

Draft response on EEIP to Deborah Cadman, Chief Executive EEDA

Dear Deborah,

East of England Implementation Plan – Cambridgeshire Response

I am writing to you on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council in relation to the East of England Implementation Plan (EEIP) currently issued for consultation by EEDA. We have consulted closely with Cambridgeshire Horizons and the Greater Cambridge Partnership in preparing this response so that you can regard it as a unified view from the Greater Cambridge area.

Our detailed response is attached as an appendix and will be submitted via the online portal as requested. However I am taking the opportunity in this letter to bring to your attention our key views on this important document.

The EEIP usefully brings together for the first time the wide range of delivery requirements for the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and the Regional Economic Strategy (RES). However, while we recognise that this is a “work in progress” which will be informed by the consultation response, we find the document seriously lacking in a number of important respects:

- a) There is no summary analysis of the overall scale of the delivery challenge in financial terms or the identification of priorities or major strategic elements such as the much needed improvements to the A14.
- b) There is very little explanation of how delivery is to be achieved or who is responsible for particular elements.
- c) There is no recognition of the longer term growth challenges arising from early work on the RSS review which set an important context for shorter to medium term implementation plans.
- d) There needs to be much better alignment with local authority delivery for example through Local Transport Plans, Local Area Agreements and the new duties in relation to flood risk and water management being introduced as a result of the Pitt Review.
- e) We feel that the need to adapt to climate change has not been fully recognised in the EEIP in a number of areas, not only flood risk and water management.
- f) Although there is some recognition of the recession there is an inadequate strategic response explaining how the region will make an early recovery and deliver growth and new infrastructure in an era of restraint on public finance.

Turning more particularly to the Greater Cambridge area, I would highlight the following points:

- i) As the economy of the Cambridge area is vital to the success of the East of England as a whole, it is important that our potential for sustainable growth is maintained by adequate investment in infrastructure and skills – and this needs to be recognised in the EEIP.
- ii) There should also be recognition of the widely supported Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth which sets out the key principles for new development relating to Community, Connectivity, Climate and Character.
- iii) The progress being made towards a more sustainable transport in the area seems to be underplayed by the EEIP, bearing in mind the implementation of the Cambridge Guided Busway and ambitious plans to make other major improvements to public transport and facilities for walking and cycling.
- iv) A number of key elements in the transport plan have been omitted including Chesterton Rail Station and proposals related to Cambridge as a Cycling Demonstration Town.
- iv) The important role of market towns in economic growth and housing delivery in Cambridgeshire needs to be given much greater weight. There is no mention of Fenland at all in the EEIP despite the priority that is given to regeneration of the economy and improving skills in the area.
- v) Cambridge is becoming an important hub for the development of new skills and markets for sustainable construction, including Smartlife and now the exciting new proposals for the Hive. The importance of these initiatives for Greater Cambridge and the wider Sub-Region should be recognised.
- vi) You will be aware that Cambridgeshire Horizons is leading in the exploration of innovative funding mechanisms such as the Variable Tariff and Tax Increment Financing, which will be fundamental to housing and infrastructure delivery, but this strand of work is not included in the sub-regional priorities.

I hope you will be able to incorporate these views in the revision of the EEIP. The officers of the Council, Cambridgeshire Horizons or the Greater Cambridge Partnership would be very willing to assist you in this task.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Smith
Executive Director for Environment Services