

meeting **JOINT COMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC PLANNING & TRANSPORT**

date 10th September 2010 agenda item number **4**

from: **JOINT OFFICER STEERING GROUP**

Report

STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE

Purpose of Report

1. This report updates the planning issues arising from the work of the new Coalition Government which require consideration of the Committee. These are the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies, including the review of housing provision and the proposed Localism Bill, and progress on Local Investment Plans (formerly the HCA's 'Single Conversation').

Coalition Government

2. The Government is now implementing a range of actions relating to regional government and planning, and its associated agencies and bodies. The progress with this is summarised at Appendix A to this report.
3. In July Eric Pickles, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, revoked all Regional Spatial Strategies with immediate effect. He expects Local Planning Authorities to make decisions 'without the framework of regional numbers and plans'. A letter from Steve Quartermain, the CLG Chief Planner accompanied the letter. Advice has also been issued by the Planning Inspectorate on how to deal with plan-preparation and development management in the absence of regional strategies.
4. As resolved at the last meeting of this Joint Committee, a letter was sent to Eric Pickles by the Chair, expressing concern over the loss of policy context to local planning, but also emphasising the positive developments in joint working and liaison over spatial and infrastructure planning in the City and County. That letter is attached at Appendix B.
5. As reported to the last meeting, the particular focus of the Government's actions are to allow local authorities (as yet not defined) to establish their own housing provision levels, thus removing the prescription of regional housing numbers in order to, amongst other things, protect Green Belt and Greenfield areas from development. More attention is given to this matter in the report on the Aligned Core Strategy, and similar work is developing in the remainder of the County.

6. Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, Nottingham and Derby Councils are preparing to support district technical and evidence preparation, in a similar manner to that undertaken for the Joint Structure Plans, although clearly in a very different context. This is because the two strategic Authorities recognise the need for consistency in evidence and context, even though local decisions may be taken on the basis of that evidence.
7. Following abolition/revocation, the policy content of Regional Strategies (RS) now ceases to exist except for any parts of it that are re-incorporated in local planning authorities' Core Strategies or subsequent new replacement 'local plan' processes. There are also concerns that policies that apply across several districts will need to be prepared and applied consistently. There has been no further information regarding the longer term 'radical review of the Planning system'.
8. The intention to introduce a proposed housing delivery incentive has been announced in a letter on the 9th of August from the Housing minister Grant Shapps which stated that "councils that take action now to give planning consent and support the construction of new homes will receive direct and substantial benefit". Details will be confirmed early in the spending review and then consulted on, probably late in the autumn. The two Authorities will engage in all consultations relating to these developments and keep the government's proposals under close review, with regular reports to this committee. The Authorities will also keep under review and report any potential delays to important policy development work.
9. The Government has stated that a Localism Bill will be prepared from November 2010 to be approved in November 2011. The particular aspects of the bill affecting planning, transport and infrastructure provision will be the intention to:
 - Give councils a general power of competence;
 - Give communities the right to bid to take over local state-run services,
 - Facilitate establishment of Local Enterprise Partnerships,
 - Implement options for the Housing Revenue Account,
 - Meet people's housing aspirations by streamlining and speeding up the planning system,
 - Provide local authorities with strong and transparent incentives to facilitate housing growth,
 - Replace the Infrastructure Planning Commission with an efficient and democratically accountable system that provides a fast-track process for major infrastructure projects,
 - Reform the planning system to give neighbourhoods much greater ability to determine the shape of the places,
 - Maintain the Green Belt, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and other environmental protections,
 - Create a new designation to protect green areas of particular importance to local communities,
 - Abolish the requirement for Regional Strategies,(Source, CLG Structural Reform Plan)

10. This is a very broad remit, and all these matters are areas of work in which the two Authorities have a significant interest, in order to plan for sustainable development (environmental, social and economic), promote the growth and economic regeneration of their area, and move towards a low-carbon economy. They will be taking a particular interest in the preparation of the Localism Bill, and will jointly and individually be responding to and attempting to shape the Government's programme of legislation.

Local Investment Plans

11. Appendix C outlines the development of 'Local Investment Plans' in the two Authorities' area. The involvement of the Joint Committee Authorities, as well as the district councils, ensures that HCA investment planning can be co-ordinated with the spatial plans being progressed as well as other infrastructure planning directly and indirectly influenced by the Authorities.
12. Planning, housing and employment finance are the principal areas of attention in LIP, and transport and other infrastructure provision is included as it is fundamental to achieving wider aims. Therefore it is important for the City and County Councils to ensure that all the strategic planning and investment processes they are involved in are co-ordinated, including through the LIPs.

