

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO PLANNING  
COMMITTEE**

**DATE: 24 September 2008**

**CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF  
DEVELOPMENT AND  
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

**NORTH EAST OF ENGLAND REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY**

**SUMMARY**

1. This report informs members about the publication of the North East Regional Spatial Strategy.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. Members are recommended to:
  - (i) Note the contents of this report.

**BACKGROUND**

3. 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). Following a number of consultation drafts, the North East of England Plan - Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) has now been adopted.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.

7. The appendix attached to this report provides a summary of the main policies contained within the RSS and gives a broad overview of how the policies impact on Stockton-on-Tees.
8. Some policies contained in the RSS 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.
9. 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.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

14. Members are recommended to:

- (i) Note the contents of this report.

### **Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services.**

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#### **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).

**Financial Implications – N/A**

**Environmental Implications –** Sustainable development is a key objective of the Regional Spatial Strategy, to improve the quality of life for all without threatening the environment for future generations. The environment policies have been development to ensure biodiversity, ecological and geological resources are protected and enhanced.

**Community Safety Implications –** 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.

**Human Rights Implications – N/A**

**Ward(s) and Ward Councillors – N/A**

## APPENDIX: SUMMARY OF THE NORTH EAST OF ENGLAND PLAN REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY TO 2021



GOVERNMENT OFFICE  
FOR THE NORTH EAST

### The North East of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021

July 2008



Following a number of consultation drafts, the North East of England Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) has now been finalised. 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. The plan influences and shapes many of the key decisions to be taken in the region over the next 15-20 years providing a vision to deliver jobs, homes and infrastructure to the region up to 2021. The Strategy replaces all of the policies in the Tees Valley Structure Plan (2004) as well as a number of other structure plans in the Region.

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.

This document provides a summary of the policies in relation to Stockton-on-Tees. Note that not all of the policies have been summarised as a number of them have little relevance or will have minimal impact on the borough.

## List of Regional Spatial Strategy Polices

Policy No.	Policy	Policy No.	Policy
1	North East Renaissance	30	Improving Inclusively and Affordability
2	Sustainable Living	31	Landscape Character
3	Climate Change	32	Historic Environment
4	The Sequential Approach to Development	33	Biodiversity & Geodiversity
5	Phasing & Plan, Monitor and Manage	34	The Aquatic & Marine Environment
6	Locational Strategy	35	Flood risk
7	Connectivity and Accessibility	36	Trees, Woodlands and Forests
8	Protecting and Enhancing the Environment	37	Air Quality
9	Tyne and Wear City Region	38	Sustainable Construction
10	Tees Valley City Region	39	Renewable Energy Generation
11	Rural Areas	40	Planning for Renewables
12	Sustainable Economic Development	41	Onshore Wind Energy Development
13	Brownfield Mixed-Use Locations	42	Overall Minerals Strategy
14	Supporting Further and Higher Education	43	Aggregate Minerals Provision
15	ICT Networks	44	Opencast Coal
16	Culture and Tourism	45	Sustainable Waste Management
17	Casino Development	46	Waste Management Provision
18	Employment Land Portfolio	47	Hazardous Waste
19	Office Development Outside Centres	48	International Gateways
20	Key Employment Locations	49	Regional Transport Corridors
21	Airports	50	Regional Public Transport Provision
22	Ports	51	Strategic Public Transport Hubs
23	Chemical & Steel Industries	52	Framework for Demand Management
24	Delivering Sustainable Communities	53	Demand Management Measures
25	Urban and Rural Centres	54	Parking and Travel Plans
26	Metrocentre	55	Accessibility within/between the City-Regions
27	Out-of-Centre Leisure Developments	56	Accessibility in Rural Areas
28	Gross and Net Dwelling Provision	57	Sustainable Freight Distribution
29	Delivering and Managing Housing Supply	-	-

## **Summary of Regional Spatial Strategy Polices**

### **Policy 1 North East Renaissance**

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.

### **Policy 2 Sustainable Development and Policy 3 Climate Change**

Policy 2 states that sustainable development is essentially concerned with 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 policy states that this broad principle should underpin all strategies.

Policy 3 ensures that all strategies, plans and programmes in the Region contribute to mitigating climate change and assisting adaptation to the impacts of a changing climate by helping the Region to contribute to meeting national policy as set out in the Energy White Paper to put ourselves on a path to cutting the UK's carbon dioxide emissions by some 60% by about 2050.

