

Panel Question (i)

Does the draft RSS align with the Regional Economic Strategy, the Regional Housing Strategy and Regional Funding Allocation advice?

1.1 Considerable work has been undertaken by the three key regional bodies (North West Regional Assembly, Northwest Regional Development Agency and Government Office North West) during 2004/2005 to find ways of aligning the Draft RSS, Regional Economic Strategy and Regional Housing Strategy. Examples are set out in paragraph 3.3 of the Draft RSS, and include the agreement of a common economic evidence base (see Matter 1C and 3A and Briefing Paper 3¹) and strong alignment between policy approaches in all three documents.

1.2 Table 3.1 in the Technical Appendix² highlights the linkages between actions identified in the Regional Economic Strategy³ and policies W1 – W8 in the Draft RSS. In addition Actions 85 – 87 in the RES, which seek to create a high quality and diverse housing stock and reduce areas of housing market failure, are supported by policies L2 – L5 of the Draft RSS.

1.3 The strategic priorities established in the Regional Housing Strategy are reflected primarily in policies L2 – L5. In particular Table 9.1 in Draft RSS sets out the recommended distribution of housing provision between different parts of the North West, reflecting RSS and Regional Housing Strategy objectives. The approach towards determining and setting out housing figures has moved away from traditional administrative county basis towards clusters of districts. In defining the clusters of districts, account has been taken of the housing typologies set out in the Regional Housing Strategy.

1.4 Significant joint work has also been undertaken to agree regional priorities for transport investment and management, for both the preparation of the Draft RSS and submission of advice to the Government in relation to the Regional Funding Allocation process announced in July 2005. Further details of these processes are set out in the Technical Appendix⁴ and Matter 5C.

1.5 The Assembly believes that the considerable joint working which has been undertaken between the three regional bodies has resulted in the preparation of key regional strategies which are mutually supportive⁵, and which together set a solid policy framework for the future development of the North West.

Panel Question (ii)

Does the draft RSS properly reflect other strategies such as the Northern Way and other relevant strategies?

2.1 In developing RSS, the Assembly have sought to ensure that it aligns with and complements the emerging policies in a number of other strategies.

¹ Briefing paper 3 – Economic Scenarios, NWRA, September 2006

² NWRA (January 2006), Submitted Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West – Technical Appendix

³ The table refers to the draft RES, but the references and text have remained unchanged in the final document.

⁴ Submitted Draft Regional Spatial Strategy Technical Appendix, NWRA, January 2006, paragraphs 5.313 to 5.316

⁵ Highlighted in the response from GONW – see paragraph 2 in Annex 1.

Northern Way

2.2 The Northern Way Growth Strategy was published in September 2004. An overview of the initiative is set out in Appendix 1.

2.3 Many of the ideas/initiatives emerging under the ten main investment projects and priorities identified in the Northern Way have already been incorporated within RSS. Most significantly the Spatial Development Framework and sub regional geography used in RSS has sought to align with and build upon the City Region concept of the Northern Way. The sub regional policies set out in Chapters 12-14 covering Manchester, Liverpool and Central Lancashire sub regions have been developed in partnership with stakeholders in these sub regions – in line with statutory requirement to consider advice from Section 4 (4) authorities. This advice was prepared at the same time as the City Regional Development Plans (CRDP's) were being prepared for the Northern Way. Given that in many cases the same people were involved in drafting both, this ensured a great degree of synergy between them.

2.4 Finally great weight should be placed on the fact that the Northern Way Secretariat in their response has “supported the thrust of the Spatial Strategy, which embraces the City Region Concept we welcome the attention given in the draft plan to providing an appropriate spatial planning framework for each of the City Regions so as to enable sustainable economic growth.”

Other Strategies

2.5 Aside from the Regional Economic Strategy, Regional Housing Strategy and Northern Way, the Assembly has also sought to ensure that RSS complements other key strategies and policies. Though not an exhaustive list, examples include:-

- UK Sustainable Development Strategy.
- National planning policy and guidance.
- Defra Rural Strategy.
- Future of Air Transport.
- Modern Ports: A UK policy.
- Wales Spatial Plan
- Action for Sustainability.
- North West Sustainable Energy Strategy.
- Regional Waste Strategy for the North West.
- A Strategy for Tourism in England's North West.
- A new vision for North West Coastal Resorts.
- Sustainable Communities in the North West: Building for the future.
- North West Freight Transport strategy.
- Regional Rural Delivery framework for the North West.
- Investment for Health: A plan for the North West England.
- West Cheshire/North East Wales Sub-regional Spatial Strategy

Panel Question (iii)

Are the separate objectives of the Regional Transport Strategy appropriate and how do they link to the overall draft RSS objectives, spatial principles and the spatial framework?

