

**REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR THE SOUTH WEST
EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC**

SOUTH WEST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY RESPONSE

**PANEL NOTE 2
PROGRAMMING OF DEVELOPMENT AREAS**

March 2007

1 Context

1.1 Panel Note 2, issued by the Examination in Public (EiP) Panel (20th November 2006), sought clarification of the anticipated development programming for the following search areas:

- West of England (Areas of Search A – E)
- Swindon (Area of Search G)
- Gloucester/Cheltenham (Areas of Search H & I)
- Exeter (Area J)
- Taunton (Area of Search L)
- Plymouth (Area R)

1.2 Whilst Panel Note 2 was primarily aimed at the South West Regional Assembly (SWRA), it was acknowledged that cooperation would be required from the section 4(4) authorities. Since the Panel issued Note 2 officers from the secretariat have been in discussion with colleagues at the section 4(4) authorities to elicit clarification on the development programming for the areas of search identified above, as identified in the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (Draft RSS). Although this exercise has taken longer than anticipated, the Panel have now received comments directly from all the relevant section 4(4) authorities.

1.3 Responses have also been received from Dorset County Council, Bournemouth Borough and the Borough of Poole, the respective section 4(4) authorities for South East Dorset, not specified on Panel Note 2. Furthermore, participants either with direct development interests or acting on behalf of others have also responded. All responses are now available on the EiP website.

1.4 This submission from the SWRA seeks to identify correlations or discrepancies between the scale of development proposed in the Draft RSS areas of search and the responses to Panel Note 2, along with commentary on timing. A summary of the responses to Panel Note 2 is attached at Appendix 1 (as at 13th February 2007).

2 Response

All comments below relate purely to proposed dwelling levels at urban extensions within areas of search only.

2.1 West of England (Areas of Search A – F)

The Draft RSS reflects the section 4(4) advice received from the four Unitary Authorities (Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council) in September 2005, through their 'First Detailed Proposals', with the scale of growth in the West of England identified at 92,500 dwellings.

With regard to the identification of areas of search, areas A, B, C, D, E & F were identified through the 'First Detailed Proposals', section 4(4) advice,

reflecting technical work undertaken by the four Unitary Authorities. Area F benefits from greater technical evidence and being more advanced due to it being proposed by the unitary authority through the Weston Area Action Plan (WAAP). The scale of growth at the remaining areas of search reflects officer discussions with the Joint Strategic Planning & Transport Unit (JSPTU), since superseded by the West of England Partnership Organisation (WEPO).

It should be noted that South Gloucestershire Council consider it inappropriate to identify areas of search in the RSS. The authorities' response to Panel Note 2 sub-divides the authorities housing into a Bristol urban figure and remainder of the administrative area (NLD35).

The SWRA is aware that further technical work has been ongoing in the West of England to clarify the scale of growth. Technical work undertaken by B&NES, Bristol City and North Somerset suggests that the capacities of areas of search A and B may be lower than that proposed in the Draft RSS (A – 8,600 /Draft RSS 10,500 and B – 3,500 /Draft RSS 6,000). The SWRA has had access to further technical work for area of search B (submitted to the Panel), but has not had access to further technical work for areas of search A, C or D and cannot therefore comment on the validity of the lower capacities proposed.

In this instance, other participants have brought forward evidence to support the locations for the areas of search as well as demonstrating that there is at least the capacity identified in the Draft RSS. Specifically, Baker Associates (NLD12) identified that area of search A (Bristol) could accommodate up to 15,000 dwellings, 4,500 higher than the Draft RSS. For area of search B (Bristol), Barton Willmore (NLD09) suggests 6,000 dwellings, the same as the Draft RSS. For area of search D only (East of Bristol) Pegasus Planning suggest 7,800 dwellings, 200 dwellings lower than the combined totals of areas C & D in the Draft RSS.

The SWRA is aware that the four Unitary Authority's have been working closely together to ensure that the evidence base for this proposal is robust and consistent. The SWRA is also aware of other participants assessing capacities of the areas of search and consider that the EiP is the appropriate place to consider their relative merits. However, the SWRA is confident that collectively, the responses provided to Panel Note 2 demonstrate that the Draft RSS proposals can be delivered, subject to the delivery of infrastructure.

2.2 Swindon (Area of Search G)

The Draft RSS reflects the section 4(4) advice received from Swindon Borough Council (SBC) and Wiltshire County Council (WCC) in terms of identifying an area of search which matches the conclusions arising from the Swindon Joint Study, area of search G. The Draft RSS housing provision at Swindon is 3,000 higher than the section 4(4) advice, increasing the scale of the proposed urban extension to 12,000 dwellings over the plan period.

