

**THE EAST OF ENGLAND PLAN – THE REVISION TO THE REGIONAL  
SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR THE EAST OF ENGLAND**

**(Report by Head of Planning Services )**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Secretary of State has now issued the East of England Plan - The Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England and that document now forms part of the statutory Development Plan for Huntingdonshire.

**2. THE REVISION TO THE REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY**

- 2.1 The Government considers that this review of the Regional Spatial Strategy embeds, within the statutory planning system, a sustainable long term vision for delivering new development in a region faced with dealing with particularly strong growth pressures. It outlines a 20 year vision in terms of how the Government intends to tackle climate change, address housing shortages, strengthen the region's economy, improve the quality of life for the people of the region and improve and conserve the region's environment. The RSS covers the period to 2021 but sets out a vision, objectives and a core strategy for the longer term.

**THE SPATIAL STRATEGY**

- 2.2 The regional spatial strategy strongly reflects the Governments desire to put into place a strategy which promotes, rather than constrains, medium and longer term growth. The spatial strategy directs most of the strategically significant growth to the region's major urban areas where public transport accessibility is at its best and there is the potential to use the proposed growth as a means of enhancing physical and social infrastructure. It is proposed that 60% of the proposed new development would be on previously developed land. Cambridge and Peterborough are defined as being Key Centres for Development and Change whilst the strategy also considers that other growth should be directed towards the market towns in order to increase their economic and social sustainability.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- 2.3 The economic development strategy aims to ensure the continued growth of the regions economy and to deliver a better alignment between the location of homes and jobs. The plan states that Local Development Documents should also take into account the outcomes of the on-going review of the Regional Economic Strategy; which is to be published in the summer. Therefore significant growth in jobs is proposed, with an indicative 452,000 for the whole region up to 2021,

with 75,000 new jobs being proposed for Cambridgeshire and 20,000 in Peterborough. The strategic employment policies designate the Cambridge Sub-Region as a centre for world-class research and development whilst Peterborough, to achieve regeneration, is advocated as a centre for the growth of environmental services. The cluster development policy goes on to outline support for a life-science regional super-cluster with concentrations at locations including in the Cambridge sub-region, an environmental technologies cluster stretching from Essex to Cambridgeshire with a particular focus on Peterborough and a strong ICT cluster in the Cambridge area.

## **HOUSING**

- 2.4 The housing strategy proposes a further increase in the planned overall housing numbers for the region so that local planning authorities should facilitate the delivery of at least 508,000 net additional dwellings over the period to 2021. District allocations should be regarded as being minimum targets to be achieved, rather than ceilings which should not be exceeded. Within Cambridgeshire the proposed overall minimum dwelling provision is set at some 98,300 new dwellings with the spread of provision being 11,200 for Huntingdonshire, 19,000 for Cambridge City, 8,600 for East Cambs, 11,000 for Fenland, 23,500 for South Cambs and 25,000 for Peterborough.
- 2.5 The Plan states that all the local planning authorities should plan for the delivery of housing for at least 15 years from the date of adoption of relevant development plan documents. When bringing forward land for housing, planning authorities should take account of the regional spatial strategy, the need for the co-ordination and consistency of approach between neighbouring authorities and the need to co-ordinate development with necessary transport and other infrastructure provision.
- 2.6 With regard to affordable housing provision the Secretary of State has clarified the policy position by setting a regional target for 35% affordable housing provision.

## **THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY**

- 2.7 The regional transport strategy encourages a significant change in travel behaviour, encourages a reduction in distances travelled and a shift towards more sustainable modes of travel. The strategy states that demand management measures should be used to tackle congestion. The strategic and regional road network should be improved, managed and maintained and priority should be given to the efficient and sustainable movement of freight.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

- 2.8 The Plan includes policies to protect the countryside and to promote diversity and the Great Fen Project is defined as being a regionally strategically significant green infrastructure project. Other policies seek to conserve the regions natural and historic environments and encourage high quality built environments.

## **CARBON DIOXIDE EMISSIONS AND RENEWABLE ENERGY**

- 2.9 The Plan strongly outlines that the regional strategy should seek to locate and design new developments in order to optimise its carbon performance and that local authorities should encourage the supply of energy from decentralised, renewable and low carbon energy sources. Proposals for the generation of renewable power should be supported in order to ensure that by 2020 17% of the region's energy comes from renewable sources. Water efficiency and integrated water management are also advocated.

## **SUB-AREAS AND KEY CENTRES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE**

### **The Cambridge Sub-Region**

- 2.10 The strategy for the Cambridge sub-region, as previously defined by the Structure Plan, is carried forward largely unchanged into this RSS. The Plan advocates that a comprehensive approach to growth should be adopted to secure the necessary infrastructure and the previously adopted sequential approach to accommodating growth (within Cambridge, on the periphery of Cambridge, at Northstowe and then within, or on the peripheries of, the sub-region's market towns) has been reiterated.

### **Peterborough**

- 2.11 Peterborough is also defined as a Key Centre for Development and Change, at the centre of a sub-region which includes parts of Huntingdonshire, with the aim of the policy being to strengthen Peterborough's role as a major regional centre and focus for the northern part of the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough Growth Area.

## **3. CONCLUSIONS**

- 3.1 The East of England Plan will set the strategic planning framework for this region for the period up to 2021. It will be the fundamental aspect of regional and local policy, it will guide and influence all strategic development and planning decisions, and therefore the application of its policies will have a pronounced material impact on the future character of Huntingdonshire.
- 3.2 The East of England Plan now forms part of the statutory Development Plan for Huntingdonshire. Accordingly this Council, when acting in respect of its role as the local planning authority, will have to pay due regard to the Plan and its policies in respect of its decision making.

## **4. RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 That the Cabinet notes that the Secretary of State has now issued the East of England Plan and that this revision to the RSS will form part of the statutory Development Plan for Huntingdonshire.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The East of England Plan – The Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England – May 2008

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