



PRE-DRAFT



**REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY
(RSS)**



TOPIC PAPER 10:

FORESTRY



**Consultation
Winter 2004/05**



Foreword

The Yorkshire and Humber Assembly has reached another crucial stage in the development of 'PLANet Yorkshire and Humber' - the new Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). A draft of the new RSS is to be submitted to Government by the end of April 2005.

In preparing the new draft RSS the Assembly is committed to involving as wide a range of organisations and individuals as possible. The preparation process for the new draft RSS therefore provides for two specific periods of public consultation *before* a new draft RSS is prepared and submitted to Government. This is in addition to the continual involvement of many partners in the technical work for the new RSS.

The first consultation document - 'Draft Spatial Vision and Strategic Approach' (July 2004) - considered the overall approach that should guide the preparation of the new RSS (particularly the role of sub-areas), key issues facing different parts of the region and possible responses to these issues.

We have now reached the second stage of consultation. This is based on the need to consider in more detail how we can develop a clear spatial strategy for the region that takes into account all of the issues identified in the RSS Project Plan ('Shaping the Future', January 2004). This second stage of consultation is therefore structured around a series of 'topic papers', of which this is one. The full list of topic papers is:

Topic paper 1:	Introduction to Pre-Draft RSS
Topic paper 2:	Spatial Options
Topic paper 3:	Housing
Topic Paper 3a:	Distributing the Housing Requirement
Topic paper 4:	Economy
Topic paper 5a:	Freight
Topic paper 5b:	Strategic Public Transport
Topic paper 5c:	Public Transport Accessibility
Topic paper 5d:	Demand Management
Topic paper 5e:	Aviation
Topic paper 5f:	Transport Investment Priorities
Topic paper 6:	CAP reform
Topic paper 7:	Energy
Topic paper 8:	Water
Topic paper 9:	Sustainable Tourism
Topic paper 10:	Forestry
Topic paper 11:	Biodiversity
Topic paper 12:	Culture
Topic paper 13:	Health
Topic paper 14:	Education
Topic paper 15:	Minerals
Topic paper 16:	Sustainable Waste Management
Topic paper 17:	Retail and Leisure
Topic paper 18:	Monitoring
Topic paper 19:	Climate Change

Please bear in mind that these topic papers are raising many challenges that policies in the new RSS will need to address. The topic papers do not include draft policies and there will need to be a great deal of integration across topic areas before the policies are drafted. The purpose of this stage of consultation is to receive feedback on what direction you think RSS policy should take.

Please note that these topic papers have not been endorsed by the Assembly, or its advisory body the Regional Planning and Infrastructure Commission. They do not represent Assembly policy but give an important opportunity for a wide range of stakeholders to feed in to the further development of the new RSS for the Yorkshire and Humber region.

Your comments

We would like your comments on these topic papers. You can answer the questions that we ask in the papers or you can send us your general comments.

We need to hear from you by **Friday 18th March 2005** so that your views and ideas can be taken into account as we prepare the new draft RSS to submit to Government.

Please send your comments to

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All the topic papers and accompanying documents can be found at www.yhassembly.gov.uk

Strategic Environmental Assessment/Sustainability Appraisal

At each stage of the development of the new RSS, a Strategic Environmental Assessment/Sustainability Appraisal (SEA/SA) is being carried out. At this stage, this appraisal has particularly concentrated on Topic Paper 2 – Spatial Options. The report of this appraisal is also available from the Assembly.

Any queries

If you have any queries about the topic papers, or any aspect of RSS, please call the Regional Planning and Transport team on 01924 331590.

Topic Paper 10: Forestry

Introduction

1. This Topic Paper looks at how the draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) needs to consider issues related to the forestry - trees and woodlands - of the region. It identifies how the RSS could help with the implementation of the Regional Forestry Framework (RFF). The final draft of the RFF is currently being prepared, following consultation, and is due to be launched in summer 2005.
2. Further information on the RFF is available at www.goyh.gov.uk/forestry or at www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry. The latest draft of the RFF is available from the Forestry Commission on 01904 448778.

