

Our ref: Planning Conformity/Selby/Final Responses/Selby Housing Policies Interim Stage February 2008

27 February 2008

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Dear Terry

**Selby District Local Development Framework – Core Strategy  
Interim Policy to Control the Release of Land**

The Yorkshire and Humber Assembly welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Selby Interim Housing Policies document 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 might arise. When the Interim Housing Policies 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 Yorkshire & the Humber (based on the 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. Paragraph 4.19 of PPS12 makes it clear that an RSS under preparation gathers more weight as it passes through its preparation process. It states that

“Where the regional spatial strategy... has been through an Examination in Public, and the Proposed Changes have been published, considerable weight may be attached to that strategy because of the strong possibility that it will be published in that form by the Secretary of State”.

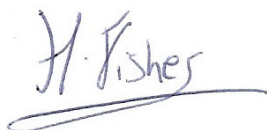
The Assembly has therefore referred to the Proposed Changes to the draft RSS (published at the end of September 2007) in this response but would like to make it clear that the Assembly will be commenting on the Proposed Changes and that the final RSS is expected to be published in May 2008.

Overall, the document reflects the policy direction of current RSS (December 2004), draft RSS (December 2005) and the Secretary of State’s Proposed Changes to draft RSS (September 2007). In particular, the Assembly supports:

- The intention to manage housing development in the District to accord with the RSS housing provision targets
- The approach to managing the release of housing land which directs new development to locations that comply with the Core Approach of the RSS
- The new thresholds and targets for the provision of affordable housing which should help to deliver more affordable housing in the District
- The promotion of 100% affordable housing schemes and the requirement to demonstrate an identified local need in the smaller settlements

I trust that these comments are helpful to you as you prepare the final Interim Housing Policies document. If you wish to discuss any of the points made here please do not hesitate to get in touch. We look forward to continuing to work with you on your LDF.

Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "H. Fisher". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Harriet Fisher  
Policy Officer

## **Annex A**

### **The Need for Interim Policies**

The Council recognises the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) as the principal context for the Interim Housing Policies and the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly welcome this. Draft RSS provided for an annual provision of 390 dwellings between 2004-2016 and 440 dwellings between 2016-2021 in Selby. The Secretary of State's Proposed Changes has brought forward the increase to 440 dwellings per annum from 2008 and extends the plan period to 2026. Selby's current annual completion rate of 658 dwellings clearly exceeds the RSS housing targets.

The Government has placed a clear focus on housing, and addressing housing affordability, as a key national priority. In light of this emphasis on housing, recent informal messages from Government have suggested that local planning authorities may be able to deliver above RSS figures. However, the Department of Communities and Local Government has not formally issued this advice. In addition, the Assembly is of the view that the RSS targets should not be exceeded where the scale or location of growth would undermine the Core or Sub Area Approach of the RSS. The Assembly would therefore welcome an Interim Housing Policy that seeks to manage growth in Selby to ensure that new housing development accords with the locational principles of the RSS.

In responding to the RSS Proposed Changes, the Assembly suggested a new policy on managing and stepping up the supply and delivery of housing. This draft policy seeks to reinforce the RSS' focus on urban transformation by prioritising the development of brownfield land and requiring local authorities to pro-actively identify sites and broad locations for housing development. The policy looks to support a step-up in housing delivery in locations that accord with the Plan's Core and Sub Area approaches. An Interim Housing Policy that seeks to manage growth in Selby would support the new policy that the Assembly put forward in response to the RSS Proposed Changes.

### **Policy INT1 – Managed Housing Land Release**

The Regional Spatial Strategy seeks to focus new development within the Regional Cities, Sub-Regional Cities and Towns and the Principal Towns. Within rural and coastal areas the RSS directs development to the Local Service Centres where that development will meet local housing needs. The RSS settlement network identifies Selby as a Principal Town. In addition, Selby District contains two Local Service Centres, Sherburn-in-Elmet and Tadcaster. Figure 1 of the draft Interim Housing Policies shows that a large proportion (44%) of new housing development has been within Selby town. However, the majority (47%) of recent housing completions in the Selby District have been located within villages.

The scale and distribution of current housing completions in Selby does not accord with the RSS Core Approach, given the large proportion of new housing development taking place within villages in the District. The Assembly would therefore welcome an Interim Policy that restricts market housing development in the smaller villages in order to ensure house building is directed to the most sustainable locations, in line with the Core Approach of the RSS. Housing development within the smaller villages should be limited to 100% affordable housing schemes. Within the larger Service Villages it may be appropriate to permit small-scale market housing where it meets an identified local need.

### **Policy INT2 – Housing in the Countryside**

Outside of the villages' development limits and within the open countryside, new housing development should only be permitted under very special circumstances. It may be appropriate to allow small-scale 100% affordable housing schemes as exception sites. The Assembly considers that draft Interim Housing Policy INT2 sets out appropriate criteria for new housing development in the countryside.

### **Policy INT3 – Affordable Housing**

The Assembly welcomes the draft Interim Housing Policy INT3. The Regional Housing Strategy defines affordable housing need in the North Yorkshire district as 'high'. In addition, the Council's Housing Needs Study identifies an annual need of 294 affordable homes in the District 2004-2009.

Draft RSS states that on developments of more than 15 homes (or a site area of more than 0.5 hectares) authorities in areas of high need should seek an affordable housing contribution of over 40%. It should be noted that the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to draft RSS amends this to state that LDFs should set targets for the amount of affordable housing to be provided and gives a provisional estimate of the proportion of new affordable housing that should be sought of over 40%.

The draft Interim Housing Policy proposes thresholds of 10 dwellings in Selby and 2 dwellings in the Local Service Centres and Service Villages. The draft Policy proposes that the Council will look for 50% of the total number of new dwellings to be provided to be affordable. These thresholds exceed that put forward by draft RSS in Policy H3. However, the Proposed Changes provides for flexibility in setting the thresholds. In addition, given the high level of need for affordable housing in Selby, the Assembly considers that the proposed lower site capacity thresholds are justified, provided that the Council is confident that these targets can be achieved.

## **Policy INT4 – 100% Affordable Housing Schemes and Exception Sites**

The Assembly supports draft Interim Policy INT4, which permits schemes for 100% affordable housing within Service Centres and Villages. The Assembly agrees that where 100% affordable housing schemes are proposed outside (but adjacent to) the Service Villages or within or outside (but adjacent to) Other Villages, an identified local need should be demonstrated. Affordable housing schemes outside of the Service Centres and Villages should accord with general development and sustainability principles (e.g. heritage, flood risk, infrastructure, accessibility). In considering accessibility, the Council should use the Accessibility Criteria set out in Table 16.8 of the RSS, which provides guidance on the location of new development in rural areas.