
Planning Cumbria

Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan 2001 – 2016

Technical Paper 1

The Relationship between Regional Planning Guidance and the Deposit Plan Policies

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The main purpose of Regional Planning Guidance is to provide a regional planning strategy within which local authority development plans and local transport plans can be prepared. It provides the broad development framework for the Region, identifying the scale and distribution of housing development and the priorities for the environment, transport, infrastructure, economic development, minerals and waste treatment and disposal.
- 1.2 Regional Planning Guidance for the North West therefore forms an important context within which policies contained in the deposit version of the Structure Plan are framed. The purpose of this technical paper is to outline the relationship between policies contained in the Structure Plan and those within Regional Planning Guidance for the North West.

2 DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR THE NORTH WEST

- 2.1 Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13) was published in March 2003. It replaces the previous Regional Planning Guidance for the North West published in 1996. Prior to its formal approval, draft Guidance was issued in 2000 with a Public Examination held in 2001. This was in turn, followed by Proposed Changes in 2002.
- 2.2 The County Council has been fully involved in all stages of the preparation of Regional Guidance. Where issues of concern have not been resolved through the working arrangements with the North West Regional Assembly then formal objections were made at the appropriate stages. Outstanding concerns were also raised through full participation at the Public Examination.

- 2.3 Whilst most of the County Council's concerns with Regional Guidance have been satisfied by the due processes the following general areas were not fully resolved:

- Over prescription: particularly in naming towns within the Regeneration Priority Areas
- Housing: concerns on targets for building houses and ensuring affordable needs are met
- Transport: ensuring no ambiguity in wording could prevent transport investment from taking place in Cumbria.

3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE AND THE DEPOSIT STRUCTURE PLAN

- 3.1 The development of Regional Planning Guidance has taken place in tandem with the work needed to prepare the draft policies contained in the Structure Plan. The context within which Structure Plan policies have been prepared has therefore changed overtime. Structure Plan policies have needed to evolve to accommodate these changes. However, since publication of the deposit version of the Structure Plan post dates that of the final Regional Planning Guidance, a firm basis for Structure Plan policies has been provided.
- 3.2 Structure Plan policies therefore seek to take forward Regional Planning Guidance providing the local context for further development by Local Plans. Where appropriate references to key Regional Planning Guidance policies have been made within the explanatory text that supports the Structure Plan policies. In recognition that this is a two way process the following sections of this technical paper describes how Structure Plan policies take forward some of the key issues within Regional Planning Guidance.

- 3.3 Appendix 1 sets out policies contained within Regional Planning Guidance in full and outlines the Structure Plan policies that are relevant.

4 CORE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 The RPG core development principles are intended to inform spatial and development planning across the region in order to achieve sustainable development. RPG Policies DP1 Economy in the Use of Land and Buildings and DP3 Quality in New Development are incorporated directly into Policy ST1 of the Structure Plan which ensures that development proposals within the County promote sustainable development. Elsewhere, individual policies of the Structure Plan also secure sustainable development consistent with the core development policies. To make sure that this is maximised a sustainability appraisal of the structure plan has also been carried out to test individual policies against the governments objectives for sustainable development, see Technical Paper 8. These include objectives for social progress and maintaining high and stable levels of economic growth and competitiveness consistent with RPG Policy DP4 and effective protection of the environment and prudent use of natural resources consistent with RPG Policy DP3.

5 THE SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

- 5.1 The RPG spatial development policies indicate areas and localities where development and urban renaissance resources need to be focused. Not all policies are relevant to Cumbria. Important amongst the spatial development policies is RPG Policy SD3 Key Towns and Cities Outside the North West Metropolitan Area. It forms the basis of the Structure Plan policies ST4 to ST8. These split

the County into subareas based on planning issues and set out

the general principles for new development, building on the emphasis provided by the RPG policy. Elsewhere Structure Plan Policies EM10 and H14, which allocate land for employment and housing uses, carry forward this emphasis in the scale of development proposed within each sub area. Furthermore Structure Plan Policy ST2 identifies key service centres as required by the RPG policy as the main focus of development. This applies to settlements outside the Lake District National Park area. Their identification has been based on the availability of service and the potential housing and employment and transport accessibility to outlying settlements.

- 5.2 At the same time the rural needs of the County have not been ignored. Structure Plan policy ST3 sustains rural communities through new development consistent with RPG Policy SD8 Development in the Wider Countryside. Specific Structure Plan policies also seek to protect and build on the potential of the coast consistent with RPG policy SD7 and ensure a land use policy framework that complements the priorities for Regional Transport Strategy consistent with RPG policy SD9.

6 ECONOMIC GROWTH AND COMPETITIVENESS WITH SOCIAL PROGRESS

- 6.1 RPG recognises that the strength of the economy is vital to the future prosperity and quality of life of its residents. It therefore seeks to increase competitiveness of the economy whilst promoting wider social benefits. RPG policies EC1 to EC5 do this by requiring development to meet a range of sectoral priorities. Structure Plan EM10 takes this forward by ensuring a portfolio of employment land is available to meet

these sectors consistent with the locational strategy provided by the RPG spatial development framework and RPG policy EC6 which seeks to bring the benefits of economic growth to areas of acute need. Structure Plan policy ST6 also provides a very clear emphasis on regeneration within the Regeneration Priority Area.

- 6.2 Structure Plan policies T23 and T25 specifically safeguard land at ports, airports and rails facilities for heavy goods haulage to discourage unnecessary transport by road consistent with RPG policy EC7, transport requirements are further amplified by market sector type by Policy EM10.
- 6.3 A range of Structure Plan policies also take forward RPG Policy EC8 Town Centres – Retail, Leisure and Office Development. Structure Plan policies L48 and L49 supports the role of town centres and the need to protect and enhance them, including ensuring that they are accessible with priority given to non car travel. Policy L50 takes forward the sequential test to the location of retail, leisure and office development. The location of Class B1 offices, however, is addressed within policy EM10 covering employment land provision.
- 6.4 Structure Plan Policy EM13 Tourism Development recognises the important driver tourism provides consistent with RPG Policy EC9 and specifically seeks to direct it to areas where it will assist economic and physical regeneration. All development regardless of whether it is tourism or not will be expected to follow principles of development outlined in Structure Plan policy ST1 and consistent with RPG policy EC9, including economy in the use of land, however, the Structure Plan policy EM13 recognises the value to rural diversification that may be achieved through the conversion of farm and rural buildings to recreation uses.

Importantly additional safeguards are provided for the National Park and AONB's which, consistent with RPG, are considered the Countys most valued landscapes of regional significance. Elsewhere within the Structure Plan the role of tourism is recognised within the strategy polices, particularly Policy ST6 Furness and West Cumbria. The need to improve strategic cycling and walking networks is taken forward by Structure Plan Policy T21.

- 6.5 RPG policy also seeks to encourage development of sport. The Structure Plan has a general policy promoting formal and informal leisure facilities everywhere, not just within West Cumbria as identified by RPG. However, Whitehaven/Workington and Barrow in Furness are specifically identified as locations for Regional Parks.

7 DELIVERING AN URBAN RENAISSANCE

- 7.1 RPG seeks to address the condition of older urbanised areas to ensure all residents enjoy a good quality of life by focusing on issues of health, education, housing, transport, urban greenspace and the recycling of land and buildings.
- 7.2 The Structure Plan strategy policies for the City of Carlisle and Furness and West Cumbria cover the County's older urban areas. Both policies take this forward by promoting refurbishment of the housing stock and sustaining and enhancing opportunities for new development whilst Structure Plan policy H20 specifically addresses the issue of housing renewal.

7.2 RPG also requires land to be brought forward for new housing to achieve an annual average rate of 1170 new dwellings net of clearance. This is taken forward by Structure Plan policy H14 which distributes this requirement by subarea in a way which is consistent with the policy direction provided by the RPG spatial development framework. It also frames the requirement in terms of planning permissions to enable it to relate to a factor within the control of the planning authorities. Further guidance on managing the release of land to meet this rate, as required by RPG Policy UR8, will be provided through local plans. RPG requires that 50% of houses completed between 2002 and 2016 are built on previously developed land. Urban potential studies and the National Land Use Database have been used to assess the supply of such land and local targets have been set taking into account the supply of previously developed land and the likely impact the Structure Plan locational strategy would have on its availability. (See also Technical Paper 3 for further information.)

7.3 In bringing sites forward for housing development RPG requires the suitability of existing employment sites to be evaluated. Structure Plan policy E11 Development of Employment Land for other Uses takes forward this requirement. However in view of the need to ensure that quality sites for employment are available the need to retain a supply of employment land consistent with the portfolio required by Policy E10 is established.

7.4 RPG Policy UR9 Affordable Housing recognises the communities need for affordable housing and in particular highlights the Lake District National Park and the south and east Cumbria as areas where affordable housing needs should be addressed. To take this forward the Structure Plan

contains a suite of policies. Outside the National Park Policy Structure Plan Policy H16 sets out two approaches for the provision of affordable housing (on large sites or as an exception to policy) consistent with Circular 6/98. In recognition of the specific needs of the South and East Cumbria sub area the development strategy afforded by Structure Plan policy ST7 seeks to maximise the opportunities for the approaches outlined in Policy H17 to be taken up. It does this by requiring all general housing needs to be met within the key service centres. Within key service centres the chances of large sites where an element of affordable housing can be provided by cross subsidy are greatest. Outside key service centres all housing would be considered as an exception to policy and could only be provided if it fulfilled affordable/local needs. No requirement for general housing is set for the National Park and therefore all housing within the National Park will be similarly considered as an exception. Policies within the National Park also seek to be able to allocate sites for social housing a policy approach hereto untested.

7.6 Elsewhere Structure Plan policies provide a framework to allow the communities specific needs to be met. These include health, education and training needs and local services and facilities. It also includes the provision and protection of leisure and recreation spaces consistent with RPG Policy UR10 Greenery, Urban Greenspace and the Public Realm. Structure Plan Policy ST1 ensures that new development gives priority to sites that are or can be made accessible by public transport, walking or cycling and that proper provision is made for access by these uses and by people with restricted mobility or with special needs. This emphasis is also carried through other Structure Plan

development policies and the specific transport policies.

- 7.7 RPG Policy UR11 requires Local Authorities to seek an upgrading in the environment of urban fringes. The Structure Plan considers environmental improvement in a wider context. Environmental quality and its importance to the perception of the area is recognised as an important factor contributing to investor confidence particularly in areas such as Furness and West Cumbria. Since poor environmental quality is not only an urban fringe problem Structure Plan policy E35 sets out its priorities for enhancement within the range of urban, rural and urban fringe locations. The Structure Plan does however identify broad locations for regional parks consistent with RPG policy UR12 and establishes the contribution these could also make to the improvement of urban fringe environments. Improvements to air quality and the minimisation of light and noise pollution are obtained by a combination of promoting a more sustainable pattern of development focusing more on existing urban areas whilst at the same time ensuring individual development proposals do not adversely affect air quality.

8 ENHANCING THE COASTAL ZONE

- 8.1 RPG recognises the importance of the regions coast and requires developed and undeveloped coast to be defined. Within Cumbria the Structure Plan identifies the developed coast as Silloth, Maryport through to Workington, Whitehaven, Sellafield, Seascale, Millom, Akam in Furness, Barrow, Ulverston, Grange over Sands and Arnside. Local Plans Proposals Maps will be expected to establish precise boundaries. The Structure Plan directs development requiring a coastal location into the developed coast. A separate Structure Plan policy on coastal defence takes

forward the requirements of RPG Policy CZ2B Coastal Defence. RPG requirements to develop and sustain the economies of coastal communities are predominantly taken forward by the Structure Plan through its sub area strategy policies but also by specific policies on employment and transport.