3.1 The importance of an objectives-led approach is set out in the Government's Planning Policy Statement 11: Regional Spatial Strategies and the recently published Regional Spatial Strategies: Guide to Producing Regional Transport Strategies.⁶ Objectives should stem from an evidence-based analysis of problems and issues and should in turn provide the basis for the development of options for policies and priorities. The transport objectives set out in the Draft RSS were developed early on the process and underwent several iterations as thinking developed and the wider RSS objectives, regional development principles and regional spatial framework evolved.

3.2 It is acknowledged that some of the RTS objectives are not particularly spatial; however, they were developed in accordance with the consultation draft Guide to Producing Regional Transport Strategies following an extensive analysis of transport problems and issues in the region and reflect links to wider economic, environmental and social concerns. Many transport problems and issues also tend to be more a question of scale than location specific. Peak period congestion occurs in many places across the North West, but the scale of the problem is much greater in, for example, the Manchester City Region than in regional cities and towns such as Chester, Preston and Warrington. Delays can arise at random as a result of incidents such as crashes on the motorway network or operational difficulties on the rail network. Poor air quality arising from traffic congestion affects many parts of the region, including rural areas, but is most likely to be related to time of day and day of week dependant on location.

⁶ Regional Spatial Strategies: Guide to Producing Regional Transport Strategies, DfT, July 2006

Appendix 1 – Overview of Northern Way

Source: <http://www.thenorthernway.co.uk/what.html>

The Northern Way originated from the challenge set by the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, to capitalise on the North's new-found confidence and energy, and to speed up the rate of change.

Its aim is simple - to establish the North of England as an area of exceptional opportunity combining a world class economy with a superb quality of life.

The Northern Way is being led by the three Northern Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) - Yorkshire Forward, One North East and the Northwest Regional Development Agency. By collaborating with Government and regional stakeholders, it will develop a long-term strategy for growing the economy of the whole of the North.

Geographically it identifies the primary drivers for economic growth will be the major cities, conurbations and transport infrastructure. It recognises that the North is at the crossroads of nationally strategic east-west and north-south transport corridors, and it aims to exploit this connectivity to national and international markets. The Northern Way will also bring significant benefits to urban communities that are within commuting distance of the cities - and, by boosting the economy of the North as a whole, to the rural areas. Areas of opportunity - including the North's assets - and areas of need, both within and between the three Northern regions, will be linked. Links with Ireland, Europe and Scotland will also be strengthened.

It identifies eight city regions based on Tyneside, Teesside, Leeds, Hull, Sheffield, Manchester, Liverpool and Central Lancashire.

It recognises the natural assets of the North, such as the national parks, are of fundamental importance - they are key to creating a world class economy with a superb quality of life. These assets include:

- many globally competitive companies in, for example, chemicals, software, aerospace and defence
- 14.3 million people living in the North – the talents, skills and character of these people are our most valuable strength and will be in the future
- our cultural and ethnic diversity
- the North is at the crossroads of nationally strategic east-west and north-south transport corridors
- the North is home to some of the country's best universities
- magnificent countryside, coasts and a unique heritage
- a distinctive culture that underpins the strength of the North.

Ten main investment projects and priorities have been outlined in "Moving Forward: The Northern Way"⁷ and will help bridge the £30 billion output gap:

⁷ "Moving Forward: the Northern Way", The Northern Way Steering Group, September 2004. **(REG5)**
"Moving Forward: the Northern Way - Action Plan – Progress Report", The Northern Way Steering Group, February 2005

- bring more people into employment - tackling major factors that contribute to worklessness by building on existing pathways to work programmes through working in partnership with the Department of Work and Pensions
- strengthen the North's knowledge base - building on the North's knowledge base and technology strengths and increasing expenditure on research and development
- build a more entrepreneurial North - increasing the rate of business start-ups, launching the Northern Enterprise in Education Programme, the Northern Enterprise Initiative and the Northern Leadership Academy
- capture a larger share of global trade: key clusters - ensuring that the companies in key manufacturing and services continue to grow
- meet employers skill needs – ensuring our workforce is sufficiently skilled and productive to enable our communities to compete in global markets
- improve access to the Northern airports – preparing a Northern Airports Priorities Plan improving surface access to northern airports
- improve access to the North's sea ports – increasing ship arrivals at Northern Ports and increase the throughput of northern ports
- create premier transit systems in each city region and stronger linkages between regions – reducing congestion on our inter-urban strategic road networks and increase reliability on key inter-urban and gateway strategic routes
- create truly sustainable communities – guiding the preparation of Regional Spatial Strategies, to include specific proposals for each of the eight city regions to demonstrate how best to strengthen their communities
- Market the North to the world – marketing the north with a joint campaign to international markets will improve awareness of the North overseas and attract UK entrepreneurs back to the North.

Each of the eight city regions has prepared a development programme to enable economic growth with specific proposals for housing, transport and economic development as a key input to the review of the Regional Economic Strategies in each of the three northern regions.