strategic Authorities – Final advice was submitted by 24 September from this Panel, the Joint Member Panel and Cabinet/County Council.

Essex strongly questioned the numbers in the RSS disputing that housing and employment would be in balance. They supported the regeneration of Harlow and development North of Harlow.

Cambridge set out their Strategy for Growth in their Structure Plan and included a strong line in their advice that the extra 18,000 should not be accommodated as there was no justification. They picked up on the New Town Policy but said that it was now too late and should be addressed as part of an early review after 2021.

Hertfordshire questioned how EERA and RSS had arrived at their figures.

Norfolk and Suffolk concentrated on local issues.

Eminent Person's Study – Robin Thompson was asked to review the advice and come up with suggested amendments in a final document.

He has come up with options of what to do if an extra 18,000 is accepted, what the distribution of housing would be if it is not, and a compromise of what to do if 9,000 is accepted.

Legal Audit – conclusions are that the document is too long, does not marry up with the guidance in PPS1, is not specific enough, is not regionally specific and goes into too much detail. EERA has responded by saying it is too late to change it. This highlights the fact that the RSS document that is actually produced is likely to be radically different and the issues raised will be deferred.

Strategic Decisions – extra 18,000 dwellings - This was considered at the September meeting of RPP which said it was not justified and wanted it excluded from RSS. At the RTAG meeting, in an attempt to deal with the pressure from Government Office, EERA tried to compromise by tabling a policy in the plan for a Strategic Reserve Approach to the extra 18,000 dwellings. This was again rejected. There are now no policies which include the 18,000 extra, but supporting text refers to circumstances which may call for an early review of the plan in three or four years' time and extra housing that may need to come forward to meet growth issues.

Appendix 1 set out a new draft distribution of housing tabled at the RTAG meeting on 30 September which increased Hertfordshire's total figure to 76,890. This was based on the Roger Tym Study together with a focus for a large scale development at Stevenage and North Herts and a high greenfield number in East Herts (10,000 North of Harlow, development at Bishops Stortford and extra in East Herts) and North Herts.

Milton Keynes Sub-Regional Study – The issue of whether the outcome of the Milton Keynes Sub-Regional Strategy is a “given” for RSS14 is causing some concern and there is likely to be more detailed work needed.

#### Other Policy Changes

- At Harlow and Stevenage there will need to be a joint local development approach because of cross boundary issues;
- Due to scale of development and regeneration issues, there will need to be strong delivery mechanisms put in place – a development company or corporation
- Robin Thompson suggests some policy amendments – e.g. joint LPDs at the sub-regional centres
- Green Belt Policy – the suggestion that there needs to be a review of Green Belt in the London Arc has been removed and focuses on Bishops Stortford, Harlow, Lea Valley and Stevenage. 25,000 green belt houses are proposed which would involve some large green belt reviews in the County.

Joint Member Meeting – 11 October - Although the current RSS proposals are quite beneficial to some Districts, there is still concern about process and how numbers had been arrived at in the first place. One common message relating to the 18,000 dwellings is that the scale of growth needs infrastructure in addition to the existing deficit which still needs to be addressed. It was agreed that a joint resolution from Hertfordshire addressing those issues should be tabled at the RPP on 15 October and work on that was currently in hand.

**5. Affordable Housing – reference from Environment Scrutiny Committee**

This item was referred to the Panel for further consideration by the Environment Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in June 2004. A copy of the report was attached.

The report identified that although the percentage of affordable housing built in the County from 2003-2004 was 18%, a 2% increase from 1991, this does not address the need for affordable housing in the County.

The Panel agreed :

- there should be a presentation at the next Panel on the Regional Affordable Housing Study;
- The County Council would respond to the Government consultation on PPG3 in the new year;
- There should be continued lobbying for strong policy at every opportunity.

**4. A.O.B.**

There was none.

**5. Next Meeting**

**Monday 22 November at 10.00 a.m. in Committee Room A**