



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

**PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION  
COMMISSION  
22 SEPTEMBER 2008**

# ITEM 10

Report of the Corporate Director - Regeneration  
and Community

## **RESPONSE TO THE EAST MIDLANDS REGIONAL PLAN (REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY) – SECRETARY OF STATE’S PROPOSED CHANGES**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1 To note the key changes made by the Secretary of State to the Regional Spatial Strategy and in particular the concern in paragraph 2.2 regarding the phasing of the housing provision.
- 1.2 To make any additional comments on the proposed changes.

### **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 2.1 The Secretary of State, SoS, for Communities and Local Government has published for public consultation the Proposed Changes to the East Midlands Draft Regional Spatial Strategy, RSS. The consultation period ends on 17 October 2008. The changes have been informed by the recommendations of the Panel which conducted an Examination in Public into the RSS in 2007.
- 2.2 The RSS provides a broad development strategy for the Region. It forms part of the Development Plan and the Local Development Framework must be prepared in conformity with it. The proposed changes are available to view at [www.gos.gov.uk/goem](http://www.gos.gov.uk/goem). The main points arising are summarised below in the paragraphs below. Appendix 2 highlights what are considered to be the top five issues for the City and provides a brief commentary on each.
- 2.3 The SoS has accepted the Panel’s recommendation to increase housing provision to reflect the increases in the 2004-based household projections and proposes a 3.2% increase across the region. In the Derby Housing Market Area, HMA, which comprises Derby City and Amber Valley and South Derbyshire Districts, this increase is negligible, rising by just 500 to 44,750 (1,790 pa) for the period 2001 – 2026. However, a 5 year phasing requirement has been introduced which, for Derby, is heavily loaded towards the first 5 - 10 years of the plan period. The amount of housing that is expected to be built raises significant concerns regarding deliverability, particularly in view of the related infrastructure needs and the effects of the credit crunch. The SoS has based these figures on forecasts made before the recent downturn in the housing market and they are now considered very unlikely to be achievable. It is suggested that this is a matter to raise concerns about in the City Council’s response.

- 2.4 The SoS has accepted the Panel's recommendation for an early review of the Draft RSS Housing Provision to take account of 2006-based projections showing higher levels of population growth. These indicate that the East Midlands is likely to grow at a faster rate than any other region.
- 2.5 The Modifications no longer propose a percentage requirement for the provision of affordable housing provision for each HMA. The draft Plan had required 33% social rented across the HMA. However, an indicative target of 14,800, i.e. 33%, for the period 2001-26 is provided to guide the level of affordable housing required for the Derby HMA. Establishing firm affordable housing targets will be a matter for local planning policy.
- 2.6 Enhanced recognition has been given to the need to address climate change and attention is drawn to a range of specific new and amended policies included in the Plan. In particular, the text supporting Policy 2 'Promoting better design' is welcomed. This expects local planning policies to ensure that a proportion of energy supplies to new developments are from renewable sources. But, before local policies are in place, all new developments (of 10 dwellings or more or for other uses exceeding 1,000 sq. m.) will be expected to secure at least 10% of their energy from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources – unless the applicant can demonstrate this is not feasible or viable.
- 2.7 Gypsy and Traveller Pitch requirements are included for each local authority based on the recently completed Derbyshire-wide Accommodation Needs Assessment. For Derby, the need for 16 additional pitches is identified. This would be satisfied by the planning permission for 17 pitches recently granted at Russell Street.
- 2.8 New Policy 21 identifies a need for local authorities to work with emda, Sub-regional Strategic Partnerships, the Highways Agency and Network Rail to bring forward strategic distribution sites in a number of locations in the East Midlands including one in the Derby HMA. A number of site selection criteria are suggested, including a minimum developable area of 50 hectares and good rail access.
- 2.9 The SoS has rejected the Panel's recommendation to require a review of the Green Belt in the Nottingham Core HMA and Hucknall. However the Proposed Changes introduce a new policy (Policy Three Cities SRS 3) indicating the need to undertake a wide-ranging review which considers the most sustainable growth options for the Nottingham conurbation over at least the next 25 years, including options which may be in the Green Belt. This review should not however have implications for Green Belt land to the east of Derby.
- 2.10 The SoS has accepted the Panel's recommendation to delete SRS Policy 3 'Sub regional Priorities for Green Wedges', but retained recognition of their useful strategic function. The SoS has also introduced a clear requirement for local planning policies to review existing Green Wedges and to consider the need for new ones in association with new development.

