



Report of the Director of City Development

Development Plan Panel

Date: 12 June 2007

Subject: Report of the Panel : The Yorkshire & Humber Plan – The Regional Spatial Strategy

Electoral Wards Affected:

All

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity



Community Cohesion



Narrowing the Gap



Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with a brief overview of the recently issued (4 May), Yorkshire & Humber Plan – Regional Spatial (RSS) Panel Report and to highlight particular implications and issues for Leeds. Throughout the course of the preparation of the RSS and ongoing consultation with members, the City Council has sought to influence the scope and content of the Plan regarding a number of core areas (including: greater emphasis for the role of Leeds within the City Region, the need for greater clarity and consistency in the approach to city regions and economic development, the approach to the distribution and provision of new housing, the need for infrastructure to support sustainable growth and environmental protection and the need for the ambitions of the spatial plan to be supported by an effective transport strategy).
2. The Panel Report has been issued for *information* not *consultation* and the next stage in the process is for the Government Office of Yorkshire & the Humber (GOYH) to prepare a series of "Proposed Changes", based on the Panel's recommendations for public consultation (it is understood that this will be for a 12 week period, likely to commence towards the end of June).
3. A significant dimension of the RSS, is the need for Local Development Frameworks (LDF) to be in general conformity with the Plan. Clearly, within the context of the issues summarised in this report and the subsequent Proposed Changes, consideration will need to be given to the direct implications for the Leeds LDF Core Strategy and emerging Area Action Plan documents.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with a brief overview of the recently issued, RSS Panel Report and to highlight particular implications and issues for Leeds. Throughout the course of the preparation of the RSS and ongoing consultation with members, the City Council has sought to influence the scope and content of the Plan regarding a number of core areas (including: greater emphasis for the role of Leeds within the City Region, the need for greater clarity and consistency in the approach to city regions and economic development, the approach to the distribution and provision of new housing, the need for infrastructure to support sustainable growth and environmental protection and the need for the ambitions of the spatial plan to be supported by an effective transport strategy).

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 Members will recall that the draft plan was initially issued for public consultation in December 2005 and the Examination in Public took place in September - October 2006, chaired by an Independent Panel. In presenting the City Council's case at the examination, officers attended over 30 separate sessions to give evidence. On 4 May, the Government Office for Yorkshire & the Humber (GOYH) issued the Report of the Panel, comprising Vol. 1 (a 254 page document with 118 recommendations as to how the Plan should be changed) and Vol. 2 (which includes a series of detailed Annexes, including a summary of the Panel Report's recommendations).
- 2.2 It should be emphasised that the report has been issued for *information* not *consultation* and the next stage in the process, is for GOYH to prepare a series of "Proposed Changes", based on the Panel's recommendations for public consultation (it is understood that this will be a 12 week period, likely to commence towards the end of June). It should be noted also, that this final stage of consultation is concerned primarily with taking forward the Panel's recommendations into the final plan and not about reopening the debate about aspects of the Plan, the Panel are reported as being satisfied with. However, whilst many of the recommendations are very specific and prescriptive, there are other areas, which will perhaps be open to wider interpretation by GOYH in the preparation of Proposed Changes. Further detailed analysis of all of the recommendations, will therefore be needed by the City Council in order to make representations as part of the Proposed Changes process.

3.0 Main Issues

Key Recommendations of the Panel Report & the Implications for Leeds

- 3.1 As highlighted above, the Panel Report makes 118 Recommendations (across 17 Chapters), which from the City Council's perspective will need further detailed appraisal. The following points, following general observations, therefore focus upon key areas where the City Council has made representations.

General Observations

- 3.2 These can be summarised as follows:
- The Report is, broadly, supportive of many of the submissions made by LCC, though the key issue of new housing allocations is a major issue for the West Yorkshire sub region from 2016-21 and especially for Leeds, where it is expected that major growth should take place.

- The Report recommends a clear focus on city regions and the Northern Way Growth Strategy (NWGS), including the use of the 'city region' terminology.
- The Report concurs with LCC's comments, that there is a lack of consistency between core strategy and sub area policy.
- The Report is critical of the overall transport strategy.

Chapter 3: Vision & Spatial Strategy

- Notes some contradictions in the overall approach and spatial vision and its lack of geographical specificity (LCC made similar comments).
- Roles of places – Greater emphasis to Bradford in the city region chapter but not recognising it's role as a regional centre.
- Recommends greater emphasis given to Sheffield City Region in the Plan, including the links to East Midlands region.
- Recommends clarity on guidance on the roles of places.

