

# REPORT TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Report No.9

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> June 2008</b>			
<b>Title of Report</b>	The South West Regional Spatial Strategy - update			
Link to Corporate Priorities	The production of the Local Development Framework and all related priorities dependant upon spatial planning policies.			
Public Report	Yes			
<p><b>Summary of Report</b></p> <p>The South West Regional Spatial Strategy is a statutory Planning document prepared by the South West Regional Assembly in co-operation with County and Unitary Authorities across the south-west and in consultation with the public. It has reached the stage where a Panel of Inspectors have produced their Report which was submitted to the Secretary of State in December last year.</p> <p>The intention is that the Secretary of State will consider the Report, publish proposed changes to the RSS shortly, followed by a period of 12 weeks for consultation. Following consideration of these, the intention is that the final South West Regional Spatial Strategy will be published in the Autumn of 2008.</p> <p>Links to the draft Regional Spatial Strategy and the Panel Report and a summary of its contents can be accessed at or via the Council's website:  <a href="http://www.northwilts.gov.uk/index/env/planning/localplans/draft_regional_spatial_strategy_rs_s_.htm">http://www.northwilts.gov.uk/index/env/planning/localplans/draft_regional_spatial_strategy_rs_s_.htm</a></p> <p>(Note: A separate Examination was made in March on the subject of the regional response to the planning for Gypsies and Travellers and a Panel Report on that subject will be published in due course.)</p>				
<p><b>Officer Recommendations -</b></p> <p><b>That the Report be noted.</b></p>				
Other than those implications agreed with the relevant Officers and referred to below, there are no other implications associated with this report.				
Financial Implications	Legal Implications	Community & Environmental Implications	Human Resources Implications	Equality & Diversity Implications
No	No	Yes	No	No
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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The South West Regional Spatial Strategy is a statutory Planning document prepared by the South West Regional Assembly in co-operation with County and Unitary Authorities across the south-west and in consultation with the public. It has reached the stage where a Panel of Inspectors have produced their Report which was submitted to the Secretary of State in December last year.

## **2. Options and Options Appraisal**

- 2.1 The report is for information only and to be noted by the Committee.

## **3. Background Information**

- 3.1 The proposed South West Regional Spatial Strategy as recommended to be altered by the Panel Report has substantial implications for the North Wiltshire area and the eventual Wiltshire-wide Local Development Framework.
- 3.2 The Panel has recommended that there would be merit in including a hierarchy of Strategically Significant Cities or Towns. The only one in the administrative area of North Wiltshire is Chippenham which is categorised as a fourth tier of SSCT and as such is referred to as a main town centre acting as local focal point for growth.
- 3.2 In respect of “lower” tier settlements, Local Planning Authorities have been invited to identify settlements suitable for ‘locally’ significant development.
- 3.3 Concern was expressed that the proposed RSS was too urban focussed, with large areas of open countryside outside the main settlements for which there would be no strategic planning guidance. The Panel thought that most rural development should be guided to locations in or adjacent to settlements in accordance with National Planning Policy guidance but Local Planning Authorities may make policy provision in LDFs for development elsewhere in the countryside if it is of a type that inherently demands a rural location.
- 3.4 Joint working is important for the area at West Swindon which lies within administrative area of one local planning authority while the land required lies within the control of another. A high degree of co-ordination will be necessary. North Wiltshire is expected to work jointly with Swindon and Wiltshire County Council for the purposes of developing and adopting planning documents relating to the Swindon SSCT.

## **4. Housing Implications**

- 4.1 In the northern area of Wiltshire, the Panel said that Strategic growth should be concentrated at Swindon and Chippenham. Elsewhere, the emphasis should be on meeting the economic and housing needs in order to minimise commuting to Swindon and Chippenham.
- 4.2 So, the following provision for North Wiltshire is given:

5,500 at Chippenham  
3,000 as an urban extension to Swindon  
5,200 in the remainder of the District

- 4.3 Also, it is stated that the LDFs for Swindon Borough and North Wiltshire District should bring forward urgently urban extensions to assist in delivering the scale of growth over the plan period.
- 4.4 The housing requirement for North Wiltshire between 2006 and 2026 = 13,700. In preparing the options for Chippenham within the LDF, it has already been suggested that Chippenham will have to expand outwards. Sites have yet to be decided, however accommodating the increase in the number of housings can be planned for.
- 4.5 Further work will need to be undertaken to develop options for future development in the remaining towns and to decide if and where allocations are necessary in light of the increase in the number of dwellings for the remainder of the District. Most importantly, the issue of the increase in the number of houses to be provided as an urban extension to Swindon needs to be addressed.
- 4.6 Further detail on this subject and a variety of other issues can be found in the detailed summary note on the Council's website:  
[http://www.northwilts.gov.uk/index/env/planning/localplans/draft\\_regional\\_spatial\\_strategy\\_rss.htm](http://www.northwilts.gov.uk/index/env/planning/localplans/draft_regional_spatial_strategy_rss.htm)

## 5. Timetable for the future

- 5.1 The intention is that the Secretary of State will consider the Report, publish proposed changes to the RSS shortly, followed by a period of 12 weeks for consultation. Following consideration of these, the intention is that the final South West Regional Spatial Strategy will be published in the autumn of 2008.

## 6. Financial, Legal and Human Resources Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial, legal or human resources implications arising directly from this report.

<b>Appendices:</b>	None
<b>Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="http://www.northwilts.gov.uk/index/env/planning/localplans/draft_regional_spatial_strategy_rss.htm">http://www.northwilts.gov.uk/index/env/planning/localplans/draft_regional_spatial_strategy_rss.htm</a></li> <li>Panel Report: Examination in Public on the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West December 2007.</li> </ul>

### Previous Decisions Connected with this Report

Report	Committee & Date	Minute Reference
None		