

CITY OF PLYMOUTH

Report: Overview and Scrutiny Panel – Transport, Housing and Related Regeneration

Subject: Devon Structure Plan

Committee: Scrutiny Commission

Date: 22nd August, 2002

Ref: 5/THRR/SP/KJ

Part: I

Executive Summary: The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to the Scrutiny Commission following the Panel's consideration of the deposit draft of the Devon Structure Plan 2001-2016. The City Council's representations must be received by the Joint Structure Plan Committee before 6th September, 2002.

Corporate Strategy: The establishment of Overview and Scrutiny Panels forms part of the corporate strategy for implementation of that part of the modernisation agenda relative to new democratic arrangements.

Financial Implications: There are no financial implications arising out of this report.

Recommendations: The Panel recommended that the City Council make representations on the Deposit Structure Plan to the effect that -

- (1) while recognising that Plymouth City Council's housing allocation of 8,500 dwellings was based on Plymouth's Local Plan and Urban Capacity Study, these figures had still to be tested through the Plymouth Local Plan Inquiry, and therefore may be subject to change;
- (2) while recognising the Plymouth employment allocation of 80 hectares reflected both demographic and past trends for employment land take-up, a further allowance may need to be made in the Plymouth Area of Economic Activity to compensate for the need to reserve employment land in the longer term to accommodate any proposals for medical and marine sector clusters in the City.

Recommendations Cont'd/ ...

- (3) further clarification on the percentage of affordable housing, including a definition based on wage levels and social housing for rent, should be provided;
- (4) further clarification on the use of brown field sites should be provided including a recognition that this land needs to be re-used for a variety of uses (including housing, employment, service, communal and leisure facilities etc.) in order to ensure a balanced form of development;
- (5) the Plan Monitoring and Management approach be fully supported;
- (6) a distinction be made between Plymouth and Exeter Airports.

Background papers:

Briefing Note on Devon Structure Plan - Report to the Transport, Housing and Related Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 19th July, 2002.

Plymouth Urban Capacity Study

Plymouth Sub-Regional Study

Devon Structure Plan 2001-2016: Deposit Draft - Report to Executive on 16th July, 2002

Devon to 2016 - Deposit Notice

Devon to 2016 - Deposit Draft

Devon to 2016 - Sustainability Appraisal

Devon to 2016 - Statement on Publicity, Public Participation and Consultation

Minutes of Transport, Housing and Related Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 19th July, 2002

REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – TRANSPORT, HOUSING AND RELATED REGENERATION

DEVON STRUCTURE PLAN

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Commission, at its meeting on 27th June, 2002, agreed a number of Work Programme items for the Transport, Housing and Related Regeneration Scrutiny Panel, including consideration of the Devon Structure Plan.
- 1.2 The Transport, Housing and Related Regeneration Scrutiny Panel met on 30th July and 2nd August, 2002, to consider the Devon Structure Plan 2001-2016 Deposit Draft and supporting documentation as well as talk to officers.

2.0 Panel Structure

Councillors

Councillor Birkenhead, in the Chair.

Councillor Brookshaw, Vice-Chairman.

Councillors Mrs. Ford, Martin Leaves, Mrs. Nelder and Wheeler.

Officers In Attendance

Mike Palmer

Rose Gripaios

Katey Johns

Group Leader, Strategic Planning Unit

Principal Economic Development Officer

Democratic Support Officer

3.0 Objectives

- 3.1 The Transport, Housing and Related Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Panel consider the Devon Structure Plan 2001-2016 Deposit Draft and submit its recommendations to the Scrutiny Commission prior to the closure of the consultation period on 6th September, 2002.

4.0 The Detail

- 4.1 The Devon Structure Plan is an important policy document which will define the context for, and influence, the Plymouth Local Plan. It is currently on deposit until 6th September, 2002, and opportunity exists for the City to make comment on it to the Joint Structure Plan Committee before this date.
- 4.2 The Transport, Housing and Related Regeneration Panel considered the content of the Deposit Draft which -
- (i) identified the key changes which had been made;
 - (ii) set out the vision, aims and objectives which had been grouped so as to link in more clearly with the objectives of Regional Planning Guidance;

- (iii) proposed a sustainable strategy for Devon and the Plymouth area;
- (iv) detailed numerous policies including Conservation, Transport, Shopping, Tourism, Recreation and Leisure;
- (v) emphasised the importance of the 'plan, monitor and manage' approach.

From their discussions with the officers, the Panel was also made aware that -

- (vi) the Plan focuses on four main areas of economic activity: Plymouth, Exeter, Torbay and Barnstaple, prioritising development to the Principal Urban Areas;
- (vii) housing issues are of particular importance . The housing figure of 4,300 dwellings per annum was set by Regional Planning Guidance, and was a 12% reduction on the 1995-2011 provisions for dwellings;
- (viii) Plymouth housing provision was 8,500 dwellings, this figure related to the 6,100 dwellings put forward by the Plymouth City Local Plan 2001-11, together with the 2,400 dwellings indicated by Plymouth Urban Capacity Study finding that could accommodate 2,400 dwellings in the City during the period 2011-16;
- (ix) the Plan sets a minimum level of provision for affordable housing at 30%. This compares to Plymouth's aim of providing between 38-55% affordable housing;
- (x) the Plan does not provide for any additional employment land, over and above the current Structure Plan allocation. .

5.0 Comments

Having considered the Deposit Draft and supporting documentation, the Panel raised a number of issues, the majority of which were responded to by the officers present. However, there were a number of points which it was thought appropriate should be commented on to the Joint Structure Plan Committee, such as -

- (i) the basis on which Plymouth's housing allocation figure of 8,500 dwellings had been calculated and its potential implication for increased housing density to impact upon quality of living standards;
- (ii) the inclusion and clarification of limits on social housing for rent;
- (iii) the provision of more guidance on the issue of affordable housing and particularly on whether it was economically viable to put affordable housing on brown field sites;
- (iv) the availability of grants and whether this had been taken into account when considering the redevelopment of brown field sites;

- (v) the potential for the Sherford development to become an urban extension;
- (vi) the commuting difficulties that already exist in the City particularly from the east and north;
- (vii) the Panel's support for the transport strategies although it was felt that more emphasis should be given to the importance of Plymouth Airport to the City;
- (viii) the Panel's support for the Plan Monitoring and Management approach.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 The Panel concluded that, in many respects, they were fully supportive of the Devon Structure Plan. However, they were keen to seek clarification on a number of issues and to see the inclusion of a few minor caveats in relation to the Deposit Structure Plan.

7.0 Recommendation

- 7.1 The Panel recommends that the City Council support the Devon Structure Plan 2001-2016: Deposit Draft, subject to making the following representations to the effect that -
- (1) while recognising that Plymouth City Council's housing allocation of 8,500 dwellings was based on Plymouth's Local Plan and Urban Capacity Study, these figures had still to be tested through the Plymouth Local Plan Inquiry, and therefore may be subject to change;
 - (2) while recognising the Plymouth employment allocation of 80 hectares reflected both demographic and past trends for employment land take-up, a further allowance may need to be made in the Plymouth AEA to compensate for the need to reserve employment land in the longer term to accommodate any proposals for medical and marine sector clusters in the City.
 - (3) further clarification on the percentage of affordable housing, including a definition based on wage levels and social housing for rent, should be provided;
 - (4) further clarification on the use of brown field sites should be provided covering the need for balanced developments including communal and leisure facilities;
 - (5) the Plan Monitoring and Management approach be fully supported;
 - (6) a distinction be made between Plymouth and Exeter Airports i.e. the use of Plymouth by business and Exeter by tourists.