

Luton & South Bedfordshire Joint Committee

19th September

Agenda Item No. 7

AUTHOR	Joint Officer Team (Richard Watts BCC)
SUBJECT	South East Plan – Proposed Changes
PURPOSE	To agree a response to the Secretary of State's consultation on the proposed changes to the South East Plan
RECOMMENDATIONS	The Joint Committee is recommended to object to the identification of a development option to the west of Leighton Linlade in Aylesbury Vale District.
REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS	The Joint Committee is responsible for planning the growth area, within the framework provided by Regional Plans, which include the South East Plan. A response to the consultation is required to ensure the views of the Joint Committee are taken into account in finalising the South East Plan.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The South East Plan was submitted to Government in March 2006, a Public Examination held from November 2006 to March 2007 and a Panel report of the Examination was published in August 2007. The Secretary of State has now published for consultation proposed changes to the South East Plan in response to the Panel report. The closing date for responses is 24th October.
- 1.2 This report focuses on those changes which directly effect the work of the Joint Committee in bringing forward the Local Development Framework.

2. PROPOSED CHANGES

- 2.1 The South East Plan area abuts the boundary of the Luton and South Bedfordshire growth area to the west of Leighton Linlade. Consequently proposals in Aylesbury Vale District are potentially relevant to the planning of the growth area.
- 2.2 The Proposed Changes (Policy MKAV1) suggest that Aylesbury Vale District makes provision for at least 26,890 dwellings 2006 to 2026 from the following sources:-

- i. 5,390 dwellings in an urban extension to the south west of Milton Keynes;
- ii. 16,800 dwellings in and around the Aylesbury urban area, including urban extensions, and;
- iii. 4,700 dwellings in the rural area/rest of Aylesbury Vale.

In addition, opportunities to go beyond provision of 26,890 dwellings should be taken, if possible, to provide for further development in Aylesbury Vale district associated with growth around Leighton Linlade.

- 2.3 The proposed changes also amend the approach in the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy that development in a local authority that adjoins a growth area should count towards the housing allocation for that growth area. The Sub-Regional Strategy stated () that development east of Milton Keynes in Mid Bedfordshire was included in the housing provision for the Milton Keynes Growth Area (Milton Keynes/Aylesbury Vale Policy 1, page 30 and Bedfordshire & Luton Policy 2b, page 25) that development to the and east of Luton in North Hertfordshire (policy 2b page 25) and west of Leighton in Aylesbury Vale was included in the housing provision for the Bedfordshire and Luton growth area. The proposed changes now suggest that any housing east of M1 in Bedfordshire will count towards Mid Bedfordshire's housing provision and any housing west of Leighton Linlade in Buckinghamshire will count towards the Aylesbury Vale housing provision.

3. IMPLICATIONS FOR LUTON AND SOUTH BEDFORSHIRE GROWTH AREA

Aylesbury Vale

- 3.1 The 2005 Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy identified that for Leighton Linlade there should be a comprehensive review of all options for urban extensions. (policy 2a, page 24). In bringing forward the Luton and South Bedfordshire Local Development Framework, officers from the Joint Technical Unit have been working with colleagues in Aylesbury Vale District to test options for urban extensions. The Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation in June 2007 included four potential areas of development around Leighton Linlade. The June 2008 Joint Committee agreed a draft Core Strategy Preferred Options which identified an option to the east of Leighton Linlade, but not an option west of Leighton Linlade in Aylesbury Vale District. This is a more up to date evidence base than was considered by the South East Plan Examination in Public, so the Secretary of State's proposed changes are based on an out of date position.
- 3.2 By suggesting the option of development west of Leighton Linlade, the South East Plan is undermining the conclusions of a comprehensive review of all options with the consequent danger of producing a less sustainable urban extension that is not needed to meet the housing targets of either the South East Plan or the East of England Plan. Should such a need arise through revisions to the Plans or as a result of other sites being found to be unachievable, it is considered that all potential sites within the Aylesbury Vale District should be considered equally.

- 3.3 Normally Regional Spatial Strategies identify development options that are strategic in scale. In this instance the South East Plan is being overly prescriptive about the options Aylesbury Vale should consider to meet their housing provision as development west of Leighton is not of sufficient scale to be regarded as strategic.
- 3.4 For the above reasons the Joint Committee is recommended to object to the identification of a development option to the west of Leighton Linslade in Aylesbury Vale.

Housing Provision in adjoining administrative areas

- 3.5 The proposed changes show that the Secretary of State considers that housing provision east of Milton Keynes in the East of England Region (Mid Bedfordshire) can not count towards the South East Plan housing provision (Secretary of State's Proposed Changes – Chapter 23, pages 458 and 459). The proposed changes fail to carry this logic forward for any potential extension to Leighton Linslade, westwards into the South East Plan area (Aylesbury Vale). The failure to do this means that Leighton Linslade potentially has to meet housing provision figures additional to its contribution to the housing provision of 41,700 new dwellings by 2031.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no equalities implications at this stage.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications at this stage.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no legal implications at this stage.