

Report

Report subject: Regional Spatial Strategy - update

Report to: Cabinet / Planning & Economic Development Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Date: 16th January 2006

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1. Summary of Report

To update members on the progress of the South West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) process. Regional Spatial Strategies are being prepared for each of the English regions to replace the existing Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) and, in light of the changes to the planning system, will also partially replace the role of county Structure Plans. On 25th October 2005 the South West Regional Assembly (SWRA) – the Regional Planning Body - approved the initial draft RSS which will be subject of further refinement and stakeholder consultation during the period up until January 2006. In January a pre-submission draft will be prepared for further discussion by the Assembly prior to final approval of a draft for submission to the Secretary of State in March 2006.

2. Background

On 24th November 2004, Cabinet was informed about the emerging RSS process and was asked to comment upon three options which had been put forward by the SWRA regarding the overall distribution of development across the region. The view relayed to the region by this Council was that the overwhelming focus of development and resources on larger cities (termed Principal Urban Areas (PUAs)) did not adequately reflect the needs of local centres and rural areas.

Having considered all the views received during the consultation period, the SWRA broadly accepted an approach which better reflected different parts of the region and acknowledged the roles of larger centres such as Salisbury.

Since that time the Assembly have been undertaking a great deal of technical work to understand the most appropriate distribution which reflects the functionality of key settlements across the region as well as more detailed topic area work which has contributed to the formulation of emerging RSS policies. In the summer months, districts and counties undertook significant amounts of work to express the ambitions of key settlements in the region as well as technical analysis to inform the distribution of appropriate levels of housing for each district. During this period the SWRA held a number of stakeholder events across the region which were attended by a range of interest groups including national and regional agencies, local authorities (officers and elected members) and the development industry. Local organisations also participated on a sub-regional basis to help inform more localised issues.

A summary of RSS the process to date can be found at
www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/swra/ourwork/RSS/RSS_Developing.shtml



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3. A Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West

On 21st October the SWRA approved the emerging draft RSS at a meeting in Exeter. The draft document at that time was in an emerging state on account of the need for further work to be completed in certain topic areas. Appendix A sets out an executive summary of the document. Appendix B sets out the resolution of the SWRA meeting on 21st October.

In light of some of the issues raised below members are encouraged to also look at the full document at http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/swra/ourwork/RSS/draft_RSS.shtml

The most significant component of the document is the overall **strategy for development distribution** across the region in the period to 2026. The approach now taken can be summarised as follows

- Ongoing focus of the majority of new development into Principal Urban Areas (PUAs) where the needs of a growing population can be met by available services. However, as a result of consultation, it was recognised that constraints facing some of these places (e.g. Bournemouth/Poole, Bath) existed and so additional development has been proposed at less constrained centres such as Greater Bristol and Swindon. These larger growth centres have also been the focus for major infrastructure funding bids from the ODPM's Sustainable Communities Plan.
- Greater recognition of the role of sub-regional centres in the delivery of a sustainable pattern of development. In response to the consultation in autumn 2004, the Assembly identified a group of larger settlements (including Yeovil, Salisbury, Barnstaple and Trowbridge) whose free standing status as centres in their own right enable them to accommodate levels of development which are commensurate with their needs.
- Although unnamed within the RSS, supporting studies have identified a further group of settlements where development can be focused (within Local Development Frameworks) which will also support their role as localised centres. These places, such as Warminster, Frome and Bridport are clearly not regionally significant centres, but in their own right provide focal points for surrounding rural catchment areas in terms of services and employment.
- Within the remaining rural areas, including smaller towns and villages, new development levels will be determined by Local Development Frameworks with the focus being on the delivery of development which meets local needs and reduces the need to travel. Typically, this will mean that development is limited to affordable housing and measures which contribute to creating and supporting rural employment.

Leading on from this prescribed pattern of distribution, the RSS then has the role of setting **levels of new house building** for each district. This process has been underpinned by work by the Regional Assembly and by joint work between County and District Councils since July. The table below illustrates the current proposals in respect of Salisbury District.

