

Response to Inspector's request for statement on the status of the MAA

"The email and link from Mr Daniels highlights an issue that I should have included in my note of 8 September as matters for the Council to address in relation to housing. I apologise for raising this at this late stage. Either integrated with what the Council is working on, or as a supplement to it, would the Council please explain:

1) Whether the West of England Partnership still exists

Yes, the West of England Partnership brings together the four Unitary Authorities of Bath and North East Somerset Council, Bristol Council, North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council, and a range of social economic and environmental partners. It co-ordinates high level planning to improve the quality of life of its residents and provide for a growing population. Core Document CDE54 reflects this in the discussion on Joint working and further information on the status and role of the West of England Partnership can be accessed from the website:

<http://www.westofengland.org/>

and the current status /future intentions regarding the Multi Area Agreement;

At the point of preparation:

The MAA sets out the ambitions and priorities of the West of England, the progress made and future actions and outcomes planned. It also poses asks of government designed to support greater progress and to increase local powers and capacity.

Now:

With some exceptions, such as its response to the now abandoned emerging Regional Spatial Strategy, much of the MAA remains relevant to the priorities and actions the West of England is pursuing. Progress has been monitored and managed, including by the Partnership Board and in the periodic meeting of local authority Chief Executives, the Director of the Government Office and the Regional Directors of SWRDA and H&CA. Work programmes have been modified but it is not proposed to revise the MAA itself, not least because relevant content is being incorporated into the West of England's proposals in response to the Government's development of Local Enterprise Partnerships in natural economic areas.

It is noted that the MAA is a voluntary agreement and does not form part of the Bristol Development Framework and is not part of the statutory development plan.

2) How the Council's proposals for housing in the Core Strategy relate to the aims and objectives for housing in the MAA and what are the implications of any significant differences between what the Council proposes now and that document.

Bristol City Council's proposals for housing remain consistent with the objectives for housing in the existing MAA. The MAA was prepared during 2008/9 and reflects the aspirations and spatial focus of the Core Strategy, and expresses the same areas of priority for regeneration. The MAA seeks to prioritise development on previously developed land and that where investment contributes to regeneration. The only significant difference between the MAA and the Core Strategy as the Council would now wish to progress, is in relation to urban extensions in the green belt. The MAA refers to urban extensions in the following terms:

....those urban extensions **necessary** to meet existing housing needs and sustain the needs of a growing economy. Pg 27

To prioritise development locations which contribute to urban regeneration and intensification, whilst ensuring timely joint spatial and infrastructure planning of the **required** urban extensions. Pg 38

The West of England Partnership proposes to prioritise development locations which contribute to city and town centre regeneration, intensification and expansion, and minimise the impact on the environment, but is ensuring early joint spatial and infrastructure planning of the **required key strategic sites, including Urban Extensions.**

Whilst the sequencing and phasing of development will be determined taking into account the unitary authorities response and possible challenges to the final RSS, other factors to be taken into account include:

- phasing of strategic Infrastructure delivery and investment streams;
- deliverability on the basis of technical and environmental considerations and obstacles balanced with strategic objectives and success factors;
- the impact and implications on Economic Recovery and Regeneration;
- market conditions and engagement with the development industry, communities and key stakeholders;
- and, **Council/sub-regional priorities, confirmed in the context of the RSS,** finally confirmed in the way described in 'context'Pg 42

These statements make clear in effect that the urban extensions would only be pursued where required either by the emerging RSS (now abandoned), or where considered necessary to meet local housing needs.

