

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Cabinet

Date of Committee 2nd February 2006

Report Title **Review of Regional Spatial Strategy - Phase 2 - Advice of Coventry Solihull Warwickshire Forum**

Summary Coventry Solihull Warwickshire Forum (CSWF) is advising the County Council - along with Solihull and Coventry City Councils - to adopt a partnership approach to the detailed advice on such matters as housing numbers and employment land to be given to the Regional Planning Body on Phase 2 of the Regional Spatial Strategy's Review. Cabinet is recommended to agree with the Forum's advice.

For further information please contact Andy Cowan
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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? Yes/No

Background Papers None

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- *Details to be specified*

Other Committees

Local Member(s)
(With brief comments, if appropriate)

Other Elected Members Councillor P Barnes } for information
Councillor M Jones }
Councillor P Morris-Jones }

Cabinet Member Councillor C Saint – cleared for consideration. I
(Reports to The Cabinet, to be cleared with endorse the proposals as a WCC member of the
appropriate Cabinet Member) CSWP Forum

- Chief Executive
- Legal I Marriott – agreed.
- Finance
- Other Chief Officers
- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION **YES/NO** (*If 'No' complete Suggested Next Steps*)

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS :

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

Cabinet – 2nd February 2006

Review of Regional Spatial Strategy - Phase 2 - Advice of Coventry Solihull Warwickshire Forum

Report of the Strategic Director of Environment and Economy

Recommendation

That the advice of the Coventry Solihull Warwickshire Forum (9th December 2005) be generally endorsed and that Cabinet specifically confirms the Council's agreement to:-

1. The Forum co-ordinating the joint views of all the authorities in the Sub-region, conveying these for the 3 Strategic Authorities to passport to the Regional Planning Body while the Strategic Authorities retain their legal right to make any additional comments separately; and
2. The Forum's contention that the detailed housing figures should be produced for local authority areas - taking into account local, sub-regional and cross-boundary housing market issues.

1. Background

- 1.1 At its meeting on 9th December 2005, the Coventry Solihull Warwick Forum (CSWF) agreed the recommendations of the latest report from the sub-regional joint officer coordinating group on the sub-region's engagement in the next stage of the review of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). A copy of this report is attached as **Appendix A**.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 Essentially, the CSWF advice is about how the sub-region takes part in Phase 2 of the RSS Review expected to be carried in 2006. (Phase 1 of the Review – the Black Country Study - is already well underway). As part of this process, the 3 Strategic Authorities – Warwickshire County Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and Coventry City Council – each have a legal right (under Section 4(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) to bring forward the first draft detailed proposals where a sub-regional dimension is needed. In the interests of maintaining and strengthening our longstanding partnership approach to sub-regional working in this sub-region, the Forum is advising the 3 Strategic Authorities to adopt the approach set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report in **Appendix A**. Briefly, in this arrangement, CSWF will act as a

coordinating body for the work done jointly by the officers of the constituent authorities.

- 2.2 Forum's aim is for a single CSW sub-regional view to be presented to the Regional Planning Body (RPB) but always retaining the option for the individual strategic authorities to express different views if they consider it to be appropriate. Therefore, it is looking to the RPB for the same sub-regional brief to be sent to each of the 3 Strategic Authorities, covering all the relevant topics to be reviewed – rather than a series of uncoordinated topic briefs. This is particularly important as the time allowed (by the Act) is only 3 months i.e. from receipt of the RPB's brief to sending our advice on detailed proposal back to the RPB.
- 2.3 The CSW joint officer coordinating group is already progressing technical work on the priority topics identified by Forum for the sub-region to detail in the RSS Review e.g.
- (i) A sub-regional employment land review has been commissioned to be completed in time to input the sub-region's views on all the matters which will be required.
 - (ii) Work on housing capacity has already been done but further work will be required to respond to the imminent revised population and household formation projections from the Government.
 - (iii) Views on the role of Rugby as a Sub-regional Focus have already been made to the RPB.
 - (iv) Work is advanced in bringing together a joint statement for the sub-region based on the emerging waste management strategies of the 3 Strategic Authorities.
- 2.4 In line with the position taken last year by CSWF and the County Council on the Regional Housing Board's 'housing market areas' (HMAs), the Forum is making it clear to the RPB that detailed housing figures generated by the authorities in this sub-region will be for local authority areas rather than HMAs.