SBC's response to Panel Note 2 (NLD06) in terms of scale of growth identifies provision for 12,000 dwellings over the plan period in area of search G, in line with the Draft RSS. The response from the East Swindon Development Group (ESDG) (NLD17) supports this position, although it does consider an additional 2,200 dwellings (total 14,200) could be delivered over the plan period. In both instances, it is considered that delivery will begin in 2010.

The SWRA is aware that SBC and ESDG have been working closely together to ensure that the evidence base for this proposal is robust and consistent. Whilst it is acknowledged that SBC's response as the section 4(4) authority is for 9,000 dwellings in area of search G, the SWRA is confident that collectively, the responses provided to Panel Note 2 demonstrate that the Draft RSS proposals can be delivered, subject to the delivery of infrastructure and that there are no adverse impacts on the Strategic Road Network.

2.3 Gloucester/Cheltenham (Areas of Search H & I)

The Draft RSS does not reflect the section 4(4) advice from Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) with regard to the identification of areas of search for proposed urban extensions. The Draft RSS has been formulated on an evidence base derived from technical work undertaken by officers of the County Council and Local Authorities overseen by a JSA Steering Group, prior to the local elections in May 2005. The areas of search for proposed urban extensions are drawn from this evidence, with the scale of growth having regard to information on urban capacity potential and technical forecasts.

In this instance, other participants have brought forward evidence to support the locations for the areas of search as well as demonstrating that there is capacity beyond that identified in the Draft RSS. Specifically, Robert Hitchens Ltd. (NLD16) identified that area of search H (Gloucester) could accommodate between 4,000 - 5,500 dwellings, an additional 2,000 – 3,500 above the Draft RSS. At Cheltenham, Boyer Planning (NLD11), Hunter Page Planning (NLD13) and Linden Homes (NLD19) all identify scope for between 4,000 – 7,000 dwellings in area of search I compared to the RSS figure of 4000. The SWRA is aware that reference to safeguarding the 'Honeybourne Line' for non-private car movements is made in the Cheltenham Local Plan and could potentially contribute to a more sustainable form of development.

The SWRA is confident that collectively, the responses provided to Panel Note 2 demonstrate that the Draft RSS proposals can be delivered, subject to the delivery of infrastructure. Whilst there are minor differences in the commencement date for delivery (2011, 2012 & 2013) there is a strong collective suggestion that there is some urgency for delivery, particularly at Cheltenham prior to Gloucester. Development of an urban extension at Gloucester should not prejudice the Gloucester Urban Heritage Regeneration Company's (GUHRC) objectives.

The SWRA would like to draw the Panel's attention to the Inspector's Report, Cheltenham Borough Council Local Plan, where reference can be found regarding the lack of supply of both housing and employment within Cheltenham's urban area, with a recommendation to remove land from the Green Belt to accommodate employment. Further work is being undertaken by Cheltenham Borough Council on a review of the Green Belt to assist their Local Development Framework.

2.4 Exeter (Area J)

The Draft RSS reflects the section 4(4) advice received from Devon County Council (DCC) in terms of both scale and identifying an area of search which matches the conclusions arising from the Exeter Joint Study, area J, Cranbrook New Community. It should be noted that the Draft RSS does not refer to an area of search as the technical work is further advanced for this proposal, reflecting that a planning application has been resolved to be approved, subject to legal agreements (East Devon District Council, 19th December 2006).

DCC's response to Panel Note 2 (NLD25) in terms of scale of growth identifies provision for 6,500 dwellings over the plan period in area J, in line with the Draft RSS. The response from the East Devon New Community Partners (EDNCP) (NLD36) supports this position, although it does consider an additional 1,000 dwellings (6,500 – 7,500) could be delivered over the plan period, potentially going beyond 2026. In both instances, it is considered that delivery will begin in 2008.

The SWRA is aware that DCC and EDNCP have been working closely together to ensure that the evidence base for this proposal is robust and consistent. The SWRA is confident that collectively, the responses provided to Panel Note 2 demonstrate that the Draft RSS proposals can be delivered, subject to the delivery of infrastructure.

2.5 Taunton (Area of Search L)

The Draft RSS reflects the section 4(4) advice received from Somerset County Council (SCC) in terms of both scale and identifying an area of search which matches the conclusions arising from the Taunton Sub Area Study, area of search L.

SCC's response to Panel Note 2 (NLD05) in terms of scale of growth identifies provision for between 3,500 dwellings over the plan period in area of search L, marginally higher than that specified in the Draft RSS (3,000 dwellings). The response from Boyer Planning on behalf of Persimmon Homes and Redrow Homes (NLD15) supports the draft RSS position. In both instances, it is considered that delivery will begin in 2014/15.