9 ENHANCING THE RURAL AREAS

- 9.1 RPG also seeks to enhance the rural areas of the region recognising in particular the need to sustain agriculture and diversify the rural economy and ensure that the need for rural housing, local services and rural transport are met. The Structure Plan strategy focuses development on identified key service centres. The strategy also recognises the need to allow existing services and rural business to be supported by further development. This would include the development of housing which could bring additional patronage to vulnerable businesses. In South and East Cumbria such housing would only be allowed as an exception to policy if serving local affordable needs. Local Plans would be expected to identify smaller towns and villages where development could benefit services. The Structure Plan also introduces a new policy supporting proposals for local services and facilities. In recognition of the role service centres provide to their rural hinterlands Structure Plan policy L49 ensures access to town centres.
- 9.2 Structure Plan Policy EM12 rural employment development and Policy EM13 Tourism Development both promote the diversification of the rural economy. They in particular reflect the need to help sustain agriculture by allowing new sources of income to be secured. To safeguard agricultural resources all new development proposals are expected to avoid the best and most versatile agricultural land. Additionally, a range of policies

provide appropriate safeguards of important environmental assets.

10 ACTIVE MANAGEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

10.1 A range of policies seek to preserve the regions environmental resources. To take this forward Structure Plan Policy E31 identifies the environmental assets of national and international importance and ensures these are afforded the highest level of protection consistent with national and regional policy. This is underpinned by a range of policies which protect specific interests of nature conservation, landscape and historic environment and where appropriate identifies and affords particular protection to assets of sub regional importance. The Structure Plan strategy requires all new development to have regard to a range of environmental issues. Sub area strategy policies in addition recognise the contribution the County's heritage makes to specific areas.

10.2 RPG Policy ER6 sets out targets for new woodland planting. Whilst woodland planting comes outside normal planning controls the Structure Plan supplements RPG by setting priorities. Similarly RPG Policy ER7 which seeks to protect water resources will also be addressed by mechanisms other than planning. In setting the overall development strategy for Cumbria discussion has taken place with North West Water and the Environment Agency to ensure that water resources will not be prejudiced. Structure Plan policy ST1 ensures development avoids areas of floodrisk taking forward the precautionary principle in accordance with national and regional policy.

10.3 Policies ensure that appropriate provision is made for mineral extraction and land won aggregates. The Structure Plan takes this forward onshore through a range of policies

that safeguard the resource and ensure that land is brought forward albeit it with greater restrictions within the National Park. RPG also seeks to promote the use of secondary and recycled aggregates. Whilst it will be for other mechanisms to ensure the achievement of targets the Structure Plan strategy supports the reuse of materials and through Policy R46 Waste Management Facilities ensures that sites for recycling will be available.

10.4 RPG establishes that targets for renewable energy will be based on study 'From Power to Prosperity' and requires that areas of search are identified. These are set out for a range of renewable technologies in Cumbria by Policies R39 to R42. They also take forward the RPG requirement to protect the regions valuable assets by providing criteria specific to each technology based on assessment of the likely impact this would have on the assets (see Technical Paper 6) and in addition provide a framework to ensure wider impact on environment and communities is minimised. The Structure Plan strategy Policy ST1 in addition seeks to minimise energy use and promotes the use of renewable energy technology.

11 ENSURING HIGH ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

11.1 RPG addresses environmental concerns associated with derelict and contaminated land; air and water quality; waste management and radioactive waste.

11.2 Whilst other agencies will have the main responsibility for the restoration and remediation of derelict and contaminated land Structure Plan Policy E35 does identify such land as priority for environmental enhancement and introduces positive measures for its improvement through proposals for regional parks. Similarly

other organisations will have the prime responsibility for regulating quality of air and water resources. The strategy does however require all new development to avoid reductions in quality.

- 11.3 RPG seeks to minimise waste through the application of a range of principles to the identification of waste management options. These principles were considered in preparing the County Council's Waste Management strategy which in turn has highlighted the need for a range of waste management facilities as taken forward through Structure Plan Policy R46. Specific criteria are set out in Policy R46 for each management option. These guide location according to proximity principle, modal transfer and the spatial development strategy. However, despite the acknowledged need to reduce disposal to landfill sites, economies of scale and the proximity principle mean that some landfill may be necessary within Cumbria and this is recognised by Structure Plan Policy R47 Residual Waste and Landfill. RPG specifically acknowledges the need to promote an agreed long term solution to the management of radioactive waste. Should such a need result in new proposals within Cumbria these will be considered against the Structure Plan Policy ST9 Major Development Proposals.

12 AN ACCESSIBLE REGION WITH AN INTEGRATED TRANSPORT SYSTEM

- 12.1 A high quality transport system is recognised by RPG as essential to support the competitiveness of the North West industry and commerce and to facilitate the Region's social and recreational needs. It seeks to integrate transport networks across the region examining issues on a multi-modal basis in accordance with the priorities of the Spatial Development Framework. It provides

a series of policies taking forward specific transport issues.

- 12.2 Most RPG policies will be addressed through the Local Transport Plan. However, the Structure Plan contains a range of policies to take forward the transport agenda. Whilst specific transport proposals are contained in the section of the Structure Plan on Improving Transport and Communications, transport is not seen in this context as a product in its own right. The Structure Plan therefore integrates it into relevant development policies. In particular central to the strategy section is the need to locate development where it will minimise travel and promote a sustainable pattern of development. This has influenced the identification of key service centres, with Policies ST2 and L49 also ensuring that they have a high level of transport accessibility including access from their rural hinterlands. The RPG spatial development framework has been incorporated into the sub area strategy policies and has implications for key transport issues. Policy ST6 Furness and West Cumbria, in particular, supports the RPG Priority Regeneration Area and highlights the need for good communications to assist regeneration.

- 12.3 Specific RPG policies give priority to investment in the regional rail and highway network and securing the role of the regions airports, ports and inland waterways. These are each underpinned by Structure Plan policies. Structure Plan Policy T21 supports the whole strategic network encompassing both strategic walking and cycling routes and includes the networks identified by appendix 3 of RPG as regionally significant. Policy T26 safeguards future transport schemes including protection of disused railway lines where these have a viable transport use. It is linked to a list of identified schemes contained in schedule 2 that will be

kept up to date to reflect those schemes that can be delivered within the Plan period. These take forward the priorities for transport investment identified by RPG policy T10 and include the regionally significant committed schemes outlined in table 10.1 and the regionally significant transport proposals outlined in table 10.2 of RPG.

- 12.4 RPG also requires the introduction of demand management measures. Structure Plan policies generally seek to encourage modal transfer by giving priority to the needs of cyclist, pedestrians and public transport over the car and by encouraging facilities that promote their further development. More specifically in considering new development proposals the Structure Plan seeks to manage demand by requiring transport assessments and travel plans and by setting limits for car parking in accordance with the car parking standards set out in appendix 4 of RPG.

13 MONITORING

- 13.1 RPG stresses the need for monitoring to ensure that its objectives are being met and sets out targets and indicators in appendix 5. The Structure Plan will similarly need to be monitored to ensure that its policies are effective. Since many policies contained in the Structure Plan take forward the RPG agenda there is clearly a need to ensure that monitoring resources are used to meet the needs of both documents. The requirements of appendix 5 have therefore been used to inform the priorities for monitoring the Structure Plan as set out in Technical Paper 7.

14 CONCLUSION

- 14.1 The Structure Plan is a key document in the implementation of RPG. It currently provides the statutory framework that underpins RPG for

Cumbria. It has sought to address and provide further emphasis to the land use implications of RPG and provides a context for further development by local plans.

- 14.2 Government proposals are in place to review the way that planning policy is prepared. Structure Plans will eventually be abolished. Regional Spatial Strategies will replace Regional Planning Guidance and these will contain where appropriate sub regional strategies taking forward some of the key strategic land use issues formally provided by the Structure Plan. In the meantime transitional arrangements ensure that work on the Structure Plan continues and the Plan will be saved for three years following its adoption.

Appendix 1: RPG Policies and their relationship with Structure Plan Policies

Only the policies contained within published RPG are set out below. RPG also contains amplifying text and cross references between policies. For a full understanding RPG itself should be consulted.

REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE POLICY

DP 1 Economy in the use of land and buildings.

Economy in the use of land and buildings is required.

New development and other investment in infrastructure and services should be located so as to make the most effective use of land, promote appropriate mixes of uses within a site and its wider neighbourhood, make efficient use of transport facilities and assist people to meet their needs locally.

Local authorities and others should ensure the continual identification and prompt appraisal of vacated land and buildings, make plans and take measures to ensure their speedy redevelopment and re-use. Buildings of very poor quality and little or no scope for re-use should be promptly removed to make way for new uses.

Development plans should adopt the following sequential approach to meeting development needs, taking account of local circumstances, the characteristics of particular land uses, and the Spatial Development Framework:

(i) the effective use of existing buildings and infrastructure within urban areas, including the re-use or conversion of empty buildings (if they are sound and worthy of re-use, and/or of architectural or historic interest) - particularly those which are accessible by way of public transport, walking or cycling;

(ii) the use of previously-developed land, particularly that which is accessible by public transport, walking or cycling; and then

(iii) the development of previously undeveloped land, where this avoids areas of important open space, is well located in relation to houses, jobs and other services and infrastructure and is or can be made accessible by public transport, walking or cycling.

Policy DP2 Enhancing the Quality of Life

An enhancement in the overall quality of life experienced in the Region is required.

The overall aim of sustainable development is the provision of a high quality of life, for this and future generations.

Enhancing the quality of life requires the enhancement of economic, social and environmental 'capital': the sources of the benefits we receive from the economy, the environment and society.

The Region's objectives and targets for achieving more sustainable development is set out in the Assembly's Regional Sustainable Development Framework – 'Action for Sustainability' (AfS). Local authorities and others engaged in spatial planning should use AfS to inform their proposals and, in particular, the environmental/sustainability appraisals of development plans.

RELEVANT STRUCTURE PLAN POLICIES

ST1 Promoting sustainable development

ST2 New development and key service centres

ST3 Development to sustain rural communities

ST1 Promoting sustainable development

T27 Transport assessments

T28 Travel plans

E31 Areas and features of national and international conservation importance

L51 Local services and facilities

L52 Health, education and training facilities

They should also require transport, environmental and other impact assessment of proposals, as appropriate, to identify important elements of environmental, social and economic 'capital' and to identify key benefits and services which might be affected.

Development plans should contain policies which set out clearly:

- those elements of 'capital' where there is a presumption against any harm arising from development;
- an expectation that development should, where possible, enhance the quality of life and not result in a net loss of any of the key benefits and services; and
- the means, including planning obligations and conditions and the phasing or programming of development, by which any necessary compensation, mitigation or substitution is to be achieved.

Policy DP3 Quality in New Development

New development must demonstrate good design quality and respect for its setting.

Local authorities should prepare local design strategies and principles for inclusion in development plans or as Supplementary Planning Guidance, based on community participation and public consultation (including Conservation Area Appraisals, Countryside Design Summaries and Village Design Statements). These should:

- set out guidance to ensure the integration of new development with surrounding land use taking into account the landscape character, setting, the quality, distinctiveness and heritage of the environment and the use of sympathetic materials;
- set out guidance to ensure more innovative design to create a high quality living and working environment, especially in housing terms, which incorporates:
 - ❖ more efficient use of energy and materials;
 - ❖ more eco-friendly and adaptable buildings;
 - ❖ sustainable drainage systems;
 - ❖ community safety and 'designing out' of crime; and
 - ❖ appropriate parking provision and best practice in the application of highway standards;
- set out key design principles for land allocations, and more detailed design briefs for land;
- encourage the provision of an appropriate range of sizes, and types of housing to meet the needs of all members of society;
- set minimum densities for housing based on the individual circumstances of each site, Urban Potential Study results and guidance set out in national planning policy/guidance; and
- consider the transport implications of development proposals, in particular:
 - ❖ the potential for existing infrastructure to accommodate further development
 - ❖ the accessibility of sites by sustainable modes of transport, and any potential for improvement.

ST1 Promoting sustainable development

T27 Transport assessments

T29 Car parking standards

Policy DP4 Promoting Sustainable Economic Growth and Competitiveness and Social Inclusion

Economic growth and competitiveness, with social progress for all, is required.

Local authorities and others should set out, in their regional strategies and development plan policies, guidance to ensure that development and investment will, to the fullest extent possible, simultaneously and harmoniously:

- help to grow the Region's economy in a sustainable way; and
- produce a greater degree of social inclusion.

