

**WEST OF ENGLAND
JOINT STUDY AREA
FIRST DETAILED PROPOSALS**

Report to the West of England Partnership meeting on 16th August 2005

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1. OVERALL VISION FOR THE WEST OF ENGLAND

Our vision for how the area will be seen in 2026

In 2026 the West of England will have:

- one of Europe's fastest growing and most prosperous sub regions which has closed the gap between disadvantaged and other communities – driven by major developments in employment and government backed infrastructure improvements in South Bristol and North Somerset.
- a buoyant economy competing internationally, based on investment by innovative, knowledge-based businesses and a high level of graduate and vocational skills.
- a rising quality of life for all, achieved by the promotion of healthy lifestyles, access to better quality healthcare, an upturn in the supply of affordable housing of all types and the development of sustainable communities.
- easier local, national and international travel, thanks to transport solutions that link communities to employment opportunities and local services, control and reduce congestion and improve strategic connections by road, rail and through Bristol International Airport and seaport.
- cultural attractions that are the envy of competitor city regions across Europe, making the West of England the place of choice for talented, creative workers and affluent visitors.
- success secured in ways that are energy efficient, protect air quality, minimise and manage waste and protect and enhance the natural and built environment.
- built upon the benefits of its distinctive mix of urban and rural areas.
- real influence with regional and national government, by demonstrating vision and leadership and delivering these achievements.

2. THE SPATIAL STRATEGY

- 2.1 The Vision for the sub-region is for continuing high rates of growth in jobs, population and housing enabled by accelerated investment in housing, transport and other social infrastructure, which realises the economic strengths of the West of England, improves the quality of life, and achieves mixed and balanced communities.
- 2.2 It is proposed that land be made available to meet an accelerated pace of jobs growth, at an average rate of 5,000 per annum, and house building at 25% above the existing regional target, an average of 4,625 net additions to the housing stock per annum.
- 2.3 Co-ordinated investment programmes from local, regional and central government funds and the private sector, in line with *'The Way Ahead'*¹, will be needed to implement the spatial strategy.

Key objectives of the spatial strategy

- 2.4 The RSS must provide a policy framework for investment, development, regeneration and conservation in the West of England, as a Core City region, to benefit the area and the regional and national economies, and to maintain and improve the quality of life of the area's residents, by:
- as a priority, promoting urban renaissance, especially in Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare, to make them better places in which to live, work, visit and invest, to create balanced communities, and to maximise the success of their future growth and development;
 - regenerating areas of disadvantage, particularly in Bristol and Weston-super-Mare;
 - promoting and enhancing prospects for sustainable development and investment in south Bristol and Weston-super-Mare;
 - ensuring that the Green Belt continues to perform its fundamental roles in the area, while reviewing its extent in certain areas to meet the sub-region's requirements for sustainable development;
 - overcoming existing deficits in physical and social infrastructure in the West of England, and providing infrastructure to create balanced new communities, as part of the sub-region's successful economic expansion.
 - delivering a step change in the quality of public transport and traffic management within the Bristol urban area, Bath and Weston-super-Mare, and between the cities, smaller towns and rural areas across the sub-region.
 - improving strategic communications to areas outside the West of England, by sea, air, rail and road;

¹ the South West's response to the Government's *'Sustainable Communities Plan'*

- protecting and enhancing key environmental assets, especially those of national or international importance, and retaining, enhancing and restoring the diversity of wildlife and the landscape in the sub-region;
 - improving efficiency in the use of resources, with waste production minimised and waste managed in a sustainable way;
 - contributing towards achieving a carbon-neutral economy in the sub-region, with reduced household, transport and commercial energy consumption, reduced environmental pollution, increased renewable energy generation, and positive adaptations to climate change and rising sea levels;
 - encouraging the provision of green infrastructure throughout the sub-region, through environmental initiatives within the urban areas, maximising the potential of the Forest of Avon, and measures to encourage the appropriate use and management of the Green Belt and rural areas for amenity;
 - enhancing positive relationships between urban and rural areas for their mutual benefit.
- 2.5 Development within the sub-region will focus on the Bristol urban area, as the region's major location for future growth in economic activity and housing provision.
- 2.6 Priority will be given to the integrated provision of infrastructure and development to improve communications within and around south Bristol and to provide new links between the M4, south Bristol, the airport, the M5 and Weston-super-Mare.
- 2.7 Sustainable urban extensions will be developed to the south and east of the Bristol urban area following the provision of necessary infrastructure and the release of land from the Green Belt. They will be planned and developed as sustainable communities which deliver a high quality of life through high standards of design and access, the protection and maintenance of environmental assets and landscape setting, and by providing the physical and social infrastructure required.
- 2.8 Provision for significant economic growth and housing at the other regionally important centres within the area, Weston-super-Mare and Bath, will reflect their future potential, environmental factors and the need to address problems associated with commuting by improving the balance between economic activity and housing provision. Sustainable urban extensions will be considered at Bath, subject to the need to address environmental and landscape constraints associated with its status as a World Heritage Site, its setting, transport implications, and the release of land from the Green Belt. At Weston-super-Mare, urban extensions will accommodate mixed development, a new sustainable community, and transport infrastructure improvements.
- 2.9 Significant development at settlements elsewhere will be considered if it is well related to sustainable transport links and meets other sustainability criteria.