	Annual level of housing completions initially proposed by Regional Assembly 2006-2026	Annual Level of Housing completions initially proposed by Wiltshire County Council 2006-2026	Published annual range identified in the draft RSS (2006-2026)	Historic annual rate of housing completions 1991-2004
Salisbury District	364	450	360-450	478

In the period leading up until March, the range identified in the RSS will be refined towards a more precise figure. In broad terms the range identified appears acceptable as it will enable the district to address acknowledged issues in the housing market whilst supporting the needs of business in terms of supplementing the local workforce. The key balance however, will relate to the level of housing expected to be located at Salisbury as the recognised natural constraints represent barriers which at some point in the future may act to impose a finite capacity on the growth of the city.

In terms of other areas covered by the RSS, the following aspects are notable.

- Clear emphasis on design quality, including sustainable building construction.
- Protection of natural assets including landscapes, biodiversity and historic/cultural sites, whilst recognising their social and economic potential. Within Salisbury District, the vast array of natural and cultural assets (e.g. River Avon SAC, Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB, Stonehenge,

etc.) which exist are valued and protected, however they also provide opportunities for local communities to benefit.

- Establishment of renewable energy targets for counties – 65-85Mw generating capacity within Wiltshire. In addition sustainable energy schemes to provide for 10% of new development will be a policy requirement.
- Economic development which allows for organic growth and is appropriately scaled to the locality. Emphasis upon developing knowledge based economic activity and enterprise which draw links with further education establishments. Within Salisbury District this policy stance will enable Salisbury to provide for new employment land which is critical to maintaining the economic momentum of the city whilst enabling major projects such as Solstice Park and expansion at Porton Down to be encouraged. For more rural parts of the district it will be for the Local Development framework to manage employment land supply (i.e. retention of existing sites and allocating new sites) to address business demands.
- Promotion of a strategic retail hierarchy which meets sub-regional and local needs, as well as identifying sources of support for local shops, especially in rural areas.
- Promotion of tourism in a manner which improves the quality and range of attractions within the region whilst limiting the increase in the need to travel. Focus on reducing pressure on key locations and encouraging secondary attraction clusters to complement more isolated main attractions.
- Promoting the role of community led exercises as the basis for local people to more clearly articulate their own needs within Local Development Frameworks whilst acknowledging the expectations of national policy and the need for this to be framed within a regional framework (i.e. the RSS).

5. Next Steps

Since 21st October the SWRA have been undertaking further refinements to the working draft and undertaking additional study work. For example, DTZ have been commissioned to prepare work regarding the broad role of key centres in the region, within which Salisbury is included. Furthermore, additional consultation has been undertaken with districts to refine the issue of housing numbers.

The next key stage will be the presentation of a more firm draft of the RSS to the SWRA meeting scheduled for 27th January. At this meeting the content of the RSS must be broadly agreed ahead of the submission to Government Office for the South West (GOSW) at the end of March. A failure to submit the RSS by this date would mean that the Regional Assembly's role in progressing the document further will be limited with GOSW taking a greater role in shaping the process and overall content of the strategy.

Setting aside this scenario, once submitted at the end of March the Submission RSS will then be the subject of a formal 12 week public consultation period. As such this represents the first main opportunity for individuals to formally comment on the proposals. Up until now (aside from the exercise in late 2004 to comment on the options for distribution in future growth) consultation has been limited to stakeholder groups. It is therefore expected that there will be a considerable volume of representations for the SWRA and GOSW to assess during the latter part of 2006 as the Examination in Public is prepared for.

In terms of input by Salisbury DC into the process it is proposed that any feedback highlighted by members be reported to the SWRA by officers and the councils member representatives, and that a further report is prepared during the formal RSS consultation period – likely to run from April to June – at which time a written representation is submitted to ensure that issues raised by the council are firmly lodged. Beyond this, officers (and members) may become engaged in the Examination in Public part of the process which may require further updates as required.

RECOMMENDATION

That members

- a) Note the content of the report.**
- b) Highlight any relevant issues to be fed back to the SWRA which would better reflect the aspirations of the district**
- c) Receive a further report during the formal consultation period on the Submission RSS in order that a clear representation is made on behalf of the council.**

Background Papers:

Planning Policy Guidance Note 11 – Regional Spatial Strategies – ODPM 2004
First Draft RSS – (version 1.92) – SWRA - October 2005

Implications:

- **Financial:** None
- **Legal:** None
- **Human Rights** – The RSS process provides for the views of individuals are taken into account. Within that process, the view of the council is one amongst many.
- **Personnel:** None
- **Community Safety:** None
- **Environmental implications:** None
- **Council's Core Values:** Communicating with the Public, Being Environmentally Conscientious, Being Fair & Equitable, Open, Learning Council and Willing partner
- **Wards Affected:** All Wards

**FIRST DRAFT RSS
Executive Summary
Regional Assembly
21st Oct version**

**Version 1.9
October 2005**

*South West
England*

The Context for the RSS

The South West region – issues and challenges

It is an exciting time to live in, work in and visit the South West of England. It has a growing economy and population, and a wealth of attributes that support a high quality of life and help explain why people want to live, work and visit here.