JOHN DEEGAN
Strategic Director of Environment and Economy
Shire Hall
Warwick

16th January 2006

Cabinet – 2nd February 2006

**Review of Regional Spatial Strategy - Phase 2 - Advice of
Coventry Solihull Warwickshire Forum**

**Coventry Solihull-Warwickshire Forum
9th December 2005**

West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy, Phase 2 Revision

Draft Project Plan - Report from the CSWAPO RSS Review Co-ordinating Group

Recommendations

That members of CSW Forum:-

- Note the contents of the Draft Project Plan for undertaking the RSS Partial Review Phase 2;
- Confirm that sub-regional input to the process will be made by CSW Forum co-ordinating the joint views of all the authorities in the sub-region, conveying these for the 3 Strategic Authorities to passport to the RPB while the Strategic Authorities retain their legal right to separately make any additional comments;
- Confirms the work areas for input by CSW Forum as agreed at its previous meetings, and notes progress by the CSW RSS Co-ordinating Group on these;
- Agrees the principle of meeting urgently to discuss Phase 2 issues if this becomes necessary;
- Urges the RPB to submit a single overall project brief to the 3 Strategic Authorities in the sub-region to enable consistent and rational cross-issue responses possible;
- Informs the RPB that the housing output requirements will need to be based on predominantly local authority areas taking into account local/sub-regional/cross-boundary housing market issues.

- 1.1 Members of CSW Forum received a report on 17th June 2005 setting out the progress on work by your RSS Review Co-ordinating Group in preparation for a start on Phase 2 of the Review.
- 1.2 This report set out the 3 phases for the RSS Review, the likely scope of the that part of the Review, the key issues to be dealt with and the progress to date within the CSW area.
- 1.3 The Regional Assembly published in mid-November a Draft Project Plan on the Phase 2 Review with an end date for consultation by the public and stakeholders of 31st December 2005. The contents of this Draft Project Plan are summarised below.
- 1.4 In order to take forward this Review the Regional assembly will be relying on an informal partnership approach with the strategic authorities within the region. It is anticipated that these strategic authorities will be formally written to in January 2006 seeking their agreement to work in this way, in terms of the joint topic work, the sub-regional work and the programme and timescales set out.

2 Summary of The Draft Project Plan

- 2.1 The Draft project Plan does not envisage changes to the RSS Objectives, which are:
 - To make the Major Urban Areas of the WM increasingly attractive places where people want to live, work and invest.
 - To secure the regeneration of the rural areas of the Region.
 - To create a joined up multi-centred regional structure where all areas/centres have distinct roles to play.
 - To retain the Green Belt, but allow an adjustment of boundaries where this is necessary to support urban regeneration.
 - To support the cities and towns of the Region to meet their local and sub-regional needs.
 - To support the diversification and modernisation of the Region's economy while ensuring that opportunities for growth are linked to meeting needs and reducing social exclusion.
 - To ensure the quality of the environment is conserved and enhanced across all parts of the Region.
 - To improve significantly the Region's transport systems.
 - To promote the development of a network of strategic centres across the Region.
 - To promote Birmingham as a world city.

2.2 The Phase 2 Revision Tasks are set out in the document as follows:

Prosperity for All

- A re-examination of employment land needs and requirements in the light of an updated evidence base.
- A re-assessment of existing strategic employment land designations.
- The identification of investment priorities within the strategic network of centres.

Communities for the Future

- A re-examination of regional housing requirements in the light of updated national projections, the Government's response to the Barker Review, and advice from the proposed National Advice Unit, and further work on shared evidence base.
- A re-examination of Urban Capacity across the Region, particularly within the Major Urban Areas and the implications for:
 - Provision of replacement dwellings for cleared housing stock
 - The identification of previously developed land targets for 2011-21.
- A consideration of the role of Sub-Regional Foci, including whether Burton should also be so identified.

Quality of the Environment

- Waste management issues identified by the Secretary of State.

Transport & Accessibility

- Identification of strategic park & ride sites.
- Implications of the Airports White Paper.
- Guidance on road user charging.

2.3 The document sets out the technical and research work which is being undertaken to underpin the revisions tasks above.

