

The Regional Planning Evidence Base – November 2010

1 Introduction

The Regional Planning Function in Yorkshire and Humber, which had been provided since April 2009 by Local Government Yorkshire and Humber (LGYH), has been disbanded following the revocation of the Regional Strategies by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) Chief Planner on the 6th July 2010¹.

As a result, the policies that were contained within the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) no longer form part of the statutory development plan. Whilst national Planning Policy Statements still apply, reference to the RSS or Regional Strategies within them should be disregarded.

Therefore, there is no longer any requirement for local authorities to seek advice from LGYH on the conformity of strategic planning applications or emerging local development documents with the Regional Strategy. There is also no longer a requirement to send monitoring information to LGYH.

Local authorities should now continue to progress their Local Development Frameworks (LDFs), which are now seen to be even more critical to ensure up-to-date development plan coverage. It is important for local authorities to decide whether and how to work across local authority boundaries on planning policy. There are benefits of local authorities working together on planning, to support the production of local planning documents and achieve efficiencies in undertaking technical work.

Advice from CLG, which is contained within the 6th July revocation letter, stated that the planning data and research currently held *“will still be available to local authorities for the preparation of their local plans”*. Therefore, whilst the policies included in the Regional Strategy no longer form part of the statutory development plan, the evidence base that was used to develop the Regional Strategies can be used by Local Planning Authorities to inform the scale and distribution of development planned through their emerging Local Development Frameworks.

The Planning Officers Society has also reinforced the importance of Local Planning Authorities progressing their LDFs, particularly Core Strategies, in the advice note entitled “Planning Post RSS revocation”, which was published in October 2010².

To support local planning authorities to continue to identify cross boundary spatial planning issues and to discuss how they are best addressed, LGYH strategic planning staff have been seconded into Yorkshire and Humber’s four “functional sub region” (FSR) partnerships until the end of the current financial year. The regional planning evidence base has also been made available for use by local authorities. This includes the evidence base that was used to inform the issued Regional Spatial Strategy (2008) and the more recent evidence that was intended to inform the preparation of the Integrated Regional Strategy. Whilst the integrated Regional Strategy will now not be produced, the evidence is available for consideration and use in LDFs.

A full list of the documents that formed the regional planning evidence base, background studies and relevant data is available online – see www.lgyh.gov.uk/Our%20Work/Regional%20Planning/ - where a spreadsheet is available to download, containing web links to relevant documents. A further overview of the most up-to-date parts of the evidence base and how it could be used to inform local authorities’ LDFs is set out at Sections 4 to 9 of this note below.

It is important to note that any interpretation of the evidence available at the regional level must be tested through a local examination in public. For Development Plan Documents to be found sound at examination they must pass several tests specified in Planning Policy Statement 12. They should be justified, meaning being founded on a robust and credible evidence base; the most appropriate

¹ See www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1631904.pdf

² See www.planningofficers.org.uk/downloads/pdf/Planning%20post%20RSS%20revocation_POS%20Advice%20note_Oct10.pdf

strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives and effective, meaning being deliverable and able to be monitored. The documents should also be consistent with national planning policy.

Work is continuing at FSR level on the preparation of Sub Regional Planning Assessments for the Leeds City Region, Sheffield City Region and York & North Yorkshire. These Assessments set out the evidence base for each FSR and relate this to the roles of places. The FSRs are working closely with local authorities to develop the sub regional planning assessments. To date the Sheffield City Region Planning Assessment has been finalised and is available at www.sheffieldcityregion.org.uk/sheffield-city-region-spatial-planning. The Leeds City Region and York and North Yorkshire sub regional planning assessments will be made available when they are finalised. Whilst there are no plans for a specific sub-regional planning assessment in the Hull & Humber Ports City Region, work is taking place within the FSR to support local authorities individually on their LDF work and identify areas where cross-boundary working could add value.

