

**DRAFT REGIONAL SPATIAL
STRATEGY FOR THE NORTH WEST
EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC**

**GUIDANCE NOTES FOR
PARTICIPANTS**

Preliminary Meeting: 27 July 2006

Public Examination Commences: 31 October 2006

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the North West has been prepared by the North West Regional Assembly (NWRA).
- 1.2 In July 2004 the Assembly launched the process for the Draft RSS, and published RSS Issues Papers for consultation, in 2005 they developed RSS Option Papers, which were put out to consultation. From April 2005 – January 2006 the Assembly worked on the preparation of the Draft RSS, which was submitted to the Government on 30 January 2006. The consultation period on the submitted Draft RSS ran from 6 March – 12 June 2006.
- 1.3 The Secretary of State has decided to hold a Public Examination (EIP) of selected matters arising from the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy.
- 1.4 These Notes have been prepared to assist those individuals and organisations who have been selected to participate in, or who wish to observe, the Examination in Public of the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West.

The Purpose of the Examination

- 1.5 The main purpose of the Examination is to provide an opportunity for a structured discussion and testing of the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) before an independent Panel appointed by the Secretary of State. The discussion will be guided by a selection of matters arising from consultation on the Draft RSS. This will provide the main basis on which the Secretary of State can decide whether any changes are required to the RSS before it is adopted.
- 1.6 The Examination is not a review of all the proposals contained in the Draft RSS, nor is it a hearing of all objections. It will, however, ensure that there is public discussion of those major issues of concern, where the Panel considers that an examination could usefully provide further information. Participants are selected to ensure a broad mix of viewpoints on each issue for debate.
- 1.7 The Examination will address strategic issues. It will not be appropriate to discuss the merits of individual development schemes, or to address land use allocations, which are the concern of local development documents, unless they are of strategic significance for the Draft RSS. National policies as such will not be debated, but the Examination will be able to consider the application of such policies if they directly affect those areas covered by the Draft RSS.
- 1.8 The Panel report, together with all the consultation responses, must be taken into account when the Secretary of State decides whether any changes need to be made to the Draft RSS.
- 1.9 In preparing its report following the Examination, the Panel will include recommendations for amending the Draft RSS. The broad questions selected by the Panel are designed to stimulate discussion about the main elements of the consultation draft, that have attracted public concern, or where there may be conflict with other policies. In preparing their Written Submissions and in debate at the Examination, Participants are asked to consider the wording of the Draft RSS and whether or not changes are required, as well as the underlying issues. Participants are asked to be as specific as possible about the changes they wish to see, including where appropriate suggested wording.
- 1.10 Detailed guidance on the conduct of the Examination is also contained within PPS11.

2. Panel Members and Secretariat

Panel Members

- 2.1 The Secretary of State has appointed Chris Shepley CBE BA DipTP MRTPI as the Chair of the Panel and Mike Hurley BA DipTP MRTPI as the Inspector Member of the Panel. Both Panel members are independent of all Participants in the Examination. Biographies can be found on the website.

Panel Secretariat

- 2.2 The Panel Secretary is Mrs Helen Wilson BA(Hons). Her duties include briefing the Panel, dealing with correspondence on behalf of the Panel and assisting them with the preparation of the report. Any correspondence for the attention of the Panel should be sent to the Panel Secretary.
- 2.3 The Panel Assistant is Miss Joanne Parr BSc(Hons). She is responsible for the administrative requirements up to and during the Examination. Her duties include maintaining the Library and ensuring that documents are distributed as necessary. Any queries regarding the programme, attendance at the Preliminary Meetings and the Examination, as well as all other general queries should be directed to the Panel Assistant.
- 2.4 The Panel Secretary and Panel Assistant have been appointed for the duration of the Examination process and are independent of all Participants involved. Both work under the direction of the Panel Chair.
- 2.5 The Panel will also be assisted on technical matters by Mark Wilson BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI and Chris White BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI, Higher Planning Officers from the Planning Inspectorate.
- 2.6 Contact details for the Panel Secretariat are provided at Appendix A.