The South West is a large region, and its peninsula geography influences the patterns of cities, towns and villages. The region's northern tip in Gloucestershire is as close to Scotland as it is to Land's End in Cornwall. Its population is dispersed, with around 35% living in settlements of fewer than 10,000 people and a higher proportion of very small villages than any other region. It also has a unique age structure, with the largest proportion of older people of any English region. The assets of the region – its diversity and distinctiveness, its environments, its cultural opportunities, and the character of its settlements – are key to the region's identity and attractiveness.

The South West faces some real challenges now and in the future. It is likely over the next 20 years to attract around half a million extra people to live and work in the South West, mostly moving here from the South East, attracted by economic prospects and the high quality of life. This growth brings benefits for the economy but also places pressures on housing, infrastructure and the environment. In particular, demand for housing arising from both within and outside the South West are adding to a housing affordability problem second only to that of London. Harnessing the benefits of this population growth and supporting a prosperous economy, whilst protecting the valued environment will be key challenges for the South West. There are also significant disparities within the region, and some areas of real deprivation, particularly in the far South West and some pockets of rural areas. 'Closing the prosperity gap', is a long term challenge for the region¹. In addition, the South West faces some significant external challenges, particularly climate change which will have major, effects upon the environment, social and economic life of the region.

The Role of the Regional Spatial Strategy

Addressing these challenges requires co-ordinated, and concerted, action across the region by a range of partners. The South West's Integrated Regional Strategy – *just connect!* – is the overarching strategic framework for all regional policy making in the region. *just connect!* makes it clear that sustainable development must be at the heart of the region's future plans. This Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) is one of the delivery mechanisms for *just connect!* and will contribute to the regional vision and aims. The RSS is a statutory plan and is one of a number of published strategies for the South West, sitting alongside the Regional Housing Strategy, the Regional Economic Strategy, the Regional Environment Strategy and the Regional Cultural Strategy. The RSS can be called the 'spatial expression' of other regional strategies.

The RSS is a new type of plan, setting out the long term development strategy for the South West over a 20 year period. In setting out the anticipated scale, distribution, nature and pace of development it illustrates how managing development carefully can contribute to tackling the challenges outlined above, ensuring the region becomes more sustainable, focusing on the creation and support of thriving and sustainable communities. Not only does it set out the likely scale of development, it is a regional framework, providing spatial guidance for investment and resource use for health care, education, culture, housing, transport, the economy and the environment. In essence, the RSS is all about 'how much',

¹ Trends and Challenges for the South West: Key Issues for the Future of the Region, 2003, SWRA

'how quickly' and 'where' in the region. But it is not just about quantity – critically - it is also about quality, creativity and innovation

The RSS in setting the regional context for planning in the South West:

- guides the planning process at a local level – in District Local Development Frameworks and provides detailed guidance on housing provision at district level;
- provides sub regional strategies in places where significant gaps are left by the removal of Structure Plans
- includes a Regional Transport Strategy to guide investment in transport facilities; and
- provides spatial policy guidance on issues ranging from minerals extraction and waste treatment to economic development and housing, health, culture, environment.

The Regional Spatial Strategy supports the achievement of a set of regional objectives which have been agreed following wide consultation. It does not seek to address all the issues facing all places in the region; that is the role of other plans and strategies produced locally.

Dealing with Growth and Change

Guiding Principles for The Spatial Strategy : A Sustainable Region and Sustainable Communities within it²

The Spatial Strategy will guide development and change in the South West to achieve a more sustainable region, sustainable communities within it and a better quality of life for the region's residents.

