



# Introduction

Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) for Yorkshire and the Humber is a spatial and development strategy for the region, covering land use and transport issues. The current RPG was issued in October 2001. It provides a broad development framework for the period up to 2016, setting the context for the more detailed development plans and local transport plans that are prepared by individual local authorities. It also informs other strategies and programmes, such as the Regional Economic Strategy prepared by Yorkshire Forward.



The Yorkshire and Humber Assembly has undertaken a selective review of RPG12, Draft Revised RPG12, which was published for public consultation in June 2003. An independent "Public Examination" of the draft revised RPG commenced in February 2004, following which revised RPG12 will be issued by the First Secretary of State.

The Review of RPG was well underway when the Government introduced legislation (the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill) to change the current system of development planning and, at a regional level, introduce a system of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) to replace RPG. Work has commenced on the preparatory work for a fully revised Regional Spatial Strategy however, current and draft Revised RPG still have a crucial role in establishing a clear spatial vision for the region.

The Assembly has published its second Monitoring report for RPG - AMR2003 - which aims to measure whether RPG is meeting its objectives by looking at a range of economic, social and environmental indicators and targets. This document is the Executive Summary of that Monitoring Report. This summary outlines the main findings of monitoring and the key issues that arise from those findings. Copies of the full Annual Monitoring Report are available from the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly at the address given on the back cover.

AMR2003 is the next evolution towards putting in place comprehensive monitoring of RPG12. The scope and depth of this year's publication has been aimed at building on the initial "baseline" or "benchmark" assessment of data sets that was established in AMR2002, to enable trends to be picked out over

time. We want to hear your views, on both the full report and this Executive Summary: how it might be improved in future years and whether you are able to help by becoming involved in the annual monitoring of RPG.

## Vision, Objectives and Strategy for Delivering a More Sustainable Region

### Main Findings

- The total population of the region is about 5 million, with approximately 75% of its population living in the three cities of Leeds, Bradford and Sheffield.
- Urban areas cover approximately 11.5% of the total area of the region.
- The region has experienced a significant reduction in the proportion of developed land that is derelict from 3.4% in 1998 down to 2.7% in 2002.
- The region will need to accommodate additional housing at a rate of 14,765 dwellings per year. It is estimated that 2,320 hectares of all previously developed land that is unused or may be available for redevelopment (out of a total of 8,000 hectares) would be suitable for housing development which could provide for 87,500 dwellings, assuming a density of 38 dwellings per hectare.



### Key Issues

The key issues for the region are the achievement of economic regeneration and growth; social inclusion; urban and rural renaissance; and the conservation and enhancement of natural resources in a sustainable manner.

The Assembly needs to work with regional partners to develop the method of monitoring a number of the indicators that will measure the region's performance in achieving development patterns that are sustainable in accordance with the vision, objectives and strategy set out in RPG12.

Sustainable development should be integrated into every policy, plan, and project; a method of collecting data relating to regional strategies and major proposals needs to be devised.

## Spatial Strategy

### Main findings

- According to the Regional Employment Land Survey, approximately 60% of the region's employment land allocations are on greenfield sites (as of 31 March 2003).
- Between 1996 and 1999, 40% of land changing to a developed use in Yorkshire and Humber came from agricultural and other not previously developed uses, compared to 44% in England.
- By December 2003 Urban Capacity Studies, required to identify the potential to accommodate housing development on previously developed land (including through conversions) in existing settlements, had been completed by 15 local authorities, leaving just six authorities still to complete.

### Key Issues

A significant issue in the region is the stock of existing permissions and allocations, particularly for housing and economic development. It remains important that local authorities continue to review existing commitments in accordance with RPG policy P3. In the case of employment land, reviews will be informed by the Regional Employment Land Survey. In the case of housing land, it is vital that sites outside urban areas are reviewed as a matter of urgency.