Background

3. Current RSS (December 2004, based on the Selective Review of RPG12) includes Policy N4 – Forestry (see Annex A). This is in addition to the strategic policies of RSS that recognise the role that forestry – trees and woodlands - plays in the social and economic as well as environmental well-being of the region.
4. A particular challenge for the Assembly in drafting the new RSS is the need for the Strategy and its policies to be more regionally and spatially-specific than in current RSS. Policies such as N4 therefore need to be reviewed in the light of this challenge to consider whether they can be more regionally and spatially-specific than they are at present.
5. Current Policy N4 is quite regionally and spatially specific. It identifies particular areas of the region that could benefit from more planting (such as 'woodlands by the motorway', particularly in South Yorkshire and beside the A1) and sets out policy that will help the implementation of specific projects and schemes (including the South Yorkshire Forest and Project Arbre in North Yorkshire).
6. The drafting of the new RSS provides an opportunity to review the policy on forestry, to make sure that it is up to date (particularly in the light of changed circumstances such as that relating to Project Arbre) and that it is supporting other regional strategies, such as the RFF. It is also an opportunity to make sure that the overall spatial strategy and other policies in the RSS support forestry objectives.
7. This Topic Paper therefore identifies the key linkages that will need to be made between the RFF and the RSS when it is drafted and asks for your views on these.

Regional Forestry Framework

8. The Draft RFF sets the future of the region's trees and woodlands in its international, national and regional context. It describes the current state of woodland and trees in the region, identifying particular patterns of planting and ownership. It is structured around a number of themes, strategic aims, guiding principles, objectives and outcomes. The revised themes and strategic aims are:

Theme	Strategic Aim
The Regional Context	To ensure that transformation or expansion of the region's tree and woodland resource is managed in a way that reflects and respects the historic, natural and cultural identity of the region
Trees, Woods and People	To ensure the benefits provided by the region's trees and woodlands are understood, recognised and valued
Sustainable Forestry	A sustainably managed regional tree and woodland resource supporting the retention and development of a viable and vibrant forestry sector, and contributing to the overall sustainable development of the region
Creating a Setting	To utilise the many environmental strengths of trees and woodlands to underpin the economic and social renaissance of the region
Natural Heritage	To achieve optimum biodiversity gain for the region through appropriate tree and woodland planting and management that takes account of the needs of all species and habitats
Healthy Environments	To help the region address issues of ill-health by maximising the contribution of trees and woodlands, particularly in areas of greatest health inequalities
Climate Change	To help the region combat climate change through maximising the contribution of trees and woodlands
Delivering the Strategy	To achieve effective and efficient implementation of the aims and objectives of the strategy

Links to the RSS and/or local development documents

9. The RSS will have a role in supporting these themes and strategic aims in its overall spatial strategy and strategic policies. In addition, there are particular desired outcomes set out in the Draft RFF that RSS and/or local development documents could help to implement. These include:

Sustainable Forestry

- increased timber sawmilling and processing capacity adding value within the region
- a well developed woodfuel energy market within the region
- increased contribution by the forestry sector to the changing rural economy

Creating a Setting

- investment is increased by environments made more attractive through tree and woodland planting and management
- existing employment and infrastructure development is better integrated into the local landscape through tree and woodland planting and management
- the reclamation of derelict and underused land is made more sustainable through tree and woodland planting and management
- housing areas are made more attractive places to live through tree and woodland planting and management
- town centres and public spaces are made more attractive places to use through tree and woodland planting and management
- the wider landscape of the region is enhanced through appropriate tree and woodland planting and management
- increased promotion, management and sustainable use of the region's woodlands for leisure, recreation and tourism

Natural Heritage

- Distribution and status of priority woodland habitats and species within the region is established, and regional targets derived from the national woodland habitat and species action plans are met
- Maintain the area of Ancient Woodland and the remaining irreplaceable resource is assessed and maintained or restored to favourable or recovering condition
- The region's ancient or veteran trees, and historic orchards, are identified, protected and enhanced

Healthy Environments

- More opportunities for physical recreation through increased woodland access opportunities for all near to where people live
- Communities in urban areas are brought closer to nature through increased tree and woodland cover
- Atmospheric pollution in urban areas is reduced through increased tree and woodland cover
- Reduced noise and atmospheric pollution along transport corridors through increased tree and woodland cover

