

**From Councillor Jose Hales to the New Communities Portfolio Holder:**

*“Could the portfolio holder explain to members what this council’s policy is now regarding housing provision numbers given, that the Regional Spatial Strategy policy has now been abolished?”*

Shortly after the Secretary of State abolished the Regional Spatial Strategies for England, this question was answered in part by the Chief Planning Officer at the Department for Communities & Local Government who wrote to all local planning authorities to explain the practical implications of the Secretary of State’s decision and to provide guidance on how local planning authorities should proceed during the transitional period before the government’s new planning system comes into effect at the end of 2011. The Chief Planning Officer’s letter was put on the Council’s web-site on day it was received – 6<sup>th</sup> July.

In reply to the question, the letter explains that the planning policies which will remain in force are the Council’s adopted Development Plan Documents and the saved policies from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003. The housing numbers that do apply are now only to be found in the Council’s Core Strategy which was adopted in January 2007 (20,000 homes 1999 – 2016), pre-dating the Regional Spatial Strategy which was not adopted until May 2008 (23,500 homes 2001 – 2021).

This information and the links to both the Council’s Core Strategy and the Structure Plan ‘saved policies’ are on the Council’s web-site and this information was included in the July Planning Policy Update which is sent to all Parish Councils and to members.

The housing numbers in our Core Strategy are based on the 2003 Structure Plan which was developed locally and endorsed by all of the Districts as well as the County Council. Those housing numbers were produced by local forecasts of the growth of the local economy and local population and are the houses that we all agreed would be needed to ensure the continued prosperity of the area and to stop houses becoming unaffordable to more local people. Based on those housing numbers we have an agreed development strategy which all Councils in Cambridgeshire have signed up to and, through the Joint Development Control Committees, we are actively delivering

Looking to the future once the new local planning system is in place, housing numbers will be found in the new style Local Plans and will be based once more on forecasts of prospects for our local economy and population growth. We are already working with partners to begin the developing the evidence needed and I am looking forward to working with our local communities to develop the new local plans.