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Pete Ashcroft  
Spatial Planning Manager  
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County Hall  
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Dear Pete

### **East Riding Smaller Settlements Document: Preferred Options Consultation**

The Yorkshire and Humber Assembly welcomes the opportunity to comment on the East Riding Smaller Settlements Document: Preferred Options and to continue its involvement in the development of a coherent spatial planning framework for the region. The comments offered in this letter are intended to be within the spirit of continued and productive joint working.

At this stage, the Assembly's response to the consultation document is a set of officer comments. The aim is to highlight where issues related to general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy may arise. When the Smaller Settlements Document is submitted to the Secretary of State a formal Assembly view on its general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy will need to be given.

The following officer comments are made in relation to the existing Regional Spatial Strategy for the Yorkshire & the Humber (based on a selective review of RPG12 issued in December 2004) and the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy – the Yorkshire and Humber Plan (submitted to the Secretary of State in December 2005).

The comments place emphasis on the draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), which reinforces and develops the general thrust of existing RSS; furthermore it is more up to date and has significant 'weight' in its own right. Prior to adoption (expected late 2007), the weight attached to the draft RSS will increase once the Panel's Report is received (expected early 2007) and also when proposed changes are published (expected Summer 2007).

## **Regional Spatial Strategy**

As you know, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced mechanisms to help ensure that DPDs drawn up by local authorities as part of the Local Development Framework are in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The intention is to ensure that DPDs are contributing to the delivery of the RSS and that the two strands of the Development Plan for an area (the RSS and DPDs) are mutually supportive and not in conflict.

The Assembly welcomes the statement of the 'general need' for conformity between the RSS and DPDs documents that is set out at the start of the document, which demonstrates the need for a strong link between the LDF and the RSS. Also welcomed are the references made to the RSS throughout the document.

In order for the Smaller Settlements Document to more clearly reflect the Regional Spatial Strategy set out in both current RSS (December 2004) and the draft RSS (Yorkshire and Humber Plan – December 2005), it is suggested that the following issues should be taken into account in the next stages of the Document's development.

### **Overall Comments**

The Assembly welcomes the helpful reference to the overall East Riding Settlement Hierarchy as set out in the Joint Structure Plan in the introduction of the document.

One of the main objectives of this Smaller Settlements Document is to reduce dependency on the private motor car and increase opportunities for using public transport, cycling and walking. The Assembly welcomes this objective as it clearly reflects the overarching spatial vision of the RSS.

It is the Assembly's view that the document sets out a positive approach to try and reconcile the dual needs of achieving a more concentrated pattern of development and supporting vibrant rural areas and communities, which successfully meets policies YH7 and YH8 in the draft RSS.

The document clearly sets out that 'Market Villages' will be expected to accommodate only limited growth. This is further highlighted through the proposed development limits, which are set out as a tool in restricting development outside the limits. It is critical to the RSS approach that this growth is very limited and focussed on meeting local needs, particularly for affordable housing as market villages represent an additional tier of settlements below the 'towns' identified in the Joint Structure Plan and the Local Service Centre approach required by the draft RSS.

The preferred option identified in the document (at paragraph 4.75) represents a positive measure to achieve a more concentrated and less dispersed pattern of development in the East Riding of Yorkshire than in the past – the document itself explains this at paragraph 4.3 in terms of the change from the previous approach based on 50 selected settlements. This change in direction would be further re-enforced if the Alternative Options 1 or 2 (paragraph 4.76) were taken forward. For example, Alternative Option 1 would allow a settlement strategy focused on 25 places beyond the 4 Principle Service Centres identified in the draft RSS in the East Riding (as opposed to 36 settlements under the Preferred Option in paragraph 4.75).

The use of the three 'priority levels' of 'market villages' does introduce additional layers into the settlement approach. It is the Assembly's view that the identification of one single grouping of market villages could be achieved by combining the 'priority 1' and 'priority 2' level settlements together (and not including the 'priority 3') and this would be our preferred option to take forward.

I hope that these comments are helpful to you. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if anything is not clear. We look forward to working with you as you prepare your Development Plan Document for submission and examination.

Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J Poxon', written in a cursive style.

Jenny Poxon  
Head of Planning Delivery and Conformity