

REGIONAL STRATEGY PRINCIPLES AND ISSUES (RS 2010)

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SUMMARY:

This report sets out an overview of the principles and issues paper of the Regional Strategy for England's North West to enable discussion and views.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Government has recently published draft legislation to enable all regions to produce a single integrated regional strategy to replace the Regional Economic Strategy (RES), Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and Regional Housing Strategy (RHS). The North West, jointly led by NWDA and 4NW, is beginning this work in advance of legislation and expecting to produce a first draft (RS2010) by 2010.
- 1.2 The North West RS2010 will set out a 20 year vision with a 3 to 5 year investment and implementation plan for the region. It will set out the key regional challenges including sustaining economic growth, housing supply and affordability, climate change issues and areas identified as priorities for regeneration, investment and intervention. In particular it aims to set out the strategic requirements and provision for transport, waste, water, minerals, culture energy and environment.
- 1.3 The principles and issues paper aims to question the fundamental principles of how the North West economy and society work and sets out a number of core questions for consultees. We have the opportunity to add our voice to the consultation by the end of April 2009.
- 1.4 This paper sets out the core consultation information as preparation for the discussion and will be supported by a presentation to the committee with officer feedback on each of the key questions.
- 1.5 **Question A: Do you believe that things have fundamentally changed as a result of this recession and that issues of climate change, low carbon economy, completing land use pressures and the nature of future growth are important to consider?**

2. ASSUMPTIONS

- 2.1 Appendix 1 reproduces the assumptions set out in the principles and issues paper.
- 2.2 **Question B: Do you agree with the assumptions? If not what alternative assumptions would you make? Are there any assumptions missing?**

3. ULTIMATE NORTH WEST STRATEGIC AIMS

- 3.1 Previous strategies have particularly focused on Gross Value Added (GVA). This strategy also sets out to “generate economic success in the future” but also to “use that success” to achieve longer term integrated “sustainable and equitable social, economic and environmental well being”. See appendix 2. A specific vision statement will be produced in 2009 which aims to set out what kind of North West we want in the future.
- 3.2 **Question C: Do you agree that the focus of this strategy should be on sustainable economic growth and contribute to sustainable development?**

4. CHALLENGES

- 4.1 Appendix 3 sets out the identified persistent challenges the 2010 strategy will need to address and recognises that the mix of these varies across the North West.
- 4.2 **Question D: Do you agree with the challenges outlined for the North West over the coming 20 years? Are there any missing?**

5. UNIQUE OFFER

- 5.1.1 The paper highlights the importance of recognising the uniqueness of the region and lists out eight elements to define this unique contribution.
 - a. The people, diverse culture, sport, positive external image and trading heritage. A welcoming and attractive place to live, work, invest and visit.
 - b. Relatively high skill, low cost location with connectivity.
 - c. Quality, diversity and character of natural and coastal assets including availability of brownfield and employment land providing the potential for growth with minimal environmental impact.
 - d. Potential renewable and nuclear energy offer.
 - e. Advanced engineering and materials strengths.
 - f. Small but highly productive bio medical strengths and an emerging digital and creative sector.

- g. History in and critical mass of innovation, science, research and university assets.
- h. International Ports and Airports.

5.1.2 QUESTION E: Do you agree that these elements adequately summarise the North West's unique offer in a world economy? Are there any current or future elements missing?

6 ISSUES

6.1.1 There has been a wide range of evidence gathering undertaken over the past year which will continue into 2009. This evidence has been looked at from two angles:

- a. to identify "the themes that the regional strategy will have to address to integrate economic, social and environmental issues";
- b. how the "issues for the region play out in places, the thinking about the strengths of particular places and their inter-relationship".

6.1.2 These are the 10 core issues the NWDA and 4NW see as particularly pertinent and interlinked from the evidence gathered:

- a. Low Carbon Economy, Resource Use and Water
- b. Urban Growth
- c. Connectivity
- d. Places and Communities
- e. Natural Environment and Rural Areas
- f. Skills and Talent
- g. Health and Worklessness
- h. Innovation
- i. Advanced Manufacturing
- j. Nature of Growth and role of public sector

6.1.3 QUESTION F: Do you agree that the list of major issues for the region to address via the Regional Strategy are correct and will lead to sustainable and equitable economic, social and environmental well being? Are there any issues you would remove or are missing from a Copeland perspective?

7 SUMMARY

7.1.1 The integrated Regional Strategy is ambitious and builds on how at all levels we link up the three core pillars of housing, economic and spatial developments. Within Copeland Borough Council we have begun this process within the Development Strategy service and specifically within the Copeland Regeneration Delivery Plan.