- 2.11 The SoS agrees with the Panel's conclusions that the Regional Transport Strategy is unsound but that it should stand on an interim basis to allow publication of the RSS. An overall reappraisal should form part of an early review of the Draft RSS. Some changes have been introduced to update and strengthen the national policy context, in particular to make clear that traffic growth should be managed to achieve a reduction in the rate of increase, rather than bringing the rate to zero. Greater clarity has also been given to realistic investment possibilities over the plan period. Whilst a number of schemes have been deleted, as they are not considered sufficiently committed to be identified as regional investment priorities, the A38 (Derby Junctions) improvement scheme has been retained.

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<b>Background papers:</b>	East Midlands Regional Plan (Regional Spatial strategy) Secretary of State's Proposed changes East Midlands Regional Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy) Schedule of Proposed Changes
<b>List of appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 - Implications

<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
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**Financial**

- 1.1 The costs arising from Derby's contribution to the Review of the RSS are already taken into account within the Local Development Framework budget. The cost implications of the early review of the RSS will need to be taken into account in future budgets.

**Legal**

- 2.1 The RSS is a statutory document which establishes the minimum amount of housing growth to be delivered in Derby and the wider Housing Market Area.

**Personnel**

- 3.1 The remaining stages of the RSS review have minor staff resource implications. The early review of the RSS recommended by the SoS will have a significant impact on staff resources in 2009 and 2010.

**Equalities Impact**

- 4.1 Many of the policies have implications for reducing exclusion, reducing poverty, ill health and the effects of disability, and providing access to homes and facilities.

**Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

- 5.1 The proposal furthers the Council's objectives of making us proud of our neighbourhoods, creating a 21<sup>st</sup> Century City Centre, leading Derby towards a better environment and helping us to be healthy, active and independent.

## Summary of Key Issues Arising from RSS Changes

Issue	Comment
<p><b>1. Housing provision</b></p> <p>The changes propose only a minor increase in overall housing provision to 2026, in line with population projections. However a high short term target for housing development in Derby for 2006-11 has been introduced which is unlikely to be achievable.</p>	<p>The overall amount of housing proposed to 2026 can be accommodated. However, the slump in the housing market means that previous forecasts for housing completions in the short term are being revised downwards. This should be reflected in the RSS targets.</p>
<p><b>2. Renewable energy policy</b></p> <p>A statement is included expecting all new developments to secure at least 10% of their energy requirements from renewable, decentralised or low carbon sources, in advance of specific local policies.</p>	<p>This statement is welcome but could be strengthened by being included in policy itself rather than just the supporting text.</p>
<p><b>3. Gypsies and Travellers</b></p> <p>The RSS includes pitch requirements for each district from the recent Derbyshire Needs Assessment. This shows a need for 16 pitches in Derby</p>	<p>The recent planning permission at Russell Street would provide 17 pitches and meet this requirement.</p>
<p><b>4. Strategic distribution site</b></p> <p>The RSS identifies a need for a 50 hectare distribution site with rail connections in the Derby HMA.</p>	<p>It will be difficult to meet this requirement within the City, however, we will work with South Derbyshire and Amber Valley to consider the best location in the HMA as a whole.</p>
<p><b>5. Transport Priorities – A38 junctions</b></p> <p>The schemes to improve the at-grade A38 junctions in Derby have been retained as a transport priority. However implementation is not expected before 2016.</p>	<p>These schemes are vital to managing traffic flows in and around Derby and are needed to enable the housing and economic growth that is planned. There is concern however at the possible time frame for delivery, which should be accelerated if possible and certainly not allowed to slip</p>