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)

The creation of Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEPs) offer a mechanism for cross boundary work on planning; however, LEPs are unlikely to offer complete coverage of Yorkshire and Humber, at least in the short to medium term³. There is scope for some strategic, collaborative planning work to be undertaken by or on behalf of LEPs where they exist, as set out in the "Local Growth White Paper", published on 28 October 2010⁴. However this is likely to be focused on a specific and narrow range of issues, including informing the understanding of functional economic relationships; helping to identify the most important locations for economic growth and re-structuring; and ensuring that planning policies at local level support and help deliver wider strategies for growth and change. There remains potential for local authorities to work together across their boundaries, in both LEP and non-LEP areas. Furthermore authorities may choose to work to different geographies, most suited to the issue to be addressed. LEPs are unlikely, therefore, to provide the whole solution to coordinating planning work across local authority boundaries.

2 Accessing the Regional Planning Evidence Base

The evidence base that was developed to support the preparation of the issued Regional Spatial Strategy (2008), the Regional Spatial Strategy Partial Review – the Housing Challenge and the more recent evidence that was intended to inform the proposed integrated Regional Strategy has been documented - see www.lgyh.gov.uk/Our%20Work/Regional%20Planning/. This includes a downloadable spreadsheet, listing the entire evidence base and background studies, complete with relevant web-links and details of where information is available online (or from other sources).

The following sections of this note provide an overview of the most up-to-date parts of the evidence base and how they could be used to inform local authorities' LDFs, structured around a number of key policy areas⁵.

³ Note: on 28 October 2010 it was confirmed that the Sheffield and Leeds City Region LEPs had been approved by Government. Further LEP announcements are expected to be made on an ongoing basis.

⁴ See <http://bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/corporate/docs/L/PU1068%20-%20Local%20growth>

⁵ Note: Yorkshire Forward led on regional strategic transport issues in Yorkshire and Humber and future arrangements for transport, including making the relevant Yorkshire Forward evidence base available for future reference, are still being considered

3 Housing

The principles and evidence to develop housing policy at the local level should be based on the principles set out in 'Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing' (PPS 3), which states that when determining housing provision local planning authorities should take into account the evidence of current and future levels of need and demand for housing and affordability levels.

This should be based on local and sub-regional evidence of need and demand, set out in Strategic Housing Market Assessments and other relevant market information; the Government's latest published household projections produced by the CLG; and the needs of the regional economy, having regard to economic growth forecasts and the local and sub-regional evidence of the availability of suitable land for housing.

PPS3 also encourages local authorities to assess housing need and demand in terms of housing market areas. This could involve working with other local authorities in a sub-regional housing market area. Through a housing market partnership on the basis of identified housing market areas, constituent local authorities are encouraged to undertake the strategic housing market assessment together.

In Yorkshire and Humber the most recent work that may be useful to local authorities include the Evidence Base for Housing in Yorkshire and the Humber report, produced by Nevin Leather Associates – see www.lgyh.gov.uk/Our%20Work/Housing/Housing%20Research/.

An overview of the evidence on the need and demand for housing was also produced by LGYH. This will help local planning authorities and other interested parties to better understand the different drivers of housing need and demand and the uncertainty surrounding them. This evidence is available from the strategic planning leads in each FSR (see contact details at Section 12 of this note).

Four housing papers covering a number of topics have been produced by Ecotec to support the work that would have led to the development of the integrated Regional Strategy. As part of this work Ecotec have also produced three housing demand scenarios based on rapid growth, steady growth and continued decline. This work is available to view at www.lgyh.gov.uk/Our%20Work/Housing/Housing%20Research/ and covers issues such as house building and land supply, relevant financial and fiscal policy, employment growth and the residential property market; and the demand for non-market housing.

4 Economic Development and Employment Land

The principles and evidence to assess the development of Economic Development and Employment Land policies at the local level should be based on the guiding policies set out in 'Planning Policy Statement 4: Sustainable Economic Development', which reflects the guidance set out in the 2004 ODPM 'Employment Land Reviews guide: Guidance Note'⁶.

This guidance note sets out a number of different approaches to assess employment land demand at a local level. One of these approaches is to base employment land demand on employment job forecasts. If local planning authorities wish to undertake their employment land review following this approach then the Yorkshire Forward Chief Economist Unit may be able to provide advice and clarification of the use of the Regional Econometric Model, for as long as it continued to exist⁷. In

⁶ see www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/employmentlandreviews?view=Standard

⁷ Note: Yorkshire Forward is working on providing a legacy of data and information, in the light of its forthcoming closure by March 2012 details of which will emerge over the coming months

addition work carried out by Roger Tym and Partners provides advice on how local authorities could translate employment job forecasts into future employment land requirements. This report, including technical appendices can be found at www.yorkshire-forward.com/our-wonderful-region/our-economy/integrated-forecasting-framework. This method of carrying out employment land reviews may not be appropriate for all local planning authorities, however. It is important to note that indicative land employment forecasts within the issued RSS 2008, which were to be used in the absence of more up to date local employment work, are now out of date and need to be reconsidered in light of the recent recession.