The MAA objectives and a note on consistency with the Core Strategy are set out in the table below:

Objectives for Housing in the MAA (page 38)	Proposals for Housing in the Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy
<p>To work with strategic partner organisations and government to mitigate and to overcome the impact of the current economic recession on our plans to meet the needs of existing and future residents for homes, and to continue planning to meet the projected medium and long term needs.</p>	<p>BCC has worked with adjoining authorities, the HCA and South West RDA and central government representatives in establishing priorities for the delivery of affordable housing in the West of England through the mechanism of the 'Single Conversation'. The priorities as identified in Bristol are set out in Appendix A and are consistent with the spatial aspirations of the Core Strategy, identifying key opportunities in South Bristol, and on inner city previously developed land sites. Whilst development in key sites in identified areas of South Bristol remains a priority (e.g. Kingswear and Torpoint, and Knowle West Regeneration Framework area), the implications of the economic recession on available public subsidy for such proposals is likely to delay the delivery of these proposals until later in the plan period (see also paper on South Bristol).</p>

<p>To accommodate the housing needs of existing and future residents including the appropriate diversity of size, types, price and tenure, including affordable and supported housing.</p>	<p>Policies BCS17 and BCS18 of the Core Strategy address this objective directly, by seeking to widen the range of available housing across the city, and in areas of priority need for focused regeneration as identified in BCS1 and BCS3. These areas are also identified as areas of priority need for the MAA, explicitly South Bristol, and also the focused opportunities identified in central Bristol (St Phillips north of the Feeder) and the Inner East and the Northern Arc. The BCC position on housing need and demand has been set out in Housing Position Paper 10th October 2010</p>
<p>To ensure new development provides a mix of uses to support homes and jobs in sustainable communities, and to reduce the need to travel.</p>	<p>Policies BCS1, 2,3,7,10,11,and 12 of the Core Strategy address this objective directly, by seeking to ensure accessible balanced and sustainable communities</p>
<p>To prioritise development locations which contribute to urban regeneration and intensification, whilst ensuring timely joint spatial and infrastructure planning of the required urban extensions.</p>	<p>Policies BCS1, BCS3 and BCS20 of the Core Strategy give focus to the needs of South Bristol, The Northern Arc and Inner East Bristol for regeneration, and the importance of maximising opportunities for the re-use of previously developed land. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan takes into account related issues.</p> <p>With regard to urban extensions – the wording of the objective refers to joint planning of required urban extensions – the revocation of Regional Strategies has removed the requirement by an external agency for the urban extensions to be progressed. The unitary authorities of the WoE are now proposing not to progress urban extensions adjoining Bristol to the southeast and southwest. There is no conflict for Bristol, therefore, in the proposed delivery of new homes as intended in proposed revisions to the Core Strategy following the abandonment of the emerging RSS.</p>
<p>To engage stakeholders, local communities and developers in planning and delivering well designed, mixed use and sustainable new and existing communities.</p>	<p>The Statement of Community Involvement addresses this objective directly, by seeking to clear engagement of all sectors of the community in the preparation of development plan documents</p>
<p>To ensure that all new buildings are efficient in the use of energy and water and capable of being used flexibly in their lifetimes, with the aim of addressing and reducing the effects of climate change.</p>	<p>Policies BCS13, 14 and 15 of the Core Strategy address this objective directly by seeking to ensure climate change is appropriately addressed in all development.</p>
<p>To ensure new development is designed and constructed to the highest quality in</p>	<p>Policies BCS 21,21 and 23 of the Core Strategy address this objective directly, by</p>

terms of appearance and sustainability to ensure it improves and enhances our natural and built environment and heritage, and minimises environmental impact and delivers successful neighbourhoods.	seeking to ensure that all development is quality design to improve and enhance the environment.
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

3) Whether what the Council is now proposing in the Core Strategy have any implications for the aims and objectives for economic growth in the MAA. "

Comments on the relationship between housing levels and projections of economic growth, and Bristol's position within the West of England are set out in the Council's Housing Position Paper of 10 October 2010

<http://www.bristol.gov.uk/ccm/content/Environment-Planning/Planning/planning-policy-documents/bristol-development-framework/examination-hearing/file-storage-items/bcc-housing-position-paper-october-2010.en> .

Bristol City Council's aspiration is to deliver the necessary homes to ensure the future growth of the city. The MAA supports this position.