It is anticipated that local authorities will undertake review work as part of the preparation of Local Development Framework (LDF), which, under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Order Bill, are proposed to replace existing development plans. Further work is required to ensure the compatibility of LDF policies and allocations with the RPG spatial strategy. The Assembly will work with local partners to develop an approach that is consistent, resource efficient and coherent, and adds value to the planning process. We need to monitor the location of development and the impact of policies on the successful regeneration of priority areas, including the most deprived parts of the older industrial areas and remote rural and coastal areas.

## The Economy

### Main Findings

- In 1998, the GDP of Yorkshire and Humber Economy was £55,457 million. In 1999, this rose to £57,554 million, an increase of 3.8%. The Region's GDP accounts for 7.4% of total UK GDP.
- The proportion of the workforce employed in the 'high' and 'medium high' technology sectors fell from 5.6% of the salaried workforce in 1998 to 4.9% in 2001.
- Employment figures have generally improved year on year, in line with national trends. However, over the period summer 1998 to summer 2002, the region experienced the second highest regional improvement in percentage of employed at 1.9%. The UK average increased by 0.9% over this period.
- The tourism industry is worth over £2bn annually in the region, employing 135,000 people (over 15% of the workforce and accounting for 6% of GDP). The Yorkshire area has experienced a 17.5% increase in the value of tourism over period January 2003 to June 2003.



### Key Issues

The economy policy framework will be reviewed as part of the development of Regional Spatial Strategy. Critical to this work will be the rapid "roll out" of the Regional Employment Land Survey, which is now underway – and an analysis of results. The outcomes of the Objective 1 and 2 mid-term evaluations and emerging work on the Leeds and Environs and South Yorkshire Spatial Studies will also feed into policy review.

The need to revise the approach towards the provision of strategic site, the scale of employment land provision and the need to support business clusters will be explored in the preparation of RSS. Close links will be required in this work to the Regional Economic Strategy and to Yorkshire Forward's Investment Planning Process.

The Assembly is committed to developing a spatial strategy for sustainable tourism. This work links with the work of Yorkshire Forward, the Yorkshire Tourist Board, the Yorkshire Culture and the Countryside Agency on tourism and will be developed in partnership with them. This work will also feed into the development of regional tourism policy into 2004.



## Housing Main Findings

Data on completion rates for residential development (between 2001 and 2003) are incomplete, but would it appear that, at the regional level, house completion rates for this period have been broadly consistent with those set out in RPG, albeit with some divergence at the local level.

RPG sets a target to develop 60% of new dwellings on previously developed land or through conversions. Historically the region has achieved around the 50% level. Data for the period 2001 to 2003 (although incomplete) appears to offer cause for optimism, regionally and in many locations with regional figures of 55% (2001/02) and 57% (2002/03).

RPG sets a target to reduce rates of vacancy in the housing stock to 3.5% by 2016. In 2002 the regional vacancy rate had increased to 4.3% of the total regional stock from 4% in 1998, moving further away from the target. In 2002 3.9% of homes in the public sector, 3.7% of Registered Social Landlord stock and 4.4% of private sector homes were vacant.



## Key Issues

There is a pressing need to organise better and more effective collection of housing data across the region. This work will be taken forward through the proposed Monitoring Action Plan, through which monitoring guidelines will be developed with partners, to reflect Government good practice guidance and current local authority monitoring activities.

There is a need to review the outcome of the 'urban capacity' or 'urban potential' studies that local authorities are undertaking across the region to assess the physical capacity of towns to absorb new housing development on brownfield sites.

Background work to develop a new methodology for defining the scale and distribution of new housing in the region has been undertaken to be included in RSS. The methodology will need to be applied to determine the actual scale and distribution of housing to be included in the RSS.

## Regional Transport Strategy

### Main Findings

- The region has the second lowest level of car use in travel to work (71%) of all regions and the second highest use of public transport (10%) outside of London.
- Yorkshire and Humber has the highest proportion of walking trips and the shortest average journey length to and from school out of all the English regions for the period 1999/2001
- There has been a 19% increase in road traffic between 1993 and 2002. The England average increase over this period is 18%.

