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FOR THE NORTH EAST

Regional Planning Guidance for the North East (RPG1)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Regional Planning Guidance for the North East (RPG1)

Introduction

This short summary sets out the overall spatial strategy for the North East and its main policy areas. The summary does not form part of RPG1.

Vision and Strategy

The vision and strategy for the North East is for the sustainable development of the region based on four key themes:

Regeneration

Four priorities are identified to ensure the regeneration of the region:

- to accelerate the renaissance of the Tyne, Wear and Tees conurbations;
- to provide job opportunities and support communities in the former coalfield areas;
- to adapt and revitalise the region's town and city centres; and
- to secure rural regeneration.

Opportunity

The region needs to identify the opportunities and priorities for the future. A sequential approach should be adopted in identifying development opportunities to ensure that development is located in the most sustainable locations. Priority is given to the development of previously-developed land within the existing urban areas of the region, but there is also a recognition that the reuse of land and buildings and the development of sites within the existing urban areas cannot provide for all development needs of the region.

Accessibility

Improving accessibility to employment, retail, education, health and social facilities is a key element in the strategy to improve living standards, to tackle social exclusion and to contribute to the quality of life in the North East. A priority of the strategy is to ensure that the region's population has access to transport networks and the knowledge through Information Communication Technology (ICT).

Conservation

The North East's environment is one of its key assets. The strategy seeks to preserve and develop the region's natural resources, and ensure the wise management of the cultural and natural heritage. Priorities for the strategy include:

- maintaining and increasing biodiversity;
- recognising the region's cultural heritage as an important environmental, educational, economic and cultural resource;
- ensuring the prudent use of natural resources; and
- promoting the sustainable management of minerals, energy, waste and water.

Locational Strategy

The locational strategy identifies the following priorities:

- to locate the majority of new development to the built up areas of the Tyne, Wear and Tees conurbations;
- to locate significant, but smaller scale, developments in Hartlepool, Darlington and the main towns serving other regeneration areas in south-east Northumberland, south-west, north-west and east Durham and east Cleveland; and
- to enhance the role of market towns and other main rural centres in serving their hinterland in order to act as a focus for future development and redevelopment.

These locational priorities are supported by policies that adopt a sequential approach to identifying sites for development to ensure priority is given to development in the most sustainable locations. Five sub-regional areas are identified as a basis for the development of sub-regional guidance to be considered as part of the early review in 2002/03.

Environment

The region's natural and historical environment is recognised as one of the key assets of the region. Maintaining and enhancing the environment should be integral considerations in decisions on development by: according appropriate protection to designated areas and species; supporting initiatives to improve the environment; and seeking positive gains to the environment and biodiversity through development.

In addition to the natural environment, the region also possesses an outstanding historic built heritage that should also be protected and enhanced.

Recognition is given to the increasing importance of taking account of flood risk in new development decisions.

Employment

The strategy seeks to facilitate the economic renaissance of the region by encouraging inward investment opportunities and the development of SME's and growth of indigenous businesses. The provision of an effective employment land portfolio of good quality attractive employment and business sites and premises to meet the needs of business is required.

An additional strategic employment site in the broad location of north of Sunderland is brought forward. As it is accepted that there is an over-provision of employment land in the region, a Regional Employment Land Survey will be co-ordinated by the North East Assembly to assess all allocated sites over 10ha, including premier division sites and strategic employment sites to assess the level of over-provision, examine past rates of development and projected needs, and an assessment of market conditions, to provide a baseline of information. In addition all local planning authorities are required to undertake an assessment of allocated employment sites as part of the development plan process. Sites that have no prospect of being developed for any use within the foreseeable future should be de-allocated or re-allocated.

Housing

A 'plan, monitor and manage' approach to providing land for housing is proposed so that a sustainable balance between supply and demand can be achieved, giving preference to previously-developed land in sustainable locations in urban areas. A target of providing 65% of new houses on brownfield land and through conversions is set.

This version of RPG1 provides interim guidance. There is a need to reconsider the housing strategy as part of the early review, to adopt a more integrated approach to housing to ensure that the provision of additional housing does not result in, or exacerbate, problems of low demand and abandonment. To reflect the RPG strategy of facilitating an economic renaissance, reversing out-migration and stabilising population, the provision for additional housing is assessed as an annual building rate of around 5,000 dwellings for the period 2002-2006. With the exception of demolitions of empty dwellings arising from low demand and abandonment, the annual rates of housing provision should be provided for in development plans as net additions to the stock. This provision is distributed by strategic planning area reflecting RPG locational priorities.

Transport

The strategy seeks to integrate land use and transport planning so as to reduce the need to travel and shorten average journey lengths. Development should be located and designed to encourage the maximum use of walking, cycling, public transport and the movement of freight by rail and sea. The movement needs of the region's population will be met by promoting the best use of existing infrastructure and through a combination of improved provision for walking, cycling, and public transport and by discouraging inappropriate use of the car.

The management of, and investment in, the transport network should be considered on a multi-modal basis.

The RTS is currently being progressed and will be integrated into the early review of RPG1 in 2002/03.

Minerals, Waste and Energy

The minerals, waste and energy guidance will be revised as part of the early review of RPG1 to take account of:

- the review of MPG6 on aggregate provision;
- the incorporation of the work currently underway to develop a regional waste strategy; and
- work being developed to ensure that the North East meets the national target of achieving 20% of electricity to be supplied by renewable energy by 2020.

Monitoring

A number of targets and indicators are identified to monitor progress on achieving the RPG1 strategy and policies. These will be used to inform the production of an annual monitoring report which will be produced by the North East Assembly. An interim annual monitoring report should be published by March 2003.

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CHAPTER 1
Introduction and Regional Context

Introduction

1.1 RPG1, Regional Planning Guidance for the North East, is issued by the Deputy Prime Minister. It is based on the draft RPG1 prepared by the Association of North East Councils (ANEC), with the participation of a wide range of regional stakeholders, and takes account of representations received about the draft RPG1, the Panel's Report of the Public Examination (October 2001), all representations submitted in response to the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes and Further Proposed Changes (April 2001 and February 2002), together with the sustainability appraisals carried out at key stages of the process.

1.2 This version of RPG1 covers the period to 2016, with the vision and strategy, which will be fully developed by an early review in 2002/03, providing a longer-term perspective for the next 25 to 30 years.

1.3 This guidance note supersedes the two existing guidance notes for the North East: *RPG1: Strategic Guidance for Tyne and Wear* (1989) and *RPG7: Regional Planning Guidance for the Northern Region* (1993), which covered the periods to 2001 and 2006 respectively. Revised RPG1 covers the administrative areas of Northumberland and Durham County Councils, Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland Metropolitan Authorities, the Northumberland National Park, together with Darlington, Hartlepool, Stockton-on-Tees, Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland Unitary Authorities. The Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit undertakes strategic planning for the latter five Unitary Authorities. The small part of Redcar and Cleveland Borough that lies within the North York Moors National Park is covered by *Regional Planning Guidance for Yorkshire and the Humber, (RPG12)*, published in October 2001. The region shares boundaries with two English regions: the North West and Yorkshire and the Humber, and also with the Borders Region of Scotland.

1.4 It is recognised that this guidance does not fully accord with the advice in *Planning Policy Guidance Note 11: Regional Planning* (DETR, October 2000) on the scope and format of RPG. At present, it is insufficiently regionally specific in places and therefore resorts to references to national policy.

1.5 The early review of RPG1 to be undertaken in 2002/03 will be more regionally specific and therefore be compliant with PPG11. This will make the Guidance more regionally focussed, without the need to repeat national policy. As a result the revised document should be much shorter and more concise. Annex 2 identifies the further work that should be undertaken as part of the early review. However, this version of RPG1 will provide a regional framework for

the review of development plans and local transport plans setting new priorities and enabling them to look further forward.

Role and Purpose of Regional Planning Guidance

1.6 The primary purpose of Regional Planning Guidance is to provide a regional spatial strategy, within which local authority Development Plans and local transport plans can be prepared. The importance of RPG1 is that it provides the overall vision and strategy that enables these separate plans to contribute to a coherent framework of regional development. It provides a regional land use and transport context on the Government's commitment to achieving its sustainable development objectives of social progress, protection of the environment, prudent use of natural resources, and high and stable levels of economic growth and employment. RPG1 also sets a land use context for a range of other related policies, in particular the Regional Economic Strategy prepared by the Regional Development Agency, One North East, and, through incorporating a Regional Transport Strategy, provides the regional context for the preparation of Local Transport Plans, the Trunk Road Programme and transport infrastructure and service providers strategies. RPG1 is also relevant to a range of other regional strategies and initiatives, set out in Annex 3.

Preparation of RPG1

1.7 Draft Regional Planning Guidance for the North East was issued by the Association of North East Councils (ANEC) in December 1999. A Public Examination was held before an independent Panel, which considered selected matters in June and July 2000. The Panel report was published in October 2000. The Secretary of State has taken into account the representations received on his Proposed Changes published in April 2001, and those made on the further consultation, issued in February 2002. It has also been necessary to update the RPG1 to reflect developments in national policy since the first draft was published.

Content of RPG1

1.8 This chapter sets the context within which RPG1 has been developed. A vision for the North East is set out in Chapter 2, which also contains a summary of the challenges that need to be resolved at regional level and describes the general spatial strategy for the North East, including the preferred distribution of development. The need for the development of sub-regional guidance is identified, and five sub-regional areas are suggested as a basis for this work. Chapters 3 to 6 contain guidance for the preparation of Development Plans, Local Transport Plans and other strategies covering the Environment, Development Patterns (including economic development, housing and Green Belt), Transport, and Natural Resources. Chapter 7 sets out information on implementation and monitoring, and identifies a range of potential targets and indicators to monitor the implementation of the RPG1 strategy.

1.9 The policies contained in RPG1 have been the subject of a sustainability appraisal. This has had a significant influence on its final content.

Regional Characteristics

1.10 The North East covers an area of some 850,000 hectares. A large part of the region is upland in character, largely above 300m, but rises to over 800m and contains some of the highest hills in England. There is a general fall in height from west to east, accentuated within the main river valleys and reversed in isolated outcrops and plateaux, notably the Magnesian Limestone escarpment of east Durham/Tyne and Wear, and the Cleveland Hills. The varied coastline ranges from extensive sandy beaches, dunes, and inter-tidal flats to spectacular cliffs, islands and rocky outcrops that have provided positions of defensive strength for castles and fortified structures.

1.11 Urban development in the North East is concentrated in a coastal strip some 30km wide, stretching from north of Morpeth and Ashington to the boundary with North Yorkshire. The remaining two-thirds of the region is very rural in character, thinly populated with large tracts of attractive upland countryside. Forests have a significant role in the region, particularly in relation to timber production and recreational opportunities.

1.12 The Tyne and Wear conurbations include the regional service centres of Newcastle and Sunderland. There is a wide range of economic and social facilities and a good public transport network. Coal mining, shipbuilding and heavy engineering formed the original basis of prosperity but these have been largely superseded by advanced manufacturing and administrative/financial services.

1.13 Central and east Durham and south east Northumberland contain a number of main urban centres. Large parts of the area have been affected by the demise of the underground coal mining industry resulting in job losses and a legacy of environmental despoliation. Radical restructuring of the economy and comprehensive regeneration schemes are achieving success in job creation and environmental improvement.

1.14 In the south of the region urban development in the Tees Valley is concentrated on the main towns of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Stockton-on-Tees. Rationalisation of the area's main industries of steel and chemicals left a legacy of dereliction and unused land, especially along the River Tees corridor. The area has been successful in attracting new technology and service based industries, and the main towns provide significant retail and office employment.

1.15 Extensive rural areas in the north and west of the region have traditionally been dependent on primary land uses such as farming, forestry, fishing, mineral extraction, and the services associated with them. Tourism has grown in importance. Health, education and community services and larger scale employment opportunities are generally concentrated in the market towns and larger villages. There are also numbers of secondary service centres that provide employment and services for the local population. In addition there is a series of villages and hamlets that accommodate a limited and increasingly declining range of community services such as schools, post offices, pubs and village halls. This hierarchy of settlements is important if rural dwellers are to have access to services on a day-to-day basis, without having to travel long distances.

Environment

1.16 The growing recognition of the importance of the environment in maintaining opportunities for future generations highlights particular problems in the North East. The region's mixture of very high and low quality environments gives rise to questions of balance between protection and improvement. Access to high quality designated areas where there is visitor pressure may need to be managed and constrained, but alternative locations in less sensitive areas may not be attractive without major investment. Similar options apply to both natural and built environments.

1.17 Most of the inland countryside comprises either undulating lowland or upland. An impressive range of hills comprising the Pennines and the Cheviots dominates the west of the region. This area and the section of North York Moors in the south east corner of the region are primarily managed as uncultivated pasture or moorland, and support many important wildlife habitats such as the rare plant communities of Upper Teesdale.

1.18 The coastline is a major feature of the region. The northern stretch is characterised by extensive unspoilt sandy bays such as Druridge and Alnmouth interspersed with prominent Whin Sill volcanic intrusions. Further south there are dramatic, gullied cliffs along the magnesian limestone strata of Tyne and Wear and Durham, as well as the stretch bordering North Yorkshire. The coastal environment supports a number of internationally important wildlife habitats, particularly the inter-tidal zones in North Northumberland and around the mouth of the Tees.

1.19 Despite the generally high quality environment in the coastal and rural parts of the region, there is a legacy of industrial decline in some areas such as the North Pennines, the coalfield and urbanised parts of the coast. The landscape character of both the lowland and upland countryside has been heavily influenced by farm management practices. Market forces and changes to the Common Agricultural Policy are also likely to result in significant structural changes in farming, other land based industries and the support sectors. Agri-environment and other rural development measures provide an opportunity to assist this process and for the further protection and enhancement of the environment. Farm diversification, organic farming, niche marketing and the growth of tourism provide possible employment opportunities. Other developments in rural areas such as mineral extraction, power generation and distribution may sometimes be necessary but can have adverse effects on the natural beauty of the area.

1.20 The environment in areas dependent on declining industries has been transformed in recent years by a combination of reclamation and new development. While much has been achieved, many derelict sites still remain and future economic changes are likely to result in new problems. The region has a varied and distinctive built heritage that provides a challenge to achieve regeneration in ways that are sympathetic to its character.

1.21 Environmental changes often result from a combination of economic and social factors, so that an environmental dimension needs to be incorporated in all policy areas. For example, policies to raise the environmental quality of the region's city and town centres depend on action to support their functional and community value.

Economic Development

1.22 Future prospects for the economy are inevitably subject to great uncertainty, but all projections show that the North East will continue to lag behind other parts of the country unless action is taken. The economic base is not yet strong enough to generate sufficient growth to meet future job requirements.

1.23 Some existing industries will continue to contract and, whilst other existing activities have potential for growth, there is likely to remain a need to develop both the region's base of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and allow for additional inward investment. It is therefore important that RPG1 provides a land use and transport context for other initiatives, such as the Regional Economic Strategy, the Regional Competitiveness Strategy and the Regional Skills Strategy, by setting out a clear long-term framework.

1.24 Industrial decline and the physical remoteness of some rural areas have worked to the North East's disadvantage in a competitive international economy. Large areas of the region qualify for assistance and financial support through various special programmes, including European Structural Funds, Assisted Areas and Rural Development Areas. Despite the beneficial effect of these programmes, the region still lags substantially behind UK and EU averages for economic prosperity.

1.25 Manufacturing remains a more important source of employment in the North East than in Great Britain as a whole. Inward investment, particularly from the Far East, USA and European Union, has been a significant reason for this. The recent development of large plants in the region has employed many directly and created further job opportunities among component suppliers. The new enterprises have contributed towards a more diversified and competitive regional economy and provide opportunities for indigenous companies. However, the region remains susceptible to international influences and fluctuating world markets. Although there has been an increase in service sector employment, the highest level privately provided finance and business services are less well represented than nationally. Historically the North East has depended on large employers and small or medium-sized businesses are relatively poorly represented.

1.26 Unemployment has been falling steadily since 1993, but is still structural and the regional rate remains above the national average. Job opportunities are largely in the service sector, with only a quarter now being related to the manual skills traditionally associated with male manufacturing employment in the region. There is therefore a mismatch in some areas between the type of job available and the skills of the local workforce. Self-employment also represents a relatively small proportion of total jobs in the region, although it plays a more important role in rural areas. There has been a reduction in full-time jobs and an increase in part-time and temporary working. For many this means greater uncertainty and more limited opportunities.

Social Change

1.27 The North East is home to some 2.6 million people. From the 1960s through to the late 1980s the population experienced net decline, despite gains through natural increase. The period saw a substantial restructuring of the regional economy, resulting in significant employment

losses in traditional industries. This not only resulted in high levels of unemployment, but also created a substantial 'push' factor to population movement out of the North East. Between 1988 and 1993 a small increase in the population of the region was experienced as the net migration loss substantially decreased. Since then this loss has increased, peaking at nearly 6,750 persons in 1996, then falling to 3,800 between 1997 and 1998. One effect of this is to reduce the size of the better-qualified and skilled workforce in the North East, exacerbating the mismatch between skills and job opportunities. Within the region, the pattern has been one of population loss from the conurbations to areas within commuting distance, with an exodus of young people from the more remote rural areas.

1.28 Comparatively poor health is a feature of the North East, being most acute in the conurbations and coalfield areas. Regional mortality rates have been consistently above the national average throughout the present century. The Standardised Mortality Rate for the Northern Region continued to be the highest of all English Regions in 1998. In 1998-2000 14 local authorities in the North East region fell into the bottom 20% of local authorities in England for male life expectancy and 16 local authorities for female life expectancy. Likely causes include unemployment and poor housing conditions as well as occupational history.

1.29 Social polarisation has increased, as shown by contrasts between affluent and deprived communities within the region. High levels of crime have undermined the stability of some areas by reducing their attractiveness or commercial viability. Nevertheless, there has been continued success in crime reduction over recent years, particularly since the widespread use of CCTV and other measures to deter crime. In the rural areas average incomes are lower and access to facilities is severely limited for those who do not have access to a car or public transport.

1.30 The Government's 1996-based sub-national projections, published at the end of 1998, show a projected decline in the population of the North East of 79,000 over the period 1996 to 2016. This is in contrast to the 1992-based population projections, published in 1994, which projected an increase in population. The 1996-based population projections are a major input into the 1996-based household projections. The latter, published in 1999, project an increase of around 74,000 households in the North East over the period 1996 to 2016. The revised household projections also project a reduction in the composition of households.

Land Use Integration

1.31 The current settlement pattern in the North East largely reflects the requirements of extractive and heavy manufacturing industries that are no longer significant for the economic future of the region. It also reflects an agricultural economy that is subject to uncertainty in the future. New development in recent years has tended to consolidate the historic settlement pattern, although new towns and settlements have established new communities in the coalfield areas and around the Tyne, Wear and Tees Valley conurbations. The land use planning system in the region needs to demonstrate sensitivity to the requirements of a range of economic activities, some of which are yet to emerge as technologies change and market opportunities arise. It needs to provide and keep under review a portfolio of land use opportunities for these that are appropriate in terms of the needs both of the economy and the population, and which are consistent with the sustainability principles set out in this Guidance.

1.32 The loss of local employment, for example in coal mining or iron and steel working, has resulted in land use imbalances, with some communities facing a severe shortage of jobs. Imbalances have also arisen from the nature of the newer activities, because many local people have been unable to compete successfully for the jobs that are available.

1.33 It is therefore necessary to ensure that the distribution of development and other policies encourage settlements to have a closer balance between population and jobs. Such integration will reduce the need to travel and maintain the vitality of communities within the region. Policies on housing and jobs need to be backed up by the provision of retail, leisure and training opportunities within some catchment areas.

1.34 In the rural areas, job losses in the primary industries of agriculture, forestry, fishing, the extractive industries and their service support sectors have created the need for diversification and innovative approaches to rural development in order to sustain the wider rural economy. This has had an impact on the services available in some rural areas, where there have been losses of rural infrastructure such as schools, shops, post offices, banks, pubs and other community facilities. The rural economy is now more diverse and accommodates a range of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Many of these businesses are associated with the primary industries, but new technologies and advance in communications have opened up the prospects for new employment opportunities. In order to sustain rural communities, it is important to ensure that such employment opportunities are maintained and created locally. Reliance on commuting long distances is not a sustainable alternative and would exacerbate rural disadvantage by being impracticable for those on low incomes or without access to a car. The requirements of SMEs must be taken into consideration and appropriate policies are needed on new development, including the re-use of existing buildings. In addition to tourism, sport and leisure, food processing, manufacturing, distribution and catering may present growth opportunities.

Communications

1.35 The North East's transport infrastructure has been substantially upgraded through major improvements to roads, railways (including the Tyne and Wear Metro), ports and airports. Traffic levels have been increasing rapidly in line with national trends. Industries using rail to distribute freight have declined and been replaced by road-based enterprises, although there has recently been evidence of a shift back to rail freight. Car ownership remains below national levels, but there is increasing use of the private car instead of public transport, cycling or walking. This is particularly true in the region's rural areas where there are few alternatives to the private car. The capacity of the strategic road network in and adjoining the North East, which has, until recently, been an advantage in attracting new activity, is now congested in some locations at peak times. The proportion using public transport as the main means of travel to work is slightly higher than the national average and there is a greater use of buses as opposed to trains. Distance travelled for shopping and other personal services is higher for residents of the North East than nationally.

1.36 Major transport corridors run north-south through the region, including the A1 and A19 and the East Coast Main Line railway. The A66 and A69, the Tyne Valley rail line and Trans-Pennine rail services via Leeds are the main east-west links. Strategic long-distance footpaths and regional routes include the Cleveland Way and the Pennine Way. The National Cycle

Network includes the 'Sea to Sea' (C2C) cycle route together with other existing and proposed routes through the North East.

1.37 The North East has two international airports, Newcastle and Teesside, which are increasingly important for the regional economy and are catering for growth in passenger numbers and freight volumes. Over 80% of the port cargo of the region is handled by the Port of Tees & Hartlepool, currently the second largest port in the UK in terms of tonnage handled. There are also ports at Berwick, Amble, Blyth, the Tyne, Sunderland and Seaham. Shipping links with the Netherlands, Scandinavia and eastern Europe are well established, but further short sea shipping opportunities need to be identified and developed.

1.38 National projections of traffic levels show a continued growth into the next century if current trends continue. The implications for the North East include problems of capacity and environmental impact and RPG1 reflects the principles contained in the Transport White Paper and includes interim policies that will be developed into an integrated regional transport strategy in the review of RPG1 in 2002/03.

1.39 Policies, which seek to reduce the growth in road traffic, will also be contained in Local Transport Plans. The increasing potential and importance of telecommunications is taken fully into account in this Guidance.

1.40 The North East is increasingly seen as an excellent location for businesses that require a high standard of telecommunications facilities, and there has been substantial growth of call centres in the last five years.

Regional Assets

1.41 The vision and strategy for the Regional Planning Guidance for the North East, set out in Chapter 2, have been developed, building on a number of outstanding assets which are distinctive of the North East, providing a vital link with its past, the capital for the future, and a source of regional pride. These include:

- the people of the North East, who have experienced a period of concerted change and have adapted to meet economic and social challenges;
- the cities and towns of the region which continue to act as the focal points of economic, social, cultural, educational and retail activity;
- the overall air quality, which is a product, in part, of the settlement pattern and lower than average reliance on the private car;
- the water catchments, providing ample clean water to meet the needs of the region;
- the rivers, estuaries, coast, and marine environment with those areas that were once despoiled, increasingly being improved through integrated management;
- the world-class wildlife, a promotional asset and a starting point for building biodiversity;
- the wild, open and remote character of the upland landscapes;

- the forests which meet a variety of economic and recreational needs, and have considerable potential for physical and functional diversity;

- an accessible countryside, with green wedges extending into all of the region's major urban areas; and

- the world-class heritage sites and buildings, providing positive images and attracting resources to the region.

Links with other strategies

European Spatial Development Perspective

1.42 The spatial strategy for the region needs to be considered in the light of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP). The ESDP aims to ensure regionally balanced development and to avoid excessive economic and demographic concentration in the core area of the EU (London, Paris Milan, Munich and Hamburg). The concept is to create zones of global economic integration, distributed throughout the EU, comprising a network of internationally accessible regions and their linked hinterlands. The ESDP also emphasises the need for policy development to take full account of the variety of urban and rural inter-relationships.

1.43 Within this context, the strategy recognises the need to address regional disparity and for action to bring the GDP of the North East up to at least the European average. There is a need for continued support from European funds to achieve this aim. This support should be directed towards developing the region's opportunities and securing its regeneration.