3. Preliminary Meeting

- 3.1 The Preliminary Meeting will be held at The Investment Centre, Wigan on Thursday 27 July, 11.00 am, a map showing its location is provided at Appendix B.
- 3.2 The purpose of the Preliminary Meeting is to clarify any procedural questions. The Panel wish to encourage Participants to reach agreement in advance of the Examination on as much of the factual background of their intended submissions as possible (see paragraph 7.1 below). The Preliminary Meeting will be held during the 28-day period that PPS11 requires for formal comments on the Draft List. Any person can make comments during this period (on the Matters or the Participants) by writing to the Panel Secretary. The Panel will consider these comments (and consult with the North West Regional Assembly and Government Office for the North West) before publishing the Final List of Matters and Participants. The decision whether to make any amendments prior to the issue of the Final List is one for the Panel alone. Respondents may have views on the Draft List of Matters and Participants, but rather than raising them at the Preliminary Meeting, these should be submitted in writing to the Panel Secretariat by no later than **4pm on Monday 21 August**.
- 3.3 The Panel wish to stress that it will be invaluable for parties to meet in advance and to seek to reach agreement, or at least to narrow down disagreement. This applies especially to technical issues. The time at the Public Examination will not be valuably spent if it is concerned with resolving detailed issues relating to data and methodology, rather than examining policy and strategy. The Panel therefore urge parties to get together and to produce joint papers on issues wherever possible. The Panel may request such meetings and may in some cases Chair sessions where they believe it is possible to clarify issues before the Examination. This may save time both at the Examination and also in subsequent reporting.

- 3.4 If any party wishes to put forward a substantial methodological change, underpinned by detailed technical information, they should make it available well in advance of the EIP. If it is a matter that will be discussed at the Seminars, then parties should attend the relevant Seminar and explain their alternative methodology (see 4.1 below). The Panel may not be able to deal with any substantial methodological variations, which are not submitted until 2 October (see 5.9 below).
- 3.5 Minutes of the Preliminary Meeting will be produced and circulated to all attendees, a copy will be posted on the EIP website www.northwesteip.co.uk and copies can also be obtained from the Panel Assistant at the Panel Secretariat office.
- 3.6 The Panel do not currently intend to hold a further Preliminary Meeting, but reserve the right to do so should the need arise. If a further Meeting is required it will take place at some point during the 11-13 September, when the Seminars are due to be held (see 4.1 below)

4. Seminars

- 4.1 To enable base information and data to be understood and agreed prior to the start of the EiP, the Panel have requested that seminars take place on the following topics :-
- Housing/population forecasts
 - Employment land forecasting
 - Transport
 - Waste
 - SA/SEA
 - Energy
- 4.2 On the 11 and 12 September the seminars will be held at the Wigan Investment Centre and on the 13 September the seminar will be at Manchester City Football Club (for details of how to get to the stadium visit www.mcfc.co.uk or contact the Panel Assistant). Once confirmed a detailed timetable will be posted on the EIP website.
- 4.3 An overview note will be produced after each seminar and will be available on the website.

5. Documentation

Examination Library

- 5.1 Leading up to and during the Examination, the Panel Assistant will maintain an Examination Library, which will include:
- Copies of the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West;
 - Sustainability Appraisals and any documents produced by the North West Regional Assembly in support of the Draft RSS;
 - Copies of all representations submitted on the Draft RSS;
 - Comments on the Draft List of Matters and Participants;
 - Any briefing supplied to the Panel;
 - Details of any tours undertaken by the Panel;
 - Copies of all Written Submissions on the matters to be discussed;

- Documents other than those listed above and referred to in Written Submissions (see paragraph 5.8 below).

5.2 Before the start of the EiP the library will be available for inspection at the Secretariat Office, however due to the security arrangements at City Tower you are asked to contact the Panel Assistant to arrange a suitable time. A list of the contents of the library can also be obtained from the Panel Assistant.

5.3 All library material must be replaced in its original location and no material should be removed. Photocopying facilities will be available upon request.

Core Documents

5.4 Core Documents include:

- Sustainability Appraisals and any documents produced by the North West Regional Assembly in support of the Draft RSS;
- Any relevant statements of Government policy, for example, Planning Policy Statements and Guidance Notes [PPS/PPG], good practice guides, consultation papers, circulars, and advice notes;
- Any other supporting documentation considered necessary or desirable by the Panel.

5.5 Core Documents can be referred to in Written Submissions without the need to provide further copies or extracts.

Documents (other than Core Documents) Referred to in Written Submissions

5.6 Participants preparing Written Submissions should check whether any documents that they intend to refer to in their submissions or at the Examination are included in the list of Core Documents. If the document does not appear in the list, they should contact the Panel Assistant to arrange for it to be included in the library (e.g. to obtain a Library Reference Number). Four copies of each such document will need to be submitted with the Written Submissions and in accordance with the timetable for the making of those Submissions as set out below in paragraph 5.9.