Within the main urban areas

2.10 To implement change, the overall priority through Local Development Documents and other local and sub-regional initiatives will be to maintain and improve the attractiveness of the urban areas as places in which people wish to live, work and invest. This approach is particularly relevant in the West of England given the size and national importance of its major urban areas and the significance of the constraints to further urban expansion in the sub-region.

2.11 The priority is to enable an urban renaissance to develop balanced, vibrant and sustainable communities with a high quality of life, incorporating new residential environments. This will be achieved by: -

- Actively restructuring land uses and transport networks to meet physical, economic and social changes;
- Reinforcing the role and function of city, town and district centres, to focus regeneration initiatives and to meet the needs for additional retail, office and leisure floorspace; and encouraging the renewal and efficient use of commercial areas close to existing town and district centres.
- Creating new mixed residential and commercial districts which make more efficient use of land and buildings; retain and expand employment; optimise housing densities; have high standards of design; contribute positively to the townscape and landscape of the wider area; build on good public transport accessibility particularly in and adjacent to city and town centres; and make positive use of green infrastructure - including public open spaces and waterways - and the cultural and architectural heritage;
- Promoting regeneration in areas of multiple deprivation, to close the gap between disadvantaged and other communities through comprehensive packages of measures involving local people; and to achieve physical, economic and social improvements and vibrant living environments;
- Improving key services such as education, health, and cultural provision, and renewing outdated social infrastructure.
- Improving environmental quality;
- Reducing the need to travel and improving accessibility to and between centres by means other than the car
- Promoting and managing change through Local Development Documents and other local and sub-regional initiatives to secure an integrated approach.

2.12 Local authorities will implement a focussed approach to renewal and intensification by identifying, as an immediate and continuing priority, proposals for area action within the Bristol urban area, Bath and Weston-super-Mare. Proposals will incorporate a variety of measures moulded to the particular characteristics of different areas, involving, where necessary, a partnership approach with other agencies. This should help achieve the overall objectives

for urban areas, including optimising housing development, better than focussing on individual sites.

Smaller towns

2.13 Yate / Chipping Sodbury, Thornbury, Clevedon, Nailsea, Portishead, Keynsham and Norton Radstock contain significant levels of employment and local services which meet many of the needs of their residents, although many residents work in Bristol or Bath. Local Development Documents will plan for the future roles of these towns and their policies will allow new development which:

- provides local jobs, or
- extends the range of services available to local communities, or
- meets local housing need identified in surveys; or
- makes use of existing premises; and
- fits in with the scale of the settlement, if traffic implications can be demonstrated to be acceptable

2.14 Some of these towns are physically closer to city centres than some areas of countryside that adjoin the urban areas. In some cases, further development will be considered where it is a sustainable option, where it will deliver significant improvements to public transport to the main urban centres, and where it is consistent with fundamental Green Belt objectives for the area.

Rural areas

2.15 Rural land uses - open countryside with scattered settlements and villages - cover most of the West of England's area, and many of the challenges facing these areas are similar to those experienced elsewhere in the region. However, many people living in the area's rural communities look to the urban centres for employment, leisure, shopping and health/welfare services. Equally, urban residents value rural areas for their amenity, recreation and leisure opportunities.

2.16 The role, amenity value, social and economic vitality of rural areas needs to be maintained while discouraging unsustainable patterns of development or movement. In these areas, development will reflect local needs, including affordable housing, changes in the rural economy, and the need for local services.

2.17 In rural areas adjoining the main urban areas, including areas where new urban extensions are planned, measures should be taken to manage the urban fringe, provide 'green infrastructure' for recreation and conserve landscape and biodiversity. The aims and objectives of the Forest of Avon will be supported.

Green Belt

2.18 The Bristol and Bath Green Belt has an essential role in helping to achieve more sustainable patterns of development. It will be maintained in accordance with national policy set out in PPG2, subject to the review of its outer and inner

boundaries, to ensure that it continues its fundamental role of preventing urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.

2.19 In particular, the Bristol and Bath Green Belt will support both the national purposes of Green Belt designation and the spatial strategy for the sub-region by: -

- checking the unrestricted sprawl of the Bristol urban area and Bath
- preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another, particularly by maintaining the physical separation and distinct identities of the Bristol urban area, Bath, and settlements in the area between the two cities
- safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- preserving the setting and character of historic towns, including the World Heritage Site of Bath
- assisting in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

2.20 In order to help meet these objectives, areas will be considered for removal from the Green Belt through Local Development Documents if their value in meeting Green Belt purposes is outweighed by the benefits of developing communities or making other provision to meet the sub-region's requirements for sustainable development. Further work will be undertaken on the spatial strategy, including Green Belt, as part of the process of considering the findings of the Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study.

