



meeting Communities Department Briefing

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agenda item number

5

## **Report of the Leader of the County Council**

### **The Regional Spatial Strategy (Draft East Midlands Regional Plan)**

#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To summarise the main points in the Draft East Midlands Regional Plan, statutorily the **Regional Spatial Strategy** [RSS], as background for the discussion.
2. The Draft East Midlands Regional Plan and associated documents are available on-line at [www.emra.gov.uk/regionalplan/documents.htm](http://www.emra.gov.uk/regionalplan/documents.htm)

#### **Background**

3. The East Midlands Regional Assembly [EMRA] has submitted to the Government the draft East Midlands Regional Plan Review – technically the Regional Spatial Strategy [RSS] – which when finally approved by the Secretary of State will replace the current RSS 8 approved in March 2005. It also will supersede and replace the Joint Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Structure Plan adopted earlier this year.
4. The Plan was submitted on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2006 and the period in which formal representations can be made on the document finishes on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2006. The Plan covers the period 2001-26 and has various sections including a main section and sections on four Sub-Regional Strategies [SRS] two of which cover the entire geographic County – the Three Cities SRS and the Northern SRS.
5. A number of background papers have been prepared and published with the Plan. The list includes a paper concerning the strategic review of the Nottingham/Derby Green Belt.
6. EMRA consulted on an “Options for Change” document at the end of 2005 and which was considered by the County Council’s Cabinet in January 2006. A series of stakeholders meetings have been held, those for the Sub-Regional Strategies being organised by the “Section 4 (4) Authorities” (the County Councils and Unitary Authorities).

## **The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy**

7. The main section of the draft RSS (Part 1) covers matters which affect the whole East Midlands Region – Derbyshire (including the whole of the Peak District National Park), Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland). Matters covered are briefly set out below :-
  - a) 10 core objectives
  - b) broad principles for development – sustainable development, the sequential approach to development, promotion of better design, priorities for rural development, and priorities for each of the five Sub-areas (the 3-Cities and Northern Sub-areas affect the geographic County of Nottinghamshire)
  - c) topic based policies on housing (see paragraph 7 below), employment land, town centres and retail development, casino development, rural diversification, tourism, ICT, the natural and cultural heritage, environmental and green infrastructure, biodiversity and geodiversity, landscape management and enhancement, the historic environment, water resources/water quality/managing flood risk, strategic river corridors, minerals, waste, energy (including energy reduction and efficiency, and low carbon energy generation), culture/sport/recreation, a suite of policies on transport matters – from traffic growth reduction, through public transport matters to regional highway priorities – and a policy on the implementation, monitoring and review of the RSS
8. The housing section divides the Region up into a series of Housing Market Areas (HMAs) for the purposes of providing housing provision. The HMAs nest within the 5 Sub-areas. The geographic County is covered by 3 HMAs dealt with in later paragraphs. The overall policy sets out housing provision for 2001-26 by HMA and by District/Unitary Authority, and a further policy sets out the % of housing for each HMA that should be for affordable housing.
9. The RSS states that the housing provision figures reflect the growth point bids for the 3-Cities, Newark, Lincoln and Grantham areas. These bids were requested by Government and put in by Local Authorities (Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City for the County part of the 3-Cities bid, and Newark & Sherwood District Council for the Newark bid). The Government announced that it had accepted these bids at the end of October 2006.
10. The second Part of the RSS covers four SRSs for the 3-Cities Sub-area covering Derby, Leicester and Nottingham and surrounding suburban and rural areas, the Northern Sub-area covering 3 Districts in North Derbyshire and Ashfield, Bassetlaw and Newark & Sherwood Districts in Nottinghamshire, for Northamptonshire and Lincoln.
11. For the 3-Cities SRS, the housing totals by District are split between that which should be in or adjoining the main Principal Urban Areas (the three City areas)

and a remainder. The table below sets out the annual rates for housing for the Nottingham Core HMA.

