

# **WEST OF ENGLAND RESPONSE TO EIP PANEL NOTE 2: HOUSING DELIVERY AND THE REGIONAL STRATEGY IN THE WEST OF ENGLAND**

## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 The housing trajectory information attached is supplied by the four West of England unitary authorities in response to Examination in Public Panel Note 2 'Programming of development areas'. The information relates not only to anticipated programming of development within the draft RSS areas of search, but sets out the authorities views on projected dwelling completions within the SSCTs, other urban areas and the remainder of their respective administrative areas. It is based on housing land assessments initially undertaken by the unitary authorities to inform their respective responses to the draft RSS. As such the figures reflect the authorities' current position with regard to total development capacity within the RSS period and includes estimates for commitments and windfalls. This information reflects the current position in each Unitary Authority and may be subject to review as new data becomes available.

## **2.0 Initial Assessments and Findings**

2.1 Data supplied by the four authorities was compared to the average dwelling requirement for each authority and reflects the position taken by the authority in its representations to the Panel for the Examination in Public. For three of the four authorities, this is a slightly lower figure than that proposed in the draft RSS (Figure 4.1). Appendix 1 – attached – sets out a housing trajectory for each of the West of England authorities and the West of England as a whole; it shows projected completions in five year tranches between 2006 and 2026 and distinguishes between completions in the urban area, the urban extensions and elsewhere. The information reflects work in progress and further refinement may be required. The key general points which can be drawn from the trajectory are highlighted below and are heavily dependent on the assumptions contained in the individual assessments about expected patterns of growth (see individual authorities section).

### **General**

- Between 2006-2016 anticipated WoE housing supply and draft RSS requirements are nearly in balance although this is crucially dependent on a number of key actions [see below]

- The 2006-16 figure hides an anticipated surplus in 2006-11 of around 2,000 dwellings and a deficit in 2011-16 of around 3,000
- Bristol and South Gloucestershire anticipate a higher rate of delivery in the first ten year period, to 2016, than the second period to 2026.
- Given the scale of urban extensions proposed, North Somerset and B&NES anticipate deficits throughout the 2006-2016 five year periods and at this stage work undertaken suggests that there may be difficulty in accommodating the RSS requirement set down in table 4.1 for this period
- This relatively positive picture however, contains some key assumptions about the deliverability of urban extensions up to 2016 which if not achieved could turn a 10 year surplus of 1,000 dwellings into a shortfall of up to 5,000 dwellings, raising doubts about the deliverability of the overall WoE strategy.
- Delivery assumptions for the south west and south east Bristol urban extensions (areas of search A & B) are related to South Bristol regeneration and the phased programme for constructing the South Bristol Ring Road. Delivery assumptions for Bristol also reflect a phased programme of development which prioritises construction on previously developed land, and allows for improved connectivity between areas of urban extension in Bristol and adjoining North Somerset.

### **Individual Authorities**

- 2.2 The notes below set out the background to the attached tables of projected completions for each of the unitary authorities.

#### **Bath & North East Somerset**

Projected completions are based on Bath & North East Somerset Council's current assessment of capacity which is as follows:

Bath urban area 5,500 dwellings

Bath urban extension 1,000 dwellings

South East Bristol urban extension 3,500 dwellings (Whitchurch area)

Rest of B&NES 3,000 dwellings (Keynsham 900, Norton-Radstock 1,100 and rural areas 1,000)

As set out in the Council's submitted response to the draft RSS two potential options for closing the total capacity gap of 2,500 dwellings compared to figures in RSS table 4.1 exist.

1. Potential development adjoining south-east Bristol at Hicks Gate (would require integration into the existing Bristol urban area).

2. Assessment of whether additional residential capacity exists in Keynsham and Norton-Radstock in support of economic/job growth led development.

Urban extensions to south-east Bristol and Bath are assumed to start delivering dwelling completions after 2016 meaning that, subject to further work, a gap of around 1,000 dwellings could arise against RSS requirements up to 2016.

Achieving the rates of development assumed before 2016 is dependent upon the delivery of significant urban capacity within Bath, as well as development at Keynsham and some of the larger villages in the south of the District.

Delivery of projected completions in B&NES is dependent on the co-ordinated delivery of infrastructure, including transport measures programmed in the Regional Funding Allocation and Joint Local Transport Plan e.g. Greater Bristol Bus Network Improvements, Bath Package and Avon Ring Road extension.

There is no current planning policy context for urban extensions to Bath or south east Bristol and therefore, lead in times will be significant to allow for the preparation of the relevant Local Development Documents.

Delivery of the South East Bristol urban extension is influenced by its relationship with the regeneration of South Bristol and principally its phasing with regard to the provision of key infrastructure. Delivery start date and early development rates are dependent upon the current programming of phase 3 of the ring road extension (Hengrove to Hicks Gate). Assumptions made accord with GBSTS conclusion that substantive development should not take place before this phase of ring road extension constructed. Further work on assumptions is necessary.

Delivery start date for urban extension to Bath is influenced by the need co-ordinate it with delivery of brownfield regeneration within the city and to reflect the necessary preparatory work and delivery of infrastructure. Delivery rates are estimated having regard to the size of the urban extension and sensitivity associated with the World Heritage Site and its setting.

## **Bristol**

Bristol has a key role in contributing to the achievement of the RSS within the WoE with a potential for over 18,000 dwellings up to 2016; this relatively high average rate of development is however, dependent on continuing good market conditions and on a spatial strategy that clearly identifies new opportunities for regeneration and intensification, particularly after 2011, in

anticipation of a gradual overall decline in brownfield dwellings as the bigger inner area sites are completed.

