

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Environment Committee</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>10 November 2009</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Consultation on East of England Plan Review</b>	
<b>Author:</b>	<b>Melanie Jones, Principal Planning Officer, Ext 461</b>	Item for decision

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### Summary

This report outlines the arrangements for the review of the East of England Plan to 2031 and seeks member's endorsement of the Essex Local Authorities' Joint Policy Response in the Council's formal response to the consultation.

### Recommendations

That the Council supports the Essex Local Authorities' Joint Policy Response in its formal submission to the EERA review of the East of England Plan to 2031, together with any other issues identified by Members.

### Background Papers

East of England Plan >2031 Scenarios for Housing and Economic Growth – Consultation September 2009  
East of England RSS Review – Integrated Sustainability Appraisal – Interim ISA Report September 2009

### Impact

Communication/Consultation	The Council is a Consultee
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Finance	None
Human Rights	None
Legal implications	Once the RSS is approved any revisions to the housing numbers and other policies will need to be reflected at the District level in future LDF reviews.
Sustainability	The consultation material has been subject to a sustainability appraisal which is available as a background document.

Ward-specific impacts	All at this stage, although this might become more specific as any new growth targets in the revised RSS are incorporated into Local Development Plan Documents.
Workforce/Workplace	None

### Situation

- 1 The East of England of Plan was published in May 2008. It sets out the development strategy for the region for the period 2001-2021 and covers the broad location of new housing and jobs and priorities for the environment, transport and other infrastructure. The Government has asked the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) to carry out a review of the plan to extend the strategy to 2031.
  
- 2 The consultation document produced by EERA only represents a partial review of the RSS. It invites views on whether the vision, objectives and policies of the current approved plan should be updated, on four growth scenarios setting out a range of housing and job growth targets and on the supporting information available to underpin the review. The closing date for comments is the 24 November 2009. The key issue for the District is likely to be the implications of the four scenarios which are summarised below:
  - Scenario 1 – Roll forward of the existing plan - this is broadly based on advice from county and unitary councils that a “roll forward” of the current plan rates for another ten years is the highest level of development that local authorities felt was deliverable. In Uttlesford this would represent an average figure of 430 homes a year.
  - Scenario 2 – National Housing Advice and Regional New Settlements – this scenario is based on the Regional Scale Settlement Study which identified potential for new or expanded towns that could provide at least 20,000 new homes. This scenario could potentially have the greatest impact on Uttlesford because one of the locations identified in the settlement study is south of the A120/west of Braintree. This scenario suggests an average figure of 1,080 homes a year for Uttlesford.
  - Scenario 3 – National Housing Advice and Regional Economic Forecasts – based on the economic potential to create more jobs. In this scenario growth is spread over more districts but with particular concentrations in the Districts within Hertfordshire, south Essex and Cambridgeshire. For Uttlesford the housing requirement would be 430 homes a year.
  - Scenario 4 – National Household Projections – the scale and distribution of growth in this scenario is based on Government projections of new households and gives a figure for Uttlesford of 350 new homes a year.
  
- 3 There are a number of issues of concern in the consultation:

- The formulation of the growth scenarios is too narrowly focussed on housing numbers to the exclusion of other important planning considerations which should have been considered e.g. impact on transport networks and infrastructure capacity. In the current climate the difficulty of securing funding to support infrastructure delivery is likely to be a major constraint on housing growth.
  - The recession may affect building rates for a large part of the plan period and the assumed delivery rates will not be achieved.
  - Below the district level there is no adequate explanation of how the growth will affect key settlements in terms of the scale, location, type and phasing of new development and no robust testing of the feasibility of development in particular locations.
  - In scenario 2 the consultation document implies the creation of large new regional scale settlement in Uttlesford but it is vague and non-specific about where this would be located. The regional scale settlement study which is the source of this proposal makes the provision of such a settlement conditional upon the future growth of Stansted Airport. Latest estimates suggest that the airport will not be a significant generator of jobs or housing and there are strong objections to scenario 2 for this reason.
  - The relation between the scenarios and the visions, objectives and core strategy policies of the approved EEP is not satisfactorily explained.
- 4 In response to the EERA consultation Essex County Council has commissioned consultants Roger Tym and Partners to provide technical support and facilitate stakeholder workshops which members and officers from Uttlesford have attended. The purpose of the workshops and the resulting reports on jobs growth, housing growth and linkages with other areas beyond Essex is to review and discuss different aspects of the EERA consultation document and inform the preparation of a joint report on behalf of Essex Districts which is attached. It is proposed that this Council signs up to the joint report and endorses the comments made in its formal response to the EERA consultation.

### Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
The Council's views are not represented	Low	Medium	Share in joint response with Essex Districts and the County Council as well as responding in our own right

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.