To achieve a more sustainable South West Region the RSS will:

- **Seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and better manage the future impacts of climate change on the environment, economy and society**
- **Minimise the need to travel through better alignment of jobs, homes and services**
- **Minimise the need to travel by car, by demand management, improved public transport, and effective planning of future development**
- **Use our natural resources wisely and aim to stabilise and then reduce our regional ecological footprint**
- **Build a strong, stable and sustainable economy realising the economic potential of the region**
- **Reduce economic disparities across the region providing prosperity and opportunities for all**
- **Protect and enhance the range of distinctive environments and cultural assets in the region and live within environmental limits**

To develop more Sustainable Communities within the South West we will:

² Developed from the Regional Sustainable Development Framework (2001) and UK Sustainable Development Strategy (2005)

- **Meet the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities through a clear vision and strategy based on the role and function of cities, towns and villages and their local character and distinctiveness**
- **Link the provision of homes, jobs and services based on role and function so that cities, towns and villages and groups of places have the potential to become more self contained and the need to travel is reduced**
- **Promote a step change in public transport and take steps to manage demand for travel and promote public transport 'hubs'**
- **Encouraging business activity and particularly small businesses and their contribution to the region's prosperity**
- **Make adequate and affordable housing available for all residents**
- **Ensure that supporting infrastructure is delivered in step with development**
- **Promote sustainable construction as the norm in all future development**
- **Improve living and working environments, health and wellbeing by the provision of green infrastructure, better design and high quality development**
- **Increase participation in and provision of cultural activities across the region**
- **Ensure that access to opportunities is available to all residents including skills and training.**

These principles are explored in more detail in sections 1.6-1.7 of the draft.

Strategic Assumptions about Future Growth and demand for development

During the next 20 years change, and growth, will happen and will continue to drive development. Securing economic growth is a key ingredient in a sustainable future. The evidence of the past 10 years suggests that the region is attractive to private investment in new and existing economic activities and that relatively high rates of growth can be achieved that bring benefits to the region. However, the region has lagged in terms of productivity.

This Strategy, and the distribution of development it will contain, is based on what the RPB considers to be a realistic set of forecasts of the region's economic potential and population and household growth over the period to 2026. The RSS needs to align with the Regional Economic Strategy. Key assumptions made are that Gross Value Added (GVA) will range between a low of 2.4% and a high of 3.2% pa³. Migration of people into the SW will continue at about 30,000 people net pa and jobs will increase at a rate of 17,500 to 23,000 pa. These assumptions lead to a forecast need for new dwellings in the region of between 22,000 to 28,000 pa compared with about 20,000 pa in the current strategy

The Spatial Strategy

In order to deliver these principles of a sustainable region and sustainable communities, the RSS guides most development to the strategically significant and generally larger cities and

³ Regional Economic Strategy Review: Evidence Base, 2005, SWRDA

towns of the region. These are places which have been demonstrated to play an important role and function in the region, now or in the future, as centres of economic activity, service centres, or where people go for shopping, culture, leisure and entertainment. This approach means that over time an increasing proportion of the region's population will live in these identified places, giving a better balance of homes, jobs and services and lessening the need to travel. RPG10 and the independent strategic sustainability assessment demonstrated that this approach was the most effective way of the RSS contributing to a sustainable region.

The diversity of the region is recognised and the strategy is tailored to the needs and circumstances of different parts of the region. This is reflected in the strong sub regional dimension of the RSS and the different emphasis of the strategy in different parts of the region (section 5).

The Spatial Strategy and sub-regional emphases

This strategy recognises the diverse needs and potential for change of different places and parts of the region. Development will be planned to meet the needs of all communities and to realise their potential. To deliver more sustainable communities and a more sustainable region there will be:

- **Significant change at a small number of strategically important cities and towns in order to support their economic role**
- **Smaller scale change outside of those places to achieve more balanced communities and a better local environment.**

Different strategy emphases will guide the distribution of change and development across the region:

