

## **Executive – 22 March 2005**

Present: Councillor Williams (Chairman)  
Councillors Bishop, Mrs Bradley, Cavill, Edwards, Hall, Leighton and Mrs Lewin-Harris

Officers: Mrs P James (Chief Executive), Ms J Wishlade (Strategic Director – Operations), Mr N T Noall (Head of Development), Mr R Willoughby-Foster (Forward Plan Manager), Mrs R James (Communications Manager) and Mr G P Dyke (Member Services Manager)

Also Present: Councillors Croad, Denington, Hayward, Hindley, House, Meikle, Paul, Ms Peppard and Phillips

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm.)

### 25. Apologies

Councillor Garner.

### 26. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 9 March 2005 were taken as read and were signed.

### 27. Public Question Time

(a) At the request of Miss D Robins, Councillor Williams explained fully the reason why he was not prepared to receive questions from her during Public Question Time.

(b) Mr Harris made statements and asked a number of questions in connection with the Council's dealings with Mr S Robins.

Councillor Williams replied that Councillors and Officers had been working together for many years to resolve these problems.

(c) Mr Mike Marshall referred to the Taunton Sub Area Study and drew attention to the fact that no mention had been made in the Baker Report of large scale developments east of the M5 and protecting rural settlements. He also asked how the Council viewed the success of the consultation given the short period of time in which it took place.

Councillor Williams replied that in the Council's recommendations it was suggested that development east of the motorway should be divorced and should be near RPG 10 and follow economic growth. He had previously expressed his views on the consultation process involved in the Sub Area Study.

- (d) Mr Alan Debenham stated that he was pleased that RPG 10 plus 50% was something that everybody appeared to want to discount. He felt the development could happen without the green wedge being sacrificed. He did not agree with the inevitability of constant growth and felt that climate change, global warming, ozone layer depletion and oil shortages must be considered as part of the planning process.

Councillor Williams replied that the County Council's Executive meeting would be meeting the following day and Mr Debenham was welcome to make his points at their meeting.

## 28. Taunton Sub Area Study

(Councillor N Cavill declared a personal and prejudicial interest in certain sites within Monkton Heathfield which had been referred to in the report. He advised the Chairman that he would leave the meeting if and when any of these sites were specifically discussed.)

Considered report previously circulated regarding the Council's proposed response to the Taunton Sub Area Study final report. The summary and report of the County Council's consultants, Baker Associates, had also been circulated to all members of the Council. This matter had also been considered by the Strategic Planning Transport and Economic Development Review Panel at its meeting on 3 March at St Andrews Hall, Taunton when over 100 members of the public had attended.

The report explained the background to the Study and highlighted Taunton's role and function together with the role of Bridgwater and Wellington. The report went on to explain the economic potential, demand for housing, maximising urban potential and housing delivery requirements together with the environmental and transport implications. It also covered waste management, culture, health and education and a strategic sustainability appraisal.

RESOLVED that Somerset County Council be informed that the future regional strategy for the Taunton area should be sustainable and based on:

- The continued role of Taunton within the region as a PUA or other equivalent designation as a regional centre in accordance with the Vision for Taunton.
- It is considered that there was inadequate time for the extensive public consultation that such an important matter deserves.
- To implement in full the regeneration proposals of the UDF to expand the Town Centre to embrace the River Tone providing new commercial, retail and cultural opportunities and supporting new educational and health facilities.
- The level of growth should be based on the employment prospects with housing provision in balance, reflecting a continuation of the RPG 10 level of growth to maintain the existing high level of self containment.
- Higher growth scenarios are not desirable, achievable or sustainable.

- The roles of Bridgwater and Wellington are complimentary to Taunton.
- It is essential that Bridgwater and Wellington maintain their role and function with balanced growth of homes and jobs maximising the opportunities for regeneration, development to fund necessary infrastructure and economic diversification.
- A mixed use scheme at Longforth Farm including a northern relief road would support the complimentary role of Wellington.
- Both Monkton Heathfield and Comeytrowe are suitable locations for urban extensions in the longer term but development at Comeytrowe should not be considered until around 2020 and then only if absolutely necessary.
- The alternative option 1b set out in paragraph 11.27 of the report for later phasing for Staplegrove should be considered.
- To integrate enhanced transport infrastructure and services with development in order to achieve and maintain high accessibility, high quality public transport and greater reliance on walking and cycling.
- Smaller developments around the edge of the town will be sustainable and help deliver outer distributor roads and meet local needs.
- Development to the east of the motorway would be divorced from the town and should be resisted.

(The meeting ended at 7.55pm).