Appendix Q. Water policy review

European and National Policy on Water Conservation and the Yorkshire and Humber RSS: A Digest of Policy Requirements

EDAW, 22 September 2005

Planning Policy Statement 11: Regional Spatial Strategies

PPS 11 sets out how the development options and policies for the RSS should be prepared and what should be considered in their preparation this includes a realistic assessment of resources. The sustainability appraisal of the RSS should be an ongoing process and is primarily based on the four principles of PPS1 which include effective protection of the environment and prudent use of natural resources.

PPS 11 indicates that in Annex A (p. 57) highlights the policy and guidance and topics to be covered in Regional Spatial Strategies. With regard to water the following should be taken into account by Regional Planning Bodies when preparing Regional Spatial Strategies.

Water:

Document Title:	Date:	Author:	Relevance of Document/Material Covered:	Web Link:
The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003	2003	Defra	Requires all inland and coastal waters to reach "good status" by 2015. It will do this by establishing a river basin district structure within which demanding environmental objectives will be set, including ecological targets for surface waters. See in particular 'Duty to have regard to river basin management plans and supplementary plans' (Regulation 17).	http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/si/si2003/20033242.htm
Water Resources for the Future – A strategy for England and Wales (Supplemented by detailed regional strategies plus one for Wales)	2001	Environment Agency	The strategies identify existing and forecast pressures on water resources, consider the needs for water of both the environment and society, and examine the uncertainties about future demand and availability. They are therefore an important source of information to inform land use planning strategies to ensure sustainable development.	www.environment-agency.gov.uk
Directing the flow: Priorities for future water policy	2002	Defra	Government's priorities for water in England over the longer term, primarily concentrating on the use of fresh water and the inland water environment.	http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/strategy/index.htm

European Level – Water Framework Directive

The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) entered into force on 22nd December 2000. The WFD establishes a range of environmental objectives for surface waters and groundwaters. Its main aims are to improve water quality while reducing any danger a water body poses, such as flooding. It's also designed to stop the deterioration of wetlands and improve aquatic habitats for wildlife. The main thrust of the legislation requires all inland and coastal waters to reach 'good status' by 2015. It will do this by establishing a river basin district structure (see below).

The directive recognises that quantity is also a major issue for groundwater. 'Briefly, the issue can be put as follows. There is only a certain amount of recharge into a groundwater each year, and of this recharge, some is needed to support connected ecosystems (whether they be surface water bodies, or terrestrial systems such as wetlands). For good management, only that portion of the overall recharge not needed by the ecology can be abstracted - this is the sustainable resource, and the Directive limits abstraction to that quantity. *On this principle it may be possible to argue that future abstraction rates would be over and above the recharge needed to support dependent ecology. Trying to prove this I am sure is fraught with difficulty. However the Environment Agency indicate (see below) that the extraction rate for the Doncaster area is ' unsustainable or unacceptable.*

While the Directive offers no direct indication that housing development should be curtailed in certain circumstances Article 1 of the directive establishes a framework for the protection of inland water which:

'(a) prevents further deterioration and protects and enhances the status of aquatic ecosystems and, with regard to their water needs, terrestrial ecosystems and wetlands directly depending on the aquatic ecosystems;

(b) promotes sustainable water use based on a long-term protection of available water resources;'

Article 4 encourages member states to 'protect, enhance and restore all bodies of groundwater, ensure a balance between abstraction and recharge of groundwater, with the aim of achieving good groundwater status at the latest 15 years after the date of entry into force of this Directive…'

The Directive sets out a timetable for both initial transposition into laws of Member States and thereafter for the implementation of requirements. Defra are responsible with the Environment Agency for the implementation in the UK. The first step is to identify water bodies and the surrounding land area- these are called River Basin Districts. The Environment Agency has located Doncaster Humber Groundwater River Basin District. The Environment Agency will 'characterise' the unique nature of these areas by assessing the pressures and impacts on the water environment, such as overuse or pollution. Then a River Basin Management Plan is repaired.

