

Panel Question (i)

Does the draft RSS set out the right underlying principles for spatial planning in the region?

1.1 The RSS Project Plan produced by the Assembly sets out key principles¹ for RSS which have been adhered to throughout the process of developing the draft RSS. Of particular relevance are the following principles:

- Setting out a strategic spatial vision underpinned by policies that deal with specific regional and sub-regional matters;
- Ensuring alignment with other regional documents;
- Providing a greater focus on delivery and implementation;
- Ensuring monitoring feeds into analysis of policy; and
- Placing sustainable development at the heart of the draft RSS.

1.2 During the development of draft RSS, draft spatial principles were developed and put forward by the Government Office for the North West (GONW) for consideration at the Regional Planning Advisory Group (RPAG)² and the Assembly's former Planning, Environment and Transport Key Priority Group (PETKPG)³. The development of the draft RSS has followed much of the draft spatial principles set out by GONW. As a result, the Assembly invite GONW to expand on their formal response⁴ to illustrate how they envisage the development principles in Policy DP1 should be revised.

1.3 Other key influences on the underlying spatial principles of the draft RSS include the Northern Way Growth Strategy principles⁵ and the purpose and scope of RSS set out in PPS11⁶. In order to ensure that draft RSS remains clear and concise, extensive repetition of the content of other strategies has been avoided

1.4 The Panel may wish to consider whether the development principles in Policy DP1 should expand to address the wider health implications of spatial planning (see Matter 4B).

Panel Question (ii)

Are the different elements of DP1 clearly stated, and how will they be monitored?

2.1 DP1 draws upon the various elements of policies DP1 to DP4 contained in the adopted RSS⁷. Much of the wording contained in the policy is therefore not new and has been agreed through a previous round of regional planning policy development. The latest Annual Monitoring Report⁸ notes how the various indicators selected by

¹ RSS Project Plan – final version, NWRA, April 2005 (see paragraph 1.22)

² Provided for the RPAG meeting held on 18 May 2005

³ See PETKPG report, 19 May 2005 – Annex A

⁴ GONW (395/4285)

⁵ Northern Way Growth Strategy, Northern Way Secretariat, 2004 (see paragraphs 9.15 to 9.17) (**REG6**)

⁶ Planning Policy Statement 11 – Regional Spatial Strategies, ODPM 2004 (see paragraphs 1.2 to 1.8). (**PP11**)

⁷ Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13), GONW, 2003

⁸ Annual Monitoring Report on RPG13, NWRA, 2006 (see Table 1.1) (**MON2**)

the Assembly monitor the current DP policies in the adopted RSS. Moreover, the table sets out the links between the indicators and draft RSS policies including DP1.

Panel Question (iii)

Is the sequential approach in DP1 appropriate?

3.1 The draft RSS continues the agreed sequential approach set out in the adopted RSS. The public consultation response to the draft RSS highlighted an alternative 'sustainability first' approach, and assertions that the draft RSS approach was inconsistent with draft PPS3 and went beyond what was advocated in PPG3⁹. The Assembly firmly believe that the approach set out in the draft RSS provides a regionally specific solution to managing development pressures and continues the approach approved in the adopted RSS.

⁹ Including Arlington Securities, Bellway Homes Ltd, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, Blackpool Borough Council, Elevate East Lancashire, Home Builders Federation, Lancashire County Council, Langtree Group Plc, Paycause Ltd, Redrow Homes (North West) Ltd, The Emerson Group