Policy SD1 The North West Metropolitan Area*

Policy SD2 Other Settlements within the North West Metropolitan Area

Policy SD3 Key Towns and Cities Outside the North West Metropolitan Area

To the north and south of the North West Metropolitan Area, development will be concentrated in the following key towns and cities:

- to the north, Blackpool, Blackburn, Burnley, Lancaster/Morecambe, Preston, Barrow-in-Furness and Carlisle; and
- to the south, Chester, Crewe, Macclesfield and Northwich.

Of these, Chester, Carlisle, Lancaster and Preston should be regarded as historic towns requiring continual conservation with sensitive integration of new development, where needed, plus a regard for maintaining and enhancing their setting.

In the case of Chester, Carlisle, Crewe and Preston regard should be had to their roles as gateways and/or interchanges for visitors to the Region from adjoining areas/regions and countries, and the need to provide high quality modern facilities to support those roles.

Blackpool is a tourist destination of regional and national importance and is a sub-regional center for the Fylde Coast. There is a need to provide high-quality modern facilities to support these roles.

The distinctive naval and maritime role of Barrow-in-Furness should be respected, its landscape setting enhanced and its links to the rest of the Region, including the Lake District, improved in terms of their environmental quality and efficiency.

There will also be a need for modest development and re-development to ensure the physical enhancement, regeneration and gradual restructuring of the following Regeneration Priority Areas:

- Lancashires's coastal towns, including Fleetwood, and Morecambe;
- East Lancashire, including Accrington, Padiham, Nelson and Colne; and
- West Cumbria and Furness, including Dalton-in-Furness, Ulverston, Maryport, Workington and Whitehaven.

ST2 New development and key service centres

ST3 Development to sustain rural communities

EM10 Employment land provision

EM11 Development of employment land for other uses

EM12 Rural employment development

EM13 Tourism development

Not relevant

Not relevant

ST2 Promoting sustainable development

ST3 Development to sustain rural communities

ST4 The City of Carlisle

ST5 North Cumbria

ST6 Furness and West Cumbria

ST7 South and East Cumbria

ST8 Lake District National Park

T21 The Strategic Transport Networks

T26 Safeguarding futures transport schemes

L48 Town centres

L49 Access and town centres

L50 Retail, leisure and office development

L51 Local services and facilities

L52 Health, education and training facilities

L53 Leisure and recreation spaces

L54 Regional Parks

Provision should be made for development requirements in the latter three areas in line with the approach set out in Policy DP1 (Economy in the Use of Land and Buildings), with local development plans ensuring in each case:

- guidance to encourage the provision of a wider range of complementary services to meet the needs of the resident populations;
- an emphasis on enhancing their overall visual attractiveness and the quality of life on offer within them, their rural setting and access to/from adjacent rural areas;
- in respect of the coastal resort towns listed above, in particular, guidance to encourage more diverse and complementary roles as modern, sustainable resorts and centres for coastal sport/recreation and other uses, and greater elegance; and
- an emphasis on higher quality, interlinked and integrated transport systems in all modes.

Most other development requirements will be met within smaller towns and large villages which are able to provide a range of services, and which have the potential to provide good public transport links to outlying settlements. Such settlements should be identified as key service centres in structure or local plans. Development in key service centres should complement existing settlement character and should be of an appropriate scale and nature to accommodate or fulfil the needs of local communities for housing, employment and services, and to deliver an enhanced quality of rural life.

Policy SD4 Maintaining Urban Form and Setting, and the Treatment of North Cheshire*

Development plans and other strategies for the Region should contain policies which will help both to maintain urban form and enhance urban living and also ensure a visually attractive and accessible setting around the North West Metropolitan Area and all other settlements in the Region. To that end, it will be necessary to ensure that:

- the overall physical extent of the North West Metropolitan Area remains reasonably stable;
- development on the urban/rural edge respects and enhances the urban setting and countryside character;
- positive land use planning and management of the land on the edge of settlements is encouraged in all development plans; and
- the recreational potential of urban edge environments is enhanced.

Continued and extensive use of Green Belt policy and other policies to protect open land will be an essential tool to that end.

Given the continued high demand for development in the North Cheshire area, much of which is in the Green Belt, development plan allocations in that area, should be reviewed to ensure that any existing and proposed land allocations for further development in the North Cheshire area are fully justified regarding the Core Development Principles, and this Spatial Development Framework. In North Cheshire, beyond the North West Metropolitan Area, only those allocations which are sustainable and which will add significant value to the development of the national economy or which are of greater than regional significance should be retained, together with those which meet purely local needs. New employment land allocations may be contemplated where they clearly enable sustainable expansion of existing high-technology and research establishments of at least regional significance. The revised list of allocations for North Cheshire should ensure avoidance of development in flood-risk areas, and development plan criteria should ensure respect for the urban /rural interface and the need for high design quality and low landscape impact.

ST1 Promoting sustainable development

ST2 New development and key service centres

L54 Regional Parks

- NOTE : North Cheshire is to be interpreted for the purpose of this Policy as the northern edge of the County of Cheshire, running west to east from Chester to Macclesfield, and to the north of the "A roads" connecting Chester, Tarvin, Kelsall, Northwich, Knutsford and Macclesfield, plus that area of Warrington BC which lies outside the North West Metropolitan Area.

Policy SD5 The Green Belts

Policy SD6 Settlement boundaries in areas not covered by Green Belt

In those parts of the Region not covered by Green Belt, where identified local needs up to 2016 cannot be fully met within existing settlement boundaries, development plans will need to review settlement boundaries in line with the Core Development Principles and the Spatial Development Framework.

Policy SD7 The North West's Coast

On the undeveloped and developed coast alike, the primary emphasis will be on the need to:

- respect the changing physical nature of the coastline;
- recognise the risk over time of fluvial and coastal flooding and erosion;
- take active steps to ensure the conservation and enhancement of historic and archaeological features, natural beauty, seascapes and natural features;
- enable wise use of all the natural resources, both on and off-shore; and
- ensure that on-shore enabling development to support off-shore activity is anticipated.

Development plans should recognise the potential for regionally significant development and existing operations and diversification of existing ports and harbours, and anticipate the need to support off-shore developments. There will also be scope for new and strategic tourism development well related to the coastal environment. There will be a need to ensure the reshaping of resort towns for new and more varied purposes and, simultaneously, ensure that more elegant, accessible and economically competitive coastal frontages emerge in respect of all coastal settlements in the North West.

Policy SD8 Development in the Wider Countryside

Development in rural areas outside key service centres should promote the diversification of the rural economy and support agriculture or other existing land use practices that sustain landscape, biodiversity and cultural heritage. Such development should be encouraged where it is:

- of an appropriate scale and nature, in line with its rural location, to fulfill, in a sustainable way, the needs of all groups within local communities for housing, employment, transport and services, and
- respectful of the landscape character of the countryside in which it is to be located.

Development plans should make provision for such development in line with Policies DP2 and DP3.

It will be the exception for major new development to be located on open land in the countryside, especially in the case of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Not relevant

Not relevant will be addressed through Local Plan

ST6 Furness and West Cumbria

T23 Ports and airports facilities

C37 Development on the coast

C38 Coastal defence

ST3 Development to sustain rural communities

ST9 Major development proposals

EM12 Rural employment development

EM13 Tourism development

H16 Affordable housing outside the Lake District National Park

H17 Housing in the Lake District National Park

H18 Allocation of sites within the Lake District National Park for social housing

H19 Exception sites within the Lake District National Park

E35 Environmental enhancement

L51 Local services and facilities

The sustainable re-use of rural brownfield land for forestry, woodland, agriculture and other biodiversity habitats should be encouraged. Other uses, which respect the character of the countryside, should be encouraged where sites are capable of being well served by public transport. Major built development should be discouraged on such sites, except where this would fulfil a significant regional, or national need which cannot be met elsewhere.

Policy SD9 The Regional Transport Strategy

The Regional Transport Strategy will support the achievement on the ground of Policies SD1-8, especially Policy SD1, and should deliver:

- enhancement of Trans-European Networks (TENs);
- effective multi-modal solutions to the conveyance of goods, people and services, especially at major hubs;
- effectively planned and significantly more efficient transport interchanges;
- attractive gateways and transport corridors;
- scope for effective use of new technology to enhance travel;
- high quality public transport in urban and rural areas; and
- a safe and pleasant environment complementary to the need to improve the Region's image and encourage more use of environmentally-friendly modes of transport (e.g. walking, cycling and canals).

Policy EC1 Strengthening the Regional Economy

The Region's economy should be strengthened by an increasing focus on the sectoral priorities identified in the NWDA's Regional (Economic) Strategy, published in 2000.

Development plans in conjunction with local economic development strategies should identify a range of suitable sites and premises for employment purposes which:

- complement the Region's sectoral priorities;
- take account of the needs of local businesses and communities and the need to ensure the modernisation and diversification of older manufacturing industries and their premises;
- are based on a review of existing commitments (Policy UR5);
- have the potential to promote clustering (Policy EC4);
- take account of the sequential approach set out in Policy DP1;
- support the Spatial Development Framework; and
- take account of the availability of skilled labour and wider employment and training opportunities.

Development plans should support a greater shift of freight from road to rail and water by guiding new major industrial and distribution developments to sites that can be readily connected to the rail network, waterways and ports.

Local authorities should work with their partners, particularly the NWDA in relation to the Regional (Economic) Strategy, to promote the environmental economy and the arts, culture and creative industries in their areas in line with the above approach, to aid regeneration, rural diversification and tourism initiatives and benefit the North West economy as a whole. They should do this by promoting diverse local economies through the creation and growth of local businesses to provide jobs, goods and services needed by the local population.

Will be addressed by the Regional Transport Strategy

ST1 Promoting sustainable development

EM10 Employment land provision

EM11 Development of employment land for other uses

EM12 Rural employment development

EM13 Tourism development

T23 Ports and airports facilities

T25 Rail freight

Policy EC2 Manufacturing Industry

In providing for the needs of manufacturing industry, development plans and other strategies should ensure the provision of sites which meet the changing needs of traditional manufacturing industry as well as new and emerging manufacturing activities. The sites should also be able to meet the need for expansions, and relocations as well as the needs of inward investors.

Development plans should also anticipate the need for existing manufacturing establishments to modernise their plant and to adapt and diversify their operations, and to undertake improvements to plant in accordance with environmental legislation, as well as general environmental enhancement.

The sites for manufacturing should be located in accordance with the Core Development Principles and the Spatial Development Framework, within key transport corridors or Regeneration Priority Areas, ideally with inter-modal transport capability. The need for new specialist manufacturing industry to locate close to existing related plants should be recognised, as should the availability of skilled labour.

Education and training should be recognised as central components in promoting the development of manufacturing industry.

Policy EC3 Knowledge-Based Industries

Knowledge-based industries will be supported, in accordance with the Core Development Principles, particularly the sequential approach set out in Policy DP1, and the Spatial Development Framework. Development plans and other strategies should facilitate the development of sites with direct access to research establishments, including universities, Higher Education Institutes and major hospitals. Priority locations will be in the main conurbations, close to centres of research, or within science parks. Sites should be well located in relation to transport infrastructure, especially public transport, and should be capable of providing high environmental quality. Access to education, skills and training should be recognized as key aspects of securing the development of this sector.

Policy EC4 Business Clusters

Development plans and other strategies including regeneration strategies should consider the potential to promote the clustering of existing and new economic activities with the potential for sustainable growth. They should meet both the Region's sectoral priorities and local needs by making appropriate provision for premises, including business and science parks, in line with the sequential approach set out in Policy DP1 and the Spatial Development Framework.

Clusters designed to support knowledge-based industries should:

- make provision for networks based on information communication technologies; and
- as a preference be located near to Higher Education Institutes, major hospitals, research establishments or major technology-based businesses.

