



GOVERNMENT OFFICE  
FOR THE SOUTH WEST

9 May 2006

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Dear Bryony

**Formal Submission of Draft Revised Regional Spatial Strategy:  
REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR THE SOUTH WEST**

Thank you for your letter of 26<sup>th</sup> April 2006 to Bronwyn Hill enclosing the RSS submission documents, together with your subsequent letter of 4 May 2006 clarifying that you have now inserted the correct postal address for the Panel Secretariat on the cover. I am pleased to confirm receipt of the draft revised RSS, the report of the findings of the sustainability appraisal, and the pre-submission consultation statement which you have submitted to us in accordance with part 5(8)(b) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and your team on reaching an important milestone in the RSS review process. I know that you have been making arrangements to ensure that the publication of the Plan and consultation process can now take place as soon as is possible in accordance with the legislation and advice in Planning Policy Statement 11. If you wish to discuss these further please do not hesitate to contact Tom King or Neal Whitehead.

As you know, we are expecting an Examination in Public to be held by an independent Panel to test the Plan starting in April 2007. A final decision will be made on this in accordance with section 7(4) of the Act after the end of the consultation period. The EIP would be chaired by Jim Parke, assisted by Rhys Davies, and David Lavender has been nominated as inspector member of the Panel. Brian Cobley will be the Panel Secretary, and he should be your point of contact with

the Panel. The Panel Assistant, Elaine Lamb, will work with the Panel Secretary. The Panel Secretary and Assistant will be based at 2 Rivergate, Bristol.

I would like to remind you that there are certain things that Government Office staff will not be able to do now that you have submitted the draft RSS. In particular, we will not be able to enter into discussions, with yourselves or other stakeholders, about the content of the Plan. This is to ensure that we do not prejudice our role later in the process when we will advise the Secretary of State about proposed changes and final revisions to the Plan in the light of the Panel report and representations received.

We will of course continue to be actively involved in the RSS process over the coming months. By the end of the consultation deadline we will submit comments, on behalf of Government, to the independent Panel focussing on any aspects of the Plan that we think potentially conflict with national policy or need further consideration through the Examination process. We, along with you, will liaise with the Panel Secretary in order to provide factual briefing as required and to advise on the selection of matters and participants for the EIP. We will continue to provide advice about procedural matters. We will also continue to attend the sorts of meetings that we have in the past, such as RSPTG and the POG. However, as explained above, at these and other meetings dealing with the content of RSS or closely related matters, Government Office staff may need to refrain from entering into the discussions.

Finally, I would suggest that it may be helpful to make the contents of these letters publicly available. We will update our website accordingly, and perhaps you could consider doing the same.

*Yours sincerely*



**HILARY NEAL**