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Dear Peter

Project Plan for the RSS 2009 Update

Thank you for your letter of 7th October and the copy of the final version of the RSS Update Project Plan. I can confirm that this sets out an appropriate way forward in line with the Assembly's Business Plan for 2008/9. I am aware of the various amendments made to the Project Plan following consultation, and of the next key step which is to consult on options in November and December.

Caroline Flint MP, in her position as Housing Minister, wrote to you in August confirming that the review of RSS is appropriate. I am pleased that the Regional Assembly is continuing to work to deliver this. Despite the current economic conditions, there remains the need to plan for the long term. The RSS update provides the opportunity for regional stakeholders to consider how best to meet the longer term housing needs in different parts of the region, coordinating this with infrastructure provision, and ensuring that it helps to deliver sustainable development.

Following the recent decisions of the Assembly and partners to move to new regional governance structures by April 2009, it will be important for the RSS review work to be carefully considered through the transition arrangements that regional partners are considering. We will continue to work with you on this, both in terms of advising on transition issues and through the Business Planning Guidance for next year. We will, of course, also continue to input to the RSS update, including through close working with your planning staff, and attendance at relevant Assembly meetings and at the consultation events in November and December.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Jackson