

report

meeting:	JOINT COMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC PLANNING AND TRANSPORT	
date:	12th. November 2004	agenda item number:
from:	JOINT OFFICERS STEERING GROUP	

The Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Joint Structure Plan Report of the Panel

Purpose of Report

To inform the Committee of the contents of the Report of the Panel who conducted the examination in public (EiP) of the Deposit Draft Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Joint Structure Plan held in June – July this year.

Background

1. The Deposit Draft Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Joint Structure Plan (DDJSP) was placed on deposit from 7 November to 19 December 2003. This resulted in over 1500 separate comments from 124 individuals, organisations, interest groups and local authorities. Following this the Panel were appointed by the First secretary of State to conduct an independent examination in public of selected issues. Based upon the representations received and in consultation with the Panel the two Councils selected 11 matters for examination. In all some 66 individuals and organisations and individuals participated at the EiP.
2. The Panel Report has now been published and is very largely supportive of the strategy and policies set out in the deposit draft Joint Structure Plan. There are though 31 recommendations for changing the DDJSP set out in annex A of the Panel Report (this Annex is attached as an appendix to this report). This report to the Joint Committee provides a summary of the main conclusions and recommendations of the Panel Report. The Panel Report has been made available on both Councils' web sites.

Strategy

3. A key issue debated at the EiP was the DDJSP's concentration of most new development within the south Nottinghamshire sub-area. The Panel agreed that this was the most sustainable option for accommodating new development. In coming to this view, the Panel conclude that emerging RPG 8 supports the DDJSP's policy of concentration and to dilute this concentration strategy would in the Panel's view take the DDJSP away from the central tenet of regional thinking.

Environment and Natural Resources

4. The DDJSP's policies on the environment and natural resources have been largely supported by the Panel who are of the opinion that the plan has been

successful at striking a balance between the promotion of development and the protection of the environment.

5. It is pleasing to report that the Panel have found the landscape character approach set out in the DDJSP to be a “refreshing” change and commend it subject to more explanation being given in the policy about the purpose of the character assessment approach.
6. The DDJSP did not include specific policies on minerals extraction relying instead on the minerals local plan prepared to the adopted Nottinghamshire Structure Plan 1996. The Panel are content with this situation and the fact that mineral extraction will also be reviewed as part of the future Regional Spatial Strategy to which this Council will have to prepare a Minerals development document.

Housing

7. The housing provision for the DDJSP was proposed in RPG 8 which provides for 2,450 dwellings per annum equating to some 49,000 dwellings over the Plan period. The Panel listened to arguments to depart from this RPG control figure but are firmly of the view that the best forum for testing the regional control figure will be through the full review of RPG 8. The Panel have recommended no change to the housing provision for the Plan Area which remains as 49,000 dwellings.

Employment and economy

8. During the EiP there was much discussion on the method of forecasting employment land. The Panel consider the extrapolation of past trends plus a mark up of 50% - the method used in the DDJSP - to be as good as any. The Panel is happy with the employment land provisions for the Plan Area although they agree that a reduction in Broxtowe District is justified (see below).
9. The Panel were concerned to ensure that existing employment sites are subject to an urgent and rigorous review and that existing sites should be subject to the same searching criteria as new allocations. In the view of the Panel such an approach should ensure that important strategic employment sites can be defended. A new policy is recommended to this effect.

Transport

10. In the light of the DDJSP's spatial strategy of concentrating development, the Panel have expressed general support for the movement and transport policies of the Plan. The Panel acknowledge that the DDJSP seeks to reduce the need to travel and encourage the use of alternative transport to the car.

Rural Issues

11. The Panel were generally satisfied with policies dealing with development to meet the specific needs of rural areas (3/7 concerning rural housing and 4/5 concerning business development) subject to minor policy changes.

Central Areas and shopping

12. The Panel are recommending changes to the shopping and central areas chapter. They would prefer the policy objective of achieving a more balanced network of centres to be more explicit by rewording policy 7/1 to refer to spreading new expenditure through the hierarchy rather than being concentrated on the larger centres. Although the Panel are clear that this approach should not compromise the regional role of Nottingham City centre. The designation of Mansfield as a major sub-regional centre is supported by the Panel.

Sub-Area recommendations

South Nottinghamshire Sub-Area

13. On Green Belt – the Panel consider firstly, that it is right for the DDJSP to set a framework for reviewing the Green Belt for development requirements up to 2021. Secondly that there is no present need for safeguarded land (land between the urban edge and the Green Belt for longer term development needs) and the report recommends no change to Green belt policy in the DDJSP.
14. The Panel have accepted the overall housing provision for the South Nottinghamshire sub-area (37,000). A major issue debated at the EiP is the urban capacity of the City of Nottingham. The Panel agree that the Nottingham City figure of 18,500 is achievable and accept the distribution between the City of Nottingham and surrounding districts.
15. On employment land, the Panel have accepted the argument that the figure for Broxtowe should be reduced by 25 ha (following the recommendation of the Inspector who held an inquiry into objections to the Broxtowe Local Plan) but are broadly content with the employment land provisions for the City and remaining Districts.
16. Turning to transport the Panel recognise the integrated nature of the land use and transportation strategies and stress the importance of ensuring adequate resources are made available for the necessary transport improvements. No modifications are proposed to the transport proposals for South Nottinghamshire.