Written Submissions

5.7 Submissions **should not exceed 2,000 words** in length for each Matter to be discussed at the Examination. Such submissions must be specifically directed to the Matters referred to in the Final List of Matters and Participants.

5.8 Those preparing Written Submissions are reminded that there is no need to prepare a submission if all the points are already covered in their original response to the Draft RSS. Participants who do not wish to submit further submissions should notify the Panel Secretary so that their original representations may be circulated to represent their views.

5.9 The deadline for the delivery of Written Submissions to the Panel Secretariat is no later than 4pm on Monday 2 October 2006. This deadline must be strictly adhered to – late submissions and additional papers submitted on the day of the relevant session will not be accepted.

5.10 When preparing Written Submissions, Participants and Non-Participants should note the following:

- Submissions should relate to the Final List of Matters and Participants to be published and circulated by the Panel Secretariat in early September.
- Participants should make a separate submission for each Matter; these will be clearly marked in the Final List of Matters.

- Submissions should be on A4 size paper, paginated, double hole-punched in the left hand margin and stapled or treasury-tagged in the top left hand corner. **Spiral Bindings, folders or stiff covers must not be used.**
- Submissions should include individual Respondent numbers at the top right hand corner of all pages of the Statement(s) together with the Matter number.
- One paper copy of the Statement (we require a total of 8 paper copies) should be printed single sided and should not be stapled (for ease of photocopying by the Secretariat).
- When sending electronic copies please do not include logos or picture formats as these make the files slow to download/open/print and speed will be of the essence to ensure swift circulation to the Panel and Participants.
- Appendices should be flagged and indexed, and should **only** include A4 tables and plans which are essential to support the text, and should not include any other supporting information. Any other documents (such as background papers, master plans etc.) should be given to the Panel Assistant for inclusion in the Core Documents library (4 copies of each to be included – see Para. 5.11 below).
- **8 copies** of each submission are to be sent to the Panel Secretariat. These will be circulated to the Panel and to every other Participant invited to discuss that particular Matter. Submissions should be in hard copy format - **do not fax original submissions.**
- In addition to the 8 copies referred to above, electronic copies should also be sent where possible in order to hasten the process of forwarding documents to Participants. **However, it should be borne in mind that the hard copies must be with the Panel Secretariat by no later than 4.00pm on 2 October.** Electronic copies should be received by the same deadline and will be treated as final (as will paper copies) – subsequent updates or amendments cannot be accepted.
- All documents submitted for the consideration of the Panel will be treated as public information, so submissions marked copyright or confidential cannot be accepted.

The Panel Secretariat accepts that the above requirements may cause difficulty to individuals or some voluntary sector groups. If this is the case the Panel Secretariat will be pleased to do what it can to assist. Participants may also wish to note Section 7 of these Notes and the availability of financial assistance / expenses for such Participants.

- 5.11 Submissions should be as succinct as possible and limited to a maximum of 2,000 words in length for each Matter (about 6 sides of A4). Submissions exceeding this limit will be returned. Where Matters are further divided into separate issues or questions the 2,000 word limit is for all the issues in the Matter (i.e. it is not a maximum of 2,000 words for each issue); the Final List will clearly mark what is encompassed within the 2,000 word limit. There is no need or requirement to use the full allocation of words if this is not necessary; nor is it necessary to cover all the issues or questions set out in the relevant Matter`. Any suggestions for changes to the wording of policies or the supporting text in the Draft RSS should be clearly set out in such submissions. They should not repeat at length the contents of policy documents, published survey material or detail already provided with the original Representations. Such material can be lodged separately in the Examination Library and only relevant points need be referred to in the submissions.
- 5.12 Submissions will be circulated to all other Participants involved in the same Matter in advance of the Examination. In the interests of fairness and the efficiency of the Examination, the Panel will expect Participants to have read all the documents relevant to a particular session. Late submissions are therefore not acceptable.
- 5.13 Submissions should be in plain English and should avoid so far as possible the use of technical language or jargon. This is for the benefit of members of the public and of parties who may not be professionally represented. The Panel will also benefit from submissions being succinct and as straightforward as possible.