Chapter 4: Economy

- RSS is an acceptable long term framework. It supports the concept of city regions, and is aligned with the Regional Economic Strategy and Northern Way Growth Strategy.
- RSS flags up a shift from traditional heavy industry to office based financial and business services.
- RSS economic policies support economic restructuring but may not be as successful as hoped because of the crucial role of transport and connectivity, and the imbalance of housing growth to employment growth, especially in the Leeds City region (LCR).
- The Panel recognised tensions across the region about employment land supply, with some local authorities arguing for a larger figure. Land supply figures are not considered to be a critical part of the RSS policy. Consequently, there are no specific targets or limits, other than an overall net figure. Local authorities can use more recent employment forecasts and convert to gross. Figures different from those in Table 14.6 should be taken through LDFs and supported by evidence.
- The employment forecasts only go to 2016. They should go to 2021 or even 2026 (RSS is a guide for 15-20 years). Also need to revise the figures using the latest forecasts. RSS is right in not taking the optimistic Scenario C as a basis for employment land forecasts.
- Sites for new casinos should be limited to regional and sub-regional centres.
- The Panel Report seeks to clarify, to some extent, the use of different terminologies with regard to the role of 'places' and 'centres'. In some instances however it is felt that this has led to further confusion and clarification is therefore needed.

Implications for Leeds

- The recommendations under Economy do not have many new implications for Leeds. They usefully clarify the role of the employment land forecasts and leave it to LPAs to justify their own figures in their LDFs. Perhaps the most significant comment is the one about support to manufacturing. This raises the question as to how, in the Core Strategy, for example, we should plan for existing manufacturing operations, many of which are in constrained locations and/or on sites that could be developed for higher value uses, whilst providing local employment opportunities.

- The overall ambition of the Plan to secure housing growth consistent with economic activity does not appear to be clearly aligned in practice, given the lack of specificity of employment land requirements linked to housing requirements.
- The recognition that even though manufacturing may represent a declining proportion of the economy it is likely to remain as a sector with a future which should be taken forward with other sectors is welcomed. Greater emphasis should have perhaps been made to give greater prominence to the scope to modernise manufacturing industries as part of the region's economy. From a Leeds perspective, the approach allows scope for these issues to be examined more fully at a local level through future Development Plan Documents under the LDF.
- In differentiating the role of offices, the Report provides scope for 'out of centre business parks', which would appear to be inconsistent with Planning Policy Statement 6 and the overall thrust of the Plan itself. Clearly if taken forward through the Proposed Changes, this will have implications for policies and proposals as part of the LDF.
- Important changes to the Draft RSS sought by Leeds have been accepted by the Panel Report changes. The deletion of the phrase 'large scale' and the references to Meadowhall and White Rose centres from Policy E2B (i), removes the potentially special treatment initially offered by Draft RSS to these two large out-of-centre shopping centres to be able to expand. Leeds city centre and other traditional town centres in the Leeds area will benefit from not being faced with competition from out-of-centre extensions being sanctioned in principle by RSS policy.

Chapter 5: Housing

Housing Provision

- The sections on the regional scale of housing growth are complex and cover issues such as the desirability of including the latest population projections, which were published during the EiP period, and the effectiveness of the models being used.
- The Panel have abandoned the RSS approach of first determining the size of the regional 'housing cake' and then 'slicing it up'. Instead, the regional cake is a blend of District numbers derived from various sources. It is felt that there is now no consistent evidence base underlying the housing figures.
- The Panel consider, but reject, the possibility of extending the plan period to 2026 (Rec 5.1 and Table 5.3). (A later reference in Rec 5.4(ii) to 2026 is presumably a misprint for 2021). They also reject the proposal in 13.33 of the draft Plan that local authorities would not have to identify specific proposals to meet requirements post 2016. They must now plan for the whole period to 2021.
- They retain separate figures for 2004-11, 2011-16 and 2016-21, although the latter two are identical. The 2004-11 figures are as in the draft Plan, and are lower than the post 2011 figures. The Panel's view is that extra housing will only be needed as economic growth builds up.
- After 2011, provision is set to the 2016-21 levels in draft RSS in the Humber, North Yorkshire except for York and Calderdale. Elsewhere it is geared to the Scenario B model run (incorporating updated 2003 household projections) reproduced in Appendix 5 of the RA's Background Paper 2. The selective use of these higher projections is seen as enabling housing provision to be more closely aligned with expected economic growth in the urban areas of the region.
- Overall provision across the region rises from 16610 p.a. 2004-21 to 19270 p.a. The revised figure is about the same as the household increase implicit in the ONS 2003 based household projections.