### Key Issues

Evidence of modal shift away from car travel and towards more sustainable travel choices will indicate the success of transport and land-use policies in achieving these goals.

Following the publication of the South and West Yorkshire Multi-Modal Study, the Assembly made a commitment to undertake a study of the strategic role of public transport in the region. The Assembly has taken the initial steps towards undertaking this study.

The Assembly has taken the lead in developing a comprehensive freight strategy for the region to be taken forward in the RSS.

## Social Infrastructure

### Main Findings

- Indicators show that there have been improvements in the health of the region with positive progress towards achieving the targets set out in RPG.
- It has not been possible to report on matters such as the provision of urban green space; town centre vitality and viability; recreational opportunities; and sports facilities' provision.

### Key Issues

Mechanisms for collecting data to monitor performance against social infrastructure policies need to be developed with regional partners. This work will be carried forward through the Monitoring Action Plan.

The Assembly will need to consider and strengthen linkages between the RSS and the forthcoming Regional Strategic Frameworks for Health and with the health sector more generally, and also with the education sectors and the Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action.



## Built and Natural Environment

### Main Findings

The region has a higher proportion of Grade I and Grade II\* buildings at risk than the national average (5.3% as opposed to 3.6%). However, 41% of buildings at risk had "solutions" agreed or in progress – the highest percentage of all nine regions.

There has been a decline in the condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) both nationally and regionally; however the decline in this region has been more severe than that experienced nationally.

Total area of woodland is 92,082 hectares, representing 6% of the land area of the region. The region's woodland coverage is below the national average.

## Key Issues

Data on important national and local biodiversity designations and assets are not consistent enough to allow full reporting at a regional level at present. This is an area where future work will be required to find out how well these assets are being protected. The preparation of baseline environmental information in accordance with the requirements of the EU directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment may assist in measuring the net change in natural and semi-natural habitats. The work of the Regional Environment Forum in developing a regional "Environment Hub" of environmental information will also be important in improving monitoring.

The Assembly will work with local authorities to monitor whether development plans and emerging local development frameworks are contributing to the reclamation of derelict land and the urban and rural renaissance agendas.

## Resource Management

### Main Findings

- Mean sea levels in the Humber Estuary and along the Yorkshire Coast have risen at rates of between 1.5mm and 3.6mm a year over the last 80 years.
- Environment Agency data show improving water quality for rivers and within the Humber Estuary. There have been fluctuations in the quality of coastal bathing waters, but generally a picture of sustained year-on-year improvements is emerging.
- The majority of local authorities have improved rates of recycling of municipal waste over the period 1998/99 to 2002/03. There is a considerable difference in the recycling rates achieved by each of the region's authorities.
- In 2002, 30% of aggregates were sourced from National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- The region is a significant net exporter of energy, with electricity output at 63,883 GWh from the region's power stations, representing 15.4% of the UK's total production.



## Key Issues

The Yorkshire and Humber Regional Environment Forum is undertaking a Regional Air Quality study to inform the RSS and the work of other stakeholders in the region.

There is a need for best practice in flood risk assessments, including a better mutual understanding of what constitutes an appropriate flood risk assessment in each case. The Yorkshire and Humber Assembly and Environment Agency joint publication (published April 2004) will provide guidance on, amongst other matters, strategic flood risk assessment.

There is a need to develop sub-regional and minerals planning authority apportionment tonnage for aggregates production and this will mean close working with the Regional Aggregates Working Party. Initial technical work commenced on this matter during Summer 2003.

The Regional Waste Strategy has informed the introduction of a number of new policies within Draft Revised RPG. However, consideration still needs to be given to the specific policy approach for construction, commercial, industrial and hazardous waste.

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HUMBER  
ASSEMBLY**  
*Voice of the region*

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# Yorkshire and Humber Regional Planning Guidance

Annual Monitoring Report 2003  
Executive Summary



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