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| REPORT TO: | Environmental and Development Services | AGENDA ITEM: 11 |
| DATE OF MEETING: | 1st February 2007 | CATEGORY: |
| REPORT FROM: | Deputy Chief Executive | OPEN: |
| MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT: | Ian Bowen X5821 | DOC: |
| SUBJECT: | West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy – Phase Two Revision - Spatial Options | REF: |
| WARD(S) AFFECTED: | All | TERMS OF REFERENCE: EDS |

1.0 Recommendation

- 1.1 That the West Midlands Regional Assembly be advised that South Derbyshire District Council's views on the WMRSS Phase 2 Spatial Options are as follows:

“The acknowledgement of the need for consideration of Burton upon Trent in the context of both the West and East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategies can be welcomed and supported. However, given the need to improve accessibility to the Swadlincote area and to ensure a comprehensive planning approach to the Burton-Swadlincote area, the WMRSS needs to explicitly acknowledge the feasibility work being undertaken into a strategic road link between the A38 and A511.

In terms of housing requirements, the amount of Burton-related development which would need to be accommodated in South Derbyshire under a high growth option is unknown. However, it will be essential for the WMRSS to require that any such development across the regional boundary is provided in a way which will be beneficial to communities in South Derbyshire, and is accompanied by appropriate and adequate infrastructure. If this option is chosen, development should only be promoted on the

basis of cross border working particularly in drawing up LDF documents”.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To consider and agree a response to the Spatial Options on the “West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy – Phase Two Revision”.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 On 8th January 2007, the West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA) published for consultation their ‘Spatial Options’ for a partial review of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS). The revised WMRSS will set the amount and distribution of growth in the West Midlands for the next 20 years as well as establishing priorities for transport and development restraint.
- 3.2 Whilst the core objectives of the existing WMRSS (issued in 2004) remain unchanged, certain issues are being reviewed on the recommendation of the Secretary of State. The current round of consultation is formally known as the ‘Phase 2’ revision and concentrates on housing, employment, transport and waste issues. Consultation on phase 1 relates only to the Black Country area, whilst Phase 3 will address certain other detailed issues at a future date.
- 3.3 The WMRSS phase 2 revision is at the initial ‘Issues and Options’ stage, and as such essentially presents a number of open-ended questions regarding the key strategic issues rather than a fully worked up draft Plan.
- 3.4 Comments are required by 5th March 2007. Full copies of the consultation document have been placed in the Group lounges and the Members Room. The document can also be viewed on line at www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=283 and the link has been e-mailed to all members.

4.0 Detail

- 4.1 Whilst the bulk of the planning strategy for the West Midlands is of limited interest to South Derbyshire, the treatment of Burton upon Trent is clearly a key issue given its proximity to the Swadlincote area. In this regard, Members will recall that the draft East Midlands RSS (EMRSS) was the subject of consultation between September and December 2006. In view of the importance of this document, a special Member Working Panel was convened, and its suggested response was considered at full Council on 14th December 2006.
- 4.2 This Council concluded that a key failing of the East Midlands Plan was its scant acknowledgement of the relationship between Swadlincote and Burton. Furthermore, the draft plan was silent on the feasibility work

which had been undertaken into a river crossing linking the A38 to the A511. The Plan also failed to acknowledge that South Derbyshire contains sites with potential for major brownfield redevelopment – one of which is located at Drakelow and which could be served by the new river crossing.

5.0 Content of the draft West Midlands RSS

- 5.4 In terms of detail, the consultation document acknowledges that there are close links between Burton upon Trent and the East Midlands and that the future development of Burton “should be considered in the context of both Regional Spatial Strategies”. In relation to housing, the document presents three growth options for Burton for the period 2001 - 2026 ranging from 308 dwellings per annum to 600 dwellings per annum. In this regard, the draft RSS advises that the higher growth rate may imply development in a neighbouring district (i.e. South Derbyshire).
- 5.5 The draft RSS revision does not, however, refer to any infrastructure implications arising from major growth in the Burton area and crucially avoids any mention of the feasibility work being undertaken into the provision of a new strategic road linking the A38 to the A511 at Swadlincote.

6.0 Officer Observations

- 6.1 Given the Council's recent representations in relation to the draft East Midlands Regional Plan, it is important to raise corresponding comments on the West Midlands RSS in so far as it relates to the Burton area.
- 6.2 The specific reference in the draft WMRSS to a need for consideration of Burton upon Trent in the context of both regional strategies can be welcomed and supported. However, given the need to improve accessibility to the Swadlincote area, and to ensure a comprehensive planning approach to the Burton-Swadlincote area, the WMRSS needs to explicitly acknowledge the feasibility work being undertaken into a strategic road link between the A38 and A511.
- 6.3 In terms of housing provision, the possibility of significant growth at Burton upon Trent is noted. The town's Growth Point status, although not referred to in the draft WMRSS, suggests the selection of a high growth option is likely. Under this scenario, the clear implication is that any growth which is not able to be physically accommodated within East Staffordshire will need to be located in South Derbyshire. Any such development would be treated as additional to South Derbyshire's future housing requirement being established in the emerging East Midlands RSS. At this stage the amount of likely Burton-related development needing to be accommodated in South Derbyshire is unknown. However, it will be essential for the WMRSS to require that any such development across the regional boundary is provided in a way which will be beneficial to communities in South Derbyshire, and is

accompanied by appropriate and adequate infrastructure. If this option is chosen, development should only be promoted on the basis of cross border working particularly in drawing up LDF documents.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 None

8.0 Community Implications

8.1 Major growth in the Burton upon Trent area has implications for residents of South Derbyshire in terms of development, infrastructure, accessibility and environmental quality.

9.0 Conclusions

9.1 It will be essential that a co-ordinated approach to the Burton – Swadlincote area is adopted in both the West and East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategies. The WMRSS acknowledges this fact and can be supported. However, the draft Plan needs to specifically acknowledge feasibility work being undertaken on the A38 – A511 road link. In terms of housing, the draft WMRSS indicates that the high growth options may imply development in neighbouring districts including South Derbyshire. If such an option is pursued, it will be essential that development is accompanied by necessary infrastructure and co-ordinated through LDF documents to ensure benefits accrue to communities in South Derbyshire.

10.0 Background Papers

10.1 West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy – Phase Two Revision