1.44 Newcastle upon Tyne is recognised as the regional capital in the North East and a Gateway City to the region. The strategy seeks its development as a city of European importance within the Union capable of supporting a comprehensive range of private, public, commercial and cultural services and facilities appropriate to a region of some three million people. Similarly, Sunderland and Middlesbrough are recognised as urban centres of national importance.

Co-ordination with the Regional Economic Strategy

1.45 RPG1 provides the longer-term land use planning framework for the work of the Regional Development Agency, One North East. The then Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions welcomed the first Regional Economic Strategy for the North East, "*Unlocking our Potential*" when it was published in January 2000. It sets out a vision for where the region should be in 2010 and identifies six strategic priorities:

- create wealth by building a diversified, knowledge based economy;

- establish an entrepreneurial culture;
- build an adaptable, highly skilled workforce;
- place the universities and colleges at the heart of the North East economy;
- meet 21st century communication and property needs; and
- accelerate the renaissance of the North East.

1.46 The RPG1 strategy aims to support and compliment the strategic priorities of One NorthEast and provide the spatial framework to assist in achieving them. The RES is currently being reviewed and is due to be published in October 2002. The early review of RPG1 will need to consider the spatial implications of this update.

Education

1.47 The North East has a wide range of higher and further education facilities, including five universities and 24 colleges that provide major opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and new technologies. These education facilities will provide the people of the region with the necessary skills to allow them to benefit from the new jobs that are envisaged to be created in the North East. They will also attract young people to the region. The RPG1 and the RES encourage development of the region's higher and further education establishments to enable them to contribute to the economic development of the region.

Tourism and Culture

1.48 The region's cultural and natural heritage, linked with the attractive countryside and coast represent a valuable resource of significant economic potential, as well as an invaluable, irreplaceable natural resource. As part of the wider strategy to broaden the region's economic base, the opportunity exists to develop further a high value tourism and cultural industry in both urban and rural areas. These resources also have important indirect benefits in providing a strong regional identity that helps to attract inward investment.

1.49 A Regional Cultural Consortium (Culture North East) has been established and published the *Regional Cultural Strategy* in July 2001. This strategy, and its associated Action Plan, identifies strategic aims and proposals to set priorities for the cultural sector and to ensure that cultural interests are reflected in other regional strategies. The spatial implications of the objectives of the Regional Cultural Strategy should be considered as part of the early review of RPG1 in 2002/03.

Health

1.50 The strategy of RPG1 will contribute to improving the health of the region's population. The Government is committed to improving the overall health of the nation. The White Paper "*Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation*" (July 1999) recognises that health is affected by a range of factors including the provision of safe, secure and sustainable environments, reduction of

pollution, adequate housing provision, access to leisure and recreation, reduction of social exclusion and the improvement of employment opportunities. It also recommends the use of health impact assessments to evaluate the effect of these factors. The RPG1 strategy therefore has an important influence on the health of the population of the region. *The National Health Service Plan* (July 2000) made reducing health inequalities a priority and promised national targets for the first time. These were announced in February 2001 in the areas of life expectancy and infant mortality. Both targets aim to narrow the gap between those suffering health inequalities and the population as a whole, a gap that is generally widening. All local organisations, particularly local authorities, Strategic Health Authorities and Primary Care Trusts, and including communities, will need to work in partnership to improve the health, and narrow the heath inequalities, experienced by people in the region. Achieving health improvement and, in particular, reducing health inequalities should be considered in the production of Development Plans. For example, Development Plans should seek to achieve transport systems which improve access to work, learning, health care, social activities, retailing and other key activities, particularly for those without cars, people living in rural areas and those who suffer from disabilities. Transport systems should also aim to reduce pedestrian deaths, pollution and isolation. Consideration needs also to be given to improving the provision of good quality housing by, for example, improving insulation and heating systems in new and existing buildings and taking steps to reduce the risk of accidents in homes (such as fitting smoke alarms). Improving opportunities for employment by, for example, introducing developments providing new locally based jobs suitable for those in need of employment, and reducing the risk of unemployment by, for example, increasing accessibility to training and education programmes, should also be addressed.

1.51 The provision of effective, accessible and high quality services that promote health and well-being are important in improving the quality of life within the region. The Government has set out a strategy in the National Health Service Plan to modernise the provision of health care services. The key elements with strategic spatial implications are increasing concentration of hospital services in fewer, more specialised centres; and providing primary care services on a more local basis. There is a significant opportunity for mutual reinforcement between Health Improvement and Modernisation Plans (HIMPs), Development Plans and Local Transport Plans. Partnership working between the Primary Care Trusts, communities, and local care providers, including local authorities, will lead to the development of the HIMPs. These plans will set out the strategic programmes for NHS modernisation, health improvement, the tackling of inequalities and providing a local contribution to achieving national targets and objectives. This, together with sharing and mainstreaming of the learning from the Health Action Zone programmes in the region in Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, and Tees, will have land use implications. These should be tackled in the review of RPG1 and Development Plans in conjunction with the new Strategic Health Authorities, NHS Trusts and Primary Care Trusts and the Public Health expertise in the Government Office for the North East.

HAW1 – HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

To ensure that health and well-being infrastructure requirements are taken fully into account Development Plans and programmes should:

- **facilitate the reconfiguration and modernisation of local health services, in accordance with sustainable development principles, informed by partnership working with Primary Care Trusts and others in Health Improvement and Modernisation Plans (HIMPs); and**

- **ensure that the underlying strategy has regard to the impacts of proposed developments on the health of local communities, taking advice from the appropriate public health expertise in the Government Office, new Strategic Health Authority, or Primary Care Trust.**

Crime

1.52 The creation of environments that are safe to live and work in will bring direct benefit in the reduction of crime, and will assist in the wider aims of regeneration and the improvement of the image of the region as a whole. It is therefore important that community safety issues are considered in the preparation of Development Plans, particularly relating to the design of new development. This is reinforced by the statutory implications placed upon local authorities by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998 to ensure that consideration of crime and disorder issues are part of the decision making process. Priority needs to be given to those areas currently experiencing high levels of crime. Care must be taken that initiatives do not simply displace crime to other areas.

Information Communication Technology (ICT)

1.53 Existing and new technologies and communications provide the means of broadening local employment provision, creating new small enterprises and increasing the opportunities of working from home in both urban and rural areas. Investment in such facilities and the provision of necessary support services is an important aspect of the strategy.

CHAPTER 2
Strategy – A better future for the North East

Vision

2.1 RPG1 is based on the vision of:

"a dynamic economy, a healthy environment and a society where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their full potential."

2.2 This will ensure an improved quality of life for all those who live and work in the North East. However, this vision must be achieved through economic, social and physical developments for which our children will thank us. It must not be at the expense of future generations.

2.3 The North East of England is clearly distinguishable from other regions of the UK physically, economically and socially, although there are distinct sub-regional variations. During the past 30 years it has undergone fundamental change and this process is continuing. The strategy set out in this document will guide this process of change. Whilst some parts of the strategy are concerned with the period up to 2016, the vision provides a long term perspective for the next 25 or 30 years. It is a vision of a sustainable North East.

2.4 This is a challenging agenda and a difficult vision to achieve. There is a need to determine priorities at the regional and sub-regional level, particularly in light of emerging regional strategies, including the Regional Transport Strategy. The future of the region depends on all those who live and work in the area: businesses, local authorities, voluntary groups, Government agencies, regional associations and local residents. There will be a need to achieve consistency and co-ordination between neighbouring local authorities and to ensure that policies are complementary to those in adjoining regions, through consultation and discussion. Many influences are outside our control and decisions taken by national and European parliaments and by international companies will influence the development of the North East. The approach taken in RPG1 must be realistic in relation to the potential availability of resources, and progress must be monitored through the setting of clear and achievable targets. Only if there is an agreed vision at which to aim, and a commitment by everyone in the region, is the overall vision more likely to be achieved for the benefit of future generations.

Challenge for the future

Sustainable Development

2.5 The challenge is one of sustainable development. There are many different definitions of sustainable development but the overarching principle for RPG1 is:

"to provide a framework for development which delivers environmental, social and economic objectives to improve the quality of life for all, without threatening – either now or in the future – the viability of the natural, built and social systems on which the delivery of those objectives depends".

2.6 The Regional Sustainable Development Framework, (RSDF), *"Sustaine – Quality of Life in the North East: Towards A Regional Framework"*, was published in January 2002. The RSDF has a regional focus and recognises what is unique about the region, and goes someway towards identifying regionally specific priorities. The vision is that:

"The North East will be a region where present and future generations have a high quality of life; where there is an integrated approach to achieving social, economic and environmental goals; and where global responsibilities are recognised".

2.7 To achieve this the RSDF identifies 16 objectives that are consistent with the national aims of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy, *"A Better Quality of Life"* (DETR, 1999), and the priorities set out in RPG1. The inter-relationships are illustrated in Table 1.

A Spatial Strategy for the North East

2.8 Although major economic and physical restructuring of the region is continuing, problems still remain. The challenge for the future is to consolidate and build on past success. The aim of the strategy, which sits within the priorities for sustainable development set out above, is:

"to continue to strengthen and diversify the economy, improve living conditions and safeguard the region's outstanding cultural and natural heritage to create a truly sustainable future for the North East."

2.9 In order to achieve this the strategy has been prepared around the following four key themes:

- Regeneration
- Opportunity
- Accessibility
- Conservation

Table 1 **Sustainable Development Principles**

UK Sustainable Development Strategy Aims	**Regional Sustainable Development Framework Objectives**	**RPG1 Objectives**
Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth.	1. To ensure high and stable levels of employment so everyone can share and contribute to greater prosperity. 2. To achieve high and sustainable levels of economic growth. 15. To ensure good accessibility for all to jobs, facilities and services in the region.	• To ensure that those who require a job have the opportunity of meaningful employment; • To improve the competitiveness of the region; and • To tackle social exclusion and ensure that everyone should benefit from improvements to the economy, and everyone should have the same opportunities to learn and to succeed.
Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone.	3. To raise educational achievement across the region. 4. To ensure everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent and affordable home. 13. To reduce crime and fear of crime. 14. To improve health and reduce inequalities in health. 16. Increase public involvement in decision making.	• To promote social cohesion and encourage the development of sustainable communities with a strong sense of community identity; • To create liveable and vibrant urban areas, set in attractive new landscapes, which make a significant contribution to the health, well-being and quality of life of local communities; • To balance the urban renaissance of the region, which will reduce development pressure in the countryside, with the need to promote rural regeneration and ensure a living, working, protected and vibrant countryside; • To encourage community participation in the preparation of Regional Planning Guidance to provide ownership of the emerging strategy; • To encourage the development of sustainable communities that meet the needs of local residents for affordable, good quality housing, employment and training opportunities, a wide range of shopping facilities, access to health services, and for easy access to sport, recreation and cultural activities; • To integrate planning, transport, housing and regeneration policies on a local basis to reduce the need to travel and improve clean, safe, energy efficient forms of transport such as walking, cycling, and public transport; and • To ensure that policies are supported by co-ordinated action to tackle social problems, such as securing greater community safety and reducing the fear of crime.
Effective protection of the environment.	5. To ensure good local air quality for all. 6. To protect and enhance the quality of the region's ground, river and sea waters. 8. To protect and enhance the region's biodiversity. 11. To protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the region's rural and urban land and landscapes. 12. To protect and enhance the region's cultural heritage and diversity.	• To reduce air and water pollution and develop suitably located unused or derelict land in preference to greenfield sites; • To manage and protect the region's features of national and international importance for landscape, wildlife, archaeology and heritage and ensure an overall commitment to protect and enhance biodiversity, improving the landscape and encouraging good design in buildings; • The distinctive characteristics and cultures of the region need to be enhanced, respected and conserved for future generations, enjoyed by the present generation and utilised, where appropriate, to attract tourists and generate employment; and • To protect sites and buildings of local interest, which contribute to the quality of life for local residents, where possible and ensure they are replaced when their loss is unavoidable.
Prudent Use of Natural Resources.	7. To reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. 8. To reduce the amount of waste produced and increase the amount recycled. 10. To use non-renewable resources carefully.	• To reduce the level of resources required to cater for people's needs, while increasing the region's wealth; • To generate much less waste and for it to be treated in a sustainable way; and • To manage natural resources and energy sources to optimise the relationship between resource conservation and economic growth.

2.10 A key means of delivering the strategy is through the distribution of development as set out in the Locational Strategy (paragraphs 2.52-2.56). This sets out eight general principles and broad policy guidance that provide the context for the more detailed policies, which are contained in Chapters 3 to 6. This section also suggests five areas to be developed further as sub-regional guidance as part of the early review of RPG1.

Regeneration

2.11 Regeneration is the process of bringing new life to communities and areas that have been adversely affected by past change. Regeneration, which reflects sustainable development principles, is a vital component in securing the renaissance of the North East. Achieving such regeneration is at the heart of the investment and development strategy for the whole region, be it urban or rural. It encompasses action to improve economic, social and environmental conditions. RPG1 also sets a framework for the co-ordination of regeneration funding programmes and area-based action on housing, transport, health, sport and education.

2.12 Four priorities are identified to ensure the regeneration of the region. Development Plans, Local Transport Plans and regeneration programmes should be co-ordinated to:

- accelerate the renaissance of the Tyne, Wear and Tees conurbations;
- provide job opportunities and support communities in the former coalfield areas;
- adapt and revitalise the region's town and city centres; and
- secure rural regeneration to combat social exclusion, improve access to jobs and services, and sustain viable communities.

2.13 To achieve these priorities in a sustainable manner the emphasis of the strategy is to maintain and strengthen existing settlements and communities to enable them to support a range of quality housing, employment, shopping and leisure facilities appropriate to their size and function. Priority should be given to:

- reclaiming and redeveloping contaminated and vacant sites; improving the economic viability of developing previously-developed land; and ensuring that greenfield sites are only identified for development where they are fully justified and in sustainable locations;
- refurbishing and, where necessary, renewing existing outworn infrastructure and facilities; and enhancing the historic environment particularly in the identified regeneration areas;
- recognising the vital contribution of improvement or replacement of unsatisfactory existing housing to the achievement of regional objectives of regeneration;

- recognising the role of new housing provision in the regeneration of the region and the potential effect on areas of low demand and abandonment;

- devoting resources to enhance and, where necessary, restructure town and city centres to introduce mixed uses to improve their attractiveness to business and investment and those who use them;

- ensuring that new development which cannot be located within existing settlements is directed to locations that reinforce the existing settlement pattern and are well served by public transport, are easily accessible by cycling and walking, and which make the best use of previously developed land;

- ensuring that jobs and services are accessible to the region's population by a range of means of transport in both urban and rural areas;

- introducing new locally based jobs, reducing unemployment, under-employment and the need for commuting, particularly in the conurbations, the former coalfield areas and rural areas;

- assisting rural areas in terms of their competitiveness to make them capable of supporting sustainable communities in which people can live and work;

- recognising the changing needs of the primary rural industries, such as agriculture, forestry and fishing, and other rural businesses;

- securing the regeneration of the rural parts of the region in a manner which ensures that the environment is maintained and enhanced;

- improving the local environment and enhancing community pride;

- ensuring that the countryside around settlements is attractive and accessible;

- recognising the role of the Great North Forest, the Tees Forest and other initiatives such as the "Greening for Growth Strategy" for South East Northumberland, in delivering major environmental improvements to a large part of the urban fringe within the region and creating high quality sustainable landscapes for the integrated planning of new housing, economic development, recreation and a wide range of social and cultural opportunities;

- securing investment to improve the landscape and nature conservation value of the countryside close to the region's main urban settlements and to create and maintain facilities for public enjoyment;

- seeking a higher standard of countryside management to integrate the delivery of more extensive forms of countryside management through agri-environment schemes, economic/tourism development and traditional recreational management to enable recreational demands to be accommodated alongside nature conservation interests and the operation of agriculture and other rural businesses;

- dealing with threats to viable communities such as high levels of crime; and
- improving the quality and, where necessary, the quantity of accessible recreational and amenity open space.

Regeneration Areas

2.14 Regeneration areas have been identified in the following general locations, as indicated on the Strategy Diagram:

- South-east Northumberland;
- Tyneside;
- Wearside;
- North-west Durham;
- East Durham;
- South-west Durham;
- East Cleveland;
- Darlington;
- Hartlepool; and
- the built up areas of Teesside.

2.15 The strategy also promotes regeneration in the extensive rural areas of north and west Northumberland and west Durham, where emphasis is given to supporting the provision of well distributed, small-scale services, improving accessibility to local services and public transport and diversifying the economy on a scale appropriate to sustain viable local communities whilst maintaining environmental quality.

Opportunity

2.16 As well as regenerating those areas affected by past activities, the region also has to identify the opportunities and priorities for the future. Despite its past success in restructuring, the region continues to suffer from high levels of unemployment, a narrow economic base, and a lack of small and medium size enterprises. This has led to a trend of outward migration, particularly to the south east of England. One of the key aims of the strategy is to reduce the loss of population to other regions by making the North East a vibrant economy and an attractive place to both live and work.

2.17 A key regional priority for this guidance will be to develop local enterprise and increase the quality of employment available. The strategy therefore aims to enable the region to build on its strengths and maximise the opportunities to achieve sustainable economic growth. Major strengths include:

- regional pride and distinctiveness;
- a high quality cultural and natural heritage;
- established excellence in higher education institutions;
- a long tradition of industrial innovation and skills; and
- an efficient and compact pattern of urban settlement and associated transport infrastructure.

2.18 A sequential approach to the selection of sites should be adopted for the allocation of land for development, in order to ensure that it is located in the most sustainable locations (Policies DP1 and DP2). This is a key element of the strategy. Priority should be given to the re-use of previously-developed land and other sites within established urban areas taking into account the need to provide a high quality environment and community facilities and services, including recreational and other public open space. The aim in all localities is to achieve balanced development and mix of uses that reduce the need to travel.

2.19 Planning policies in the region have for many years sought to maximise urban redevelopment opportunities. Much of the derelict land in the coalfield areas has been reclaimed to provide valuable recreational use and has improved environmental quality. Most of this reclaimed land has not been remediated and is often not well located to meet future development needs in accordance with the strategic principles of RPG1.

2.20 In order to maximise the amount of all development located within existing urban areas, and in particular on previously-developed sites, the strategy is to:

- adopt a sequential approach to site selection;
- adopt a comprehensive approach to redevelopment and revitalisation in existing developed areas;
- seek the reuse of existing buildings in innovative ways;
- make resources available to deal with development constraints on previously-developed land and buildings;
- seek higher housing densities in all new development with the highest densities on sites in central parts of accessible urban areas and public transport nodes;
- maintain a Green Belt around the Tyne and Wear conurbations and strong green wedge restraint policies in the Tees Valley; and

- phase the release of land for development in order to give priority to the reuse of sites within urban areas.

2.21 As part of this commitment to maximise the use of previously-developed land and buildings, the RPG1 strategy seeks to ensure that by 2008 60% of additional housing is provided on previously-developed land and through conversions of existing buildings, and that by 2016 a target of at least 65% is achieved.

2.22 The strategy recognises, however, that the reuse of land and buildings and the development of sites within the existing urban areas cannot provide for all the development needs of the region. Land will also need to be identified for future development in sustainable locations adjacent to built-up areas. In identifying such sites the strategy is to:

- review existing greenfield allocations in the light of the criteria set out in paragraph 2.52;
- make maximum use of poor quality and degraded land where development offers the opportunity to positively enhance the quality of the environment;
- have due regard to the protection of best and most versatile agricultural land as a regional resource;
- locate the majority of development where it can be served by high capacity public transport routes and where it reinforces service provision in existing town and city centres; and
- co-ordinate, where appropriate, the location of development that will generate the need to travel with new residential development areas.

2.23 A key objective of Development Plans, in co-ordination with regeneration programmes, is to improve the economic viability of previously used land to make it more attractive to developers and reduce the need for greenfield sites.

Employment Land Provision

2.24 To facilitate the economic renaissance of the region, one of the key aims of the strategy is to ensure that the region creates the right conditions to allow industry and business to flourish. It aims to provide a range of sites in terms of their size and location, to contribute to a well structured portfolio of attractive, serviced employment sites, well located to serve existing communities. Given the over-allocation of employment land that currently exists in the North East, the strategy seeks an urgent review of existing allocated sites. This will be achieved through a Regional Employment Land Survey (RELS) of sites of 10ha+, to be co-ordinated by the North East Assembly, to be undertaken in tandem with a re-assessment of all other employment allocations by local planning authorities as part of the Development Plan review process. The re-assessment will entail the re-allocation or de-allocation of sites that are considered unlikely to be developed for employment use.

2.25 The strengths of the region mean it has a proven track record of attracting inward manufacturing investment to assist economic restructuring. Such investment places the region under the influence of international economic forces and decision taking over which

it can exert little control. The region needs therefore to create the right conditions to allow indigenous industry to flourish, while accepting that it also needs to develop opportunities for attracting inward investment as part of a balanced approach to economic development. Such investment can act as a spur to industrial competitiveness and to the development of indigenous supplier firms with the potential to develop their own market opportunities. The encouragement of increased trading links between firms in the region is also an important part of the strategy to meet local needs from local sources and to increase local employment opportunities.

2.26 The strategy seeks to ensure that the region provides an appropriate range of strategic employment sites in terms of their size and location, to ensure that the North East can compete in providing opportunities for major inward investors. The region has a significant area of land currently allocated in adopted Development Plans as "premier division sites" (40 ha+) which provide a range of sites for inward investment in the short to medium term. RPG1 brings forward proposals for a further strategic employment site in the broad location of north of Sunderland and accepts in principle the need for an additional strategic employment site in the Tees Valley, in the broad location of west of Stockton.

2.27 The need for any additional greenfield allocations should only be considered once the RELS has been completed. Such proposals, which would need to be consistent with the priorities of the Regional Economic Strategy, should only be brought forward and justified in a future review of RPG1.

Housing Provision

2.28 One of the key aims of the strategy is to facilitate an urban and rural renaissance of the region. To assist in achieving this aim the housing strategy adopts an integrated approach to housing which recognises both the role of new housing and the improvement or replacement of unsatisfactory existing housing stock in areas of low demand and abandonment to the regional objectives of regeneration.

2.29 The Deputy Prime Minister's statement on "*Sustainable Communities, Housing and Planning*" (18 July 2002) recognised the need for the North East to adopt an integrated approach to tackle the issue of low demand. There is increasing evidence that low demand and abandonment is a regionally significant issue that needs to be addressed. The early review of RPG1 must consider issues of housing market failure, regeneration and clearance programmes in planning future housing provision.

2.30 This version of RPG1 therefore adopts an interim approach to its housing strategy, pending the early review in 2002/03. This approach identifies in Table 4.3, a net annual average rate of housing provision for the region of around 5,000 new dwellings per year for the period up to 2006. With the exception of demolitions of empty dwellings arising from low demand and abandonment, the annual rates of housing provision should be provided for in development plans as net additions to the stock. Taking into account the vision and strategic aims of this guidance, there may be a case to increase the housing provision to reflect the economic success of the region and the potential additional housing this could generate in the second half of the guidance period (2006-2016). Indicative figures are given in Table 4.4 as to what this increase in provision could be. However, the move to a higher rate of provision for the second half of the guidance period will only be justified if it has been clearly demonstrated

that the increase in housing provision is on the basis of more rapid growth in household formation rates, and that the implications of increased provision on areas of low demand and abandonment have been addressed.

2.31 In adopting the "Plan, Monitor and Manage" approach, the strategy recognises that there are uncertainties associated with predicting housing needs, which may vary in light of a range of demographic and economic factors. An essential feature of this approach is that housing provision should be kept under continuous review. The North East Assembly (NEA) will provide annual monitoring reports that will form the basis on which the RPG1 strategy is reviewed and taken forward. Any adjustments to the housing requirements of the region should be brought forward through a review of RPG1.

Accessibility

2.32 Improving accessibility to employment, retail, education, health and social facilities is a key element in the strategy to improve living standards, to tackle social exclusion and to contribute to the quality of life in the North East. A priority of the strategy is to ensure that the region's population has access to transport networks and to knowledge, through Information Communications Technology (ICT).

