

CHESHIRE EAST

Cabinet

Date: 21st May 2008
Report of: Joint Implementation Team
Title Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the Draft NW Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To set out items of interest to Cheshire East from the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the draft Regional Spatial Strategy and propose a consultation response.

2.0 Decision Required

- 2.1 Cabinet is requested to approve the proposed consultation responses as set out below (4.16, 4.23 and 4.26) and that other matters be taken into account in developing the Local Development Framework for Cheshire East.

3.0 Implications for Transitional Costs

- 3.1 N/A

4.0 Background and Options

- 4.1 The draft North West RSS was submitted by the North West Regional Assembly in January 2006.
- 4.2 An independent Panel held an Examination in Public into the draft RSS between November 2006 and February 2007, and subsequently published a report making a number of recommendations for changes to the draft RSS.
- 4.3 The Secretary of State has considered the recommendations made by the Panel and has also taken into account the representations received on the draft RSS and changes made to Government policy before the end of January 2008.
- 4.4 The Secretary of State has produced a document detailing the proposed changes to the draft RSS, which has been published for public consultation until 23rd May 2008.
- 4.5 Following consideration of the responses to this consultation, the Secretary of State intends to publish the final version of the North West RSS in July 2008.
- 4.6 It is understood that Macclesfield BC, Congleton BC, Crewe and Nantwich BC and Cheshire CC will make separate representations, but it is also considered appropriate for the Shadow Authority to make its own response on issues likely to be of significance to the new Local Authority.

- 4.7 This will allow the Shadow Authority to record its views on the Proposed Changes document and to influence the Secretary of State in producing the final adopted version of the Regional Spatial Strategy, which will form part of the Cheshire East Development Plan.
- 4.8 **Partial Review.** With the publication of new national planning guidance, there is an urgent need to review RSS policies on housing, waste and energy. It is proposed to carry out a Partial Review of the RSS covering these policy areas as soon as possible.
- 4.9 There is no objection to the principle of the Partial Review and there will be opportunities for the Shadow Authority and the new Unitary Authority to comment on issues relating to the Partial Review at the appropriate times, starting in June 2008 with consultation on Issues and Options.
- 4.10 **Spatial Priorities.** The first priority for growth and development within the North West will be the regional centres of Manchester and Liverpool and the second priority will be the inner areas surrounding these regional centres.
- 4.11 A number of towns and cities (including Crewe and Macclesfield) are listed in a third tier of locations identified for growth. Within this list, Crewe is also highlighted as a location with particular opportunities for growth which should be harnessed in a sustainable way.
- 4.12 There is no objection to this approach and this will need to be incorporated into the Cheshire East Local Development Framework.
- 4.13 **City Regions.** In terms of city regions, the Secretary of State 'acknowledges the overlapping nature of city regions, but believes that, for the sake of clarity, policy should be articulated for discrete sub-regions that relate to administrative boundaries and that in terms of the articulation of policy local authority areas should be addressed in one city region or sub region only'
- 4.14 The Secretary of State proposes to amend the definition of city regions to reflect Local Government restructuring in Cheshire. Vale Royal will be moved into the Liverpool City Region with the other West Cheshire authorities. The whole of Congleton Borough will be moved into the Manchester City Region with Macclesfield Borough. However, the proposed changes document indicates that Crewe and Nantwich Borough would remain in its own sub region of South Cheshire.
- 4.15 This has the potential to cause difficulties and issues of policy consistency for the new authority. However, it is also clear that the Manchester City Region policies are based on the idea of the regeneration of central Manchester with restraint in the peripheral areas to support it. Due to Crewe's limited relationship to the Manchester City Region, it is not considered that growth in Crewe would have a significant impact on the regeneration of central Manchester. Placing Crewe and Nantwich in the Manchester City Region would subject the borough to Manchester City Region policies, which may preclude growth in Crewe. A South Cheshire Sub-Regional Study has been commissioned by the NWRA to examine the future role of Crewe and Nantwich and Congleton Borough areas, and the relationships between south Cheshire, and north Staffordshire / Shropshire. The findings of this study will provide important information when looking at potential future housing growth as part of the Partial Review.

