

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

Date: 27 September 2006

Subject: **South East Plan Core Document - outstanding issues**

Report of: Planning Manager

**Recommendation:**

That the Committee:

1. Notes the progress and timetable for completion of outstanding advice from the Principal Authorities responsible for advising the Assembly on the sub-regional strategies for South Hampshire and Central Oxfordshire.
2. Agree the further advice provided by the PUSH authorities on the sub-regional town centres policy for recommendation to the EiP Panel to replace the policy and text in the South East Plan.

**Purpose of Report:**

To update members on progress on outstanding issues and advice provided by the Principal Authorities relating to the sub-regional strategies for South Hampshire and Central Oxfordshire. This includes:

- a) Further advice on town centres and policy SH8 of the South Hampshire sub-regional strategy (Section E1) provided by the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) authorities
- b) District level housing distribution for the Strategic Development Area proposed to the North / North East of Hedge End in South Hampshire (Policy SH12 in Section E1 and Policy H1 in Section D3)
- c) Further advice on the distribution of housing proposed for Didcot between South Oxfordshire District Council and the Vale of White Horse District Council (Policy CO2 in Section E7).

**Key Issues:**

The additional advice from the PUSH authorities on town centres requires consideration by the Assembly prior to the commencement of the Examination in Public. There have been delays in provision of district level housing figures relating to both Didcot (Central Oxfordshire) and the Strategic Development Areas in South Hampshire. Work is progressing on these issues and it is intended that further advice will be provided for discussion at the Examination in Public.

## **I. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Assembly received advice from the principal authorities on the sub-regional strategies for inclusion in the South East Plan in December 2005. There were a small number of outstanding issues that required further work and it was agreed that this would be undertaken to feed into the consultation process and the Examination in Public. These included:
- a) South Hampshire: Further advice on a town centres policy to replace the current Policy SH8 (Office Development) and supporting text (paragraph 2.26), taking account of technical work that was not completed in time to inform the advice provided in December 2005;
  - b) South Hampshire: Further advice on the distribution by district/borough of the housing proposed in the North East/North of Hedge End Strategic Development Area as included in Policies H1 and SH12;
  - c) Central Oxfordshire: Further advice on the distribution of housing proposed for Didcot between South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse districts.
- 1.2 Progress on provision of this further advice is described below.

## **2. South Hampshire Policy SH8: Strategy for Main Town Centres**

- 2.1 Hampshire County Council and the PUSH authorities had intended that technical work undertaken by DTZ would be used to inform the advice provided to the Assembly in December 2005, for inclusion in the South East Plan. Delays to this meant that the policy advice was not provided in time. Assembly officers agreed with the PUSH authorities that an appropriate way forward would be for additional advice to be submitted to the Regional Assembly and for that advice to be considered by this Committee in advance of the Examination in Public. The views of the Committee would then be included in the evidence presented by the Assembly secretariat to the EiP.
- 2.2 The Assembly received further advice from the PUSH authorities on 21 March 2006. The recommended policy and text, and the covering letter, is attached as an annex (Annex B) to this report.
- 2.3 The new Policy SH8 and supporting text provides detailed guidance on the role and future development of the main town centres in the sub-region. This can be justified on the basis of the extensive urban area that is covered by the sub-regional strategy, and the scale of need and capacity set out in the supporting text, reflecting the technical research.

### **3. South Hampshire: Further Advice on Distribution by District / Borough of Housing in the two Strategic Development Areas**

3.1 The advice provided to the Assembly by the PUSH authorities in December 2005 included provision for two Strategic Development Areas (SDAs). Policy SH2 describes the broad location of each SDA and sets out what is intended for these areas:

- (i) in Fareham Borough to the north of the M27 comprising 10,000 new homes (between 2016 and 2026)
- (ii) to the North and North East of Hedge End comprising 6,000 new homes (2016-26).

3.2 Policy SH12 sets out the scale and location of housing proposed in the sub-region. The two SDAs are identified separately and the housing provision in these areas is not explicitly distributed by district/borough. This is reflected in the content of Policy H1. A footnote to Policy H1 explains that further advice is to be provided by PUSH.

3.3 The Assembly is charged with providing district-level housing numbers in the South East Plan. The Fareham SDA is entirely within Fareham Borough BC. However, the North and North East of Hedge End SDA covers more than one district and so the district level distribution is unclear.

3.4 Given the long term nature of the provision of housing within the SDAs (beyond 2016) and the need for further work to define their form and location, PUSH has advised the Assembly that it believes that it is inappropriate to disaggregate the overall housing figures to district level.

3.5 In addition there are concerns that if one or both of the proposed SDAs are not implemented, there will be a need to fundamentally review the sub-regional housing distribution rather than reallocate this elsewhere in the districts covered by the existing SDAs.

3.6 The Assembly has therefore not received any further advice on district level distribution in the SDAs from PUSH.

### **4. Central Oxfordshire: Further Advice on District Level Housing Distribution in Relation to Didcot**

4.1 The advice provided to the Assembly by Oxfordshire County Council in December 2005 included an overall figure of 3,000 dwellings for Didcot between 2016 and 2026. The urban area of Didcot is on the border of South Oxfordshire District and Vale of White Horse District.

4.2 The distribution of new housing between the two districts had not been agreed at the time the advice was submitted for inclusion in the South East Plan. For pragmatic purposes, and as an interim measure, the overall provision was divided equally between the districts, and this is described in Policy CO2.

- 4.3 Further work is progressing to determine and agree the distribution of this housing, led by South Oxfordshire District Council and the Vale of White Horse District Council. This is taking into account constraints around Didcot and will lead to the identification of broad locations for development. Public consultation on this work is planned for November 2006.
- 4.4 A major issue has been flood risk, and a strategic flood risk assessment is being undertaken in conjunction with the Environment Agency. The results of this work are unlikely to be available until the end of 2006.
- 4.5 The Oxfordshire planning authorities (Vale of White Horse DC, South Oxfordshire DC and Oxfordshire County Council) are aware of the need to inform the Assembly and the EiP Panel on the distribution of housing at Didcot at the earliest opportunity. However, this has been delayed due to the need to follow necessary technical and consultation procedures. In addition the respective authorities also require time to consider the evidence and determine the preferred option for housing distribution.
- 4.6 The County Council as the Principal Authority aims to be in a position to provide the additional advice on the district-level distribution of housing at Didcot in their submission on the Central Oxfordshire sub-region for discussion at the EiP. The deadline for submissions for this Matter is 22 January 2007.

## **5. Conclusion**

- 5.1 The Assembly has received further advice from the PUSH authorities to address the outstanding issue with regard to the Town Centres policy for South Hampshire sub-region. The Committee is asked to agree this advice for recommendation to the EiP Panel for inclusion in the sub-regional strategy of the South East Plan.
- 5.2 The Assembly has not received any further advice from PUSH on the district level distribution of housing in the Strategic Development Areas. Therefore the housing provision for the SDAs in Policy SH12 and HI will continue to be presented separately to district level figures.
- 5.3 Further work is underway by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils and Oxfordshire County Council to provide further advice on the distribution of housing proposed for Didcot after 2016. This work has been delayed but the aim is to provide the advice in time to inform discussion at the forthcoming EiP.

**David Payne**  
**Planning Manager**

8 September 2006

Tel: 01483 555217

Email: [davidpayne@southeast-ra.gov.uk](mailto:davidpayne@southeast-ra.gov.uk)