Projected completions for Bristol City are based on provisional findings of housing trajectory work undertaken in late 2006. These indicate an urban capacity of 24,140 dwellings, with an additional capacity within Area of Search A (to the SW of Bristol) of 1,100 dwellings, with an allowance of 2,000 for windfall development. It should be noted that planning for development within Area A is at a very early stage and the scope to provide the information requested is therefore limited. Further work is required to establish a firm relationship between housing completions in Area A and new transport infrastructure. However, it is evident that completions of much of the housing in Area A will benefit from the delivery of the South Bristol Ring Road which will span much of the Plan period.

In relation to Area A, most of which falls within North Somerset, it is anticipated that development within Bristol will begin early in the period 2016-21. It is expected that completions will be spread through the period 2016-26, giving an average per annum figure of 110. Developers are unknown at this early stage.

The programme outlined above should be considered in the context of the wider housing trajectory for the Bristol City Area, shown in Appendix 1. Reflecting the provisional results of a recent HLAA, higher than anticipated delivery rates are now predicted for the early part of the RSS period – 2006-2011. This promises to accelerate initial delivery, but at the expense of capacity in later periods.

The high rates of completions achieved in recent years have been heavily dependant on City Centre housing, demand for which remains buoyant at present. Elsewhere in the City, the supply of former industrial land, which has been a major source of new residential sites, is expected to decline substantially when existing supplies have been used. This is the main factor leading to diminishing completions after 2011.

The HLAA findings indicate an overall capacity of 27,240 for the RSS period – 760 below the RSS allocation for Bristol City. However, the City Council is actively engaged with the South West Regional Development Agency and English Partnerships in investigating the scope and viability of potential regeneration initiatives, focused on South Bristol. While it is premature to quantify any additional housing yield from these projects, English Partnerships have committed to purchase sites in this area, which will enable delivery of mixed use development to support balanced and sustainable communities. The Council is

optimistic that these will enable the 760 dwelling gap to be bridged. These agencies are also working with the City Council in evaluating potential delivery vehicles to co-ordinate regeneration in this area. The housing trajectory for Bristol also reflects the Council's commitment to prioritising development on previously developed land throughout the Bristol City Council area. This will additionally support regeneration.

Consistent with the proposals in RSS (Figure 4.1) it has not been assumed that Bristol will contribute to the capacity of Area of Search B (to the SE of Bristol). Initial studies of the relatively small area within the City boundary – at Hicks Gate – cast doubt on its ability to meet sustainability objectives.

## **North Somerset**

In North Somerset the key components are the completion of existing strategic allocations at Weston and Portishead (to 2011), followed by two substantial urban extensions at Weston and SW Bristol. Both of these urban extensions are critically dependent upon the timely delivery of key infrastructure, and will require significant lead in times, which will constrain the ability to deliver the high completion levels set out in the RSS.

The RSS proposes 3,000 dwellings within the Weston urban area 2006-2026; current estimates are that this figure could be increased to about 4,000 dwellings, partly accounted for by the allocation of a number of new mixed used sites through the Local Plan.

At Weston, progress on the planning framework is well underway given the Local Plan context and progress on the Area Action Plan. However, the Weston urban extension is dependent upon securing employment-led regeneration as set out in the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan. The assumption is that with a focus on employment land to 2011, that housing completions will only be delivered during the last 15 years, resulting in an ambitious annual delivery programme, particularly as development needs to build up, and phased in step with essential infrastructure. Further work is needed to understand the relationship between employment provision and housing delivery, particularly in order to address issues of out-commuting and self-containment.

Unlike Weston, there is no current planning context for the SW Bristol urban extension, and so there will be a significant lead in time, particularly with the need to relate the development to

regeneration objectives within South Bristol, and also phased in relation to key infrastructure, particularly the South Bristol Ring Road. Development is therefore not anticipated to start until post 2011, and will then need to build up to significant levels by the end of the plan period. Even so, it is anticipated that this site will at best be able to deliver 7,500 dwellings; 1,500 less than anticipated in the RSS.

Overall dwelling completions in North Somerset are likely to fall short on delivering the RSS requirement of 26,000, despite optimistic assumptions being made about delivery rates on the new urban extensions 2016-2026.

### **South Gloucestershire**

In South Gloucestershire, a substantial number of existing Local Plan commitments will help to deliver more housing development within the Bristol urban area in the earlier part of the RSS period, notably at Hewlett Packard, Filton Northfield, Harry Stoke and Emerson's Green East. Continuing small and large-scale windfalls in the urban area and elsewhere will make a significant contribution towards delivering overall requirement without the immediate need for building on further new urban extensions. In total, it is estimated that around 13,000 dwellings will be delivered in the urban area over the period 2006 to 2026. The key to achieving this outcome will be ensuring that development commences on the major allocated sites in the short term up to 2011.

An initial assessment of the capacity for urban extensions in South Gloucestershire reveals that the target of 8,000 dwellings in Areas of Search C and D set out in the draft RSS is rather high. An examination of these areas suggests that a much lower number of dwellings could be accommodated and this has still to be confirmed by further studies. As any of these locations would require long lead in times and a planning context to be set through the Local Development Framework, it is assumed that houses could not start to be delivered on any urban extension sites until after 2016.

An initial assessment suggests that around 8,500 dwellings could be delivered elsewhere in the rest of South Gloucestershire, including urban extension sites, to deliver the overall target for the District of 21,500 homes between 2006 and 2026. Work is currently under way to provide further detail on the capacity of individual locations

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