
UPDATE INFORMATION RELATING TO ITEM 26

Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor John Williams, Economy Portfolio
Responsible Director - Richard Alty (Assistant Chief Executive, Regeneration)

Update Information

1. Since Item 26 was prepared, the Government has announced (on 6th July) the revocation of regional spatial strategies (RSSs) with immediate effect. As such, the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North East no longer forms part of the development plan.
2. In guidance to Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), also issued on 6th July, the Government indicates that LPAs should continue to develop Local Development Framework core strategies and other development plan documents, reflecting local people's aspirations and decisions on important issues such as climate change, housing and economic development. The guidance indicates that authorities may decide to review and/or revise their emerging policies in the light of the revocation of RSSs.
3. The Cabinet report (Item 26) considers the possibility of the removal of the RSS from the statutory development plan, at paragraph 65, and the observations therein still stand. Subject to Cabinet's agreement to those observations, and in the light of the revocation of RSS, consequential changes need to be made to the version of the Publication Draft Core Strategy that appears at **Appendix 1** to Item 26, and to the Key Diagram (**Appendix 3**).
4. A revised version of the Publication Draft Core Strategy is therefore being prepared, to remove the references to the RSS, and to replace them, where necessary with alternative policy justification. This has been sourced from national policy statements, documents that were submitted during the preparation of the RSS (the Government has specifically indicated that these can still be used), and from several studies and strategies that have been prepared at sub-regional or Borough level.
5. The justification for the housing policy (Policy CS10) was the most reliant on the RSS, in that the RSS set out the number of new homes needed in each Local Authority area for the plan period, and CS10 seeks to apportion those numbers to locations and phases to development across the Borough over the next 15 years. A paper prepared by the North East Assembly in 2007(North East RSS Dwelling Provision Technical Annex) has been identified and referred to instead, and added to the list of background papers to the preparation of Core Strategy.

6. Core Strategy Policy CS5: Supporting the Local Economy also relied on employment land provision figures set out in the RSS. The figures for Darlington reflected information provided by the Council regarding the supply of employment land, so these can remain unchanged. However, the policy also included for an additional 69ha of employment land to be provided from 2021 to 2026, which was derived as a pro-rata rate of the RSS provision amount up to 2021. Given that the more recent Employment Land Review 2009 found that projected employment land uptake could be easily accommodated within the identified portfolio of sites and forecast slower rates of growth, it is proposed that this additional 69ha of provision is removed from the Policy CS10.
7. It is also proposed that reference to 'strategic gaps' (see paragraph 32 of Item 26) now be removed from Policy CS1: Darlington's Sub-regional Role and Locational Strategy, and from the key diagram. This was a designation handed down from the RSS which, in practice, did not add anything in terms of development control that is not already provided by the limits to development element of Policy CS1.
8. A copy of the Publication Draft Core Strategy with the necessary additions and deletions of text highlighted is available electronically on the website.

Recommendation

9. In the light of the above, Members are invited to consider an amendment to recommendation (a), so that it reads as follows:
 - (a) Cabinet recommend to Council that the Local Development Framework Publication Draft Core Strategy, as amended to reflect the revocation of regional spatial strategies, be agreed and published, in accordance with Regulation 27 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(Amendment) Regulations 2008;
10. This will ensure that the Publication Draft Core Strategy, when published, is an up to date document and will avoid the potential wasted resources that could otherwise occur in responding to representations on the Core Strategy that merely point out or seek to exploit the inappropriate use of RSS as a justification or context for the policies in the Core Strategy.

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