ST2 New development and key service centres

EM10 Employment land provision

L52 Health, education and training facilities

EM10 Employment land provision

L52 Health, education and training facilities

EM10 Employment land provision

L52 Health, education and training facilities

Policy EC5 Regional Inward Investment Sites

Development plans and other strategies should reserve Regional Inward Investment Sites for strategic business investment which supports the Region's sectoral priorities. They should set out mechanisms including planning conditions and Section 106 agreements to support their status and ensure high quality, environmentally sensitive, sustainable development well linked with existing urban infrastructure and consistent with this RPG's Core Development Principles.

Such Regional Investment Sites should be identified in consultation with the NWDA, NWRA and GONW. Identification of the sites must support:

- urban renaissance;
- the objectives of the Regeneration Priority Areas (Policy EC6);
- areas of economic assistance;
- sectoral priorities (identified by the NWDA within the Regional (Economic) Strategy); and
- this RPG's Core Development Principles and the Spatial Development Framework.

In addition, and in the interests of sustainability, all Regional Investment Sites should be, or be designed to become:

- well related to public transport infrastructure;
- readily accessible, wherever possible, to the rail network, or a port or commercial waterway;
- well related to housing and supporting community facilities;
- well landscaped;

and should preferably be located:

- clear of flood-risk areas;
- on recycled land; and
- close to existing employment concentrations.

The sites should also, for reasons of practicality be:

- capable of development within appropriate timescales, with regard particularly to:
 - land condition and availability;
 - ownership;
 - infrastructure capacity;
- suitably located, where appropriate, for international access;
- in proximity, where appropriate, to Higher Education Institutes, or other research facilities; and
- capable of providing a good environmental setting.

Policy EC6 The Regeneration Challenge: Bringing the Benefits of Economic Growth to Areas of Acute Need.

Local authorities and other agencies will work together to rectify the imbalance between parts of the Region where continued growth may have unfavourable consequences, and those where economic regeneration is needed, in a manner consistent with the Core Development Principles and the Spatial Development Framework.

The NWDA's investment in Regeneration Priority Areas and derelict land reclamation must be supported by development plan (including sub-regional strategies) and local transport plan policies to encourage and deliver, simultaneously:

- improved linkages (in terms of access to labour, skills and expertise; travel to work routes, transportation and communications; training and other facilities) between thriving areas and other areas nearby where employment opportunities are more limited; and

ST4 The City of Carlisle

EM10 Employment land provision

ST6 Furness and West Cumbria

EM10 Employment land provision

EM11 Development of employment land for other uses

EM13 Tourism development

T21 The strategic transport network

T22 New road building

T26 Safeguarding future transport schemes

E35 Environmental enhancement

L52 Health, education and training facilities

- co-ordinated and coherent efforts to enhance the attractiveness to potential investors of locations in more needy areas (primarily by improvements in image; visual attractiveness and better environmental quality, including advance “structure planting”; better health/schools/social facilities; more varied leisure facilities; improved skill-levels; and business support), especially within the North West Metropolitan Area.

Local authorities and other agencies should consider this challenge as they prepare all of their partnership initiatives, action plans and investment strategies, including their plans for management of the public realm.

Policy EC7 Warehousing and Distribution

Development plans should ensure that new warehousing and distribution developments are located so as to avoid the unnecessary movement of goods by road and to make best use of the Region’s rail network. Sites should be identified on the basis of need in line with the Core Development Principles and take particular account of:

- the preference for brownfield sites while recognising that urban locations are not always appropriate;
- proximity to an appropriate labour supply;
- access to the regional highway network for freight purposes;
- access to rail freight facilities;
- access to airports/ports; and
- the need to be of sufficient scale to allow for flexible development and expansion.

Policy EC8 Town Centres – Retail, Leisure and Office Development

Development plans, town centre management initiatives and other strategies should recognise the continued need to protect, sustain and improve all of the town and city centres in the Region, including the role of the two Regional Poles (Liverpool and Manchester /Salford) as regional shopping centres, in line with the Spatial Development Framework, by:

- encouraging new retail, leisure and/or mixed-use developments within existing defined town and city centre boundaries (retail development should be directed particularly to primary shopping areas); and
- directing office developments (Use Classes:B1(a) and A2) that generate significant trips, to suitable locations within or adjoining main city and town centres, or district centers, and near to major public transport interchanges within urban areas. Where capacity is not available in these centres, office development should be located in accordance with the principles of sustainable development set out in the Core Development Principles, having regard particularly to Policy DP1, and the need for accessibility to public transport.

A sequential approach to retail and leisure development must be adopted, in accordance with national planning guidance (PPG6: Town Centres and Retail Developments) and the Core Development Principles. Office development should locate within preferred locations, as set out above, as close as possible to public transport, in accordance with national planning policy guidance (PPG13: Transport).

Where a need is established for retail and leisure development, and where the application of the sequential approach has indicated that no suitable town centre sites are available, new or expanded developments in urban areas will be considered where their function forms the core of a mix of uses, including housing and only then when public transport is accessible.

E10 Employment land provision

T23 Ports and airports facilities

T25 Rail freight

L48 Town centres

L49 Access and town centres

L50 Retail, leisure and office development

Office development that is ancillary to, and needs to be co-located with, manufacturing uses will not be classed as major office development for the purposes of this Policy.

No need has been demonstrated to create new or to extend existing out-of-centre regional or sub-regional shopping and leisure facilities.

Policy EC9 Tourism and Recreation

Tourism has the potential to be a major economic driver within the North West in supporting regeneration, as well as constituting a key sectoral priority, particularly in and around the Lake District; in Blackpool and many of the North West's other coastal resort and historic towns throughout Lancashire, Cheshire, Cumbria; in the Regional Poles (Liverpool and Manchester/Salford); and elsewhere in the North West Metropolitan Area. In all these locations, the emphasis should be on sustaining and adding quality rather than mere quantity.

Partnerships should develop local tourism strategies that effectively manage existing and new opportunities and promote investment that encourages the creation of tourist facilities around appropriate attractions and activities. Recreation and leisure are complementary to many tourism activities and together can help to support economic growth and urban renaissance.

Development plans should facilitate the provision of employment opportunities by encouraging the growth of and investment in tourism within the North West. They should identify provision for new facilities that generate significant numbers of tourists / trips in appropriate development locations. In identifying such locations, plans should give priority to areas that have existing major tourism and leisure attractions and facilities (including visitor accommodation) or where development will contribute to regeneration within the defined Regeneration Priority Areas.

They should ensure that:

- the location represents economy in the use of land in accordance with Policy DP1;
- the infrastructure and environment is able to accommodate the visitor impact;
- the existing amenities for local residents and business are protected; and
- the location is, especially in respect of large-scale visitor attractions, conveniently accessible by public transport.

Where an activity requires specific natural features or areas of large open space, then development should be considered as an exception to the sequential approach set out in Policy DP1 as long as the intrinsic quality of the environment is conserved and enhanced.

Development in and around the Region's most valued landscapes should be considered in accordance with the Core Development Principles and Policy ER1 and ER2.

Local authorities should develop regional footpaths and cycle routes that link with the National Cycle Network (Policy T8) to improve accessibility and increase links along the coast, and between the coast, the rural uplands and lowlands and the conurbations in order to encourage increased sustainable tourism and recreational activity across the North West.

ST6 Furness and West Cumbria

EM13 Tourism development

T21 The Strategic Transport Networks

E31 Areas and features of national and international conservation value

L53 Leisure and recreation spaces

L54 Regional Parks

Policy EC10 Sport

This RPG supports the development of major new sporting facilities in East Manchester as part of Sport England's proposals for the English Institute of Sport network.

Development plans should support Sport Action Zones in the North West by encouraging the development of new sports facilities in the following broad locations:

- South Liverpool;
- East Manchester;
- West Cumbria; and
- as part of Regional Park resources (identified in Policy UR12).

Local authorities across the North West should undertake a definitive audit of sports facilities, underpinned by the Playing Pitch Strategy 12, to assess local requirements for a range of indoor, outdoor, organised and informal sport in order to maintain a quality environment supporting and encouraging a range of sport, recreation and leisure activities. Provision of facilities should be promoted in accordance with the Core Development Principles.

Policy UR1 Urban Renaissance

The sustainable regeneration of the Region's urban areas as identified in the Spatial Development Framework (which encompass all the areas included in the NWDA's Regeneration Priority Areas) will be a regional priority.

In preparing strategies and programmes, local authorities and other regional agencies should work together to provide accessible, desirable, living and working conditions that ensure a good quality of urban life for all. They should take account of the key principles identified in the "National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal" and promote urban renaissance by:

- reviving local economies, including industrial restructuring;
- reviving communities;
- ensuring the delivery of decent services;
- encouraging leadership and joint working practices;
- co-ordinating resources like education and health to tackle poverty and promote social inclusion; and
- tackling low demand for housing and poor physical conditions.

Policy UR2 An inclusive Social Infrastructure

Local planning authorities should liaise closely with health service, education, crime prevention and other providers in developing and implementing strategies and development plans. These should:

- facilitate the modernisation of local health services, in line with the Core Development Principles and the Spatial Development Framework, informed by partnership working with Primary Care Trusts on Health Improvement and Modernisation Plans and Health Action Zones;
- allow for the varied provision of facilities for education and training including Education Action Zones;

L53 Leisure and recreation spaces

L54 Regional Parks

ST1 Promoting sustainable development

ST2 New development and key service centres

ST3 Development to sustain rural communities

ST4 The City of Carlisle

ST5 North Cumbria

ST6 South and East Cumbria

EM10 Employment land provision

EM11 Development of employment land for other uses

H14 Scale of housing provision

H20 Housing renewal

L48 Town centres

L49 Access and town centres

L50 Retail, leisure and office development

L51 Local services and facilities

L52 Health, education and training facilities

ST1 Promoting sustainable development

L51 Local services and facilities

L52 Health, education and training facilities

- promote the provision of other facilities necessary for local communities, and maximize the potential of existing community buildings and other facilities wherever there is potential for mixed use; and
- have regard to the impacts of proposed developments on the health of local communities so that they support health improvements and the narrowing of health inequalities. This will require working in partnership with the appropriate public health expertise in the Government Office, Health Authorities and Primary Care Trusts.

As well as ensuring that the requirements and plans of relevant agencies are taken into account, continuing liaison and consultation should aim to ensure that social and community facilities are provided in locations which optimise their contribution to social inclusion and sustainable development.

Policy UR3 Promoting Social Inclusion through Urban Accessibility and Mobility

Within the North West Metropolitan Area and other urban settlements as defined in the Spatial Development Framework, local authorities and transport service providers should place a high priority on the development and improvement of accessible infrastructure and services, in the interests of sustainable development and maximising mobility for people who may not have access to a car.

Priority should be given to the identification of:

- a) areas where social exclusion is being fostered or exacerbated by lack of access to employment and education opportunities, shops, leisure facilities and public services; and
- b) locations where safety and environmental quality are key concerns.

Detailed policies and proposals should then be defined in local transport plans and development plans as appropriate, with particular regard to:

- assisting people with special mobility needs;
- improvement and development of pedestrian routes;
- creation of cycle networks;
- upgrading the public transport network;
- related improvements to the road network.

Policy UR4 Setting Targets for the Recycling of Land and Buildings

The redevelopment and re-use of vacant sites and buildings within urban areas should be a priority. Additional development should be encouraged to make best use of such sites in sustainable locations.

Local authorities should make full use of their extensive powers to ensure that any existing or emerging areas of derelict and abandoned buildings are immediately identified and swiftly addressed. The NWDA's Regional (Economic) Strategy, related sub-regional strategies, development plans, neighbourhood renewal, and housing strategies will need to ensure the re-use of suitable buildings and areas of historic interest, wherever possible, and ensure swift progress in clearing and redeveloping any other derelict and/or abandoned buildings. The regional aim must be to clear unsuitable buildings, to bring about the continual, positive, 'gradual renewal' of urban areas, and thus reduce the need for later, more far reaching, comprehensive clearance and redevelopment of older buildings.

