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Our Ref: 40b/Planning Conformity/final responses/LDFs/Hambleton Development Policies DPD

4 October 2006

Graham Banks
Planning Policy Team Leader
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DL6 2UU

Dear Graham

**Hambleton Local Development Framework
Submission of Development Policies Development Plan Document**

Further to your letter of 24 August 2006, I am pleased to confirm the Assembly's opinion that the Hambleton Development Policies Development Plan Document, as submitted to the Secretary of State on 25 August 2006, is in general conformity with the existing and draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). At this stage in the document's development, the Assembly would wish the following comments to be taken into account.

As with the Core Strategy DPD for Hambleton, the role of the RSS in providing a strategic policy context for the local policies is clear throughout the document. This helps to reinforce the close relationship that there needs to be between the RSS and the DPD and it demonstrates how the DPD will help to implement the RSS.

The DPD draws exclusively on the draft RSS. This is currently subject to Public Examination and will not be finalised until late 2007. In making this response on general conformity, the Assembly needs to refer to both current and draft RSS. Since the draft RSS builds on the current RSS the Assembly is content that the DPD is in general conformity with both current and draft RSS. There might, however, be issues of policy cross-referencing in this DPD once the draft RSS is finalised.

Settlement hierarchy and distribution of development

The Assembly's response to the Core Strategy highlighted the need for more development to be focused on the Principal Service Centres of Northallerton and Thirsk and suggested that the designation of 'secondary village' could be removed.

This would reinforce the need for development to be focused in larger settlements in the hierarchy whilst recognising that the identification of 'service villages' in addition to Local Service Centres was a necessary local interpretation of current and draft RSS policy (P1 and E1 of current RSS and YH1-9 of draft RSS) given the nature of the Hambleton District.

Following these issues through to the Development Policies DPD, there are a number of points that could be made:

- The development limits of the Principal Service Centres of Northallerton and Thirsk might be drawn too tightly to enable the majority of development to be focused there in future (Policy DP8). Whilst the implications of these Development Limits will not be totally apparent until the Allocations DPD reaches its next stage it would not be helpful if preferred options for the Allocations DPD had effectively been closed off through the definition of the Development Limits in this DPD. Equally, it is noted that the target % of development to be allocated in each level of the settlement hierarchy is not to be set until the Allocations DPD (Annex 4, Monitoring and Implementation table 1) but it is crucial that the principle of having a higher % in the higher order settlements is reinforced in this DPD and this could be set out in general terms here.
- Consideration should be given to removing the development limits of the secondary villages so that they are covered by exceptions policy (Policy DP9).
- In phasing the release of land, a greater distinction should be made between the Principal Service Centres and other Service Centres (Policy DP11).

Employment land

In its response to the Core Strategy DPD the Assembly raised some concerns regarding the amount and proposed distribution of employment land in the District. These concerns will need to be followed through in relation to the Allocations DPD but it is once again vital that the principle of having a greater % of land allocated in the higher order settlements is reinforced in the indicators and targets for this DPD (Annex 4, table 1).

Renewable Energy

In its response to the Core Strategy DPD the Assembly was concerned that the contribution that the District needed to make to meet the region's targets for renewable energy was not clearly set out. Policy DP34 goes some way to addressing this concern but it does still not include a target figure and no figure is included in the monitoring framework (Annex 4). Current RSS (Policy R12) sets out a target figure for renewable energy generation in North Yorkshire of at least 194MW for by 2010.

It is acknowledged that Hambleton District Council has concerns about the target for the District included in ENV5B and Table 15.12 of draft RSS. This figure was derived from the Sub-Regional Renewable Energy Assessment and Targets Study (2004) which took into account environmental sensitivities and issues such as those related to airfields. The North Yorkshire Renewable Energy Assessment and Targets Study (2005) helped to inform Renewable Energy targets for local authorities. It broadly supported the findings of the Sub-Regional Study. However, it does diverge from the Sub-Regional study in terms of the landscape sensitivity in the north of Hambleton. The level of landscape sensitivity in this part of the District suggested that the sensitivity category should change from 'low' to 'medium'. The impact of this change on the suggested target is not predicted to be that great. Further work to evaluate this is in hand, but is not yet available.