- West Yorkshire's share rises from 7440 p.a. 2004-21 to 9150 p.a. 2004-11 figures are as in the draft Plan, but for 2011-21 the Panel provide only a figure of 10300 p.a. for the West Yorkshire Districts - Leeds, Bradford, Wakefield and Kirklees (Calderdale has been excluded on the basis of more limited capacity, enabling a specific figure to be determined). In fact there appears to be a small arithmetic error in this total for the 4 West Yorkshire Districts, Background Paper 2 gives a figure of 10840 for WY, which leaves 10170 after deducting 670 for Calderdale). The GOYH is charged with finalising District figures taking into account (mainly paras 5.35, 5.122, Rec 5.12).
- The need to achieve a better balance between housing and economic growth is recognised by the Panel, together with the need to enhance the sub-regional role of Bradford, reality checking of the proposed apportionment and the housing capacity of areas.
- Appropriate reality checks are listed in para 5.26. Key checks are likely to be housebuilding rates, projected household formation, housing land availability and employment forecasts. The Panel ask for (presumably Scenario B) employment projections to extended to 2021 and put in a table alongside either proposed housing provision or projected household growth – it is unclear which. (Rec 5.11, para 5.112).
- If the 10300 (or 10170) provision were to be split in the same proportions as 2004-11 provision, Leeds' share would be around 3800 p.a. net 2011-2021. However, it may be intended that Leeds's share should be further increased above earlier levels (references to "larger share of housing growth" in 5.122 and Rec 5.12).
- The Report proposes various changes to Policy H1. These include the merging of draft Plan Tables 13.2 and 13.3 to clarify the gross figures, and their extension to 2021 (Rec 5.5 and para 5.69). Rec 5.4(i) appears to suggest that the land release management measures very loosely sketched out in paras 13.23 – 13.31 of the draft Plan be tightened and incorporated in H1 – although no very direct advice is offered on how this should be done (also para 5.63).
- They propose no change in the PDL targets in Table 13.2, even though overall provision has been increased and local authorities were doubtful whether these targets were attainable at higher output levels.
- They decide that insufficient work has been done to define housing market areas, which will have to be left to the next Review. The illustrative map from the exploratory DTZ study is however to be included in the Plan.
- Various proposals to change Policy H2, which offers generalised support to failing housing markets, are rejected in favour of relatively minor re-wording of the existing policy. However, the list of areas affected is amended to include East & South East Leeds (EASEL).
- There is to be clearer identification of the areas expected to benefit from policy H4, which encourages diversity of tenure, price and housing mix. This clarification could possibly affect one or two settlements in south Leeds.
- The Report also notes a 'mismatch between new jobs and the provision of housing to accommodate those working in these new jobs' noting that West Yorkshire is forecast for 70% of economic growth but only 43% of the housing need.
- With regard to housing markets, the Panel consider that this is work in progress and therefore that no recommendations can be made on allocations to sub areas – this will be a matter for the next RSS.
- The Report recommends that EASEL needs to be included as a 'failing market' in Policy H2.
- York needs to accept a higher annual figure, but not in full, as there needs to be further work on the capacity in the city.

Affordable Housing

- The Draft Plan proposed that 6,000 affordable dwellings per annum are needed across the region per annum and that targets of +40% (high), 30-39% (med) and up to 29% (low) are set for high, medium and low need parts of the region (Policy H3). Leeds was proposed as a medium need area.
- The Panel Report splits its conclusions into two separate sections. The conclusions are inconsistent and somewhat unclear. In the first section (paras 5.96-103) after summarising that there is insufficient evidence to justify neither the 6,000 nor the target percentages, the recommendation (5.10) merely seeks to improve the clarity of the description of the percentage target bands.
- In the second section (paras 5.114-117), the ability to meet affordable housing needs in the region is discussed with the conclusion that the targets in Policy H3 should be replaced by indicative numbers of dwellings for each local authority or housing market area. The proportions of dwellings to be generated by market housing developments and by public subsidy schemes should be clarified.
- Leeds had objected to the target percentage of 30-40% for Leeds saying it was too high to be realistically deliverable, particularly with competing priorities such as public realm improvements. If the target band of 30-40% for Leeds is retained, this will make it difficult for Leeds to set LDF targets below that range and achieve "sound" plans in terms of conformity with the RSS.
- However, the Panel recommendation is silent on the numbers of dwellings to be required. It is speculation how much GOYH might depart from the 6,000 per annum set out in the Draft Plan, and what evidence of justification might be used.

