

What you need to know about...

Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to The Yorkshire and Humber Plan (the Regional Spatial Strategy)

What is it?

On 28 September 2007 Government Office for Yorkshire and The Humber (GOYH) published the Secretary of State's 'Proposed Changes' to the draft Yorkshire and Humber Plan (the Regional Spatial Strategy). The Proposed Changes have been issued for a period of consultation; responses on them need to be received by GOYH by 21 December 2007. Representations need to relate to the parts of the Plan that have been changed.

The draft Yorkshire and Humber Plan was submitted to Government in December 2005 following 18 months preparatory work and stakeholder involvement. Consultation took place on the draft Plan in early 2006 and then an independent Panel held an Examination in Public about the draft plan in Autumn 2006. The Panel's recommendations were set out in their Report published in May 2007, these have been considered by the Secretary of State in producing the changes.

This briefing provides an overview of the Proposed Changes. It doesn't cover every change. Further briefings will be produced and tailored for particular meetings and events. A 'Data Briefing' is also being prepared to help explain key housing and employment changes by area.

What documents have been published?

Three main documents have been published:

- A tracked changes version of the Plan, which highlights additional or deleted text (be aware though that not all of the text to be deleted is shown in this document)
- A 'Schedule of the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes and Reasons'
- A summary 'Revised Sustainability Appraisal' of the Proposed Changes.

Also available on the GOYH website (www.goyh.gov.uk) are a series of other documents which have been used in drawing up the Proposed Changes – which are particularly relevant to the revised figures on job growth, housing and waste.

What are the key recommendations?

Overall: The Plan's overall strategy remains the same, including its emphasis on urban transformation, strengthening the roles of towns in rural and coastal areas, raising environmental quality, creating a more diverse and competitive economy, reducing inequalities and improving accessibility. What is fundamentally different is the scale of growth to be planned for:

- The draft Plan's housing requirements increase from 15,000 to 19,000 between 2004-2016 – the changes would require 22,000 additional homes a year between 2008-2026.
- Employment growth projections underpinning the Plan would also be increased - from 19,000 to 29,000 additional jobs per annum.

The employment changes reflect the latest economic growth projections and ambitions set out in the Regional Economic Strategy and Northern Way City Development Programmes. There are also

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very detailed changes to policy wordings throughout the Plan, the implications of which will need to be carefully considered, including in the **Sub Area** policies. One new policy is added to the Plan on green infrastructure.

Core Approach: in the over-arching strategy section of the Plan,

- The terms Regional Cities, Sub-Regional Cities and Towns and Principal Towns are now being used rather than Regional/Sub-Regional Centres and Principal Service Centres
- Hull is identified as a Regional City, along with Leeds and Sheffield
- Principal Towns remain identified in the Plan
- Reference to the regional target of reducing green house gas emissions has been removed from the climate change policy
- Additions to the green belt policy include the need to define detailed boundaries of the green belt around York and that strategic reviews of the green belt may be required in parts of West Yorkshire in order to deliver longer term housing growth
- A streamlined vision is included along with a revised key diagram, now at the end of the Plan

Housing: Higher requirements are based on the Panel Report recommendations, which drew largely on the new evidence of the 2004 Household Projections. The Panel though recommended a step-up in 2011 from the Plan's figures. The Changes introduce an immediate increase from 2008. The draft Plan's three time phases for managing housing requirements (up and down) have also been removed and the requirements run for longer, until 2026. The changes to the numbers include:

- An increase of housing growth in the Region to around 22,000 per year from 2008, compared to the Plan's graduated increase from 15,000 to 19,000.
- Much higher housing levels for Wakefield, Kirklees and particularly Leeds and Bradford reflecting the size of those cities and their high job growth potential
- Higher housing levels across South Yorkshire and in Scarborough, Selby, York, Hull and North and North East Lincolnshire
- Lower housing levels in Hambleton, Ryedale and Craven

The changes seek greater clarity on affordable housing and housing mix. Local Development Frameworks will set targets for the amount of affordable housing to be provided but Regional benchmarks remain. Sub-regional targets for site provision for gypsies and travellers have been included whilst targets for housing development on previously developed ('brownfield' land) have been removed.

Economy: The higher employment forecasts to be used in the plan build on work done for the City Region Development Programmes. The most significant increases in forecasted full time jobs are in Bradford, Barnsley and York. The requirement to help deliver job forecasts has been made more explicit. The focus on supporting town and city centres is maintained, in particular by recognising their key roles as drivers of productivity. A stronger emphasis is placed on halting the growth of major out-of-town shopping centres. Policies on tourism and the rural economy have been slightly modified.

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Environment: Key changes include the new policy on green infrastructure, a strengthened policy on flood risk (particularly in terms of tidal protection) and the deletion of the specific 10% target for energy generation to come from on-site renewable sources. There are minor changes to the minerals, water, forestry, biodiversity and historic environment based policies. The Health and Recreation policy includes a greater emphasis on ensuring adequate and accessible health care facilities. Updated waste data has been used to introduce revised waste recycling targets, in line with the National Waste Strategy 2007. The revised data emphasises the urgent need to develop extra waste treatment facilities to help reduce the Region's reliance on landfill.

Transport: The changes to the Transport policies seek better integration to the spatial strategy and to give a clearer indication of the priorities for future investment and management. The Changes include:

- Increased emphasis on demand management in urban areas and the strategic road network, particular on road user charging
- More restrictive parking standards should be applied in some town and city centres
- Increased focus that public transport improvements should be concentrated in Regional and Sub Regional Cities and Towns – with Leeds and Sheffield the regional priorities
- Increased emphasis on accessibility by non-car modes especially public transport
- Overall transport investment priorities include improving access to the Humber Ports

What happens next?

Debate and discussion on the Proposed Changes will take place over the coming weeks. Discussion in Assembly Boards, Forums, Officer Advisory Groups and other networks will shape our response. It is important that during the early part of the consultation period we hear what you think about the changes and what you think the implications are for the Region.

Clearly many organisations across the Region will be coming to their own conclusions and making representations. If we can help please let us know. Key dates in our timetable for making a response include a meeting of the Regional Planning Board on 16 November, who have the task of drawing up the Assembly's response and co-ordinating the input of other Boards, and the full Assembly meeting on 6 December which will agree the final response (in their role as Regional Planning Body) before the 21 December consultation deadline.

The final Yorkshire and Humber Plan should be issued around Spring 2008. In the meantime in the Assembly's role as a statutory consultee in the planning system we will need to reflect the fact that Government guidance requires considerable weight to be attached to the Proposed Changes by decision makers.

For further information about the 'RSS Proposed Changes' please contact Richard Wood, Head of Planning Strategy and for any advice on the Assembly's statutory consultee role please contact Jenny Poxon, Head of Planning Conformity and Delivery – using the contact details below.