



Report of	Meeting	Date
Joint LDF Officer Team	Central Lancashire LDF Joint Advisory Committee	29 January 2009

REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY - IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CORE STRATEGY

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To summarise the regional development framework policy in the final published version of the North West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and advise on implications for the Core Strategy.
2. To comment on representations on the Preferred Core Strategy document relating to the Core Strategy's interpretation of RSS policy.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the report be noted.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

3. The final version of the North West RSS was published on 30 September 2008. The Central Lancashire LDF Preferred Core Strategy was published on the internet on that date, paper copies were still in the course of being printed. Consequently, with a few exceptions the document related to the previous version of RSS that contained the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes. Officers had anticipated it was likely that there would be only minor changes to RSS when the final version was published. However, as a result of representations to the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes, the regional development framework in the published version of Policy RDF1 includes amended wording relating to the emphasis for growth placed on certain towns and cities, including Preston.
4. Some representations to the Central Lancashire Preferred Core Strategy, particularly from other nearby Councils in Lancashire, refer to this change and point out that references to RSS policy in the document are incorrect (because they refer to the previous version). Nevertheless it is your Officers' view that had the final version of RSS been published in time for the Preferred Core Strategy to correctly reflect the final wording of RDF1, the preferred strategy for Central Lancashire would probably have remained unchanged. Officers are confident that the spatial vision for Central Lancashire is in general conformity with the regional development framework for the North West, as set out in the final published version of RSS. The representation received from 4NW confirms this.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

5. Members need to be aware of the final published version of RSS and its implications for the Central Lancashire Core Strategy.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

None.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES TO THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK IN THE PUBLISHED VERSION OF RSS

- 6.1 **Policy RDF1 Spatial Priorities** – this policy has changed from the Secretary of State's (SoS) Proposed Changes version, reverting to the previous wording recommended by the Examination in Public Panel Report. The bullet point in the policy setting out the third priority for growth in the North West now refers to all the towns and cities within the three North West City Regions and Preston is referred to at the same level as Blackburn, Blackpool and Burnley. The SoS's Proposed Changes effectively elevated Preston within the third bullet point by listing it in bold type, along with the towns and cities of Carlisle, Chester, Crewe, Lancaster and Warrington. The SoS's reason for this was the need in the North West to build on success as well as tackle need and, wherever possible, link the two. The towns that were listed in bold type all have particular advantages, for example due to their location or their attractiveness to the market. The SoS was not proposing unbridled growth in these locations but was recognising that the opportunities they present should be harnessed in sustainable ways. The published RSS has removed the priority afforded to these centres – the reasons given relate to the fact that some representations expressed concern about how the policy would work and the approach taken.
- 6.2 **Policy CLCR1 Central Lancashire City Region Priorities** – the fifth bullet point in this policy now deletes the words 'and harness its potential for economic growth in sustainable ways' from the end of the sentence that now just reads 'develop the role of Preston as a regional transport gateway in line with policy RT3'.
- 6.3 **Policy CLCR2 Focus for Development and Investment in the Central Lancashire City Region** – this policy states that the main urban areas have strong functional links with smaller towns. The published RSS has added the words 'the policy boundaries of the towns and the definition of surrounding key and local service centres should be set out in LDFs.'

Policy CLCR2 builds on the strengths and opportunities of each of the four main centres in the City Region and lists the attributes for each. Within the attributes for Preston the strength and opportunity of Preston as a 'higher order centre for retailing and services' was mentioned in the SoS's proposed changes. The other three main centres (Blackpool, Blackburn and Burnley) were referred to as 'retail and service centres'. Some consultees objected to the difference in wording between the four centres, stating that this was in conflict with the listing of retail centres in RSS Policy W3. Consequently, CLCR2 has been changed in the published RSS to refer to Preston as a 'retail service centre', in order to align with the other centres' references.

IMPLICATIONS OF THESE CHANGES FOR THE CENTRAL LANCASHIRE CORE STRATEGY

7. The Core Strategy is required to make clear spatial choices about where development should go in broad terms. These spatial choices need to have regard to and be in general conformity with the RSS. The Preferred Core Strategy document referred to the latest available draft version of RSS, which included the SoS's Proposed Changes. The final version of RSS was published on 30 September 2008, the day on which the Preferred Core strategy was web published but still being printed. Consequently it was not possible to amend the document to fully reflect the wording of the final version of RSS.
8. Some representations to the consultation on the Preferred Core Strategy refer to the fact that the document relates to the earlier draft version of RSS. The RSS errors pointed out in these representations are accepted and the next stage in the preparation of the Core Strategy will reflect the final version of RSS.
9. However officers are confident that the spatial vision for Central Lancashire, as set out in the Preferred Core Strategy, remains in general conformity with the regional development framework for the North West, as set out in the final published version of RSS and the Regional Planning Body – 4NW agrees. Whilst the wording of policy RDF1 in the final published RSS does not differentiate the city of Preston from the other major towns in Lancashire, it includes Preston (as a city in one of the three North West City Regions) as the third priority for growth after Manchester, Liverpool and the inner areas surrounding these regional centres. Officers are also confident that the final RSS sub-regional policies CLCR1 and 2 fully reflect the spatial vision for the Central Lancashire area.

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Background Papers			
Document	Date	File	Place of Inspection
The North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021	30 September 2008		www.gos.gov.uk/gonw/Planning