

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE 23 MAY 2000

NOTE: Full copies of the reports mentioned below have been sent to all members of the Environment Committee and other members who have requested it. Any queries on this report to: Joan Blake, Room 222, County Secretary's Department, County Hall, Hertford. (Tel: 01992 555560)

1 DRAFT REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR THE SOUTH-EAST (RPG9) AND EAST ANGLIA (RPG6)

1.1 Rpg9 - The South-East

In December 1998 the South East Regional Planning Conference (SERPLAN) submitted to the government its draft regional planning guidance for the south-east. That document, entitled "A Sustainable Development Strategy for the South East" was the subject of public consultation and examination in early 1999, following which the report of the examination panel - The Crow Report - was published.

In March this year the government published its "Proposed Changes" to SERPLAN's draft RPG9 which amounted to a complete rewrite of SERPLAN's original proposals. The changes reflected the government's response to the recommendations of the Crow Report as well as to the many earlier representations in SERPLAN's original proposals. A public consultation on the proposed changes was held, during which time the Committee considered the recommendations of the Structure Plan Task Group and agreed the County Council's response to the proposed changes. A copy of the response was sent to Hertfordshire MPs, neighbouring authorities, district, parish and town councils, and the East of England Local Government Conference.

Whilst broadly welcoming the proposed changes, the County Council's response included various objections and recommendations in addition to suggested changes to the wording of policies, in the following areas:-

- Structure of the RPG as a Framework for a more Sustainable Future
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Affordable Housing
- Housing Distribution between Counties
- Stansted/M11 Corridor, including Harlow and the Cambridge sub-region
- Parking

In compiling the response to the proposed changes, district councils' views which had been expressed at a joint member meeting in May were taken into account.

The Committee expressed pleasure that districts supported the main thrust of the Task Group's recommendations, and responded to specific comments individual districts had made.

1.2 RPG6 - EAST ANGLIA

The Regional Planning Guidance for East Anglia (RPG6) which was issued in July 1991 for the period 1991-2006, is being replaced under a similar process and time-scale to that for RPG9. A Regional Strategy for East Anglia for the period 1995-2016 was prepared by the Standing Conference of East Anglia Local Authorities (SCEALA) and subsequently submitted to the Secretary of State, who published his "Proposed Changes" earlier this year.

The Committee considered the recommendations of the Structure Plan Task Group and agreed to make representations along the following lines:-

- Concern about the proposed level of housing provision for Cambridgeshire
- That surrounding market towns such as Saffron Walden were considered to be the least sustainable option for major new housing development in the Cambridge sub-region and the order of preference in Policy 21 was supported.

- That the area of the Stansted/M11 Corridor study should be extended northwards to cover the Cambridge sub-region.
- That the study should be led by a partnership of the relevant local authorities, including Cambridgeshire.
- That a development option of a new settlement was preferred to that of market towns and areas for consideration of such a settlement should not be limited to those north of Cambridge.
- That proposed further work on transport issues in East Anglia be carried forward as part of the regional transport strategy for the East of England.
- That reference to the expansion of Stansted in the 'Transport' section of the draft guidance should be clarified to make clear it applied only to the permitted level of expansion (15 million passengers per annum) at the airport.

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A PROSPECTUS FOR HERTFORDSHIRE'S RAIL NETWORK: RESULTS OF CONSULTATION

The County Council first published its Prospectus for Hertfordshire's Rail Network in 1996-97. The purpose of the document was to state clearly the aspirations of local authorities and rail users in Hertfordshire for development of the county's rail network and it was well received by the rail industry and rail user groups.

In January this year the Committee approved a draft of the revised Prospectus for Hertfordshire's Rail Network for public consultation. The updated document was designed to bring Hertfordshire's aspirations up to date and serve as a supporting document to Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan. During February and March the document was circulated to a wide audience including railway industry stakeholders, district, borough and appropriate parish and town councils, and representatives of the county's rail users.

Over 40 separate responses were received covering a total of 141 comments. Inevitably, there were a number of significant issues raised by the consultation and the committee approved revisions in respect of Herts East-West Passenger Transport Links (formerly Central Herts Passenger Transit System (CHPTS), integration of the bus network, Railfreight, Stevenage and Napsbury stations.

The committee authorised the publication of the final version of the Prospectus as a supporting document to the Local Transport Plan.

**Jane Pitman
Chairman
County Hall
Hertford**

23 May 2000