Gypsies & Travellers

- The Panel concedes that Policy H5 of the Draft Plan does not accord with national guidance (circular 1/06), by not setting out numbers of pitches required to be provided in each local authority area. However, the Panel considers that the conflict can be overlooked because of the urgency to provide more Gypsies and Travellers accommodation. As a pragmatic way forward, the Panel proposes modifications to Policy H5 to Set out interim minimum shortfall figures of 257 pitches for the Region (34 Humber, 57 N. Yorks, 78 S. Yorks and 86 West Yorkshire), requiring all authorities to carry out accommodation assessments by March 2008, deleting the list of authorities with no existing provision and deleting the promotion of "rural exceptions" site development schemes.

Implications for Leeds

- Clearly, the prospect of a significantly higher annual housing requirement for Leeds (after 2011 – in the order of potentially 4,000 dwellings) raises profound implications for the city in terms of infrastructure, urban capacity and distribution. In presenting evidence on this matter, the City Council consistently emphasised that economic growth is an important objective for the City but not at the ultimate expense of the unique character of Leeds or the quality of life of its citizens. The Panel Report also acknowledges the important strategic role of the Green Belt and does not put forward any proposals to amend the general extent of Green Belt designation within the region and considers any changes to be a local matter. Given members previous desire to maintain the city's Green Belt and greenspaces, the implications of a higher housing requirement (post the adoption of the Proposed Changes), would mean an increase in urban densities, the need for higher levels of public transport investment and the need to avoid, adapt and mitigate against detrimental impacts upon environmental sustainability. Given the statutory status of the RSS once adopted, such issues

will need to be addressed through the LDF, however given the need to deliver the necessary infrastructure to achieve such growth measures will need to be taken outside the planning process to secure major public/private investment to make this possible. Achieving numerical targets for housing, without such infrastructure is likely not to lead to sustained regeneration or the development of sustainable communities.

- As regards implications for Leeds, Policy H5 as modified adds no further requirements than are already set out in Circular 1/06. Leeds already has an accommodation assessment underway in partnership with neighbouring West Yorkshire authorities.

Chapter 6: Environment & Resource Management

- The Panel Report seeks greater integration between ‘the Core Approach’ and Environmental sections and between Thematic and sub area policies.
- The Inspectors supported the request for a “Green Infrastructure” policy and such a policy should identify areas where this is particularly important i.e. in those areas (such as Leeds), which have to accommodate the largest amounts of growth in the region.
- Recognition is given to the need to improve air quality based upon Air Quality Management area information.
- The Report recommends that the Environment section in the Plan should be given greater emphasis and be the first of the thematic sections and that the resource demands from development should be minimised.
- The Panel consider that Policy ENV5 is revised to ‘maximise improvements to energy efficiency and increases in renewable energy capacity’.
- The need to undertake and allocate land for development within the context of Strategic Flood Risk Assessments is recommended by the Panel.
- The need to manage water resources is recognised through recommended revisions to Policy ENV2A
- Recommendations are made to improve the clarity of policies for minerals and waste but these still read as generic statements rather than being regionally or sub area specific.

Implications for Leeds

- The Recommendations regarding a greater recognition for environmental capacity and the overall status and clarity of environmental policy in the Plan is welcome. In order for the policies to be achievable in practice however, there is a need for the Proposed Changes to indicate how such considerations can be achieved in the light of the significantly higher housing requirements for Leeds and wider aspirations for ‘growth’. In addition, there is an important link between economic competitiveness, quality of life and ‘good environment’, which does not flow evenly throughout the Plan – which also need to be supported by the necessary infrastructure (e.g. flood alleviation, addressing contaminated land, public transport etc).
- Through the LDF Core Strategy, the Leeds MD interpretation of Green Infrastructure will need to be addressed as a key spatial component of the strategy.

