

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

Date: 26 July 2006

Subject: **Augmenting the Evidence Base for the South East Plan (The Roger Tym Report)**

Report of: Planning Strategy Director

**Recommendation:**

That the Committee note the publication of the research and key findings identified.

**Purpose of Report:**

To inform members about the content of recently published research, undertaken by Roger Tym & Partners for the Government; and assess its implications for the forthcoming South East Plan Examination in Public.

**Key Issues:**

This desk-based study developed and appraised alternative options for accommodating housing and associated growth in the South East, over and above the level set out in the draft South East Plan. Using existing evidence and information, a total of four options were tested incorporating different growth levels and distributions. Each option was developed as an 'add-on' to the housing targets and distribution set out in the Plan.

We have two main concerns about the approach set out in the report:

- i. It bases housing provision on one issue, and this is not a sustainable approach;
- ii. It misrepresents the relationship between housing provision and economic growth.

The study does not suggest an 'optimum' level of growth, or assess deliverability, but rather focuses on the possible implications of the levels of growth and distribution options from an 'impartial' viewpoint. The report itself identifies significant adverse impacts that would occur as a result of higher growth levels, which we regard as making these higher levels unacceptable and undeliverable.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Roger Tym & Partners were commissioned by Government to provide independent technical advice to help inform the forthcoming Examination in Public (EiP). The specific purpose of the study was to develop and appraise alternative options for accommodating housing and associated growth in the South East, additional to the amount proposed in the draft South East Plan.
- 1.2 The final report (“Augmenting the Evidence Base for the Examination in Public of the South East Plan”) was published on 20 June 2006, and the full report and associated information can be found on the GOSE website: <http://www.gose.gov.uk/gose/news/417702/>.

## **2. Approach**

- 2.1 The research involved a desk-top study which looked at evidence that already existed. Two different approaches to overall housing provision were suggested as alternatives to the approach outlined in the Plan: a ‘demographic’ approach based on long-term and short-term migration patterns (33,000 and 37,000 dwellings per annum respectively); and an economic based approach based on interpretation of employment projections (46,000 dwellings per annum). The draft South East Plan contains a target of 28,900 dwelling per annum.
- 2.2 All three ‘growth scenarios’ were tested against different distributions. Each assumed the draft South East Plan’s distribution for 28,900 dwellings, but alternative approaches were applied to distribute the ‘additional’ homes. The options were:
  - Options A and B – pro-rata distribution of the additional dwellings needed for the 33,000 and 37,000 scenarios, based on the distribution in the draft Plan.
  - Option C – distributes the additional dwellings from the 37,000 to the 29 core towns and cities in the region (Functional Urban Areas - FUR), based on the proportion of the population in each FUR.
  - Option D – employment led growth (46,000) using the Temprow model to identify likely areas of growth, with distribution of the additional 17,000 dwellings based on district level information.

## **3. Implications**

- 3.1 The report highlights a number of issues that will no doubt be raised by participants at the EiP later this year. It does not suggest an ‘optimum’ level of growth, or assess deliverability, but rather focuses on the possible

implications of the levels of growth and distribution options from an 'impartial' viewpoint.

- 3.2 We have two main concerns about the approach set out in the report:
- i. It bases housing provision on one issue, ie projected demand, and this is not a sustainable approach;
  - ii. It misrepresents the relationship between housing provision and economic growth.
- 3.3 The report itself highlights concerns about the impact of going above the growth level set out in the draft South East Plan, and implies major difficulties in the ability to deliver the growth. We believe these impacts make the higher growth levels unacceptable and undeliverable.
- 3.4 Officers at the Assembly have given some initial thought to the issues raised, and further consideration will be given over the coming weeks in preparation for the EiP. At this stage we have identified a number of key issues that arise from the study:
- 3.4.1 Are past trend demographic and employment projections a sound basis for long term spatial planning?
- i. PPS11 makes it clear that these are just factors that should be taken into account along with other factors. There will always be different scenarios for testing, but many of these have already been tested through the Plan preparation process and the Assembly regards its proposal in the draft Plan to be the most sustainable in the long term.
- 3.4.2 Can the housing levels outlined in the Roger Tym report be delivered?
- i. The report makes no attempt at addressing the difficult issue of how the housing will be delivered. There is already a gap in infrastructure funding that has to be bridged, and higher levels of growth will require higher levels of investment in infrastructure, but the report appears to be silent on this key issue.
  - ii. Of equal importance is the issuing of timing of that investment. There must be a real question mark over the ability of the infrastructure sector to deliver higher levels of investment in the short to medium term because of capacity issues within the sector.
- 3.4.3 Related to delivery, is there the capacity – water resources/quality, waste and transport - to deliver higher rates of growth?
- i. The work already being undertaken on water resources and quality indicate that significantly higher housing numbers start to have serious effects on the ability of the infrastructure to cope, or for new infrastructure to be provided in a timely way. Efficiency would need to increase dramatically to avoid problems with water supply.

- ii. While we may have sufficient information already available to allow us to take a view on the ability of the trunk road and rail networks to accommodate higher levels of growth, the views should be sought of the Highways Agency and Network Rail on the implications of the growth levels set out in the report.

#### 3.4.4 What are the links between economic and housing growth, and between housing growth and regeneration?

- i. The report appears to make simplistic assumptions regarding the links between housing and employment growth, and we hope that work that the Assembly is currently involved with will shed further light on the linkages here in advance of the EiP. In addition the report focuses primarily on 'economic' growth as equating to 'employment' growth, and does not reflect the priority within both the draft South East Plan and the draft RES for higher-productivity based growth, which is not necessarily so labour or land intensive. In addition, it is not clear how the research builds potential employment land demands into its assessment of residential land availability.
- ii. Where housing and regeneration is concerned, the methodology used for distribution in the economic option appears to fail to recognise that the housing provision set out in the draft Plan is attempting to change past trends and has a clear spatial strategy underpinning it, including a focus on areas with regeneration needs.

## 4. Next Steps

- 4.1 The Roger Tym & Partners study is a helpful indicator of some of the lines of debate that are likely to be discussed through the EiP process. As explained, we have concerns about the approach used in the study, as it bases housing provision on one issue, and we believe it over-simplifies the relationship between housing provision and economic growth.
- 4.2 In addition, the findings, and the 'outline' Sustainability Appraisal that has been included as part of the work, identify a number of significant impacts that would result from the higher levels of housing growth, which we regard as making the higher levels of growth unacceptable and undeliverable. Officers will continue to examine the report for implications in preparation for the EiP.

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