- 7.1.2 Further consultation will take place on the RS2010 as the work develops during 2009/10. It is proposed to bring core elements of this back to this committee later in 2009.

APPENDIX 1

Assumptions

1. The Northwest is likely to become increasingly integrated into the European and wider world economy (which is potentially good for the region) and will need to compete harder to generate sustainable economic growth.
2. The imperative for the region to compete on quality, rather than just price, will increase, at the same time as the need for the region to differentiate what it does.
3. Climate change is happening and will fundamentally affect the way we live our lives and run our businesses. We will have to innovate in order to adapt and find solutions, not least to deliver against a Government target of 80% carbon reductions by 2050.
4. Gas and Oil prices are likely to increase in the long term, and display increasing volatility. There will be issues of use and develop alternative and local sources of energy.
5. Some natural resources will become scarcer and this may lead to fluctuations in food and commodity prices – to counteract this we will need to manage natural resources sustainably and reduce consumption. These natural resources, including air, water, soils, landscapes and bio-diversity provide services which both directly and indirectly benefit the region, its economy and its communities.
6. People will still need to commute and travel round, and in/out of, the region (not necessarily by car) for work and leisure. Work/life balance and ICT, new technology and digital infrastructure will become increasingly important though and will continue to influence the way in which we live and work.
7. Cities/large towns will remain a major focus for living (residential development), economic activity and growth. Pressure on the green belt and ageing infrastructure services will increase.
8. There will be an ageing population, declining cohort of school leavers and lower levels of inward migration unless we specifically set out to attract talent. However, there is an expected growth in intermediate and higher level occupations. We will therefore need to make better use of our existing population by valuing equality and diversity, up-skilling and releasing the potential of the whole workforce. People will have to work longer to accumulate a pension. Older people will have higher expectations and contributions to make. The region will become more ethnically diverse.

Ultimate Aim/Goals

1. Good levels of health
2. Affordable, appropriate, good quality, well designed, energy efficient housing.
3. High standard of education available both for children and adults, and training which enables people to participate in society and in work.
4. A broad range, depth and attractive choice of quality employment opportunities, which reflect and recognise everyone's potential and inspire and enable ambition to be realised.
5. Excellent sustainable connectivity within and to/from the region
6. Sustained and sustainable consumption, production, economic growth and investment.
7. High levels of productivity, investment and enterprise, driven by innovation/research, leadership excellence and high skills.
8. High employment rates and few concentrations of low employment rates with decent work in sustainable workplace.
9. Vibrant (cultural offer, activities, lifestyle choices) cities, towns, coastal and rural areas
10. Communities and places in which people feel safe and proud, have a sense of belonging and get on well together with people from different backgrounds
11. A regionally distinctive natural and marine environment which has rich biodiversity.
12. Good quality green infrastructure and public open space/parks accessible to all
13. Low levels of carbon emissions

Challenges

1. Ill-Health, including mental health and the economic/social impacts of this. The Northwest has over 400,000 incapacity claimants
2. Relatively poor quality, ageing house stock and limited choice in parts of the region and the need to increase the new build supply (across tenure, type and affordability). The Northwest has a higher rate of dwelling stock deemed unfit than the England average.
3. Areas of entrenched (and often intergenerational) deprivation and inequality and poor levels of social cohesion in some areas. Fifteen out of the top twenty most deprived lower super output areas in the 2007 Indices of Multiple Deprivation are in the Northwest.
4. External perceptions of the region and some evidence of low expectations or aspirations within some of our communities.
5. Attraction and retention of highly skilled and talented people.
6. Low education and skills levels, including leadership, in parts of the region. In 2007 nearly 10% of 16-18 year olds in the Northwest were understood to be Not in Education, Employment, or Training, the third highest level amongst English regions.
7. Low employment rates. Only 12 local authorities in the Northwest have an employment rate of more than 70%.
8. Lowest levels of enterprise, enterprise culture and entrepreneurship, with the Northwest performing below national average on surveys and recorded business starts.
9. Growing congestion on the transport networks in parts of the region, and constraints in other places from poor connectivity and poor public transport.
10. High levels of energy use and relatively poor utility infrastructure.
11. Integration of urban areas more effectively with their rural hinterlands to tackle remoteness from growth and deliver sustainable markets for rural businesses.
12. Volume and management of waste.
13. Dealing with threats to and protection, management and enhancement of environmental, cultural and historic assests.
14. Risks to markets and sectors of global climate change and to businesses, homes and places from flooding.
15. Productivity and competitiveness relative to other international economies and emergence of BRIC countries. (Brazil, Russia, India, China).