Transport

2.33 Transport is a means to an end. The RPG1 strategy seeks to promote accessibility for all, whilst reducing the local and global environmental impacts of transport in support of the other three strategy themes of Regeneration, Opportunity and Conservation. In integrating land use planning with the management and improvement of the transport network, the strategy seeks to:

- support investment and enhance the region's position in relation to national, European and global markets;
- promote accessibility to employment, education, retailing, health, leisure facilities and other services by public transport, cycling and walking;
- improve individuals' health by promoting walking and cycling as an alternative mode of transport;
- reduce congestion, which can both undermine regional and local competitiveness and exacerbate problems of pollution and noise;
- reduce the impact of transport on the global and local environment and the health of the region's population;

- reduce social exclusion, particularly amongst those without access to a car; and

- recognise the particular transport needs of people living in rural areas.

2.34 To achieve this the priorities will be:

- to integrate land use and transport planning so as to reduce the need to travel and shorten average journey lengths. Development should be located in accordance with the locational strategy, the policies on development patterns in Chapter 4 and the guidance on Transport in Chapter 5;

- to locate and design development, in conjunction with local and regional transport planning, so as to encourage the maximum use of walking, cycling, public transport and the movement of freight by rail and sea;

- to work with health bodies and other stakeholders to develop support for alternative modes of transport, such as walking and cycling, by promoting positive impact on individuals' health; and

- to provide for meeting movement needs in the most sustainable manner, through Local Transport Plans and by investment in, and the management of, strategic transport infrastructure. This will be achieved by promoting the best use of existing infrastructure and through a combination of improved provision for walking, cycling and public transport and by discouraging inappropriate use of the car.

2.35 The management of, and investment in, the transport network should be considered on a multi-modal basis at the international, national, intra-regional and local level to support the strategy's four themes of regeneration, opportunity, accessibility and conservation. Specific priorities to consider are:

- to develop the role of Newcastle and Teesside airports, the region's ports, and rail links to the Channel Tunnel, to improve international accessibility;

- to use the outcome of current and future multi-modal and roads-based studies in assessing priorities for strategic links with neighbouring regions and the rest of the UK. Priorities will be brought forward in the early review of RPG1;

- to develop the regional rail network to provide an attractive alternative to the car for intra-regional journeys; and

- to ensure that public transport, cycling and walking opportunities are available, in conjunction with demand management measures to increase travel choices for motorists and promote accessibility for all.

Information Communications Technology (ICT)

2.36 RPG1 gives priority to the need for flexibility in the adaptation of infrastructure, sites and buildings to changing business needs and the use of ICT. In providing for this, planning policies should aim to maximise the re-use and redevelopment of existing premises. Access to high quality telematics networks should be encouraged to reduce travel demands, and create economic opportunities, increase access to education, improve the delivery of services and facilitate participation in a knowledge-based economy and society. Both urban and rural areas need to be connected to broadband services wherever possible. Due regard should be given to the potential adverse visual impact of infrastructure, and encouragement should be given to innovative solutions that provide access whilst minimising environmental impact.

Conservation

2.37 This section sets out a strategy to preserve and develop the region's natural resources, and ensure the wise management of the natural and cultural heritage.

Conservation of the Natural Environment

2.38 A priority of the strategy is to maintain and increase biodiversity within the region. In the interim, while the Regional Biodiversity Forum completes work, RPG1 adopts the objectives of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

2.39 Work is currently underway through the Regional Biodiversity Forum to develop regional targets relating to biodiversity. These should be incorporated into the early review of RPG1 in 2002/03.

2.40 The strategy seeks to maintain and enhance the quality of the region's environment by:

- according appropriate protection to assets recognised by international, national, regional and local designations, and recognising the overall biodiversity of the region;
- supporting management activities and initiatives to upgrade damaged or degraded environment; and
- taking advantage of opportunities for positive gains to the environment and biodiversity through regeneration and development.

2.41 To achieve this the priorities will be:

- to ensure that development plans identify sustainable management of natural resources as a consideration in decisions about the location of development;
- to support the provision of resources sufficient to enable management of the region's cultural landscapes, which include the National Park and AONBs;
- to ensure the location of, and accessibility to, visitor facilities in a sustainable manner;
- to ensure that measures to protect and manage the designated areas are complemented by measures to upgrade the quality of the environment and to develop further leisure and tourism activity in urban fringe areas;
- to take a holistic approach to nature conservation by considering the sites of nature conservation interest of national and international significance as part of the broader nature conservation resource of the region, and support the preparation and implementation of Biodiversity Action Plans for appropriate areas that provide a comprehensive coverage for the whole of the North East;
- to support the preparation of Countryside Strategies and Management Plans, reinforcing the distinctiveness identified in the Countryside Character Areas covering the North East; and
- to support continued investment in the region's coastline damaged by past coal mining activities to restore them, where appropriate, to their former quality to the extent to which they can be considered for national recognition in the future.

Conservation of the Cultural Heritage

2.42 The region has an outstanding historic heritage with many areas of national and international significance including the two world heritage sites at Durham Cathedral & Castle and Hadrian's Wall. There is a multitude of Conservation Areas, Buildings of Architectural and Historic Interest, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Historic Battlefields, Historic Parks and Gardens and other non-scheduled archaeological sites throughout the North East.

2.43 This heritage is an important environmental, educational, economic and cultural resource for the region. The priorities are:

- to support investment to ensure that it is properly conserved, recorded, understood and, where appropriate, interpreted; and
- to support the preparation of Management Plans, area-based funding programmes such as Conservation Area Partnerships Schemes and Heritage Economic Regeneration Schemes, and individual heritage restoration projects to conserve and restore the region's historic heritage as an integral part of its future development.

Prudent Use of Natural Resources

2.44 Conservation priorities should also correspond to the prudent use of natural resources. The sustainable management of natural resources is also a priority of the strategy and development plans should consider this in making decisions about the location of development.

Minerals

2.45 The region is rich in minerals and energy resources. The production of coal, which once created and dominated the industrial economy of the North East, is now confined to one deep-mined colliery, and to a number of opencast sites and small drift mines in Northumberland and Durham.

2.46 Although large coal reserves remain, their exploitation is not expected to play a significant part in the economy and development of the region during the period of this guidance. There is likely to be continued demand for the extraction of coal by opencast methods. The strategy aims to:

- ensure that the further development of coal resources only takes place in accordance with the principles of sustainable development; and

- support a presumption against coal extraction, unless the proposal is environmentally acceptable and provides local or community benefits which clearly outweigh the likely impacts.

2.47 The working of aggregate minerals is currently a significant activity in the region, and the need for aggregates will continue to be regularly assessed at the regional level. The strategy:

- adopts a sustainable approach to future workings, based on the need to conserve minerals as far as possible, whilst ensuring an adequate supply to meet the needs of society;

- seeks to increase the amount of aggregates met from secondary sources, by the greater use of recycling and waste materials, including, in the longer term, limiting the amount of new permissions to achieve recycling targets; and

- seeks to protect areas of high landscape, nature conservation and archaeological value, from damaging mineral workings, to enable important features to be conserved for the benefit of future generations.

Energy

2.48 Currently the region's energy needs are predominantly met from the burning of fossil fuels, both coal and gas, and from nuclear power generation. Such generation is inherently unsustainable and, while the region will continue to rely on these sources during the Guidance period, the strategy seeks to:

- ensure that future investment is directed at the replacement of fossil fuels by alternative sources of energy where appropriate, such as wind and wave power, combined heat and power, and energy recovery from waste;

- encourage a reduction in demand through greater energy efficiency, both in existing and new development;

- place the region at the forefront of innovation in energy efficiency and sustainable power generation; and

- reconcile any conflicts that arise between the development of alternative sources of energy and policies to protect the region's natural and historic heritage by ensuring that they avoid detrimental impact on environmentally sensitive locations.

Sustainable Waste Management

2.49 A Regional Waste Strategy for the North East will be prepared and incorporated into RPG1 as part of the early review in 2002/03. In the interim, the strategy seeks to:

- significantly reduce the current dependence on landfill in the region by minimising the amount of waste produced, increasing the recycling and reuse of valuable materials and the recycling of waste as raw material for new products, including the production of compost and the generation of energy;

- encourage waste to be treated or disposed of as close as possible to the point where it is generated to limit environment impact and pollution from the unnecessary transport of materials;

- ensure that the region is self-sufficient in the provision of facilities to treat and dispose of waste, with the exception of specialised waste; and

- provide new facilities for waste recycling, composting and the recovery of energy from waste at a number of sites well distributed throughout the region.

Water Resource Management

2.50 Water is an important resource in the North East. The geography of the region is largely defined by its major river systems, including the Tyne, Tees, Wear, Tweed, Blyth, Wansbeck, and Coquet, and its long and varied coastline. Water is important in meeting human needs, as an economic and environmental resource and as an amenity and recreational asset. The strategy seeks to conserve and enhance the region's water resource so that it is able to fulfil all these purposes and meet demands.

2.51 Investment is required to improve the water quality of some of the region's river systems. Priority will be given to:

- improving the quality of the region's estuaries, building on the success of past achievement;

- improving treatment at inland sewage works and to reducing storm water overflows from the foul sewage system, in order to bring river water quality up to the maximum obtainable standards throughout the region;

- improving the Region's water treatment works;

- maintaining and, where necessary, augmenting the pumping and treatment of polluted mine water from former coal workings;

- ensuring that coastal discharges receive appropriate treatment; and

- the conservation and protection of ground water supplies (aquifers) from activities that could affect water quality.

Locational Strategy

2.52 The future location of new development reflects the four strategic themes of Regeneration, Opportunity, Accessibility and Conservation within the overarching principle of sustainability. This will be achieved by:

- adopting the sequential approach in site identification to give priority to the reuse of previously-developed land and buildings and ensuring that land is only allocated for development to meet identified and justified needs;

- regenerating and consolidating existing urban areas;

- sustaining coalfield and rural communities;

- improving the balance between people, jobs and facilities in localised areas to reduce the need to travel;

- assisting in the development of improved public transport facilities and transport integration;

- taking account of existing and proposed transport links and modes, and their capacities and/or means of increasing those capacities to accommodate development demands;

- protecting and enhancing the environment, including ensuring that development is compatible with or enhances existing countryside and settlement character; and

- taking account of the physical constraints on the development of land.

2.53 The priority of the strategy is:

- to direct the majority of new development to the built up areas of the Tyne, Wear and Tees conurbations;

- to locate significant, but smaller scale, developments in Hartlepool, Darlington and the main towns serving other regeneration areas in south-east Northumberland, south-west, north-west and east Durham and east Cleveland; and

- to enhance the role of market towns and other main rural centres in serving their hinterland in order to act as a focus for future development and redevelopment. Development of an appropriate scale should also be encouraged in secondary centres and other key settlements to maintain local services and allow for their regeneration needs.

A Sequential Approach to Development

2.54 The strategy establishes the need to adopt a sequential approach to the identification of land for development. Policies DP1 and DP2 provide an overarching policy framework to ensure that the overall distribution of development at the regional, sub-regional and local level meets the priorities set out in paragraphs 2.52 and 2.53 of the strategy through specific allocations in development plans.

2.55 Policy DP1 sets out the sequential approach to the identification of sites for development, recognising the need to make the best use of land and optimise the development of previously-developed land and buildings in sustainable locations. Policy DP2 establishes the sustainability criteria under which the suitability of sites can be assessed in accordance with the sequential approach as set out in DP1.

DP1 – The Sequential Approach to Development

Development Plans should adopt a sequential approach to the identification of land for development to give priority to previously-developed land and buildings in the most sustainable locations. Locations should be selected in the following priority order:

- **suitable previously-developed sites and buildings within urban areas;**

- **other suitable locations within urban areas not identified as land to be protected for nature or heritage conservation or recreational purposes;**

- **suitable sites in locations adjoining urban areas, particularly where this involves the use of previously-developed land and buildings; and**

- **suitable sites in settlements outside urban areas, particularly where this involves the use of previously-developed land and buildings.**

All sites should be in locations that are, or will be, well related to homes, jobs and services by all modes of transport, in particular public transport, walking and cycling.

DP2 Sustainability Criteria

The following criteria should be taken into account in assessing the suitability of land for development in accordance with the sequential approach set out in DP1:

- **the nature of the development and its locational requirements;**

- **the availability and location of previously-developed land and buildings;**

- **the accessibility of development sites to homes, jobs and services by all modes of transport, in particular public transport, walking and cycling, and the potential to improve such accessibility;**

- **the capacity of existing infrastructure including public transport, the highway network, utilities and social infrastructure to accommodate such development;**

- **physical constraints on the development of land including the level of contamination, flood risk and land stability;**

- **the impact that the development of sites will have on the region's natural resources, environmental and cultural assets, and the health of local people;**

- **the economic viability of the development of the site;**

- **the suitability of sites for mixed use development; and**

- **the contribution that development might make to the strengthening of local communities.**

2.56 Whilst it is clear that there is a need to monitor the distribution of development in order to gauge the success of the overall strategy, there is insufficient data currently available to establish the proportion of development that currently takes place in the main urban areas. It is not possible, at this time, to determine what the exact balance should be. Monitoring systems should be put in place to form a basis for an analysis of success in the achievement of this priority aim of the strategy. The requirements for the monitoring systems are set out in Chapter 7. This is an area which should be developed to be incorporated into the early review of RPG1 in 2002/03.

Sub-Regional Areas

2.57 One of the most important features of RPG1 is its ability to provide guidance at the most appropriate level. If it is too general and merely repeats national planning policy, it represents a missed opportunity to fine-tune policy at a regional level. If, however, the guidance is too specific and fine grain, it will devalue the role of other local strategies.

2.58 In the North East there is a range of tiers of administration, each contributing to the overall co-ordination of policy:

- in the shire counties of Northumberland and Durham there are traditional county Structure Plans which provide the next level of detail at a sub-regional level, together with the final tier of local plans which provide the site specific policy framework of the authorities who will take most land use planning decisions;

- in Tees Valley, although the constituent Councils are unitary authorities, there will be an agreed joint Structure Plan; and

- in Tyne & Wear, individual unitary authorities each produce a Unitary Development Plan that combine both strategic and detailed policies. There is no Tyne & Wear Structure Plan.

2.59 It is therefore essential that RPG1 provides appropriate levels of guidance to meet these different administrative structures.

2.60 The Government's Policy Paper on Planning, issued on the 18 July 2002, alongside the Deputy Prime Minister's statement on Housing, will lead to a change to this structure, with greater emphasis given to planning at a regional and sub-regional level. The early review of RPG1 will need to reflect the new arrangements, particularly in relation to sub-regional planning. Interim guidance will be issued by the Government on the development of Regional Spatial Strategies in Autumn 2002.

2.61 In seeking to achieve the overall aims of RPG1, a balance needs to be struck between the re-use of previously-developed land and development of greenfield sites. It is accepted that there may be a requirement for an element of greenfield development, but it is still necessary to apply the overall principles of sustainable development, including the sequential approach, to the areas that may be suitable for such further development. It would not be appropriate for individual local authorities to bring forward unrelated and uncoordinated proposals. Rather, it is essential that RPG1 should seek to make provision for any additional greenfield land releases, in particular for housing and employment uses, on a more sub-regional basis.

2.62 This may involve the creation of sub-regional areas, based on inter-relationships between housing markets, travel to work areas, communications and strengthening strategic links to reflect the inter-relationships between urban and rural areas. This is a subject that requires additional work and should be addressed in time for the next review of this Guidance in 2002/03. In particular, the outcome of the Regional Transport Strategy, and other related studies, may have an impact on spatial considerations. RPG1 needs to develop policies at a level that ensures co-ordination of policy at the most appropriate level.

2.63 It is important that sub-regional areas are carefully chosen. They should be sufficiently large to cover more than one local authority, yet small enough to reflect local distinctiveness. The following sub-regional areas are not exhaustive, but provide a basis for further study. The suggested areas and potential topics are:

South East Northumberland – the sub-regional guidance for this area should reflect the regeneration area identified in paragraph 2.14 and include, at an appropriate degree of specificity:

- sub-regionally specific targets which contribute to achieving the regional target for re-use of previously-developed land and buildings;
- sub-regional strategic policy on the role of the Green Belt;
- distribution of housing;
- a consideration of the issues of low demand and abandonment;
- a review of employment and housing allocations in adopted Development Plans;

- priorities for the regeneration of coalfield towns, particularly Blyth, Ashington and Bedlington;

- priorities for concentrating development in the main urban areas to assist the regeneration of Ashington, Bedlington, Blyth and Morpeth;

- sub-regional strategic policy for continued development at Cramlington;

- priorities for public transport links;

- policies relating to the proposed rail link to Ashington from Tyneside; and

- a consideration of the potential for electricity generation by renewable sources.

Tyne & Wear – the sub-regional guidance for this area should reflect the regeneration areas of Tyneside and Wearside identified in paragraph 2.14 and include, at an appropriate degree of specificity:

- sub-regionally specific targets which contribute to achieving the regional target for re-use of previously-developed land and buildings;

- a distribution of housing;

- a consideration of the issues of low demand and abandonment;

- a review of employment and housing allocations in adopted Development Plans;

- priorities for regeneration to maximise development and improve the environment within the Tyne and Wear conurbation;

- priorities for public transport links;

- an appraisal of the release of greenfield sites in North Tyneside in view of the strategy to focus development on previously-developed land;

- an analysis of Newcastle Great Park and its effect on development in Tyne and Wear and South East Northumberland;

- priorities for town and city centres;

- the sub-regional context for the Metro Centre;

- consideration of the findings of the Tyneside Area Multi-Modal Study which is considering issues of congestion and road safety on the A1(T) and A19 (T) in Tyneside; and

- a consideration of the potential for electricity generation by renewable sources.

Central and East Durham – the sub-regional guidance for this area should include, at an appropriate degree of specificity:

- priorities for development within the main towns of the north west, south west and east of County Durham as identified regeneration areas in paragraph 2.14;
- sub-regionally specific targets which contribute to achieving the regional target for re-use of previously-developed land and buildings;
- priorities for the regeneration of former coalfield settlements in the urban, coalfield and coastal areas;
- a distribution of housing;
- a consideration of the issues of low demand and abandonment;
- a review of employment and housing allocations in adopted Development Plans;
- priorities for public transport links; and
- a consideration of the potential for electricity generation by renewable sources.

Tees Valley – the sub-regional guidance for this area should reflect the regeneration areas for East Cleveland, Darlington, Hartlepool and the built up areas of Teesside identified in paragraph 2.14 and include, at an appropriate degree of specificity:

- sub-regionally specific targets which contribute to achieving the regional target for re-use of previously-developed land and buildings;
- priorities for regeneration, development and use of previously developed land within the conurbation area;
- a distribution of housing;
- a consideration of the issues of low demand and abandonment;
- a review of employment and housing allocations in adopted Development Plans;
- the identification of a more specific location for a strategic employment site in the broad location of West of Stockton;
- priorities for protection of green wedges and strategic open areas between the conurbation and nearby towns and villages;
- priorities for town and city centres;
- priorities for public transport links; and
- a consideration of the potential for electricity generation by renewable sources.

Rural West and North – the sub-regional guidance for this area should include, at an appropriate degree of specificity:

- the regeneration areas in the extensive rural areas of north and west Northumberland and west Durham identified in paragraph 2.14;
- the need to develop sub-regionally specific targets which contribute to achieving the regional target for re-use of previously-developed land;
- the distribution of housing;
- a consideration of the issues of low demand and abandonment;
- priorities for supporting agriculture, forestry, tourism and other rural businesses;
- priorities to secure rural regeneration and to combat social exclusion;
- a review of employment and housing allocations in adopted Development Plans;
- priorities to sustain viable communities;
- priorities for the protection and improvement of market towns and other rural service centres;
- priorities to improve access to jobs and services;
- priorities on access to key services;
- priorities for affordable housing;
- priorities for transport links and ICT;
- priorities for protection of the countryside; and
- a consideration of the potential for electricity generation by renewable sources.

CHAPTER 3
Environment

Introduction

3.1 The environment of the North East is a major asset in its own right, and a significant factor in attracting people to live and work in the region. The importance of maintaining and enhancing the environment is reflected in the four themes of the RPG1 strategy – Regeneration, Opportunity, Accessibility and Conservation and is integral to the achievement of a sustainable region.

3.2 The North East has an outstanding natural environment, that includes major areas of landscape importance, concentrated in the uplands and the coast, and supports a number of important wildlife habitats. The region also enjoys an outstanding cultural and historic heritage, including two World Heritage Sites at Durham Cathedral & Castle and Hadrian's Wall. However, low quality environments have arisen in parts of the region as a result of industrial decline. There are also potential threats to our environment arising from the impact of climate change, such as flooding. It is for the planning process to ensure that a balance is struck between the protection and the improvement of the environment.

3.3 Development Plans and other strategies should have regard to the policy framework provided by the Government's UK Sustainable Development Strategy, the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and the Government's national Climate Change Programme. They should also embody the aims and objectives of the Regional Sustainable Development Framework (RSDF) "*Sustaine – Quality of Life in the North East: Towards A Regional Framework*". In addition, consideration should be given to undertaking sustainability appraisals of plans and programmes to ensure that they maximise social, economic and environmental benefits. They should have regard to the policies and views of the relevant statutory agencies (including the Countryside Agency, English Nature, English Heritage and the Environment Agency). The main environmental designations in the region are shown on Map 2.

Objectives for the Environment

- **to integrate environmental considerations into decision making at every level, ensuring that plans and development options are assessed for potential positive contributions as well as negative effects on the environment;**

- **to complement other measures aimed at urban and rural renaissance through protecting and improving the environment;**

- **to ensure that provision for development is balanced with the need to protect the region's natural and man-made assets. Unnecessary loss of, or damage to, these assets should be avoided; and**

- **to ensure that, as far as possible, development does not cause significant environmental harm; where such development is to be allowed, mitigation and compensation measures should be fully employed.**

Natural Environment

Air Quality

3.4 Air quality in the region has improved considerably over recent decades due to the regulation of industry and the introduction of progressively tighter EU emissions standards for vehicles and fuels. However, because of various local factors, some areas of poor air quality are likely to remain, and those areas of unacceptably high levels of pollution can harm human health and the environment. There also remains a significant contrast between air quality in the region's urban and rural areas. Local authorities and central Government will continue to work towards reducing levels of air pollution.

3.5 Despite improvements in air quality, harmful emissions from industry, traffic, household fuels and chemicals, such as paints, fuels and inks, are still being added to the air. The *"Air Quality Strategy"* (AQS) for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, published in January 2000, is part of the Government's aim to deliver cleaner air in the UK in the short to medium term. Stating health-based objectives for eight main air pollutants to protect human health, it also sets out measures for reducing emissions and promotes the integration of land use planning and pollution control.

3.6 Local authorities throughout the North East have been reviewing and assessing the current, and likely predicted, air quality in their areas, as required under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995. Where it is considered that one or more of the air quality objectives, as set out in the AQS and prescribed in regulations, is unlikely to be met by the required date, it must declare an Air Quality Management Area where the problem is expected. The local authority must then draw up an action plan setting out the measures it intends to take in pursuit of the air quality objectives in the area. Local authorities are working with other partners across local administrative boundaries in monitoring air quality. They also need to work closely with the Environment Agency, Highways Agency and other local stakeholders in devising management strategies to tackle areas of poor air quality.

ENV1 – Air Quality
Development Plans and other strategies should:

- **ensure that the land use planning system makes an appropriate contribution to the achievement of national air quality objectives;**

- **be closely linked and complementary to any relevant Air Quality Action Plans;**

- **assist in the improvement of air quality through the decisions made on the location of development, transport infrastructure and traffic management;**

- **play a part in promoting policies to reduce emissions from industry and facilitating new higher-quality development; and**

- **ensure that, particularly where Air Quality Management Areas have been designated, air quality is properly considered alongside other material considerations in the planning process.**

Water Resources

3.7 The region's abundant fresh water supply is a major industrial, environmental and recreational asset. The abundance of fresh water is largely due to past investment in Europe's largest man-made reservoir at Kielder Water in Northumberland, together with a supporting water infrastructure, which allows a supply of water, via the river systems, to Tyneside, Wearside and Tees Valley. Kielder is an important strategic reservoir with a significant spare capacity, which should not be wasted. During the drought of 1995, a pipeline to link the River Tees to the River Wiske in Yorkshire was commissioned by Yorkshire Water, with the intention of supporting supplies to customers in Yorkshire with water from Kielder. However, the pipeline was never connected and it is unlikely to be required in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, the potential remains for this link to be used at a later date. There are no further plans at present to deploy spare Kielder water to meet demands outside the region, and any such schemes would be likely to involve large, and possibly prohibitive, additional infrastructure costs. The environmental impact would also be an important consideration in any proposal for new water transfers, nevertheless, the use of Kielder Water to meet future demand will remain an option in both the Regional and National Water Resources Strategies of the Environment Agency.