### **Policy 4 The Sequential Approach to Development**

Local Development Frameworks should adopt a sequential approach to the identification of land for development to give priority to previously developed land and buildings in the most sustainable locations. All sites should be in locations that avoid areas at the highest risk from flooding, having particular regard to the vulnerability of the proposed development to flooding. Locations should be selected in the following priority order:

- a. Suitable previously-developed sites and buildings within urban areas, particularly around public transport nodes;
- b. Other suitable locations within urban areas not identified as land to be protected for nature or heritage conservation or recreational purposes;
- c. Suitable sites in locations adjoining urban areas, particularly those that involve the use of previously-developed land and buildings; and
- d. Suitable sites in settlements outside urban areas, particularly those that involve the use of previously developed land and buildings.

Note that the sequential approach does not apply to renewable energy developments.

### **Policy 6 Locational Strategy**

“Tees Valley” refers to the five administrative districts of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland, and Stockton on Tees. The Tees Valley City-Region is the area which looks primarily to the Tees Valley Conurbation and Main Settlements for access to jobs and services. There is no formal boundary to the City-Region for policy purposes, however for statistical purposes it could be considered to include the following districts:

- Darlington
- Hartlepool
- Middlesbrough
- Redcar & Cleveland

- Sedgefield
- 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. The RSS supports the polycentric development and redevelopment of the conurbation.

### **Policy 7 Connectivity and Accessibility**

The policy seeks to improve and enhance the sustainable internal and external connectivity and accessibility of the North East by promoting public transport, travel plans, cycling and walking and reducing the need to travel long distances by focusing development in urban areas that have good access links.

### **Policy 8 Protecting and Enhancing the Environment**

The main thrust of this policy is to maintain and enhance the quality, diversity and local distinctiveness of the environment. This will be achieved by amongst other things:

- reducing the impact of travel demand particularly by promoting public transport, travel plans, cycling and walking;
- ensuring safe transport networks and infrastructure;
- maximising the potential of the International Gateways of the ports and airports and strategic transport infrastructure in supporting regional economic growth and regeneration; and
- protecting the special qualities of the environment and the nationally designated areas, woodland areas and sites, green spaces and important sites for biodiversity and geodiversity.

### **Policy 10 Tees Valley City-Region**

This policy sets out how the Strategy will support the polycentric development and redevelopment of the Tees Valley City Region. The Strategy will do this through the implementation of regeneration initiatives, improving economic prosperity, creating sustainable communities, improving connectivity, maintaining strategic gaps and maintaining and enhancing the environment as well as encouraging the development of renewable energy.

### **Policy 12 Sustainable Economic Development**

Policy encourages 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 policy seeks to promote 'green business' in terms of self sufficiency, locally producing goods and services.

### **Policy 13 Brownfield Mixed-use Locations**

The only Brownfield Mixed-use Location identified in Stockton-on-Tees is North Shore. The policy requires a detailed masterplan to be prepared for North Shore and that the emerging Local Development Framework should ensure that:

### **Policy 14 Supporting Further and Higher Education**

This policy supports 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. This will particularly be the case with Durham University.

### **Policy 16 Culture and Tourism**

Policy recognises a need to promote culture and tourism, including provision for sport and leisure. This will be done by improving the first impressions gained by visitors arriving and passing through the area, including supporting environmental improvements to gateways and transport corridors. The objectives will also be achieved by ensuring that the development of culture, sports, leisure and recreation and tourist facilities and attractions protects, invests in and enhances and maintains the Regions natural, built and heritage environments.

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.

### **Policy 18 Employment Land Portfolio, Policy 19 Office Development Outside of City and Town Centres, Policy 20 Key Employment Locations, Policy 21 Airports, Policy 22 Ports and Policy 23 Chemical & Steel Industries**

#### **Stockton on Tees Allocations**

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

Town centres will be the preferred location 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. The policy states that if a proposal has a negative impact on any strategy set out in the Local Development framework, it should not be approved.

The only Key Employment Location in the borough is at Wynyard. This is to provide 200ha for large scale development opportunities for high quality modern industry. Note that 130 hectares of Wynyard is allocated to Hartlepool.

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

The Strategy states that up to 445 hectares of land should be protected for chemical and steel manufacturing industries within Stockton-on-Tees.

### **Policy 24 Delivering Sustainable Communities**

This policy 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 policy means that the majority of new development will 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.

### **Policy 28 Gross and Net Dwelling Provision**

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: <b>9,475</b>

The target for the amount of new development to be built on previously developed land for the Tees Valley is 70%

### **Policy 32 Historic Environment**

Within the policy, 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.

### **Policy 33 Biodiversity & Geodiversity**

The Environment map on page 197 shows the location of:

- The Stockton-on-Tees Brownfield Biodiversity Area
- Teesmouth Intertidal Area
- Two Habitat creation and Enhancement Areas both at the above areas
- The National Nature Reserve
- ‘Ramsar’ sites (Wetlands of international importance)

The policy has 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.