The Examination in Public of the draft RSS will discuss this matter on 10 October and the Panel report should be available in early 2007 but the final figure to be included in the RSS will not be set out until late 2007. As a minimum, therefore, Policy DP34 and/or its monitoring framework could include the North Yorkshire target to reinforce the scale of the challenge to be met by the policy.

Policy DP34 states that 'for all developments above 1000msq in size or 10 or more residential units, the following will be required....energy efficient measures must be incorporated which will provide at least 10% of their energy requirements from on-site renewable energy generation, *or otherwise demonstrate similar energy savings through design measures*' (italics added).

The first part of this clause carries forward Policy ENV5B of draft RSS in requiring at least 10% of the energy to be used in sizeable new development to come from on-site renewable energy sources. The second clause of the policy (highlighted in italics above) is in danger of undermining the implementation of the first part of the clause. It suggests that developments could *either* have design measures to increase efficiency *or* meet 10% of their energy requirements from on-site renewable sources whereas developments should be encouraged to increase energy efficiencies *and* derive energy from renewable sources. Policy ENV5B of draft RSS builds on Policy R12 of current RSS in these regards.

Gypsies and Travellers

At the Preferred Options stage in the preparation of the DPD the matter of accommodation for gypsies and travellers was raised by the Assembly. As paragraphs 4.5.9 to 4.5.13 of the DPD make clear, the needs of gypsies and travellers should be reflected in relevant policies in the DPD. The Regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment is now complete and it identifies that there is a shortfall in provision in all local authorities in the region. More local studies of need will have to be carried out but the results of the regional assessment suggest that Policy DP14 will need to be changed, particularly to accommodate the need for 'local exceptions' to be made to help to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers. This change, along with research to inform the Allocations DPD, should help to address the needs identified.

Affordable housing

The need to provide affordable housing in the District is clearly addressed in the DPD. The Core Strategy sets out high targets, reflecting Policy H4 of current RSS and H3 of draft RSS, and Policy DP15 builds on this. Part iii of Policy DP15 states that affordable housing provided in developments must 'be available to people who have a local connection...'. Given this, it might be helpful to set out what is meant by a 'local connection' in a way, for example, that the National Parks (and more recently Ryedale District Council) have defined what is meant by housing for 'local people'.

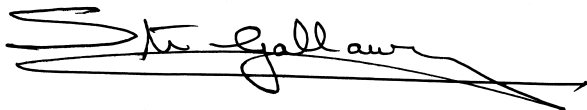
Accessibility criteria and parking policies

Current and draft RSS include policies on accessibility criteria (Policy T2 of current RSS and Policy T3 of draft RSS use the same criteria) and parking policies (Policy T5 of current RSS and Policy T2 of draft RSS include the same clauses on parking policy). The Assembly would wish to see the policies in the DPD and the indicators and targets in the monitoring framework reflect the standards and policies of RSS. Again it would be helpful if the targets for accessibility of sites could be included in this DPD so that it sets an appropriate framework for drawing up the preferred options of the Allocations DPD.

At this stage, the Assembly would be happy for the points made here to be dealt with by written representations at the Examination of the Hambleton Development Policies DPD.

If you have any queries about these points, please do not hesitate to contact Jenny Poxon on 01924 331555.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Galloway". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Stephen Galloway
Chair, Regional Planning Board
Yorkshire and Humber Assembly

Cc Margaret Jackson, Director, Economy and Strategy, Government Office for Yorkshire Humber, Queen Street, Leeds.
Isobel Mills, Director, People and Communities, Government Office for Yorkshire Humber, City House.