Yorkshire Forward currently has a contract with Acxiom, who provide data on retail including the pattern of retail expenditure flows. The contract between Yorkshire Forward and Acxiom Ltd means that, until September 2011, local authorities have the license to access this retail data. Please contact Lisa Littlefair from the Yorkshire Forward Chief Economist Unit for details of the named contact in each local authority area (see section 12 of this note for contact details). There is potential for this data to feed into the evidence base for LDFs; however, the use of the data set would need to be discussed with Yorkshire Forward.

5 Infrastructure

Advice from CLG, which is contained within the 6th July revocation letter, stated that *'new ways for local authorities to address strategic planning and infrastructure issues based on cooperation will be introduced'*. This reinforces the Coalitions views that cross local authority cooperation of infrastructure is important and there may also be a role for the new Local Enterprise Partnerships in this matter.

The infrastructure evidence base that has been developed at the Yorkshire & Humber-wide level includes the Regional Integrated Infrastructure Scoping Study (see www.lgyh.gov.uk/Our%20Work/Regional%20Planning/Infrastructure/Regional-Evidence-Base-/Integrated%20Infrastructure/) and the Green Infrastructure and Regional Spatial Strategy for Yorkshire and Humber (see www.lgyh.gov.uk/Our%20Work/Regional%20Planning/Infrastructure/Regional-Evidence-Base-/Green%20Infrastructure/). Both of these documents set out the broad infrastructure issues at a Yorkshire and Humber-wide level.

Natural England is currently working with local authorities to map green infrastructure networks across Yorkshire and Humber. This mapping is available at www.naturalengland.org.uk/regions/yorkshire and the [humber/ourwork/yandhgreeninfrastructuremappingproject.aspx](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/regions/yorkshire).

LGYH also developed the "Infrastructure Hub", which has been a shared resource between local authorities across Yorkshire and Humber, offering practical support, clarification and guidance to help prepare infrastructure delivery plans. Whilst the Hub is unlikely to be proactively updated in the future, it can continue to be accessed at www.lgyh.gov.uk/Our%20Work/Regional%20Planning/Infrastructure/Infrastructure-Toolkit/.

6 Water Management

The principles of flood risk and water management related to plan making is set out in 'Planning Policy Statement 25 (PPS25): Planning and Flood Risk'. The Flood and Water Management Act places a duty on local authorities to develop and implement wider strategies for flood risk, including in their local development frameworks. Several flood risk partnerships are emerging across the

region and the Environment Agency can be contacted directly to provide further information on how they can assist local planning authorities (see contact details at Section 12 below). Work is currently ongoing to complete the Sub Regional Water Cycle Scoping Study and this will be made available from FSR strategic planning leads when finalised (again, see Section 12 below for contact details).

Flood risk – and action necessary to manage it - does not respect local authority boundaries. In its guidance for local planning authorities following the revocation of Regional Strategies, Government clarified that local authorities should continue to work together across administrative boundaries to plan development that addresses flooding and coastal change.

In line with Pitt Review recommendations⁸, the Floods and Water Management Act and the Flood Risk Regulations promote a more integrated approach to flood and coastal risk management, with duties on responsible parties to work together – not just for planning but on flood risk management in general.

The Floods and Water Management Act has changed the role of local authorities. For example, it requires a lead local flood authority (LLFA) to develop and implement a strategy for local flood risk management in its area, working with other bodies such as water companies and the Environment Agency (who has a strategic overview role). The Act also establishes a sustainable drainage systems approving body at county or unitary local authority levels, which would have responsibility for the approval of proposed drainage systems in new developments and redevelopments, subject to certain conditions and exceptions.

The Act complements PPS25, which seeks to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages in the planning process, limiting the impact of flooding on new and existing communities. The Act also enables partnerships to be formed, but it doesn't say what any local arrangements should look like. In 2009, local authority Leaders across Yorkshire and Humber endorsed a new framework of partnerships to support implementation of the Act and the Flood Risk Regulations.