6. Arrangements for the Examination

Timetable

- 6.1 The Examination will start on **Tuesday, 31 October 2006**, opening at 10.00, and is set to run for up to 6 sitting weeks, in two 3 week blocks, with a recess in December (see 6.4 below). The order of business will follow the detailed timetable that will be issued in September.
- 6.2 The typical weekly timetable will be as follows:

Day 1, Tuesday, 31 October 2006, 10.00 a.m. start; thereafter:

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Tuesday, Wednesday and | 10.00 – 11.00 session 1 |
| Thursday | 11.00 – 11.15 approx mid-morning break |
| | 11.30 – 13.00 session 2 |
| | 13.00 – 14.00 lunch |
| | 14.00 – 15.30 session 3 |
| | 15.30 – 15.45 approx mid-afternoon break |
| | 15.45 – 17.00 session 4 |
| Friday | 09.30 – 11.00 session 1 |
| | 11.00 – 11.15 approx morning break |
| | 11.30 – 13.00 session 2 |

The Panel will not sit on Mondays to allow for travelling attendees, but reserves the right to do so should this be to the overall advantage of the Examination process. It may also be necessary to hold an afternoon session between 14.00 and 15.30 on Friday afternoons to ensure that the business of the Examination is concluded in a timely fashion. Equally the Panel would anticipate that some sessions may finish earlier than anticipated and will not stretch the debate to fill the time available. Please note that the EiP will not be sitting on Tuesday 14 November.

- 6.3 The Panel will make every effort to keep to the programme; however, last minute changes may be unavoidable. Priority will be given to starting each Matter at the appointed time. It may be necessary to extend the afternoon session in order to complete a debate. The length and timing of breaks will be flexible depending on the progress of the debate. Participants will be informed by the Panel Assistant of any changes to the timetable; it remains, however the ultimate responsibility of Participants to ensure that they keep themselves up to date.

Venues

- 6.4 The venue for the Examination will be The Investment Centre, Wigan from 31 October – 17 November 2006 and 6 – 18 January 2007 and 23-26 January at The Lake District National Park Authority Headquarters.

Facilities

- 6.5 Directions to the Examination venues are provided at Appendix B.
- 6.6 The Panel Secretariat has its office in City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester M1 4BE and this includes the Examination Library.
- 6.7 The Secretariat office will move to The Investment Centre shortly before the opening of the Examination. Contact details for The Investment Centre and the timing of the relocation will be posted on the website in due course.

Access

- 6.8 There is ample car parking at the Investment Centre and at the National Park Headquarters and both are within walking distance of the train station.
- 6.9 The venues have access for disabled persons. If any special assistance or particular facilities are required at the Examination, Participants should contact the Panel Assistant in advance to enable appropriate arrangements to be made.

Refreshments

- 6.10 Refreshments will be provided at both venues, however participants are expected to make their own arrangements for meals. Food and beverages are available for purchase at the Investment Centre, and there is a supermarket next to the National Park Headquarters.

Communications

- 6.11 All mobile phones must be switched off while the Examination is in session. The Panel will request a donation of £10 to a local charity should any mobile phone interrupt the proceedings. In case of emergency the Panel Secretariat will be available to take calls and receive faxes on behalf of Participants.

Attendance

- 6.12 Participants are expected to attend all sessions concerning the Matter(s) for which they have been invited. On arrival at the Examination venue, Participants are asked to sign the attendance register. Where an organisation has been invited to participate and is bringing a team of speakers and advisors, all members of the team should register.
- 6.13 Where Participants are unable to attend a session to which they have been invited, they are asked to notify the Panel Assistant as soon as possible beforehand.

Seating

- 6.14 Each organisation or individual participating in a particular session will have one speaking point at the table. This will be occupied by one spokesperson at a time. Participants may change the spokesperson occupying the speaking point as appropriate to the Matter under discussion. There will be one seat available behind the spokesperson for use by an assistant or colleague.
- 6.15 Participants will sit at tables arranged in a U-shape. The Panel will occupy a table situated at the open end of the U-shape. A seating plan will be prepared for each session and individual places will be identified by nameplates.

Recording

- 6.16 All proceedings will be recorded. Anyone wishing to purchase copies of the recordings should contact the Panel Assistant.
- 6.17 Other than the official recordings, referred to in 5.16 above, no video, sound recording or photography is permitted during the Examination.

Public

- 6.18 All sessions will be open to the public to observe. Participants may attend, as observers, any session to which they have not been invited, but they will not be able to take part in the discussion.

Smoking

- 6.19 Smoking is not permitted at anytime within the Preliminary Meeting or Public Examination room.