ENV2 – Water Resource Management
Development Plans and other strategies should:

- **protect the availability and quality of the region's water supply;**

- **encourage water conservation measures;**

- **ensure the timely and sustainable provision of any infrastructure required for water treatment and storage;**

- **ensure that any future scheme involving the exportation of water from Kielder Water should pay particular consideration to its environmental impact; and**

- **promote the use of sustainable drainage systems and the scope to reduce the need for hard infrastructure.**

Water Quality

3.8 The visual and water quality of the region's coast and rivers varies enormously. Some stretches are recognised for their national or international nature conservation importance and landscape quality. In other areas, particularly in the lower reaches of estuaries where urbanisation and industrialisation have led to dereliction and pollution, there remains scope

for significant improvement. Many stretches of river and coast, especially the urban waterways, have great untapped potential for recreation and nature conservation, including the re-naturalisation of watercourses where appropriate, however detailed consideration must be given to potential conflicts.

3.9 New development should be located, and its implementation planned, in such a way as to allow for sustainable provision of water services and enable timely investment in sewage treatment and discharge systems to maintain the appropriate standard of water quality. Investment in the sewage infrastructure, and achievement of improved treatment standards, are equally important to the needs of existing developments.

3.10 New development should also consider, whenever feasible, the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS). These allow for the sustainable management of surface water within the built environment by: reducing and slowing down the run-off of rainfall from impermeable surfaces, such as roads, car parks and roofs; encouraging absorption of rainfall into the ground close to where it falls; and retaining run-off in ponds, on roofs and in gardens. Other measures include the use of permeable surfaces and the creation of wetlands, which offer the potential for amenity and nature conservation. Due consideration of natural systems within the water environment is needed at all stages of planning and design, and should apply to both the primary design and any infrastructure, to avoid problems of flooding, erosion and pollution which may be costly to correct.

ENV3 – Water Quality

Development Plans and other strategies should:

- **pay careful attention to water quality and, wherever possible, development should lead to positive improvements;**
- **ensure that natural systems within the water environment are thoroughly examined at all stages of planning and design, to help minimise the potential impact of flooding, erosion, and point and diffuse pollution;**
- **ensure timely and sustainable provision of infrastructure for sewage treatment and discharge systems, in particular for new development; and**
- **include policies that ensure that ground water supplies (aquifers) are given adequate protection and conservation, as they can be adversely affected by activities such as tipping and waste disposal.**

Flooding

3.11 High-water events in rivers and coastal waters are natural processes that play an important role in shaping the environment. The damage that results to both people and property is a consequence of previous decisions about settlement and land use. Climate change is also having noticeable effects on the environment, and is likely to exacerbate the risk of fluvial and coastal flooding in the North East, as demonstrated by the flooding experienced in parts of the region in 2000. Such damage cannot be prevented entirely, however, its effects can be reduced. The most current fluvial and tidal floodplains in the North East are shown on Map 6, however this map is updated regularly and the most recent information should be

consulted. The maps are available on the Environment Agency web-site (www.environment-agency.gov.uk). Flood risk estimation is not an exact science, and the information provided on the map represents the best currently available. *PPG25: "Development and Flood Risk"* (DETR, 2001) provides guidance on the application of a sequential approach to flood risk using a risk-based criteria when planning new development. An important sustainability objective of RPG1 is to ensure that new development decisions do not add to the risks of flood damage in the future. In considering such proposals, local authorities will need to work in close liaison with the Environment Agency and water companies.

ENV4 – Flooding
Development Plans and other strategies should:

- **protect flood plains and existing or proposed flood defences;**

- **avoid development in areas identified as being at risk or likely to be at medium to high risk in future from flooding, as defined in PPG25, where alternative sites are available; and**

- **ensure that where other considerations in favour of the development outweigh the flooding issues in identified flood risk areas, development will only be permitted where it has been established, following consultation with the Environment Agency and other relevant organisations, that any necessary protection or management measures will be provided and are environmentally acceptable.**

3.12 Sea level change and increasing understanding of marine processes require attention to sustainable means of coastal protection and defence, taking account of the implications of works for other parts of the coastline. Shoreline Management Plans exist for the whole of the North East coast. They make a valuable contribution to the understanding of coastal processes and, by informing the land use planning system, towards the goal of achieving sustainable coastal defence and protection measures.

Biodiversity

3.13 The richness of the North East's environment is highlighted by its abundance of designated sites, including National Parks (2), Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (2), Heritage Coasts (3), Ramsar Sites (5), Special Protection Areas (8), Special Areas for Conservation (14), National Nature Reserves (14), and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (249). Changes in the number of designated sites are expected during the life of RPG1.

3.14 The main concentrations of important wildlife habitats are concentrated on the North Pennines, and the Northumberland, Teesmouth and Cleveland, and Durham Coasts. Internationally, nationally and locally designated sites, which contribute to the wider countryside and landscape, should continue to be protected in line with the Government's tiered approach to nature conservation as set out in PPG9 "*Nature Conservation*" (DoE, 1994). In addition to this, The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 has placed a greater emphasis on all local authorities to protect and enhance Sites of Special Scientific Interest. However, these designated sites should not be seen in isolation but as an integral part of the biodiversity of the region.

3.15 Biodiversity encompasses the whole range of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, insects and other invertebrates, plants, fungi, and micro-organisms such as protists, bacteria and viruses. The current decline in biodiversity is largely the result of human activity. It is important that biodiversity is protected and conserved according to the principles of ecological, economic and social sustainability. In addition to its designated nature conservation sites, the region possesses a wide range of distinctive habitats worthy of attention and appropriate expansion, including caliminarian (heavy metal tolerant), magnesian limestone and whin grasslands, and juniper scrub. The Regional Biodiversity Forum has been established and will assist in identifying regionally important habitats and species which merit action and targets. Having published the "*North East Region Biodiversity Audit*" in May 2002, work is currently underway on a Regional Biodiversity Plan. These should inform the preparation of the early review of RPG1.

3.16 In 1997, English Nature, English Heritage and the Countryside Commission introduced the concept of Natural Areas and Countryside Character Areas. Countryside Character Areas are discussed below. Natural Areas set out a sub division of the country that illustrate distinctions between areas in terms of wildlife and natural features of the landscape and their interrelationships with those who live and work in the area. They provide a way of interpreting the ecological variations of the country and will help to inform Biodiversity Action Plans at a local and regional level.

3.17 The complexity of the region's ecology should be recognised through policies for whole ecosystems, including river valleys and the coast, and for co-ordinated natural areas and sites crossing local authority boundaries. In some areas, co-ordination will need to transcend the regional boundary, notably in relation to the North York Moors and the North Pennines. A coherent network of sites should be identified and protected and, where possible, linked and extended. In addition, wherever appropriate, environmental improvements should be used as an opportunity to enhance nature conservation interest, for example in reclamation and restoration schemes, and the use of conditions and planning obligations to promote biodiversity should be fully explored

3.18 RPG1 therefore recognises the need to take a holistic approach to nature conservation in the region and supports the preparation of local Biodiversity Action Plans for appropriate areas that together provide comprehensive coverage for the whole of the North East.

ENV5 – Biodiversity

Development Plans and other strategies should:

- **aim to maintain and increase biodiversity within the region, and recognise the nature conservation value of non-designated habitats;**

- **contain policies against which development proposals which will affect sites of nature conservation importance and protected species can be assessed;**

- **promote relevant local Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs), both in protecting the nature conservation value of designated habitats and the wider countryside, and in assessing the possible contribution of development and regeneration proposals to enhancing biodiversity (and vice versa); and**

- **consider adopting local BAPs as Supplementary Planning Guidance.**

Landscape overview

3.19 The North East has a distinctive, varied and attractive landscape that contributes considerably to the quality of life for those living in the region. The introduction of the Countryside Character Area approach in 1997 sought to move away from a situation whereby judgements on landscape are made with respect to their "value", to one in which character and local distinctiveness form the basis for decisions. The concept of landscape character embraces the combination and interrelationships between landform, habitat, wildlife, climate and human activity. It provides a means by which to determine the ability of a landscape to accommodate change whilst preserving its local distinctiveness.

3.20 There are fifteen Character Areas in the North East, which are shown on Map 3. These are broad areas of cohesive character, which illustrate what is unique about the region. The Countryside Agency, together with Scottish Natural Heritage, has produced guidance on Landscape Character Assessment that should inform the use of this approach in development plans.

ENV6 – Landscape Character
Development Plans and other strategies should:

- **seek to maintain and enhance the quality, diversity and local distinctiveness of landscape character throughout the North East; and**

- **have regard to the Countryside Agency's landscape character approach.**

National designations

3.21 The region's National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coasts are highly prized for their unspoilt open landscapes. They represent some of the few areas, nationally, which offer an experience of wilderness and opportunities for solitude, peace and quiet in a world increasingly driven by technology. These areas are subject to strong protection from inappropriate development through the planning system set out in *PPG7: "The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development"* (DETR, 1997). This policy approach will be maintained, refined and reinforced by appropriate management action. However, it must be recognised that these areas also contain living, working communities that have, to a large extent, been disadvantaged due to their relative remoteness and by changes in the agricultural economy. For the purposes of RPG1, policies within this document apply to Northumberland National Park, but not the North York Moors National Park. Only four per cent of the North York Moors National Park lies within the region, therefore it is governed by policies set out in the *RPG for Yorkshire and the Humber (RPG12)*.

ENV7 – National Designations
Development Plans and other strategies should:

- **seek to protect the special qualities of the environment in nationally designated areas, and uphold their statutory purposes, while recognising their role as a living, working and vibrant countryside; and**

- **only permit major developments in the Northumberland National Park and the region's two AONBs, the Northumberland Coast and the North Pennines, and in the three areas of Heritage Coast, North Northumberland, Durham and East Cleveland, in the most exceptional circumstances.**

3.22 Protection should be balanced with a co-ordinated approach to revitalising the local economy, particularly in upland areas, and encouraging a scale of development and innovative approaches to rural diversification consistent with achieving sustainable local communities. The Northumberland National Park Management Plan is currently under review, and is intended to complement development plans as a means to implement these approaches. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 introduced a requirement for a review of both management structures and management plans for these areas. A review of management plans for the region's two AONBs is underway, and should be taken into account in the preparation of development plans. Policies for the North Pennines AONB will have to be co-ordinated across the regional boundaries.

Local designations

3.23 The North East is especially fortunate in its extensive areas of scenery of national quality, but also possesses landscapes which, in less favoured parts of the country, might well be candidates for national designation. Existing Development Plans and the identified Character Areas provide a starting point for identifying and protecting these areas from inappropriate development. Some current designations extend across administrative boundaries and policy consistency is therefore desirable. Furthermore, there is the possibility that landscapes that are currently despoiled may qualify for consideration once improvements are implemented.

3.24 Protection and management of the designated areas will be complemented by measures to upgrade the quality of the environment. As well as benefiting residential amenity and restoring community pride, such measures are also of value in reducing pressure on more sensitive areas.

ENV8 – Local Designations
Development Plans and other strategies should:

- **review existing landscape designations, with regard to the Landscape Character approach, co-operating with other planning authorities and agencies, where necessary, to identify and protect areas of particular character; and**

- **not restrict development unreasonably in these areas, but aim to ensure that where development is permitted, its final form does not detract from the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape.**

Tranquillity

3.25 Tranquillity is an important part of countryside character. The geography of the North East has ensured that relatively large areas have so far remained free from the disturbance caused by urban development and traffic noise.

ENV9 – Tranquil Areas
Development Plans and other strategies should:

- **identify those areas where the maintenance of tranquillity is both important and practical; and**

- **protect and, where appropriate, increase tranquil areas throughout the region when formulating policies for land use, transport and traffic management.**

Open space

3.26 Open spaces, such as parks, play areas and playing fields, have an important role in contributing to the quality of life in urban areas, providing recreational opportunities, and can maintain and enhance biodiversity. The greenspaces within these areas and the countryside around our towns and cities are an important source of recreation for their inhabitants. Research for the Countryside Agency suggests that providing more natural and open space in and around towns and cities may be the most effective way of retaining their attraction as places to live. The open space needs of settlements in rural areas should also be considered, as countryside access is not always an adequate substitute for accessible greenspace within a settlement.

3.27 Open space corridors provide for movement within and between urban areas, linking larger open spaces to residential areas and to the wider countryside. Some larger open areas, such as the Newcastle Town Moor and the coastal Leas of South Tyneside, Sunderland and east Durham, are of regional significance.

ENV10 – Open Space
Development Plans and other strategies should:

- **protect land which serves a strategic function from unnecessary development, even where not formally designated as open space;**

- **ensure that the strategic role of linked and linear open spaces is maintained, enhanced and, where possible, extended; and**

- **identify valuable areas of open land, which are not formally open space, for more active management through urban fringe initiatives.**

Agricultural Land

3.28 Agriculture represents over 80 per cent of the region's land use and is, therefore, fundamental to the overall appearance and biodiversity of the North East. The quality of farmland is extremely variable, with only about 15 per cent falling within the 'best and most versatile' category, compared with about a third in England as a whole. Decisions about development affecting best and most versatile land will be made through the planning system.

ENV11 – Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

Development Plans and other strategies should set out the appropriate level of protection to be afforded to high quality agricultural land in relation to other considerations such as landscape character, biodiversity and sustainability.

3.29 The rural economy in the North East has historically been heavily dependent on primary industry. Farming plays an important role in maintaining an attractive and diverse countryside and in sustaining the wider rural economy. In the changing economic climate, and particularly as part of the strategy for recovery from Foot and Mouth Disease, it has become increasingly important to recognise the crucial role that diversification can play in sustaining and developing farm businesses. However, rural diversification needs to have full regard to social, economic and environmental considerations. This is discussed further in Chapter 4 – Rural Economy.

ENV12 – Rural Diversification

Development Plans and other strategies should balance the need for economic diversification and business growth in rural areas with the need to protect the environment.

3.30 The shift in farming support from production to the promotion of agri-environment schemes will assist in maintaining traditional farming practices and protecting and enhancing landscape features and biodiversity. Parts of the North Pennines are designated as Environmentally Sensitive Areas, within which financial incentives are offered to farmers to adopt agricultural practices beneficial to the rural environment. The England Rural Development Programme (ERDP), provides for a significant increase in funding for rural economy and agri-environment schemes, in particular the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. This discretionary grant scheme is available in agricultural areas outside Environmentally Sensitive Areas.

Tree cover

3.31 An increased area of tree cover is a national objective. Woodland and forests can provide a diverse range of benefits, such as providing timber, enhancing the beauty of the countryside, revitalising derelict landscapes and enhancing wildlife habitats and acting as sinks for CO_2. It can also be used to improve the quality of life in and around towns and cities by screening development and improving the surroundings of housing and industry, provide opportunities for sporting and recreational activities, and generate employment. The economic benefits of the forestry industry are covered in Chapter 4. Kielder Forest Park, the Great North Forest, the Tees Forest and the South East Northumberland *"Greening for Growth"* Strategy have been and will be instrumental in achieving these aims. However, the aim of increasing tree cover should not be solely limited to these areas.

3.32 Significant areas of tree cover in the region are the result of intensive, mono-cultural planting in past decades and landscape improvements will be possible as this planting is harvested and replaced. The England Forestry Strategy, *"A New Focus for England's Woodlands"*, published in December 1998, sets out the Government's strategic priorities and programmes for forestry over the next five to ten years. Its main aims are the sustainable management of existing woods and forests, and the continued, steady expansion of woodland area, where it is needed, to provide more benefits for society and the environment.

ENV13 – Tree Cover
Development Plans and other strategies should:

- **identify and protect existing woodland of amenity and nature conservation value, particularly ancient woodlands;**

- **encourage and facilitate the implementation of the Great North Forest and Tees Forest community forestry strategies, Greening for Growth Strategy in South East Northumberland and other woodland planting, where this is consistent with policies for the protection and enhancement of landscapes and habitats. The maximum landscape, nature conservation and recreational benefit should be sought from appropriate development within the forest areas;**

- **identify landscape and woodland strategies in regeneration areas; and**

- **take account of issues arising from the England Forestry Strategy.**

Built Environment

Heritage

3.33 The North East displays evidence of a long history of human occupation, much of which is not always easily visible. The upland areas are among the country's most significant archaeological resources, with whole landscapes being of historic interest, whilst sites in urban areas can provide unique insights into more recent developments. Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site and its setting form an important historic landscape; other important historic landscapes include the Cheviot and Eston Hills, commons such as the Newcastle Town Moor, and village greens like Stamfordham or West Auckland. The region also contains a significant industrial archaeological resource, notably related to the early history of the various mining industries and of the railways. Attention is now also being paid to maritime archaeology associated with inter-tidal areas on the coast and in the river valleys.

3.34 The region's abundance of designated sites which are of historic importance include over 12,000 listed buildings; over 1,000 are listed grade I or II*; forty entries on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens; 269 conservation areas; two World Heritage Sites, Hadrian's Wall and Durham Cathedral and Castle; seven entries on English Heritage's Register of Historic Battlefields; and over 1,300 Scheduled Ancient Monuments. There are also a significant number of archaeological sites that are not scheduled and are protected through the planning process. A high proportion of such remains survive as earthworks, such as hill forts, mainly outside areas of arable cultivation.

3.35 Planning authorities should pay particular regard to Planning Policy Guidance notes 15 and 16 when framing conservation policies in development plans. *PPG15: "Planning and the Historic Environment"* (DETR, 1994) provides guidance on the protection of historic buildings, conservation areas and other elements of the historic environment. *PPG16: "Archaeology and Planning"* (DETR, 1990) sets out planning policy on the preservation and

the handling of archaeological remains on land, both in an urban setting and in the countryside.

ENV14 – Historic Landscapes
Development Plans and other strategies should:

- **seek to conserve the historic landscapes of the region;**
- **seek to preserve, in situ, scheduled archaeological sites of national importance and, where appropriate, other archaeological remains of more than local importance; and**
- **identify and give an appropriate degree of protection to historic parks and gardens, battlefields, ancient field systems, green lanes trackways, industrial monuments and other non-scheduled archaeological sites, which reflects their national or regional importance.**

3.36 Hadrian's Wall Military Zone, which includes the Scheduled Ancient Monument and its landscape and historical setting, was designated as a World Heritage Site in 1987. It stretches from Bowness-on-Solway in the west, to Wallsend in the east. It is recognised as one of the best preserved and most complete examples of Roman frontier defences in the world. It is therefore important that the site and its landscape setting are protected from inappropriate development.

ENV15 – Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site
Development Plans and other strategies that cover the route of Hadrian's Wall Military Zone World Heritage Site should incorporate the principles of the Hadrian's Wall Management Plan into their plans and programmes.

3.37 Durham Cathedral and Castle were designated a World Heritage Site in 1986. The Cathedral was built in the late 11th and early 12th centuries and is the largest and best example of Norman-style architecture in England. Close to the Cathedral is the Castle, an ancient Norman fortress, which was the residence of the Prince-Bishops of Durham. It is important that the character and setting of the site are safeguarded from inappropriate development.

ENV16 – Durham Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site
The Durham County Structure Plan and the Durham City Local Plan should contain policies that reflect and are compatible with the proposed management plan for the Durham Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site.

3.38 Policies for the North East's two World Heritage Sites, and other internationally important sites, will need to be integrated with policies concerning any activities in surrounding areas that may affect sites indirectly.

Historic Settlements

3.39 The region has a fine heritage of historic settlements, notably its market towns, many dominated by impressive medieval castles and churches. These settlements and their settings are vulnerable to insensitively designed or sited development. As well as their historical

importance, market towns are an important focus for the economic regeneration of rural areas.

3.40 Many settlements in the North East have areas of distinctive architectural and townscape character that add significantly to regional diversity, notably some of the planned developments of the 19th and 20th centuries, such as Victorian resorts and the new towns. These are not always fully reflected in existing designations such as conservation areas. In some cases new policy instruments, including local design guides, may be needed to address issues wider than those for which conservation area status provides an appropriate solution. The character of historic settlements and the countryside can be marred by rigid application of highway design standards and there may be cases where a flexible approach is also appropriate to enhance the character of new developments.

ENV17 – Historic Settlements
Development Plans and other strategies should:

- **seek to protect and enhance the character of historic settlements or individual sites in the region, and provide for necessary development in locations that do not adversely affect their character. Where large scale new development cannot be accommodated in such settlements without damage to their character, strong policies of restraint will be appropriate; and**

- **address the overall impact of highway design standards and parking controls, along with the design and location of signage, street furniture and lighting in historic settlements, to ensure that they are fully sympathetic to the local environment.**

3.41 Some views of buildings and landscapes make contributions of strategic importance in defining regional identity. Notable examples include the setting of the Tyne bridges, views of and from Hadrian's Wall, and the landscape 'bowl' within which Durham City lies. The relevant authorities should co-operate to ensure that new development does not adversely affect such views. Good examples of important hilltop structures are Tynemouth Priory, Bamburgh Castle, the Angel of the North and the Penshaw Monument.

ENV18 – Views of Strategic Importance
Development Plans and other strategies should protect views from, and to, important structures such as historic towns, castles and monuments.

Listed Buildings

3.42 There are over 12,000 listed buildings in the North East. They are a familiar and often cherished part of the fabric of the region, varying in their nature from large castles and houses to telephone boxes and milestones. They form an integral part of the character of our towns and countryside. They confer economic advantage and are a valuable educational and tourist asset.

3.43 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the duty of local authorities in respect of listed buildings in the exercise of their planning powers. *PPG15: "Planning and the Historic Environment"* (DETR, 1994) also contains the appropriate policy

framework. Development plans should contain detailed policies to protect and enhance the special architectural and historic interest of such buildings.

ENV19 – Listed Buildings
Development Plans and other strategies should:

- **pay special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings and any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess;**
- **strongly resist the demolition of listed buildings; and**
- **set out clearly the criteria to apply to proposals to alter, extend or change the use of listed buildings.**

Conservation and Regeneration

3.44 Increasingly, conservation has a role to play in the regeneration of older areas, contributing to sustainable solutions to social and economic problems.

ENV20 – Conservation Initiatives
Development Plans and other strategies should take account of the initiatives and priorities of English Heritage and other conservation bodies in the region, integrating these into regeneration proposals wherever appropriate.

3.45 A notable characteristic of the region's historic development has been a legacy of dereliction, despoliation and decay. This has contributed to an unfortunate and unwarranted perception of the North East as a region of generally poor environmental quality. Local authorities have sought, since the 1960's, to concentrate resources on the regeneration of areas affected most adversely by the decline of the region's traditional industrial base, including:-

- expansive surface mineral extraction;
- abandoned mining and quarrying operations;
- vacant and derelict premises;
- outworn housing areas;
- redundant plant and equipment;
- declining retail areas;
- industrial riverside sites; and
- heavily trafficked and former transport corridors.

3.46 Whilst considerable success has been achieved in the regeneration process, the region still has a number of significant environmental challenges to face. The rate at which these will be addressed is heavily dependent upon the scale of resources made available to the North East in the early part of this new millennium.

3.47 Some previously-developed land is important for its nature conservation or industrial archaeological value. In other cases, the effect on an area's image which reclamation for soft uses can have may outweigh arguments for its development.

3.48 In addition, the whole of the coastline of the region is one of its most significant natural resources and assets. North Northumberland, East Cleveland and parts of Durham coast are designated as Heritage Coasts. Other areas along the Durham coast and in south Northumberland are still recovering from the damage caused by past coal mining activities. The coast within urban areas has also been adversely affected by development. RPG1 supports continued investment in those areas to restore them to their former quality to an extent to which they can be considered for national designation in the future.

ENV21 – Conservation & Environmental Improvement
Development Plans and other strategies should:

- **encourage the reclamation of derelict land, giving a high priority to regenerating outworn and despoiled areas;**

- **ensure the conservation of naturalised or historically-important areas of previously developed land and facilitate their improvement and management; and**

- **encourage the improvement of coastal areas that have been adversely affected by development.**

Diversity and Distinctiveness

3.49 An essential element in regeneration is the achievement of high design standards including layout, design, materials, conservation of resources, including energy and water, and the repair of existing fabric. High design standards can result in a reduction in energy consumption, thus reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions. Energy Efficiency is covered in Chapter 6.