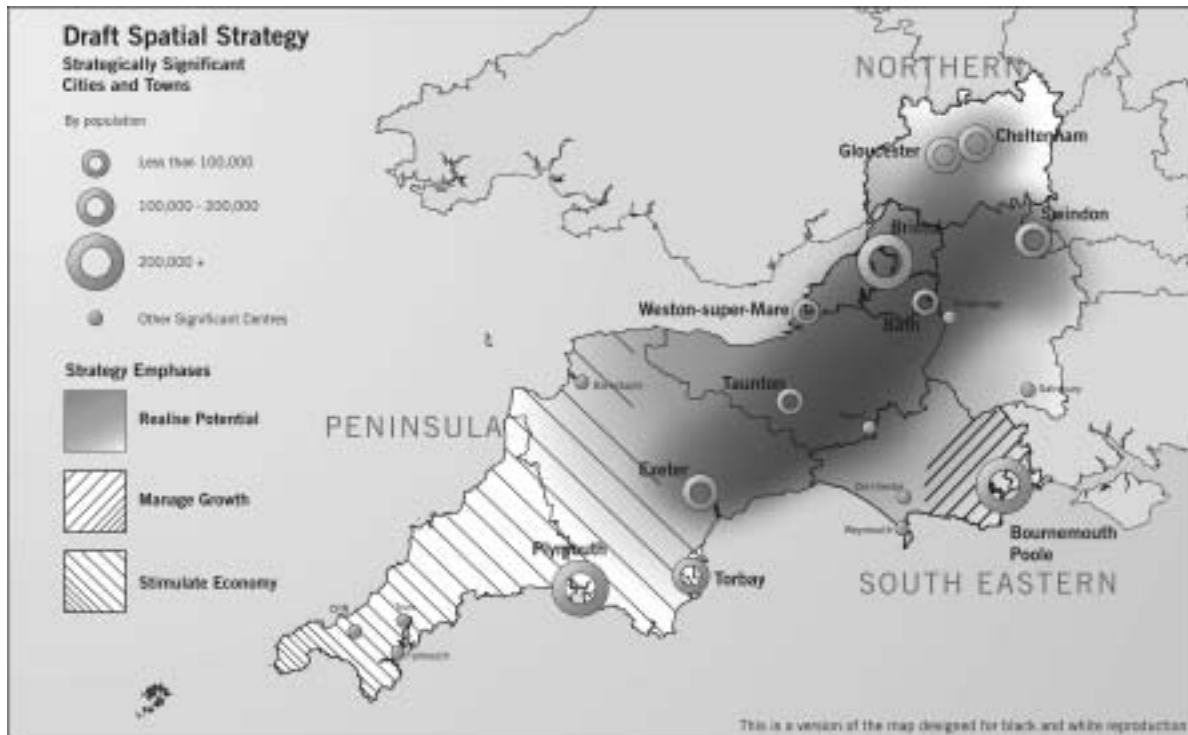
In the North/central part of the Region the strategy emphasis is to realise the economic potential and service role of Bristol, Cheltenham, Exeter, Gloucester, Swindon and Taunton in order to enhance regional prosperity and address regeneration, with sufficient housing provided to meet the needs of a growing population at these centres. The cultural, service and employment roles of Bath, Trowbridge, Weston and Yeovil should be recognised and promoted and development will ensure their role is maintained and enhanced, balancing new housing and service provision with economic growth. At each of these places, rates of development must balance new housing and service provision with economic growth, reducing the need to travel. Transport planning should focus on a step change in public transport patronage, demand management and a more resilient transport system, focusing on reducing the need to travel by car.

In the South East of the Region the strategy emphasis is to manage development to meet the housing and employment requirements of the growing population in a way which recognises environmental limitations on outward expansion of Bournemouth and Poole. The role and potential of Dorchester, Salisbury and Weymouth is supported and LDDs will make provision for strategic economic expansion and the development of housing and services which will increase self containment and support surrounding rural communities.

In the western part of the Peninsula the strategy emphasis is to stimulate economic activity in the strategically important cities and towns and remoter rural area bordering the north coast of Cornwall, Devon and Somerset Strategic provision will be made for significant growth in economic activity and housing at Plymouth, Torbay and the Cornish towns of Truro, Falmouth

and CPR, to help meet regeneration needs. Improvement to the reliability and resilience of strategic transport links to towns in this part of the peninsula and particularly Plymouth will be required. At other strategically important places in the west of the Peninsula, economic activity will be encouraged. The functional importance and potential of Barnstaple and Newton Abbot are supported through economic development, provision of housing and services to increasing their self containment and support surrounding rural communities.

