

SPACED OUT IN SPATIAL STRATEGY *continued*

The Bristol Civic Society (BCS) Local Agenda 21 (LA21) Land Use Group response

BCS jointly with the LA21 Group responded to the consultation. These were our key concerns:

- **Urban sprawl must be avoided** particularly in the green belts, which contain the sustainable city. RSS's object should be to attain the compact, higher densities of the great European cities and not lead to the extended cities of USA.
- **Greater Bristol is a single economy and built-up area.** Unless there is a clear direction to act collectively, as a sub-region, the four unitary authorities would be free to act autonomously for reasons that could be incompatible with the aims of a neighbour authority.
- **Urban extensions into green belt** without appropriate infrastructure will repeat past mistakes where large housing estates have been built without the infrastructure to support them. Where the residents do not work locally these developments increase car journeys and contradict the RSS's policy to create sustainable communities and to reduce traffic congestion, climate change and pollution.
- **The economic factors** that developers face will cause them to choose green belt development before urban re-generation. There must be a clear policy of give urban regeneration priority, to produce sustainable communities and to reduce car journeys.
- **The assumptions of economic and population growth** may not happen to the projected extent. Green belt should only be released for development after all other options have been exhausted.
- RSS must propose a **radically revised transport strategy** to support sustainable regeneration and development.
- If Bristol International Airport is permitted to expand substantially, the car will continue to be the predominant means of access. This will cause a **significant increase in road traffic** and car park expansion.

The Examination in Public

The Civic Society was invited to participate orally at the EiP on the 15th May to examine the WoE housing market area sub-regional policies and on the 26th/27th June to examine the policies to manage and to improve the regional transport network. The EiP rules require that we file a statement of our evidence. BCS has drafted amendments to revise the sub-regional housing market policies to reflect our concerns based on these objectives:

- **To accommodate growth within the built up area** for as long as possible by increasing residential densities and the local availability of jobs and services with associated environmental improvements;
- **As a pre-condition for permission for urban extensions into the green belt** there must be proof (i) that development opportunities within the built-up area are practically exhausted and (ii) that within the proposed urban extensions, there are local employment opportunities, services and transport facilities to keep the need to travel by car, to a minimum.
- To establish **agreed criteria** for adding sites to and (only when necessary) removing sites from the Green Belt;
- To require **regular, frequent updating** and scrutiny of forecasts for the requirements for homes, commercial floorspace and other facilities which will enable informed decisions to be taken on the location of development.

The Civic Society has drafted amendments to revise the regional transport policies to reflect these concerns:

- Urban extensions will create more car journeys and congestion.
- RSS policies must aim to reduce traffic and pollution as a whole rather than just reducing the rate at which traffic increases.
- The RSS should propose a Transport Authority for the WoE sub-region to be the coordinating and regulatory authority, with powers over public transport and demand management similar to those in London.
- Bristol International Airport should be developed and optimised within its existing capacity. Any development must be supported by improved access by public transport to prevent increased road congestion.

Who's who at the EiP

The participants are called mainly from various arms of Government and commerce. The Civic Society will make common cause with Bath Preservation Trust and Friends of the Earth who agree with BCS that immediate urban extensions into the green belt must not be permitted, and that the proposed transport policies are inadequate to promote a reduction in the need to make short car journeys, to reduce traffic congestion, to improve air quality and to promote efficient public transport.

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