3.50 High quality development adds to the existing stock of environmental capital and can enhance the region's visual identity, for example through public art, which adds to the range of distinctive images available to describe the North East. Design can also contribute to achieving sustainable development. Revised *PPG1 "General Policy and Principles"* (DETR, 1997) places increased emphasis on good design. Vernacular architecture should be valued for its contribution to the region's distinctive and diverse identity. However, the use of traditional materials is often impractical in the design of new farm buildings. Modern materials, if selected carefully, can ensure that any new building does not detract from its surroundings. Authorities are encouraged to prepare Design Guidance and, in conjunction with the local community, Village and Countryside Design Statements to provide advice on the incorporation of good design into planning applications.

ENV22 – Built Development

Development Plans and other strategies should:

- **seek to ensure a high standard of built development and design throughout the region;**

- **seek to promote high quality contemporary architecture or local styles, where appropriate, in building design and the use of materials appropriate to the development and its location;**

- **encourage recycling and re-use of traditional materials, where appropriate, and where the existing built environment would not be harmed; and**

- **seek to maximise energy efficiency in new and existing buildings through appropriate design criteria and consider preparing Village Design Statements and Countryside Design Summaries, in conjunction with the local community, to assist in informing appropriate design.**

CHAPTER 4
Development Patterns

Economy

4.1 The economic regeneration of the North East is a key aim of both the RPG1 strategy and the Regional Economic Strategy (RES). This is reflected throughout the vision, the priorities for sustainable development and the four themes of the strategy: Regeneration, Opportunity, Accessibility and Conservation. Both RPG1 and the RES seek to achieve an economic renaissance for the region, building on the restructuring of the economy which has taken place over recent years and by promoting the North East as a region which offers opportunities for development, a good transport infrastructure and an attractive environment. These documents should be regarded as complementary and should be read together.

The Regional Economy

4.2 The RES provides a framework for economic development, development of skills and training, and regeneration priorities. It emphasises the need for concerted action between all the key players in the region and the need to integrate and harmonise policies, plans and programmes across a broad agenda. RPG1 draws on these priorities and needs to determine broad areas of land for economic development, how to make optimum use of infrastructure and assets, and to identify priorities for regeneration and improvement. The RES concentrates on the needs of the region's people (in terms of job skills, training, etc.), while RPG1 complements and supports its priorities through a land use and spatial development strategy.

4.3 Economic activity in the region needs to be stimulated in ways that are compatible with stated environmental and social objectives. Improvements to the environment can have a beneficial affect on economic prospects by making the region more attractive for investment. It is within this framework that planning authorities throughout the North East must pursue economic development as part of a co-ordinated approach to facilitating sustainable development. Economic areas within the region are shown on Map 4.

4.4 The competitive position of the North East must be strengthened. An important element of this will be to provide the appropriate infrastructure to increase and broaden employment opportunities. Although there have been a series of well publicised developments that have created many new jobs, high unemployment, low incomes and little tradition of entrepreneurship remain problems which can only be tackled over the long term.

Aims for the Regional Economy

Development Plans and other strategies should provide the context in which sustainable economic growth can take place, balancing the provision of a range of opportunities for development with the protection of community interests and the environment.

Objectives for the Regional Economy

In pursuit of an improved competitive position for the regional economy and within a framework of sustainable development, the main objectives should be to:

- **improve the image of the area;**
- **develop appropriate infrastructure;**
- **encourage the creation, growth and survival of new and existing enterprises, with particular emphasis on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); and**
- **attract inward investment.**

4.5 The RES has set a series of broadly comparable objectives:

- create wealth by building a diversified, knowledge based, economy;
- establish a new entrepreneurial culture;
- build an adaptable, highly skilled workforce;
- place the universities and colleges at the heart of the North East economy;
- meet 21st century communication and property needs; and
- accelerate the renaissance of the North East.

4.6 It is important that every effort is made to ensure the co-ordination of these objectives in a manner that achieves an improvement in competitiveness, and raises the region's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per person up to the national average whilst ensuring sustainable development. The land use implications of the RES should be recognised by local planning authorities in developing policies for the economic development of the region.

4.7 The emphasis on indigenous small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is a key element in a strategy that seeks greater competitiveness. In the longer term, it is expected that the majority of new jobs in the region will be created in such firms. The number of people employed by SMEs has increased in recent years, but business formation and survival rates remain below the UK average. Existing SMEs need further help and advice to expand, with the very best being encouraged to be world market leaders. The region also needs to encourage new entrepreneurs to increase the number of new business start-ups. For the early part of the Guidance period, however, the attraction of major inward investors will continue to create some of the additional jobs required, both directly and as a result of local supply chain developments.

4.8 It is important that the new jobs created improve the range and quality of employment opportunities. The North East continues, in a few key employment sectors, to be over dependent on large firms. Development plans should offer a range of employment sites to encourage a broadening of the economic base, however care needs to be taken to ensure that allocations are realistic and reflect a review of employment land as part of the development plan review process. It is not possible, nor desirable at present to predict the types or mix of economic activity that may characterise the region by the end of the period covered by RPG1. In a rapidly changing global economy flexibility may be a key characteristic.

4.9 The construction industry has an important role to play in supporting the regional economy and in the promotion of its development. It has a significant role in regeneration and has to be able to respond to the need for new projects and premises. The house-building sector forms an important element of this industry.

4.10 To attract more jobs and new investment, the region must improve its economic competitiveness. The availability of skilled labour and the qualifications gained by those leaving colleges and higher education in the region are an attraction to some inward investors, but, in general, a lack of skills and training is becoming a constraint to economic growth.

4.11 A wide range of capital grants and incentives have helped the existing competitiveness of the region, particularly EU Structural Funds, including Objective 2. The North East has been identified as an Objective 2 region, which will release funds for the period 2000 – 2006. EU funding has a considerable impact in directing investment to the region and to particular areas. Whilst it is accepted that the region requires large amounts of further public funding to reclaim and prepare previously used land for development, an approach that relies, in perpetuity, on public funding to secure the re-use of land is inherently unsustainable.

4.12 The region's town centres play an important role within the local economy by acting as a focus for significant levels of investment and as areas of major employment. Regeneration of town centres is essential to help improve competitiveness and to ensure a supply of good quality office and business floorspace to meet modern occupier requirements. Policy TC1 encourages such uses, which generate a large number of trips, to be located in existing town centres where they can be well served by public transport.

4.13 The promotion of economic development opportunities in or close to areas with concentrated social and environmental problems is particularly important. Residents in such areas are often excluded from the labour market and need to overcome a wide range of obstacles, including access to satisfactory education, training, and employment programmes, as well as difficulties of access to work due to travel costs or lack of confidence in moving outside the immediate area. The creation of job opportunities and investment in skills development for the resident population will help support a sustained programme of comprehensive regeneration. This should be promoted as part of a comprehensive programme of development and regeneration.

Employment Land Allocations

4.14 The strategy acknowledges the need for the region to create the right conditions to allow industry and business to flourish. An important element of this is the provision of a wide

range of employment sites to allow existing firms to expand and to cater for the varied needs of new businesses. The region, therefore, needs to maintain a portfolio of good quality attractive employment and business sites and premises that can recognise the changing nature of the global, national and local economy, and meet anticipated rates of development. However, the implementation of the strategy will require a different approach in the future to the allocation of employment land, including a review of existing allocations.

Table 4.1 **Land allocated for Industrial/Business Development** *(Source: LA data 2000)*

Strategic Planning Area	Hectares
Tees Valley	2,429
Tyne & Wear	887
County Durham	887
Northumberland	630
North East Total	4,833

4.15 In 1999/2000 there were some 4,833 hectares of land allocated in the region for industrial/business development. The quantity, quality and general availability of this land varies. It is recognised however that there is a general over-provision of employment land allocated in development plans, far more in aggregate than is likely to be developed throughout this guidance period. The current rates of demand for industrial land vary widely across the North East, and are linked to factors of quality, size and location of the land. It is important that an assessment of take-up rates of employment land is undertaken at the regional and sub-regional level to help inform the development of an appropriate policy response in the early review of RPG1 in 2002/03 to ensure the provision of an effective employment land portfolio that assists in achieving the economic renaissance of the region.

4.16 The over-provision of employment land means that the limited resources for site assembly, clearance, decontamination and basic infrastructure provision are spread too thinly. Competitive sites at the national / international level improve the region's ability to retain indigenous growth as well as attract inward investment. To meet the aspirations of both RPG1 and RES strategies to engender an economic renaissance of the region, it is essential that the region's employment land portfolio is assessed against a careful choice of locations to meet the needs of industry and the workforce, and for targeting of resources for site preparation, infrastructure and training. Site selection should also aim to achieve a sustainable pattern of economic growth that takes account of wider environmental and social issues. It is important that further work is undertaken to: assess the level of over-provision; examine past rates of development and projected needs; and assess market conditions, to provide a baseline of information to assist in managing change. A Regional Employment Land Survey will be co-ordinated by the North East Assembly, working in conjunction with One North East, to assess sites of 10ha+, including 'Premier Division' and strategic employment sites, to feed into the early review of RPG1 in 2002/03.

EL1 – Regional Employment Land Survey

Before any additional employment land is allocated in Development Plans, a Regional Employment Land Survey (RELS) must be undertaken, which will be co-ordinated and managed by the North East Assembly. The RELS will assess the market potential of

employment sites, taking into account any necessary site preparation required and the cost and time constraints this may imply. The RELS will provide a baseline of information, and assist the NEA in identifying the broad location and number of employment sites to meet requirements at regional and sub-regional level to feed into the early review of RPG1. Sites assessed as part of the RELS should also be considered against the criteria set out in policies DP1 and DP2.

4.17 As well as contributing to the RELS for sites over 10ha, local authorities should undertake a review of allocated employment sites and assess new employment land allocations as part of the review of development plans. Development plan allocations should be made on the basis of the locational priorities set out in paragraphs 2.52 and 2.53 of the strategy and follow the sequential test and sustainability criteria set out in Policies DP1 and DP2. The review of employment land should recognise the importance of large, global companies retaining land held in their ownership for future investment and expansion. Furthermore, development plan policies should identify brownfield sites in sustainable locations as a priority for industrial / commercial development before greenfield sites.

4.18 In some circumstances, particularly where there is an oversupply of employment land, current allocations will be identified which do not contribute to the range of sites available and are unlikely to be developed. Currently allocated sites for employment uses on previously-developed land should be examined as part of the Urban Housing Capacity Studies being carried out by local authorities throughout the region and assessed against the criteria set out in policies DP1 and DP2. These studies should assist in identifying those sites that are considered to be essential to the economic development of areas and have therefore been discounted as potential housing sites.

4.19 Sites which have been identified in the employment land review as having no prospect of being developed for any use within the foreseeable future should be re-allocated or de-allocated. De-allocations should not be used to argue for the substitution of greenfield sites to the economic disadvantage of brownfield sites of a similar type in the area; equally, de-allocation should not prevent appropriate greenfield sites being brought forward in sustainable locations where there is market demand or local need, and which comply with other aspects of this guidance.

EL2 – Reassessment of Current Employment Land Allocations

In preparing Development Plans, local authorities should undertake a rigorous assessment of the amount of employment land needed to:

- **make provision for good quality land for employment uses which is sufficient to provide flexibility and choice to potential investors, and recognising changing business requirements;**

- **ensure that in the context of the results of the Regional Employment Land Survey, and within an identified realistic total to meet the needs of the area, a range and variety of sites, in terms of size, quality and distribution are offered having regard to policies DP1 and DP2;**

- **ensure that where new greenfield sites are required their provision does not lead to the economic disadvantage of brownfield sites; and**

- **include policies to facilitate a phased approach to the release of land for employment generating development over the timescale of the plan.**

Development Plans should critically re-examine all current employment land allocations against the criteria set out in Policies DP1 and DP2.

Employment land allocations that have no prospect of being developed within the foreseeable future (taking account of the requirements of some companies to hold land for their investment and expansion), and which do not satisfy the criteria set out in policies DP1 and DP2, should be de-allocated.

Where sites meet the criteria in DP1 and DP2 and, where the following criteria apply, Development Plans should re-allocate the land for an alternative purpose:

- **the site does not contribute to choice and variety;**
- **the prospect of development for employment purposes is unrealistic and unlikely;**
- **acceptable alternative uses can be identified which meet the general principles of sustainable development set out in paragraph 2.52 and Policy DP2; and**
- **re-allocation will have no adverse affect on local strategies for economic development and regeneration.**

4.20 Existing employment land allocations will be able to meet the majority of industrial land and business requirements over the guidance period. The region has a good supply and distribution of smaller local sites for small and medium-sized enterprises. There has been considerable investment in such sites, therefore it is vital to ensure that they play a positive role in future development through expansion of existing uses and new activities. The particular strengths and linkages of certain areas should be developed further.

4.21 There are a number of sites in the region that need to be upgraded, but the funds to undertake this work are limited. Effort and resources should be concentrated on removing the constraints from existing allocations, and local authorities will need to work with the private sector and potential investors to achieve this. One NorthEast, is currently assessing sites throughout the region with a view to developing a systematic strategy for removing constraints and ensuring that sites are readily available for development.

EL3 – Renewal and Modernising of Existing Employment Areas

Development Plans and other strategies should:

- **facilitate the renewal and modernising of existing employment areas;**
- **assess the feasibility for removing constraints from sites within existing employment areas;**
- **protect existing key employment areas from inappropriate development;**
- **protect those employment areas with high public transport accessibility or those with firm proposals to improve public transport accessibility; and**
- **assess the potential to improve access to employment areas by public transport, walking and cycling.**

Sub-regional Distribution of Employment Land Allocations

4.22 The overall strategy of both RPG1 and the RES is to ensure that employment should be located in a manner which best meets the needs of local communities, whilst ensuring the maximum sustainability in terms of access and economy in land use. It is essential that the location of development is not constrained by historic local authority boundaries that may have little relevance to the functional relationships between employment uses. Equally, care needs to be taken that there is not an imbalance of provision across boundaries.

4.23 It is important that it is recognised that employment-generating development should be considered at a level greater than individual local authority areas. The allocation of sites at the sub-regional level should be made within the context of policies DP1 and DP2, the type of employment use envisaged, and the availability of sustainable sites in adjoining local authority areas. This should be considered as part of the early review of RPG1, and be informed by the outcome of the RELS.

Strategic Employment Sites

4.24 A study by English Partnerships in 1997 concluded that the North East appears to have a reasonable supply of strategic sites (in the 20-40 ha range), which could be made available to accommodate major users in the short to medium term. A number of recent major inward investments in the region have required sites larger than 40 ha. A number of these currently allocated 'premier division' strategic sites remain available to accommodate major developments.

4.25 All these strategic sites meet general criteria in terms of scale (capable of accommodating upwards of 1,000 jobs); demand requirements of end users (such as availability of skilled labour and training packages, good accessibility, and attractive environment); deliverability (in programme, financial and technical terms); and relevance in terms of supporting broad regional development objectives. The existing allocated 'Premier Division' strategic sites are set out in Table 4.2 and are reserved for single users and should not be used in a piecemeal manner.

4.26 The sites identified in Table 4.2, with the addition of the strategic employment site in the broad location of 'North of Sunderland' (identified in policy EL4) and the acceptance in principle of the need for an additional strategic employment site in the Tees Valley, are considered to be broadly sufficient to allow for most strategic inward investment opportunities throughout the guidance period. Further work is required to identify more precisely where the additional site in the Tees Valley should be in the broad area 'West of Stockton'. This proposal should be carried forward as part of the early review of RPG1 in 2002/03.

Table 4.2 **Premier Division Strategic Sites (40 ha +)**

Site & Location	Site size (ha)	Planning Status
Heighington Lane West *(Sedgefield/Darlington)*	70	Adopted LP
Wynyard *(Stockton/Hartlepool)**	170	Planning permission
West Hartford *(Blyth Valley)*	53	Adopted LP
Cambois West *(Wansbeck)*	84	Adopted LP
Newcastle Great Park *(Newcastle upon Tyne)*	80	Adopted UDP
Faverdale *(Darlington)*	122	Adopted LP
East Durham *(Easington)*	68	Adopted LP

*In April and June 2000, Hartlepool and Stockton Borough Councils each renewed an outline planning permission for an electronic components park on their portion of a 170 hectares site, which straddles the boundary west of the A19 (T) at Wynyard. The effect of these decisions has been to allow a longer period for the submission of reserved matters, which has in essence extended the life of the planning permissions on this site for a further 10 years, until the year 2010. This site does not appear in either Local Plan.

4.27 It is important that all 'premier division' and strategic employment sites are considered as part of the Regional Employment Land Survey to assess if they are still appropriate in offering the most attractive large sites for both indigenous growth and inward investment. If these sites are successfully taken up and there are clear indications of continuing demand for sites of significant scale, then consideration should be given to the allocation of further suitable sites. However, until such time as this review has been undertaken no further strategic employment sites should be considered. Any additional strategic employment sites should only come forward if they are fully justified and considered through a review of RPG1. Sites must be clearly demonstrated to be in a sustainable location, particularly in terms of ease of access by public transport and should be assessed against the criteria in policies DP1 and DP2.

4.28 Due to limited provision in the sub-region that includes the local authority areas of Sunderland, Gateshead and South Tyneside, the need for a strategic employment site in the broad location of 'North of Sunderland' has been accepted. Unlike other strategic sites in the regional portfolio, a site in this general area will not be reserved for a single major user. Instead, it will provide for a flexible response to attract regionally significant investment in emerging growth sectors. This could encompass campus or cluster developments to support knowledge-based industries or major inward investors.

4.29 This broad location straddles three local authority areas, and it is imperative that:

- the site is identified through a joint project by Sunderland, Gateshead and South Tyneside Councils;
- the boundaries are defined in each of the unitary development plans, including a revised Green Belt boundary;
- a clear set of policies are developed to avoid piecemeal development of the site; and
- a joint development brief should be prepared before any permission for development is granted.

4.30 The Sunderland, South Tyneside and Gateshead UDPs should identify clearly the type of high-quality development that is appropriate to ensure that the site is safeguarded for strategic purposes, either for major inward investors or business cluster development. Only prestige development, which will be of national or regional rather than local economic significance, should be permitted on the site. The Development Plans should also make it clear that the allocation of a strategic employment site in this broad location should only be identified following a stringent examination of existing allocations in this sub-area and if it can be demonstrated that its development would not divert investment from existing brownfield allocations.

4.31 The development of a strategic employment site in this location has the potential for significant public transport access. The necessary improvements should either be in place prior to, or be secured as part of, the development. In addition, some of the region's most severely deprived wards are located in this sub-area. The local authorities concerned, One North East, and other economic development agencies will wish to consider promoting local employment initiatives to maximise the employment opportunities for, and as accessible to, those residents in the most deprived wards in this area.

4.32 The area of search, within which this site will be identified, lies within the Green Belt and the Great North Forest. It is a flat, open, intensively managed agricultural landscape that is a crucial component of the network of narrow green corridors between the built up areas of Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland that constitute the northern part of the Great North Forest. The final identified site should be selected as a result of appraisals of the sustainability of potential sites to deliver an optimal relationship between economic, social and environmental needs. Once the specific location for the site has been identified this will require land to be removed from the Tyne and Wear Green Belt. Policy GB2 makes it clear that any resultant alterations to the Green Belt boundary should be brought forward in a co-ordinated manner as part of the review of the UDPs for Sunderland, Gateshead and South Tyneside.

4.33 PPG2 *"Green Belts"* (DoE 1995) states that new development within Community Forests should respect their woodland setting. Development in this area should therefore be accompanied by a package of appropriate environmental measures, both to ameliorate its immediate impact and to strengthen and enhance the structure, appearance and accessibility of the wider countryside around it. The Great North Forest provides an approved, strategic, sub-regional context for the preparation of such measures.

EL4 – Strategic Employment Site in the Broad Location of "North of Sunderland"

Through joint working between the three local authorities concerned, and in consultation with One NorthEast, Development Plans should allocate a strategic employment site in the broad location of 'North of Sunderland', taking account of the criteria set out in Policy DP2. The allocation should be supported by a development brief based on the following broad principles:

a) the site should be between 40ha and 200ha;

b) that development will not divert investment from existing or future brownfield allocations;

c) the site will be restricted to the development of major inward investors and prestige business cluster development of national or regional significance;

d) there should be a strategy to secure high levels of public transport accessibility and use. No development should be permitted on the site until such time as improvements to public transport infrastructure and services have been undertaken or secured as part of the development;

e) the viability of rail access to the site from the Leamside line has been considered;

f) that any necessary improvements to the strategic and local road network required to accommodate traffic generated by the development, taking account of likely use of public transport to the site, can be safely and efficiently accommodated. No development should be permitted on the site until such time as improvements to the strategic and local road network have been undertaken or secured as part of the development;

g) that local employment initiatives to maximise the employment opportunities for residents of surrounding wards are promoted;

h) that major environmental, historic and resource assets are protected; and

i) that the proposals ensure the development of a strategic, woodland based landscape and recreational framework within the context of the Great North Forest.

Clusters

4.34 The Competitiveness White Paper *"Our Competitive Future: Building the Knowledge Based Economy"*, the 1999 Pre-Budget Report and the 2000 Budget, and the *"Opportunity for All in a World of Change"* White Paper, emphasised the importance of promoting the creation and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge-driven companies. There is no definitive definition of a cluster. However, *"Planning For Clusters"* (DTLR 2000) includes the following definition: clusters are geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, specialised suppliers, service providers, firms of related industries and associated institutions in particular that compete but also co-operate. Their locational and geographic parameters vary from relatively confined areas, to clusters that transcend local planning authorities' areas and even regional boundaries (virtual clusters). Clusters may be concentrated in particular locations, such as technology parks, or linked in "Innovative Cluster Areas" (ICAs). ICAs comprise a network of locations with a central research and development base, with incubator units, connected through communication links, both digital and land based, to growth points for specialised production, analysis, testing and services. Additional work is required to identify and facilitate regional clusters and further advice is contained within paragraph 4.06 of PPG11. One North East and its partners have identified existing and potential clusters from national and local research, and potential cluster developments have been included in the discussions with the European Commission on the 2000-2006 Objective 2 Structural Funds Programme. The role of the Development Plans in the region is to consider the spatial requirements of cluster development. The current list of clusters being considered is as follows:

- Automotive;
- Bio-sciences;
- Chemicals;
- Electronics;
- Environmental Industries;
- Food and Drink;
- Multi/digital media;
- Offshore/marine/high value-added engineering including energy;
- Rural Clusters; and
- Tourism and cultural industries.

4.35 One North East continue to refine this list and to consider other industries for inclusion. However, there is already an on-going programme in the region to promote the development and expansion of these clusters. For example, Newcastle Great Park where software development activities will be attracted; Knowledge Campus at Gateshead, where rapid prototyping activities are envisaged, and Netpark in Sedgefield where strengths of local universities are being examined to maximise technology transfer within the sub-region. Work is currently underway to develop the physical and professional infrastructure that is required at these locations. It is also essential that these (and other) developments work together rather than competing to secure greater levels of technology transfer throughout the region. A further area with potential for growth is nano-technology. The early review of RPG1 in 2002/03 should consider the spatial elements of the development on clusters in the region in line with the update to the Regional Economic Strategy, to ensure a co-ordinated approach to cluster development activity across the region.

EL5- Business Clusters

To facilitate the creation and expansion of innovative business cluster areas Development Plans should ensure that:

- **sites are well related to other development and are accessible by public transport, cycling and walking;**
- **priority is given to the use of previously-developed land;**
- **wherever possible, sites should make use of successful existing employment areas in the locality as these can form an integral part of Innovative Cluster Areas, providing space for support industries, production space as well as providing essential links to assist existing companies to be drawn into worthwhile partnering or cluster activity; and**

- **the creation of the necessary physical infrastructure to support such networks and encourage the creation of incubator units where this is appropriate in the heart of clusters.**

Further & Higher Education

4.36 The region's universities and colleges have a central role to play in the economic regeneration of the region. One North East and the region's five universities have prepared a North East Universities Economic Compact. The main objectives of this Compact are to:

- expand the Universities;
- increase employment and the Universities' contribution to the region's wealth;
- accelerate two-way knowledge transfer between the Universities and industry; and
- mobilise University skill resources to contribute to the region's efforts to build more inclusive, sustainable communities.

4.37 Any land use implications of regional significance which may arise from Universities' Economic Compact, and of the requirements of other higher education establishments in the region should be incorporated into RPG1 as part of the early review in 2002/03.

Information & Communications Technology (ICT)

4.38 Recent progress in information technology has led to an increased demand for high quality and suitably serviced sites to attract businesses from this expanding sector of the market. The region already has a wide variety of sites and premises suitable for industries that are capable of accommodating information and communications technology. ICT also has the potential to influence travel behaviour, for example by the provision of call-centres, facilitating shopping from home, encouraging home working, and enabling access to training and education.

