

RESPONSE TO PANEL NOTE 2
PREPARED BY RPS ON BEHALF OF
CREST STRATEGIC PROJECTS LIMITED (444D)
MARCH 2007

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Local Authority Ref:
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Authorised by.....

Date



Response to Panel Note 2 – Crest Strategic Projects Limited

- 1) Crest Strategic Projects Ltd is promoting comprehensive development in two of the identified Areas of Search in the West of England. Those areas were identified in the draft RSS submitted representations, and are located at:
 - Area of Search B (land at Hicks Gate, in the south east of Bristol between the urban area and the A4174 Avon Ring Road, falling within the administrative boundaries of Bristol City and BANES); and
 - Area of Search C (land in South Gloucestershire, in the Bristol North Fringe between the urban area and the M32).
- 2) This response note seeks to provide information in respect of:
 - a) the expected start date;
 - b) the broad development programme in term of dwellings per annum and any related assumptions on the number of developers expected to be involved; and
 - c) the implications of any strategic infrastructure components for the programme.
- 3) In seeking to provide a robust response to the Panel, an assessment of the likely capacity of development in both locations has been factored into the response. Whilst the preparation of any conceptual plan for either site naturally pre-empts any public consultation work or liaison with the relevant local authorities, it nevertheless presents a reasonable summary of what the promoters believe the sites capabilities to be. For the avoidance of doubt, they are however submitted at this stage for illustrative purposes.
- 4) Each area is considered in turn. The following documents are appended to this response note that have helped inform the assumptions set out below:

Appendix 1: Land at Hicks Gate Concept Plan

Appendix 2: Land East of Harry Stoke: Concept Plan

Appendix 3: Land at Hicks Gate: Landscape Assessment (Cooper Partnership)

Appendix 4: Land at Hicks Gate: Sustainability Assessment (Arup)

Appendix 5: Land East of Harry Stoke: Landscape Assessment (Cooper Partnership)

Appendix 6: Land East of Harry Stoke: Sustainability Assessment (Arup)

Area of Search B: Land at Hicks Gate

- 1) The area at Hicks Gate forms part of the wider area of search to the South east of Bristol. In reality, two potential locations for growth can be defined within the area of search, the first at Hicks Gate, the second at further south at Whitchurch. The two areas are physically separated by Stockwood Vale, an area of high quality landscape where built development is not a realistic proposition, despite it being identified as part of the Area of Search.
- 2) BANES has asserted that up to 3,500 homes could be accommodated in the Whitchurch area, however, the provision of those homes is largely dependent on the construction of the “southern bypass” or extension of the Avon Ring as identified on the West of England Inset Diagram. The land at Hicks Gate is less reliant on the new bypass coming forward in order for a start on site to be made. It lies at the foot of the existing A4174 Ring Road (the final junction being the “Hicks Gate roundabout”) and will be directly served by the A4 that links Bath and Bristol.
- 3) Green Belt is a naturally sensitive issue in this part of the West of England since it helps protect the coalescence of the two major cities and the character of the settlements in between (Keynsham and Saltford). Development at Hicks Gate will not however prejudice the robustness of the Green Belt given the strong defensible boundaries that currently exist, and that which will be developed over the period of this RSS. The boundary of the existing and proposed line of the Ring Road will present a strong defence against any development ever leaping the road and seriously threatening the character of Keynsham, and ultimately the degree of separation between Bristol and Bath.
- 4) The concept plan (**Appendix 1**) has also been informed by a comprehensive landscape assessment of the development area, which is included as **Appendix 3** of this response.
- 5) The proposals incorporate the area of St Brendan’s Sixth Form College, however, it is not proposed through this submission to redevelop the site. The College does however have aspirations for expansion and the removal of this land from the Green Belt will assist the College greatly in meeting its medium/long term aspirations.
- 6) The proposals demonstrate the potential for up to 3,500 homes to be built within the area identified on the concept plan at an average density of 50 dwellings per hectare. There is scope within this assessment to provide the necessary supporting open space, local retail and education requirements of development. Scope also exists for economic development, however, it remains to be seen how appropriate this may be once a true understanding

of the desired spatial outcomes for the West of England and Bristol in particular are established.

- 7) BANES has not advanced a figure for what it considers to be an appropriate target in the Hicks Gate area. In part, this is due to the cross working arrangements that will need to be set up between BANES and Bristol City. The fact that the site straddles administrative boundaries should no longer present cause for concern since it is the role of this RSS to endeavour to put those mechanisms in place. The LDF process also enables joint authority Action Area Plans to be prepared in order to ensure a comprehensive approach to development. Whilst the majority of the development area falls within BANES (hence the lack of a provision for development in the Bristol City part of the Area of Search), the area will naturally form an urban extension to Bristol, and the City Council's involvement will be critical in establishing the impact of development on routes into the City.

