

Panel Question (i)

Is the sub regions housing provision and distribution appropriate and achievable? Are the PDL targets in Table 9.1, realistic, deliverable and based on robust evidence?

1.1 As outlined in the NWRA statement for Matter 4A, the level of housing provision proposed in Draft RSS has been formulated in light of national guidance¹ and is designed to complement the level of economic growth envisaged by NWDA in its Regional Economic Strategy. In doing so, the Assembly have followed a three strand methodology which has been set out in detail in the Technical Appendix and covered in the Housing Seminar. In summary, the figures set out in Table 9.1, have been derived taking account of:-

- information on housing need and demand as translated into household growth (including taking account of economic growth implications on household formation).
- housing land supply information including urban potential study results (where available) and existing planning consents.
- the spatial strategy of emerging Draft RSS².

1.2 The Assembly believes that the housing distribution does reflect the spatial strategy of RSS, whilst taking into account housing demand and supply. In deriving these figures, extensive consultation took place with local authorities in the summer of 2006, to ensure their views on distribution were addressed. This was subsequently followed up by the consultation on the Interim Draft RSS via the website during October/November 2005. During this process there was little or no significant objection to the proposed housing figures set out for each district. The approach represents a continuation of the approach, previously adopted by the Assembly in preparation of Draft RPG13, which was endorsed by the Panel. Indeed it is noted that a wide variety of respondents support the figures and distribution³.

1.3 It is noted that few of the respondents who object to the housing provision and distribution in the City Region have put forward and justified alternative figures, whilst a number of specific objections are counter-balanced by supporting responses.

1.4 It should be noted that the grouping of districts do not comprise 'housing market areas' as envisaged in Draft PPS3 as there was insufficient time and resources to develop the robust evidence base to define such areas. However, the groupings do reflect broad spatial policy approaches set out in Draft RSS, the housing typologies set out in the Regional Housing Strategy and represent a significant shift in approach away from traditional administrative County-based approach for distribution used in the past. The Assembly welcome the recently published research by Ecotec for

¹ "Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (PPG3) Housing" DETR, 2000 (**PP3a**); "Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing Update – Planning for Sustainable Communities in Rural Areas", ODPM, 2005 (**PP3c**); "Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing Update – Supporting the Delivery of New Housing", ODPM, 2005 (**PP3b**); Draft PPS3 – "Consultation Paper on a New Planning Policy Statement3 (PPS3) Housing" ODPM December 2005 (**PP3d**); and paragraph 1.5 and Annex A of Planning Policy Statement 11 (PPS) 11 Regional Spatial Strategies" ODPM 2004 (**PP11**).

² Including the sub regional policy framework set out in LCR1-4.

³ including: Merseyside Policy Unit, various local authorities, Northern Way, English Partnerships, Barratt (Manchester) Ltd, Barrow Estates plc and Langtree Group

GONW on housing market areas and looks forward to GONW clarifying how they will use the findings from this research in this RSS process.

1.5 Very importantly the Draft RSS does not just focus on the housing figures. In paragraphs 9.19 (a) to (l), a strategic policy approach is presented to clearly indicate what type of housing may be required in a particular locality in order to support implementation of other policies in RSS and other strategies. The wording of these paragraphs was developed in partnership with relevant Local Planning Authorities, in order to assist their preparation of LDF's. This wording seeks to ensure that future housing provision in the sub region complements the wider RSS policy approach and the sub regional strategy in particular.

1.6 The development of previously developed land and buildings (PDL) must complement both sustainable development and urban renaissance. In setting targets for the reuse of previously developed land and buildings, the Assembly was aware of the governments own national targets⁴, various estimates produced by differing bodies on the potential level of development possible on previously developed land and buildings⁵ and recent rates of reuse of PDL⁶. It is important the existing challenging targets are maintained. However it is important to set targets that whilst challenging for the region are also realistic to achieve given the diversity of the region (in terms of quantity, quality and location) and the complexities in developing such sites across the region. Therefore the targets will be the subject of ongoing monitoring by the Assembly.

1.7 The Assembly is aware that PPG3⁷ and Draft PPS3 indicates that local planning authorities should adopt their own land recycling targets in LDF's. However we do not consider that the inclusion of sub regional targets to be contrary to that advice. We consider that they have a valid role to play in providing LDF's with an interpretation of the regional target for their area. Given the significantly differing circumstances between sub regional areas, this will allow local authorities involved to make a more meaningful evaluation of the targets as part of the LDF process. The delivery of these targets will be assisted by the policy framework set out elsewhere in Draft RSS Policies especially LCR1-4 and L2 L5.

1.8 As a result, both a regional and series of sub regional targets were set in Table 9.1 to be achieved over the whole 18 year period 2003 to 2021. These targets were established in light of the spatial expression of housing provision in Table 9.1 of Draft RSS plus information about the potential supply of PDL sites across the region (including the results from the Urban Potential Studies undertaken across the region)⁸, details of which are set out in the Technical Appendix. In this approach, the Assembly believes it has been entirely consistent with Government guidance.

1.9 The Assembly note that the wide variety of views expressed in responses both in support and objection to specific targets identified for groupings of districts. If in light of the other statements and the debate at the Examination in public, the Panel is

⁴ National target that by 2008, 60% of new housing should be built on brownfield land or be provided by the conversion of existing Buildings. Source: PPG3 "Housing", DETR, 2000.

⁵ "Towards an Urban Renaissance – Final Report of the Urban Task Force", Urban Task Force, 1999.

Paragraph 39, "Housing PPG3", 17th Report of House of Commons Environment Transport & Regional Affairs Select Committee, 1999.

⁶ See Indicator 3.4 (% of new dwellings provided on previously developed land and the % of new dwellings provided by the re-use of existing buildings) – Tables 3.4.1 - 3.4.3 and Map 3.4.1 within "Annual Monitoring Report on RPG13" North West Regional Assembly, February 2006.

⁷ Paragraph 23, PPG3 "Housing", DETR, 2000.

⁸ See Tables 4.13 and 4.14 of "The North West Plan – Submitted Draft regional Spatial Strategy for the North West of England – Technical Appendix" North West Regional Assembly, January 2006.

mindful to recommend the revision of any particular target, the Assembly would not wish to see the revised targets undermine the delivery of existing national targets or a lower level than that currently set out in RPG13.