
REPORT TO:	ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 9
DATE OF MEETING:	20th NOVEMBER 2008	CATEGORY: RECOMMENDED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	IAN BOWEN (EXT. 5821)	DOC:
SUBJECT:	DRAFT WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY – PREFERRED OPTION	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: EDS17

1.0 Recommendations

That :

- 1.1 The draft “Phase 2 West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy – Preferred Option” and the “Development of Options for the West Midlands RSS in Response to the NHPAU Report” (prepared by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners) be noted;
- 1.2 Objections be raised to both these documents as set out in paragraphs 4.5 – 4.7 and 4.11 of this report;

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To consider and formulate a response to consultations on the following two documents:
 - a) The draft “Phase 2 West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy – Preferred Option” published by the West Midlands Regional Assembly; and
 - b) “Development of Options for the West Midlands RSS in Response to the NHPAU Report” published by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners on behalf of the Government Office for the West Midlands

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA) is undertaking a review of certain aspects of the West Midlands RSS (WMRSS) which was published in June 2004.

The review is being undertaken in three separate phases and the Assembly is currently consulting on a 'Preferred Option' for 'Phase 2' which, amongst other matters, deals with future new housing requirements up to 2026.

- 3.2 Comments are required to be submitted by noon on **8th December 2008**.
- 3.3 In addition, a second related consultation is underway arising from the Government's concern that the 'preferred option' does not propose sufficient housing numbers. This conclusion was reached in the light of a national study undertaken by the National Housing and Planning Advice Unit (NHPAU) which recommended a higher range of house-building rates be considered in the West Midlands - between 51,500 and 80,000 dwellings higher than those proposed in the WMRA's Preferred Option. Accordingly, the Government Office for the West Midlands commissioned a study from Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (NLP) to advise on the capacity of the West Midlands to accommodate such higher growth levels. The NLP report was published on 7th October 2008 and comments are also required to be submitted by noon on **8th December 2008**.
- 3.4 Responses on both documents will be forwarded to the Examination in Public Panel which will convene some time in 2009.
- 3.5 Copies of the Preferred Option consultation documents have been placed in the Members Room. The NLP report and accompanying background technical reports including sustainability appraisal can be viewed at **www.nlppanning.com/wmrsshousingoptions**

4.0 Detail

- 4.1 The contents of the two consultations are considered in turn below, together with recommended officer responses.

(a) WMRSS – Preferred Option Consultation

- 4.2 Whilst the bulk of the planning strategy for the West Midlands is of limited direct interest to South Derbyshire, the RSS's treatment of Burton upon Trent is clearly a key issue given its proximity to the Swadlincote area.
- 4.3 In an earlier consultation on the WMRSS, there had been a suggestion that in view of likely future levels of housing development at Burton upon Trent (reflected in its Growth Point status), some of East Staffordshire's housing requirement may need to be accommodated within South Derbyshire as an urban extension to Burton (i.e. in the Drakelow area).
- 4.4 The current consultation continues this theme. The draft proposes a housing requirement for the period 2006–2026 of 12,900 dwellings (645 pa) for East Staffordshire, of which 11,000 (550 pa) should be in Burton upon Trent. It also notes the Growth Point status of Burton upon Trent and advises that:

“ ...[the] limited development capacity within the urban area of the town will require cross boundary liaison with adjoining authorities within the East

Midlands to enable the most sustainable pattern of development, and mix of land uses to be considered”.

Similarly, Policy CF3 states that:

“ ... co-operation and joint working will be necessary to ensure sites are released in a way that supports sustainable development”.

It goes on to state that local authorities in East Staffordshire and South Derbyshire:

“ ... must jointly consider the most appropriate locations for development before producing or revising LDDs”.

Recommended Response

- 4.5 *South Derbyshire is part of the Derby HMA Growth Point and as such is already required to provide homes well above those necessary to meet its own needs. The Council is happy to participate in appropriate joint working where evidence demonstrates it is necessary in the interests of both East Staffordshire and South Derbyshire e.g. in solving infrastructure problems such as a third river crossing that could open up appropriate development opportunities.*
- 4.6 *However, the Council strongly objects to the provision of additional housing in South Derbyshire to meet the needs of the West Midlands. Such an approach is completely unsupported by any credible evidence to show that it is necessary in terms of development capacity or more sustainable than alternative options.*
- 4.7 *The relevant section should therefore be deleted from paragraph 3.52 together with Criterion Vii of Policy CF3.*

(b) Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners Study

- 4.8 This study puts forward three overall development scenarios for future housing growth in the West Midlands for consideration by the RSS Examination Panel. The scenarios relate to strategies of a “South East Focus”, “Spreading Growth” and “Maximising Growth”.
- 4.9 As regards East Staffordshire, these scenarios would mean a potential additional housing requirement (above the Preferred Option outlined above) of zero, 2,500 dwellings and 5,000 dwellings respectively. There is no specific reference or acknowledgement of South Derbyshire in the study other than an oblique reference to “possible cross boundary/regional issues to address here”.
- 4.10 However, given the concerns over likely pressures for development impacting on South Derbyshire even under the lowest growth scenario of 12,900 dwellings, the prospect of higher growth requirements would clearly be unsustainable and completely unacceptable. In this regard, it is understood that East Staffordshire Borough Council similarly have serious concerns and intend to raise objections to their housing figures being increased further.

Recommended Response

- 4.11 Given this Council's concerns over likely pressures for development impacting on South Derbyshire even under the lowest growth scenario of 12,900 dwellings, the prospect of higher growth requirements would be unsustainable and completely unacceptable. In this regard, the Council fully supports East Staffordshire Borough Council's objections to their housing figures being increased further.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 None arising directly from this report.

6.0 Corporate Implications

- 6.1 The prospect of accommodating housing to meet the needs of the West Midlands in addition to the emerging housing requirement in the East Midlands Regional Plan may have implications for all services within this Authority.

7.0 Community Implications

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

8.0 Background Papers

- Draft "Phase 2 West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy – Preferred Option" – December 2007
- "Development of Options for the West Midlands RSS in Response to the NHPAU Report" (Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners) – October 2008