2.21 The following strategic locations are identified for more detailed review of their designation as Green Belt, to enable the development of sustainable new communities adjoining or close to the main urban areas to be considered:-

- Adjoining Bristol to the south west, within North Somerset and Bristol City, to accommodate mixed development, a new sustainable community, and transport infrastructure improvements
- Adjoining Bristol to the south east, within Bath and North East Somerset and Bristol City, to accommodate strategic employment development, mixed development, new sustainable communities or to enhance existing ones, and transport infrastructure improvements
- Adjoining the Emerson's Green area to the north east of Bristol, within South Gloucestershire, to accommodate mixed development, a new sustainable community, and transport infrastructure improvements
- Immediately north of Bristol within South Gloucestershire, between Harry Stoke and the M32, to accommodate mixed development and transport infrastructure improvements
- To the south of Bath, to accommodate mixed development.

2.22 Areas will be added to the Green Belt through Local Development Documents where the protection of land from development over the long term will meet the purposes of the Green Belt and support the spatial strategy for the sub-region. In particular this may help contain the expansion of small settlements which have an imbalance between homes and jobs and where other policies such as

national environmental designations or recognised flood risk areas, which would give the certainty of long term protection from development, do not exist.

2.23 The positive use of land within the Green Belt will be promoted, provided its openness is maintained, by:

- initiatives to support and implement the aims and objectives of the Forest of Avon, which covers much of the Green Belt and in particular all those areas adjoining the Bristol urban area;
- allowing appropriate opportunities for improved access to the open countryside;
- allowing appropriate opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation near urban areas;
- safeguarding attractive landscapes, enhancing landscapes, and improving damaged and derelict land around towns;
- securing nature conservation interest; and
- retaining land in agricultural, forestry and related uses.

3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 Vision 2026 envisages the West of England as one of Europe's most competitive regional economies, which has closed the gap between disadvantaged and other communities; has rising living standards and a buoyant economy that competes internationally, based on innovation, knowledge-based businesses, a highly-skilled work force, and the diverse cultural and other resources of the sub-region. Employment is projected to grow at an average rate of 5,000 jobs per annum, with continuing high rates earlier in the period.
- 3.2 The spatial planning strategy will be complemented by the West of England's Economic Development Strategy and partnership working with national and regional agencies to raise productivity and competitiveness; promote investment in and the development of key business sectors; support training and development of the workforce to meet the changing requirements for skills; and tackle barriers to employment and training in disadvantaged communities.

Objectives

- 3.3 To ensure the continuing supply of sites and premises for all economic activities to support business investment and competitiveness.
- 3.4 To secure a more sustainable pattern of economic development that provides good accessibility between homes and jobs; the inclusion of disadvantaged communities; the regeneration of older or declining industrial and commercial areas and other sites within the urban areas where this results in a more sustainable pattern of development; the enhancement of city and town centres for a variety of activities; and sustainable new communities with a mix of uses.
- 3.5 To support the delivery of key economic development priorities, including:
- investment in key sectors, especially knowledge-based businesses, including aerospace and advanced engineering; ICT; media and creative; professional and business services; tourism, retailing, construction and environmental technologies.
 - realising the potential of key development sites and locations, including new opportunities for securing business investment that are consistent with the spatial strategy; expansion of the port and airport, and related business development.
 - maintaining and developing the centres of Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare as vibrant business and multi-activity centres.
 - developing the economic potential of the sub-region's rural areas whilst protecting the environmental quality of the countryside.
 - facilitating business start-ups and small business development.
 - safeguarding and expanding the role of the smaller towns as service centres for their rural hinterlands.

Proposals

- 3.6 Existing employment locations and development allocations will be reviewed against projected requirements, in accordance with government guidance. Sites will be allocated and safeguarded in Local Development Documents. They will provide opportunities for a variety of locations and kinds of sites to meet assessments of demand for different kinds of business activity. These will be in accordance with the spatial strategy and will relate to the distribution of the workforce; the need for economic inclusion; and the creation of sustainable communities. Mechanisms will be established for regular review.
- 3.7 There will be a need to allocate a further 120 to 180 hectares of industrial land and 190,000 to 250,000 square metres of office floorspace for the period 2006-2026. These figures are based on current assessments of projected job growth, changing business structures, rates of development and property requirements, compared with existing and committed land supply and the results of changes of use and regeneration of existing sites.
- 3.8 Provision will include a variety of sizes and types of sites and premises to meet a wide range of different needs, including those of existing, new, expanding and relocating companies and the public and voluntary sectors. Continuing provision will be made for non-business uses, such as health, education retailing, leisure, cultural and community services: in some cases these should be located with new housing to re-vitalise existing communities or to form sustainable new communities.
- 3.9 Opportunities for economic development will include existing strategic locations, sites that are currently committed, new strategic locations that may be created in extensions to the urban areas that are under consideration, and locations for economic development that are appropriate within smaller settlements and the rural areas. Many of these opportunities will comprise mixed-use developments.