4.39 The availability of high standard ICT facilities is important in creating new employment, influencing business location, and extending opportunities in the region. National policy is to make access more generally available, achieve greater integration between providers and encourage changes in working patterns which involve less travel. In May 1999 the Prime Minister launched Northern Informatics Regional Electronic Economy Programme (REEP). The particular needs of rural areas have also been highlighted in the strategy prepared by Northern Informatics *'Avoiding Exclusion: the Challenge of Shaping the Information Society in the Rural North'*. Telecommunications can create more opportunities in rural areas, but the remoter rural areas depend more heavily on radio or satellite technology. Care needs to be taken in minimising the environmental impact of the necessary infrastructure.

4.40 The North East's conurbations and main towns should be directly connected to the highest quality ICT networks and therefore development plans should enable the necessary

infrastructure to be installed. Pressure for the development of facilities is increasing and it is important to establish policies and liaison procedures that minimise their environmental impact through sharing of facilities where practicable. Development Plans should establish strategic priorities for providing access from rural areas in order to guide investment decisions. Opportunities should also be taken to use developing telecommunications technology in traffic management and in improving information available to public transport users.

EL6 – ICT Services

Development Plans and other strategies should seek to provide flexible responses to rapidly changing demands for both the location of ICT businesses and the provision of links to enable e-businesses. In particular, plans and strategies should:

- **ensure the roll out of ICT networks to existing urban areas and main rural service centres, communities, business parks and industrial estates;**
- **seek to identify a variety of sites for high quality development and the application of modern technology;**
- **ensure sites have a high environmental quality and be easily accessible by public transport;**
- **give preference to previously-developed land; and**
- **consider greenfield allocations only where no viable alternative exists.**

Plans and strategies should also ensure that the process of ICT development does not lead to a further cycle of obsolescence and disuse of buildings, creating new calls on public funds for regeneration. Adaptation and re-use of existing sites and buildings should take precedence over the release of greenfield land for these purposes.

Airports, Port and Rail-based Development

4.41 The region possesses a range of strategic rail, sea and air transport nodes that are of key importance to the region both in terms of providing gateways to goods and services, and for passenger movement to other regions and beyond. These nodes offer a high level of accessibility and specialised facilities that are attractive to a wide range of developments. Policies T6, T16 and T17 in Chapter 5 provide guidance on their role in supporting the regional economy.

4.42 Whilst in support of RPG1's transport objectives it is important to locate development to make the best use of these nodes, it is, however, necessary to ensure that the nodes, and their potential for expansion, are not put at risk by inappropriate development.

4.43 The sustainable development and expansion of Newcastle and Teesside international airports for airport-related development should be encouraged to improve links with Europe and beyond, and because they in themselves can support the attraction of new development to the region and are significant sources of employment.

4.44 Work is continuing on the *Northern Regional Air Services Study* with the consultation process due to be completed by November 2002. The study is considering, amongst other things, the respective roles of Newcastle and Teesside airports within the region. This study will subsequently inform the development of an Air Transport White Paper. The spatial implications of the study will need to be reflected in a future review of RPG1.

4.45 Sites adjacent to ports and deep-water passages are unique assets and should be protected where they have a realistic potential for port-related purposes. The North East *Regional Ports Study* reported in 2001. Its findings will inform the work underway on the Regional Transport Strategy, and subsequently the early review of RPG1. A number of the region's ports are close to or adjoin areas of international or national importance for nature conservation, which will need to be protected and taken into account when considering proposals for port development and expansion.

4.46 The region also has a number of smaller harbours that support a locally important fishing industry, and these should be protected. Some of the region's rivers may have potential for increased water-based commercial transportation.

4.47 The aim to achieve a significant increase in the movement of goods by rail means that sites adjacent to freight handling facilities are also an important resource. Further consideration is given to the transport implications of railways in Chapter 5 of this document.

EL7 – Airport, Port and Rail-based Development

In considering the potential of employment generating development at the region's major transport nodes Development Plans and other strategies should:

- **ensure that the development of land at or close to airports is restricted to airport related development, in order to avoid the loss of expansion potential;**
- **safeguard development sites adjacent to existing ports for industries and port-related services that will benefit from these locations;**
- **recognise the importance of development sites that are already connected or easily connected to the rail network and encourage their use by industries that are best placed to take advantage of the facilities or opportunities available;**
- **ensure protection of nature conservation interests, particularly in locations where designations of international significance (SPA, SAC and Ramsar) occur. In these circumstances only development that does not cause damage should be permitted.**

Rural Economy

4.48 The importance of encouraging regeneration of the rural areas of the region is recognised as one of the top priorities in the RPG1 strategy, and as complementary to the priorities for urban regeneration. The strategy also reflects the principles set out in the *England Rural Development Programme* (ERDP) (MAFF October 2000) and the *Rural White Paper* (DETR /

MAFF November 2000) by recognising that the region's rural areas have their own special economic and social problems. Although a range of employment opportunities exist in the market and other towns, much of the rural area suffers a combination of relative isolation and declining services, and a lack of affordable housing and employment opportunities. The particular needs of the region have been recognised by the designation of Rural Development Areas in Northumberland, east and west Durham, and east Cleveland.

4.49 The ERDP is a first step towards delivering an integrated rural policy. It identifies the key features of the North East as:

- significant dependence in rural areas on agriculture, forestry and fishing compared with the national average;
- overall reduction in rural population with net outflow of young people in particular;
- intra-regional disparity between the remote rural north-west, with harsh farming conditions and signs of rural deprivation, and the more prosperous south and east of the region;
- nationally important landscape and countryside, including extensive areas of remote uplands, coastline, rivers, rich biodiversity and Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site.

4.50 The problems of the rural area were exacerbated by the economic and social effects of the outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease. In the short term, foot and mouth continues to affect the region's farming industry and the consequential damage sustained by other rural businesses, particularly tourism, is also an ongoing concern. To address this a Rural Action Plan for the North East has been prepared to look to the future, decide what needs to change to bring about a lasting revival of the North East's rural economy, and how this can be delivered. It identifies 10 priority actions that will make the most difference to the North East's rural areas over the next 3 to 5 years to bring about a lasting revival of the rural economy. One of the priorities identified is developing an enabling planning system that facilitates sustainable rural development. Its guiding principle is that development plans should benefit rural economies and communities as well as the maintenance and enhancement of the environment. It states that development plans need to include policies that are consistent with sustainable development and enable rural diversification, including conversion of rural buildings for economic use, small-scale employment-related development, promoting teleworking and telematics, and providing good quality affordable housing.

4.51 The RES identifies five categories of regeneration initiative that will be embraced to accelerate the Region's rural renaissance:

- improving transport and ICT networks;
- developing rural business clusters;
- improving access to education, training employment and business support;
- regenerating towns and villages as "service nodes" and improving community services across all rural communities; and
- enhancing the region's natural assets.

Objectives for the Rural Economy

To ensure that the aims and objectives of the Rural White Paper, ERDP and the Rural Action Plan are met within a sustainable development framework the main objectives should be:

- **to protect and enhance the landscape;**
- **to conserve and enhance the region's habitats and species;**
- **to reduce waste, harmful emissions and pollution;**
- **to ensure a stronger, integrated rural economy;**
- **to ensure increased business competitiveness;**
- **to increase the added value of goods ands services produced in the North East;**
- **to increase the well-being of the region's population;**
- **to empower rural communities and maintain their distinctiveness and quality; and**
- **to improve access to services.**

4.52 The economic strategy for the rural areas of the region is based on diversifying the economy, improving access to a wide range of job opportunities for local people, and improving access to training, affordable childcare, public transport and business advice. Agriculture will remain an important employer in rural areas, but is having to adapt to new market conditions. Development Plan policies should be co-ordinated with other strategies and action plans to enable farming, and other rural industries (such as forestry, tourism, leisure and sport provision, cultural industries, food processing (including fish), catering and distribution) to develop and diversify through the provision of workspaces in new buildings and by conversion without damaging the environment.

Rur 1 – Facilitating Rural Regeneration

Development Plans and other strategies for rural areas should provide a positive framework for integrated rural development, linking business support and environmental enhancement, sustaining local communities, and improving access to ICT, whilst reducing the need for excessive commuting. This framework should be developed in accordance with the sequential test and sustainability principles set out in Policies DP1 and DP2.

4.53 In the North East the market towns and villages in rural areas that function as key rural service centres provide a range of important services for their extensive catchment areas, and they should continue to be supported. The North East Rural Action Plan sees investment in market towns and village service centres as a focal point for rural regeneration and the key to ensuring widespread access to modern services across the rural parts of the region. There is a hierarchy of such centres, the size and role of which varies across the region. Many have a high quality built environment. They will remain the main locations for regeneration and new development, including inward investment, in the rural areas, but this should be of a scale that is consistent with maintaining their character and environmental quality. Twelve towns

in the North East have been selected to participate in the Market Towns Initiative which seeks to create new job opportunities, restore high streets, improve local transport, the environment and encourage the involvement of local people and businesses in building better communities. These are: Barnard Castle, Middleton in Teesdale, Stanhope, Crook, Guisborough, Alnwick, Seahouses, Wooler, Haltwhistle, Hexham, Morpeth and Berwick upon Tweed. It is important that Development Plans identify these and other key rural service centres which allow for access to homes, jobs and services by a range of means of transport and establish their role in a structured hierarchy of regional, sub-regional and local service provision.

Rur 2 – Identification of Rural Service Centres

Development Plans should identify a hierarchy and the role of main and secondary rural service centres (including market towns and other key service centres) appropriate to the needs of the local community. Such hierarchies should be based on sub-regional and local service patterns, rather than local government boundaries, and take account of accessibility by a range of means of transport, recognising that the potential for using public transport, walking and cycling is more limited than in urban areas.

4.54 It is important that Development Plans provide clear guidance on the scale and location of appropriate development in rural service centres and other settlements. The maintenance and enhancement of a strong local economy requires the provision of suitable land for homes, services and businesses. It is also important that development plans include specific support for proposals that will assist the implementation of the Regional Electronic Economy Programme (REEP) and similar initiatives to improve access and use of ICT.

4.55 Outside these main rural service centres there is a network of secondary centres that provide a range of community facilities, retailing and employment opportunities for a more local catchment. It will be important for development plans to identify such centres and seek to protect and develop rural services and community facilities in order to maintain sustainable rural communities.

Rur 3 – Development in Rural Settlements

Development Plans and other strategies should ensure that settlements in the rural area provide for an appropriate scale of new development in accordance with the defined settlement hierarchy as set out in Policy Rur 2, and the sequential test and sustainability principles set out in Policies DP1 and DP2. Policies should:

- **meet the housing needs of local people;**
- **facilitate the expansion of existing businesses and development of new small and medium sized enterprises through an appropriate scale of new building and conversion;**
- **encourage proposals that add value to or support local businesses based on distinctive local products;**
- **seek to secure improvements in ICT networks; and**

- **seek to protect and improve the provision of critical rural service infrastructure (including schools, post offices, banks, shops, pubs, village halls, and petrol stations).**

4.56 The maintenance of a strong and vibrant agricultural sector is important to the region in several respects. In remote rural areas agriculture is still a significant employer and in all areas has a role to play in the maintenance of the appearance of the countryside. Even prior to the foot and mouth epidemic there were increasing economic pressures on agricultural businesses. Changes to the way agriculture is supported, particularly at the European level with the reform of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP), will have a significant affect upon those parts of the region most dependent on agriculture. In addition to this, initiatives to assist the recovery of the rural economy from foot and mouth will also lead to change as farmers explore alternative sources of income and employment.

4.57 The Government's agricultural strategy *"A New Direction for Agriculture"* promotes further reforms of CAP and redirects support to improve, not damage the environment. The Rural White Paper and North East Rural Action Plan seek to achieve a working countryside with a prosperous and diverse economy, and both recognise the need for a more diverse economic base in the rural area. The diversification of agricultural enterprises has a role to play in the broadening of the economic base. It can help strengthen farm business and protect against market fluctuations, and, in turn, this will assist in maintaining traditional farm practices and the resultant countryside character. The amendments to *PPG7: "The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development"* announced by the then Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions in March 2001 recognised that diversification into non-agricultural activities is vital to the continuing viability of many farm businesses, and that local planning authorities should be supportive of well-conceived farm diversification schemes.

Rur 4 – Agriculture

Development Plans and other strategies should recognise the importance of a strong agricultural sector. In order to facilitate structural change, resulting from reforms to the Common Agriculture Policy and the impact of the Foot and Mouth epidemic, development plans should also include positive policies for agricultural development and sustainable farm diversification. Such policies should be balanced with the need to ensure that new farm development is of a design and scale appropriate to their rural surroundings and does not have a detrimental effect on the environment.

4.58 Forestry is a significant activity in this region, through production from areas such as the Kielder Forest. Indeed, the North East is the most important English region for commercial forestry. Forestry can bring benefits to the regional economy as well as to landscape, nature conservation and recreation. To maximise the potential of the forestry industry in a sustainable way requires appropriate infrastructure and facilities that would allow the provision of integrated plant for processing close to source.

Rur 5 – Forestry

Development Plans and other strategies should maximise the potential of the forestry industry in a sustainable manner by making provision for appropriate infrastructure and facilities which would allow the provision of integrated plant for timber processing close to source and the development of related industries such as renewable energy generation.

Housing

4.59 One of the key priorities of the strategy set out in Chapter 2 is to promote an urban and rural renaissance in the region through the four strategy themes of Regeneration, Opportunity, Accessibility and Conservation. The strategy recognises the contribution to regeneration that is made from new housing and the improvement or demolition of unsatisfactory dwellings. The strategy is concerned with the provision of better housing as part of a much broader approach to creating improved urban living environments for the region's population. This reflects the Government's intention that everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home, that there should be a greater choice in housing and that housing should not reinforce social distinctions.

4.60 The Government is also committed to turning round the incidence of low demand for housing by 2010. This underlines the importance of adopting a more integrated approach to housing. This has been recognised by the North East Assembly (NEA) who are committed, as part of the review of RPG1 currently underway, to tackling the problems of older housing in conjunction with planning for new housing development. Pending this review, the policies in this section should be considered as interim guidance. In reviewing their approach to planning for housing it is important that the NEA, in its role as Regional Planning Body, and local planning authorities pay regard to the priorities of the Regional Housing Statement "*Housing in the North East – a Framework for Action*". This was produced in partnership with the Housing Corporation and published in June 2001. It was updated in March 2002 and work is now underway to develop the Regional Housing Statement into a strategic framework which will be published in Spring 2003.

Objectives for Housing Policy

4.61 **The policy objectives of RPG1 are:**

- **to ensure this housing strategy supports the spatial strategy set out in Chapter 2;**
- **to ensure that everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home;**
- **to ensure that there should be a greater choice of housing in sustainable locations, and that the best use is made of the existing stock, and suitable previously-developed land and buildings in urban areas in providing this choice;**
- **to ensure that the provision of additional housing does not result in, or exacerbate, problems of low demand and abandonment;**
- **to ensure that housing should not reinforce social exclusion;**
- **to stem population loss from the region, particularly through the reversal of net out-migration; and**
- **to integrate planning policy and implementation and the strategy, priorities and action points of the Regional Housing Statement.**

These objectives are supported by the following targets:

- **turn around the incidence of low demand for housing by 2010;**
- **provide by 2008, 60% of additional housing on previously-developed land and through conversions of existing buildings and by 2016, 65%;**
- **reduce the regional housing vacancy rate to 3%**

Existing Stock

4.62 The North East has a housing stock of some 1.1 million dwellings comprising a large stock of 19th century terraced housing together with pre- and post-war local authority housing. Owner occupation in the region has risen substantially over the last two decades and now forms a substantial part of the housing stock. In 2000, 63% of the regions households were owner occupied, 21% were rented from local authorities, 8% rented from a registered social landlord and 8% rented from a private landlord.

4.63 It is anticipated that the majority of housing needs and provision of choice in terms of housing type and location will be met within the existing stock. Failure to maintain and make good use of these dwellings will increase the number of empty properties, lead to pressures for unnecessary land release and undermine urban regeneration. It is equally important that existing areas of housing should contribute positively to the attractive urban environment that is essential to securing a thriving regional economy. It is therefore crucial that development plans and other strategies integrate planning for housing with policies and proposals for transport, regeneration, crime and environmental improvement so as to ensure that a high priority is afforded to making the best use of existing dwellings and improving the quality of residential environments. Plans should also ensure that new commercial and other development important to the life of a community is accessible to existing residential areas by a range of means of transport, in particular public transport, walking and cycling. Plans should support the sustainable regeneration of the region and avoid the unnecessary development of greenfield sites.

4.64 In April 2002 the Government announced nine Pathfinder Housing Market Renewal Initiatives in Northern England and the Midlands to tackle the problems resulting from housing market failure. The issue of low demand in the North East has been recognised by Government in identifying Newcastle/Gateshead as one of the Pathfinder Initiatives. This initiative has significant regional, sub-regional and local implications particularly in relation to targets for population increase, housing markets, housing land supply and urban capacity. Its aims are to take an integrated sub-regional approach to addressing low demand, and effectively link housing, planning and economic policy.

4.65 In addition to the Pathfinder Initiative, the recent study prepared by the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (CURS) of the University of Birmingham "North East England: changing housing markets and urban regeneration" (June 2002) provides a clearer picture of the causes and extent of the problem of low demand housing in the North East. This identifies five zones of low demand problems emerging in the North East:

- along the River Tyne in Newcastle, Gateshead, North Tyneside and South Tyneside;
- Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, and Stockton;

- Sunderland;
- Hartlepool; and
- scattered pockets of South East Northumberland and the Durham coalfield.

4.66 The analysis indicates that 20% of the regional housing stock is at risk of experiencing problems of low or changing demand. This increasing evidence base shows that low demand and abandonment is a regionally significant issue which needs to be addressed. Improvement of the housing stock and creation of attractive urban environments are vital to the achievement of an urban renaissance for the North East. However, if improvements are to be sustained they will need to be associated with a broad range of actions to regenerate local communities and improve the wider local environment.

4.67 The regional housing vacancy rate is currently an average of 4.5%. The aim is to reduce vacancy levels to 3% by 2010, which is consistent with the national target. The delivery of this aim will be dependent upon the strategies and programmes to be implemented by local housing authorities and other housing partners.

4.68 While the emphasis will be on retention and refurbishment of the existing dwelling stock, there will still be a need to clear housing which is unfit, or beyond economic repair. Clearance of housing in good condition may also prove to be necessary to secure the regeneration of an area, particularly where there is reduced demand and abandonment.

4.69 Anticipated future levels of clearance in the region are uncertain. Recent levels have been low and focused largely on post-war housing built by local authorities. However, this is likely to change as a result of a number of initiatives being undertaken by local authorities. The provision of replacement dwellings for cleared stock is integral to determining the appropriate level of housing provision and must be fully addressed in the early review of RPG1. Given the poor quality, and lack of demand for, some of the older housing stock which may be demolished, this review, development plans and other strategies must recognise that replacement dwellings will not always be required. This is particularly so in the case of empty dwellings. In the interim, in providing for the annual average rates sought by Policy H2, Development Plans should not seek compensatory housing provision for dwellings removed from the stock because of low demand and abandonment.

H1 – Existing Housing Stock, Housing Clearance and Renewal

To ensure an integrated approach is adopted to housing renewal, clearance and urban regeneration, Development Plans and other strategies, including the Regional Economic Strategy and the Regional Housing Strategy, should:

- **support initiatives, mechanisms and resources for improvements to both public and private sector housing;**
- **consider whether the needs of regeneration can best be addressed by improvement of existing stock or whether demolition represents a better option as part of a broader course of action to regenerate local communities, improve the environment and increase numbers of and access to local jobs;**
- **give high priority to making the best use of existing dwellings and previously-developed land and buildings in urban areas so as to minimise the need to develop new housing on greenfield sites; and**

- **identify and implement measures to reduce regional vacancy levels in the existing housing stock to 3% by 2010.**

Regional Housing Provision

4.70 Policy H2 sets out the overall provision for new housing in the form of annual average rates for each strategic planning area to 2006 in Table 4.3. In arriving at the annual rates for housing provision and the distribution between sub areas of the region, the following factors have been taken into account:

- the vision set out in RPG1 of a dynamic economy, a healthy environment and a society where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their full potential;

- the strategy contained in Chapter 2 and the approach to the location of development as set out in policies DP1 and DP2 to achieve the regional vision;

- current knowledge of the availability of land and buildings in urban areas suitable for housing development;

- the links between improving and reusing the existing housing stock, its renewal where necessary and the need for additional dwellings; and

- environmental and other policy considerations.

4.71 The annual rates reflect the aspirations of the strategy to stem population loss. This is balanced by the need to address the Government's commitment to turning round the incidence of low demand housing by 2010 and avoid exacerbating the problem of abandonment of housing stock in the region. They are set at a level above those implied by the 1996-based household projections.

4.72 Given the inherent uncertainties in the strategy, and the fact the economic renaissance sought will take time to secure, it is not appropriate to move to the higher annual rates set out in Table 4.4 until monitoring indicates this is appropriate. These annual rates are therefore indicative until confirmed by the early review of RPG1 already underway. Drawing from up-to-date work on urban housing capacity, this review will also assign between the Tyne, Wear and Tees conurbations the unallocated annual rates set out in Tables 4.3 and 4.4.

4.73 The indicators set out in Chapter 7 should be central to this monitoring and review, and reported on in the annual monitoring reports produced by the NEA. It is expected that the move to the higher rates of provision for the second half of the guidance period will only be justified if:

- there is evidence of household growth resulting from the economic renaissance of the region and stemming of out-migration; and

- it is demonstrated that the increased provision will not adversely affect the successful regeneration of areas of low demand nor give rise to further abandonment.

H2 – Housing Distribution

Development Plans should provide for housing to achieve over the period 2002-2006 the annual average rates set out in Table 4.3 below, and post 2006, those set out in Table 4.4.

The annual rates of provision set out in Table 4.4 are subject to confirmation through the early review of RPG1 to be informed by the indicators set out in Chapter 7 and up-to-date work on urban housing capacity.

With the exception of demolitions of empty dwellings arising from low demand and abandonment, the annual rates of housing provision should be provided for in development plans as net additions to the stock. In other words there should be no compensatory housing provision for demolitions of empty dwellings arising from low demand and abandonment. The annual rates of housing provision include dwellings gained from conversions.

Table 4.3 **Annual Average Rates of Housing Provision 2002-2006**

Strategic Planning Area		2002-2006
Tees Valley		**1,250**
Durham		**1,050**
Northumberland		**700**
Tyne and Wear		**1,850**
Gateshead	*350*	
Newcastle upon Tyne	*350*	
North Tyneside	*600*	
South Tyneside	*150*	
Sunderland	*400*	
Unallocated		**200**
North East Region		**5,050**

Table 4.4 **Indicative Annual Average Rates of Housing Provision post 2006**

Strategic Planning Area		Post 2006
Tees Valley		**1,500**
Durham		**1,250**
Northumberland		**800**
Tyne and Wear		**2,250**
Gateshead	*450*	
Newcastle upon Tyne	*450*	
North Tyneside	*700*	
South Tyneside	*150*	
Sunderland	*500*	
Unallocated		**200**
North East Region		**6,000**

The Managed Release of Sites

4.74 Priority should be given to the reuse of suitable previously-developed land and buildings in urban areas. Greenfield releases should not fuel abandonment in the region's urban areas, and where they are necessary they should help secure sustainable developments.

4.75 The management of the release of land is a matter for development plans, reflecting the good practice guidance set out in *"Planning to Deliver"* (DTLR, 2001). Policies should be based on an up-to-date assessment of urban housing capacity and the objectives set out in RPG1. The early review of RPG1 should fully address the scope for sub-regional mechanisms to ensure that the release of greenfield land in one part of the region does not undermine the urban renaissance of other parts of the region. This emphasises the need for the early completion of urban housing capacity studies. In the meantime, Development Plans should include policies which avoid the development of greenfield land releases where this could undermine the renaissance of the region's urban areas, and the strategy set out in RPG1.

H3 – Managed Release of Land for Housing
Development Plans should incorporate policies to ensure that the managed release of land and buildings for housing accord with the principles set out in Policies DP1 and DP2 and Policy H2. Policies should be underpinned by up-to-date urban housing capacity studies and give priority to the re-use of suitable previously-developed land and buildings in urban areas. Consideration should be given to the wider effects of greenfield land releases so as to avoid undermining the renaissance of the region's urban areas.