ST1 Promoting sustainable development

ST2 New development and key service centres

ST4 The City of Carlisle

ST6 Furness and West Cumbria

T23 Ports and airports facilities

T24 Public passenger transport

T26 Safeguarding future transport schemes

E35 Environmental enhancement

L49 Access and town centres

H15 Targets for the recycling of land and buildings

The regional target is that at least 70% of new dwellings, including conversions, constructed in the Region from April 2002 should use previously developed land and existing buildings in sustainable locations in line with the approach to development set out in the Core Development Principles and the Spatial Development Framework. However, it is recognised that variations exist in the amount of previously developed land and buildings in sustainable locations across the Region, and in preparing development plans local planning authorities should aim to achieve the following targets, through co-operative working within the specified areas, and in conjunction with adjoining authorities:

- in the Liverpool and Manchester/Salford City Council areas, on average at least 90% of new housing will be on previously developed land;
- in the remainder of the Merseyside area, and Halton, on average at least 65%;
- in the rest of the Greater Manchester area, and Warrington, on average at least 80%;
- in Cheshire at least 55%; in Cumbria at least 50%; and in Lancashire at least 65%.

Policy UR5 Existing Commitments in Development Plans

When carrying out a review of any development plans local planning authorities will need to reconsider existing allocations in line with the requirements set out in the Core Development Principles and the Spatial Development Framework. In particular, the suitability of existing employment land commitments should be assessed in the light of:

- whether they provide for strategic investment which supports the Region's sectoral priorities balanced with the need for local indigenous growth;
- the commercial viability and attractiveness of sites for employment;
- whether development for employment would be less environmentally and socially sustainable than alternative allocations;
- whether the re-designation of employment sites for other uses is consistent with the retention of a balanced and appropriate mix of uses within settlements;
- whether, if housing is considered more appropriate, this accords with the approach of "Plan Monitor and Manage" set out in Policies UR6, UR7, and UR8; and
- whether they provide a focus and support for urban renaissance by regenerating and consolidating existing urban areas through the promotion of mixed use, efficient use of land and car parking provision.

Local planning authorities should:

- ensure that land allocations in development plans provide for development to meet identified needs only;
- minimise the amount of take up of additional greenfield land for development; and
- review as a matter of urgency all unimplemented planning permissions and development plan allocations, especially for housing, respecting the Spatial

Development Framework in order to maximise the re-use of previously developed land and buildings and, through development plans, de-allocate sites and set policies for the non-renewal of permissions for housing where alternatives are available in more sustainable locations.

The scope for encouraging mixed use developments as alternatives, including partial re-use for housing, should be considered, particularly on larger sites. Mixed use should be considered for all sites within the defined town centres of all the Region's towns and cities named in the Spatial Development Framework and development plans should clearly identify the uses proposed.

EM10 Employment land provision

EM11 Development of employment land for other uses

H15 Targets for the recycling of land and buildings

L48 Town centres

Policy UR6 Existing Housing Stock and Housing Renewal

Local Authorities should develop an understanding of local and sub-regional housing markets, taking into account changing labour demand patterns, in order to adopt a concerted and comprehensive approach to influencing housing supply across all tenures and values, in the interests of improving the quality of the Region's housing stock. This will be especially important in the Region's urban areas, and particularly within the following authorities:

- Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral
- Manchester and Salford
- Oldham and Rochdale
- Hyndburn
- Burnley
- Pendle
- Blackburn with Darwen; and
- Rossendale.

A comprehensive approach to housing renewal, clearance and urban regeneration, particularly in Regeneration Priority Areas is required. In order to bring this about, the NWDA's Regional (Economic) Strategy, sub-regional strategies, development plans, neighbourhood renewal and housing strategies should:

- support initiatives, mechanisms and resources for improvements to both public and private sector housing stock in conjunction with the Government, private sector and other agencies;
- reflect local circumstances and priorities as well as the availability of resources;
- consider designating substantial local areas for comprehensive regeneration, possibly including demolition and clearance, as part of a broader course of action to regenerate local communities, improve the environment and increase numbers of and access to local jobs;
- involve and engage the local community in determining the future of its area;
- give high priority to making the best use of existing dwellings to minimise the need to develop new housing on greenfield sites;
- identify and implement measures through their regeneration strategies in order to reduce regional vacancy levels in the existing housing stock to 3%;
- include a prior evaluation of the environmental, economic, social and cultural impacts of the way any proposed clearance and after uses will affect the surrounding area and the local community; and
- incorporate a fully resourced Action Plan for implementing strategies of housing renewal and after uses.

The approach to be adopted, whether clearance, or renewal and refurbishment, or a mix of these, will depend on local circumstances. There will be a particular need for clearance in areas where there are problems with housing that is:

- unfit;
- beyond economic repair;
- life expired and unsuitable for modern living;
- in areas of extremely low demand; and
- necessary to assist the better functioning of local housing markets or the overall improvement and regeneration of an area.

Clearance will also be necessary in some parts of the Region in order to assist the better functioning of local housing markets or to bring about the overall improvement and regeneration of an area.

H20 Housing renewal

Policy UR7 Regional Housing Provision

Local planning authorities should monitor and manage the availability of land identified in development plans to achieve the annual average rates of housing provision set out in Table 5.1 and in doing so must seek to minimise the amount of land needed for new housing by:

- bringing about a reduction in vacancy rates to 3% in the existing dwelling stock, and 2% within the new stock, in line with Policy UR6 through the increased re-use of suitable vacant housing, especially in areas where vacancy rates are currently high, including East Lancashire, and the North West Metropolitan Area;
- maximising the re-use of vacant and under used land and buildings in line with Policy UR4;
- making allowances for the contribution that can be made by conversions to residential use and sub division of existing dwellings;
- considering the impact of new housing development upon the existing housing stock and market in the immediate area and adjoining districts.

In considering the allocation of land for new housing in development plans, local planning authorities should:

- adopt the sequential approach to development location as outlined in the Core Development Principles and the Spatial Development Framework;
- use the results of up-to-date Urban Potential Studies to inform the allocation of specific sites;
- introduce phasing policies in line with Policy UR8 as part of the “Plan, Monitor and Manage” approach;
- allow for clearance replacement to reflect local circumstances, as a mechanism for the recreation of viable and sustainable neighbourhoods; and
- take into account the need for affordable housing provision in line with Policy UR9.

Policy UR8 A Phasing Mechanism for Release of Housing Land

Land allocated for housing should be released in an orderly, managed, manner in accordance with the principles set out in Policies DP1-4 and SD1-9. To this end, all development plans should incorporate phasing mechanisms which:

- are underpinned by housing capacity studies prepared in accordance with the guidance in PPG3 and in the Good Practice Guide, “Tapping the Potential”, carried out on a regular basis by local authorities in partnership with the house building industry and other parties;
- secure the development of previously developed land and buildings in urban areas as a first priority;
- allow for the release of land for housing in phases over the period of the plan, the timing of release to take account of the need for co-ordinated provision of the necessary infrastructure and the overall availability of land for housing identified in the housing provision studies; and
- take account of the potential housing land provision and policy framework in place in adjoining local authority areas to ensure a sub-regionally consistent approach that does not undermine urban renaissance in other districts.

H14 Scale of housing provision

H15 Targets for the recycling of land and buildings

H16 Affordable housing outside the Lake District National Park

H18 Allocation of sites within the Lake District National Park for social housing

H19 Exception sites within the Lake District National Park

H20 Housing renewal

H14 Scale of housing provision

Policy UR9 Affordable Housing

Development plans across the North West should address the need for affordable housing. It is anticipated that the greatest need will be in:

- market towns and the more accessible and scenic rural areas of Cumbria, particularly the Lake District National Park and adjoining areas to the South and East;
- villages in remoter rural areas; and
- particularly affluent areas within commuting distance of the Regional Poles including Stockport, Trafford and parts of North Cheshire and South Lancashire.

Development plans should make provision for a range of dwelling types and sizes to meet the assessed need of all sectors of the community including the elderly, those with special requirements, ethnic minorities, single households and larger families in both rural and urban areas based on up-to-date local housing needs studies. They should do this in accordance with national planning policy, as currently expressed particularly in PPG3 (Housing) and Circular 6/98 (Planning and Affordable Housing), and:

- indicate how many affordable homes need to be provided and make proposals for their provision on particular sites;
- indicate the type of affordable housing necessary in the context of their own area, provided this does not exclude any particular type of affordable housing taken into account in local studies;
- indicate how an element of affordable housing would be sought in all substantial housing schemes;
- consider the use of local connections criteria, where appropriate, and conditions on planning permissions and planning obligations to support the provision of housing to meet local needs;
- address the development of affordable housing to meet identified local needs as an exception to normal planning policies in rural areas where there is a demonstrable shortage of such housing which cannot otherwise be met;
- address the need for affordable housing in rural settlements with populations under 3,000 by seeking contributions even on the smallest sites;
- permit the sympathetic conversion of other buildings to residential use, particularly traditional farm buildings and under-used commercial premises not required for employment purposes; and
- seek to ensure that affordable housing provided can be secured and will be available in the long term.

Policy UR10 Greenery, Urban Greenspace and the Public Realm

Local authorities and other agencies should identify the urban areas in need of more greenspace, and in response develop appropriate strategies for the design, management, maintenance and enhancement of the public realm and urban greenspace with an emphasis on:

- driving up significantly the overall quality of the public realm, especially in city and town centres;
- enhancing the setting of local residential neighbourhoods in built-up areas;
- increasing the overall stock of urban trees; and
- improved accessibility and community safety.

Development plan policies should create and enhance urban greenspace networks by:

- ensuring adequate protection is given to key features such as parks, linear walkways, river valleys, canals and public open spaces, and
- identifying the areas where new physical linkages between these areas need to be forged.

H16 Affordable housing outside the Lake District National Park

H18 Allocation of sites within the Lake District National Park for social housing

H19 Exception sites within the Lake District National Park

E35 Environmental enhancement

L53 Leisure and recreation spaces

L54 Regional Parks

Local authorities and others should also encourage patterns of development which maintain and improve air quality and minimise the impact of light and noise pollution upon the public realm. Good lighting of the public realm and urban greenspace should be secured in order to ensure safety. Tranquil zones should be identified, sustained and extended as part of the plans to enhance urban greenspace networks.

Policy UR11 Urban Fringe

Change in the urban fringe should be managed as follows:

- local authorities in partnership with other agencies should prepare joint strategies to identify the role, potential and management of urban fringe areas, with an emphasis on improving their visual attractiveness as urban setting/rural edge, and their recreational value and biodiversity; and
- development plans and briefs should ensure that new developments on the edge of urban areas contribute significantly towards enhancing the character, appearance and environmental capital of the urban fringe, improving the setting of towns and consolidating greenspace networks. They should also ensure that new developments do not undermine housing markets within urban areas which are suffering from low demand.

Policy UR12 Regional Park Resources

The North West Regional Assembly and the North West Development Agency will agree broad locations (linked as appropriate to the review of RPG) for the creation of new and/or further Regional Park resources, which are accessible to the main centres of population, in the following areas:

- in/around the North West Metropolitan Area;
- along the Region's coast;
- alongside the towns in East Lancashire, and West Cumbria and Furness; and
- adjacent to the key cities and towns identified in Policy SD3.

Regional Parks should be focussed on informal outdoor recreational provision with limited all-weather facilities, which will complement the regional effort to secure an urban renaissance. They should be of a significant size, well beyond that of a district park, and/or should provide linear parks of several miles length. They should do some or all of the following:

- extend opportunities for water based sporting activities on the existing developed coast or within/adjacent to urban areas;
- secure landscape and biodiversity enhancement;
- enhance existing open space networks in urban areas;
- radically enhance and extend footpath, cycle way and bridleway provision and connections along the undeveloped coast and river valleys/canals;
- ensure the reclamation of derelict and contaminated land;
- significantly improve urban fringe environments;
- extend woodland cover and build upon the work of the Community Forests;
- display public art, and provide small scale venues for the performing arts;
- include a range of sporting facilities, principally outdoors and informal in nature;
- include limited additional development to enable interpretation, to ensure the public's comfort and security, and essential maintenance functions.

Regional Parks will not be business parks, but their recreational functions may augment other adjacent regeneration efforts and increase employment opportunities, directly or indirectly, within the Parks and in adjacent localities, in an integrated manner.