Strategic Locations:

- Bath City Centre
- Bath Western Riverside (regeneration area)
- Bristol City Centre
- South Bristol (including Hengrove Park)
- Weston-super-Mare (Town Centre and urban extensions)
- Avonmouth, Severnside and Royal Portbury
- Emersons Green (including the Science Park)
- Built-up areas north of Bristol and south of the M4 Motorway

Urban Extensions under consideration

(See also Policy Approach 2 above):

- South west of the Bristol Urban Area
- South east of the Bristol Urban Area
- North east of the Bristol Urban Area

4. MEETING THE NEED FOR NEW HOMES

Objectives:

- 4.1 To ensure that the housing requirements of present and future populations are met, including addressing existing backlogs of needs, through the provision of open market and affordable housing;
- 4.2 To provide an appropriate scale and distribution of housing to meet needs arising from:
 - urban regeneration;
 - changes in population structure and household formation; and
 - projected growth in the West of England economy.
- 4.3 To contribute to regeneration of the urban areas, and maximise the use of brownfield development sites in the cities and towns as part of a phased land use strategy that makes effective use of brownfield and greenfield sites.
- 4.4 To ensure that significant proposals for new housing are well located in relation to jobs, services and accessible open spaces, and can be effectively served by public transport
- 4.5 To provide affordable housing in a variety of locations that responds to the distribution of needs.
- 4.6 To safeguard and encourage investment in the existing housing stock where it can be brought up to decent home standards

Proposals

- 4.7 Provision will be made for a net increase of 92,500 dwellings in the West of England in the period 2006-26, averaging 4,625 dwellings per year. This will provide for the estimated net increase in households over the period, plus a response to the backlog of housing need, continuing affordability problems, and the need to replace some older stock.
- 4.8 Dwelling requirements will be accommodated in a phased manner from 2006-2026 in accordance with the totals in Table 2. Phasing will be dependent on the required social and transport infrastructure being committed before development takes place.
- 4.9 Redevelopment and regeneration of the urban areas will make a significant contribution to future housing provision whilst addressing the wider social and economic needs of the local population and improving the existing housing stock where it is economic to do so. Most new housing will be provided within the Bristol urban area, Bath and Weston-super-Mare.
- 4.10 About 60% of new housing will be developed through the continuation of existing policies or planned commitments. This will include continued redevelopment and re-use of urban sites for housing, already planned urban extensions at Harry Stoke and Emersons Green, implementation of the Weston-super-Mare Area Development Framework, and smaller developments in rural settlements. The remaining housing will be provided through new urban extensions and limited development elsewhere in the sub region.

- 4.11 The availability of sites for housing before 2011 (see table below) indicates a need to identify early opportunities for housing development. Whilst there will be a continuing emphasis on the development potential of the urban areas, attention will also need to be focussed on developing proposals for new communities in the form of extensions to the main urban areas or smaller towns, as set out in this strategy. This will help to maintain a continuous supply of new housing as existing commitments are developed.
- 4.12 Where major new housing is proposed, it is essential that it is developed either to enhance the sustainability of an existing community or as a new sustainable and balanced community with high standards of design, appropriate densities of development, open space, green infrastructure and access to jobs and local services that is not car-dependent.
- 4.13 The urgent need for more affordable housing will be addressed through
- targeted use of grant funding for social housing where either affordable housing targets are unviable or secure additional affordable housing above the target level;
 - Section 106 planning agreements to maximise the contribution to affordable housing from all open market housing projects falling within designated size thresholds;
 - forming partnerships with registered social landlords and the private sector to develop new, innovative, intermediate housing products; and
 - working with local, regional and national agencies and government to secure solutions.
- 4.14 Affordable housing targets on sites falling within current or future size thresholds will be set to reflect needs assessments. These are likely to be at least 30%, with higher percentages where adopted local plans, housing needs studies and land values support a higher figure.
- 4.15 Housing provision will be subject to regular monitoring and review to respond to trends in employment growth, economic activity rates and affordability. There will be regular updating of an area-wide affordable housing need model.

Sites for Gypsies and Travellers:

- 4.16 The unitary authorities in the West of England are jointly assessing the need for sites for Gypsies and travellers; in accordance with Government advice and guidance; in consultation with representatives of these communities; and in association with neighbouring authorities. They are also continuing to monitor the demand for and use of approved sites and unauthorised encampments.
- 4.17 The provision of sites will be addressed in local development frameworks in accordance with needs assessments, when they are available, following Government guidance.