Urban Housing Capacity

4.76 The Government is committed to maximising the re-use of previously-developed land and the conversion of buildings for housing in order to promote regeneration and to minimise the amount of greenfield land being taken for development. The national target is that by 2008, 60% of additional housing should be provided on previously-developed land or through conversions. Work has already been carried out at a regional level to make preliminary judgements and this is set out in the Regional Urban Capacity Study 1998, and its update to 2001, and the Regional Brownfield Study 2000. In addition to this, Local Authorities throughout the region are carrying out urban housing capacity studies of their areas as a basis for their development plans, and to inform the early review of RPG1.

4.77 The National Land Use Database (NLUD) project was undertaken to provide central and local government with information on the amounts of previously-developed land that may be available for redevelopment. The information is collected and published on an annual basis. The most recent results, show that in the North East in 2001, 4,930 ha of previously-developed land and buildings are unused, or underused, and may be available for development. 1,740 ha of this has been identified as potentially suitable for housing.

4.78 On the basis of this early work on urban capacity and the results of the NLUD, it is clear that substantial potential exists in the North East to accommodate new housing on previously developed land and through conversions. However, the regional performance on delivering the Government's target is poor. Between 1997 and 2000 the North East achieved an average of 46% of additional dwellings on previously-developed land. It is the aim of this guidance to

improve on past performance and ensure that by 2008 60% of additional housing is provided on previously-developed land and through conversions of existing buildings, and that by 2016 the target of at least 65% is achieved.

4.79 It is clear that the availability of suitable previously-developed land and buildings varies across the region. Therefore, this overall target is likely to be achieved by differential performance between authorities. Precise and challenging targets for the reuse of previously developed land and buildings for each local authority area should be set out in Development Plans, on the basis of detailed urban housing capacity studies. Local authorities should consider the implications of the potential capacity which will arise through demolition and clearance. This work on urban housing capacity should also feed into the early review of RPG1, which will assess the regions performance in meeting the recycling targets, consider whether they are sufficiently challenging, and identify sub-regional targets.

H4 – Re-use of Previously-developed Land and Buildings

Development Plans and other strategies should ensure that maximum use is made of suitable opportunities within existing settlements to re-use previously developed land and buildings in accordance with the sequential test and sustainability principles set out in Policies DP1 and DP2.

Development Plans should set challenging targets for the re-use of previously developed land in order to achieve by 2008 a regional average of 60% of additional housing on previously-developed land or through conversions and by 2016 a regional average of 65% of new housing on previously-developed land and through the conversion of buildings. Progress towards the achievement of targets set in Development Plans should be monitored and reviewed as appropriate so as to ensure the achievement of regional and sub-regional targets.

Other Housing Issues

4.80 It will not be possible when preparing plans to identify all of the redevelopment opportunities that may arise during the life of the plan. Local planning authorities should therefore make realistic assumptions with regard to potential windfall sites which may become available on previously-developed land and buildings. Government policy is clear that no allowance should be made for greenfield windfalls.

H5 – Windfall Sites

Development Plans should include criteria based policies to assess the suitability of windfall sites on the basis of the sequential test and sustainability principles set out in Policies DP1 and DP2.

No allowance should be made for greenfield windfall sites.

4.81 Local planning authorities should address through their Development Plans appropriate densities for housing development in order to secure the efficient use of land (and thereby minimise the amount of greenfield land required for future development). Local authorities should avoid developments that make inefficient use of land (those of less than 30 dwellings per hectare net) and encourage those that make more efficient use of land (between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare net). Greater intensity of development is sought at places with good public transport accessibility.

H6 – Housing Density

Development Plans should include policies on densities that seek to accommodate new housing in a manner that is consistent with the principle of making more efficient use of land.

In formulating plan policies and proposals, account should be taken of local character and market considerations as well as encouraging good and safe design, layout and amenity. In cases where clearance and replacement of older high density housing is involved there may be some circumstances when it may be appropriate to lower the overall density of an area to improve the environment and quality of life for residents.

The preparation of design statements as supplementary planning guidance can provide the opportunity to consider and provide advice on such matters and the environment of residential areas in greater detail.

4.82 Good quality affordable housing available to those unable to compete in the general market forms part of the vision of RPG1. An adequate supply of affordable housing can also be essential to the economic well-being of parts of the region. In some areas, particularly those rural areas within commuting distance of the conurbations, and villages in the remoter rural areas, the housing market has not met the housing needs of people on modest or low incomes. This can create serious imbalances in the population of rural communities, reducing the available workforce to rural businesses and undermining local service provision. Local authorities should plan to meet the housing requirements of the whole community, including those in need of affordable housing. Development Plan policies should reflect PPG3 and DETR Circular 6/98.

H7 – Affordable Housing

Development Plans should incorporate the results of up-to-date local housing needs surveys and should address the need for affordable housing in their areas. Where need is clearly established, they should:

- **make provision for a range of dwelling types and sizes to meet the assessed needs of all sectors of the community, including the elderly and disabled;**
- **ensure that affordable housing is provided where it is needed and where there is good public transport to employment and services;**
- **set out clearly the mix of dwelling types that would be expected in different parts of the plan area against which development proposals can be assessed;**
- **include policies for securing an adequate supply of affordable housing, based on local housing strategies, which in turn should be based on robust local assessments of need; and**
- **take account of the special housing needs of agricultural or forestry workers. Such housing should only be permitted where a clear, essential need has been established.**

Appropriate policies should be included in Development Plans to make clear the local authority's position on the use of the exceptions policy.

Green Belt and Open Land

4.83 Policies on the Green Belt settlement boundaries and green wedges have an important role in sustaining urban communities by helping to concentrate development in urban areas. The existing North East Green Belt extends to 530 km^2 (representing 6% of the land in the region) and has a vital role in checking the unrestrained sprawl of Tyneside and Wearside and in preventing the conurbation merging with surrounding settlements.

4.84 In the 1960's, areas of Green Belt were designated around the Tyne and Wear conurbation, including areas in Northumberland to the north west of Newcastle and along the Tyne Valley. The boundaries within the conurbation were reviewed in the 1980's in the Tyne and Wear Green Belt Local Plan. More recently, further amendments have been progressed through the development plan system to extend the green belt:

- into North Tyneside and South East Northumberland;
- to the west of Hexham in Northumberland;
- in south Gateshead/north west and central Durham; and
- between Sunderland and Seaham.

4.85 Deletions have also been carried out to accommodate Newcastle Great Park and to create a window around Newcastle International Airport. The resultant Green Belt forms an almost complete band of protected land around Tyne and Wear, including adjacent areas of Northumberland and County Durham.

GB1 – Role of the North East Green Belt
The role and purpose of the Green Belt in the North East Region is to:

- **safeguard the countryside from encroachment and check the unrestricted sprawl of Tyneside and Wearside;**
- **check urban sprawl around and prevent the merging of:**
  - **Sunderland with Seaham, Houghton-le-Spring, Washington or Tyneside;**
  - **Gateshead with Hebburn, Washington, Birtley or Whickham;**
  - **Washington with Chester-le-Street;**
  - **Newcastle upon Tyne with Ponteland, Newcastle Airport, or Cramlington;**
  - **North Tyneside with Cramlington or Blyth; and**
  - **Durham City with Chester-le-Street;**

- **preserve the setting and special character of Durham City, Hexham and Corbridge; and**

- **thereby assist the regeneration of the urban areas contained by, and coalfield areas that lie beyond, the Green Belt.**

The broad extent of the Green Belt should be maintained with the alterations set out in GB2.

4.86 A major role of the Green Belt in the region, as outlined in GB1, is the protection of the setting and character of historic towns. The Green Belt already extends around Durham City to the South and Hexham to the west. Morpeth, which lies to the north of Newcastle, is under significant pressure for development of a scale and nature that could damage its character. It has been accepted that the pressures around the town could not be addressed by existing policies and that an extension of the green belt to surround the town would be consistent with advice in PPG2. The broad extent of the expanded Green Belt should be set out in an alteration to the Northumberland Structure Plan with the Castle Morpeth Local Plan determining the precise boundaries. They should ensure that only land which is required to be kept permanently open is included within the Green Belt and that detailed boundaries are drawn to ensure the maintenance of the role of the town in the long term without making provision for substantial commuter led housing development. Once established, it would be inappropriate to alter the new Green Belt boundary within the foreseeable future, except in the most exceptional circumstances.

4.87 This version of RPG1 establishes the need for the identification of an additional Strategic Employment Site in the general location of 'North of Sunderland' (Policy EL4). Whilst the specific location of this site is uncertain at present, it is clear that land will need to be deleted from the Green Belt to facilitate the allocation and development of the site. The area of search straddles the Local Authority boundaries between Sunderland, Gateshead and South Tyneside. In order that the site can be allocated and released for development in a co-ordinated manner and that it is not developed in a piecemeal fashion, it is important to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the progression of Development Plan reviews to address this deletion.

GB2 – Green Belt Extension / Alterations

(i) The Green Belt will be extended northwards to encircle Morpeth in order to:

- **protect the countryside around Morpeth from encroachment;**

- **prevent the sprawl and coalescence of the town and neighbouring smaller settlements;**

- **protect the character of the historic town; and**

- **focus development on priority areas for regeneration.**

Alterations to the Northumberland Structure Plan should establish the general extent of the enlarged Green Belt with the precise boundaries established in a review of the Castle Morpeth Local Plan.

The general principle for setting the extent of the Green Belt is that boundaries should be established that will endure and that they be carefully drawn so as not to include land that it is unnecessary to keep permanently open. The outer limit should provide a sufficiently wide, defensible boundary that will enable the Green Belt to fulfil its functions in accordance with the guidance in PPG2. The inner boundary around Morpeth should be drawn to ensure that there is sufficient land to maintain the role of the town in the long term.

(ii) Land will be deleted from the Green Belt to accommodate the development of a strategic employment site to the 'North of Sunderland', as set out in Policy EL4. Alterations to the Sunderland, Gateshead and South Tyneside Unitary Development Plans should be brought forward in a planned and co-ordinated manner to establish a detailed green belt boundary around the site. The boundary should be drawn on the basis of Policy EL4 and the resultant joint development brief.

4.88 The implementation of RPG1 should not require any change to the general extent of the Green Belt for the foreseeable future, with the exception of those outlined in GB2. However, monitoring of development patterns and change may raise strategic matters relating to the role and purpose of the North East Green Belt, the RPG1 strategy or matters of cross boundary importance which it would be appropriate to address at the regional or sub regional level. These matters and their implications for the green belt should be addressed, justified and tested on the basis of the advice in PPG2 and the strategy of this guidance, through a future review of RPG1.

4.89 In addition, there may be a need for locally significant changes to the detailed Green Belt boundaries to accommodate development where it meets the wider principles of sustainable development in comparison with other development options; or where it is justified by reference to the capacity of urban areas and the need to enable development to proceed which meets the aims of the strategy in this guidance. These minor changes would not materially harm the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy in the area concerned and should be justified on the basis of exceptional circumstances through the Development Plan process.

4.90 Any proposed changes to the Green Belt should be related to a longer timescale than other aspects of the Development Plan. Therefore where such changes are proposed, consideration should be given to designating safeguarded land related to it, in accordance with advice in Annex B of PPG2.

GB3 – Future changes to Green Belt boundaries.

The boundaries of the North East Green Belt should be altered only in exceptional circumstances. Any future alterations should be considered and justified on the basis of exceptional circumstances through a review of RPG1 where matters relate to:

- **the purpose of the Green Belt as set out in GB1;**
- **the RPG1 strategy and direction of long term development; or**
- **alterations which are not contained entirely within one Local Authority Area;**

Other locally significant changes, which would not conflict with the purposes of the green belt as set out in GB1, should be justified on the basis of exceptional circumstances through the Development Plan process.

Open Land

4.91 Around the Tees Valley conurbation and in settlements in the more rural areas of the Region, open land policies have been applied for a number of years. This policy approach has been successful in focussing development in such a way as to make best use of existing infrastructure and services, limiting the spread of development, and retaining land in open uses. It is considered appropriate to maintain this policy approach, in conjunction with the sequential approach to development and sustainability criteria set out in Policies DP1 and DP2, to ensure that future development needs are met in the most sustainable manner.

4.92 In making decisions on the location of development, it is important to ensure that open areas which are important for recreational or amenity purposes are maintained. In particular, green wedges formed, for example by valleys or other natural features, perform a valuable function in linking rural areas with urban centres.

OL1 – Open Land
Development Plans and other strategies should ensure that:

- **a review of settlement boundaries is carried out on the basis of Policies DP1 and DP2 in order to meet development needs in the most sustainable manner, for the period up to 2016; and**

- **open land of recreational or amenity value is protected from development.**

Town Centres, Retailing and Commercial Leisure

4.93 The Region's urban centres include Newcastle, the regional capital, Sunderland, Middlesbrough, and town and district centres in urban and rural areas. The Metro Centre, an out-of-centre regional shopping centre, is located within the Tyneside conurbation. There are a number of out-of-centre retail locations, including retail parks and free-standing units within the urban areas or on the periphery of towns.

4.94 Other larger towns' centres, such as Durham City, Darlington and Hartlepool, act as a focus for attracting inward investment and help promote the region. A number of town and city centres are important historically. The region's town centres contain significant levels of public and private sector investment. They have a mix of land uses and provide high levels of accessibility by a variety of modes of transport to employment, cultural, leisure, tourist, social, health and community facilities. They are important to the quality of life in the region, and in some cases their influence extends outside the North East. The retail function underpins these centres. However, some town and local centres in the Region have suffered decline as a result of changing retail patterns and other economic factors, and may now be marginal.

4.95 The concentration of the types of uses that generate a large number of trips in locations well served by public transport plays a key role in delivering a more sustainable pattern of development.

4.96 There is pressure in some parts of the region for large-scale commercial leisure developments. Development Plans will need to identify suitable sites in existing centres for schemes which include cinemas, night-clubs, bowling alleys, pubs, restaurants and other entertainment. The vitality and viability of town centres, in particular their evening economy, is assisted where there is diversification of land uses.

TC1 – Town Centres

Development plans and other strategies should ensure that town centres continue to be the focus for a wide range of activities and uses that will maintain and enhance their vitality and viability, encourage investment and support sustainable development.

Measures to improve the vitality and viability of town centres should also secure the protection and enhancement of their built and natural environment, taking into account features of local distinctiveness, and cultural and historic characteristics. Uses such as shopping, offices, leisure, entertainment, hospitals and higher education which generate a large number of trips should be concentrated in town centres, where they can be well served by public transport and reduce the need to travel. Other smaller-scale facilities, such as health centres, branch libraries, local offices, primary schools, pubs and restaurants, should be encouraged in district and local centres.

4.97 Newcastle, Sunderland and Middlesbrough contain higher-order services and functions not available in smaller town centres. Darlington, although smaller, provides a wide range of services to a large hinterland that crosses the regional boundary with Yorkshire. The Metro Centre also provides higher-order retail facilities, but a more limited range of other functions and attracts a much lower proportion of visitors by public transport. The hierarchy identified in TC2 may need to be reviewed following the development of a regional strategy for retail and leisure development which is to be incorporated into RPG1 as part of its early review in 2002/03.

TC2 – Hierarchy of Centres

Development Plans should set out a hierarchy of centres (city, town, district and local) which:

- **reflects the importance of the centres of Newcastle, Sunderland, Middlesbrough and Darlington in terms of their economic, social and cultural vitality and their promotional and future investment potential as the focus for major new retail development, so as to harness it in the regeneration of these centres;**

- **reflects the current role of the Metro Centre as an existing out-of-centre regional retailing facility;**

- **enhances the vitality and viability of existing town and city centres by:**

  - **maintaining an attractive, safe and secure environment;**

  - **ensuring good accessibility including measures to assist pedestrians and cyclist movement;**
  - **identifying development, redevelopment and refurbishment opportunities;**
  - **encouraging complementary land uses;**
  - **promoting town centre management; and**

- **reflects the importance of key rural service centres in providing a wide range of services to their rural hinterland.**

4.98 Local planning authorities should ensure that their town centres remain the focus for the majority of new retail, leisure and commercial development and steps should be taken to protect the vitality and viability of existing centres.

TC3 – Function of Centres

City, town, district and local centres should be the focus for the majority of new retail, leisure and commercial development. Development Plans and other strategies should:

- **promote and protect the vitality and viability of existing centres;**
- **acknowledge that the role of centres may change over time;**
- **review the role of marginal/declining town and district centres and consider how they can be managed to meet changing retail patterns by supporting the reuse of land and buildings to secure their regeneration; and**
- **consider the scope for new or replacement district and local centres and the criteria to be applied in considering possible locations and, where appropriate, contain specific proposals for their development. Any such proposals should be an integral part of an appropriate scale, mixed-use development and should be assessed against the strategy in the Development Plan.**

4.99 While town centres remain the focus of public transport provision, local authorities should take an integrated approach to transport in order to enhance town centre accessibility and avoid the destructive potential for competitive provision of parking. Further guidance on parking is given in paragraphs 5.52 – 5.62.

TC4 – Traffic Management

Development Plans should:

- **include traffic management policies for town centres to improve the quality of service offered by public transport;**
- **include policies for the provision/management of parking in town centres and at out-of-centre locations to reinforce the attractiveness and competitiveness of town centres and support the locational policies set out in PPG13;**

- **promote the improvement of public transport to existing town and out-of-centre retail and business developments, including the Metro Centre;**

- **adopt parking policies which set maximum levels of parking provision appropriate to broad classes of development and locations as soon as these can be agreed, and, in the interim, to apply the national parking standards as set out in Annex B to PPG13 until such time as regionally-specific standards are agreed as part of the Regional Transport Strategy; and**

- **include policies to discourage long-term commuter parking in town centres and to restrict parking at out-of-centre locations.**

Retail Development

4.100 The retail function underpins the region's town centres and in order to promote retail development, development plans should confirm that town centres will be the preferred location for new retail development.

4.101 The role of RPG1 is to identify a network of town and city centres and propose a broad strategy for their development. The early review of RPG1 should reflect the findings of the study to assess the need for further retail or leisure developments. This will inform the strategic choices of how any future retail growth should be best distributed to contribute to an urban renaissance, social inclusion and the creation of a more sustainable pattern of development. National planning policy indicates that the main focus for any such growth should be in existing town centres.

RD1 – Retail Development

Development Plans and other strategies should ensure that the preferred location for new retail development is in existing centres in accordance with advice in PPG6. In line with revised guidance, after establishing the need for additional retail floorspace, Development Plans should:

- **identify which centres should be the focus for retail development;**

- **identify sites to accommodate such developments in accordance with the sequential approach;**

- **include criteria-based policies for assessing development proposals for sites not allocated in the plan, based on an assessment of need and a sequential approach to site selection;**

- **ensure that proposals for retail development outside existing centres, in a location or of a scale which adversely affect the vitality and viability of existing centres, are refused; and**

- **ensure that retail developments are located where they will reduce the need to travel and are easily accessible by modes of transport other than by car.**

4.102 In rural areas, retailing and other key service facilities are vital for the maintenance of balanced communities and can reduce the need for travel. Development should be encouraged in the most accessible locations, such as market towns and rural service centres, whilst recognising that the potential for using public transport and other non-car modes is more limited than in urban areas. Proposals for farm shops should be considered in light of advice contained in Annex C of *PPG7: The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development.*

RD2 – Retailing in Rural Areas

The development of retail services in rural areas should be encouraged primarily at the most accessible locations, such as market towns or rural service centres, through a range of modes of transport, in particular by public transport, walking and cycling. Development Plans should:

- **set out a hierarchy of centres in rural areas on the basis of Policies Rur2 and Rur3;**
- **ensure that the scale of retail provision is appropriate to the role, function and character of the centre;**
- **encourage retention and improvement of existing retail facilities within settlements in order to sustain viable local communities;**
- **encourage a flexible and innovative approach to the development of alternative forms of service provision in rural areas which facilitates the creation and retention of appropriate services; and**
- **resist proposals for retail provision in areas not well served by public transport or readily accessible to a local residential population.**

Out-of-Centre Retail Developments

4.103 New additional out-of-centre regional or sub-regional shopping facilities could put at risk the continued vitality and viability of the region's town and city centres, and frustrate the ability to facilitate the urban renaissance of existing centres in the region, one of the key aims of Government policy. Existing centres provide a full range of commercial, leisure, cultural and social facilities, and are generally accessible by public transport, cycling and walking.

4.104 The Region has one regional-scale, out-of-centre shopping centre at the Metro Centre, in addition to a number of smaller sub-regional out-of-centre developments, including Royal Quays and Silverlink (North Tyneside), and Portrack Lane and Teesside Retail Park (Stockton on Tees). Any expansion of retail use at these centres is likely to have a significant impact on the vitality and viability of existing town and city centres and must be carefully examined within the context of the aims of RPG1 and PPG6.

4.105 It is important for the early review of RPG1 to consider the long-term future of the Metro Centre and other sub-regional retail facilities and establish the policy approach to their future roles. This work will be informed by the regional retail needs assessment. Taking into account the Metro Centre and existing and proposed out-of-centre retail developments, it is not

considered that there is scope for further major out-of-centre retail development within the Region.

RD3 – Out-of-Centre Shopping Centres
Development Plans should not make provision for new out-of-centre retail development of regional or sub-regional significance.

Urban Commercial Leisure Development

4.106 Urban commercial leisure developments should support the role of town centres and therefore the same locational principles should apply to these proposals as for retail development. The Regional Retail Needs Assessment Study is also looking at leisure development. The findings of the study should be incorporated into the early review of RPG1 in 2002/03.

LD1 – Urban Commercial Leisure Development
Development Plans and other strategies should ensure that proposals for urban commercial leisure developments are treated in the same way as retail proposals.

Sport and Recreation

4.107 Sport and recreation is an important part of the region's heritage and culture and is central to social well-being and improving the quality of life. Participation rates are generally increasing, reflecting the growing importance of health and fitness in everyday life. As well as social benefits, sport and recreation, including informal recreation, also has an important role to play in strengthening the regional economy. Sport and recreation help to provide a physical and cultural environment that promotes the Region and attracts investors and visitors. Improved sports provision can also assist in inner city regeneration.

4.108 The region contains a number of unique resources that are of strategic importance for sport and recreation, the potential of which should be realised more fully.

Objectives for Sport and Recreation
Adequate provision should be made for both organised and informal sport and recreation on the basis of a rigorous analysis of current deficiencies and anticipated future demand.

4.109 In September 2001, The North East Sports Board produced a North East Sports Strategy for the period to 2006. This highlights the growing role that sport can play in support of social and economic policy objectives, and its contribution to the quality of life of the region's population. It is important to have a co-ordinated policy approach within the Region. The spatial implications of the North East Sports Strategy should be reflected in the early review of RPG1 and Development Plans.

SR1 – Sport & Recreation

Development Plans and other strategies should address the growing and increasingly varied demands for sport and recreation, including the recreation/open space needs of strategic development. They should ensure that recreational and sports facilities are accessible to all sections of the community and that the provision of new facilities and infrastructure takes place within a framework of policy for the environment and, where relevant, wildlife interests. Similarly, plans should seek to minimise and resolve conflicts between different activities.

4.110 The region's countryside and coast includes National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coast designations. The promotion of opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of National Parks is one of their statutory purposes. Recreation and tourism are also significant in the economy of the region's National Parks. New recreation and tourism developments must be of a scale and nature that respects the Parks' special character. Large-scale tourist attractions, by their nature, would not be appropriate in the National Parks. Whilst recreation is not an objective of the designation of AONBs and Heritage Coasts, these areas play a significant role as recreational and tourism destinations. Policies towards tourism and recreation development and management should respect the very differing characters of the region's AONBs and Heritage Coasts.

4.111 Some forms of recreation and certain sports, that may cause noise or erosion, require access to the region's natural environment, which provides the resource enabling participation in the activity.

SR2 – Sport & Recreation in the Countryside

Development Plans and other strategies should ensure that proposals for sport and recreation in the countryside:

- **are of a scale and nature that respect the character of the location;**
- **do not have a significantly adverse impact on the environment and local amenity;**
- **where possible, are accessible by a range of modes of transport, particularly public transport, walking and cycling; and**
- **where recreation and leisure developments are potentially intrusive and damaging, are accommodated in a manner that does not adversely affect the environment and local amenity.**

Wherever possible, encouragement should be given to proposals which contribute to the diversification and strengthening of the rural economy and, in particular, to farm diversification.

4.112 The urban fringe and Green Belts are a largely under-developed recreational resource, yet they offer significant opportunities for passive and active enjoyment of the landscape. They can also make a significant contribution to reducing leisure-based car journeys as they provide recreational opportunities in accessible locations close to the main centres of population.

