

South West Regional Spatial Strategy Revision: Examination in Public (EiP)

**Bournemouth International Airport / Drivers Jonas,
(480), Matter 4/7.**

March 2007

Matter 4/7 – The Bournemouth and Poole HMA Sub-Regional Strategy

In setting out policies and proposals for the HMA sub-region, does the draft RSS adequately deal with the following:

a) Is the draft RSS sufficiently clear about the spatial outcomes it is seeking in Bournemouth and Poole in terms of their present and future regional and sub-regional roles and their relationship with the other parts of the HMA?

The approach in the draft RSS is generally supported by our client since it seeks to focus growth towards the conurbation of Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch within the South East Dorset Sub Region. This area is noted as having a significant role to play in meeting future economic growth in the region, with significant levels of demand and new business formation, including those within key growth sectors.

Conclusions of the draft South West RSS and Regional Economic Strategy identify the Bournemouth / Poole conurbation as having a more significant future role to play in the South West Region with considerable potential for growth. The sustained demand for employment space, particularly large space, is generally focussed around Bournemouth and Poole.

In order to fulfil the spatial strategy and development needs for South East Dorset, it is critical that sufficient opportunities are identified and available to accommodate necessary economic development. A key to this will be ensuring that the RSS provides a framework for an adequate supply of strategic and other (employment) sites across the sub-region capable of meeting demand from a wide range of commercial occupiers.

Various economic reports prepared to inform the preparation of the draft RSS confirm that there is generally a lack of sites within the South East Dorset sub region which are immediately available or available over the short term. Bournemouth International Airport (which includes the Business Park and operational airport) is specifically recognised in the RSS as being a significant strategic employment site, reflecting its major (almost 50%) contribution towards overall employment land supply in the sub region, capable of delivering the key opportunity for short and long term future employment development in South East Dorset. It provides a high profile location set within an exceptional environment, thus playing a critical role in the hierarchy of employment locations in the sub-region, as well as having considerable potential to become further established as a key business location for Central Southern England. It is important to acknowledge the integral relationship that exists

between the operational airport and the Business Park but also to recognise they offer different opportunities in terms of employment growth and development.

The role and status of the airport and Business Park as a key employment location will be further enhanced with the proposed significant infrastructure improvements and development of a Surface Access Strategy.

Suggested Changes to the Draft RSS

Policy SR28:

“LDD’s should not restrict the economic opportunities and increased productivity potential from the urban areas of, (and identified strategic sites serving), Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch but will...”

b) Has the scale of additional Greenfield development been adequately justified against the likely level of housing requirements and in particular the urban renewal opportunities in the main urban areas?

No comments to make

c) Has sufficient consideration been given to the impact of lead-in times for all or any of the development areas on the required annual output for the HMA?

No comments to make

d) Have environmental limits arising from matters such as flood risk and the protection of environmental assets been adequately taken into account and in particular do the proposals reflect the need to avoid any impact on the integrity of the important nature conservation areas around the conurbation?

Expansion of the Bournemouth and Poole conurbation is limited by significant environmental constraints, including areas of Green Belt and other important nature conservation and landscape designations. The heavily built-up nature of the conurbation also necessarily limits the opportunities for growth within it. This position is acknowledged in the draft RSS, and is an important consideration in guiding the spatial strategy for South East Dorset.

It is therefore right for the RSS to propose key development opportunities outside of the conurbation where these are able to best meet strategic development needs for the sub-region whilst also being able to minimise and mitigate against impacts on environmental resources.

Bournemouth Airport Business Park is generally excluded from formal nature conservation designations and is outside of the Green Belt. On this basis alone, the identification of the site in the RSS as a major development opportunity is supported. Additionally, given the acknowledged strategic importance of this site to the future development and employment needs of the sub-region, this provides a unique opportunity to substantially contribute towards the future development needs of South East Dorset whilst largely avoiding impact on the integrity of important nature conservation areas around the conurbation.

e) Have infrastructure considerations been adequately taken into account?

Ensuring adequate infrastructure provision, including highways infrastructure, is vital to realising growth in the sub-region. This is a particularly important consideration for strategic development opportunities and infrastructure considerations will need to be carefully assessed and properly planned for.

We strongly support the identification of appropriate infrastructure and access improvements which will facilitate the fullest growth and expansion of the Business Park and operational airport. The proposed completion of the A338 link road in the medium to long term is critical to be able to fully open up the development potential and attraction of the eastern sector of the Business Park for high value businesses and opportunities which can complement those in town centre locations. However, it is important to note that work undertaken in conjunction with Dorset County Council has shown that significant capacity for growth in advance of this can be achieved through relatively minor junction and signalling improvements on the local highways network.

Suggested Changes to the RSS

Paragraph 4.3.14:

*“Provision for a new passenger terminal, **and associated works**, at Bournemouth Airport and a package of measures to improve access, including a link road to the A338 (further work required) **to serve the***

level of growth identified in this part of the South East Dorset Sub-Region”

Add new paragraph after the bullet points following paragraph 4.3.14:

“The Local Transport Plan (LTP) will prioritise key infrastructure requirements and provide a basis for government funding. Given the importance of many of the above infrastructure requirements in bringing forward strategic development in the sub-region, these should be afforded a high priority in the LTP”

f) Do the proposals adequately reflect the need to reduce the need to travel, support the use of public transport and minimise congestion?

A key objective of the spatial strategy for South East Dorset Sub-Region should be to ensure that future growth aims to deliver sustainable transport objectives. The delivery of such measures are best able to be provided as part of major development proposals where there is more opportunity for comprehensive and co-ordinated approaches.

It is recognised that the location of certain strategic proposals in the draft RSS, such as Bournemouth Airport Business Park, there is scope to improve their contribution towards sustainable transport objectives. This can be achieved through the formulation and implementation of initiatives such as Travel Plans, Sustainability Action Plans and public transport strategies, to sit alongside other wider sustainability initiatives delivered at the local and sub-regional level as part of appropriate plans, strategies and development proposals, to maximise the potential for meeting sustainability objectives.

g) Are the proposed modifications to the Green Belt adequately justified?

The key change to the Green Belt in the South East Dorset sub-region proposed in the draft RSS is the exclusion of Bournemouth Airport. Comments therefore focus on the justification for this change.

The adjacent Bournemouth Airport Business Park has previously been removed from the Green Belt. The operational airport is already substantially developed with buildings and associated infrastructure set within a clear operational site context and plan for growth and improvement is planned set out in the Bournemouth Airport Master

Plan which was prepared in response to the Government’s Aviation White Paper.

Removal of the operational airport from the Green Belt would be entirely consistent with the approach adopted for the adjacent Business Park, which includes a number of aviation-related users enjoying synergies and linkages to the operational airport. Given its already developed nature, the operational airport makes minimal contribution to the role and purpose of Green belts based on PPG2 criteria.

Given this context, the removal of the operational airport from the Green Belt is justified and will be of significant benefit to the delivery of planned growth at the Airport and the associated significant economic and tourism benefits which will arise as a result.

Suggested Changes to the RSS

Paragraph 3.3.5:

*“The General extent of the Green Belt is revised in Policies SR3, SR11 and SR27 (Section 4), based on the Strategic ‘Green Belt Review’ of the role and purpose of the Green Belt using PPG2 criteria to accommodate the urban extensions **and other strategic development opportunities** required for the West of England, Cheltenham / Gloucester and South East Dorset”*

h) Does the draft RSS set out adequate guidance on the provision of Green Infrastructure?

No comments to make