

### **Regional Spatial Strategy Review**

#### **Advice from Peterborough City Council under Section 5(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004**

##### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, section 5(5), Peterborough City Council (PCC) is required, as a strategic planning authority, to provide advice to EERA on whether Peterborough should be designated as a sub-region with sub-regional policies in the RSS (East of England Plan). The EERA deadline for this information is the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2009, however it has been agreed that the council's formal advice will follow a Cabinet decision on the 30<sup>th</sup> March. The recommendations are set out below.

##### **2. Background**

- 2.1 A number of studies have been undertaken to investigate whether a functional Peterborough sub-region exists. The first of these, Peterborough Sub-regional Study, was completed in November 2003. This study identified that there is a coherent sub-region based around Peterborough and that there are common planning issues that transcend authority boundaries. These issues are associated with economic development, education, housing, environment and transport. Two further studies looked at the capacity of the Sub region to accommodate growth. The M11 Study (2004) concluded that Peterborough had both the land and transport capacity for additional growth. The Peterborough Study (2004) concluded that while the sub-region could accommodate the level of growth proposed in the draft RSS, the key issues of job growth, the role of Peterborough City Centre and the provision of affordable housing would require policy intervention.
- 2.2 In the study Peterborough Pathway to Prosperity: Economic Development Programme (July 2005), it was demonstrated that Peterborough has a capacity to deliver more jobs than that identified in the RSS. At the Examination in Public (EiP), this study was brought to the attention of the Panel and as a result, the housing and job targets were increased. The Panel amended the number of sub-regions in the RSS to four, with additional growth concentrated around the major urban areas called Key Centres for Development and Change (KCDC). Peterborough was identified as one of 21 KCDCs in the region. Representations were made to the Secretary of State requesting retention of Peterborough as a sub-region in the final version of the RSS. However, the Secretary of State considered that the Panel's recommendation of Peterborough as a KCDC would be the most suitable approach.

##### **3. RSS Review**

- 3.1 The Housing Green Paper (2007) requires a partial review of the regional plans to accommodate additional growth for homes by 2016. Policy IMP3 of the RSS also requires EERA to carry out an immediate review and to make provision for the development needs of the region for the 2011 to 2031 period. As part of the review process, PCC is requested to provide advice to EERA on whether a sub-regional approach would be appropriate for Peterborough and the identified sub-region. The review presents the opportunity to re-evaluate the

KCDC approach, assessing whether this remains the most appropriate to deliver sustainable growth, and address existing issues, through to 2031.

- 3.2 Planning Policy Statement No 11 (PPS11) paragraph 1.13 provides guidance on the identification of circumstances in which a sub-regional approach to spatial policy development is required. Whilst undertaking this assessment, there are two main principles to be considered. The first principle is the identification of a functional relationship between settlements, such as journey-to-work patterns, that differ from administrative boundaries. The second principle is the sub-region has to be based on clearly recognisable 'strategic policy deficit' which cannot be adequately addressed by general RSS policies or by Local Development Documents. The following section sets out the case for Peterborough in the context of these principles.

#### **4. Principle one: Identification of the Peterborough Sub-Region**

- 4.1 The Peterborough Sub-Regional Study (2003) provided convincing evidence to confirm that there is an identifiable, coherent sub-region based around Peterborough. There are a number of ways in which a sub-region can be defined such as using the retail catchment, commuting patterns, accessibility mapping and through the housing market. Other softer measures, such as newspaper circulation, also indicate a sub-region.
- 4.2 The Study defined the boundary of the Peterborough sub-region using above data and contributions from the neighbouring authorities and regional agencies. A map showing the boundary of the Peterborough sub-region is attached in appendix 2. The sub-region includes Peterborough and the ring of towns surrounding it. The towns are Bourne, Market Deeping and Stamford in South Kesteven District; Crowland, Holbeach and Spalding in South Holland District; March, Whittlesey and Wisbech in Fenland District and Oundle in East Northamptonshire.
- 4.3 An analysis of commuting trends in the 2001 Census shows that net commuting was 24% as a proportion of the resident workforce. Peterborough was net importer of workers with nearly twice as many people commuting into the area as commuting out. The highest level of in-commuting was from Lincolnshire (38%), with other significant in-flows from Huntingdonshire (20%) and Fenland (17%). The overall level of commuting increased between the 1991 and 2001 Census with net commuting as a proportion of the resident workforce increasing from 20% to 24% over this period. This commuting trend is likely to continue as Peterborough's employment base expands and demonstrates the continued interconnected relationship between the surrounding settlements.
- 4.4 DTZ Pieda on behalf of the East Midlands Regional Assembly identified a Housing Market Area (HMA) focussed on Peterborough. Broadly, the HMA covers the four local authorities of Peterborough, South Kesteven, South Holland, Rutland along with parts of East Northamptonshire, Huntingdonshire and Fenland. A further study carried out by Fordham Research completed in 2008 considered in detail the housing implications for this area. This research suggested that policies should be included in the East Midlands RSS to take into account the cross boundary nature of the sub region.

#### **5. Principle two: Strategic Policy Deficit**

- 5.1 Policy PB1 in the published East of England Plan was predominately derived from the sub-regional policy proposed in the draft RSS. However, as a result of

the amendments the policy only focuses on the Peterborough area and not the surrounding settlements. As the long term growth aspirations of Peterborough are realised, policy interventions will be required to ensure the impacts on the surrounding area are managed.