The identification of settlements in the RSS has moved away from a hierarchy determined on population size, and is based on their role and function. The map below shows towns which have been identified as being functionally significant at a regional and sub regional level in terms of their role for employment, services, retail, tourism, culture and so on. ‘



The RSS is a strategic framework, and so it is not appropriate to name every settlement in the region. This does not mean that they are not important however, but it will be more appropriate for Local Authorities in their LDDs to make decisions on the more detailed spatial strategy for their area.

Once Local Authorities in their LDDs have made adequate provision within their area to deliver the identified development requirements for the strategically significant cities and towns named in Policy A they should identify and plan to meet these local requirements at towns that meet the following criteria.

- **where there is already a concentration of business and jobs and where there is potential for further economic development**
- **where shopping and cultural, educational, health and business services serve the needs of a wider area's population and provide a basis for the continuation of the town's service role**

- **where public services can be provided efficiently for residents of the town and the surrounding area where basic public transport services can be maintained.**
- **where the potential effects of development can be accommodated within environmental capacity, support environmental enhancement and help provide green infrastructure**
- **where development can be targeted to address deprivation and assist regeneration**

Making the Region's Strategic Cities and Towns Function as better places to live and work

Shaping the Strategically Important Cities and Towns into places where people in future will choose to live and work will be one of the main measures of success of the spatial strategy. Of particular concern in achieving this will be the quality of development proposed including the public realm, creating high quality living environments, improvements to public transport, and management of use of road space to tackle congestion.

More emphasis has to be placed on creating excellence in urban design, building construction and the management of the public realm. In addition, improvements to living environments are important, particularly the provision of green infrastructure (including for example parks, woodland, informal open spaces, nature reserves and historic sites) and the management of urban fringe areas, which together contribute to people's well-being. Policies on green infrastructure, design and quality development are set out in sections xx.

Fundamental to the delivery of the proposed growth of the region's strategically important cities and towns is the delivery of key elements of infrastructure as development proceeds. In past phases of planning and urban growth there has sometimes been a discontinuity between housing development and important community infrastructure such as local shops, services and community facilities. Also, local transport networks and public transport services have sometimes not kept pace with the growth in population and changing travel patterns. In each of the more detailed studies which has been carried out for the region's strategic cities and towns, the local authorities and other partners have looked carefully at the potential for future growth and change. Their findings are reflected in the separate sub-regional sections in Section 5 which will need to be reflected in more detailed Local Development Documents. In all cases there is a need for authorities to co-operate across boundaries and to use the development process to deliver as much key infrastructure as possible.

Supporting Communities in Villages, Small Towns and the Countryside

The strategy does not ignore the development needs of the smaller more rural communities in which over half the current residents of the South West live and where relative disadvantage and deprivation are more dispersed and consequently not as evident as in some urban situations. These parts of the region will undergo some significant changes over the next 20 years, particularly as the agricultural community adjusts to structural changes and the possible climatic effects of global warming. To deliver the most sustainable approach to development across the region, the scale and pace of physical development in rural communities needs be managed carefully, based on better understanding of the

relationships between towns and villages and between these communities and the larger centres⁴.

Development which generates small scale economic activity or essential services, and helps maintain the vitality and balance of rural communities, will be appropriate throughout the rural South West, including in designated areas such as National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Evidence suggests however, that population growth and delivering more housing in villages may not be the solution to rural service decline and may result in increasing dependence on other centres requiring access by car in the absence of good public transport networks. Significant local development and particularly development of housing, therefore, should be concentrated in those locally important centres which act as hubs for employment, services and transport and have potential to continue providing new economic activity and essential services; the 'market towns'. Beyond this, limited development for housing in smaller village communities may be appropriate if it is supported by local needs surveys.

The application of this approach to development in rural areas will need to take careful account of local circumstances. Some parts of the region are better connected to the larger centres than others and, particularly in the more accessible north and south east of the region, some rural settlements, including 'market towns' have a 'dormitory' relationship with their larger neighbours and care will need to be taken in assessing the implications of further housing development in them. The RSS provides a broad strategic policy framework for rural development and initiatives such as the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative and Community Plans will help the Local Development Documents to identify appropriate locations in their area. The RSS and LDDs alone will not be able to address the needs of rural communities, and links will need to be made with other delivery mechanisms such as Local Area Agreements, community strategies and parish plans.

