

NOTE FROM THE INSPECTORS TO GNDP
FOLLOWING DISCUSSION AT MATTER 4 ON 23rd
NOVEMBER ABOUT FLEXIBILITY OF JCS

Flexibility

PPS 12 at Paragraph 4-46 states that a strategy is unlikely to be effective if it cannot deal with changing circumstances. Core Strategies should look over a long time frame – 15 years usually but more if necessary. In the arena of the built and natural environment many issues may change over this time. Plans should be able to show how they will handle contingencies: it may not always be possible to have maximum certainty about the deliverability of the strategy. In these cases the core strategy should show what alternative strategies have been prepared to handle this uncertainty and what would trigger their use. Authorities should not necessarily rely on a review of the plan as a means of handling uncertainty.

With regard to the NDR, the GNDP view continues to be that there is a reasonable prospect of its delivery within the timespan necessary, to begin construction at the growth triangle from 2014/15 as per page 111 of the JCS.

That may or may not be so. However, the point remains that one could not be certain of NDR delivery at the programmed adoption date of the JCS.

Consequently in order to secure soundness in relation to the “flexibility” element of the “effectiveness” determinant, we invite you to consider to what extent there could be potential for a Plan B partial alternative to the NDR.

We realise that the GNDP position is that the NDR is necessary to deliver the full growth triangle but this may be an unnecessarily high-risk approach. Development of a contingency option which enabled

programmed development to commence, even if completion of the NDR was not assured, could provide a sound alternative Plan B.

It would be necessary for GNDP to consider carefully what changes would need to be made to the JCS, having discussed the matter with the Highways Agency and any other relevant parties, including local landowners. Ideally any Plan B would provide a justified explanation of the amount of development which it could release and when. The JCS would also need to explain that once Plan B had been completed, if there were still no prospect of the NDR being constructed, then the whole of the JCS would need to be reviewed.

It is possible that much of the detail of Plan B could be devolved to the AAP, but it would be essential to have given Plan B sufficient consideration at this stage, to know that the AAP was not being faced with an impossible brief.

23rd November, 2010