Several Flood Risk Partnerships are, therefore, emerging across Yorkshire and Humber. These groups provide the opportunity to work together to further understand flood and erosion risk and approaches to managing it. Importantly this will enable the dissemination of good practice and allow funding efficiencies to be sought.

These partnerships have strong links to the Regional Flood Defence Committee, and should provide support to/will be informed by the LLFA-led Multi-Agency technical groups, which will bring together all the relevant bodies within an area to help manage local flood and coastal erosion risk. These will deal with locally-specific flood risk management, drainage and planning issues and the development of their local strategy.

There are sources of information available to assist local authority decision making and partnership working. For example:

- Catchment Flood Management Plans (CFMPs): These are high-level plans to help understand and respond to current and future inland flood risk. They set the overall direction of inland flood risk management within a catchment and include a prioritised list of actions for its management.
- Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs): As per CFMPs these are high-level plans however they focus on the risk of coastal erosion and flooding from the sea.
- Defra has also produced a briefing explaining what the Floods and Water Management Act means to local authorities - see www.defra.gov.uk/environment/flooding/documents/policy/fwmb/fwma-lafactsheet.pdf.

⁸ See www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/library/publications/33889.aspx

Evidence relating to water resources and water quality is available from the Environment Agency and the water companies. In general, data on the status of the water environment is available from the Environment Agency, whilst information on water and waste water services infrastructure is available from water companies. Information is available on the LGYH Infrastructure Hub (see Section 5 of this note above).

The Environment Agency will continue to work with local authorities individually and/or jointly to provide technical support on both flood risk and coastal erosion. Contact your local EA Planning Liaison team for assistance and general contact details for the EA are provided at Section 12 below.

7 Waste

The principles of waste management related to plan making is set out in Planning Policy Statement 10 (PPS10): Planning for Sustainable Waste Management, which set out the national requirements to meet the waste targets set out in the European Waste Framework Directive. The Environment Agency will make available raw data on waste and brings together the data in a 'Waste Data Interrogator' and a 'Hazardous Waste Interrogator' (a summary of this data has been published and is available on the Environment Agency website at <http://environmentagency.resultspage.com/search?p=Q&ts=ev2&w=waste+statistics&x=14&y=9>). It is widely recognised that waste flows across local authority boundaries and a number of local authorities in Yorkshire and Humber are working together to produce joint waste development plan documents or to manage waste through joint facilities. It is important to consider commercial and hazardous waste alongside municipal waste.

The latest work at Yorkshire and Humber-wide level that may be useful to local authorities include the:

- Yorkshire and Humber Waste Data Statistics Digest 2009, which contains data on waste trends and activities in Yorkshire and Humber for the year ending December 2007 and March 2008. This can be viewed at www.lgyh.gov.uk/The%20Library/Other%20Research/Waste/Annual-Waste-Digest-
- Sub Regional Spatial Planning Assessment Waste Evidence Discussion Paper, produced by Paul Hatherley, an independent consultant (2010). This paper is available from FSR strategic planning contacts (see Section 12 below) and offers an insight into the available regional waste evidence, but will not be updated in future years.
- As part of a pilot project, analysis of available waste data to map the flow and movement of waste streams in Yorkshire and Humber is available from the Environment Agency Publications Catalogue. This analysis shows how different waste streams move through facilities and across geographical boundaries and can be accessed at <http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/epages/eapublications.storefront?lang=e> (quoting product code: 'GENE0910BTAY-E-E').

8 Minerals

The principles of minerals management related to plan making is set out in Mineral Planning Guidance and Mineral Policy Statements. The Regional Aggregate Working Party (RAWP) has confirmed funding till March 2011. Future funding is currently unclear, however. Previously RAWP gave recommendations to the Regional Planning Body and in the future the RAWP will provide technical advice and mineral apportionments to local authorities.

The guidance to accompany the revocation of Regional Strategies in July made it clear that mineral planning authorities have responsibility for continuing to plan for a steady and adequate supply of aggregate minerals to support economic growth and that they should do this within the longstanding arrangements for mineral planning.