Regional Transport Strategy

The RSS incorporates the Regional Transport Strategy, and will set out regional priorities for investment (section x). The main focus of the spatial strategy will be to manage change in the future to better relate homes, jobs and services, so that the need (but not necessarily the desire) to travel within the region can be reduced, particularly in the more urbanised parts of the north and south east of the region. In the larger urban centres, over time, the requirements of individuals to travel will be catered for increasingly by better and more reliable public transport, supported by demand management measures. In the more rural parts of the region, reliance on car transport will continue to be high reflecting the difficulty of serving dispersed populations with public transport, but achieving better balance of homes, jobs and services in the 'market' towns should have an effect. The region's key transport statement is included in section 2.3 and 3.4, supplemented by a set of core transport policies in section 4 and more specific policies relating to specific areas set out in section 5.

The Region's Priorities for Investment to achieve the Spatial Strategy

Some hard choices are needed in order to deliver the Strategy. The benefit of a regional approach is that strategic decisions can be made for the benefit of the region as a whole, and to try to ensure that the most effective use of resources is made. A number of priorities for investment are set out in section xx which are regionally significant and critical to

⁴ Better Planning of Rural Areas in the South West, 2004, Land Use Consultants

delivering the Strategy. This does not mean that other places or schemes are not important, but that they should be dealt with through more local decisions and delivery mechanisms.

Harnessing Population Growth and Managing Change

A growing population and changing demographic structure present many challenges but also opportunities for the South West. Section 6 of the RSS includes policies on housing, design, sustainable construction, green infrastructure and harnessing the benefits of development. It takes forward the *Just Connect!* aim of harnessing the benefits of population growth and managing the implications of population change.

Enhancing distinctive Environments and cultural life

The growth and development in the South West over the next 20 years provides some real opportunities for the region around enhancing the environment and cultural life. Culture and environment in the South West help improve the quality of our lives and the way we feel about the places and communities we live within; they create work and impact increasingly on our economy; they celebrate diversity; they attract visitors and add a sense of belonging to all living here. However the scale of change is also likely to bring some real challenges for the region, particularly pressure on natural resources arising from population and employment growth and increased consumption patterns; impacts on our valued landscapes, habitats and historic environment from development, poor management and pollution; and entitlement to cultural activity for all communities in the region.

Section 7 of the RSS includes policies on culture and environment, taking forward the *Just Connect!* aim to enhance our distinctive environments and the quality and diversity of our cultural life. It also contributes to the principles of a sustainable region and sustainable communities by setting out ways the region can use natural resources more wisely, protect and enhance our distinctive environments, and increase access to and participation in cultural activities.

Enhancing Economic Prosperity and Quality of Employment opportunity

The regional and local economy makes a vital contribution towards achieving the objectives of creating sustainable communities within a sustainable region. The Spatial Strategy will deliver increases in regional prosperity by allowing the strategically important cities and towns, as 'engines' of economic growth, to realise their potential through development strategies and improvements to connectivity which enable key sectors of the region's economy to develop. At the same time development which enhances employment prospects in rural areas will be supported. It will also identify locations where measures such as skills, training, and business support should be provided to encourage economic activity and jobs. The benefits of economic prosperity need to reach all communities through better job opportunities and wages, in turn leading to higher self esteem and self worth. Section 8 outlines how the RSS will support the Regional Economic Strategy, and contribute to the *just connect!* aim of enhancing our economic prosperity and ensuring quality of employment opportunity.

Addressing Deprivation and Disadvantage to reduce Intra regional inequalities

The South West is perceived as offering a high quality of life. But this is not a reality for everyone. The existence of deprivation in many parts of the region, in our cities, towns and rural areas, is a clear measure of the inequalities that exist. Section 9 sets out how the RSS

will play its part in seeking to deliver the *Just Connect!* aim of addressing deprivation and disadvantage to reduce significant intra-regional inequalities. It identifies a number of places in the region where investment should be focused in measures to reduce disparities.

Ensuring People are treated fairly and can participate in society

It is crucial that different groups in the South West are treated fairly and are fully able to participate in society. Our society is multi-cultural, however different groups in society have different needs. Section 10 outlines the contribution the RSS can make to the *Just Connect!* aim to make sure that people are treated fairly and can participate fully in society.

