

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM 3

REPORT TO CABINET

DATE: 9 October 2008

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

**Portfolio - Regeneration and Transport.
Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Bob Cook.**

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) - Final Report

1. Summary

On the 15th July 2008, the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) published the final version of the North East regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). This report provides a summary of the policies contained within the RSS and gives a broad overview of how the policies impact on Stockton-on-Tees.

2. Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

(I) Note the contents of this report.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

Members will note that the RSS has been through several stages of preparation including Submission Draft (June 2005), Examination in Public (March 2006), Panel Report (July 2006) and two sets of Proposed Changes, one in May 2007 and the other in February 2008. The Council forwarded representations to Government Office for the North East (G.O.N.E) at each stage of the process, which has been taken into account during the development of the Strategy. The Secretary of State has accepted the final changes to the RSS and the Strategy has now been adopted.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (**paragraph 8**) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;
- and must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (**paragraph 12 of the Code**).

Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

DATE: 9th October 2008

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

SUMMARY

On the 15th July 2008, the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) published the final version of the North East regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). This report provides a summary of the policies contained within the RSS and gives a broad overview of how the policies impact on Stockton-on-Tees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

- (i) Note the contents of this report.

BACKGROUND

1. The enactment of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase act (2004) created a statutory requirement for the Regional Planning Body (North East Assembly) to develop a Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).
2. Following a number of consultation drafts, The North East of England Plan - Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) has now been adopted. The RSS is the planning framework for North East England, which sets out the long-term strategy as to where, when and how development will be encouraged in the region over the next 15-20 years providing a vision up to 2021. All subsequent Local Development Framework (LDF) Documents, produced by the Council, must be in general accordance with the RSS and when considering major planning applications, the Council should take account of the RSS policies.
3. The Strategy covers Northumberland, County Durham, Tyne and Wear and the Tees Valley and addresses matters such as the scale and distribution of provision for new housing, priorities for the environment such as countryside and biodiversity protection, transport, infrastructure, economic development, agriculture, mineral extraction and waste treatment and disposal. The policies in the Strategy set out how we will improve built and natural environments and create sustainable rural and urban communities, how we will meet housing needs, where transport improvements have to be made and where developments should take place to create jobs.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF STRATEGY

4. The central theme throughout the Strategy is the need to achieve and maintain a high quality of life for all, both now and in the future. The spatial strategy for all future development in the North East will now be based on the following principles:
 - to promote an urban and rural renaissance;
 - to contribute to the sustainable development of the Region;
 - to reflect a sequential approach to land allocations; and
 - to include appropriate phasing and plan, monitoring, manage mechanisms for planning and implementation of new development.
5. Sustainable development is a key objective of the Strategy and is defined as ‘providing for development, which delivers environmental, social and economic objectives to improve the quality of life for all without threatening the viability of the natural, built, and social systems for future generations’. The Strategy puts in place policies to ensure that all strategies, plans and programmes in the Region contribute to mitigating against climate change, helping the Region to contribute to meeting national policy objectives, cutting the UK’s carbon dioxide emissions by some 60% by about 2050.
6. The Strategy refers to the Tees Valley City-Region throughout the strategy. There is no formal boundary to the City-Region for policy purposes, however for statistical purposes it is considered to include the following districts: Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland, Sedgefield and Stockton-on-Tees. The City-Region is also considered to include parts of Teesdale and Wear Valley Districts and to influence the northern parts of North Yorkshire, including the rural service centres of Northallerton and Richmond. Some parts of County Durham may be considered to relate to both City-Regions. Within the Tees Valley City-Region, the Tees Valley Conurbation comprises the contiguous built up areas of Stockton, Middlesbrough and Redcar.

ECONOMY

7. The Strategy places an emphasis on encouraging sustainable development by focusing new development in the conurbations and main settlements within the Tees Valley City Region, at brownfield mixed-use locations and at key employment locations. The only brownfield mixed-use location identified in Stockton-on-Tees is North Shore. The policies seek to promote ‘green business’ in terms of self sufficiency, locally producing goods and services.

