

West of England Joint Spatial Plan and Joint Transport Study Launch Event Engine Shed, Temple Meads, Bristol - 30 June 2015

Barbara Davies, West of England LEP and Cllr Elfan Ap Rees, Chairman of West of England Planning, Housing and Communities Board welcomed key stakeholders from the business community to an event to introduce the Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) and Joint Transport Study (JTS) and to explain and discuss the work that had been undertaken and that was planned.

David Turner (Director of Development and Environment North Somerset Council and JSP Senior Responsible Officer) provided an overview of the JSP. David's main messages covered the:

- West of England home of Knowledge, Innovation and Quality of Life
- Purpose, key components and scope of preparing the JSP
- How the JSP helps unlock and facilitate key objectives of the West of England and infrastructure delivery.
- Timetable and process for JSP preparation.

He described the Joint Spatial Plan – to be prepared as a formal development plan document - as a 'prospectus for sustainable growth' He also confirmed the guiding principles that will underpin the preparation of the JSP:

- Commitment to a plan-led approach to guide future
- Development and secure funding for essential infrastructure
- Balance the need for growth and development with the need to secure quality of life and a strong environmental future
- Adopt a sequential approach to development using previously developed land and making best use of our existing urban areas, unlocking more previously developed land before we develop on green belt land
- Ensure our transport plans are coordinated with the JSP.

Additionally David noted:

- that the JSP will be binding on the four unitary authorities and that this is accepted by them all;
- that the scope of the JSP is strategic and that it will identify broad locations for growth.

Louise Fradd (Place Strategic Director Bath and North East Somerset Council and JTS Senior Responsible Officer) provided an over view of the JTS. Louise's main messages emphasised the importance of a strong and effective transportation system that:

- Connected skills to jobs
- Connectivity through infrastructure
- Connecting jobs to homes
- Sustainable communities that support a competitive and growing economy

- Importance of managing growth whilst maintaining our quality of life.

Additionally Louise noted:

- that the Joint Transport Study will inform the JSP in a phased approach through the issues and options stage and after, and
- that the JSP will provide a framework for future transport structure investment.

Peter Studdert of Peter Studdert Planning Ltd provided an overview of the work Cambridgeshire undertook in 2004 to 2011 which has been termed 'Cambridge Futures'. Peter previously led the Joint Unit who oversaw the Cambridge Horizons work that set the blue print for subsequent core strategy preparation in the sub-region and helped inform the growth/ investment strategy for the Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough LEP.

Peter outlined the spatial and social economic context of this functional spatial area. He drew similarities with the West of England, albeit recognising Cambridge is a smaller geographical area. Slides of his presentation are available [here](#)

He explained at the heart of this work were 3 critical objectives:

- Economic efficiency
- Social equity
- Environmental quality

He also explained this informed the setting of 7 spatial options based on a sequential approach to location of growth for future patterns and forms of growth:

1. Minimum growth
2. Densification
3. Develop necklace of villages
4. Urban extensions/ green swap
5. Growth along transport corridors
6. Virtual highway
7. New towns

Other key points from Peter's presentation reflected on:

- Joint working arrangements
- Quality character process – looking and learning
- Importance of engaging with community where people are hostile to growth
- Innovative ways need to be found to engage communities in 'big issues' especially younger people.
- Urban regeneration/ urban extensions are easier to deliver than new settlements
- Success about quality as much it is about quantity
- Plan urban extensions 50% built/ 50% public open space/green infrastructure
- Open invitation to visit Cambridge and to develop an exchange between West of England and Cambridge.

The final part of the event was a **question and answer session** chaired by Barbara Davies and the four unitary authority directors.

This provided an informed and simulating discussion. Key themes and messages which were raised by stakeholders in the discussion were:

- Timetable for JSP is challenging but all possible efforts must be made to ensure it succeeds. General welcoming of undertaking and commitment to delivery JSP
- Success will come down to degree of political consensus and confidence that JSP can delivery sustainable outcomes
- Sustainability Appraisal testing and preparation will be crucial for robust/ sound JSP
- How JSP engages with stakeholders and getting the public to understand the challenges will be crucial to its success. Need to avoid setting out proposed solutions. Instead more about communicating the issues we are really trying to solve
- JSP will provide the strategic framework to renew unitary authority local plans
- Key challenge will be can the market deliver and are their sufficient players/ competition in the house building sector to deliver both the quality and quantity of new homes and communities
- Need to explore new delivery mechanisms/ partnerships which can support boosting supply and affordable homes/ different forms of tenure. Compulsory purchase may be an extreme end choice
- Housing Association (Registered Providers) simply do not have the means to raise sufficient private finance to deliver the amount of affordable housing that is needed
- Recognised importance of lobbying government on housing policy. Way we buy and build houses in UK needs to be drastically reviewed. Sense that government is alert to this issue too
- Current housing market is unbalanced, over-heated and displays strong signs of being dysfunctional. Housing shortage could possibly be a future source of social unrest. Better ways need to be found to recycle/ release land for housing that delivers genuine choice and competition in market place. Volume house builders exert too much control/ stifle delivery, innovation, creativity and choice
- Is the Strategic Housing Market Assessment objectively assessed need of 85,000 new homes sufficient? This will be a key area of challenge at the JSP EiP
- JSP should enable real opportunities for those not in the housing market or not in the jobs market
- Should the JSP not just identify broad strategic locations but actually confirm as allocations
- Green Infrastructure place making principles have key role to play in JSP. Quality of Life needs to be considered in the round.

Attendees:

Cllr Brian Allinson	South Gloucestershire Council
Duncan Allsopp	Bath University
Cllr Patrick Anketell-Jones	Bath & North East Somerset Council
Cllr Elfan Ap Rees	North Somerset Council

Paul Appleby	Vidcomms / Sector Chair
John Baker	Peter Brett
Cllr Chris Blades	North Somerset Council
Martin Boddy	UWE
Mel Clinton	Nash Partnership
Cllr Simon Cook	Bristol City Council
Ned Cussen	JLL
Donald Davies	North Somerset Council
Shelly Dewhurst	Local Nature Partnership
James Durie	Business West
Cllr Charles Gerrish	Bath & North East Somerset Council
Matt Griffith	Business West
Cllr Pat Hockey	South Gloucestershire Council
Dominic Hogg	Local Nature Partnership
Nick Horne	Knightstone
Caroline Hughes	Knightstone
Ben Lowdes	JBP
Richard Luxton	Health & Life Sciences Sector Group
Ann O'Driscoll	IPG
Richard Ormerod	Highways England
Stephen Parsons	Social Enterprise Sector Group
Cllr Steve Pearce	Bristol City Council
Cllr Terry Porter	North Somerset Council
Simon Prescott	Barton Willmore
Dave Pring	Environment Agency
David Stewart	English Heritage
Cllr Ben Stokes	South Gloucestershire Council
Simon Stonehouse	Natural England
Peter Studdert	Peter Studdert
Lauren Taljaard	Barton Willmore
Sean Walsh	Highways England
David Warburton	HCA
Shalando Williams	First Group
Simon De Beer	Bath & North East Somerset Council
Louise Fradd	Bath & North East Somerset Council
Steve Evans	South Gloucestershire Council
Bruce Laurence	Bath & North East Somerset Council
Zoe Willcox	Bristol City Council
Barra Mac Ruairi	Bristol City Council
Sarah O'Driscoll	Bristol City Council
Patrick Conroy	South Gloucestershire Council
David Turner	North Somerset Council
Chris Sane	South Gloucestershire Council
Julia Dean	West of England LEP
Barbara Davies	West of England LEP