

## RSS 2009 Update Spatial Options Sub Regional Events

Four events were held in York (11 November), Hull (13 November), Sheffield (18 November) and Leeds (20 November). The events aimed to:

- Promote and explain the review of the Regional Spatial Strategy (the RSS 2009 Update)
- Discuss the key issues for the 2009 Update
- Engage stakeholders in the Spatial Options consultation
- Encourage response to the consultation

This note does not record every comment that was made at the events, but gives an overview of the debate and discussion that took place and draws out those points that were consistently raised across all of the events. Over 200 organisations and people attended the events representing a wide range of interests and sectors.

### **Presentations and Q+A**

The events began with presentations setting out the context for the RSS 2009 Update, the approach to housing and the sub area spatial options. The presentations are available to download from the Assembly's website. The presentations were followed by a question and answer discussion session. The following points were consistently raised at all of the events:

- The estimate of the forthcoming national 2006-based household projections shows a significant uplift from the 2004 forecast. The projections are based on 5-year historical trends. Questions were raised about the certainty that we can attach to these trends in the long-term (e.g. whether the recent levels of migration will continue) and the importance of understanding and challenging the assumptions and data underpinning the National Housing and Planning Advice Unit's work.
- Recognition of the need for additional housing (both private and social) to address issues such as overcrowding, homelessness and need for affordable housing. Importance of delivering affordable housing and need to look at new delivery mechanisms given current economic circumstances and the health of the housing market.
- Calls for a better understanding of the role the existing stock can play in meeting the Region's housing needs (e.g. bringing empty homes back into use) and the issue of second homes in putting pressure on affordable housing needs in rural and coastal areas.
- View that regeneration and transformation of cities and towns continues to be important for the Region. The Plan's current core approach should continue to give first priority to the re-use of land and buildings within towns and cities in the settlement network, followed secondly by other suitable infill opportunities in those towns and cities and finally by extensions to those towns and cities. General view that the sequential approach should be maintained and any new

housing growth should not undermine existing regeneration and investment programmes.

- Emphasis on the need for infrastructure and transport improvements to be delivered alongside any additional housing. Need to be clearer about what the Region's priorities are and join up planning and infrastructure investment.
- Call to move quickly on the issue of gypsy and traveller accommodation to ensure local authorities have a policy framework by which they can determine applications, deal with unauthorised sites, and meet the needs of the various travelling communities.
- Concerns about the impact that changes to the RSS will have on Local Development Framework preparation.

## **Group Workshops**

In the afternoon, the delegates were divided into small groups of up to 20 people for group workshops and activities. Assembly staff facilitated the workshops.

### **Housing Spatial Options - Overall Scale of Housing Provision**

The first of the afternoon workshops looked at the issue of the overall scale of housing provision. Delegates discussed in pairs their key concerns and issues arising from the morning's presentations and where possible agreed a single point to feed back to the group. The points raised were recorded on a flip chart and discussed as a group. The following points (in no particular order) were consistently raised at all of the events:

- The certainty/uncertainty that can be attached to trend based projections
- The need to better understand migration trends and demographic change
- The importance of economic growth as a key driver for housing and the need to support economy
- The importance of meeting local housing needs and the needs of specific groups e.g. elderly people
- The importance of affordable housing delivery and maintaining delivery over whole market cycle
- The risks to capacity of the housing industry and ability to deliver in the short term
- The importance of avoiding negative impacts on regeneration (sequential approach, use phasing?)
- The importance of providing quality housing and the right mix (type, size, tenure) of housing
- The need to align investment in infrastructure (critical, green and social) and transport
- The need to integrate adapting to climate change, sustainability and issues around environmental capacity with work on the review

## **Housing Spatial Options - Distribution of Housing Provision**

The second exercise looked at how we should determine the distribution of housing across the Region (between the sub-regions and local authorities). The group were presented with a list of factors and asked to 'weight' on a scale of 1-10 their importance in influencing the distribution of housing. The factors were:

- Economic change (patterns of job growth and GVA)
- Household change (patterns of household growth)
- Affordability (need for affordable housing)
- Deprivation/regeneration (deprived communities and regeneration areas)
- Market demand (where the market has expressed an interest)
- Travel to work (commuting patterns)

There was general agreement that all of the factors were important and the groups did not produce the same set of weightings. However, economic change, travel to work and affordability were consistently given the highest weighting across all of the events. Market demand was consistently given the lowest weighting.

The groups suggested a range of additional factors that could be used to determine distribution:

- Access to services
- Second homes
- Infrastructure
- Environmental sustainability and capacity
- Current plan's settlement network
- Climate change
- Transport network and capacity
- Homelessness/need for housing
- Resource efficiency
- Quality of life
- Green infrastructure
- Capacity to deliver
- Local views
- Topography
- Flood risk

## **Sub Area Spatial Options - Evidence Base**

The third activity involved looking at the evidence base for the RSS 2009 Update. The groups were asked to build an 'evidence wall' by considering the importance of different sets of information and data the Assembly has collected in determining the location of housing within the sub areas.

As well as the evidence we have considered, the groups helpfully identified additional pieces of evidence to consider (see list below). The exercise did not produce a clear consensus on which topics are more important than others but did give a useful indication of a wide range of issues and topics that we could take into account:

Climate Change	Highway capacity	Second homes
Flood risk	Travel to work	Merging of settlements
Flood management	Land supply	Loss of rural character
Flood defence	Education	Loss of open countryside
Critical infrastructure	Skills	Greenfield/Brownfield land
Green infrastructure	Employment	Local build character
Social infrastructure	Jobs	Historic environment
Sustainable communities	Deprivation	Biodiversity
Role of places	Regeneration	Nature designations
Settlement network	Quality of life	Agricultural land
Access to services	Housing Markets	Natural resources
Water cycle	Housing Market	Minerals
Ground water	Renewal Pathfinder	Topography
Public transport capacity and frequency	Areas	Landscape
	Affordability	
	Empty housing	

### **Sub Area Spatial Options – Locations**

For the final exercise the groups were presented with a map of the region showing the spatial options for growth in each of the sub areas. The groups were asked to support or object to the options by placing a green or red dot on the relevant location. The exercise was not intended to produce a formal record of views but rather, to stimulate thinking and debate and help to equip delegates to respond to the consultation.

The exercise gave a clear message that there is no consensus regarding any of the locations, with a mix of views across the region. The exercise helped to inform our thinking about the Spatial Options and encouraged lively discussion amongst delegates. Delegates can formally give their views on the locations by submitting their responses to the Spatial Options consultation.