RECOMMENDATION

It is RECOMMENDED that Members of the Committee discuss and note the contents of the report.

Background Papers

Coalition Government Programme and ministerial statements have been produced regularly since May. Of particular interest is the CLG Structural Reform Plan.

Details of the HCA LIP process are available on the HCA web site.

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Appendix A

Main Planning Elements announced in the Coalition's Programme for Government	Progress as of August 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction of consideration of competition issues for retail applications 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rapid abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies 	Done – legal challenges pending
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Powers to stop 'Garden Grabbing' 	Done
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In the longer term, radical reform of the Planning system to give neighbourhoods more control, based upon 'Open Source Planning' paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CLG Structural Reform Plan issued ▪ Localism bill planned for Nov 2011 ▪ Local Government Bill planned for Oct 2010 ▪ Local Planning Authorities able to work in new ways on local plans in advance of Localism Bill
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Abolition of Infrastructure Planning Commission 	Done – absorbed into Inspectorate and part of Localism bill
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New Consolidated National Planning Framework 	By April 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Retention of Green Belt and new designation similar to SSSI 'to protect green areas of particular importance to local communities' 	Part of the Localism Bill (Nov 2011)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Possible abolition of Regional Govt Offices 	Done – Other similar actions are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Leaders' Boards abolished (including much of East Midlands Councils) • Regional development agencies dismantled • National Housing and Planning Advice Unit scrapped
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New measures to bring empty homes back into use 	by Dec 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New trusts to allow communities to provide homes for local people 	Ministerial statement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Require continuous improvement to energy efficiency of new Housing 	Ministerial statement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incentives to be provided to local authorities to deliver new homes and businesses 	Ministerial statement: consultation due 2010 First payments April 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presumption in favour of Sustainable development 	Due to be part of the Localism bill
Other Planning Elements since appearing in the Coalition Government's Programme	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction of Local Enterprise Partnerships 	Bids invited, legislation through the Localism Bill (Nov 2011)
Main Energy/Climate Change/ Environment Elements of the Coalition's Programme for Government	

▪ Increase in EU Emission reduction target to 30% by 2020	
▪ Increase renewables target	
▪ Promotion of Anaerobic Digestion and community owned renewable energy schemes	
▪ Scrap Home Improvement Packs	Done
▪ Cancel Third Runway at Heathrow and refuse permission for additional runways at Gatwick and Stanstead	In progress
Transport Elements of the Coalition's Programme for Government	
▪ National Recharging Network for electric vehicles	No statement
▪ Longer rail franchises	No statement
▪ Low carbon benefits to be included in Transport appraisal	
▪ Network Rail to be made more accountable	
▪ High Speed Rail network	HS2 report Under review
▪ Crossrail and further electrification of rail network supported	
▪ Promotion of sustainable travel initiatives (cycling, walking and working with bus operators)	
▪ Fair pricing for rail travel	
▪ New HGV System of Road User Charging	
▪ Stop central Government funding for new fixed Speed Cameras	Reduced allocations already in place
Financial Issues	
▪ Capital schemes deferred/reconsidered in CSR	In progress
▪ Possible clawback of uncommitted Growth Point Capital/Revenue	Considered unlikely
▪ Possible non-award of 2010/11 Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG)	HPDG scrapped
▪ Review of Community Infrastructure Levy/S.106	Via Localism Bill
▪ Review of Homes and Communities Agency Funding	Via CSR
▪ Review of Housing Revenue Account	Via Localism Bill
Other elements of the Coalition Government's Programme	
▪ Abolition of Comprehensive Area Assessment	Done
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Information on timetables principally drawn from the CLG Structural Reform Plan. 2010 (<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/structuralreformplan>)

Appendix B

**County Councillor
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RB/RC/DU
26th August 2010

**The Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP
Secretary of State for Communities and
Local Government
Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU**

Dear Mr Pickles

Partnership Working for Planning across Nottinghamshire and Nottingham

In the light of the abolition of Regional Strategies and the 'localism' agenda, I am writing to you to explain our approach to planning in Nottinghamshire and Nottingham, and to commend it to you as a model which may have wider applicability.

Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council have a long history of joint working over planning that has reflected concerns and values of their residents and businesses. Following the successful production of a Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Joint Structure Plan (JSP) in 2006, the two Authorities have supported further localised joint working that has emerged from our experience preparing strategic planning documents, including the JSP and the now revoked Regional Plan.