The latest work at the regional level that may be useful to local authorities include the:

- West Yorkshire Sand and Gravel Resources: Investigating the Potential for an Increased Sub-Regional Apportionment report, which looked at the existing sand and gravel resources in West Yorkshire in 2009. This report can be found at www.lgyh.gov.uk/The%20Library/Other%20Research/Minerals/;
- Sand and Gravel Study, Stage 1 Report (June 2005), produced by the British Geological Survey;
- Sand and Gravel Study, Phase 2 Report, Appraisal of Apportionment Options (November 2007), produced by Land Use Consultants; and
- Sub Regional Spatial Planning Assessment Minerals Evidence Discussion Paper produced by Paul Hatherley, an independent consultant (2010). This is available from FSR strategic planning leads (see Section 12 below) and offers an insight into the available regional minerals evidence, but will not be updated in future years.

9 Renewable Energy

A Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Capacity Study is a technical study currently being undertaken by Aecom. Following the revocation of the RSS the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) has continued to fund the study because of the need to put in place a comprehensive evidence base for renewable energy capacity. The study looks at the potential capacity for renewable energy within each local authority with consideration of deployment and environmental factors. This study is being coordinated by Martin Elliott (see Section 12 below for contact details) and a draft will be available later this year.

The study is largely being prepared in accordance with DECC methodology which requires an initial assessment of high level energy opportunities. This is available as a report and maps for all local planning authorities, and can be found at www.lgyh.gov.uk/Our%20Work/Regional%20Planning/Renewable-Energy-Study/.

It is also worth noting the Renewable Energy Toolkit; a live document, commissioned by LGYH and Yorkshire Forward, to help local authority planning officers implement planning policy on renewable energy. It also provides other useful guidance and examples of best practice. The Toolkit is soon to be updated to reflect recent changes in the planning system and can be viewed online at www.renewable-energy-toolkit.org.uk/.

10 Role of Places and Sub-Regional Planning Assessments

The Sub Regional Planning Assessments were originally intended to bring together all the key lines of enquiry to consider what all the evidence means for the roles of places across Yorkshire and Humber, but are now being used as a means of bringing together the relevant pieces of evidence at a sub-regional level. The FSRs are working through local authorities to develop the sub-regional

planning assessments and, to date, the Sheffield City Region Planning Assessment has been finalised and is available at www.sheffieldcityregion.org.uk/sheffield-city-region-spatial-planning.

The Leeds City Region and York & North Yorkshire sub regional planning assessments will be made available when signed off and complete. Whilst there are no current plans for a specific sub-regional planning assessment in the Hull & Humber Ports City Region, work is taking place within the FSR to support local authorities individually on their LDF work and identify areas where cross-boundary working could add value.

11 Monitoring and Conformity

LGYH has no responsibility to maintain a monitoring of national or local indicator sets. The past Yorkshire and Humber Regional Annual Monitoring Reports are, however, available, covering the period 2001 to 2009. They can be found online at www.lgyh.gov.uk/The%20Library/Regional%20Planning%20Library/Monitoring%20Reports/

LGYH also now has no conformity role in relation to strategic planning applications and emerging local development documents. LGYH contacts (probably Jenny Poxon, Andy Haigh, Martin Elliot, Marta Dziudzi or Ruth Hardingham) should, therefore, be removed from local authority consultation databases and LGYH no longer needs to be consulted on such matters.

12 Key E-mail Contacts

Functional Sub Region (FSR) Strategic Planning leads:

- Jenny Poxon, Sheffield City Region Executive - jenny.poxon@sheffieldcityregion.org.uk
- Will Kemp, Hull and Humber Ports City Region – will.kemp@lgyh.gov.uk
- Martin Elliot, York and North Yorkshire Partnership Unit - Martin.Elliot@ynypu.org.uk
- Andy Haigh, Leeds City Region Secretariat - Andy.Haigh@leeds.gov.uk

Other key contacts:

- Lucy Marshall, Environment Agency - lucy.marshall@environment-agency.gov.uk
- Will Fieldhouse, Government Office Yorkshire and Humber - will.fieldhouse@goyh.gsi.gov.uk
- Dave Parrish, Regional Aggregates Working Party - Dave.Parrish@yorkshiredales.org.uk
- Lisa Littlefair, Yorkshire Forward Chief Economist Unit - lisa.littlefair@yorkshire-forward.com