3 Timetable, Responsibilities and Sub-Regional Working

3.1 The Phase 2 Timetable is as follows:-

November 2005	Launch Draft Project Plan	6 weeks to have your say
Early 2006	Completion of technical work	
Spring 2006	Strategic Authorities advise RPB	
Summer 2006	Options Stage	6 weeks to have your say
Winter 2006	Development of Preferred Option	Another chance to comment
Late Spring 2007	Submission to Secretary of State	6-12 weeks to formal consultation period
Later 2007	Examination in Public	
Early 2008	Secretary of State Proposed Changes	
Autumn 2008	Final RSS Ph 2 changes published	

- 3.2 The West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA) is the Regional Planning Body (RPB) and it is the RPB that has responsibility to prepare revisions to RSS.
- 3.3 The WMRA established the Regional Planning Partnership (RPP) to establish planning policies and priorities for the Region. The RPP is made up of Councillors from across the Region and representatives of the business sector and from the Other Stakeholder Group. A RSS Steering Group has been established to steer and guide the RSS Revision process.
- 3.4 The WMRA will co-ordinate the work being undertaken from a pool of staff resources drawn largely within the local authorities of the Region. Policy leads and membership of topic groups is predominantly made up of staff from authorities across the Region.
- 3.5 The Draft Project Plan recognises that the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 gave Strategic Authorities a new role in giving advice to the RPB to assist in revisions to RSS. In the CSW sub-region the Strategic Authorities are Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire. To fulfil this role it is intended that the RPB will set a brief and then ask the Strategic Authority to respond with advice within 12 weeks. This is the "informal partnership" scenario which CSW Forum favoured in June and advised the RPB, instead of more formal procedures. This approach allows the flexibility for Strategic Authorities in how they organise themselves to work in a sub-regional manner on these work areas. The Draft Project Plan acknowledges that the Coventry/Solihull/Warwickshire Forum is an existing partnership arrangement which can be used in this context. You should note that true sub-regional working is not really taking place in some parts of the Region, although the Black Country and North Staffordshire have been making strong progress.

4 Key Issues

- 4.1 In November 2003 CSW Forum agreed the approach of sub-regional working to input its views to the RSS Partial Review process using the officer working arrangements of the CSW RSS Co-ordinating Group. In this way the 3 Strategic Authorities would work together and with the 5 shire district authorities so as to seek to maintain sub-regional cohesion and consistency of approach. The Draft Project Plan presumes that the Strategic Authorities will work in whichever way is suitable. Therefore, it would seem that the most appropriate way for Forum to

exercise its role will be to advise the 3 Strategic Authorities of the joint views of all the authorities in the sub-region and that the Strategic Authorities then input directly to the RPB. To ensure that the joint views of the sub-region are kept intact, while the 3 Strategic Authorities retain their independent legal right to input to the RPB, it is recommended that the Strategic Authorities each passport the CSW Forum views to the RPB and that they can also separately send any additional views of their Authority. It is recommended that this approach should now be confirmed and conveyed to the RPB as part of the response to the Draft Project Plan.

4.2 Also in previous meetings, including your meeting in June, Forum agreed the work areas listed above at paragraph 2.2 which it wished to input to as part of the RSS Partial Review. In the light of the work components now confirmed in the Draft Project Plan you should note the following:-

- On Prosperity for All, work is advanced as regards the commissioning of the sub-regional employment land review and it is programmed to be completed in time to input the sub-region's views on all the matters which will be required.
- On Communities for the Future, some work on housing capacity has already been input but further work will be required to respond to the imminent revised population and household formation projections from the Government. Forum has already input its views to the RPB on the role of Rugby as a Sub-regional Focus in the particular context of our sub-region.
- On Quality of the Environment, work is advanced in bringing together a joint statement for the sub-region based on the emerging waste management strategies of the 3 Strategic Authorities.
- On Transport & Accessibility, none of the 3 identified work elements in Phase 2 are matters which Forum decided to input to, but this may need to be reviewed depending upon the draft Project Brief from the RPB in due course.

4.3 Further work will be required in regard to responding to housing issues, particularly as regards the suggested "housing market areas". This may require speedy joint working by your Officers and speedy joint decision making by Forum. Therefore, it may well be necessary to hold additional Forum meetings at critical times in the Phase 2 process, particularly in regard to the 12 week period of responding to the Project Brief.

4.4 In order for effective sub-regional working to take place it is recommended that various requirements are put to the RPB as to how you want to be involved in the Phase 2 process. A single brief across all the work streams needs to be provided so that the interrelationships between them can be taken into account in your input to the RPB in due course. Furthermore, that single brief should be the same for each of the 3 Strategic Authorities within the sub-region. In regard to "housing market areas" Forum considered its views in June and concluded that these areas do not form a basis for policy formulation and allocation but rather as theoretical inputs to the process. This should be reiterated as part of your response to the Draft Project Plan.