LA area	Total No of dwellings p.a.	% within or adjoining PUA	Comment
Nottingham City	945	100	
Ashfield (Hucknall)	120	0	Within or adjoining Hucknall
Broxtowe	270	59	Remaining housing to be focussed on Eastwood and Kimberley
Erewash*	290	19	Remainder to be focussed on Ilkeston
Gedling	310	73	
Rushcliffe	555	80	Urban extension should include land to the south of Clifton

#### Notes

The policy refers to “sustainable urban extensions” and this affects all areas apart from Nottingham and Hucknall.

\*This Borough is in the County of Derbyshire but is included in the Nottingham Core HMA

12. The SRS states that the urban extension to the south of Clifton in Rushcliffe Borough would cause least harm to the purposes of the Green Belt, avoid areas of high landscape value to the east of the conurbation and can take advantage of planned transport infrastructure measures for NET, the A453, the Trent River Park proposals and the East Midlands Parkway Station.
13. The SRS also contains a policy for the Nottingham/Derby Green Belt review required by the existing approved RSS and for green wedges.
14. There is an overall employment land policy but no employment land provision figures either for the SRS or constituent parts of it.
15. The transport objectives for the SRS include
  - to reduce the use of the car within and around the Principal Urban Areas and promote a step change increase in the quality and quantity of public transport provision,
  - to improve wider national and regional public transport linkages
  - to improve public transport surface access to Nottingham East Midlands Airport

The transport schemes set out in the RSS/SRS include improvements to the M1, A453 and A46 Trunk Roads as well as rail and light rail based schemes.

15. For the Northern SRS, the principal strategy aim is for regeneration. The SRS is divided into 2 HMAs and the table below sets out the housing figures for the four Nottinghamshire Districts.

District	Housing Provision p.a.	Comment
Ashfield *	455	*includes Hucknall total
Bassetlaw	330	
Mansfield	410	
Newark & Sherwood	600	Reflects Growth Point Bid

The housing figures are set out in part I of the RSS and do not include the detailed breakdown as found for the 3-Cities SRS. The housing provisions are above past rates of growth.

16. Again there are no detailed employment land provision totals for the SRS or constituent parts but there is a policy on employment regeneration that includes economic regeneration proposals along the Mansfield Ashfield Regeneration Route, and north of Worksop towards the new Robin Hood Doncaster Sheffield Airport. The SRS also includes a policy for the creation of a Sherwood Forest Regional Park.
17. Transport objectives for the SRS include the improvement of sustainable transport access from traditional communities to the main urban centres such as Mansfield/Ashfield, Newark and Worksop, to help alleviate rural isolation without access to the private car, and to improve surface (public transport) access to the Robin Hood Airport.
18. Transport schemes include improvements to the M1, (certain junctions on) the A1 and the A46 trunk roads and for improvements to the Mansfield Bus station.

### **Process and Future Steps**

19. This is the first time that the RSS/SRSs have been prepared to the new planning system format. As such, there has been a steep learning curve for EMRA and partner authorities and organisations. Officers of the County Council have provided assistance to EMRA with regard to the two SRSs affecting the County and helped prepare the Green Belt Study referred to in paragraph 4. The overall timeframes for the RSS preparation have been set by central government.
20. Comments made by 20<sup>th</sup> December will be considered by the Independent Panel and by the Government Office for the East Midlands – GOEM- who now take over the responsibility for the final stages in the preparation of the RSS. A Regional Examination conducted by the independent Panel will take place in May/June of 2007. The Examination will be on selected issues and participants will be invited to attend. The Panel will use the Examination to test the soundness of the RSS.
21. The Panel will then write a Report with recommendations to amend or retain the RSS as appropriate and submit the Report to GOEM who will publish it along with any Proposed Modifications for a further round of public consultation. This is

likely to take place in the early part of 2008. The final RSS is likely to be approved at the beginning of 2009. As with all formal plans, the RSS is subject to legal challenge.

22. The County Council will be considering the draft RSS at the Cabinet meeting on 6th December and the draft report for Cabinet is being prepared and will be finalised towards the end of November.

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Leader of the County Council

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