### **Policy 35 Flood risk**

The main consideration of this policy will be the implementation of the Sequential Test to assessing proposed developments. This test must be informed by Strategic Flood Risk Assessments and if necessary the Exception Test.

The policy states that there will be a need to manage the risk from tidal effects along the coast and the estuary, taking into account the latest Government predictions for sea level rise.

### **Policy 36 Trees, Woodlands and Forests**

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 policy also supports the expansion of community forestry, the establishment of integrated timber processing facilities and the expansion of tree cover, particularly in urban centres.

### **Policy 38 Sustainable Construction, Policy 39 Renewable Energy Generation, Policy 40 Planning for Renewables, Policy 41 Onshore Wind Energy Development**

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. Developers will be able to obtain a 'star rating' for any new home which will demonstrate its environmental performance. It will provide valuable information to home buyers, and offer builders a tool with which to differentiate themselves in sustainability terms.

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 1000m<sup>2</sup> 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.

Policy 40 states that renewable energy proposals within or significantly affecting the purposes of 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.

It is noted that the use of relatively small-scale technologies such as photo-voltaics, solar hot water and biomass can help to increase general awareness and acceptance of renewables and should be encouraged within the borough.

The policy recognises Teesside as having the potential for a medium size wind farm (20-25 turbines) however it should be noted that a potential location has not been identified.

### **Policy 43, Policy 45 Sustainable Waste Management, Policy 46 Waste Management Provision, Policy 47 Hazardous Waste**

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.

The RSS 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)

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

The Strategy puts great emphasis on the fact that the need for new facilities is urgent and action is needed by 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 Document.

#### **Policy 48 International Gateways**

For Durham and Tees Valley Airport the policy places priority on:

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

The policy supports the regions ports and places priority on improving rail transport to Teesport.

#### **Policy 49 Regional Transport Corridors**

This section notes that several major highway improvement schemes are being taken forward that will benefit the Region. On the A1 south of the Region two upgrade schemes are being proposed, and on the A19 in Tyne & Wear and Northumberland a number of junction improvements will help to tackle congestion and improve traffic flows.

However, the Strategy also highlights a need to address congestion issues on the A66 at Darlington and the A1 Newcastle/Gateshead Western Bypass to support the growth of the conurbations. Looking to the longer term, further major transport studies will also be required for the A1 in County Durham and the A19/A66/A174 junction to assess the need for major upgrades to tackle projected congestion and safety issues.

#### **Policy 50 Regional Public Transport Provision**

The emphasis on this policy is to ensure that new development is located and designed to promote and encourage walking, cycling and public transport provision as well as implementing a number of public transport improvements which will improve the service. This will include (in relation to the Tees Valley):

- development of Real Time Information and Traveline;
- developing common Region-wide ticketing and common bus fares;

- developing the Tees Valley metro system;
- developing Bus Quality Partnerships;
- investigating Park and Ride solutions; and
- promoting and encouraging new and improved public transport services

### **Policy 51 Strategic Public Transport Hubs**

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, Development Plan Documents etc will have to support the development of these interchanges.

### **Policy 54 Parking and Travel Plans, Policy 55 Accessibility within/between the City-Regions, Policy 56 Accessibility in Rural Areas**

The policy encourages the use of Travel Plans and wider travel awareness campaigns by schools and employers, which encourage the use of sustainable transport for the journey to work and to school.

The policy states that particular care will be needed with the development of the Key Employment Locations and Brownfield Mixed Use Locations. Where these, or other major new sites, are developed, it is important that this does not lead to high levels of parking supply even if the area is currently relatively inaccessible. If any additional parking is needed in the short term, this should, where appropriate, be subject to an appropriate charging regime, with any income used to improve alternatives to the car. The Strategy recognises that Key Employment Locations and Brownfield Mixed Use Locations provide a significant opportunity to masterplan for the provision of a parking approach that manages private car use whilst promoting sustainable modes.

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.

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.

### **Transport Actions/Proposals for plan period for the Tees Valley:**

- North Middlesbrough Accessibility Improvements (Scheme RFA approved)
- Tees Valley Bus Network Improvements (Scheme RFA approved)
- Tees Valley Heavy Rail/Metro Improvements (Under investigation by Tees Valley JSC/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 JSU)
- Conurbation-wide package of measures to tackle congestion (under investigation by Tees Valley JSU)

**For more information:**

To view the Regional Spatial Strategy, please follow the following web link:

[www.gos.gov.uk/nestore/docs/planning/rss/rss.pdf](http://www.gos.gov.uk/nestore/docs/planning/rss/rss.pdf)

For further information about the North East of England Plan, please contact the Government Office Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) team on 0191 2023528 or e-mail [strategy@gone.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:strategy@gone.gsi.gov.uk)

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