

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Date: 20 November 2006

Subject: **Review of the Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands -
Consultation Response**

Report of: Planning Strategy Director

Recommendation:

That the Committee agree the proposed consultation response as set out in Section 3 of this report.

Purpose of Report:

To agree a response to the public consultation on the Draft East Midlands Regional Plan.

Key Issues:

The Draft East Midlands Regional Plan represents a full review of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS8) for the East Midlands covering the period from 2006 to 2026. The key inter-regional implications of the draft Plan for the South East relate specifically to the proposals for the Southern Sub Region which forms part of the wider Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub Region.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8) was adopted by the Secretary of State in March 2005, following which a full review was immediately commenced during summer 2005. An initial public 'Options for Change' consultation was carried out between October 2005 and January 2006, to which the Assembly provided an informal officer response.
- 1.2 This report summarises the key features of the submission draft Plan in so far as they have implications for the South East. The consultation closes on 20 December 2006. An Examination in Public is due to commence in May 2007.

2. Summary of Plan

- 2.1 The draft Regional Plan for the East Midlands sets out an overall proposed average annual housing provision for the region of 20,418 dwellings for the period 2006-2026. This represents an increase of 28% compared with the adopted RSS8 (March 2005). Of this proposed annual provision over 5100 dwellings, or 25%, fall within the Southern sub-area; this forms an integral part of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands (MKSM) Growth Area.
- 2.2 Housing figures are provided for individual authorities and groupings of authorities within Housing Market Areas. For each HMA the Plan also provides targets for the provision of social rented and intermediate housing.

3. Proposed Consultation Response

- 3.1 This response focuses on the inter-regional implications of the draft East Midlands Regional Plan through its relationship for the MKSM Sub Regional Strategy.
- 3.2 The Regional Plan identifies sub areas which have been reviewed on the basis of research commissioned into the local authority groupings that relate to sub regional Housing Market Areas. The Southern Sub Area (which covers Northamptonshire) shares a border with the South East and will experience the highest absolute growth in jobs and houses in the region. It also forms part of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Growth Area, for which a Sub Regional Strategy (MKSM SRS) was adopted by the Secretary of State in March 2005. The MKSM SRS runs from 2001-2021 and comprises the whole of Northamptonshire (East Midlands), Bedfordshire (East of England), Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale (South East). Strategic policies for the sub region are contained in Part A of the SRS. More detailed policies applying to the individual areas covered by the three regions are separately set out in three regionally-specific statements in Part B of the SRS.
- 3.3 In order to bring the Northamptonshire area into line with the rest of the East Midlands region, there is a need to roll forward the MKSM SRS Part B Statement for Northamptonshire to make provision for housing for the period 2021-2026.

- The Options for Change document (December 2005) included three alternative sets of housing figures for Northamptonshire. These were developed on a different basis to the remainder of the East Midlands region but reflecting the approach of the recently adopted MKSM sub-regional strategy.
- 3.4 For North Northamptonshire the draft Regional Plan proposes to roll forward the provision of housing for the period 2021-2026 at the same average annual build rates proposed for the period 2016-2021. This proposal is supported as it reflects the approach taken in the draft South East Plan to extending the housing provision in Milton Keynes and Aylesbury over the same 5 year period.
- 3.5 However, housing provision figures for the Northampton Implementation Area (Northampton Borough and neighbouring parts of Daventry and South Northamptonshire) contained in the MKSM SRS were quashed by the High Court in January 2006, as the Secretary of State was found to have misinterpreted the Report of the Panel conducting the Examination in Public. The Regional Plan includes a provisional planning assumption of 31,500 for the NIA over the period 2001-2021 in the line with the MKSM Panel Report recommendations (The SRS had been adopted with a provision for 30,000 dwellings over the same period). These provisional figures will be reviewed by a growth study which will also inform a further alternation to the RSS to cover the period 2021-2026, which will be subject to consultation in December 2006.
- 3.6 To ensure consistency with the wider MKSM strategy, it would be helpful for the employment monitoring figures included in the Part B Statement for the Northamptonshire to be reviewed in line with the revised housing targets.
- 3.7 The statement confirming that the MKSM sub-regional strategy is an integral element of the Regional Plan is strongly supported. The presentation of the proposals as alterations to the existing MKSM SRS Part B Statement for Northamptonshire is welcomed and in line with the approach taken in the draft South East Plan in relation to Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale.

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 Members are recommended to agree the proposed representations to the Draft Regional Plan for the East Midlands as set out in section 3 above.

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