Implementation, measurement and monitoring

Translating strategy into clear implementation plans and priorities for action is particularly important to achieving concentrations of development, making the cities and towns 'work' better and enabling the region to contribute to the national Communities Plan agenda through the 'Way Ahead' initiative (ref). The RSS is accompanied by an Implementation Plan which highlights the actions and delivery mechanisms which are required to achieve the Strategy. This will be monitored on an annual basis to identify how well the Strategy is delivering against its stated aims, and enabling reviews to be undertaken where progress is not being made.

Appendix B - Bulletin of SWRA Meeting held at Exeter on 21st October 2005

The full membership of the South West Regional Assembly met at County Hall in Exeter on Friday 21 October to discuss the first draft of the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).

In addition to the plenary debate, Members broke into workshop groups throughout the day to explore in more detail the different elements of the draft Strategy. Workshop discussions were facilitated by Members of RSPTG (Regional Spatial Planning and Transport Group). The afternoon saw further details discussions on various components of the draft RSS including affordable housing, transport, economy, housing and environmental issues. The South West Regional Development Agency (SW RDA) also presented the draft Regional Economic Strategy (RES) to the Members.

The South West Regional Assembly agreed the following Composite Recommendation

Assembly thanks all those officers and RSPTG members for the hard work they have put in to reach this stage in the process of preparing the RSS.

The Assembly:

1. Notes that this draft of the RSS:
 - Is still "work in progress" and needs rewriting into a coherent style and plain English before it is finalised
 - Contains only preliminary, generalised housing numbers
 - Contains only preliminary transport interventions, which have not been prioritized
2. Accepts that the draft still requires some refinement to reflect locally and regionally based aspirations and concerns, and it must not just be a download of centrally driven policies.
3. Agrees that the new mapping approach is an improvement on earlier drafts but will require some more detailed work and carrying forward into the text.
4. Reaffirms our commitment to the continuance of Objective 1 for Cornwall based on the present EU "NUTS" map. We also note that there are no proposals to modify that map and the Objective 1 boundary is included as part of our draft spatial strategy map.
5. Endorses the general direction of the proposed spatial strategy expressed in sections 1 and 3 and policies A, B and C of the draft at Appendix 2.
6. Endorses the three broad strategy emphases (Section 3.2 of Appendix 2) used to indicate how the Spatial Strategy will guide development across the region.
7. Endorses the broad scale of change which needs to be planned for expressed in Section 2 of Appendix 2 and the preliminary ranges of new homes (Section 6) proposed for the region as a basis for further investigation and debate.
8. Agrees to support the emerging policy for affordable housing in new developments of a 30% minimum rising to up to 60% in areas of greatest need and calls on government improve the planning process to support this aspiration.
9. Notes that the differences in approach between the RES and the RSS, for instance the rates of development suggested in the draft RES are far higher than in the 4/4 authorities advice and that the identification of areas of economic disparity is very different and perhaps more sophisticated in the RES. Further work is required harmonise these if possible.
10. Notes that the proposed quantum of transport funding through the RFA is totally insufficient to meet present needs due to historic underinvestment in the region, without taking into account the needs generated by new development. We also believe that the full costs of national projects for connectivity between regions, the second strategic route into the South West and the Olympic access route for Weymouth should be met from national funds.
11. Accepts the "Sustainable Communities" agenda and our "Way Ahead" approach in principle but views with the gravest concern the apparent lack of resources to deliver the necessary infrastructure and urges the Section 4/4 authorities to assemble the necessary evidence so that leading members can present a cogent case to ministers on this and on the RFA as soon as possible.
12. Endorses the proposal for a special Assembly meeting in 27th January 2006 to enable further discussion and decision on the content of the RSS.
13. Appreciates the critical strategic importance of endeavouring to ensure that Cornwall retains Objective One status in the next review of European Structural Fund Regions.
14. Note that this status was only originally made possible as a result of Cornwall being designated a distinct statistical region by the Government's Office for National Statistics
15. Asserts that the Assembly's past support for Cornwall to be an Objective One region was a significant factor in achieving that outcome.
16. Accepts that research by both the Regional Assembly and Cornwall County Council demonstrates that Cornwall has a high level of distinctiveness in its socio-demographic characteristics and settlement pattern and a high level of self containment in employment terms.

Next Meeting

A special RSS Full Assembly Meeting has been arranged for Friday 27 January 2005 to discuss and review the Regional Spatial Strategy as it is refined further.