ST1 Promoting sustainable development

E35 Environmental enhancement

L54 Regional Parks

Policy CZ1 Defining the Coastal Zone

Development plan authorities on the coast, in partnership with the North West Regional Assembly and other relevant agencies, will define in development plans the developed, undeveloped and, if appropriate, the remote coast at a strategic and local level. This definition will use the coastal Countryside Character Areas as an initial area of search and be based on the following:

- settlement size, to determine whether an area is classed as developed or undeveloped;
- areas of tidal flood risk and coastal erosion or land instability reflecting Shoreline Management Plan assessments of the impacts of climate change;
- biological criteria relating to the influence of maritime conditions on habitats and species;
- landscape criteria including more detailed local landscape character assessments (following Countryside Agency guidelines) and the extent of visibility between land and sea;
- patterns of economic activity and the extent of maritime influence on the built environment;
- distinctive boundaries such as coastal roads, railways and field boundaries; and
- the broader maritime zone to the 3-mile seaward limit.

Policy CZ2A Coastal Development

Local authorities, with other relevant agencies and partners, should collaborate in the preparation of plans, policies and proposals for the integrated planning and management of the North West coastal zone, to ensure that development proposals enhance the economic importance as well as the natural, historic and heritage value of the Region's coast. In particular, plans and policies should:

- ensure co-ordination between development plans, Coast and Estuary Management Plans, European marine site Management Plans and other relevant plans or strategies affecting the coastal zone; and
- support the sustainable planning and management of adjacent coastal regions.

The NWRA, working with the coastal local authorities and other relevant bodies, will actively sustain and pursue the establishment of effective co-operation on marine issues affecting the Region's coastal zone, at local, regional and Irish Sea levels, to promote sustainable development, paying particular attention to offshore developments relating to energy, waste, pollution, transport, minerals and fisheries.

Policy CZ2B Coastal Defence

In the preparation of plans, policies and proposals for the integrated planning and management of the North West coast, local authorities and relevant partners should ensure that development proposals are compatible with the sustainable planning and management of coastal defences. In particular, plans and policies should:

- contain flood risk statements and assessments which reflect the findings of relevant Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) and Strategies, and take account of Indicative Flood Plain Maps;
- support the provisions of Coastal Habitat Management Plans linked to Shoreline Management Plans;
- direct development away from areas of flood risk, coastal erosion and land instability;
- avoid development which would prejudice existing coastal defences, or the capacity of the coast to form a natural sea defence, or to adjust to changes, without endangering life or property;
- allow for the relocation of existing development from areas of the coast which cannot be sustainably defended in the long term.

ST2 New development and key service centres

C37 Development on the coast

ST6 Furness and West Cumbria

T23 Ports and airports facilities

C37 Development on the coast

C38 Coastal defence

The NWRA, together with relevant agencies, will develop an approach to coastal planning and management which will take into account the likely impacts of climate change on the coast over the next 50 to 100 years, as part of a future review of RPG.

Policy CZ3 Coastal Communities and Economic Development

Local authorities and other agencies should work with their partners to develop and diversify the economies of coastal communities by:

- ensuring that developments which require a coastal location, where these are compatible with other policies for the coastal zone, are located within existing, developed, coastal areas;
- developing tourism roles for coastal communities which reflect local heritage and character and which protect and enhance existing tourist attractions;
- promoting regeneration based upon the Region's maritime heritage and addressing issues of environmental decline, and social and economic exclusion;
- preventing the loss of traditional boating and associated facilities to other uses not requiring a waterside location; and
- improving recreational access to the coast where this will not harm wildlife and other nature conservation resources.

Policy RU1 Sustainable Agriculture

Development plans and other strategies should recognise the need for a flexible and efficient environmentally sensitive and sustainable agricultural industry in the North West and give favourable consideration to farm-based business, including diversification into non-agricultural enterprises, to maintain the viability of agricultural holdings according to the principles in the Core Development Principles and the Spatial Development Framework, and to underpin the Region's tourism industry.

In general the countryside will be safeguarded for its intrinsic value and its contribution to the leisure economy. Development plan policies and other environmental strategies will have regard to sustainability considerations including, for example, the protection of high quality agricultural land, the quality of the landscape, the conservation of wildlife and habitats, water quality, including freshwater and bathing water quality, recreational amenity and the historic and cultural heritage and the maintenance of viable sustainable communities.

Policy RU2 Diversification of the Rural Economy

Development plans and other strategies should recognise the continued need for diversification and further development of the rural economy that:

- maintains viable and sustainable local communities; and
- respects particular environmental sensitivity and distinctiveness.

This will be promoted through:

- the provision of land for small and medium enterprises of an appropriate scale and nature to accommodate or fulfil local employment needs within or adjacent to key service centres as defined in the Spatial Development Framework and the development or conversion of premises in villages for workspace, including information communication technology based businesses;

ST6 Furness and West Cumbria

EM10 Employment land provision

EM13 Tourism development

T23 Ports and airports facilities

C37 Development on the coast

ST1 Promoting sustainable development

ST3 Development to sustain rural communities

EM12 Rural employment development

E31 Areas and features of national and international conservation importance

E32 Sub-regional nature conservation interests

E33 Landscape character

E34 Historic environment

ST2 New development and key service centres

ST3 Development to sustain rural communities

EM12 Rural employment development

EM13 Tourism development

- the conversion of farm and other rural buildings for appropriate purposes, in scale with their rural location, especially to assist with the diversification of farm businesses. This could include workspace and other uses such as small scale tourism attractions, and produce retailing, and the possibility of commercial and limited residential uses;
- the development of tourist facilities in line with the principles set out in Policy EC9;
- the development of renewable energy schemes at appropriate locations, including recycling schemes such as the composting of green waste;
- the development of value-added agricultural activities such as farm and woodland products and on-farm food processing; and
- the conservation of natural, cultural and historic resources.

Policy RU3 Housing Needs in Rural Areas

Local authorities, social housing providers and other agencies should make provision for limited additional housing within or adjacent to key service centres in rural areas in circumstances where:

- it will support sustainable local services which could become unviable without some modest growth;
- it is needed to support local economic development which will help diversify the rural economy.

In smaller settlements in the Region it will still be necessary to meet the needs of those rural communities, including the provision of affordable housing where need is established. Special rural measures such as the use of agricultural occupancy conditions or the “exceptions” policy (as referred to in Policy UR9) will be appropriate in some circumstances.

Given the need to support a living, vibrant countryside with a balanced mix of homes and jobs and to preserve family and other social relationships in these areas, special provision should be made to ensure that local people have access to housing in these locations.

Policy RU4 Local Services In Rural Areas

The provision of local services for towns and villages within rural areas of the Region, particularly those defined as key service centres under Policy SD3 of the Spatial Development Framework, will be supported in development plans and other strategies by:

- bringing forward proposals which promote innovative ways of maintaining or reintroducing local services in town and village centres which are identified as being deficient or vulnerable to decline in relation to the size and character of the surrounding rural hinterland;
- supporting and promoting the key service centre role that rural towns and villages play for surrounding areas in order to retain and enhance essential services and facilities for rural communities and to reduce the need to travel;
- supporting the development of information communication technology infrastructure to assist the local economy and services;
- encouraging the multi-use of buildings for community and local service uses;
- actively planning for development which will enhance the availability and viability of public and community transport where this would be consistent with other sustainability objectives; and
- resisting development that would lead to loss of local facilities and services.

ST3 Development to sustain rural communities

H16 Affordable housing outside the Lake District National Park

H17 Housing in the Lake District national Park

H18 Allocation of sites within the Lake District National Park for social housing

H19 Exception sites within the Lake District National Park

ST2 New development and key service centres

L48 Town centres

L49 Access and town centres

L51 Local services and facilities

L52 Health, education and training

Policy RU5 Rural Transport and Accessibility

Development plans and other strategies should improve access to jobs, rural services and facilities, public transport and road safety; and protect the character of rural areas in accordance with the Spatial Development Framework by:

- ensuring, subject to the principles of Policy SD8, that development is primarily sited at the most accessible locations and that local circumstances and the proximity to local services is taken into account;
- improving integration between different modes of transport;
- ensuring demand responsive transport including community based transport initiatives, including those from the voluntary sector;
- adopting a comprehensive approach to traffic management to include speed management strategies and the definition of road hierarchies which incorporate the concepts of Quiet Lanes and Greenways; and
- introducing demand management measures in major tourist areas that are in need of protection.

Policy ER1 Management of the North West's Natural, Built and Historic Environment.

Planning authorities and other agencies in their plans, policies and proposals should:

- promote positive management of the Region's natural, built and historic environment and protect it from development likely to cause harm (such as further loss or fragmentation of tranquil areas, including by light or noise pollution) as identified in the Regional Landscape Strategy;
- adopt an integrated approach which protects designated areas while meeting the social and economic needs of local communities;
- protect, for their own sake, all important aspects of the landscape, including regionally and sub-regionally distinctive features and special sites;
- conserve and enhance, wherever possible, regional and local distinctiveness and variety, including the South and West Pennine landscapes by re-assessing local landscape designations in the light of the Countryside Agency's Countryside Character initiative supported by local landscape assessments;
- integrate a site-based approach for development planning with a more broadly based concern for biodiversity and other environmental issues;
- seek to restore damaged and lost environmental features wherever possible;
- take a common approach to landscape and character issues which cross local planning authority boundaries.

Policy ER2 Landscape Character

Planning authorities and other agencies in their plans, policies and proposals will provide the strongest levels of protection for the North West's finest landscapes and areas of international and national importance and their settings, specifically the Lake District National Park; Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Solway Coast, North Pennines, Arnside and Silverdale and the Forest of Bowland); and St Bees Head Heritage Coast.

It is also very important that the rich diversity of landscapes and their settings throughout the North West be conserved and enhanced. Planning authorities and other agencies, in their plans, policies, and proposals, will conserve and enhance landscapes and their settings which are of regional and sub-regional importance (highlighted by the Countryside Agency's Countryside Character initiative and English Nature's Natural Areas initiatives), but not covered by national designations, by:

ST2 New development and key service centres

T22 New road building

L49 Access and town centres

E31 Areas and features of national and international conservation importance

E32 Sub-regional nature conservation interests

E33 Landscape character

E34 Historic environment

E35 Environmental enhancement

ST8 Lake District National Park

EM13 Tourism development

E31 Areas and features of national and international conservation importance

E33 Landscape character

E35 Environmental enhancement

- seeking to restore those which have become degraded;
- ensuring that all new development makes every effort to avoid damage to the landscape and, where possible, enhances it;
- seeking to provide adequate mitigatory measures where avoidance of damage is impossible or impractical;
- ensuring that, where mitigation is insufficient, equivalent compensatory landscape enhancement is provided elsewhere to ensure no net loss.

Policy ER3 Built Heritage

Planning authorities and other agencies in their plans, policies and proposals will identify, protect, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the built heritage of the Region, including those features and sites (and their settings) of historic significance to the North West:

- Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site;
- the City of Chester;
- Liverpool's commercial centre and waterfront and parts of Manchester and Salford (Ancoats, Castlefields and Worsley);
- listed buildings, historic parks and gardens, conservation areas and battlefields; and
- the wider historic landscape that contributes to the distinctiveness of the Region, taking into account the chronological depth of heritage contained within the North West Metropolitan Area, the rural lowlands, rural uplands and coastal areas.

Policy ER4 Contribution of Built Heritage to Regeneration

Local Authorities should work together with English Heritage to develop strategies and programmes that maximise opportunities for the historic and built environment to contribute to the physical, economic, educational and cultural life of the North West. Conservation-led regeneration of areas rich in historic interest should capitalise on the quality and distinctiveness of traditional buildings, and features in parks and gardens of historic interest, and the value that they lend to an area through design and use of materials. In particular, strategies should exploit the regeneration potential of:

- the maritime heritage of the North West coast including docks and waterspaces; coastal resorts and piers; and historic buildings and features, including their settings;
- the Pennine textile mill town heritage that exists in East Lancashire and Greater Manchester; and the textile mill town heritage of East Cheshire
- Victorian and Edwardian commercial developments in Liverpool and Manchester City Centres; and
- the traditional architecture of rural villages and market towns of Cumbria, Cheshire and Lancashire.