Table 2: NEW HOUSING PROVISION 2006-26

| | | 2006-11 | 2011-26 | total 2006-26 |
|------------------------------|---|----------------|----------------|----------------------|
| B&NES | Adjoining Bristol PUA | 0 | | |
| | Within / adjoining Bath PUA | 2,200 | | |
| | Smaller towns and rural areas | 750 | | |
| | TOTAL | 2,950 | 12,200 | 15,150 |
| Bristol City | Within / adjoining Bristol PUA | 8,150 | | |
| | TOTAL | 8,150 | 19,150 | 27,300 |
| North Somerset | Adjoining Bristol PUA | 0 | | |
| | Within / adjoining Weston-super-Mare PUA | 1,700 | | |
| | Smaller towns and rural areas | 3,300 | | |
| | TOTAL | 5,000 | 20,900 | 25,900 |
| South Gloucestershire | Within / adjoining Bristol PUA | 5,700 | | |
| | Smaller towns and rural areas | 650 | | |
| | TOTAL | 6,350 | 17,800 | 24,150 |
| | TOTAL | 22,450 | 70,050 | 92,500 |

5. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PROVISION

- 5.1 The West of England has a rich and diverse culture that encompasses a wide variety of resources and activities within the cities, towns and rural areas. Its culture helps to define the identity of the sub-region; contributes to a quality of life that makes the area an attractive place in which to live, work and visit; and supports the economy through creative industries and tourism. Cultural activities have important roles in regenerating disadvantaged communities, renewing the fabric of urban areas, enhancing the quality of new development and animating the public realm.
- 5.2 The West of England Partnership is working with the *South West Cultural Infrastructure Development Strategy* to establish a strategic approach to local cultural entitlement, strategic facilities and events, and funding mechanisms. This strategy will operate in parallel with the Regional Spatial Strategy and will also have an important sub-regional dimension.

Objectives

- 5.3 Cultural values and provision should be embedded in the spatial strategy in its approaches to quality of life, health, education, regeneration, social inclusion, economic growth, quality of development and maintenance of cultural assets (including built and natural resources).
- 5.4 The Regional Spatial Strategy should also help direct the investment priorities of national and regional agencies in the culture, sport, leisure and tourism sectors to support investment in cultural activities and facilities in the West of England and enhance access to those activities and facilities at local and regional levels.

Proposals

- 5.5 Spatial planning strategies should support:
- the economic importance of creative industries (of which there are significant clusters in the West of England²), tourism (which is also a significant generator of income and employment) and sport (for which there is a centre of excellence in Bath).
 - the presence of regionally and nationally-significant venues and events in the West of England for the arts, leisure and sport, and the need to support investment in new facilities and upgrading established ones.
 - opportunities for investment in culture and cultural diversity to support urban regeneration, conservation, education and social inclusion.
 - the need for new community and cultural infrastructure to support a growing population and the needs of existing and new communities, based on assessments of 'cultural entitlement' and appropriate provision in different sizes and types of settlement .

² Reference to Bristol's Creative Industries Strategy

EDUCATION:

- 5.6 The area's four universities and more than 40,000 students are important for the economy, housing markets and cultural activities. The Government has nominated Bristol as one of six 'Science Cities': a focus for innovation and technology transfer within the region. These strengths support the economic objective of developing and attracting knowledge-based businesses.

Objectives

- 5.7 The West of England's considerable strengths in higher education, innovation and technology transfer will be important in furthering the economic goals of the spatial strategy.
- 5.8 However, there are wide variations in educational attainment that are currently being addressed, including pockets of educational disadvantage within areas of multiple deprivation. In these areas, which are mostly in Bristol, comprehensive regeneration strategies are being applied and will continue to require co-ordinated approaches and funding.
- 5.9 Growth in the area's population will require continuing investment in all sectors of education, including local schools and joint facilities in new communities, and skills training to meet the changing needs of employers and an ageing workforce. There will also be a continuing need to maintain and enhance existing educational facilities.

Proposals

- 5.10 Spatial plans will incorporate the needs of the education sectors, including the maintenance and enhancement of established facilities, the need for new provision to meet the needs of a growing population and changing skill requirements, and the opportunities for joint provision to meet the wider social and cultural needs of communities.

HEALTH:

5.11 The West of England has a number of specialist medical facilities that serve areas beyond the sub-region, including teaching hospitals, university training centres, and departments with national or international reputations. Access to local community health facilities is also important. Changes in provision may be needed to meet the needs of a growing and ageing population. The Bristol Health Services Plan envisages major investment, including the re-configuration of services and resources.

Objectives

- 5.12 To meet regional and sub-regional needs in the provision of specialist health care facilities.
- 5.13 To integrate health planning with the spatial strategy for the West of England, to reflect changing patterns of development, including regeneration within the urban areas and new communities, and the changing needs of an ageing population.

Proposals

- 5.14 Spatial strategy and health planning in the West of England will be linked by:
- Substantial investment and development in hospital services and facilities in the Bristol and Bath urban areas, supported by appropriate transport infrastructure;
 - community health facilities to serve existing and new communities;
 - comprehensive approaches to regeneration that seek to improve standards of health and redress health inequalities in areas of multiple deprivation; and
 - addressing transport problems in rural areas that limit access to health facilities.

