

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Date: 17 December 2004

Subject: **Regional Planning Committee - Chairman's Report of the
Meeting on 8 December 2004**

Report of: Chairman of the Regional Planning Committee

Recommendation:

That the Executive receives the report.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update members of the Executive on business transacted at the Regional Planning Committee on 8 December 2004.

2. Minutes

- 2.1 Under Approval of Minutes, members agreed a number of changes to the minutes before they were approved. These included:
- a) In para 7.4, reflecting more fully members' concerns about the adequacy of water supply and sewerage facilities at higher levels of housing growth.
 - b) In para 8.3, reflecting the views of members who favoured lower rates of housing growth as well as those who favoured higher rates.
 - c) In para 8.4, reflecting more of the debate and recording voting on alternative proposals for consultation on rates of housing growth.
 - d) In para 8.5, reflecting the Committee's decision as a Recommendation on rates of housing growth to the Assembly and not a final decision.
- 2.2 Under Matters Arising, the undertaking to supply planning officers with data on urban potential was queried and members were advised that there had been a delay but that the information was now being provided to officers.

3. District Housing Distribution Process

- 3.1 Several requests had been made for this paper describing the process by which allocation down to district level would be achieved in Stage Two of the South East Plan. After delays, a paper was presented to the 8 November 2004 Regional Planning Committee but members were not satisfied with it and remitted it for further work.
- 3.2 Members remained critical of the paper as presented. In particular, there was potential confusion in references to 'the Assembly' when the Assembly had not taken any decision and the reference clearly referred to 'the officers of the Assembly'. See paras 3.1 and 3.7 of Agenda Item 4.
- 3.3 Members sought and were promised details of the Steering Group that would supervise independent technical advice on housing distribution methodology, including membership, timetable and the brief to the consultants (see para 3.2).
- 3.4 Members rejected proposals in para 3.5 concerning voting rights in Sub-Regional Steering Groups and recognised the legal status of principal authorities in sub-regional work, requesting them to work with district councils (in two tier areas) and with other stakeholders in determining the distribution of housing numbers within sub-regions. Sub-Regional Steering Groups were to be left to determine their precise working arrangements in their locality. A reference to discouraging minority reports (para 3.7) was deleted.

4. Sustainability Appraisal

- 4.1 Members rejected the notion that it was not necessary for members to see or formally agree the Draft Sustainability Report. Members required the South East Steering Group to have sight of the report to take a view as to the adequacy of the work. Members continued to express concerns about the way in which this work was being done and a lack of engagement to date in the sub-regional strategies.

5. Spatial Options and Levels of Growth (paper 6a)

- 5.1 Members had a substantial debate on this item. In the course of the debate an amendment was introduced to make changes to the allocation of housing numbers to the Hampshire residual area with consequential adjustments elsewhere. The outcome of the debate was a rejection both of the proposed amendment and the original officer allocations. Officers admitted that their allocation tables had been prepared in haste and contained discrepancies which required further work. Members to hold a further Regional Planning Committee on 22 December to consider a re-written paper. Officers undertook to provide papers for members by 16 December.

- 5.2 Members provided a steer to officers around the allocation process as follows:
- a) The numbers determined for consultation by the Assembly were 25,500, 28,000 and 32,000. Once determined, their derivation should not influence their distribution across the region.
 - b) Allocations for the Growth Areas should be constant and should be top-sliced off the agreed totals.
 - c) The residue should be distributed according to two formulae: the RPG9 proportions and the 'sharper focus' basis. These to be applied to the 25,500 base as well as to the other two.

6. South East Plan - Schedule of Changes

- 6.1 The paper was agreed with some minor changes to reflect better the decisions of the Assembly. Members stressed that they were implementing the decisions of the Assembly and not seeking to modify them.

7. London Fringe Sub-Regional Policies (Paper 6c)

- 7.1 Surrey members had expressed concerns about this paper. Some adjustments were agreed and the revised policies were approved.

8. Sub-Regional Options - Schedule of Changes (Paper 6d)

- 8.1 The rates of growth for consultation in the Western Corridor were modified to RPG9 and RPG9 plus 10%.
- 8.2 In other sub-regional strategies, the wording referring to rates of growth was modified from 'the Regional Assembly is seeking' to 'alternative rates of growth are sought'.

9. South East Plan - Publicity Arrangements (Paper 7)

- 9.1 Members expressed concern that there must be a clear audit trail tracking formal consultation responses to their impact, if any, on the next stage of the Plan.
- 9.2 It was emphasised that the Steering Group would see and agree all publicity material.

10. Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006-26 (Paper 8)

- 10.1 Members agreed a response and to the setting up of an inter-regional meeting in the New Year.

11. Consultation Schedule for Planning Applications

- 11.1 Some members remained concerned about this process but agreed the proposals.

12. Remaining Agenda Items

- 12.1 The remaining agenda items were not contentious. We concluded the business of the Committee at 3.40 p.m. with a reduced number of members after a long day.

Cllr Keith Mitchell
Chairman of the Regional Planning Committee

14 December 2004