

What The Region Has Achieved

The transformational agenda is central to our strategies and work in the region. The Assembly, local authorities and the Regional Development Agency have worked closely together to promote thriving cities and towns and deliver higher rates of housing development on brownfield sites.

Where The Region Is Now

A lot of progress has been made in working to achieve the region's objectives. For example, the percentage of housing completions on previously developed land has increased from 51% in 2002/3 to 81% in 2006/7. However, challenges remain. The Integrated Regional Framework sets the context for all strategies and plans in the region. The IRF identifies ten challenges facing the region, which raise issues around climate change, competitive cities, multi-speed housing markets and planning for higher rates of growth.

We are maintaining our focus on regeneration and growth in ways that deal with our diverse housing circumstances. Diversity is evident across the region, between and within individual housing markets. At one end of the spectrum are areas of high housing demand with severe affordability issues. At the other extreme are parts of the region that are suffering from low demand and failing housing markets.

Longer-term forecasts show continued growth in Leeds City Region and significant improvements in Sheffield City Region. But this growth will put pressure on our social rented housing, as many of the jobs created will not pay well enough to fund house purchase.

Although the longer-term economic outlook is optimistic we are concerned that parts of the region, particular the Humber area are not doing as well. In the shorter term the housing market will slow down at a time when we are trying to step up housing delivery. We need to manage this with care or we will undo the good progress we have made on regeneration.

Where The Region Goes Next

We need to build on progress so far and continue pursuing the transformational agenda. Urban restructuring is needed to improve the housing offer and support the development of sustainable communities and economically competitive towns and cities. Refocusing growth in the main cities and towns will help to deliver wider objectives for quality of life; travel; climate change and resource consumption. It is vital that support for regeneration investment continues and that existing programmes of public expenditure, for example in the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder areas, are not undermined by delivery of the housing growth agenda.

Research into migration trends and the latest ONS population projections indicate that household numbers in the region will continue to increase. Clearly, there is a need to step-up delivery rates and provide for additional housing. However, research in the Leeds and Sheffield City Regions has shown that a significant element of the

additional households will be employed in lower income jobs that cannot support the purchase of market or shared equity homes. The mix of new housing provision in terms of type, size, price and tenure is therefore very important. Housing growth must occur alongside regeneration and within the framework of existing strategic objectives.

Delivering regeneration and growth together will require a planned long-term approach to ensure that housing is delivered in the right locations and that new housing is of the right mix and quality. This requires the management of delivery rates so that we meet the real demand for new homes rather than trying to match delivery to a mathematical calculation that does not reflect the reality of the region.

Infrastructure must be planned for in an integrated way to support this growth. New growth that cannot be accommodated within existing settlements must be directed to the most sustainable locations, and options for new settlements will need to be tested through the RSS. It is vital that the region experiences growth without risking delivery of our wider strategic objectives.

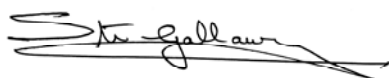
What The Region Needs From The NHPAU

We would like the NHPAU to provide tailored regional advice for each region with a clear articulation of the complexity of the challenges facing our region. This regional advice should fit into a clear overall national approach. Clarity on whether the Unit will be looking beyond the regional scale down to the sub region or city region level would be appreciated.


The basis for the advice must be made clear, and the NHPAU should explain which issues have been considered, which have been excluded and how they have arrived at their conclusions. Similarly, definitions should be made clear. For example, is an affordability problem based simply on where there are high house prices; or are other factors including job types and incomes taken into account.

In providing CLG with advice on the scale of housing required to address affordability, a narrow range should be given, which the Assembly can test and further refine through the RSS review. The indicative range of 26 – 30,000 dwellings per annum provided in the Unit's previous paper is too wide to be meaningful.

We want to work closely with you as we undertake the next RSS review, building on engagement so far, to test and refine options for growth in this region together. We hope that in the long-term continuing this dialogue will help to secure the Unit's support for the RSS at the Examination in Public.



Cllr Stephen Galloway
Chair, Regional Planning Board



Cllr Kris Hopkins
Chair, Regional Housing Board

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