

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**TUESDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2003 AT 10.30 a.m.**

**Supplementary report to County Council item 6**

Agenda item no

**6A**

**HERTFORDSHIRE SUBMISSION TO THE REGIONAL PLANNING PANEL  
ON DISTRICT LEVEL HOUSING FIGURES FOR RPG14**

Report of the Director of Environment

Executive Member: Derrick Ashley

**1. Purpose of report**

To advise members of the recent deliberations of the East of England Regional Assembly's Regional Planning Panel (RPP) with regard to overall dwelling targets for RPG14 and for the distribution of those dwellings across the district councils in the region. (At time of drafting this supplementary report the minutes of the RPP were not available.)

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The main report on this item (number 6) sets out the process for the development of RPG14 and the work undertaken by the Hertfordshire authorities in order to assist in that process. All submissions from county groupings were considered by an officer scrutiny group on 7 November.
- 2.2 At its meeting on Friday 21 November the RPP considered a suite of reports that attempted to bring together various pieces of analysis regarding overall housing numbers. It also considered the process that had been followed after submission of each of the county grouping's work on housing distribution.
- 2.3 With regard to overall housing numbers EERA's report recommended:

**That the RPP note the range of overall housing provision needs – lying between 23,600 and 24,200 dwellings per year for the period to 2021 – prior to considering the papers before it.**

This compares to a current rate of development within existing RPGs of 21,000.

This recommendation was accepted by the RPP.

- 2.4 The RPP also received the notes of the 7 November Scrutiny group referred to above.

- 2.5 The RPP was then given a series of recommendations for taking the work forward in order to meet the deadline of 23 January 2004 when the RPP will receive the final draft RPG.

With regard to completing the task in Hertfordshire and Essex particularly, the Panel considered the following recommendations:

- **That EERA discuss with Hertfordshire County Council and constituent district councils the possibility of commissioning studies of central, north-east and south-east Hertfordshire to identify the most sustainable spatial strategy for these parts of the county. Pending the outcome of any such studies, that two illustrative additions be made to the overall regional total for district level figures:**
  - **One addition of 10,000, reflecting the difference of view between Hertfordshire County Council and the districts on existing housing capacity;**
  - **A further illustrative addition of 10,000 to reflect the greenfield/Green Belt sites within the proposed study areas.**
- **That a further illustrative addition of 3,000 be made to the overall regional total for district level figures, to reflect possible additional greenfield/Green Belt opportunities within the Hertfordshire study areas.**
- **That in respect of the Essex submission, EERA discuss the situation with Essex County Council in the first instance, to investigate the possibility of commissioning additional technical work, and securing a submission more in line with the apparent capacity of the county.**
- **That EERA discuss all the submissions with county groupings to investigate the scope for modest increases in development density assumptions.**

It was not made totally clear but this recommendation was understood to set out an overall dwelling figure for Hertfordshire of 73,000 new dwellings. This needs to be considered in the context of the assessment of urban capacity in the county of between 50,000 and 60,000. A further contextual figure is the figure that results from rolling forward current RPG9 rate, which is 66,000. There is no apparent connection between the 73,000 and the previous papers in the RPP agenda setting out various methodologies and targets.

In response to this recommendation, Derrick Ashley tabled the following suggestion:

- **That EERA recognises that it should seek to accommodate at least a continuation of the current RPG rate to 2021 for each County grouping area**
- **That EERA supports a proposal for a study in Hertfordshire to examine how to bridge the gap between the baseline capacity figure of 50,000 / 60,000 and the minimum requirement of 66,000**
- **That this study should be a county-wide assessment of the most sustainable development solutions to meeting this gap, based on the principles of the emerging spatial strategy for the Region**
- **That EERA also recognises that it may be necessary for housing development rates across the region to be above historical RPG rates, and above readily identified capacity levels. In recognition of the views expressed by Hertfordshire and Essex county councils, it is proposed that a concurrent regional assessment of the most sustainable solution to this challenge should be undertaken, which considers the role of new settlements in meeting this challenge.**

The RPP accepted the first three of the above points but rejected the suggestion of any regional wide evaluations of options to meet the shortfall. EERA will therefore be seeking to take this work forward as soon as possible. In addition there was considerable pressure for the work to include an exploration of how to exceed the 66,000 figure.

### **3. Background material**

Papers for EERA's Regional Planning Panel 21 November 2003 – items 10 a-d.