

Sustainability Appraisal – A Brief Summary

European legislation requires that plans like the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) need to be developed with proper consideration of their effects on sustainability and the environment. Under UK legislation, a formal "Sustainability Appraisal" and a "Strategic Environmental Assessment" must be prepared for regional and local development plans.

For the purposes of this Update of the RSS, these requirements are being collectively referred to as "Sustainability Appraisal" or SA. In addition to looking at environmental impacts, this process will also include an assessment of social and economic implications.

Land Use Consultants (LUC) have been commissioned by the Assembly to undertake the SA of the RSS 2009 Update. They will be undertaking a critical review of the approach adopted by the Assembly to developing Spatial Options for accommodating future housing growth in the Region.

Important Issues?

The Initial SA Scoping Report highlighted a number of sustainability issues to be addressed in the Region, including:

- A growing region, but with variations in population growth and decline.
- An ageing population with an increase in the old age dependency ratio.
- High levels of multiple deprivation and growing disparities.
- Regional disparities in income and housing affordability.
- Increasing mobility and high reliance on the use of the car, resulting in increasing dispersal between where people live, work and shop.
- Comparatively high levels of greenhouse gas emissions which need to be significantly reduced.
- Comparatively high percentage of properties at risk of flooding.
- Urban development eroding the natural and built historic environment.
- Increasing recycling, but a continued need to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.

The Sustainability Appraisal will evaluate how the RSS will contribute to addressing these, and other key regional issues.

Do You Want to Know More?

1. The Last Sustainability Appraisal

The RSS or Yorkshire and Humber Plan was adopted in May 2008 and provides a high level strategy for the Region and the framework for the preparation of Local Development Frameworks to 2026 by councils. An SA was completed alongside The Plan and can be viewed at

<http://www.goyh.gov.uk/goyh/plan/regplan/690783/690795/>

The Assembly, as the Regional Planning Body, was asked by Government to review the Plan as part of a range of measures being taken forward by Government to help increase the supply of new homes across England. The update therefore represents an evolution of the current RSS rather than a fundamental review.

2. The 2009 RSS Update Appraisal

As the consultants publish reports, feedback and challenge the approach taken by the Assembly, they will be placed on the SA page of the Assembly web page at

<http://www.yhassembly.gov.uk/Our%20Work/Regional%20Planning/Regional%20Spatial%20Strategy%20Partial%20Review/Sustainability%20appraisal/>

Next Steps?

A series of stakeholder events are planned for early 2009. At these sessions, stakeholders and members of the public will have opportunity to feed into the evaluation process of the Sustainability Appraisal.

If you wish to discuss any issues connected with the Sustainability Appraisal, please contact Rob Murfin at the Assembly:

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