

**West Wiltshire District Council**

**Council**

**10 November 2004**

**Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006-2026**

**1. Purpose**

To consider and approve a response to the Regional Spatial Strategy consultation.

**2. Background**

The new national planning system requires Regional Assemblies to prepare Regional Spatial Strategies. These replace both Regional Planning Guidance and County Structure Plans prepared under the previous system. These Strategies will form part of the Development Plan and will include District level housing and employment figures. At the local level below these Strategies, Local Development Documents produced by local authorities will replace the current District Local Plans.

The South West Regional Assembly is currently consulting on broad options for a Regional Spatial Strategy, which will, when adopted in 2006, provide a framework for planning decisions over the next 20 years.

**3. Key Issues**

Set out in Appendix 1 is an extract from the consultation report, which sets out the 3 broad options, together with the identified strengths and weaknesses of each option. The full report is in the Members' room for information.

Cabinet considered the options at its meeting on 27 October 2004. Set out in Appendix 2 is a recommended response to the Regional Assembly, compiled by officers taking account of views expressed at Cabinet.

The response identifies the following issues:

- *There is uncertainty regarding overall levels of growth and the capacity of the Principal Urban Areas to accommodate these levels;*
- *The options provide little scope for market town regeneration and meeting local needs. Specifically, they will not meet the current regional, county and local objectives for self-containment in the western Wiltshire towns, regeneration of the western Wiltshire towns, promotion of employment opportunities, improvement of transport links in the A350 corridor and meeting housing needs;*
- *There is too much emphasis on meeting housing growth - and not enough on meeting the needs of the regional economy;*

- *The strategy options are too urban in focus - there is little discussion of the challenges facing rural areas;*
- *In rural areas there is a need for flexibility - to provide opportunities for rural economic growth;*
- *The strategy options are too "top down" with little flexibility for local input through Local Community Strategies;*
- *The methodology and evidence basis for the 3 options approach should be more explicit and published for consultation.*
- *There is a need for alternative options which provide some flexibility below PUA level and recognise the contribution that "clusters" of industrial/market towns such as those in western Wiltshire / north Somerset can make.*

#### *Financial and Legal Implications*

This report has no direct financial or legal implications.

#### *Environmental Implications*

This report has no direct environmental implications. The final adopted regional spatial strategy will have long term implications which will be subject to strategic environmental assessment.

#### *Human Rights Implications.*

The Human Rights implications recommended in this report have been considered and are acceptable and the checklist has been addressed.

### **4. Options**

Officers have previously circulated a summary leaflet to all members and to all town and parish councils. The West Wiltshire Local Strategic Partnership will also be considering the consultation options at its meeting later in November and officers are investigating working together with neighbouring local authorities to co-ordinate responses.

Council is asked to consider the 3 potential strategic options for the spatial strategy and any other potential options.

### **5. List of Background Papers**

File Ref: Regional Planning

File Location: Planning Policy and Conservation Section

### **6. Recommendation**

It is recommended that Council approves the response to the Regional Spatial Strategy consultation set out in Appendix 2.

**Plain English Guidance Given** 

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Mark Russell  
Planning Policy Manager

1 November 2004

**List of Appendices**

Appendix 1: Extracts from Regional Spatial Strategy Consultation Report

Appendix 2: Recommended Response of West Wiltshire District Council