Strategic Infrastructure/Development Programme

- 8) Objection is made in other statements submitted to the Panel concerning the timing of the construction of the southern bypass. Logic would suggest that the construction on the "third leg" of the bypass from Hengrove to Hicks Gate should take place as a matter of priority since this will help "open up" South Bristol and assist in regeneration far more than it will by starting phase one in the west. In reality, in order that the strategic requirement in the West of England can be met, it needs to start at both ends.
- 9) Notwithstanding the above, it is not considered that development at Hicks Gate is unduly constrained by the timing and implementation of the southern bypass when compared against the accessibility constraints affecting land further south at Whitchurch. Development can proceed in a coordinated manner that provides necessary improvements to the A4, whilst the bypass is constructed.
- 10) Neither Council LDS contains information regarding the LDF process beyond 2008 and it is therefore difficult to get realistic picture of the timescales they may be working to. As referred to above, those joint working initiatives are not yet in place. It is required as a matter of priority.
- 11) There are no major constraints to development. The sustainability report (**Appendix 4**) refers to technical issues such as drainage, access and existing infrastructure.
- 12) The table below assumes up to three developers on site in the period of peak construction. This number is considered a reasonable maximum to ensure timely delivery and a quality of development that is consistent and

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coherent throughout. Of course, it remains to be seen the precise number of dwellings and mix of development that can be achieved, however, the above will help to provide the Panel with some comfort that the target for growth in this location is a realistic proposition.

- 13) Equally, the statements submitted to the Panel (particularly in respect of Matter 4/1) contend that the Area of Search locations on the edge of Bristol are critical in helping the respective unitary authorities meet their build rate requirements in the first 10 years of the Plan period. If appropriate, the promoters of the land at Hicks Gate consider that this site can readily be brought forward ahead of the schedule outlined below. Certainly, there are no overriding technical constraints and it is only a question of how cooperative the two authorities are and how quickly the site can move through the planning process.
- 14) The site will be promoted on the basis of the comprehensive area highlighted in the submitted reps (July 2006) and as reproduced in the concept plan.

Year	No. of homes built	Overall Total	Notes
2008			RSS Adopted / BC Core Strategy Approved
2009			
2010			Preparation of Join Action Area Plan/Outline Application
2011			Action Area Plan Approved/Outline Consent granted
2012			Discharge of Conditions/Approval for Phase 1
2013	50	50	
2014	150	200	
2015	200	400	
2016	200	600	Construction of third leg of bypass to Hicks Gate
2017	300	900	
2018	300	1,200	
2019	300	1,500	
2020	400	1,900	
2021	400	2,300	
2022	300	2,600	
2023	300	2,900	
2024	250	3,150	
2025	200	3,350	
2026	150	3,500	

Area of Search C: Land East of Harry Stoke

- 1) For the purposes of this exercise, the land at Area C will be known as “land east of Harry Stoke”. “Harry Stoke” is the committed strategic development site in the Adopted South Gloucestershire Local Plan that is currently subject to an appealed application for 1,200 dwellings. The appealed masterplan for the development of that site is superimposed to the concept plan for the development of Area C (**Appendix 2**).
- 2) This particular area of search lies in a uniquely sustainable location. It is located within walking distance of up to 40,000 jobs in this part of the North Fringe, including the major employers of the MoD, Axa Sunlife, Hewlett Packard and the University of the West of England. Numerous business parks are also located on the periphery of this area. It is also within walking distance of Bristol Parkway Station and the bus interchange at UWE. It is close to major centres of education such as Filton High School, Filton College and UWE itself. Development at the Harry Stoke site will safeguard land for a new rapid transit route.
- 3) There are few greenfield development sites that benefit from proximity to such services and will encourage sustainable living to such an extent.
- 4) The land currently lies within the Green Belt, however, there are obvious robust defensible boundaries that will present South Gloucestershire when it arrives at defining those boundaries. It is clear that the M32 and M4 motorways represent the natural built development limits in this location and the concept plan has been drafted around those assumptions.
- 5) The concept plan has also been informed by a comprehensive landscape assessment of the development area, which is included as **Appendix 5** of this response.
- 6) The proposals demonstrate the potential for up to 3,500 homes to be built within the Area of Search location at an average density of 50 dwellings per hectare. There is scope within this assessment to provide the necessary supporting open space, local retail and education requirements of development. Scope also exists for economic development, however, it remains to be seen how appropriate this may be given the current Structure Plan policies for reallocating existing employment sites in the North Fringe for residential development.
- 7) A park and ride site can also be accommodated if necessary, but it is understood the assessment work to identify the most appropriate location along the M32 is ongoing.

