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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Special Meeting of Council</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM: 11(b)</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>20<sup>th</sup> March 2007</b>	<b>CATEGORY: DELEGATED</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>Deputy Chief Executive</b>	<b>OPEN</b>
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	<b>Ian Bowen 595821</b>	<b>DOC:</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>RSS Examination in Public Timetable</b>	<b>REF:</b>
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE: EDS03</b>

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## **1.0 Reason for urgency**

- 1.1 A decision is needed in order to comply with the tight deadline set by the Regional Spatial Strategy examination timetable.

## **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Chair of the Environmental and Development Services Committee to:
- (a) raise with the EiP Panel Secretary the Council's concerns over the inadequate opportunity for the District Council's attendance at the EiP;
  - (b) forward detailed suggestions for amending the matters to be discussed, as outlined in the conclusions to this report;
  - (c) advise Mark Todd MP of the inadequacy of the EiP programme; and
  - (d) make arrangements with neighbouring Local Authorities and the Panel Secretariat to represent the Council's views at the EIP.

## **3.0 Purpose of Report**

- 3.1 To inform Members of officer's concerns regarding the draft programme of matters to be discussed at the RSS Examination in Public and secure action to ensure that every effort is made within the tight timeframe to enable those aspects of importance to South Derbyshire to be properly discussed at the examination.

## 4.0 Detail

- 4.1 Members will recall that the Council raised a number of strong objections to the emerging East Midlands Regional Plan (EMRP) at Special Council on 14<sup>th</sup> December last year on the advice of the EMRP Member Working Panel. (Minute CL97 refers)
- 4.2 In raising its objections, the Council specifically asked to address the Examination in Public (EiP) Panel on a number of key issues. These included, inter alia:
- the simplistic strategy of the Plan in directing growth to main urban areas only and the role of rural villages
  - the lack of recognition of the existence of two major brownfield sites in the District and the need to plan for their future in the LDF
  - the need for the plan to show how new development will be accompanied by necessary infrastructure including roads, public transport, schools, health facilities etc.
  - The strong cross border relationship with East Staffordshire and North West Leicestershire, particularly in relation to the need for a strategic road linking the A38 at Burton to A511.
  - The need for greater clarity on the phasing of brownfield sites before greenfield releases
- 4.3 The EiP Panel Secretary has now published a list of proposed 'Matters for Discussion' and a 'List of Participants', together with a number of key dates and deadlines for the run-up to the EiP which commences on 22<sup>nd</sup> May. These were explained at a technical Preliminary meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> February and will be followed up with a further meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> April. The timetable for taking the EMRP forward is extremely tight and the Panel Secretary is requesting comments on the proposed Matters and Participants by **Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2007**. It is essential the Council raises any concerns by that date
- 4.4 The list of proposed 'Matters for Discussion' are summarised at Appendix 1. Fuller details including specific questions within each matter and a list of participants can be viewed on the Panel Secretary's website at [www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk/pins/rss/east\\_midlands/index.htm](http://www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk/pins/rss/east_midlands/index.htm) The matters of most relevance to the District Council appear to be the overall 'Background and Policy 1', 'Spatial Strategy', 'Housing', 'Economic Strategy', 'Regional Transport Strategy' and the 'Three Cities' Sub-Area.
- 4.5 Disappointingly, however, the District Council has not been invited to participate in the EiP. Instead, for the 'Housing' and 'Three Cities sub-area' sessions, a 'hot seat' arrangement is proposed. In the case of 'Housing', 1 seat would be available for all district/borough Councils to share in each county area. Similarly, for the 'Three Cities' session, 3 hot seats are being made available for all district/borough councils in the sub-area. Under this approach, there is a clear expectation that councils

will form informal alliances and agree amongst themselves, prior to the EiP, which authorities should act as representatives.

- 4.6 More disappointingly still, no district/borough council participation has been programmed at all for the remaining Matters referred to above. Instead, local authorities are to be represented by the county and unitary authorities at these sessions.
- 4.7 Furthermore, the proposed list of matters and detailed questions do not appear to offer the opportunity for consideration of the breadth of this Council's objections. For example, the 'Three Cities' session appears to be over-dominated by issues relating to a proposed urban extension to Nottingham and this is reflected in the list of invitees.
- 4.8 The EiP commences on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2007. The EiP Panel are inviting the submission of Written Statements (irrespective of attendance) for each matter to be discussed at the EiP. The deadline for their submission is 24<sup>th</sup> April 2007. The EiP is programmed to close on 19<sup>th</sup> July.

## **5.0 Financial Implications**

- 5.1 Staff time for attendance at the EiP during normal working hours is accounted for in existing salary budgets however, out of hours working may be necessary to ensure that statements are prepared in line with the tight examination timetable given other equally important and tight project deadlines.

## **6.0 Community Implications**

- 6.1 It is important for the community of South Derbyshire that sufficient opportunity is provided at the EiP to ensure that any issues are properly discussed.

## **7.0 Conclusions**

- 7.1 The proposed arrangements for the EiP give serious cause for concern, and a strong response should be made to the Panel Secretary before 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2007. As a minimum it is suggested that a dedicated session to discuss spatial planning matters within the Derby Housing Market Area should be arranged, with invitations extended to all local authorities.

## **8.0 Background Papers**

- 8.1 None other than as referred to in the report.