6. TRANSPORT PRIORITIES

- 6.1 The West of England is vital to the economy of the South West and the United Kingdom with road and rail links, Bristol International Airport and the Port of Bristol acting as gateways for the region and other parts of the country.
- 6.2 Significant improvements in transport infrastructure in the West of England are essential for this continued economic and social success of the region and the sub-region. Work completed by the four Councils with the Department for Transport demonstrates that significant investment is required both to address the under-investment in transport that has occurred over the last 20 years and to provide the foundation for future high levels of growth. If we are to both manage and deliver sustainability then additional investment will be required to address existing social, economic and infrastructure imbalances and deficits. It is estimated that time lost due to congestion costs the local economy some £350m+ a year.
- 6.3 Transport investment in the West of England should be the top priority for the region: reflecting the sub-region's key role in delivering objectives of the Integrated Regional Strategy and the Regional Spatial Strategy and the pivotal role of its transport infrastructure in the region. Reducing congestion on the rail and highway networks of the West of England will improve accessibility for large parts of the South West.
- 6.4 Investment is required in a broad range of transport solutions. All are critical to address the shared priorities of congestion, road safety air quality and accessibility and to support growth, competitiveness and quality of life in the sub-region.
- 6.5 A package of major schemes is being developed. This will be shaped by the outcomes of the Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study expected at the end of 2005 and promoted by the sub-region's Joint Local Transport Plan. Achieving the spatial strategy's vision and objectives will require a range of major schemes to be delivered.
- 6.6 The sub-region's proposals are of regional significance. By securing sufficient measures at the sub-regional level they can relieve demand and capacity problems on the strategic transport network, fulfilling the sub-region's role of linking the South West with the rest of UK.

Objectives:

- 6.7 An essential part of the 2026 Vision for the West of England is achieving a transport system that is capable of accommodating the proposed level of growth. This includes reducing dependence on the car, delivering a step-change in public transport provision that is reliable, safe, affordable and accessible, and investing in traffic management solutions and the roads network.

Proposals:

- 6.8 Key elements of the sub-region's transport requirements include:
- A step change in the provision of accessible public transport (bus) services.
 - Significant development of the heavy rail network including local rail lines, for example Bristol to Portishead and Yate to Weston, with no loss of existing services.
 - Strategic rapid transit network delivering an attractive alternative to the private car.
 - Selective additional strategic highway capacity, for example to serve business investment and regeneration in South Bristol and Weston and to improve access to the airport.
 - Selective additional strategic links to motorways and other trunk route developments.
 - Potential demand management proposals (arising from government policy and examined in the Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study).
- 6.9 Improvements of this nature cannot be delivered immediately and it is necessary to plan for a staged approach to secure the necessary enhancements. This phased approach will need to keep pace with the rate of development and address existing deficits. Strategic transport improvements will be supported by evidence from the Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study. They will need to have top priority in the Regional Spatial Strategy to secure the necessary investment from the government.
- 6.10 Major scheme bids required in the short term include:
- bus showcase routes along all strategic corridors.
 - major Park & Ride improvements.
 - the development of a guided bus (streetcar) network.
 - significantly enhanced interchange facilities, and
 - selective local highway enhancements.
- 6.11 Local transport improvements will also be planned to address accessibility to local services, reduce the need to travel, improve social inclusion in existing communities, support neighbourhood centres within sustainable new communities, and to achieve environmental improvements generally.
- 6.12 The overall level of investment needed from government, the private sector and planning obligations is likely to exceed £1 billion.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE USE AND MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The area has a wide range of environmental assets of international, national and regional importance that will continue to be protected. Assets of local importance will also continue to be protected unless there are overriding requirements for change in the interest of sustainable development.
- 7.2 Green infrastructure including open space of amenity and recreational value, and the Forest of Avon, will be protected and enhanced within both urban areas and the countryside, as a key component of sustainable development.
- 7.3 Energy conservation measures will be promoted within existing buildings and required within new developments.
- 7.4 Targets for renewable energy production will be set that reflect the resources of the West of England and the opportunities for renewable energy projects.
- 7.5 Authorities and agencies within the sub-region will implement the South West Biodiversity Implementation Plan, the Avon Biodiversity Action Plan, and their own local action plans
- 7.6 Planning for the provision of strategic waste management facilities for all waste streams will be coordinated through partnership working. Waste minimisation will be at the heart of this work. Provision for additional public waste management facilities will be made, linked to areas of growth.
- 7.7 A review will be undertaken of available waste technologies and requirements and the need for landfill facilities.
- 7.8 The apportionment of aggregate production between North Somerset and South Gloucestershire will be established.

8 THE BRISTOL URBAN AREA

- 8.1 The Bristol urban area, the largest in the South West, is a key driver for the regional economy and regional gateway for transport connections by road rail air and sea. Its position as a “core city” and designation as a “science city” reflect its wider national roles and enormous economic potential. It also makes an important contribution to the cultural life of the region. To fulfil its potential, it must be the focus of urban renaissance within the region and sub-region.

Objective

- 8.2 To secure an integrated approach to renewal, regeneration and growth, within the area based framework of Policy Approach 7, which will deliver sustainable change and create mixed and balanced communities and strengthen Bristol’s role as the prime driver of the region’s economy.