West and North-West Nottinghamshire Sub-Area

17. The Panel report refers to the need to continue to diversify the economy of this sub-area especially by promoting retail and service based jobs and in this context the Panel consider that the explanatory memorandum could be more specific about the role of Mansfield as a major sub regional centre. The opportunity for attracting employment opportunities from the development of Finningley airport is also recognised by the Panel but again they consider the DDJSP could be more specific by referring to the desirability of allocating 25 ha of employment land in Bassetlaw close to Finningley. The MARR route and the economic strategy of providing good quality employment sites in suitable locations along this new transport route are supported.
18. The Panel report refers to the need to balance the need for sufficient housing provision to support regeneration against the dangers of over providing

housing which would depress the lower end of the market. They have not found favour with arguments to increase the housing provision of the sub area. The Panel accept the need to improve the quality of the housing stock but this should be within the sub-area housing total set by the deposit draft DDJSP. Within the sub-area they support a redistribution of housing from West Bassetlaw to Mansfield in recognition of the sub regional role of the latter.

East Nottinghamshire

19. The Panel have noted a general feeling of confidence in Newark's employment prospects and recommend an increase in the employment land provisions of 25 hectares in the Newark part of the sub-area. In terms of housing the Panel recommend a transfer of 500 dwelling units to from East Bassetlaw to Newark. At the EiP, following the receipt of new information on urban capacity, officers had suggested to the Panel that this small adjustment should be in the opposite direction.

RECOMMENDATION

20. It is RECOMMENDED that the Joint Committee note the content of this report.

Background papers

The Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Joint Structure Plan Report of the Panel.

Contact Officers

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Summary of Panel Recommendations

Chapter 1 Strategy and vision

Recommendation 1.1

Modify the plan by substituting “required” for “negotiated” in the first line of Policy 1/3 and the addition, in sub-paragraph d) after “community facilities”, and in parentheses, the words “(including education)”.

Chapter 2 Environment and natural resources

Recommendation 2.1

Modify the plan by:

- (i) including in Policy 2/11 reference to the protection of historic parks, gardens and battlefields, and to the setting of conservation areas, with complementary additions to the accompanying text as appropriate; and
- (ii) including in Policy 1/1 (and associated text) reference to the built environment and cultural heritage of the plan area.

Recommendation 2.2

Modify the plan by adding to Policy 2/7 words which explain that landscape character assessment is to be undertaken to inform land allocations, assess development proposals, and promote conservation and enhancement (together with improvements to clarify the associated text).

Recommendation 2.3

Modify the plan by adding text to explain what is meant by appropriate mitigation and compensation measures in Policies 2/3 and 2/4.

Recommendation 2.4

Modify the plan by altering Policy 2/14 as follows:

- (i) deleting clause (a) and replacing it with words that express the need to consider proposals against all relevant criteria;
- (ii) deleting clause (c); and
- (iii) replacing clause (d) with the words “consideration of the cumulative impact of new development”.

Recommendation 2.5

Modify the plan by altering the first part of Policy 2/15 to read “Local planning authorities will apply the risk based approach of Planning Policy Guidance Note 25”.

Chapter 3 Housing

Recommendation 3.1

Modify the plan by deleting references to “maximum allocations outside urban areas” and including a statement in the explanatory text that local authorities should stick rigorously to the sequential approach.

Recommendation 3.2

Modify the plan by deleting Policy 3/6 and including the wording, or a variation of it, in the explanatory text if the plan making authorities so wish.

Chapter 4 Employment and the economy

Recommendation 4.1

Modify Policy 4/1 of the plan by:

- (i) the substitution of the words “Guideline Provision” for “Broad Target” at the head of column 2; and
- (ii) the addition of a footnote explaining that columns 3 and 4 are given for information and explanation only.

Recommendation 4.2

Modify Policy 4/2 of the plan by the addition:

- (i) in criterion (b) of the word “marketable” between “range of” and “sites”; and
- (ii) of a criterion (e) requiring new employment land allocation to be sustainable in all other respects, and both to respect and enhance the local environment.

Recommendation 4.3

Modify the plan by amending criterion (d) of Policy 4/2 to make it clear that the availability of public transport should be well related to the intensity of development.

Recommendation 4.4

Modify the plan by the deletion of Policy 4/4 as it stands and its replacement by a new policy which states that:

- (i) all local planning authorities will review all existing employment allocations as a matter of urgency and thereafter keep that review up-to-date;
- (ii) existing employment sites will be retained in that use if (but only if) they fully comply with the criteria set out in Policy 4/2; and
- (iii) such fully compliant sites will be defended from development for non-employment uses.