Chapter 8: - Transport – Regional Transport Strategy

- In terms of housing and employment, the Panel expresses that concern that there will be a mismatch – particularly in Leeds – between forecasts for job growth and provision of housing which will lead to an increase in commuting and

about which the Plan needs to be clearer on the implications, the ability to accommodate this change and how this might influence the distribution and timing of development.

- A general concern is expressed about the need to more clearly understand the nature and location of transport constraints across the Region and particularly in the main urban areas and City Regions and as they affect the strategic highway network.
- The report indicates that when the RSS is finalised it should be brought up-to-date in terms of Government guidance and spending programmes.
- In terms of the Northern Way Growth Strategy a need to improve the consideration RSS gives to connections to other Regions is identified.
- The Panel has concluded that the accessibility and use of walking and cycling is not seriously constrained by deficiencies in the infrastructure. This is a point, which does not seem borne out by local experience and feedback within the Leeds community.
- Whilst generally supportive of the approach to demand management, the Panel notes this is little more than a statement of national policy. Although it is not suggested that the RSS should identify specifically what measures should be used it is recommended that it should seek to identify locations where congestion is at critical levels and where demand management “will have to be applied”. Inclusion of all the various forms of demand management within RSS is recommended in addition to the parking and road user charging mechanisms.
- It is suggested that the more detailed application of parking standards within large urban areas should be considered.
- The role of strategic park and ride is acknowledged but with a recommendation that clearer guidance as to the locations of such sites is sought.
- More detailed guidance on the specific needs of public transport corridors and locations is recommended within the relevant sections of the Plan. This is particularly in relation to the Leeds City Region and South Yorkshire.
- Issues in terms of ownership and responsibility are identified in respect to the Regional Freight Strategy and the RSS are identified. The Panel was of the view that the local impacts of freight traffic were more relevant to LDF’s than the RSS and that whilst the idea of concentrating on “distribution parks” was of interest, more evidence was needed to substantiate the policy.
- In terms of air travel, issues of environmental and climate impacts were recognised and that the RSS did seek to acknowledge this conflict. Stronger reference to rail links and/or public transport connectivity to the region’s airports is sought. Targets for surface travel mode to airports were considered to be a local rather than RSS/RTS matter.
- With regard to transport investment and management priorities the Panel’s principal comments are not so much concerning a funding gap per se but more in terms of the impact of any funding gap on the achievement of Plan outcomes. In this regard it was recognised that understanding this position would merit further work but that this would be important in understanding the point and locations at which the lack of investment becomes a constraint on development.

Implications for Leeds

- Much further clarity of the transport strategy is needed and how it relates to growth etc - high likelihood that demand management will be a key requirement in the city region - particularly as there is a lack of funding for transport infrastructure.
- Clearly, the need for an effective transport strategy, underpinned by the necessary levels of investment and delivery mechanisms, is a prerequisite in the implementation of the RSS. Given the focus of the overall RSS strategy upon

the success of Leeds to delivery growth, it is therefore essential that there is a step change in public transport provision to meet such aspirations longer term.

Chapter 10: Leeds City Region

- The Panel notes that they are not sure that the practicalities of the LCR concept have been thought through in RSS, which is unclear about the different types of centre (regional, sub-regional etc) and connectivity improvements needed. The right places have been chosen to concentrate growth (regional and sub-regional centres) but no clear guidance on the “complementary roles” of places.
- Bradford is not a regional centre, but is more than a sub-regional centre. There should be an expectation of close communication and economic connectivity between Leeds and Bradford
- The Panel are concerned about a mismatch between the distributions of housing and employment growth, with Leeds by 2016 expected to see higher rates of job growth (40,000) than housing (23,000), implying a reliance on commuting to support the main centre of the region’s economy. This raises questions about sustainability, greenhouse gases and the capacity of the Strategic Highway Network. The Report comments that there is an unsolved conundrum between the roles of places, location of jobs and houses, and how they are to be connected. The Panel are not convinced there is a coherent spatial strategy for the LCR. What transport and connectivity improvements are needed? What is the actual and planned capacity of the transport system? What is needed and how will it be provided? LCR1 gives no clear view on how the LCR should look, be structured or connected by the end of the plan period. LCR2 proposals are very generalised and already committed. LCR1 and 2 need to be edited and focussed
- Congestion is reaching a critical state in Leeds. LCR1 D looks to discourage the use of private cars. There is a high likelihood that demand management (e.g. congestion charging, restriction of car parking) will be needed in the LCR during the plan period and RSS should support it and give stronger support for public transport
- There doesn’t need to be a Leeds sub-area in the LCR.
- Flood risk in the Aire Valley: new development is acceptable as long as PPG25 is followed.
- East Leeds Extension: it’s up to the LDF to specify appropriate locations for growth.
- The reference to the complementary conference roles of Leeds and Harrogate should be clarified or, if not, deleted.
- There should be enough housing and employment land without encroaching onto Green Belt.
- York sub area, the Report concludes that, a York sub area is a useful concept and notes confusion about the overlap with Leeds City Region Sub Area and the need for greater clarification of the links. However, resists the idea of a core LCR (i.e. a Leeds sub area).
- The Report concludes that more coverage needed of the relationship with Sheffield and Manchester City regions.
- The Panel is not convinced that the identified Growth Areas (5 towns) are the only ones and that they represent the greatest priorities for growth - some are regeneration areas and not associated with actual 'growth'.