Proposals

Within the wider urban area

- 8.3 An enhanced public transport infrastructure is required to serve Bristol City Centre, link with planned urban extensions and, as many main employment areas are away from the City Centre, provide new orbital connections. Proposals include the development of a ‘Showcase’ Greater Bristol Bus Network, the expansion of a Park and Ride network, improved reliability and frequency of services on the existing local rail network and the development of new rail links and light rapid transit systems.
- 8.4 In the suburban areas, to focus on creating high levels of accessibility, high densities, and co-location of services within and around larger district centres

Within the City of Bristol

- 8.5 The continued regeneration of Bristol City Centre as a regional centre to provide a focus for housing, office growth, leisure activities and regional cultural facilities, linked to training initiatives in adjoining deprived areas.
- 8.6 The integrated regeneration of deprived areas, focusing on south Bristol inner city wards and a northern arc of suburbs.

The North Fringe – communities adjoining Bristol to the north

- 8.7 The overall approach is to deliver the ‘*Vision for the North Fringe*’, which emphasises the importance of improving the sustainability of existing communities and public transport provision. Opportunities for redevelopment in the Cribbs Causeway area will be investigated to enhance its role as a centre for local communities in the light of planned new development.
- 8.8 Nearby opportunities for housing and employment will also be considered, taking into account potential impacts on the airfield.

- 8.9 Consideration will be given to further urban development in the Harry Stoke area to the west of the M32, whilst maintaining high quality green infrastructure in this area which is an important link between Bristol and the open countryside.

The East Fringe – communities adjoining Bristol to the east

- 8.10 To the north east of the urban area, development at Emerson's Green East is already being delivered, and consideration needs to be given to a further urban extension. Development will need to be linked with new and improved access to the M4, which is an essential component of the overall strategy to improve access to the south and east of Bristol, and to other investment in infrastructure, particularly public transport, to avoid adding to existing congestion on the Ring Road. Any further development should extend Emerson's Green East, enhancing its sustainability and avoiding coalescence with villages in the area.
- 8.11 Opportunities for redevelopment in some of the older communities adjoining Bristol to the east, such as Kingswood and Staple Hill will be pursued where they assist in meeting regeneration objectives.

Urban extensions to the south of Bristol

- 8.12 Areas for urban extensions will be examined to the south east and south west of Bristol. These should be associated with improvements in access to and around South Bristol, including improvements to the Ring Road between the M4, A4, A37, A38, A370 and M5. They will deliver a high quality of life by meeting high standards of design, access and physical social infrastructure, respecting the area's landscape setting, and providing green infrastructure that reinforces the Forest of Avon

The Avonmouth, Portbury and Severnside areas

- 8.13 The longer-term economic potential of Severnside will be developed through a comprehensive, integrated and sustainable strategy drawn up by the local authorities, in conjunction with developers. Important parts of this strategy will include addressing the challenges of improving road access and investing in flood defences to minimise the risk of flooding, whilst protecting the area's natural assets.
- 8.14 The continued development of port facilities, industry, warehousing and waste facilities at Avonmouth will be encouraged, with priority given to the re-use of previously developed land.

9. BATH

- 9.1 The City of Bath is a World Heritage Site in recognition of the international importance of its architectural heritage. It is important to the country and the region as a centre of history, culture, education and tourism, and is an important regional shopping and business centre.

Objectives

- 9.2 To promote Bath as a thriving, living city that harnesses its unique world heritage status to support increased vitality for the community and the region.
- 9.3 To realise Bath's potential to make a significant contribution to the image and attractiveness of the West of England and South West Region
- 9.4 To develop the City's economy, tourism and cultural diversity by visionary and sensitive strategies that harnesses and protects its exceptional environmental qualities.
- 9.5 To build on the emerging "Future of Bath" initiative to develop a clear vision for the longer term direction of the City and make the most effective use of the City's development opportunities.
- 9.6 To consider the implications for future development of Bath's relationship with the surrounding area and the importance of protecting its unique heritage and landscape setting.

Proposals

- 9.7 To use the City's unique environment to strengthen and diversify its retail and tourist economy for the benefit of its population and the region.
- 9.8 To rejuvenate Bath's role as a spa and establish the City as an accessible international destination for culture and leisure, with an enhanced public realm and riverside:
- 9.9 To strengthen the knowledge-based economy through links with the area's universities and other educational establishments.
- 9.10 To provide for housing, particularly affordable housing, to meet social and economic needs through the optimum use of brownfield land.
- 9.11 To tackle Bath's transportation issues through sensitive, innovative policies and investment, including managing the demand for travel to and from surrounding towns.
- 9.12 To complete the regeneration of the Western Riverside as a major mixed-use development, linked with realising the wider potential of the city centre through the emerging Vision for Bath.
- 9.13 To be a centre of excellence for sustainable management of urban heritage by interpreting and protecting its qualities for future generations.