Such areas will remain important priorities for focusing investment in the Region, particularly in terms of tourism promotion and regional image building.

Policy ER5 Biodiversity and Nature Conservation

Planning authorities and other agencies in their plans, policies and proposals will afford the strongest levels of protection to:

- sites with international and national nature conservation designations in the Region, encompassing: Ramsar Sites, Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, National Nature Reserves and, Sites of Special Scientific Interest; and
- statutory protected species.

E31 Areas and features of national and international conservation importance

E33 Landscape character

E34 Historic environment

ST4 The City of Carlisle

ST6 Furness and West Cumbria

E31 Areas and features of national and international conservation importance

E33 Landscape character

E34 Historic environment

ST1 Promoting sustainable development

E31 Areas and features of national and international conservation importance

E32 Sub-regional nature conservation interests

E35 Environmental enhancement

Planning authorities and other agencies in their plans, policies and proposals should ensure that the overall nature conservation resource in the North West is protected and enriched through conservation, restoration and re-establishment of key resources by:

- affording the highest level of protection and management to those resources which are important and irreplaceable within practical timescales;
- ensuring that there is no net loss in the value of other biodiversity resources in the Region;
- returning key biodiversity resources to viable levels by promoting the restoration and re-establishment of habitats and species populations in accordance with the targets set out in the UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans. In identifying areas for habitat restoration and re-establishment, particular attention should be paid to reversing habitat fragmentation and species isolation and ensuring the appropriate management of wildlife corridors that are important for the migration and dispersal of wildlife. In implementing the above, local authorities should set out a coherent and functional ecological framework which identifies priority biodiversity resources, areas of land which have the potential for returning these resources to viable levels and wildlife corridors; and
- applying the principle of enhancing the quality of life set out in Policy DP2 when considering all new development proposals which will impact on biodiversity.

Planning authorities and other agencies in their plans, policies and proposals must take into account the Regional Biodiversity Audit, English Nature's Regional Biodiversity Targets in Appendix 1, the Local Biodiversity Action Plans and initiatives related to the implementation of National Biodiversity Action Plans.

The North West Regional Assembly (NWRA) will actively pursue arrangements for the establishment of effective co-operation with authorities from neighbouring regions on cross border issues, which require inter-regional co-ordination, specifically with regard to the Pennines, Solway Firth and such important landscape and biodiversity strategies as the Dee Estuary Management Plan, and more widely in relation to the potential impacts of climate change.

Policy ER6 Woodlands

Local Authorities will work with other regional partners to take every opportunity to increase the level of tree cover by at least 10% (or approximately 1000ha per annum) by 2010 and at least 15% by 2020, supporting native species in both urban and rural areas and also to promote the improvement and sustainable management of existing woodland.

Opportunities for new planting must, however, be balanced against impacts on the natural and historic landscape, biodiversity and on agricultural land quality (see Policy RU1) and when reviewing development plans and other strategies local authorities must take account of the framework provided by Local Biodiversity Action Plans and Landscape Character Assessments.

Policy ER7 Water Resources

Local authorities will work in partnership with other regional agencies to ensure that strategies and programmes are co-ordinated to:

- manage demand, conserve supplies, reduce wastage and promote local recycling of water;
- reduce over abstraction of water from watercourses or aquifers;
- ensure patterns of development where water supplies are already available or can be affordably developed without environmental harm; and

E36 Woodlands

ST1 Promoting sustainable development

ST2 New development and key service centres

- take account of the potential impacts of climate change.

Policy ER8 Development and Flood Risk

In preparing development plans and other relevant strategies and considering individual planning proposals, local authorities should apply the precautionary principle. In accordance with this precautionary principle they will make use of Indicative Flood Plain Maps, Shoreline Management Plans, Estuary Management Plans and Local Environment Agency Plans to develop the information necessary to apply the sequential approach to flood risk set out in PPG25. In particular, they should:

- ensure built development is wholly exceptional and limited to essential transport and utilities infrastructure in areas of functional flood plains;
- apply the precautionary principle, using the sequential approach, to developments in areas at risk of flooding. In the North West, areas of greatest risk are:
 - ❖ the Solway Coast;
 - ❖ the Duddon Estuary and Morecambe Bay;
 - ❖ the Lower Lune Valley;
 - ❖ the Fylde, the Ribble Estuary and Sefton Coast; and
 - ❖ the River Mersey network and the River Dee and its Estuary;
- discourage inappropriate development in areas at risk from flooding;
- avoid development which could lead to flood risk elsewhere either by reducing the ability of flood plains to store floodwaters or by creating unacceptable increases in surface water run-off;
- promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in all new developments;
- support the protection, management and development of flood defences; and
- take account of the longer-term impacts of climate change.

Policy ER9 Minerals Extraction

Appropriate provision should be made in the North West for the supply of a range of minerals. This will take into account:

- the national significance of the Region's reserves of salt, silica sand, gypsum and peat;
- the need to maintain land banks of permitted reserves of certain minerals including materials for the cement industry;
- the contribution that substitute, secondary or recycled sources, or imports from outside the region should make;
- the principles set out in Policy DP2 and other relevant national and regional policies; and
- the provisions made for aggregates in Policies ER10, ER11 and ER12.

Minerals extraction forms an exception to the sequential approach set out in Policy DP1. Development plans should:

- subject to the necessary information being available, identify and safeguard mineral resources to ensure that appropriate levels of current and future supplies can be maintained and indicate where future land based extraction would or would not be appropriate;
- include criteria-based policies to indicate the circumstances under which extraction might or might not be permitted;
- identify in broad terms the preferred after-use of extraction sites, and encourage environmentally sensitive restoration and after care strategies, taking account of local circumstances and strategies;
- identify, safeguard and encourage opportunities for the transportation of minerals by pipeline, rail or water, including

ST1 Promoting sustainable development

C37 Development on the coast

C8 Coastal defence

T23 Ports and airports facilities

T25 Rail freight

R43 Safeguarding mineral resources

R44 Mineral extraction outside the Lake District National Park

R45 Mineral extraction in the Lake District national Park and AONBs

the maintenance of existing wharvage and railhead facilities and the provision of new ones and of facilities for onshore processing and distribution of hydrocarbons; and

- include policies to safeguard mineral resources from other forms of development.

Policy ER10 Land-won Aggregates

Mineral planning authorities should continue to work together to make provision for the agreed regional apportionment of land-won aggregate requirements to 2006 that is set out in Minerals Planning Guidance Note 6 (MPG6), pending its review; and the sub-regional apportionment set out in Table 8.2.

Following publication of the revised MPG6, the NWRA will work with the Regional Aggregates Working Party to identify an appropriate distribution within the North West and to undertake an early review of this Policy and of Policy ER11. The NWRA will then provide guidance to mineral planning authorities in making appropriate provision in their development plans for the extraction of aggregates and the maintenance of landbanks.

Policy ER11 Secondary and Recycled Aggregates

The NWRA will work with the Regional Aggregates Working Party, minerals and waste planning authorities and others to maximise the role played by secondary and recycled sources of aggregates in meeting the Region's requirements by:

- developing better systems to monitor the use of secondary and recycled aggregates in construction projects;
- working with the construction industry to achieve a target of 20% of construction aggregates to be from secondary or recycled sources by 2010 and 25% by 2021;
- encouraging local authorities and developers to incorporate temporary materials recycling facilities on the sites of major demolition or construction projects; and
- the identification in development plans, sites or criteria for the provision of permanent recycling plants for construction and demolition waste in appropriate locations.

Policy ER12 Marine Dredged Aggregates

The Regional Aggregates Working Party will take into account the potential supply of marine dredged aggregate in contributing towards overall regional aggregate needs, taking into account the demand for marine dredged aggregate as well as the need to protect the marine environment.

Policy ER13 Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

The NWRA will develop targets for the supply of electricity from grid-connected renewable installations, based, inter alia, on the findings of the DTI sponsored regional renewable energy scoping study, 'From Power to Prosperity'.

Local authorities should support local initiatives and proposals for renewable energy installations that promote self-sufficiency in energy generation and use.

Development plans should:

- ensure that development minimises energy use through careful and imaginative location, design and construction techniques;
- positively encourage the use of energy efficient technologies and energy from renewable sources in major new developments; and

R43 Safeguarding mineral resources

R44 Mineral extraction outside the Lake District National Park

ST1 Promoting sustainable development

R46 Waste management facilities

Not relevant, Structure Plan no jurisdiction off shore

ST1 Promoting sustainable development

R39 Areas of search for renewable energy

R40 Wind energy proposals

R41 Biomass and energy from waste

R42 Renewable energy in the Lake District national Park and AONBs

- identify areas of search with criteria based policies for renewable energy development, which should aim to protect the Region's most valuable and sensitive environments, and areas of similar value in adjoining regions, in line with Policies DP2 and ER2, ER3 and ER5.

Policy EQ1 Tackling Derelict Land and Contamination Issues

Local authorities should work in partnership with the North West Regional Assembly (NWRA), North West Development Agency (NWDA) and the Environment Agency to identify and prioritise a major programme of schemes for the restoration and remediation of derelict and contaminated sites. Wherever possible, priority should be given to those sites which present the best opportunities to support urban renaissance and reduce sources of pollution and environmental impact in the North West in line with the Core Development Principles and in a manner that will support the Spatial Development Framework.

Policy EQ2 Air Quality

The NWRA and the Environment Agency will take measures to improve air quality in the North West and co-ordinate action to monitor air quality in line with the Regional Sustainable Development Framework.

Development and local transport plans should:

- include air quality criteria and proposals to reduce or reverse the growth in road traffic and encourage greater use of public transport, walking and cycling;
- promote more sustainable and healthier patterns of development in line with the Core Development Principles; and
- be linked to any air quality action plans.

Local authorities should:

- work together with their partners to tackle poor air quality and reduce emissions; and
- designate Air Quality Management Areas, where required, as part of the local air quality management process.

Policy EQ3 Water Quality

Measures to improve and sustain the quality of the Region's rivers, canals, lakes and sea will be promoted.

Local authorities and other regional agencies should co-ordinate their strategies and programmes to :

- maintain or improve the quality of groundwater, surface or coastal waters;
- avoid development that poses an unacceptable risk to the quality of groundwater, surface or coastal water;
- ensure that adequate foul and surface water provision and infrastructure is available to serve new development and minimise the environmental impact of discharges;
- ensure that adequate pollution control measures to reduce the risks of water pollution are incorporated into new developments;
- discourage the proliferation of private sewage disposal facilities;
- locate development in locations where the necessary sewerage infrastructure will be available or can be provided at an affordable cost and without environmental harm;
- discourage diffuse pollution of water from agriculture and from landfill sites; and
- ensure that the construction of roads and other transport infrastructure does not unnecessarily add to diffuse pollution.

Will be addressed by the NWRA and NWDA but following Structure Plan policy relevant:

L54 Regional Parks

ST1 Promoting sustainable development

ST2 New development and key service centres

ST3 Development to sustain rural communities

T21 Strategic Transport Network

T24 Public passenger transport

T25 Rail freight

T27 Safeguarding future transport schemes

T28 Travel Plans

ST1 Promoting sustainable development

ST2 New development and key service centres

Policy EQ4 Principles Governing a Regional Approach to Sustainable Waste Management

Because of the rapidly diminishing landfill capacity in this Region, waste planning, collection and disposal authorities should, as a matter of priority, work with all stakeholders, including the waste industry, to significantly reduce the volume of biodegradable waste sent to landfill, in accordance with the national waste strategy and the requirements of the EU Landfill Directive. All key agencies should review their waste minimisation policies as a matter of priority with a view to adopting best practice, and co-operate in the promotion of waste minimisation practices throughout the Region.

Waste management options should be determined through the application of the following principles:

- The waste hierarchy which advocates waste minimisation, then re-use, then recycling, composting and energy recovery, where recycling and composting options are not appropriate. Disposal should only be considered if none of the former options is viable. Disposal through “landraising” should be discouraged and regarded as a very last resort.
- The Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO) for each waste stream.
Consideration of what constitutes BPEO in each case should be guided by the priorities of the waste hierarchy.
- Regional Self Sufficiency – most waste should be treated or disposed of within the region in which it is produced.
- “The proximity principle” – waste should generally be managed as near as possible to its place of production, to minimise the environmental impact of transporting waste.

