

8Eiii.1 Have the water supply and waste water treatment, and transport implications of the growth proposals been adequately considered (including policy CO6)?

Swindon and Oxford are both located within Thames Water's SWOX water supply area, which straddles the South East and South West regions. Any changes in development levels at either Swindon or Oxford could therefore have an impact upon water supply and therefore affect the ability of the other to achieve regional growth targets. Water resources were identified in the Swindon Joint Area Study 2005 as an issue that could impact upon the growth levels proposed in the draft South West RSS. To ascertain the scale of this impact a Swindon Water Cycle Study was commissioned jointly by Swindon Borough Council, Wiltshire County Council, the Environment Agency, Thames Water and the East Swindon Development Group, This Study has now been completed and represents a stronger evidence base to judge the demand and need for water up to 2026.

The Study has concluded that water resources in the Swindon area (SWOX water resource zone) are constrained both by the absence of resource and the inability to transport the resource around the network. However, in terms of major resources, development in Swindon may not need to be constrained by delivery of the Upper Thames Reservoir until 2023/2024, and enforcement of greater water efficiency measures could mean that reliance on the reservoir for major resources could be offset until 2027/2028.

The peak week deficits are of concern, and these are subject to ongoing work by TW updating their 2006WRP. However, these issues would not necessarily require a major resource development such as the Upper Thames reservoir; other smaller scale schemes removing network constraints would be most cost effective if peak week demand in SWOX was the only issue. However, timely delivery of the reservoir is still required to meet dry year demands for the London WRZ and maintain flows in dry periods in the River Thames. The timely delivery of the reservoir will remove some of issues associated with the peak week demand deficit in SWOX, and may therefore remove the need for other infrastructure solutions.

8Eiii.2 Are the proposals in the Implementation Plan (including for social and green infrastructure) clear, justified and well related to the spatial strategy? What are the priorities?

At present there are very good rail links between Swindon and the South East. This is heavily influence by the legacy of Brunel and is a strong historical element of Swindon's economic success. The South East RSS should recognise the importance of these links and seek to ensure that the quality and frequency of the rail links between London and Swindon are maintained. Additionally the South East RSS should pro-actively encourage the provision of a direct rail link between Swindon and Oxford. The Strategic Rail Authority has recognised the potential of the route in their long-term plan and the South East RSS should support the strategic benefits of a rail link within the regional planning framework. In addition to the economic benefits

for both Swindon and Oxford, it would also help to achieve modal shift by providing a quick direct service between Swindon and Oxford.

Work is progressing on a borough-wide Green Infrastructure strategy for Swindon, including a pilot study for the Eastern Development Area, which is identified as an area of search for 12,000 dwellings in the draft South West RSS. There is strong potential for Green Infrastructure links to be established between the South East and the South West. It would therefore be prudent if the South East RSS formally recognised this potential and endeavoured to ensure links between Central Oxfordshire and the South West, through joint working if necessary, to deliver a holistic and co-ordinated strategy across administrative boundaries.