Implications for Leeds

- It is clear that the Panel feel that the Leeds City Region policies are too generalised. They do not disagree that the LCR is likely to continue the key economic generator in the region, rather their concern is that the housing and transport policies are not commensurate with that role. The Report concludes that the best way of achieving sustainable development is to locate jobs and houses close together (at the local authority level), whilst implementing demand management measures and public transport improvements. This implies a close integration between jobs, housing and transport policies within Leeds itself, rather than at the LCR scale.
- As recommended, the main city region policy is very long, repetitive, very vague and little more than aspirational platitudes rather than spatial policies with desired outcomes.
- Further emphasis is required on the roles and relationships of both York and Barnsley within the Leeds city region to put them on an equal footing with other Sub Regional Centres.
- Further explanation is also required for Huddersfield, Halifax and Harrogate.
- The extent of the sub area though is appropriate for guiding the spatial planning at the sub-regional level.
- The importance of Leeds City to the city region and the whole region, is not given sufficient emphasis. Some confusion over whether there is a Leeds Sub Area within the Leeds City Region. On balance suggests that there is no need for a Leeds sub area.
- The Report notes that Bradford has a more significant role than the other sub-regional centres in the LCR, that there should be a close degree of commercial and economic connectivity between Leeds and Bradford and that Bradford will be expected to make a greater contribution to the growth and development of LCR than the other sub-regional centres. Recommendation 10.5 specifies the roles of the regional (i.e. Leeds) and sub-regional centres, to include York and Barnsley and "giving particular attention to the role of Bradford". It is recommended (12.1) that Hull be designated as a regional centre.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

- 4.1 As emphasised above (para. 3 Executive Summary), the preparation of the City Council's Local Development Framework needs to be in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy.

5.0 Legal And Resource Implications

- 5.1 There are no specific legal implications. With regard to resources, throughout the RSS process, the City Council has continually made representations concerning the need for the necessary resources and infrastructure to delivery the strategic ambitions of the RSS relating to Leeds. Within the context of the proposed consultation on "Proposed Changes", where necessary, this point will need to be made yet again to seek to influence what practical actions and interventions can be made.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 Relating to areas where the City Council has previously made representations, the focus of this report has summarised the key conclusions of the Yorkshire and Humber Plan, Panel Report. A series of 'implications for Leeds' have been flagged

up, which will need to be reviewed in the light of the Proposed Changes, further City Council representations are likely to be necessary, once these have been published.

- 6.2 Consistent with the Local Development Scheme (LDS) (previously approved by Executive Board and submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2007), a series of Local Development Documents are currently being advanced. Integral to these is the development of the LDF Core Strategy. Following early informal consultation in September – December 2006, work is being progressed to develop ‘issues and options’ for a 6 week period of consultation (LDF Regulation 25 stage) in the autumn (currently targeted for September – October). Whilst there is still some uncertainty regarding the precise detail of the RSS Proposed Changes, in order to comply with the LDS timetable and milestones approved by members, the emerging Core Strategy work will need to be reviewed within the context of the Panel Report and presented to the Development Plan Panel for early consideration. At this stage, it is anticipated that this will be the July or August Development Plan Panel.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 Members of the Development Plan Panel are requested to note the contents of this report for information.