

REPORT TO CABINET

REPORT OF: Economic Development Portfolio Holder

REPORT NO: PLA 784

DATE: 5th October 2009

TITLE:	East Midlands Regional Plan: Partial Review Options Consultation	
KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:	Key Decision	
PORTFOLIO HOLDER: NAME AND DESIGNATION:	Cllr Frances Cartwright Economic Development Portfolio Holder	
CONTACT OFFICER:	Karen Sinclair, Planning Policy Service Manager 01476 406438 k.sinclair@southkesteven.gov.uk	
INITIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT:	Carried out and Referred to in paragraph (7) below:	Full impact assessment Required: No
Equality and Diversity		
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT:	This report is publicly available via the Local Democracy link on the Council's website: www.southkesteven.gov.uk	
BACKGROUND PAPERS:	Cabinet Report PLA503 dated 6 th June 2005 Cabinet Report PLA629 dated 4 th December 2006 Cabinet Report PLA723 dated 6 th October 2008 Communities PDG Report PLA** dated 17 th September 2009	

1. RECOMMENDATION

That, subject to any additional comments the Cabinet may make, the response to the East Midlands Regional Plan Options Consultation, as set out in the report, be forwarded to the East Midlands Regional Assembly.

2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 2.1 To give members the opportunity to consider a response to the East Midlands Regional Plan (EMRP) Partial Review Options Consultation. The deadline for the receipt of representations is the 6th October.
- 2.2 The full Options document and supporting evidence base can be found on the Regional Assembly's (EMRA) website (<http://www.emra.gov.uk/partial-review>).
- 2.3 The EMRP does not directly relate to the Council's priorities. However, as Local Development Framework (LDF) documents are required to be in general conformity with the Regional Plan, it will have a strong influence on how the

Council's planning policies are shaped in the future and will, therefore, indirectly have an impact on the Quality Living and Good for Business priority themes.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

- 3.1 The EMRP was adopted in March 2009 and provides a broad development strategy for the period to 2026. The Government has asked the East Midlands Regional Assembly (EMRA) to undertake a further partial review focusing on housing, transport and climate change. The partial review must also be seen in the context of the move to a Single Regional Strategy (SRS). The partial review, therefore, can be seen as the first stage of developing the SRS around which the economic strands will be wrapped.
- 3.2 The primary focus of the Options consultation is on meeting future housing provision but the consultation also covers the following issues:
- approaches to setting affordable housing targets beyond 2021
 - HMA based transport outcomes and challenges to be met
 - low carbon and renewable energy generation
 - apportionment of aggregates extraction by county up to 2021
- 3.3 For each of these issues, the consultation document sets out a range of options and questions. The most relevant together with a recommended response is set out below.
- 3.4 The Communities Policy Development Group (PDG) considered a report on the Options consultation at their meeting on the 17th September. The comments of the PDG are, where appropriate, referred to in the following paragraphs.

Housing Provision

- 3.5 In terms of new housing provision, the Partial Review focuses on the post 2021 period. This, it is felt, will enable the Region to plan in a realistic way for economic recovery and longer term housing growth whilst also allowing local planning authorities to concentrate on preparing LDF Core Strategies in the short term based on the current EMRP.
- 3.6 The options take account of the most recent 2006 based household projections, which indicate that the East Midlands will be the fastest growing Region in England and should be planning to provide for some 28,000 new homes per year, a significant increase compared with previous projections. However, the scale of growth will be different in different parts of the East Midlands: it is estimated that household growth higher than the regional average is likely in Lincolnshire.
- 3.7 It should also be noted that at this time, there are no proposed housing numbers: the logic behind this being that people tend to get fixated on the pure numbers as opposed to the strategy underpinning them and it is the latter EMRA want to focus on at this stage. It is expected, however, these will be set during the next stage of development of the plan when it is likely that there will be an indicative figure of District housing numbers put forward, with a strong steer on how that development should be spatially located.

- 3.8 The Options consultation document asks the question whether further evidence can be provided regarding demographics, migration or affordability that would inform the partial review and assumptions on housing provision. At this stage no additional evidence at a local level is considered to be available and it is recommended that EMRA be advised of this.

Affordable Housing Needs

- 3.9 Regional Plans are required by national planning policy to include affordable housing targets. With the Options consultation focusing on housing provision post 2021, three approaches for developing affordable housing targets beyond 2021 are put forward, namely:
1. Extend current approach: commission updated indicative targets consistent with current Regional Plan
 2. Apply a needs based approach to set targets: this could measure the affordable housing requirement per 1,000 households to determine targets
 3. Take an evidence based approach: revise policy to enable local planning authorities to develop shorter-term targets.
- 3.10 Of the three suggested options, it is recommended that the third option be identified as the preferred option. It is considered to offer the greatest flexibility to local authorities, enabling a range of documents prepared as part of the LDF evidence base to be utilised in setting targets including the conclusions of the most up to date Housing Market Area Assessment, other economic assessments and viability studies.

