

report

meeting	JOINT COMMITTEE ON PLANNING & TRANSPORT	
date	27 January 2005	agenda item number
from	JOINT OFFICER STEERING GROUP	

UPDATE ON REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY AND THE 3 CITIES SUB REGIONAL STRATEGY

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the latest developments on the Regional Spatial Strategy and the 3 Cities Sub Regional Strategy

Options for Change Consultation

1. The East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy [RSS] is being reviewed to:
 - Comply with the new planning legislation;
 - Include housing figures for all local council areas;
 - Take full account of recent Government initiatives such as the review of policy on waste, the latest information from the 2001 Census and updated Government household projections;
 - Be rolled forward five years from the current end date of 2021 to 2026.
2. Joint Committee considered at its October meeting the “Options for Change” consultation document prepared by the East Midlands Regional Assembly (EMRA). The consultation finished on 16 January and each authority has submitted its own responses. Also a draft response covering the whole of the 3 Cities sub-area will be considered by the Leaders of the 3 Cities and Counties at its next meeting and arrangements have been made with EMRA for this to be considered as part of the consultation process.
3. Points raised at the last meeting are covered in the minutes. Key matters covered by the responses of the County and City Councils include:
 - The importance of Hucknall being considered as part of the Greater Nottingham policy area;
 - Existing Structure Plan policies being equivalent to the low growth/urban concentration/regeneration option (Option 1B).
 - The higher trend growth/urban concentration/regeneration option (Option 2B) being challenging. This relates to a growth rate some 24% higher and closer to that being proposed by the latest ODPM household projections.

4. With regard to Option 2B, it might be possible for this option to be achieved, subject to:
 - The provision of infrastructure investment;
 - Concern on the implications of the option for the provision of sites for employment development being overcome;
 - More detailed consideration on the distribution of sites for housing and employment development and implications for the environment.

5. With regard to the issue of sub-area boundaries, Councillor Edwards raised the matter at the full meeting of the EMRA on 21 October and subsequently received a letter from the Assembly's Director of Planning and Transport. The Director's view was that:
 - Policy at a more detailed geographical level can be given as part of the 3 Cities Sub-Regional Strategy, which will form part of the RSS;
 - EMRA will work with local authorities to define 'policy areas' around each of the Principal Urban Areas as a way of focusing development on the existing built up areas;
 - These 'policy areas' need not follow local authority boundaries and indeed EMRA expect that the current South Nottinghamshire policy area would form the basis of the new 'policy area' around Nottingham, perhaps with the addition of parts of Derbyshire such as Erewash;
 - Any such policies would form part of the statutory Development Plan and would thus be covered by the relevant section of the Planning Acts.

6. The issue is whether such policy provision in the RSS can be made strong enough to ensure that the scale of development can be identified for the two distinct parts of Ashfield for implementation through the new Local Development Document (LDD) process, possibly in the face of LDD objections/proposals to re-define the balance of development within the district. The view of the Assembly's Director of Planning and Transport is that the policy framework can be made effective through the RSS. Both authorities continue to highlight the question and close attention will need to be given to this in drafts of the RSS.

Sub-regional Strategy for the 3 Cities sub-area

7. A sub-regional strategy for the 3 Cities sub-area is being prepared as part of the RSS Review process. The three Cities and Counties are responsible for preparing a draft strategy for the EMRA, which will then need to be approved by EMRA.

8. It has been decided that the three Cities and Counties leaders meeting will oversee the preparation of the strategy and will endorse the final document. There is a supporting officer group which also includes representatives from the district councils, the Sub-regional Strategic Partnerships and environmental organisations.

9. The current timetable is that the final strategy will require endorsement in July/August. The draft RSS, including its sub-regional strategies, will be considered by EMRA's Joint Housing, Planning and Transport Board in mid

September 2006 and by the full assembly later in September.

10. The objectives of the sub-regional strategy are:

- To promote sustainable patterns of development and movement within and between the three Principal Urban Areas of Derby, Leicester and Nottingham, and other settlements within the Sub-area and beyond;
- To increase the use of public transport for both local and inter-urban movements;
- To improve the quality of the environment, including the provision of semi-natural green space in urban areas;
- To improve the collective economic performance of the sub-area and a reduce deprivation;
- To optimise the economic benefits of Nottingham East Midlands Airport in a way which is consistent with sustainable patterns of development and movement; and
- To ensure that Green Belt and Green Wedge designations are consistent with the requirements of the sub-area and with government advice.

11. One aspect of the sub-regional strategy will be the review of the Green Belt and a project plan has been agreed by the officer group to take this forward.

12. A further matter under discussion is the proposed Service Level Agreement between the Counties/Cities and the EMRA for the delivery of strategic planning advice as outlined in the latest planning act. This includes advice on sub-regional planning.

Growth Points

13. As part of the Government's response to the Barker Review of Housing Supply, the ODPM minister, Richard McCarthy, is inviting authorities to express interest in proposals for accelerated growth as part of a new growth points initiative. It is open to areas who can demonstrate a good case for accelerated, additional economic and housing growth where this can be shown to relieve pressure on high housing demand and tackle affordability problems. A total of £40 million is available in 2007-08 for these projects, with the closing date for submitting proposals for pilot project funding being 31st March 2006.

14. Criteria for bids has been issued and these are being examined by the two authorities. It is also understood that a combined three Cities/Counties bid is under consideration.

RECOMMENDATION

It is RECOMMENDED that the report be noted.

Background Papers

Review of the East Midlands Regional Plan to 2026 – Options for Change
(October 2005) – available at www.emra.gov.uk

Contact Officers

Roger Howes, Culture and Community Department, Nottinghamshire County
Council

Matt Gregory, City Development Department, Nottingham City Council