

## **RSS: Proposed Changes Key strategic issues arising in the West of England**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To set out the key strategic issues arising in the West of England from the RSS Proposed Changes, as emerging from discussions between officers and Planning and Housing Executive members.
- 1.2 To seek the views of members about the emerging key strategic issues arising from the Proposed Changes and the content of a Partnership response to the Proposed Changes, to be submitted to the Secretary of State.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has announced her response to the Recommendations of the Panel following the Examination in Public of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). These are referred to as the **Proposed Changes**. The government has invited views on the Proposed Changes, to be submitted by the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2008.

### **3. RSS Proposed Changes**

- 3.1 The Proposed Changes maintains the general approach of Draft RSS in providing a broad and long-term development strategy for the region. In particular:
  - It carries forward the Regional Economic Strategy aspirations for growth and greater prosperity amongst all communities;
  - It seeks to manage development in ways that improve the quality of life for all and help to create and maintain sustainable communities;
  - It maintains the spatial priorities of Draft RSS including in the case of the West of England, focusing development on the main urban areas of the sub-region and promoting the regeneration of south Bristol and Weston-super-Mare.
- 3.2 The Proposed Changes in many respects is consistent with the 'vision' of the Partnership. However, significant differences in emphasis compared with the priorities of the Partnership are emerging. These can be summarised as follows:
  - The overall level of growth proposed represents a significant challenge (the dwelling allocations of draft RSS, the recommendations of the

Panel and as shown by the Proposed Changes to RSS, are appended to this report);

- The constant (rather than the profiled) annual rate of housing completions proposed at sub-regional and district levels is unrealistic given the start-up periods involved in bringing forward the major development proposed by RSS;
- The dwelling provisions for several key locations exceed assessed development capacities and that greater locational flexibility should be provided by RSS;
- There is insufficient clarity about the considerable new infrastructure required to support the long-term development of the sub-region; and,
- The proposal for an immediate Partial Review of the RSS following its approval, and ahead of the Integrated Regional Strategy, will distract from the effective and comprehensive planning of the sub-region.

3.3 Discussions of Executive Members so far have highlighted the following general views about how the Partnership should respond to the Proposed Changes to RSS:

- The importance of securing an agreed West of England response on the wider issues and concerns raised by the Proposed Changes;
- The need to welcome the continuing recognition given by the Proposed Changes to the economic potential of the West of England and in this respect its importance to the region, and its support for regeneration;
- The need to object strongly to the uplift in the level of growth, in particular the number of additional dwellings and emphasise that the scale of development proposed is not deliverable in the context of the financial crisis and the development capacity of several key locations across the West of England;
- The need to highlight the specific changes to RSS required to address sub-regional concerns, in particular, the infrastructure requirements of growth and the investment needed from government to enable the West of England to realise its potential contribution to overall regional performance.

### **3.4 Next steps**

3.4 These views on the Proposed Changes and those offered by members of the Joint Scrutiny Committee will be considered further. A proposed response to the RSS Proposed Changes will then be placed before the West of England Partnership Board at its meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> October.

## **4 Recommendation**

That members note the report and give their views on a sub-region submission on the proposed changes.



**APPENDIX**  
**Housing Figures for the West of England**

Dwelling allocations by District and locations: Draft RSS compared with Panel Modifications and the Secretary of State Proposed Changes.

<b>2006-2026</b>			
<b>Area</b>	<b>Draft RSS Allocation</b>	<b>Draft RSS Panel Recommendations</b>	<b>Secretary of State Proposed Changes</b>
	2006-2026		
<b>B&amp;NES</b>	15,500	18,800	21,300
<b>Bristol</b>	28,000	30,000	36,500
<b>North Somerset</b>	26,000	26,750	26,750
<b>South Glos.</b>	23,000	30,800	32,800
<b>West of England Sub-region</b>	<b>92,500</b>	<b>106,350</b>	<b>117,350</b>

<b>Annual allocations</b>		
<b>Draft RSS Allocation</b>	<b>Draft RSS Panel Recommendations</b>	<b>Secretary of State Proposed Changes</b>
2006-2026		
775	940	1,065
1,400	1,500	1,825
1,300	1,338	1,338
1,150	1,540	1,640
<b>4,625</b>	<b>5,318</b>	<b>5,868</b>

<b>Locations</b>	<b>Draft RSS allocations</b>	<b>Draft RSS Panel Modifications</b>	<b>Secretary of State Proposed Changes to the RSS</b>
<b>Bristol City</b>	<b>28,000</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>36,500</b>
Bristol urban area	26,500	28,500	33,500
Urban extension (part of area of search A)	1,500	1,500	1,500
Bristol urban extension (area of Search B)			1,500
<b>South Gloucestershire</b>	<b>23,000</b>	<b>30,800</b>	<b>32,800</b>
Urban Area	13,000	15,500	17,500
Urban Extension (areas of search C)	8,000	8,000	8,000
Urban Extension (areas of search D)			2,000
Areas of Search at Yate	0	5,000	3,000
Remainder of District	2,000	2,300	2,300
<b>North Somerset</b>	<b>26,000</b>	<b>26,750</b>	<b>26,750</b>
WsM urban Area	3,000	3,000	3,000
Bristol Urban Extension (part of area of search A)	9,000	9,000	9,000
WsM Urban Extension (area of search F panel mods) (area of search H proposed changes)	9,000	9,000	9,000
Remainder of district	5,000	5,750	5750
<b>B&amp;NES</b>	<b>15,500</b>	<b>18,800</b>	<b>21,300</b>
Bath Urban Area	6,000	6,000	6,000
Bath Urban Extension (Area of Search E)	1,500	1,500	2,000
Bristol Urban Extension (Area of Search B)	6,000	6,000	8,000
Area of Search at Keynsham (listed as area of search 1F in proposed changes)	0	3,000	3,000
Remainder of District	2,000	2,300	2,300