

West of England Partnership  
Joint Scrutiny  
7<sup>th</sup> November

## **Sub-Regional Delivery Plan: Assessing requirements for infrastructure investment and the delivery of mixed and sustainable communities**

### **1 Purpose**

- 1.1 To advise members of action being taken to extend the West of England Delivery Plan.
- 1.2 To seek members' views on what needs to be taken into account by this work.

### **2 Background**

- 2.1 National planning policy seeks to enhance the integration of development and infrastructure planning. PPS1<sup>1</sup> requires local planning authorities to ensure that development plans pursue sustainable development, in particular ensuring that new development is supported by new infrastructure. PPS12<sup>2</sup> emphasises the importance of integrating the timely delivery of infrastructure into the development plan process. Core Strategies are to be supported by evidence about the physical, social, and green infrastructure needed by the development proposed for an area, including costs and sources of infrastructure funding, responsibilities for delivery, and timescales.
- 2.2 The government also advises that infrastructure planning and delivery may be more effectively and efficiently carried out over a larger area than a single local authority and that a partnership approach should be established. This acknowledges the geographically wide extent of the requirements and benefits arising from larger or more significant infrastructure projects. The Sub-National Review in recognition of these issues, highlights the advantages of sub-regional partnerships in planning for economic growth.
- 2.3 Regional planning policy as set out by the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) requires local authorities to work in partnership with others to identify regionally and sub-regionally significant infrastructure requirements and solutions including funding. In addition, the RSS requires local authorities to work in partnership in promoting a range and choice of employment sites and the maintenance and enhancement of the role of city and town centres.
- 2.4 The draft MAA for the West of England recognises the importance of a sub-regional approach to the delivery of infrastructure and phasing the sequence, mix and pattern of development.

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<sup>1</sup> Planning Policy Statement: Delivering Sustainable Development, January 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Planning Policy Statement 12: Creating strong and prosperous communities through Local Spatial Planning, DCLG June 2008.

### **3 Progress towards up-dating the Sub-Regional Delivery Plan**

- 3.1 It is essential to respond in an effective way to growth pressures arising across the West of England and to the prospect of planning applications for major developments being submitted shortly that might be inconsistent with the spatial strategy. For this reason, there is an urgent need for rapid progress with Core Strategy preparation that reconciles sub-regional spatial priorities with the concerns of local communities; and sets out the infrastructure and other requirements to be met to ensure the creation of sustainable and mixed communities.
- 3.2 Rapid progress with robust and relevant Core Strategies requires their alignment with the sub-regional dimensions and priorities of the spatial strategy. Current work therefore is identifying the elements of Core Strategies requiring 'alignment' and how this work is to be progressed.
- 3.3 In summary, issues under consideration for alignment in Core Strategies include:
- Phasing the pattern and sequence of residential and employment development in order to -
    - secure sub-regional targets;
    - acknowledge sub-regional spatial priorities - giving priority to regeneration and brownfield development, diverting growth pressures from South Gloucestershire to the Bristol urban area and Weston-super-Mare;
    - provide appropriate mixes of use, in particular a closer relationship between new homes, jobs and community facilities;
  - Linking new development with infrastructure provision, in particular 'big ticket' items such as -
    - key transport links and public transports services;
    - secondary and further education;
    - hospitals and other community facilities;
    - major investments in waste treatment, utilities and flood defence; and,
    - major investments in green infrastructure; and,
  - Clarifying development thresholds and funding issues.
- 3.4 The following benefits arise from the further work set out above on the Sub-Regional Delivery Plan:
- Clarifying prospects for local employment;
  - Informing review of development trajectories;
  - Reducing uncertainty and informing public and private sector investment planning;
  - Discouraging unwelcome planning applications and appeals;
  - Demonstrating to local communities the benefits of new development;
  - Maximising funding contributions from new development, informing the setting of a Community Infrastructure Levy and facilitating bids for funding from national and regional sources; and,
  - Improving clarity and raising confidence about delivery and hence the robustness of the local development framework.

- 3.5 As part of progressing the work described, consideration is being given to the scope of work to be undertaken by specialist development consultants. Initially, this will focus on infrastructure and associated funding issues. It will link the progress of development with infrastructure provision and funding sources and facilitate the prioritising of individual infrastructure projects.
- 3.6 Appointing consultants to undertake the work will provide the specialist expertise required and not readily assembled from within the staff resources of the local councils.
- 3.7 Funding from the South West Regional Enhancement and Improvement Programme has been made available to support further work on the Sub-Regional Delivery Plan. In addition, SWRDA and the Homes and Community Agency are considering jointly funding with the Partnership, the further work described on the Sub-Regional Delivery Plan. This reflects the importance attached to this work by these government agencies and creates the prospect that the outcome will be seen as the Infrastructure Delivery Plan for all the public bodies of the West of England.
- 3.8 The appointment of consultants for the study will be made towards the end of the year. It is hoped that the study will be completed in April.

#### **4 Recommendation**

That members note the report and give their views.

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