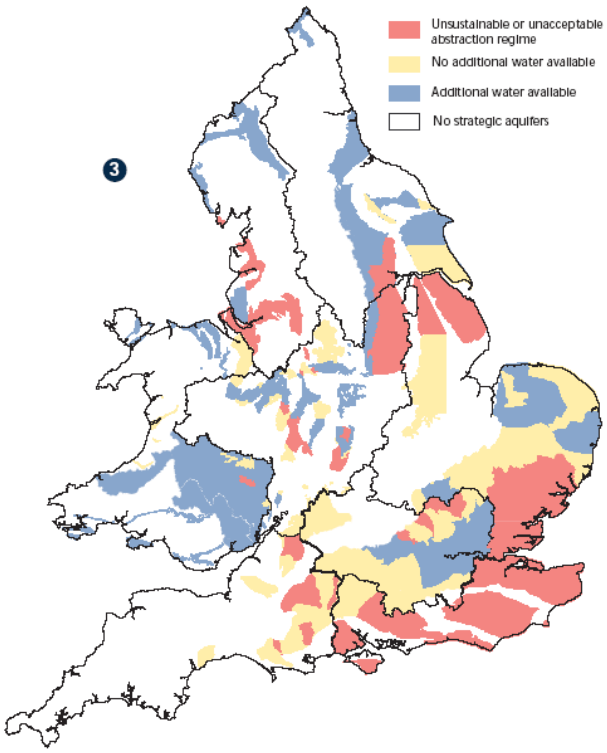
The Environment Agency Approach

The Directive requires the following from the Environment Agency to ensure that;

- all waterbodies, including rivers, coasts, estuaries, lakes, man-made structures and groundwater are included;
- new objectives will be set to promote the sustainable use of water. These will be defined and assessed using chemical, biological and physical measures;
- negative human impacts on the water environment from specific places, such as factories, and from widespread sources, such as road networks, must be identified and a 'Programme of Measures' established to address all types of impacts;
- the costs to each sector created by adopting these measures will be subject to a full economic analysis to ensure charges are fairly apportioned and agreed;
- River Basin Management Plans bring all the above together so that 'good status' can be achieved in the UK's river basins by 2015;
- public participation is a core requirement of the Directive and is fundamental to the River Basin Management Plans process.

Water Resources for the Future – A strategy for England and Wales (Environment Agency 2001)

This strategy identifies existing and forecast pressures on water resources, considers the needs for water of both the environment and society, and examine the uncertainties about future demand and availability. PPS11 (National Guidance on Regional Spatial Strategies) identifies this strategy as an important source of information to inform land use planning strategies to ensure sustainable development.



The strategy concludes that:

- in much of England and Wales, water can be a scarce resource. In some places, environmental improvements are necessary. We will work to provide the water for these improvements;
- continued availability of a reliable public water supply is essential. We recommend the enhancement of supply by about 5 per cent over the next 25 years by improving existing schemes and developing some new resources;
- water efficiency should be promoted actively;
- over the next 25 years we should expect household water metering to become widespread, in the context of the Government's broader social and environmental policies including the protection of vulnerable households;
- continued progress in leakage control will be necessary;
- agriculture must focus on using available water to best effect;
- commerce and industry should pay increasing attention to water efficiency.

'Directing the Flow Priorities for future water policy' (Defra)
A document released by DEFRA in November 2002 which highlights what the organization thinks the priorities for government policy on water in England over the long term should be. So the document has advisory status but it constitutes the only comprehensive document to deal with water in England.

Particular priorities for the future, where more effort is needed than in the past, should include:

- prudent use of water resources and keeping its use within the limits of its replenishment;
- tackling agricultural and urban diffuse pollution of water;
- achieving better integration between water and other policies and between
  different aspects of water policy.

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Water policy needs to be clearly grounded in the Government's commitment to sustainable development, covering economic, environmental and social aspects. This means:

- recognising the benefits of water to people, both now and in the future, to use and enjoy;
- respecting environmental limits: obtaining better resource productivity from our use of water by using it more efficiently both in the home and in business; neither
  abstracting beyond the rate of replenishment nor causing avoidable damage to the water environment through the use we make of it;
- taking a wide view of both the costs and benefits of changes to water policy, including taking full account of environmental impacts;
- considering more fully the effects of water policies on other sectors of the economy and how these sectors can contribute to water objectives;

National Policy

Securing the future: delivering UK sustainable development strategy
The strategy identifies that the largest and fastest growing pressures on the global environment come from areas such as household energy and water consumption, food consumption, travel and tourism. Past environmental policy focused mainly on pollution from domestic production activities. The following are relevant sections taken from the strategy.