- 5.2 The Core Strategy, supported by the IGS, sets out the importance of an 'Environment Plus' economic scenario for Peterborough. This scenario seeks to encourage Environmental industries to locate in Peterborough and to provide policy intervention to fit the needs of these industries. A critical aspect of this will be the establishment of the University in Peterborough. This will assist in the realisation of meeting Peterborough's potential in the knowledge based industries. A University will increase the skill level of the sub-region's workforce and to attract high value and high skill jobs to this part of the region. However, in order for the benefits of a University to be spread across the sub-region strategic policies will be required.
- 5.3 Sub-regional policies are needed to provide guidance and co-ordinate growth between both East of England and East Midlands regions. The sub-region does have a distinctive economy that is based on traditional sectors such as engineering, food processing and agricultural services that cross the regional boundary. There is also emerging sectors based on environmental industries, warehousing and logistics. These sectors would need to be protected from the downturn in the economy and may be overlooked by regional-wide policies.
- 5.4 Transport investments in particular are required to improve the accessibility to locations within the sub region which are often regarded as remote. Wisbech and March, two of the larger market towns in Fenland, would particularly benefit from better transport connections to Peterborough.

## **6. Delivery mechanism**

- 6.1 In addition to meeting the above principles, a sub-regional approach could be complemented by a delivery mechanism. This would assist in cross boundary decision making particularly across the regional administrative boundary, co-ordinate the funding of infrastructure and attract investment.

## **7. Summary**

- 7.1 As defined in PPS11, there are two main principles for the identification of circumstances in which a sub-regional approach to spatial policy development is required.
  - Comprehensive research has identified a functional relationship between settlements that differ from administrative boundaries and therefore identify a sub-region.
  - A 'strategic policy deficit' has been identified in the areas of housing, transport, employment, regeneration and education. Policy intervention will be required to address this deficit, particularly in the context of the economic downturn and Peterborough's long term growth aspirations.
- 7.2 The long term growth aspirations, as detailed in the section 4(4) advice, should be matched by mechanisms to ensure delivery that benefits the sub-region. Possible mechanisms, including a sub-regional body should be explored as part of the review process.

**Annex A**  
Boundary of Peterborough Sub-region

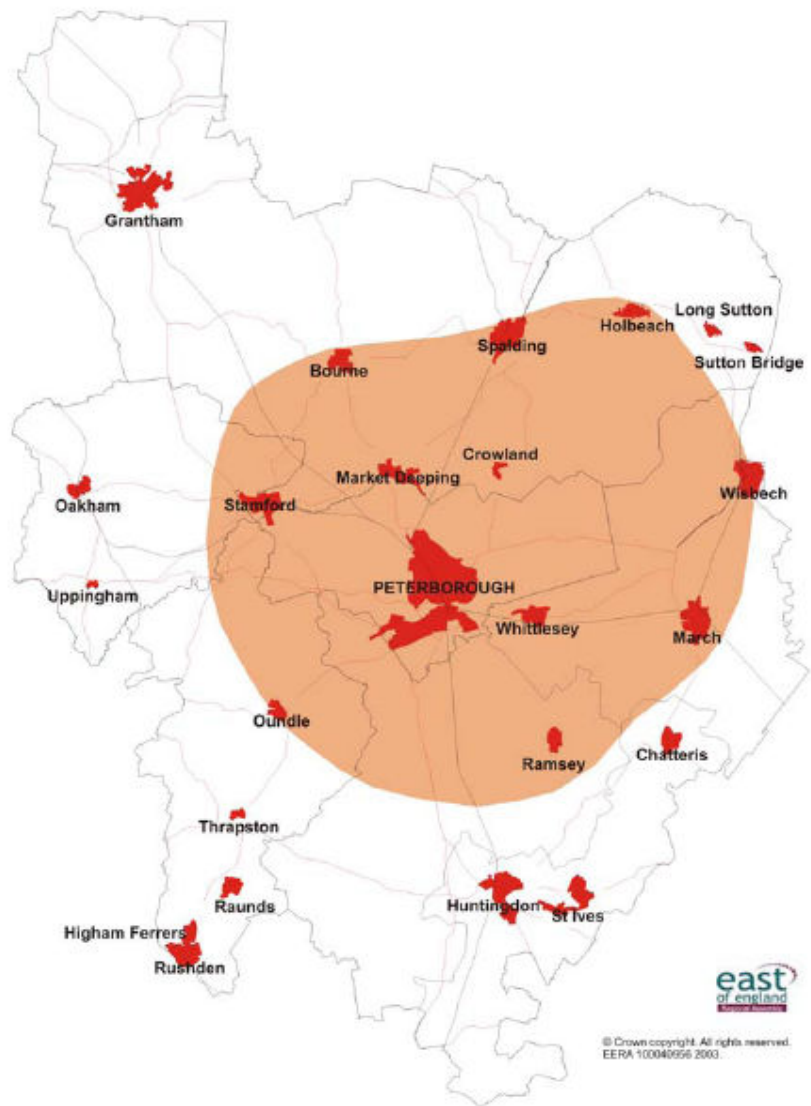


Figure 2.7: The Peterborough sub-region