- 8) There are no overriding technical constraints to development in this location (**Appendix 6**). The landscape assessment highlights those areas unsuitable for development, and whilst proposals for the undergrounding of the overhead power lines will need to be advanced, these can be accommodated within the buffer between the M32 and the built development, or along the edge of the railway line and underneath the new “Stoke Gifford Bypass”.

Strategic Infrastructure

- 9) One of the key benefits of the development will be the provision of the “Stoke Gifford Bypass”. This area of the North Fringe is characterised by the majority of residential development (in Stoke Gifford/Bradley Stoke) located north of the railway line, whilst the majority of jobs are located to the south. There are only two realistic links from one area to the other, the first being along the Old Gloucester Road, which requires commuters to pass through the Hambrook and M32 junctions on the Ring Road, and secondly the route through Brierly Furlong that passes under a narrow bridge under the railway. Both routes experience heavy congestion, especially at peak hours. The provision of the Stoke Gifford Bypass was part of the original masterplan for the development of the Bradley Stoke development of 10,000 homes in the 1980’s and will provide the link that has thus far been deprived of the residents and businesses in the area.
- 10) South Gloucestershire Council has undertaken its own review of the Bypass and established a strong economic case for its development. There remains technical work still to be undertaken in terms of what form the bypass takes. There are potential issues of severance that need to be overcome if the development is to provide for an inclusive community, however, the work undertaken to date demonstrates that a solution is achievable that meets the traffic requirements whilst also allowing its integration within the new community.
- 11) The Bypass will need to be phased sooner than that currently proposed in the Regional Funding Allocations Document if there is to be any realistic prospect that the site will be completed within the Plan period. The Bypass is likely to be subject to a significant level of developer led funding and its commencement is not therefore solely reliant on the fundings allocation programme.

Build Programme

- 12) The Harry Stoke application proposals, if approved, will provide the first leg of the Bypass and ensure the construction of the junction onto the A4174. Whilst the bypass is being constructed development can proceed both north and south of the railway line.

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- 13) South Gloucestershire Council's LDS indicates that it will have an adopted Core Strategy in place before 2009, and the Allocations Document in place by 2011. In accordance with the build programme set out below, it will be imperative that the preparation of an outline planning application be prepared in tandem with the Allocations Document. There is no reason to suggest why this would not be appropriate since the RSS will have established the broad principle of development. Crest Strategic Projects Ltd will be keen to establish a partnership approach with the Council to ensure the best practicable solution for the site, and for it to be brought forward in a timely fashion.
- 14) Equally, the statements submitted to the Panel (particularly in respect of Matter 4/1) contend that the Area of Search locations on the edge of Bristol are critical in helping the respective unitary authorities meet their build rate requirements in the first 10 years of the Plan period. If appropriate, the promoters of the land east of Harry Stoke consider that this site can readily be brought forward ahead of the schedule outlined below. Certainly, there are no overriding technical constraints and it is only a question of how cooperative the LPA will be and how quickly the site can move through the planning process.

Year	No. of homes built	Overall Total	Notes
2008			RSS Adopted
2009			Core Strategy Approved
2010			Preparation of Allocations Document/Outline Application
2011			Allocations Document Approved/Outline Consent granted
2012	50	50	Discharge of Conditions/Approval for Phase 1
2013	150	200	
2014	200	400	
2015	200	600	
2016	300	900	
2017	300	1,200	
2018	300	1,500	Completion of Stoke Gifford Bypass
2019	300	1,800	
2020	300	2,100	
2021	300	2,400	
2022	300	2,700	
2023	250	2,950	
2024	200	3,150	
2025	200	3,350	
2026	150	3,500	

- 15) The table assumes up to three developers on site in the period of peak construction. This number is considered a reasonable maximum to ensure timely delivery and a quality of development that is consistent and coherent throughout. Of course, it remains to be seen the precise number of dwellings and mix of development that can be achieved, however, the above will help to provide the Panel with some comfort that the target for growth in this location is a realistic proposition.

APPENDIX 1
Land at Hicks Gate Concept Plan

APPENDIX 2
Land East of Harry Stoke: Concept Plan

APPENDIX 3

Land at Hicks Gate: Landscape Assessment
(Cooper Partnership)

(Bound separately)

APPENDIX 4

Land at Hicks Gate: Sustainability Assessment (Arup)

(Bound separately)

APPENDIX 5

Land East of Harry Stoke: Landscape Assessment
(Cooper Partnership)

(Bound separately)

APPENDIX 6

Land East of Harry Stoke: Sustainability Assessment
(Arup)

(Bound separately)