The "Greater Nottingham Joint Planning Advisory Board" was set up in April 2008 to steer the production of the Greater Nottingham Aligned Core Strategies, and the implementation of the New Growth Point Programme of Development. It is a voluntary arrangement which brings together the County and City Councils along with the other authorities that comprise Greater Nottingham (Broxtowe Borough Council, Erewash Borough Council, Gedling Borough Council, Rushcliffe Borough Council, and the Hucknall part of Ashfield District Council), together with Derbyshire County Council.

The Board has made significant progress with preparing Aligned Core Strategies for the area, publishing an 'Option for Consultation' in February 2010.

The value of a conurbation wide approach to preparation of Aligned Core Strategies in the area has been recognised both by the participating councils, and by external organisations. These advantages can be summarised as follows:

- efficiencies in procuring evidence base studies, and subsequent consistency of information
- sharing expertise
- effective input of upper-tier authorities with strategic economic, planning and transport remits
- planning consistently across council boundaries, adding certainty to the planning process
- external organisations communicate once instead of several times
- external organisations able to take a comprehensive view of the wider city's planning issues rather than a council-by-council approach
- significant future cost savings are also anticipated through having one Examination of the Aligned Core Strategies

Our experience illustrates the challenges involved in establishing and managing partnerships which span unitary, county and district boundaries, but which together make up an area which local people, businesses and organisations can identify with and understand as being meaningful.

I would like to advocate the approach we are taking here in Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City, and should you wish to learn more, we would be very happy to provide further information.

I am copying this letter to Rt Hon Greg Clark MP and Steve Quartermain, in view of their respective responsibilities and interests.

Yours sincerely

County Councillor Richard Butler
Chairman
Nottinghamshire and Nottingham
Joint Committee for Planning and Transportation

cc Rt Hon Greg Clark MP
Councillor Alan Clark, Vice-chair, Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Joint
Committee for Planning and Transportation
Steve Quartermain, Chief Planner, DCLG, Eland House, Bressenden Place,
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Appendix C – Homes and Communities Agency: Local Investment Plans

Background

1. The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) is the national housing and regeneration agency for England, with an annual investment budget of more than £5bn across 17 different funding streams. It is a non-departmental public body and its sponsor government department is Communities and Local Government (CLG). Sir Bob Kerlake, former Chief Executive of Sheffield City Council, is the HCA's Chief Executive.
2. The HCA's way of achieving its aim of delivering appropriate investment was the 'Single Conversation' (now renamed 'Local Investment Planning') that would set jointly agreed priorities to address regeneration and housing growth. The process was intended to take place between the HCA and local authorities - either singly or in groups - but also including the Regional Development Agency (RDA), community bodies and other public and private sector partners in each area.
3. The Single Conversation has now been renamed Local Investment Planning. A Local Investment Plan (LIP) is an evidence-based document that sets out the interventions required in an area to achieve the objectives and vision for that area and will inform the HCA investment business case and plans for future investment.
4. The LIP is intended to set out the basis of a rolling three year programme of investment for inclusion in the LIA. The LIP should establish priorities within several time frames; immediate (0-3 years), medium term (3-5 years), longer term (5-10 years) and distant (typically 10-15 years).
5. In Nottinghamshire and Nottingham, the HCA is engaging with groups of local authorities in a 'Single Conversation' based on three Housing Market Areas (HMAs): Greater Nottingham HMA, Sherwood Forest HMA (previously called Nottingham Outer HMA) and North Derbyshire and Bassetlaw HMA (formerly the Northern HMA, comprising Bassetlaw, Bolsover, Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire).
6. Since the advent of the Coalition Government the Homes & Communities Agency has put all new programmes on hold after being told by ministers to cut its budget this year. However, the body itself is not to be abolished. As a result a letter was sent from Sir Bob Kerlake to inform local authorities that the process of Local Investment Planning is continuing and inviting them to make a local decision on whether continuing with the preparation and finalisation of the LIP is of benefit to their area.
7. The Local Investment Plan (LIP) is continuing to be progressed for each HMA under the governance of steering groups comprising chief officer level representatives of participating councils and other partner organisations (e.g. at one time, emda). The planning for the three LIPs are at different stages, but all have the intention of producing a final Plan by the end of 2010.

8. The HCA require completed Local Investment Plans and Local Investment Agreements in order that they can be signed off by HCA Regional Boards by March 2011 at the latest. In reality, this means that LIPs will have to be in final draft by the Autumn 2010 in order that they can be approved by the Cabinets of individual councils prior to sign off by the HCA.

The significance of the 'LIP' and implications for the Councils

9. The LIPs will contain joint investment principles around any future HCA investment, and this may include aspirations for the Councils to co-invest in priority areas through the provision of assets, funding etc. The LIP should ultimately provide a vehicle for better alignment and sequencing of investment, which should maximise the impact of funding.