

EIP/NWRA/7

NWRA-SUGGESTED CHANGES TO POLICY EM1 – DECEMBER 2006

Suggested additions and deletions are in bold and italic (deletions are in strikethrough text)

The text in red/brackets represents brief notes regarding the source of additional policy text and does not constitute part of the policy.

Policy EM1 – Integrated Land Management

Plans, strategies, proposals and schemes should deliver an integrated approach to land management, **by sustaining, conserving and enhancing the landscape, natural environment, historic environment and woodlands of the region.** (THE COUNTIES – accept that this provides further explanation about what we want integrated land management to achieve) Detailed ~~character assessments and landscape strategies conservation and enhancement strategies informed by county and district level characterisation-based studies set in the context of derived from~~ the North West Joint Character Area map **will provide the strategic framework for integrated land management.**¹ (NATURAL ENGLAND (mostly) – accept that this adds further explanation to the policy direction) With regards to specific elements of **this** integrated land management **approach**, the following should be taken into account:

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Plans, **and** strategies, **proposals and schemes** (GONW – to address consistency issues) should ~~seek to~~ deliver a ‘step-change’ increase in the region’s biodiversity resources, by delivering the **national, regional and local** biodiversity targets for maintaining, restoring and expanding priority habitats **and species populations**, (NATURAL ENGLAND – Accept that to avoid confusion as to what is being delivered, the addition of national and local targets is needed), ~~and delivering the habitat and species targets of the Local Biodiversity Action Plans~~². This should be done by protecting, **enhancing**, expanding and linking areas for wildlife within and between the locations of highest biodiversity resources, and encouraging the protection, conservation and improvement of the ecological fabric elsewhere.

Plans, strategies, proposals and schemes should also protect and maintain the region’s important geological and/or geomorphological resource (RIGS) by delivering national, regional and local geodiversity objectives and targets, including those identified in Geodiversity Action Plans. (This addresses geodiversity issues)

¹ see North West Joint Character Area map at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/jca-mm/jca-map-nw.htm>

² PPS9 – “Biodiversity and Geological Conservation”, ODPM, 2005

ODPM Circular 06/05 \ Defra Circular 01/2005: “Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system” ODPM \ Defra 2005.

Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: A Guide to Good Practice, ODPM, 2006

Broad locations where there are greatest opportunities for delivering **these biodiversity** targets are shown on the Indicative Biodiversity Resource and Opportunity **ies** Diagram (see Diagram 11.1). **More specific locations will be informed by sub-regional biodiversity maps and frameworks of statutory and local sites.** (Addresses concerns raised by the Counties and previously, Natural England to refer directly to the sub-regional work that has already taken place and can be used as a sub-regional framework) Local authorities should:

- seek to develop a more detailed representation of this spatial information for use in their Local Development Frameworks;
- develop functional ecological frameworks that seek to address habitat fragmentation and species isolation, **identifying and targeting opportunities for habitat re-establishment and reconnections; and**
- work together to address cross-border issues within the region such as in the Pennines, Solway Firth, the River Dee Estuary and the Cheshire Meres and Mosses, **as well as including biodiversity policies in any developing Marine Spatial Planning system in the Irish Sea** (Accept this is a useful addition to the policy considering the gathering momentum of Marine Spatial Planning)

Landscape **and Heritage**

Plans, strategies, proposals and schemes should identify, protect, maintain and where possible, enhance natural, ~~man-made~~ and historic **and other distinctive** features that contribute to the character **and culture** of landscapes, places and local distinctiveness within the North West.

Local Planning Authorities should set out in their policies the conditions proposals are expected to meet to avoid damage to, or erosion of, distinctive characteristics that contribute to landscapes, townscapes and seascapes with a strong sense of place of identity.

Historic Environment

Plans, ~~and~~ strategies, **proposals and schemes** should **protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment** supporting conservation-led regeneration in areas rich in historic interest, **and in** particularly ~~ly~~ exploiting the regeneration potential of:

- The maritime heritage of the North West coast including docks and waterspaces, and coastal resorts and piers
- The Pennine textile mill-town heritage that exists in East Lancashire and Greater Manchester; and the textile mill-town heritage of East Cheshire
- Victorian and Edwardian commercial developments in Liverpool and Manchester city centres; and
- The traditional architecture of rural villages and market towns of Cumbria, Cheshire and Lancashire

Trees, Woodlands and Forests (Accept that the addition of trees and forests gives further explanation of the coverage of this part of the policy.)

Plans and strategies for woodland and forestry management, should adopt the multi-purpose approach set out in the Regional Forestry Framework (RFF) (**and any subsequent sub-regional strategies**), especially in relation to their role in green infrastructure provision and management. **They should:**

- **Encourage a steady targeted expansion of tree and woodland cover and promote sustainable management of existing woodland resources to enable the delivery of multiple benefits to society**

- **Support the role of community forestry** (Accept that this can provide further guidance on this policy topic. There is no need to include ancient woodland within the policy because it is comprehensively addressed by PPS9, and there is nothing further that RSS could say that would reasonably add value to clear national-level policy direction on this issue)

Explanatory Note

The Assembly is constantly bearing in mind the need to keep RSS short and concise, to reflect the desires of stakeholders across the region and PPS11. To do this, we have to ask the question of whether additional material adds value, and whether the subject is one that an RSS should address. Does it repeat national policy or promote 'best practice' management-style instructions rather than giving a clear policy direction. Also, we need to consider whether proposed content (e.g. those statements of a nature that advocate best practice guidance) would be more suitable for inclusion in local strategies or as part of a separate guidance document, perhaps tweaked to reflect local circumstances.

The redrafted policy incorporates a number of the proposed changes suggested by various organisations. Where text has been added/deleted within the policy, we have illustrated the (primary) source of the wording when this has come directly from a participant's statement, and a brief note to explain our reasoning.

At this point in time, we do not feel it would be of benefit to combine EM1 and EM3. As our statement says, we acknowledge that there is cross-over between the two policies, and actions taken to implement one, will also implement the other. However although the two policy areas are not mutually exclusive, we feel that it would not be beneficial to combine the two at this stage. The concept of green infrastructure in the North West, although it has come a long way in the last year, is still in relatively early development and we feel it would be more useful to keep the concept in a separate policy, so as not to confuse stakeholders and implementers.