Spatial Development Options

- 3.11 For the Peterborough Partial Housing Market Area (HMA) there are three policy options put forward.

Option 1: Continue with the current strategy of focusing development and regeneration in and adjoining the Sub-Regional Centre of Grantham

- 3.12 This option would extend the current strategy, although on the basis of the diagrammatic interpretation it seems to suggest a potential scale of development in Market Deeping contrary to the existing EMRP strategy. Given that the current EMRP strategy forms the basis for the spatial housing distribution in the Submission Core Strategy, this approach is already supported locally, although of course the Core Strategy has not yet been found sound. It is also important to note that as an approach the strategy has not had sufficient time to be tested: without further work being undertaken around environmental impacts and infrastructure capacity it is not clear whether it would be workable in the longer term. The provision of adequate infrastructure in a timely manner to support growth was raised by the Communities PDG. The potential scale of growth suggested in each of the identified towns could, however, produce a level of development that would enable infrastructure and affordable housing provision to be optimised from the development.

Option 2: Focus the majority of new development at the main public transport nodes

- 3.13 This is a similar approach to Option 1 resulting in similar issues, although with the focus on public transport Stamford would take more growth than Bourne or Market Deeping. However, this option doesn't address the issue of rural public transport and the ability of people to access services, employment etc. in the identified main nodes other than by use of car, which would seem to be contrary to the objective of this option. There would, therefore, need to significant investment in rail and/or bus services together with integrated bus, cycling and walking networks, in order to achieve the modal shift and the benefits that this option seeks to deliver, but viability could be an issue.
- 3.14 The view of the Communities PDG was that Option 2 should be looked at sympathetically.

Option 3: Focus most new development on the Sub-Regional Centre of Grantham to the north and on the City of Peterborough to the south

- 3.15 This option proposes that part of the housing need of the HMA be met in another region (East of England), which would require cross boundary regional agreement. It also assumes that Peterborough would be able and willing to accommodate the additional growth, although the East of England Regional Plan is currently being reviewed, to a similar timetable to the EMRP, which would enable this option to be considered, if appropriate, as both Regional Plans move forward.
- 3.16 Under the third option the scale of development in Grantham may be increased significantly over that envisaged by the current strategy, which would require a step change in investment and delivery over and beyond that required to deliver the current strategy. There would also be environmental impacts on Grantham arising from this option, which would need to be addressed. With the focus for growth in Peterborough to the south of the HMA, this option may lead to further unsustainable commuting patterns as it presumes that people who work in Peterborough would also want to live there rather than the smaller market towns and rural areas. Limiting development in the smaller market towns could also affect their vitality and viability if economic activity and service provision were focused elsewhere and more limited housing development could lead to an increased difficulty in accessing local affordable housing in some towns.
- 3.17 The Options consultation document asks for comments on which of the three spatial planning and development options would best meet the needs of the Peterborough Partial HMA or whether any other options should be considered.
- 3.18 All three options, to varying degrees, focus growth on Grantham. This is to be supported, as it is likely to be required in the longer term in order for Grantham to continue to grow and function as a sub regional centre. However, any preferred option should also seek to meet the needs of the District's other towns and provide a level of growth that compliments their role and enables them to continue to meet their own needs and those of the surrounding hinterlands. For these reasons it is recommended that, at this stage, the first option, which proposes the continuation of the current strategy, be supported.

- 3.19 Whilst the Options consultation makes reference to the need for the economic base of some towns to expand to ensure further out-commuting is not promoted, the economic policies of the EMRP are not being reviewed at the same time. There will be a need to ensure, therefore, that the economic implications of the chosen option can be adequately managed through the existing economic policies and it is recommended that the EMRA be advised that this aspect should be fully addressed in identifying the preferred option to be taken forward.
- 3.20 None of the three options makes explicit reference to the housing needs of rural communities. It is recommended, therefore, that EMRA be advised that limited rural growth to sustain rural communities and meet local needs should be provided for and that this should be explicitly referenced as part of the partial review.
- 3.21 All responses to the Options consultation are due to be reported to the Joint Planning Board on the 23rd November 2009 and will be used to inform the drafting of the revised EMRP. This is due to be submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2010 at which time there will be the opportunity to make further comments. It is anticipated that any changes to the EMRP will be published in early 2011, following the Examination in Public.

4. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Do not comment on the Options Consultation – it is considered that this would be inappropriate because it would neglect an opportunity to have an input into policies that will shape the spatial development of the District up to 2031.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no resources implications at this stage other than officer time in responding to the consultation document, which can be accommodated within the existing planning policy work programme.

6. RISK AND MITIGATION (INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY AND DATA QUALITY)

- 6.1 None identified.

7. ISSUES ARISING FROM EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 This is the responsibility of EMRA.

8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None arising from this report.

9. COMMENTS OF SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 9.1 I have no specific financial comments to make in respect of this report.

10. COMMENTS OF MONITORING OFFICER

- 10.1 The proposed responses to the consultation are included in the body of the report. It is appropriate that Members should be asked to comment on the proposed response.