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Resources and other requirements

- 9.14 Policy and guidance will be produced to facilitate and inform the above objectives.
- 9.15 Dedicated Major Projects management and implementation capacity has been created to deliver policy objectives
- 9.16 Strategic and local partnerships and delivery mechanisms will continue to be developed to harness both private sector and public resources. Public realm investment, transportation infrastructure and regeneration support is likely to be a necessary element of achievement of the vision for Bath

10. WESTON-SUPER-MARE

- 10.1 Weston-super-Mare has undergone major change as tourism and other established industries have declined and there has been an imbalance in the growth of housing and jobs. *'A New Vision for Weston'*, formulated in 2003, envisages Weston as *'a growing urban centre, with a dynamic and diverse modern economy, and a rejuvenated seafront and town centre'*.

Objectives:

- 10.2 The Weston Area Development Framework seeks to provide high-level guidance for the future prosperity of Weston. The objectives should be supported at regional and sub-regional levels to develop Weston's growth and role as an important sub-regional centre.
- The primary objective, articulated in the Weston Area Development Framework, is the regeneration of the whole of the town through employment-led investment and exemplary mixed-use development.
 - Maximising Weston's potential in terms of land, location, labour force and other assets.
 - Delivering employment-led regeneration to address the imbalance between homes and jobs, and to reduce out-commuting.
 - Enhancing the character and image of the town; its accessibility to Bristol and the Airport; internal and external traffic; rail links and public transport.
 - Revitalising the town centre and sea front, leisure and other services, and encouraging an improved retail offer and inward investment.
 - Achieving high quality and sustainable development with high standards of design, environmental conservation, enhanced biodiversity and a wider range of social infrastructure.

Proposals:

- 10.3 The Weston Area Development Framework outlines ten themes for the regeneration of Weston-super-Mare and describes proposals and projects that will deliver various elements, for example:
- **Accessible Weston:** high quality transport links to national networks and Bristol International Airport, and sustainable traffic management proposals.
 - **Heart of Weston:** improving the image and quality of the Town Centre

- **Weston Seafront:** Tropicana and Knightstone Island developments, improved promenade and sea defences; promotion of the beach for events.
- **Employment for the 21st Century:** a broad spectrum of employment opportunities with potential for over 17,000 jobs by 2026.
- **Sustainable Weston:** an exemplar of sustainable development
- **Weston Leisure:** a renewed, more upbeat image is planned for Weston with new seafront attractions, community leisure facilities and events.
- **Rhynes Landscape and Waterside Living:** supporting nature conservation and biodiversity with a unique setting for residential, employment and recreational developments: creating capacity for over 15,000 homes within the whole regeneration area to 2026.
- **Building the Community of the Future:** serving community needs and reducing deprivation in the most deprived wards in Weston.

Resources and other requirements:

10.4 The following requirements have been identified:

- phasing of housing related to job growth
- easing capacity constraints at Junction 21 and maintaining the role of the M5.
- producing (with the Environment Agency) a flood study to identify the measures required to manage water and alleviate flood risk.
- confirming the type and scope of a local regeneration delivery vehicle.
- clearly setting out the aspiration for new development to create sustainable communities, achieve a vibrant mix of uses and be of high design quality.
- describing key employment targets, land use quotas, and densities that should be met by master plans.
- identifying and implementing transport solutions that include links between Weston-super-Mare, Bristol International Airport and south Bristol, and a package of transport measures for Weston.
- setting out a phasing approach that will deliver coordinated growth and a delivery strategy that is capable of implementing the framework.
- identifying further work that will be required to deliver the framework and building in the potential for the framework to be adopted as an 'Area Action Plan'.

12. IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERY

Objectives:

- 11.1 Investment in infrastructure and services (including affordable housing) should be in phase with the demands of development and address existing deficiencies.
- 11.2 Special delivery mechanisms, involving the Unitary Authorities, other partners in the West of England Partnership and national/ regional agencies, should be considered where they are required to ensure the successful implementation of strategic regeneration and development opportunities, and where they:
- maintain local accountability;
 - attract additional funding from the Government;
 - improve the allocation and distribution of existing funding sources, including Section 106 contributions.
 - target the investment of national and regional agencies in accordance with the spatial strategy;
 - help co-ordinate the investment of utility companies, transport operators and other private-sector infrastructure providers to support the spatial strategy;
 - enhance private sector investment in infrastructure and services; and
 - maximise contributions to investment in infrastructure from the increased land values arising from development that are created by that investment.
- 11.3 Indicative costs of infrastructure are being prepared (subject to recommendations of the Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study) based on Local Transport Plan analysis and approaches to estimates of social infrastructure investment in other studies (e.g. South East England).

Proposals:

- 11.4 The West of England's allocations of regional funds for affordable housing, transport and economic development will need to reflect the demands of growth and of current deficits in provision.
- 11.5 Existing funding regimes will need to be augmented from central resources in accordance with the Government's approach in other regions through the Sustainable Communities Plan; recognising the importance of the West of England as a Core City Region to the regional and national economy.