

Panel Question 11C (v)

Are there sufficient and appropriate links to delivery agencies and funding mechanisms to ensure delivery?

5.1 Key Delivery Agencies and mechanisms are specified where appropriate in the Draft RSS Policy, for example reference to the Highways Agency and local highway authorities in Policy RT2, housing market renewal pathfinders in MCR4, and a range of organisations in EM16¹.

5.2 The RSS has taken into account the Regional Funding Allocation for major transport scheme investment. The Assembly will continue to work closely with the Highways Agency and local authorities in managing and improving the Regional Highway Network.

5.3 The current draft Implementation Framework identifies a wide range of agencies and strategies / programmes which will play a role in delivering RSS. It was developed in consultation with stakeholders as part of the pre submission consultation process for the RSS. This included a one day implementation seminar for key stakeholders².

5.4 There is an ongoing programme to develop links with key stakeholders, especially the local planning authorities, who will be key delivery agencies, including for example:

- Attendance of regular meetings of sub-regional groups of Local Planning Authorities covering development planning and monitoring.
- Developing criteria for which planning applications the Assembly should be consulted on.
- Developing checklists / standard responses for consultations where a bespoke response is not required e.g. non-strategic planning applications, Sustainability Appraisals and Statements of Community Involvement.
- Dialogue with Local Planning Authorities to ensure they are sending us the correct consultations, and to discuss issues such as whether our responses are meeting their needs etc.
- Dialogue with NWDA / GONW to develop awareness of each others' approaches, workload and responses.
- Notifying neighbouring Regional Assemblies of any adjacent or nationally important applications.

5.5 The Implementation Framework is an evolving document and measures will be taken to increase stakeholder involvement and links to funding, as outlined North West Regional Assembly Panel Briefing Paper 19 "Proposed further development of the Implementation Framework ". This should address some of the concerns raised by GONW.³

5.6 GONW has suggested the Implementation Framework is overly reliant on land use planning mechanisms⁴. The Assembly does not agree, as:

- The Framework includes a very wide range of mechanisms, strategies and organisations, many of which are not primarily land use related⁵.
- Land use planning will have an crucial role to play in delivering the RSS.

¹ See also NWRA Statement 11a Para 2.2

² Towards a Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West: Proceedings of a stakeholder Conference on the Implementation Plan for the Regional Spatial Strategy held on November 11th 2005, Forum for the Future, November 2005

³ Paragraphs 9c) and 9d) of Annex 1 of the GONW response

⁴ Paragraph 9d) of Annex 1 of the GONW response

⁵ For example the Regional Economic Strategy, the North West Cultural Strategy, NW Annual Statement of Learning and Skills Priority, North West Physical Activity task force, North West Health Investment Plan, the North West Sustainable Energy Strategy, the Regional Tourism Strategy, Rail Franchise Specification, Strategic Health Authorities.

Panel Question 11C (vi)

Are the implementation mechanisms appropriate for addressing any cross border issues that may arise?

6.1 Mechanisms for dealing with cross border issues include:

- English Regions Network conformity group agreement on cross border referrals for planning consultations.
- Responses to consultations with authorities bordering the region.
- Programme of cross border research. A draft West Cheshire and North East Wales Sub Regional Spatial Strategy has already informed preparation of the draft RSS. Chapter 17 identifies two further areas for future cross border studies. The exact timing will be subject to funding resources being available⁶.

Panel Question 11C (vii)

Is there a need for a focused early review of the RSS? If so what should be the focus and timetable, and what would be the implications for Local Development Documents?

7.1 Pending the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR07) no funding currently exists beyond 31st March 2008, to support the Assembly's RPB function (including the employment of staff). Until the medium - long term funding situation is resolved, the Assembly is also unable to give a firm timescale commitments on undertaking a future review of RSS, as it may not be possible to comply with all the procedural process requirements of PPS11 over next 18 months, to ensure submission of a Draft RSS to Government before 31st March 2008.

Panel Question 11C (viii)

When will the research mentioned in paragraph 9.11 on the future requirements for gypsies and travellers be completed and how will this be incorporated into the RSS.

8.1 The approach the Assembly is taking is set out in North West Regional Assembly Panel Briefing Paper 11 "Dealing with the Accommodation Needs of Gypsies & Travellers in RSS". The exact timing will be subject to funding resources being available⁶.

⁶ Pending the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR07) no funding currently exists beyond 31st March 2008, to support the Assembly's RPB function (including the employment of staff). Therefore the Assembly is only able to commission new research that will be completed by 31st March 2008. Until the medium - long term funding situation is resolved, the Assembly is also unable to give a firm timescale commitments on undertaking a future review of RSS, as it may not be possible to comply with all the procedural process requirements of PPS11 over next 18 months, to ensure submission of a Draft RSS to Government before 31st March 2008.