Policy EQ5 A Regional Approach to Waste Management

Waste management options should be determined through the application of the principles listed in Policy EQ4 and comprise an appropriate mix of:

- increased re-use and recycling of household, commercial and industrial waste, including the development of centralised materials recycling facilities;
- bio-treatment through composting and anaerobic digestion; and, only if these options are not feasible;
- energy recovery from waste facilities, using the most environmentally friendly technologies possible.

Waste planning and disposal authorities should establish clear frameworks for the provision of appropriate waste management in their areas. These will be informed by the Regional Waste Strategy, which the NWRA is drawing up with advice from the Regional Technical Advisory Body (RTAB) on the likely levels of waste to be managed within the Region and the likely requirements for management and disposal facilities. The Regional Waste Strategy should be incorporated in the next RPG review.

Additional landfill capacity should only be required where the preferred alternatives do not meet the overall capacity requirement. New landfill sites should be primarily located to meet the needs of those parts of the Region where alternatives are not viable.

Policy EQ6 Waste Management Facilities

New major waste management proposals, with the exception of those for new final disposal in or on land facilities, will be required to adopt the sequential approach outlined in the Core Development Principles and the Spatial Development Framework. Wherever possible they should be accessible by rail or by water, with existing wharves and railheads protected.

Will be addressed through Waste Management Strategy

Will be addressed through Waste management strategy

But following Structure Plan policies relevant:

R41 Biomass and energy from waste

R46 Waste management facilities

R47 Residual waste and landfill

ST1 Promoting sustainable development

ST9 Major development proposals

R41 Biomass and energy from waste

R46 Waste facilities management

Policy EQ7 Radioactive Waste

The North West is a centre of national and international expertise in the fields of nuclear fuel fabrication, reprocessing, radioactive waste management and decommissioning. National and regional partners will work together to promote an agreed solution to the safe long-term management of radioactive waste, based on consultation with all relevant interests. This will incorporate a long term commitment to the reduction of radioactive discharges and to radioactive waste minimisation, management and safe storage techniques.

Policy T1 Integrating Transport Networks in the North West

It is critical to the economic competitiveness of the Region that transport systems should be modern, efficient and very well integrated.

Transport issues in the Region should be examined on a multi-modal basis to develop, where appropriate, sustainable and integrated solutions for all users, in accordance with the priorities of the Spatial Development Framework.

The management of all routes within the Regional Highway Network should be closely co-ordinated with parallel rail routes to ensure that each is planned in an integrated context.

Transport network and service providers should seek to make the best use of existing networks and utilise developments in intelligent transport systems and information technology. The promotion of quality public transport partnerships and initiatives such as through ticketing should be fully examined.

Policy T2 The Regional Rail Network

Organisations which play an active role in rail service and infrastructure provision should work toward the delivery of the following regional visions and be in accordance with the priorities of the Spatial Development Framework:

- A Region of First Class Links;
- Towards a Citizen's Network;
- A Regional Express Network;
- A Local Trains Initiative; and
- A Regional Freight Strategy.

Local authorities should protect disused railway lines from development where there is the potential for their future re-use as transport routes. Authorities should consult with the Strategic Rail Authority on all proposals that would affect the re-use of disused lines.

Policy T3 The Regional Highway Network

The Highways Agency and local authorities should give a high priority to investment in the maintenance, management and selective improvement of regionally significant routes and be in accordance with the priorities of the Spatial Development Framework. Route Management Strategies should be developed for all routes within the Regional Highway Network, with a high priority given to safety-related improvements. Best use should be made of existing infrastructure, with new road construction only being considered once a thorough examination of all possible solutions to a particular problem has taken place.

Any infrastructure improvements necessary for the safe, efficient and effective operation of the Network should be carefully co-ordinated so that they are completed and operational commensurate with planned development.

Local authorities should ensure that their development and transport plans support integrated transport objectives and the safe, efficient and effective operation to the North West's Network of Long Distance Strategic Routes. The Highways

ST9 Major development proposals

Will be addressed through the Regional Transport Strategy and the Cumbria Local Transport Plan

But following Structure Plan policy relevant:

T1 The Strategic Transport Networks

Will be addressed through the Regional Transport Strategy and the Cumbria Local Transport Plan

But following Structure Plan policies relevant:

T24 Public passenger transport

T25 Rail freight

T26 Safeguarding future transport schemes

Will be addressed through the Regional Transport Strategy and the Cumbria Local Transport Plan

But following Structure Plan policies relevant:

T21 The Strategic Transport networks

T22 New road building

T27 Transport Assessments

Agency should manage these routes in accordance with their identified function, and ensure that they are not adversely affected through inappropriate use by local traffic.

Policy T4 Road Safety

Highway authorities in the North West should seek to achieve a minimum target of a 40% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents by 2010, compared to the average for 1994 to 1998. In addition, highway authorities should seek to achieve an absolute minimum target of a 50% reduction in the number of children killed or seriously injured. The national target of a 10% reduction in the slight casualty rate should also be bettered.

The Highways Agency and local authorities will be expected to develop and implement consistent speed management strategies. The harmonisation of speed limits across highway authority boundaries should be actively considered to encourage consistency on routes of similar standard. Local authorities should include in their local transport plans proposals for action to improve and change driver behaviour through publicity, education and enforcement.

Policy T5 The Region's Airports

The role of Manchester Airport as the north of England's key international air gateway and its potential to become an important multi-modal transport interchange are recognised and supported. The role of the other airports in the North West as air gateways, which provide complementary services to those at Manchester, is also recognised and supported.

Improvements to the strategic and local transport networks, particularly public transport, will be needed to accommodate the anticipated growth in air traffic at Manchester and Liverpool airports. Development plans, local transport plans and the airports' surface transport forums should develop strategies and set challenging targets to encourage a greater percentage of trips to be made, by both passengers and staff, to the airports by more sustainable modes.

Development plans should make provision for capitalising on the economic activity generated and sustained by the Region's airports in accordance with the sustainable development principles set out in the Core Development Principles and the Spatial Development Framework and the economic Policies EC1-10.

Development plans should protect the existing use of Carlisle Airport and safeguard it for possible future increased use.

Development plans should take account of the following when considering the need to allocate land for physical expansion of airports beyond their existing boundaries:

- the scope for intensification and rationalisation of facilities within existing boundaries;
- the scope to utilise off-site facilities that conform with sustainable surface transport access strategies; and
- the Core Development Principles and the Spatial Development Framework and the economic Policies EC1-10

Policy T6 The Region's Ports and Strategic Inland Waterways

The role of the Port of Liverpool as the North West's key international seaport is recognised and supported. Environmental and capacity improvements to the strategic and local freight transport networks will, however, be needed in order to secure the economic and regeneration benefits of the anticipated growth at the Port. The function of the Region's other ports in providing useful sub-

Will be addressed through the Regional Transport Strategy and the Cumbria Local Transport Plan

Will be addressed through the Regional Transport Strategy and the Cumbria Local Transport Plan

But following Structure Plan policies relevant:

ST4 The City of Carlisle

T23 Ports and airports facilities

Will be addressed through the Regional Transport Strategy and the Cumbria Local Transport Plan

But following Structure Plan policies relevant:

ST6 Furness and West Cumbria

T23 Ports and airports facilities

regional facilities is also recognised. The Manchester Ship Canal is identified as having significant potential for an increase in freight traffic.

Development plans should make provision for capitalising on the economic activity generated and sustained by the Region's ports in accordance with the sustainable development principles set out in Core Development Principles, the Spatial Development Framework and the economic Policies EC1-10. Any future development of the Region's ports should take full account of environmental issues and other planning constraints, and development plans should take account of the scope for intensification and rationalisation of on-site facilities when considering the need to allocate land for physical expansion of ports beyond their existing boundaries. Furthermore, land allocation should only be considered where proposals have a reasonable degree of certainty of proceeding within the plan period.

Where growth in port-related road traffic is likely to compromise the Region's strategic and local highway networks, there should be a presumption in favour of making the best use of existing infrastructure where possible, and all available options to secure modal transfer should be explored.

Policy T7 Freight Transport

Local Authorities in the North West should develop freight strategies through the local transport plan process. These should consider the establishment of Quality Freight Partnerships, including partnership schemes between companies and supply chains to maximise the opportunities for efficiency savings. A Regional Freight Strategy will be developed and included in a future revision of Regional Planning Guidance.

The Strategic Rail Authority and freight transport companies should assist the transfer of freight from road to rail through the provision of new, strategically located, inter-modal interchanges to serve the North West. Local authorities should satisfy themselves that the prime purpose of any proposed site is to facilitate rail freight when allocating land in development plans.

The Strategic Rail Authority should enhance loading gauges on key freight routes, where viable, to ensure that sufficient capacity is available to meet anticipated future demand.

The Highways Agency and local authorities should protect road access to existing rail freight terminals through network management measures on the highway network. Road access to new rail terminals will need to take account of the traffic and environmental impact.

Policy T8 The National Cycle Network

Development of the National Cycle Network within the North West should be supported by local authorities and should also be facilitated by developers and other agencies in the Region when an increase in local cycling can be achieved.

Local authorities should work with interested partners to extend, improve and co-ordinate their cycle networks and to provide a regional network of routes that will integrate local networks with the National Cycle Network.

Will be addressed through the Regional Transport Strategy and the Cumbria Local Transport Plan

But following Structure Plan policy relevant:

T25 Rail freight

Will be addressed through the Regional Transport Strategy and the Cumbria Local Transport Plan

But following Structure Plan policies relevant:

T21 The Strategic Transport Networks

T27 Transport assessments

L49 Access and town centres

Policy T9 Demand Management

The NWRA will develop guidance for the introduction of demand management measures in the North West which will ensure that no part of the Region is prejudiced. This guidance will be included in a future revision of Regional Planning Guidance. Criteria for guiding the location of regionally or sub-regionally significant levels or types of development will also be developed, reflecting the differing level of public transport provision across the North West, including the development of a consistent approach to defining accessibility.

Local authorities should develop a co-ordinated approach to the use of parking charges, enforcement and provision as a demand management tool in support of wider planning and transport objectives.

Park and Ride schemes, in appropriate circumstances, can help to promote more sustainable travel patterns and improve the accessibility and attractiveness of town centres. Well-designed and well-conceived schemes that are in accordance with national and regional guidance should be included in local transport plans and should be given favourable treatment through the planning system.

Local authorities should develop maximum parking standards in accordance with the regional ceilings set out in Table 1 of Appendix 4. Standards should generally be more restrictive in urban areas to reflect local characteristics such as higher levels of public transport accessibility and higher development density. Areas where more restrictive standards are to be applied should be defined in development plans and referenced in local transport plans. There should be consistency and co-ordination in the definition of these areas and of parking standards across neighbouring authorities.

Policy T10 Regional Priorities for Transport Investment and Management

The general priorities for transport investment and management within the Region, in order of importance, are:

- maintaining existing networks;
- making best use of the networks through measures to improve;
 - ❖ safety;
 - ❖ conditions for pedestrians and cyclists;
 - ❖ public transport passenger services;
 - ❖ more sustainable movement of freight;
 - ❖ global and local environmental conditions; and
- investment in major transport infrastructure schemes of regional significance focused on the following key areas:
 - high quality public transport
 - key transport corridors; and
 - gateways and interchanges.

Major schemes of regional significance for the period to 2007 have been identified and prioritised in Table 10.2; however, it should be recognised that these schemes will still be subject to the availability of resources and will need to undergo detailed appraisal and appropriate statutory processes.

Will be addressed through the Regional Transport Strategy and the Cumbria Local Transport Plan

But following Structure Plan policies relevant:

T22 New road building

T28 Travel Plans

T29 Car parking standards

L49 Access and town centres

Will be addressed through the Regional Transport Strategy and the Cumbria Local Transport Plan

But following Structure Plan policies relevant:

T21 The Strategic Transport Networks

T25 Rail freight

T26 Safeguarded future transport schemes

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