Stockton-on-Tees Allocations

General Employment Land Allocation for Stockton	255 hectares
Key Employment Locations	70 hectares (Wynyard)

Up to 445 hectares of land should be protected for chemical and steel manufacturing industries within Stockton-on-Tees.

8. The economic policies support the growth and increasing role of universities and colleges in the Region by recognising, amongst other factors, their pivotal role in the transition to higher productivity and a more knowledge-based economy and encouraging greater links with local businesses.
9. It is recognised that culture, tourism, sport and recreation business and creative industries employ nearly 10% of the Region’s workforce and contribute £1 billion per year to the regional economy. Stockton should place emphasis on capturing the benefits of this growing industry.
10. City and town centres are the preferred locations for major office development. Proposals for office developments should only be approved at key employment locations if it can be shown that they cannot be accommodated in a city or town centre, in an edge of centre

location, or at other brownfield mixed-use locations. Policy 19 states that if a proposal has a negative impact on any strategy set out in the Local Development Framework, it should not be approved.

11. The Strategy supports the expansion of facilities at Durham-Tees Valley Airport and the increasing passenger numbers to 3 million per year. Land currently allocated for airport-related uses (80 hectares at Durham Tees Valley Airport) should be safeguarded. The RSS also supports the expansion of Teesport and rail improvements to the port.

HOUSING

12. Average annual net additions to the dwelling stock for Stockton-on-Tees:

<u>2004-11</u>	<u>2011-16</u>	<u>2016-21</u>	
600	530	525	Total over plan period: 9,475

13. The target for the amount of new development to be built on previously developed land for the Tees Valley is 70%
14. The Strategy sets out the criteria for assessing the suitability of land for development. This criteria has and will continue to be used to assist with the Local Development Framework Documents and identifying the appropriate locations for new development. The majority of new development should be concentrated within existing urban areas on brownfield land to ensure sites are accessibility to home, jobs, services and facilities to be well served by all modes of transport, particularly walking, cycling and public transport.

ENVIRONMENT

15. Within the Strategy, 'historic environment' is a term used to refer to all the historic aspects of our environment, be they archaeology sites, historic landscapes, standing buildings, parks and gardens, semi-natural environments such as wood, heath and moor, or historic land uses such as farming, defence, communications and even tourism. The historic environment is seen as not just the past, but also the present and the future. The policy seeks to preserve and enhance the historic environment and encourages local authorities to consider:
 - preparing and regularly maintain registers of Grade II listed buildings 'at risk';
 - preparing lists of locally important buildings;
 - preparing Conservation Area Appraisals/management plans;
 - preparing lists of locally important registered landscapes, Historic Landscape Assessments and Conservation Management Plans for historic designated landscapes; and
 - preparing "urban surveys" of historic towns and other substantial settlements to improve knowledge of their entire historic fabric as a guide to ensure future development maximises the potential for preservation, protection and enhancement.
16. The environment policies have been developed to ensure that the Region's ecological and geological resources are protected and enhanced to return key biodiversity resources to viable levels. Policy encourages the preparation of biodiversity and geological audits, the linking of existing habitats and species populations and preparing Local Biodiversity Action Plans and Local Geodiversity Action Plans.
17. The RSS recognises biomass as the Region's second most significant renewable energy resource, with key projects including the use of wood derived fuel in a co-firing trial at the ALCAN power station and Teesside Sembcorp project which envisages the development of a wood burning power station at Wilton. Other important projects could be using biomass to heat schools and homes, particularly in areas not linked to the gas network and in

properties using electricity for space and water heating. The expansion of the 'biomass sector' will therefore play a key role in developing rural communities. The strategy also supports the expansion of community forestry, the establishment of integrated timber processing facilities and the expansion of tree cover, particularly in urban centres.

SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION, RENEWABLE ENERGY

18. The Strategy includes a requirement to use the Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) as a measure of best practice in environmental design and management of offices, industrial units and retail units. Together with this, the Code for Sustainable Homes, a national standard for sustainable design and construction of new homes, provides an opportunity to drive innovation and technological development.
19. For energy supply, the RSS requires local level size thresholds for major new developments to secure within them an ambitious but viable percentage of energy supply from renewable sources. In advance of local targets being set within Development Plan Documents, Local Planning Authorities are expected to secure sustainable energy supply from new developments within the terms of policy 38. Policy 38 includes the following requirements:
 - Encouraging and promoting opportunities for new developments or the redevelopment or refurbishment of existing buildings to achieve high energy efficiency and minimise consumption in terms of energy efficiency best practice, BREEAM rating and the Code for Sustainable Homes.
 - In advance of local targets being set in DPDs, major new developments of more than 10 dwellings or 1000 square metres of non-residential floorspace should secure at least 10% of their energy supply from decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources, unless, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, this is not feasible or viable.
20. Policy 40 states that renewable energy proposals within or significantly affecting internationally and nationally designated areas should be appraised critically. Small scale developments should be considered favourably; including within nationally recognised landscapes (National Parks, AONBs and Heritage Coasts) if they have minimal impact, individually or cumulatively on the special qualities of these areas. The policy states that in the case of wind energy, the development of one or more turbines or a turbine with a ground to hub height of 25 metres or more is unlikely to be acceptable in these designated areas.
21. The Strategy recognises Teesside as having the potential for a medium size wind farm (20-25 turbines) however it should be noted that a site location has not been identified in the RSS.

WASTE

22. Policy 43 states that Local Development Frameworks and planning proposals should make provision to maintain a landbank of planning permissions for primary aggregates which is sufficient to deliver 0.21 million tonnes of sand and gravel and 2.9 million tonnes of crushed rock over the 21 year period 2001-2021, in the Tees Valley.
23. The Strategy recognises that the amount of waste produced in the region continues to grow with consequential environmental, social and economic costs. The average tonnage that will have to be handled each year until 2021 is as follows:
 - Municipal Solid Waste 550,000 tonnes (approx)

- Commercial and Industrial Waste 1,100,000 (approx)

24. The implications of this is that the Council should give priority to initiatives which encourage behavioural change through developing and implementing waste minimisation plans and schemes, implementing waste awareness and education campaigns and minimising the use of primary construction materials and the production of waste. The Strategy establishes specific targets for the different waste streams as follows:

- Household Waste – to increase recycling and composting to 40% by 2010 and 46% by 2016
- Municipal Solid Waste – to increase recovery to 53% by 2010 and 72% by 2016
- Commercial & Industrial – to increase recovery to 73% by 2016

25. The Strategy puts great emphasis on the fact that the need for new facilities is urgent and that action is required by both the waste industry and local authorities to identify sites and to develop new facilities. It states that LDFs will need to allocate sites for new waste facilities and contain policies, which identify specific criteria for the location of waste management facilities. For the Tees Valley this will be done through the Tees Valley Minerals and Waste Development Plan Documents.

TRANSPORT

26. The RSS recognises a need to improve connectivity within the Region, particularly between the main centres of employment, to improve the Region's competitiveness. It notes that public transport is poor in comparison and that this may be contributing to the congestion problems on the A19, A66 and A1. The policy supports the development of a 'Core and Feeder' public transport system focused on a network of key interchanges. Local Transport Plans and Development Plan Documents will have to support the development of these interchanges.

27. The Strategy recognises a need to improve the public transport connections between Tyne & Wear and the Tees Valley and to other northern City-Regions. Improving connectivity between these areas will support their growth through increased interaction and the broadening of their labour and commercial catchment areas, which is seen as essential for thriving economies. The Strategy also notes that the quality of public transport is a particular issue in the towns within regeneration areas outlying the conurbation in each of the City-Regions, which suffer a loss of local opportunities due to the decline in traditional primary industries.

28. For Durham and Tees Valley Airport, the Strategy places emphasis on:

- improving the bus service to Darlington, Middlesbrough, Stockton and Durham City;
- improving rail services and rail integration with the main terminal building, and
- improving access on the surrounding road network, including Long Newton Junction, the A66 Darlington Bypass and the Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor.