4. Sustainable Consumption
There is huge potential for better products and production processes to deliver improvements without the need for behaviour change from consumers themselves. But there will also be a need for households, businesses and the public sector to consume

more efficiently and differently, so that consumption from rising incomes is not accompanied by rising environmental impacts or social injustice.

'Much current consumption, and business models based on it, remains unsustainable in the longer term under present technologies and supply patterns. It can be relatively comfortable to talk about sustainable consumption in terms of small behaviours like switching off unnecessary lights or recycling bottles. But our bigger, customary consumption habits pose more difficult issues. For example, the world as a whole could not sustain consumption patterns like those of Western Europe in air and car travel, water use, or diet.'

A vision for natural resources is developed within the strategy which includes the following.

- economic growth will no longer be confined to environmental degradation at home or abroad
- healthy and resilient terrestrial and marine ecosystems will be a clear indicator that we are managing multiple pressures from human activity appropriately and are conserving natural resources for future generations
- we will have clearly defined where environmental limits exist and have taken action to avoid breaching them
- the interdependence of environmental goals, particularly climate change, oceans and biodiversity will be widely recognised, and
- we will appreciate the fundamental dependence of human health and the global economy on a healthy environment.
- In dealing with outputs of human activity which may have an impact on natural resources (e.g. emissions, waste, chemicals, GMOs), we are: taking an integrated approach to identify the causes of environmental degradation and acting to address problems as near to source as possible
- moving to tackle diffuse pollution as well as that from clearly identifiable sources, and
- integrating the precautionary principle – minimising the risk of harmful releases to the environment through better knowledge of potential impacts and better management.

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development
The prudent use of natural resources is fully supported in PPS1.

21. The prudent use of resources means ensuring that we use them wisely and efficiently, in a way that respects the needs of future generations. This means enabling more sustainable consumption and production and using non-renewable resources in ways that do not endanger the resource or cause serious damage or pollution. The broad aim should be to ensure that outputs are maximised whilst resources used are

minimised (for example, by building housing at higher densities on previously developed land, rather than at lower densities on greenfield sites).

22. Development plan policies should seek to minimise the need to consume new resources over the lifetime of the development by making more efficient use or reuse of existing resources, rather than making new demands on the environment; and should seek to promote and encourage, rather than restrict, the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy). Regional planning authorities and local authorities should promote resource and energy efficient buildings; community heating schemes, the use of combined heat and power, small scale renewable and low carbon energy schemes in developments; the sustainable use of water resources; and the use of sustainable drainage systems in the management of run-off.

Integrating Sustainable Development in Development Plans
24. Planning authorities should ensure that sustainable development is treated in an integrated way in their development plans. In particular, they should carefully consider the interrelationship between social inclusion, protecting and enhancing the environment, the prudent use of natural resources and economic development – for example, by recognizing that economic development, if properly planned for, can have positive social and environment benefits, rather than negative impacts, and that environmental protection and enhancement can in turn provide economic and social benefits.

26. In preparing development plans, planning authorities should:

(ii) Ensure that plans are drawn up over appropriate time scales, and do not focus on the short term or ignore longer term impacts and the needs of communities in the future. Planning authorities should consider both whether policies have short term benefits which may have long term costs, but also whether short term detriments (which are capable of being mitigated) may be offset by longer term benefits which are realistically achievable.

(iii) *Not impose disproportionate costs* ***[the key issue]***, in terms of environmental and social impacts, or by unnecessarily constraining otherwise beneficial economic or social development.

(iv) Have regard to the resources likely to be available for implementation and the costs likely to be incurred, and be realistic about what can be implemented over the period of the plan.

(v) Take account of the range of effects (both negative and positive) on the environment, as well as the positive effects of development in terms of economic benefits and social well being. Effects should be properly identified and assessed through the sustainability appraisal process, taking account of the current quality of the environment in the area and any existing environmental issues relevant to the plan.