- 4.16 ***Proposed Cheshire East Consultation Response:*** *It is proposed to submit a consultation response noting that the new Cheshire East Unitary Authority will be split between two different sub-regions.*
- 4.17 **Key Service Centres.** Alsager, Congleton, Knutsford, Middlewich, Nantwich Poynton, Sandbach and Wilmslow were identified as Key Service Centres in the draft RSS. The Secretary of State proposes to delete the list of named Key Service Centres, and replace this with a criteria-based approach that will leave their identification to Local Planning Authorities through the LDF process.
- 4.18 There is no objection to this proposal, which will allow such centres to be identified through the new Cheshire East Local Development Framework.
- 4.19 **District Housing Figures.** The annual average rate of housing provision for each of the three districts is unchanged from the previous draft version of RSS. The total number of net additional dwellings to be provided per year is 1,150 for the whole of East Cheshire (Congleton – 300; Crewe and Nantwich – 450; Macclesfield – 400).
- 4.20 The previous draft of RSS was clear that districts' total housing figures should not be exceeded over the plan period. Following the Examination in Public, the Independent Panel's report also advocated this approach. Following the publication of national Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing, and recent Government initiatives of Growth Points and Eco-towns, the Secretary of State proposes to remove the maximum ceiling to district housing figures in favour of a more flexible approach.
- 4.21 Within North East Cheshire, there is a requirement for continued careful monitoring and management of housing provision to ensure that new housing development does not result in an adverse cumulative impact on local and neighbouring housing markets. This is especially important so as not to undermine the continuing regeneration of inner areas of the Manchester City Region. The housing figures in these areas should be regarded as a maximum.
- 4.22 The position in South Cheshire is different. The overall spatial policy seeks to harness Crewe's potential for sustainable economic growth. Within this context, there is no need to regard the figures as a maximum provided that development can take place in a sustainable manner without adversely affecting regeneration initiatives in surrounding areas. The sub-regional study referred to above will investigate whether this can be achieved.
- 4.23 ***Proposed Cheshire East Consultation Response:*** *It is proposed to note that the removal of the ceiling may enable additional growth in South Cheshire where appropriate, but also has the potential to lead to additional development pressures in North East Cheshire which could undermine the regeneration of the inner areas of the Manchester City Region.*
- 4.24 At present, figures are allocated to individual districts; Macclesfield and Congleton fall into the 'Southern Manchester / North East Cheshire' typology whilst Crewe and Nantwich is in the 'South Cheshire' typology. It is not clear whether these figures would still individually apply to their respective pre-reorganisation geographic areas, or whether the figures would be aggregated for the new Cheshire East administrative area.
- 4.25 In any case, the Partial Review intends to review district housing figures and allocate new housing figures based on identified housing market areas. The

Shadow Authority will wish to consider the implications of this at the appropriate time.

- 4.26 ***Proposed Cheshire East Consultation Response:*** *It is proposed to request that the final adopted RSS includes clarification of whether the new Cheshire East authority would simply aggregate the housing figures for Congleton, Crewe and Nantwich, and Macclesfield to determine the figure for the whole of the new Local Authority area, or whether districts' figures would continue to be applied to the geographical area of each pre-reorganisation district after April 2009.*
- 4.27 **Employment Land.** The Panel's report had recommended disaggregating employment land supply requirements to district level. However, the proposed changes document has not included this recommendation. This means that the employment land requirements for Cheshire East are embedded within the requirements for 'Cheshire and Warrington'.
- 4.28 The proposed changes document indicates that disaggregation of employment land figures to district level will be left to the future Integrated Regional Strategy.
- 4.29 Table 6.1 indicates that Cheshire and Warrington has a need for 860 ha of employment land over the period 2005-2021. It also indicates that there was 1,171 ha in the supply in 2005. This means that there is likely to be a surplus of 311 ha of employment land up to 2021.
- 4.30 A new sentence is proposed in accordance with the Panel's report that encourages the de-allocation of employment sites that are unlikely to become available, are of poor quality, or are poorly located through the LDF process.
- 4.31 The new Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester authorities will need to liaise with Warrington Borough Council to identify how any de-allocations of land will be distributed. Figures should be distributed in accordance with local labour market areas, broadly indicated by Travel to Work areas identified in the 2001 Census. Further details regarding this policy will be set out in the RSS Implementation Framework.
- 4.32 **Emissions and Climate Change.** It is proposed to replace the on site renewable energy policy with a new policy on decentralised energy supply (policy EM18).
- 4.33 This means that there will be no requirement for Local Planning Authorities to introduce policies similar to the 'Merton Rule' which requires developments to generate a percentage of their energy requirements onsite from renewable sources.
- 4.34 Tables 9.7a, 9.7b and 9.7c detail the indicative sub-regional breakdown of targets for the total renewable energy generation capacity in 2010, 2015 and 202 respectively. The targets are set for the North West region, and also given at sub-regional level for Cheshire, but there is no further breakdown of the figures and there are no specific targets for individual districts
- 4.35 The percentage emissions reduction targets suggested by the Panel Report have not been included as they are expected to be set on enactment of the Climate Change Bill.
- 4.36 A new policy (DP9) deals with reducing emissions and adapting to climate change. This proposes that plans, strategies, proposals, schemes and investment decisions should contribute to regional policy to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from all

sources, take into account future changes to national targets for carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions, and identify, assess and apply measures to ensure effective adaptation to likely environmental, social and economic impacts of climate change.

- 4.37 It is also proposed to require all developments to meet the minimum standards set out in the North West Sustainability Checklist for Developments, and to achieve 'good' or 'best practice' standards wherever practicable.
- 4.38 It is not proposed to object to these changes.

For further information:-

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Background Documents:-

The Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy 'The North West Plan' Submitted by the North West Regional Assembly.

*Documents are available for inspection at:
Joint Committee Support Office/ or EC JIT Support Office
Town Hall
Macclesfield
SK10 1DX*