The SWRA is aware that SCC, Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) and Persimmon Homes and Redrow Homes have been working closely together to ensure that the evidence base for this proposal is robust and consistent. The SWRA is confident that collectively, the responses

provided to Panel Note 2 demonstrate that the Draft RSS proposals can be delivered, subject to the delivery of infrastructure.

2.6 Plymouth (Area R)

The Draft RSS reflects the section 4(4) advice received from Devon County Council (DCC) in terms of both scale and identifying an area of search which matches the conclusions arising from the Plymouth Joint Study, area R. It should be noted that the Draft RSS does not refer to an area of search as the technical work is further advanced for this proposal, reflecting that the proposal is subject to Plymouth City Council's Local Development Framework and emerging Area Action Plans.

DCC's response to Panel Note 2 (NLD25) in terms of scale of growth identifies provision for 5,500 dwellings over the plan period in area R, in line with the Draft RSS. It is considered that delivery will begin in 2009.

The SWRA is aware that DCC and South Hams District Council (SHDC) have been working closely together to ensure that the evidence base for this proposal is robust and consistent. Development at Sherford is being promoted by a specially established company to oversee the whole new community development process. The SWRA is confident that collectively, the responses provided to Panel Note 2 demonstrate that the Draft RSS proposals can be delivered, subject to the delivery of infrastructure.

2.7 South East Dorset (Areas of Search M, N, O & P)

The Draft RSS reflects the section 4(4) advice received from Dorset County Council (DCC), Bournemouth Borough Council (BBC) and the Borough of Poole (BP) in terms of both scale and identifying areas of search matches the conclusions arising from the South East Dorset Joint Study, areas M, N, O & P (a minor difference of 90 dwellings).

DCC's response to Panel Note 2 (NLD20) in terms of scale of growth identifies provision for 2,910 dwellings over the plan period in the areas of search, in line with the Draft RSS. In all instances, it is considered that delivery will begin in 2011.

The SWRA is aware that DCC and partners have been working closely together to ensure that the evidence base for this proposal is robust and consistent. The SWRA is confident that collectively, the responses provided to Panel Note 2 demonstrate that the Draft RSS proposals can be delivered, subject to the delivery of infrastructure.

It should be noted that the proposals by the Borough of Poole to increase its housing delivery through the New Growth Point Bid are not included in the response to the Panel. The inclusion of this proposal would increase the rate within the urban area.

Appendix 1

Summary of Responses to Panel Note 2

<u>Area of Search</u>	<u>SSCT</u>	<u>EiP Ref No.</u>	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Draft RSS (Dw)</u>	<u>Response (Dw)</u>	<u>Start Date</u>
A	Bristol	NLD35	N. Somerset	10,500 (Total)	7,500 (In NSC)	Post 2011
A	Bristol	NLD35	Bristol CC	10,500 (Total)	1,100 (In BCC)	Post 2016
A	Bristol	NLD12	Baker Associates	10,500 (Total)	?	?
B	Bristol	NLD35	B&NES	6,000	3,500	Post 2016
B	Bristol	NLD09	Barton Willmore	6,000	6,000	2014/5
C & D	Bristol	NLD35	S. Glos. C	8,000 (C&D)	No figure stated (<8,000)	Post 2016
D	Bristol	NLD10	Pegasus Planning	8,000 (C&D)	7,800 (D)	2013
D	Bristol	NLD18	Tim Baker	8,000 (C&D)	1,200 (D)	Not stated
E	Bath	NLD35	B&NES	1,500	1,000	Post 2016
F	Weston-super-Mare	NLD35	N. Somerset	9,000	9,000	Post 2011
G	Swindon	NLD06	Swindon BC	12,000	12,000	2010
G	Swindon	NLD17	East Swindon Dev. Group	12,000	14,200	2010
H	Gloucester	NLD16	Robert Hitchens Ltd.	2,000	4,000 (+1,500)	2011
I	Cheltenham	NLD11	Boyer Planning	4,000	4,000	2013
I	Cheltenham	NLD13	Hunter Page Planning	4,000	5,600 – 7,000	2012
I	Cheltenham	NLD19	Linden Homes	4,000	5,000	2012
J	Exeter	NLD25	Devon CC	6,500	6,500	2008
J	Exeter	NLD36	E. Devon New Community Partners	6,500	6,500 – 7,500	2008
L	Taunton	NLD05	Somerset CC	3,000	3/4,000	2014/5
L	Taunton	NLD15	Boyer Planning	3,000	3,075	2014/5
M	Christchurch	NLD20	Dorset CC	600	600	2011
N, O & P	Corfe Mullen, W. Minster & Ferndown	NLD20	Dorset CC	2,400	2,310	2011
R	Plymouth	NLD25	Devon CC	5,500	5,500	2009