7. Conduct of the Examination

Preparation

- 7.1 The Panel wish to ensure that no time is wasted at the Examination through avoidable misunderstandings or in rehearsing Matters about which there is no disagreement. Therefore, as mentioned above (see 3.3), it will greatly assist the debate if Participants try to reach agreement in advance on as much as possible of the factual background of their submissions and on the statistical issues involving assessments and forecasts that are central to the Matters to be discussed. With this in mind, Participants are encouraged to start (or continue) a dialogue with fellow Participants in advance of the Examination. It will help the Panel if Participants are able to narrow down or clarify key areas of disagreement, thus providing a clearer focus for the discussion at the Examination. Wherever possible, the Panel will highlight such areas in advance.

Procedure

- 7.2 The Examination will take the form of a series of topic discussions led by a Panel member and based on the selected Matters. The Chair or the Inspector will introduce each topic, highlighting the issues that need to be explored. The Panel will expect Participants to have read the documents relevant to a particular session. The reading out of prepared statements or the formal presentation of evidence already submitted will not normally be appropriate.
- 7.3 Except for a short presentation by a representative of the Regional Assembly on the first day, there will be no formal speeches at the opening and close of the sessions, though the Assembly will be invited to make a final comment at the end of each debate. Written copies of any opening presentation will be made available on the EIP website and will be placed in the Examination Library.
- 7.4 Where appropriate, shortly before each session, the Panel will make available (through the Panel Secretariat) a short note amplifying the questions set out under each Matter for discussion and illustrating how the Panel intends to structure the discussion. The Panel will ask one participant to open the debate, and that person will be given notice of that intention shortly before the session. Discussion will then proceed with all Participants able to contribute or respond, as they indicate their wish to do so. Participants wishing to speak should signal their desire to the Panel by standing their nameplate on end.
- 7.5 For the record of the proceedings to be intelligible, Participants will be asked to introduce themselves every time they speak, unless the Chair or Inspector has called upon them by name.
- 7.6 The Panel will adopt an inquisitorial approach, exploring issues by questioning Participants. There may be no need for every Participant to speak during a discussion. For example there will be no need to take time repeating or agreeing with matters that have already been covered by others, or in the written material already deposited. Contributions to the debates should be kept brief and be relevant to the Matters under discussion. In order to facilitate a meaningful discussion the Panel will curtail any contributions that are excessively long or go into irrelevant matters or inappropriate detail. The Panel wishes to avoid imposing a time limit for individual contributions but may have to do so if this proves necessary.
- 7.7 The informal nature of the sessions means that it should not be necessary for Participants to have legal representation. There will be no formal cross-examination of Participants, as is the case at public inquiries. Any questions concerning statements made by other Participants should be raised through the Chair.

- 7.8 It will not be possible or appropriate to accommodate videos, slides and overhead projectors. Participants will not be permitted to circulate additional material at the Examination unless this results from a request by the Panel at a previous session. Such material should be given to the Panel Secretariat. The Panel Chair will announce at the next appropriate session that it has been received and is available for comment.

8. Expenses

Eligibility

- 8.1 Travel and subsistence claims from any private individuals invited and appearing on their own behalf in the Examination will be met, as will such claims from representatives of voluntary organisations who can demonstrate that they are unpaid volunteers. Participants from public bodies or private companies will not be eligible for expenses, nor will Participants' advisers.
- 8.2 Claims from such private individuals and representatives of voluntary organisations for reasonable expenses incurred in meeting the Panel's requirements for producing written submissions will also be considered, although they are advised to consult the Panel Secretariat before incurring such expenses.

Claims

- 8.3 Claim forms are available from the Panel Assistant. Claimants for travel and subsistence should sign the attendance register each day. If The Planning Inspectorate (the paying authority) agrees to meet a claim, a cheque will be sent as soon as possible after the close of the Examination.

Appendix A

How to Contact the Panel Secretariat

The Panel Secretariat may be contacted prior to the EiP as follows:

Panel Secretariat
15th Floor
City Tower
Piccadilly Plaza
Manchester
M1 4BE

Telephone: 0161 952 4485

Fax: 0161 952 4195

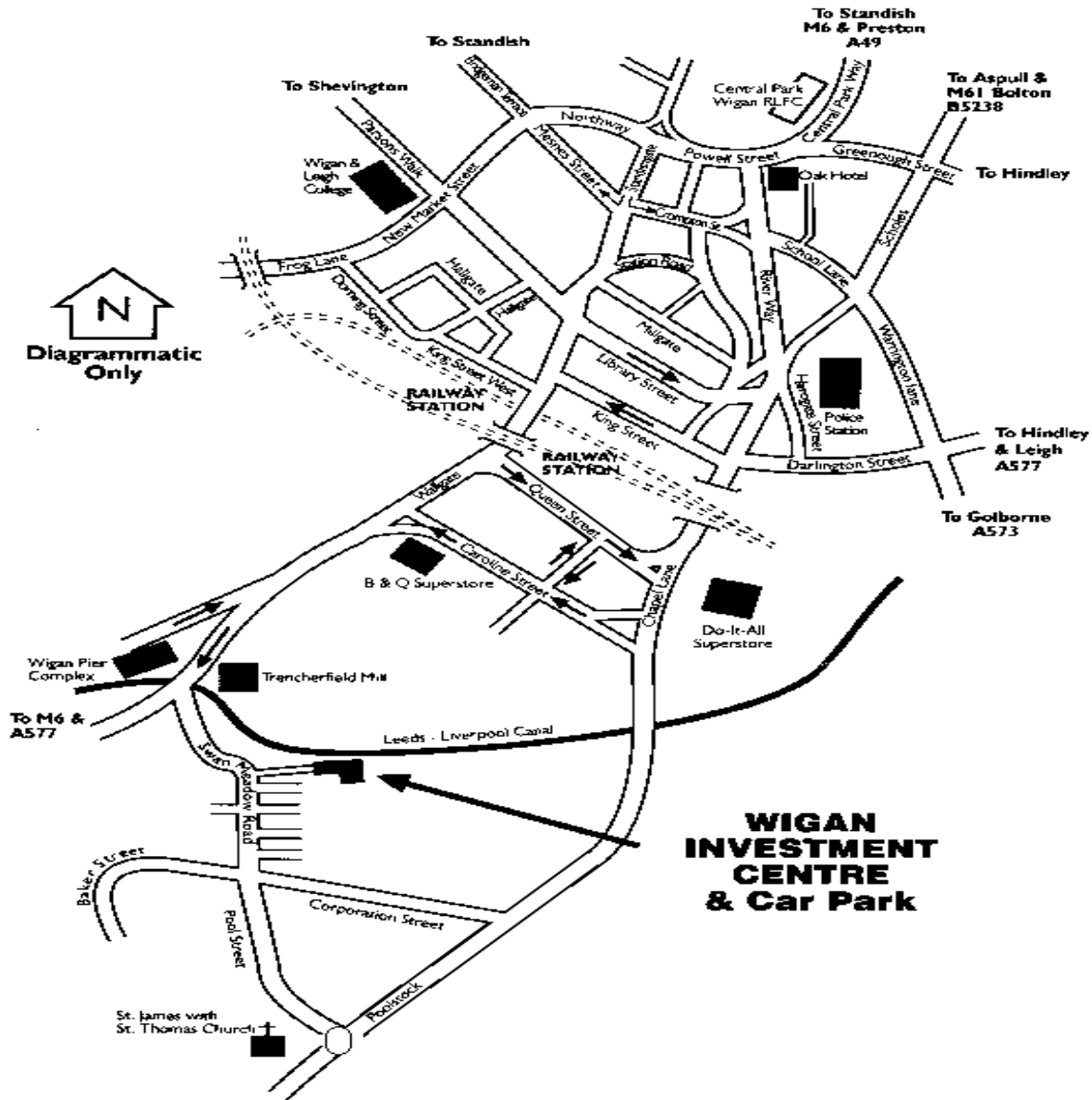
Website: <http://www.northwesteip.co.uk>

E-mail: secretariat@northwesteip.co.uk

E-MAIL FOR SUBMISSIONS ONLY statement@northwesteip.co.uk

During the Examination the Panel Secretariat will be based at The Investment Centre, Wigan and contact details will be published once known.

Appendix B



If you are arriving by train there are two stations in Wigan Town Centre. These consist of Wigan Wallgate and Wigan North Western. It takes approx ten minutes to walk to the Centre. Public transport information can be obtained from: www.traveline.org.uk or telephone 0870 608 2608

If you are travelling on the M6 northbound come off at junction 25, follow the signs for Wigan Town Centre/Wigan Pier, then you will see signs for Wigan Investment Centre of which the conference centre is based within.

If you are travelling southbound on the M6 you need to come off at Junction 26 and follow the signs for Orrell/Wigan. Follow the signs for Wigan town centre then the signs for Wigan Pier, you will then see signs for the Wigan Investment Centre.

If you are coming into Wigan from a different route, follow signs for Wigan Pier and this will lead you to signs for Wigan Investment Centre.

