

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

Date: 26 September 2007

Subject: **Items for Information**

1. **Housing Green Paper**
2. **LDD Conformity - Statistics**
3. **Major Planning Applications - Statistics**

Report of: See individual items

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of this report.

**1. Housing Green Paper:
Homes for the Future: More Affordable, More Sustainable**

The Assembly's response to the Housing Green paper was considered by Executive on 14 September 2007. The key points of response were:

- 1.1 **Housing numbers:** The Green Paper sets out aspirations to increase housing completions to 240,000 homes per annum. It implies that higher regional housing targets will be imposed where government considers RSS figures incompatible with their 'affordability though increased supply' approach. There is no justification to arbitrarily increase the numbers in the South East beyond the level recommended by the Panel, as the Panel state their figure aligns the RSS with the RES (and thus is already in broad accordance with SNR objectives for single regional strategies, to support economic potential).
- 1.2 **Affordability:** The Green Paper continues to push the simplistic view that the affordability crisis can be addressed by increasing the number of homes built. A growing body of evidence, informing the Panel Report recommendations, indicates that the only way to address genuine housing need is to increase funding for affordable housing.
- 1.3 **Type and size:** The continued focus on headline completions has created a perverse effect wherein insufficient regard is given to meeting affordable housing need in terms of providing the right type and size of affordable homes in the right locations.

- 1.4 **Funding:** The £8 billion allocation to affordable housing 2008-2011 is welcomed, as is the 'ambition' to sustain this commitment to 2020. However the implied spend per unit is similar to Housing Corporation funding 2004-2006, whilst cost per unit is likely to be higher to provide the larger, more sustainable and better quality affordable homes that will be required in the light of government requirements and regional evidence on priority housing need.
- 1.5 **Infrastructure:** We strongly support coordination of mainstream government department funding into a single delivery plan, in support of sustainable communities (and not just housing provision). A clear breakdown to regional level and consultation with the regional tier on alignment and priorities is essential. The Panel acknowledged that their higher housing target would further increase the infrastructure funding gap identified by the Assembly. In this respect the £300 million Community Infrastructure Fund, whilst welcome, is sufficient given the current funding gap, and the extent to which it will have to fund additional national commitments.

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10 September 2007

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2. LDD Conformity - Statistics

- 2.1 Between 1 July and 31 August 2007, Assembly officers provided informal advice on the Issues and Options for Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste DPD and the Crawley Development Control Policies DPD and for the Preferred Options for the Buckinghamshire Waste DPD and Preferred Options for the Aylesbury Vale Core Strategy and Allocated Sites DPDs. Assembly Officers issued opinions of general conformity and formal comments on the Spelthorne Core Strategy DPD, the Spelthorne Site Allocations DPD, the Oxford West End Area Action Plan DPD. Opinions of general conformity were issued for 4 SPDs.
- 2.2 As of 1 September 2007, there were outstanding requests for comments on 2 SPDs.

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10 September 2007

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3. Major Planning Applications - Statistics

- 3.1 In the period from 1 July to 31 August 2007, 13 consultation requests were received from local planning authorities on applications of regional significance. As of the end of August, 11 of these plus 7 applications received before 1 July were responded to within 21 days or an alternative deadline agreed in writing between the Assembly and the relevant local planning authority. The 2 consultations outstanding as of 1 September 2007 have either now been dealt with or are still within the statutory period for response.
- 3.2 All of the responses were considered and agreed by the member sub-group. Observations were raised in relation to three applications received in the period from 1 July and 31 August concerning natural resource, water and flood, Greenfield land and infrastructure issues.

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10 September 2007

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