29. The policy supports the Regions ports and places priority on improving rail transport to Teesport. In the Tees Valley, the following schemes are supported:

- North Middlesbrough Accessibility Improvement Scheme.
- Tees Valley Bus Network Improvements Scheme.
- Tees Valley Heavy Rail/Metro Improvements (Under investigation by Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit/Tees Valley Regeneration).
- A66/A19/A174 Area Action Plan (Under investigation by Highways Agency/Tees Valley JSU).

- Gauge enhancement improvements between major northern ports and destinations within the north and midlands (Under investigation by Network Rail and Northern Way).
- Re-signalling of local network (Under investigation by Network rail).
- Additional crossing capacity for the River Tees (Under investigation by the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit).
- Conurbation-wide package of measures to tackle congestion (under investigation by Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit).
- In more remote rural areas, the Strategy encourages the development of innovative demand responsive public transport, rather than relying on more traditional forms of public transport.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

30. One of the most fundamental of all the factors affecting the success of the policies in the RSS is the realism of the adopted assumptions; for example, the strategy is based on an assumption that the rate of economic growth will involve GVA growth increasing from an annual average of 1.8% (2001) towards 2.8% over the plan period, and this growth will be linked to population growth. If the assumptions are inaccurate and are slower than anticipated, the delivery of the strategy could be adversely affected.
31. To ensure the RSS objectives are achieved, the Council should ensure Local Development Documents and other strategies, plans and programs conform to the policies in the RSS. The resulting success of the policies, in terms of real world outputs and outcomes will depend on how they are implemented.
32. The RSS is accompanied by an Implementation Plan. This plan identifies the delivery mechanisms and the organisations that are the key players in ensuring the delivery of the Strategy. Each policy has its own key implementations actions.
33. To ensure the policies in the RSS deliver the objectives the Regional Planning Body will publish an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), which will be submitted to the Secretary of State by the end of February each year. The Council also has a requirement to produce an Annual Monitoring Report for the Local Development Framework by December each year, which will inform the RSS Annual Monitoring Report.
34. The RSS sets out the long-term strategy for the spatial development of the North East. Some policies have an end date of 2021, but the overall vision, strategy and policies should guide development over a longer timescale. Through careful and targeted monitoring on a regular basis, the need for a review will be constantly examined. It is anticipated that a review will be required to be undertaken every five years however if there is a major change in, for example, growth assumptions on the economy, a review will be undertaken sooner.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS - N/A

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS – N/A

RISK ASSESSMENT – N/A

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Regeneration and Transport – The Strategy sets strategic guidance for the North East Region including setting out the regeneration and transport priorities.

Environment and Housing – Sustainable development is a key objective of the Strategy, to improve the quality of life for all without threatening the environment for future generations.

Safer Communities – The Strategy sets out policies on creating sustainable communities and improving the economy of the North East. Policy 24 looks at the potential contribution of development to secure crime prevention and community safety by design. Policy 54 states that Local Transport Plans and other strategies, plans and programmes should develop measures to address safety issues with regards to parking areas.

Children and Young People – The Strategy supports initiatives such as the introduction of Safe Routes to School Travel Plans.

Healthier Communities and Adults – The Strategy includes policies to improve health and tackle health inequalities by improving access to services and facilities by modes of travel other than the private car. Support is given to the provision of health, sport and leisure facilities in new communities.

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT – N/A

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS – N/A

Name of Contact Officer: Rosemary Young
Post Title: Spatial Planning Manager
Telephone No. 01642 6054
Email Address: rosemary.young@stockton.gov.uk

Background Papers

Regional Spatial Strategy - Submission Draft (2005).

Regional Spatial Strategy - Panel report (2006).

Regional Spatial Strategy - Secretary of States Proposed Changes (2007).

Regional Spatial Strategy - Secretary of State Proposed Changes (2008).

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors – N/A

Property – N/A