Climate Change

- Increased use of wood as a source of renewable energy

- Reduced net greenhouse gas emissions through increased tree and woodland planting for carbon sequestration
 - Increased use of timber as a sustainable building material
 - Increased recycling of wood and wood based products
 - Regional flood risk is reduced through increased woodland creation in river catchments
 - Improved sustainability of urban drainage systems through increased tree and woodland planting in the region's towns and cities
 - Regional flood risk is reduced through increased woodland creation on floodplains
 - Water supplies are better protected through increased tree and woodland planting
 - Energy consumption in our towns and cities is reduced through increased tree and woodland planting
 - Ancient and native woodlands are made more resilient to the impacts of climate change through increased tree and woodland planting to buffer and link vulnerable sites
- 10.** These outcomes could be supported through general strategic policies in RSS and in topic-specific policies. Equally, there are outcomes included above that will be more effectively delivered through support of policies in local development documents.

Targets

- 11.** Current RSS (December 2004, based on the Selective Review of RPG12) contains a target to increase woodland cover across the region by 500 hectares a year. The Draft RFF says that it is "difficult to justify a particular target figure" but that strategies need to be aligned in their aim to increase tree and woodland cover across the region. Any targets that are to be included in the final RFF and RSS will need to be consistent.

Spatial specificity

- 12.** The Draft RFF contains information on woodland coverage and ancient woodland cover by local authority area. The Forestry Commission are coordinating a process of opportunity mapping using the Public Benefit Recording System in order to help identify priority areas to assist in delivering the strategy. This information will be able to feed into the further development of RSS and/or local development documents.

Questions for consultation

1. *Do you agree that the RSS has a role in helping to implement the themes, strategic aims and desired outcomes from the RFF, as identified in this Topic Paper?*
2. *Are there specific spatial dimensions to the desired outcomes that should be reflected in the draft RSS, in addition to those currently set out in Policy N4 (see Annex A)?*
3. *Should the specific reference to planting to support the Project Arbre scheme in Policy N4 (see Annex A) now be deleted from the RSS?*
4. *Should the target for increasing the coverage of woodland in the region by 500 hectares a year be included in the new RSS (given the stated difficulty of identifying a particular figure for a target), or should it be reworded to state that the target is an overall increase year on year?*

References

Further information on the RFF is available at www.goyh.gov.uk/forestry or at www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry

The latest draft of the RFF is available from the Forestry Commission on 01904 448778

Annex A

Forestry policy in current RSS (December 2004, based on a Selective Review of RPG12)

Policy N4 Forestry

Development plans and other strategies and programmes should encourage tree cover in the region to be increased in ways which reinforce and support the regional spatial strategy by:-

- a) Creating larger multi-purpose woodlands (over 20 ha) and adapting management of existing woodlands to accommodate leisure and recreational opportunities (e.g. cycling and riding).
- b) Including land use policies which facilitate implementation of the South Yorkshire Forest Plan in the development plans for Barnsley, Rotherham and Sheffield.
- c) Including substantial woodland planting as part of comprehensive schemes for regeneration of previously used/derelict land.
- d) Expanding the area of "woodlands by the motorway", concentrating on the motorways in South Yorkshire in the first instance. Opportunities should be taken for woodland planting on non-operational land associated with railways and any upgrading of sections of the A1 to motorway standard.
- e) Promoting, in partnerships, agri environmental measures which provide opportunities for smaller broad-leaved woodlands (under 10 ha) to be planted or brought into management on land of lower conservation value, for rehabilitation of ancient woodland and for sustainable management of existing, particularly neglected, woodland. This is particularly important in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- f) Providing 2,000 ha of land for short rotation coppice within 40 miles of the Project Arbre power station in North Yorkshire, with subsequent maintenance of a three-year cycle of short rotation coppice.
- g) Designing new planting and woodland expansion so as to maintain the diversity and local distinctiveness of landscape character within the region.
- h) Giving prominence to the multi-purpose benefits of woodland in preparing Local Biodiversity Action Plans.
- i) Providing for increased tree cover in schemes for the restoration of mineral workings and waste disposal.