Chapter 5 Movement and transport

Recommendation 5.1

Modify the plan by re-wording Policy 5/6(a) on the lines of:

“safeguard from redevelopment carefully selected sites with real potential for the development of freight transfer facilities to provide, and increase the capacity of, movement by rail or water.”

Recommendation 5.2

Modify the plan by revising paragraphs 5.47 and 5.48 in the text to reflect the current position concerning parking standards.

Chapter 6 Central areas and shopping

Recommendation 6.1

Modify the plan by:

- (i) changing the title of Chapter 7 to “Central Areas and Shopping”;
- (ii) deleting Policy 7/2;
- (iii) adding wording along the following lines to Policy 7/1: “Proposals for development must be of a scale appropriate to the role and function of the centre and of the area served by that centre”; and
- (iv) updating the introduction to Chapter 7 to more accurately reflect the wording of the sequential approach as set out in Ministerial Statements (or in PPS6 if available) and note that the role and function of city, town and other centres is wider than just retailing.

Recommendation 6.2

Modify the plan by amending Policy 7/1 to include wording along the lines of:

“Increased expenditure on comparison goods will be expected to be spread out through the hierarchy rather than being concentrated in the larger centres”.

Recommendation 6.3

Modify the plan by amending Policy 7/3 to include wording along the lines of:

“Local development frameworks should make provision for development of local service centres, in towns and in the countryside”.

Chapter 7 Rural issues

Recommendation 7.1

Modify the plan by:

- (i) altering Policy 3/7 by replacing the words “in” and “within” (villages) by the words “in and adjoining”; and
- (ii) altering Policy 2/9 to recognise that large-scale agricultural buildings may be permissible but only in suitable locations.

Recommendation 7.2

Modify the plan by:

- (i) re-phrasing Policy 6/1 to appear more positive in style and clarify the intention of the final sentence of the first part;
- (ii) replacing the word “all” in line 6 of Policy 6/1 with a phrase which better reflects the true intention of the plan;
- (iii) introducing a cross reference at Policy 4/5 (penultimate clause (i)) to Policy 2/9;
- (iv) updating paragraphs 6.11 and 6.20; and
- (v) adding to paragraph 6.14 words about the value of informal quiet recreation.

Recommendation 7.3

Modify the plan by:

- (i) combining Policy 5/4 with Policy 6/3 within the Movement chapter, incorporating the needs of all non-motorised forms of transport for all purposes, and in both urban and rural areas; and
- (ii) making reference in the text associated with that combined policy to the appropriate provision and management of facilities.

Recommendation 7.4

Modify the plan by re-introducing policy 3/13 from the adopted plan.

Chapter 8 South Nottinghamshire Sub-Area

Recommendation 8.1

Modify the plan by adding to the text words highlighting the importance of monitoring housing provision as a matter of course, so that if it were found that Policy 3/5 was frustrating necessary housing provision, land in the second phase would be released.

Recommendation 8.2

Modify the plan by:

- (i) in criterion (v) of Policy 4/2 adding a reference to development related to Nottingham East Midlands Airport;
- (ii) changing the title of Policy 4/3 to "Technology Transfer"; and
- (iii) replacing (d) with "A science and technology park with good university links will be provided in Nottingham".

Recommendation 8.3

Modify the plan by adding to paragraph 5.16 words which make reference to the need to safeguard local amenity.

Recommendation 8.4

Modify the plan by adding to Policy 5/10(e) words to indicate that capacity provided by the new bridge crossing the Trent should be accompanied at the existing bridges by a comparable reduction of vehicular capacity, to be taken up by enhanced public transport infrastructure provision.

Chapter 9 West and North-West Nottinghamshire Sub-Area

Recommendation 9.1

Modify the plan by adding to the explanatory text:

- (i) a specific reference to the desirability of allocating some 25ha of employment land in Bassetlaw close to Finningley Airport and to the A1; and
- (ii) a reference to the desirability of providing for additional office development in Mansfield town centre.

Recommendation 9.2

Modify the plan in the table at Policy 3/3 by reducing the allocation of Bassetlaw (part) in column 2 to 600 dwellings and increasing that of Mansfield to 3000.

Chapter 10 East Nottinghamshire Sub-Area

Recommendation 10.1

Modify the plan by amending the employment land figure for Newark in the East Nottinghamshire Sub-Area in Policy 4/1 to 80ha instead of 55ha and amend the sub-area total and county total accordingly.

Recommendation 10.2

Modify the plan by amending Policy 3/4 by increasing the provision for Newark and Sherwood (part) to 4800 and reducing provision for Bassetlaw (part) to 700.

Recommendation 10.3

Modify the plan by adding a policy along the following lines:

“In the preparation of Local Development Documents, districts should undertake an assessment of the needs of travellers, both permanent and transient populations. This assessment will be reflected in the proposals of the Local Development Documents.”

Chapter 11 Monitoring and implementation

Recommendation 11.1

Modify the plan by the addition in the explanatory text of a statement of what has been done and what remains to be done in collaboration between the district authorities, the plan-making authorities and the Regional Assembly to set up technical and administrative machinery for monitoring.