4.113 Within the region the Great North Forest and the Tees Forest are part of a national programme with a range of objectives. They seek to improve the quality of the urban fringe, promote afforestation and wildlife, encourage economic regeneration and diversification, and enable more people to enjoy the countryside close to home.

SR3 – Sport & Recreation Development in the Green Belt and Urban Fringe

Development Plans and other strategies should recognise the valuable potential of the urban fringe, Green Belts and countryside close to the larger settlements. They should seek to further develop and manage sport and recreational opportunities, while reconciling these with the operation of agriculture and other countryside activities. They should also resist the development of large scale spectator and indoor facilities that would detract from the open character of the countryside. Plans should also seek to bring derelict and underused land into recreational use.

4.114 Open spaces, parks and urban green space contribute enormously to the quality of life in urban areas. They provide valuable amenity space and opportunities for both formal and informal recreation where demand is most concentrated. Local Authorities should carry out an audit of recreational open space, and use this as a basis for policies that set standards for recreational provision and for the protection of existing and provision of new facilities.

4.115 Both indoor and outdoor sport and recreational facilities are an important resource, and new provision as part of sports and playing pitch strategies should continue to be made close to demand or in locations well served by public transport.

SR4 – Sport & Recreation in Urban Areas

Development Plans and other strategies should recognise the vital role that urban areas play in the provision of sport and recreation facilities. They should:

- **identify existing facilities;**
- **include policies for their protection, enhancement and, where necessary, refurbishment;**
- **ensure a good level and quality of provision in association with new developments;**
- **identify opportunities for developing and improving derelict and underused urban land for open space purposes; and**
- **recognise the importance of dual use indoor and outdoor sport and recreational facilities in relieving pressure on open space.**

4.116 Coastal waters and many inland water areas have a high conservation importance, and increased recreational potential must fully take into account the importance of the natural environment and opportunities for quiet enjoyment.

SR5 – Water-based Sport & Recreation

Development Plans and other strategies should seek, through an integrated approach, to maximise the potential of the region's natural resources for appropriate water-based recreation. Of strategic importance are the region's coast, Kielder and Derwent Reservoirs and the rivers Tyne, Wear and Tees (especially upstream of the Tees Barrage).

This approach should be undertaken within a framework of environmental protection and in particular should:

- **not adversely affect the natural environment and the opportunities for quiet enjoyment;**
- **seek to meet development needs for noisier water-based sports in less sensitive locations;**
- **identify new opportunities for quiet recreation, particularly on inland waters, and on the Durham Coast which is being revitalised and has considerable potential for new activity; and**
- **recognise the potential for the restoration of mineral extraction sites for water based recreation.**

4.117 Within the region there are many existing and proposed recreational routes. Some are statutory national trails – Hadrian's Wall National Trail, Pennine Bridleway National Trail, Cleveland Way, and Pennine Way. The region also has parts of the National Cycle Network being promoted by Sustrans.

SR6 – Recreational Routes

Development Plans and other strategies should adopt a consistent approach to recreational routes in relation to management and development along their length, and should ensure that they are accessible to the widest possible number of appropriate users. Development Plans should also identify existing provision and opportunities for additional cross-authority routes, particularly along river corridors, and should include policies to promote local recreational routes within their respective areas. Recreational routes should take account of nature conservation, habitat and species interests.

Tourism and Culture

4.118 The tourism industry is a significant employer in the region accounting for nearly 10% of the workforce. Income from tourists generates over £1 billion per annum to the regional economy. However, the North East attracts fewer visitors and generates lower tourism spend than any other region.

4.119 It is expected that the growth in the tourism sector will increase, particularly as part of efforts to diversify the rural economy. However, the attractiveness of the region to tourists is not confined to the rural areas; the region's towns and Cities are major destinations for tourists in themselves. The Newcastle Gateshead Initiative has submitted a bid to become the European City of Culture in 2008. It is expected that this will have significant and long term benefits to the region's image, its tourist and cultural assets, and its economy. Development Plans should ensure that tourism and cultural developments that expand existing visitor attractions and tourist accommodation are of a nature, and on a scale, that respects the intrinsic character and quality of the region's environment, and complements conservation

work. Investment needs to be directed towards upgrading, renewing and expanding existing tourist attractions and accommodation, upgrading the quality of service, and developing new facilities in appropriate locations, particularly those which will increase the international and national profile and attractiveness of the region.

4.120 Tourism is based on attractions such as the intrinsic quality of the countryside, the coast, the built environment, and urban and rural facilities and activities, all of which contribute to the diversity and distinctive character of the Region. The region also has an outstanding cultural heritage and contains two World heritage Sites, Durham Cathedral/Castle and Hadrian's Wall Military Zone, along with many other areas of national, regional and local significance. In addition, the Region's industrial heritage is without parallel and in recent years significant progress has been made in creating new cultural assets with a growing profile of world-class public art.

4.121 Resources also need to be devoted to promoting and marketing tourism; developing indigenous tourism and cultural businesses; and visitor management and quality interpretation. This will be of particular importance in enhancing the quality of the visitor experience and length of stay while minimising environmental impact.

4.122 Culture North East has prepared a *Regional Cultural Strategy for the North East*, which seeks to draw together the many cultural threads and identify priorities for the region. The Strategy will feed into, and draw from, national priorities, other regional strategies and development plans. This identifies six strategic aims and objectives that seek to: respond to the issues and challenges which face the region; and build upon the cultural strengths of the region and the opportunities and aspirations which it identifies. An Action Plan has also been produced which sets the framework for how the strategy will be implemented.

4.123 Local authorities are being strongly encouraged by Government to develop Local Cultural Strategies for their areas by the end of 2002 to promote the cultural well-being of the area. Such strategies will integrate, implement and monitor major cultural goals, policies and actions of the authority and its partners.

Tourism and Culture – General Principles

Development Plans and other strategies should reflect the spatial requirements of the Regional Cultural Strategy, local cultural strategies, and other strategies prepared by the Regional Cultural agencies such as Northumbria Tourist Board, Northern Arts and North East Museums, Libraries and Archives Council in developing policies to promote tourism and the arts.

4.124 The development of new tourism facilities must benefit local communities. If tourism development is successfully managed it can contribute positively to urban and rural regeneration and diversification. Areas should however avoid becoming over dependent on tourism and the objective of broadening the economic base must remain paramount. Tourism is the most widespread of the rural growth industries

4.125 The upgrading and renewal of existing visitor attractions, tourist accommodation and cultural venues within the region is a priority that should be encouraged in development plans. Development Plan policies should also support the development of new and varied tourist accommodation, and appropriate new, especially all-weather, attractions to extend the benefits of tourism throughout the year and throughout the region. Facilities of national and

regional importance, which would increase the attractiveness of the region, should be particularly encouraged.

4.126 In recent years major new developments have included the National Glass Centre in Sunderland, Hartlepool Marina and Historic Quay, the Arc in Stockton-on-Tees, the water sports facilities at the Tees Barrage in Stockton-on-Tees, the County Cricket Ground at Chester-le-Street, the Quayside in Newcastle, the refurbished football stadium at Newcastle and the new stadia at Sunderland and Middlesbrough.

TOUR1 – Sustainable Tourism

Development Plans and other strategies should promote tourism and seek to achieve an acceptable and sustainable balance between the development of tourist facilities and attractions, and the protection and conservation of the Region's natural and historic environment. They should also:

- **consider how to improve the first impressions gained by visitors arriving in the region;**
- **encourage tourism development that benefits the local economy, people and environment without diminishing the attractiveness of the place visited;**
- **contain policies to ensure that the development of tourist and cultural facilities is carried out in a sustainable manner;**
- **consider the current scale and distribution of tourism activity and assess the land use implications of future trends; and**
- **consider the prospects of attracting new developments and identify possible locations for such development.**

CHAPTER 5
Transport

Introduction

5.1 The Transport White Paper, *"A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone"* (1998) introduced the concept of the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) as an integral part of Regional Planning Guidance. The RTS should provide the context for integrating land-use and transport policy and identify regional transport management and investment priorities. The RTS should inform the preparation of development plans and local transport plans and the strategies of transport infrastructure and service providers. *PPG 11, "Regional Planning"*, sets out, in more detail, guidance on the main aims of Regional Transport Strategies.

5.2 For a number of reasons it has not been possible, at this stage, to develop a Regional Transport Strategy for the North East which fully addresses the aims and requirements of PPG 11. Several aspects of the RTS will require a considerable amount of new development work and the strategy as a whole must be informed by a range of ongoing studies. The North East Assembly (NEA) is currently progressing the development of the RTS, steered by the Regional Transport Co-ordination Group and involving the participation of a wide range of stakeholders through a Wider Reference Group. The Regional Transport Strategy will be brought forward as part of the early review of RPG1 in 2002/03, to inform the second round of Local Transport Plans and reviews of Development Plans and other strategies. In developing the RTS particular consideration will be given to:

- the development of an objectives-led, multi-modal framework for the Regional Transport Strategy, through which integrated strategies, across all modes of transport, are developed to address specific problems and objectives;
- an assessment of priorities for the management and investment of transport infrastructure and services of regional and sub-regional significance;
- public transport accessibility criteria for development of regional and sub-regional significance;
- more specific guidance on the context for demand management measures;
- detailed guidance on standards for the provision of off-street car parking;
- a steer on the role of airports and ports in the region and specific investment needs; and
- the identification of existing or anticipated transport problems, which it is considered would benefit from an assessment of possible solutions through a Multi-Modal Study.

5.3 This work will, in part, be influenced by a number of regional and national studies and policy papers which have recently reported, or are due to do so during, 2002. These include:

- Tyneside Area Multi Modal Study (see paragraph 5.45);
- A66 Safety Study (see paragraph 5.43);
- A1 (North of Newcastle) Multi Modal Study (see paragraph 5.45);
- Regional Ports Study (see paragraph 5.72);
- Air Services Regional Consultation Documents (see paragraph 5.74); and
- Strategic Rail Authority's Strategic Plan (see paragraph 5.32).

5.4 In view of the ongoing development work, this chapter provides interim guidance on transport in the region, covering:

- the integration of transport policy with the location and design of development (Policies T1 and T2);
- overarching policies for the improvement and management of transport infrastructure and services (Policies T3 and T4); and
- guidance on public transport, roads, parking and demand management, walking and cycling, freight, ports and airports (Policies T5 to T17).

5.5 It is the role of RPG (and the developing RTS) to set out:

- specific policies and proposals for the management and improvement of transport infrastructure and services of regional significance; and
- the regional policy context for Development Plans and Local Transport Plans for the management and improvement of transport infrastructure and services of local significance.

With much work still to be done it has not been possible, at this stage, to identify specific regional priorities or policies in relation to a number of issues. However it is considered important that until the Regional Transport Strategy is in place, RPG1 explains the regional context in which decisions should be made in accordance with the Transport White Paper, and its daughter documents, PPG 13 and *Transport 2010 – The Ten Year Plan* (DETR, 2000). Consequently, in addition to policies and supporting text, the chapter incorporates a number of shaded "context boxes" setting the background in which decisions should be made and the RTS should be developed.

Transport Aims

Transport is a means to an end and it is important, therefore, that the region's transport system supports the overall strategy of RPG1, in particular:

- **the key priorities for accessibility (see Chapter 2, paragraphs 2.32 – 2.35);**

- **the key priorities for regeneration and opportunity and of the Regional Economic Strategy (see Chapter 2, paragraphs 2.11-2.31); and**

- **the key priorities for the Environment and Conservation (see Chapter 2, paragraphs 2.37-2.51).**

The key aims of RPG1 in relation to transport are:

- **providing accessibility to key facilities throughout the region for all sections of the population in support of economic development, opportunity and regeneration, whilst;**

- **reducing the environmental impact of communications activity, both locally and globally.**

Transport Objectives

In seeking to achieve the key transport aims, the main objectives are:

- **ensuring that development is located, and designed to:**

  i) reduce the overall need to travel;

  ii) reduce average journey lengths;

  iii) be easily accessed by all modes of transport, in particular public transport, walking and cycling; and

  iv) enable the efficient and sustainable movement of freight;

- **managing and improving the transport network to:**

  i) make the best use of existing infrastructure;

  ii) promote walking and cycling as healthier alternative modes of transport; and

  iii) promote the use of public transport.

Background and General Principles

5.6 Whilst car ownership, total distance travelled and average daily traffic flows in the North East remain below the national average, and lower than in most other regions, passenger travel and freight transport have become increasingly dominated by the private car and road haulage. Travel by car accounts for more than 82% of the total distance travelled by the region's residents, and it is projected that this figure will increase. As a result road traffic flows have shown underlying growth of about 2% -3% per year and problems of noise, pollution, road casualties and congestion are worsening. Congestion for part of the day is a feature of

sections of the region's trunk road network, particularly in Tyneside and Teesside, and on many radial routes into the region's towns and cities.

5.7 The proportion of journeys made by public transport remains amongst the highest in the country and on some routes there is evidence of increasing patronage. However, overall, patronage is declining rapidly. Reductions in services, particularly in rural areas and during evenings and on Sundays, were a feature of the 1970s and 80s. Service provision broadly stabilised during the 1990s although, between 1991/2 and 1998/9 the number of bus, rail and metro journeys in Tyne and Wear fell by 28% – more than in any other Metropolitan area. This is also in strong contrast to the 14% rise in public transport journeys in London during this period. Some rural areas have little or no public transport service and all rural areas are highly dependent on public transport subsidies. As car use has risen, particularly for relatively short journeys, walking and cycling have also become less attractive.

5.8 Land use changes have reinforced these trends through lower densities, decentralisation and the location of major developments along high capacity road corridors, often poorly served by public transport. Economic trends have also tended to favour road transport, as the traditional heavy industrial base of the area has declined to be replaced by a variety of new manufacturing processes and service industries. The rail freight network, which catered well for the movement of low value, high bulk cargo, has not competed as successfully for the higher value, lower bulk cargo which now accounts for more of the region's freight movement.

5.9 Whilst increasing car ownership has widened travel opportunities for some, it has contributed towards the decline in public transport and the location of new employment, shopping, leisure and community facilities in locations readily accessible only by car. Consequently the 38% of households, and many more individuals, in the region without access to a car, find it increasingly difficult to reach key facilities and employment opportunities, contributing towards social exclusion.

5.10 Despite improvements in fuel and vehicle technology, traffic growth has led to increased noise and pollution at the local level which has been linked with a range of health problems. At the global level traffic growth is a significant contributor to global warming. Increasing road congestion will continue to exacerbate these problems whilst causing delay and journey time unreliability, which will increasingly undermine the region's economic efficiency and attractiveness as an area for investment.

5.11 A new approach is therefore needed and RPG1 must seek to promote regeneration, opportunity and increased prosperity in the region, whilst avoiding the levels of road congestion and environmental problems that have been associated with greater prosperity in other areas of the country. The Transport White Paper, "A *New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone*" (1998) and its daughter documents are a clear indication of revised Government policy at the national level. The Road Traffic Reduction Act, 1997 requires local traffic authorities to consider setting targets to reduce traffic levels, or the rate of traffic growth, and to identify measures to achieve the targets. The Transport Act 2000 empowers local authorities to introduce Road User and Workplace Parking charges in support of an integrated local transport strategy. "*Transport 2010 – The Ten Year Plan*" (DETR, 2000) sets out, in broad terms, an investment programme to deliver the Government's priorities of reduced congestion, better integration, and a wider choice of quicker, safer and more reliable travel by road and public transport.

5.12 The role of the Transport Chapter, as an interim statement until a Regional Transport Strategy is in place, is to set out strategic objectives to guide transport investment and the implementation of national policy in the North East. It also seeks to ensure that the location and design of new development support the objectives of the transport strategy. In doing so, transport policy can make a significant contribution to achieving greater economic prosperity in the region while encouraging more sustainable lifestyles and reducing social exclusion.

Location of Development

5.13 There is an inextricable link between the location of new development and accessibility, journey length and mode choice. Consequently, the location of development within the region has a fundamental role to play in reducing the need to travel, minimising journey lengths and promoting the use of alternatives to the car and road freight.

T1 – Location of Development

Development Plans and other strategies should integrate transport considerations into their land use policies and proposals by:

- **locating development so as to reduce the need to travel and minimise journey length;**
- **concentrating the bulk of the region's development within the existing urban areas, where movement needs can be well served by all modes of transport, in particular walking, cycling and public transport;**
- **identifying and protecting sites with high public transport accessibility for development likely to give rise to a high level of demand for travel. Sites which will benefit from firm proposals to improve public transport accessibility to a high level should be similarly identified and protected;**
- **considering the accessibility of development proposals by public transport and assessing major development proposals through Transport Assessments;**
- **locating development to ensure the efficient and sustainable movement of freight, promoting the use of rail and water where possible; and**
- **indicating the likely nature and scope of contributions towards transport infrastructure or service improvements which will be necessary as part of developments in particular areas or sites. Such improvements should be consistent with the priorities set out in RPG1 and Local Transport Plans.**

5.14 To support the locational strategy, as set out in paragraphs 2.52-2.56, most new development will be focussed in the existing urban areas where it can be most easily accessed by public transport, cycling and walking.

5.15 It is important that accessibility by public transport is a key consideration in determining where development is located. Sites well served by public transport should be protected for development which is likely to give rise to a high demand for travel, such as shops, offices, education, leisure and health facilities. The region's town and city centres, which are generally the most accessible locations by a range of modes of transport (in particular public transport), should be the focus for such development (see Policy TC1). In developing the Regional Transport Strategy, Public Transport Accessibility Criteria will be developed to guide the location and detailed planning of development of regional or sub-regional significance.

5.16 Larger scale development proposals should be accompanied by Transport Assessments, replacing Traffic Impact Assessments, indicating the potential mode split of journeys to and from the site. The Transport Assessment should also identify proposed measures to manage and improve transport infrastructure and services, in particular to promote the use of public transport, cycling and walking. To provide greater certainty to developers Development Plans should indicate the nature and extent of contributions that will be necessary to improve transport infrastructure and services as part of development in particular areas or sites.

Design of Development and Promoting Mixed-use Development

5.17 In addition to its location, the detailed design of new development is important in promoting sustainable travel patterns, in particular the provision and design of roads, bus stops, footpaths, cycleways and car parking. Mixed-use developments, particularly in locations well served by public transport, can reduce journey lengths and ensure that best use is made of transport infrastructure and services. Public transport routes and services are often most cost effective when serving a mix of employment, shopping and leisure trips.

T2 – Design of Development and Promoting Mixed-use Development

Development Plans and other strategies should ensure that the design of new development and redevelopment facilitates safe and convenient movement by all modes of transport, in particular on foot and by cycle and public transport. The aim should be:

- **to facilitate public transport, cycling and walking through the detailed design of development, using supplementary planning guidance and development briefs where appropriate;**

- **to enable the safe and efficient movement of goods, whilst minimising conflict and disturbance; and**

- **to promote mixed-use developments, well served by public transport, to reduce journey lengths and ensure that the best use is made of transport infrastructure and services.**

Overarching Policy for the Management and Improvement of Transport Infrastructure and Services

5.18 The management and improvement of transport infrastructure and services in the region is essential in the successful implementation of RPG1's strategy of regeneration, opportunity, accessibility and conservation. Transport infrastructure and services should be planned to complement policies on the location and design of development.

5.19 The provision, management and improvement of transport infrastructure are the responsibility of a large number of public and private sector organisations. RPG1 sets out a strategy for the future of the North East, which should inform and support the work of these organisations.

Wider Context

Transport Infrastructure and Service Providers

It is anticipated that by the end of 2002, following the Railway Administration of Railtrack, rail infrastructure will be primarily owned and managed by Network Rail (a not-for-profit company). Passenger services are operated by Train Operating Companies. Through regulation and public sector financial support rail infrastructure and services are also influenced by the Rail Regulator and Strategic Rail Authority. Metro is owned and operated by Nexus, the Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Executive.

Teesside International Airport is currently local authority owned and controlled, whilst Newcastle International Airport is owned and controlled by a public-private partnership between local authorities and Copenhagen Airport. All commercial air services are provided by independent airlines.

Tees & Hartlepool and Seaham ports are privately owned, the remainder are either publicly controlled through the local authority (Sunderland) or have independent trust port status (Tyne, Blyth and Berwick). Shipping services to and from the region are provided by independent shipping lines.

The management and improvement of the trunk road network is the responsibility of the Department for Transport and the Highways Agency, whilst all other roads are managed and maintained by local highway authorities. Bus and road freight services are provided by independent companies, although some bus services operate with public sector financial support.

T3 – Transport Infrastructure and Services of Regional Significance

Investment in, and the management of, strategic air, sea, rail and road transport infrastructure should support regeneration, opportunity, accessibility and conservation and should be based on a multi-modal assessment of problems and opportunities. Particular priority should be given to:

- **maintaining, and making the best use of, existing infrastructure;**
- **promoting the use of public transport;**
- **the efficient and sustainable movement of freight;**
- **improving safety across all aspects of the strategic transport network;**
- **reducing the environmental impact of strategic movement on local communities;**
- **reducing congestion across all modes of transport; and**
- **improving journey time reliability.**

T4 – Transport Infrastructure and Services of Local Significance

Local Transport Plans and other strategies should be consistent with the context established in RPG1 and Development Plans, and should set out a balanced strategy of measures to improve accessibility for all, whilst reducing the local and global environmental impacts of transport. Local Transport Plans should establish targets for reduced traffic levels, or rates of growth, taking into account locations with high exposure to vehicles use, air pollution and noise. Particular priority should be given to:

- **the effective maintenance of existing transport infrastructure;**
- **increasing the attractiveness of public transport, cycling and walking, and promoting Community Transport initiatives where appropriate;**
- **promoting interchange between all modes of transport;**
- **controlling car parking and managing the demand for car use to complement improvements in alternatives to the car;**
- **improving safety across all aspects of the local transport network;**
- **addressing the needs of disabled people and people with mobility impairments;**
- **promoting the implementation of Travel Plans amongst schools and employers; and**
- **promoting the efficient and sustainable movement of freight.**

5.20 In determining the management and improvement of transport infrastructure and services, an objectives-led, multi-modal approach should be adopted. Such an approach, at both the regional and local level, should identify strategies across all modes to meet transport needs

and support RPG1's wider socio-economic and environmental objectives across the themes of regeneration, opportunity, accessibility and conservation

5.21 A multi-modal framework for the Regional Transport Strategy will be developed, as part of the early review of RPG1, to replace the guidance in this chapter on a mode-by-mode basis. There are a number of formats that could be adopted for such an approach (e.g. multi-modal strategies for specific geographic areas, corridors or journey purposes), although it is important that the structure of the RTS supports the overall framework of RPG1. However, it is important that in the interim a multi-modal approach is adopted as far as possible in applying the guidance of this chapter. To assist in this process consideration should be given to the movement needs set out below which "cross-cut" each mode of transport.

Wider Context

Consideration of Movement Needs on a Multi-Modal Basis

In applying the guidance of this chapter, which is set out largely on a mode-by-mode basis, a multi-modal approach should be adopted, seeking to meet the following movement needs:

- **strategic journeys to and from the rest of the United Kingdom, Europe and the World** – the region's competitiveness is partly dependent upon the efficient movement of people and goods to and from other parts of the UK, Europe and the World. Strategies should seek to promote the use of rail, bus/coach and sea transport to meet these needs whilst recognising the importance of high quality air and road links to the regional economy;

- **access to work for the people of the region** – single occupant, peak-period commuter car trips place a very heavy burden on the region's road network. However, as many journeys to work are made over relatively short distance on a largely predictable, daily basis, there is the potential for a significant modal shift away from car use. Strategies should seek to give priority to public transport, walking and cycling measures that improve access to work, and ensure that new employment development is readily accessible by these modes of transport. Travel Plans and demand management measures should support these strategies;

- **journeys to school** – like work trips, journeys to school are concentrated in relatively short peak periods and the increasing number of "school run" car trips can exacerbate congestion and safety problems. Strategies for the location and design of new development, and investment in transport, should give priority to safe walking, cycling and public transport for the journey to school. School Travel Plans should support these strategies;

- **access to, from and within rural areas** – the dispersed pattern of development means that it can be difficult for traditional public transport to meet rural transport needs. Strategies should seek to maintain key facilities in rural service centres, to reduce the need to travel, and where they can best be accessed by public transport, cycling and walking. Strategies should also promote innovative public transport services which can meet the transport needs of rural areas, whilst recognising the importance of the car to many rural residents;

- **the movement of freight** – the efficient and sustainable movement of freight to, from and within the region supports the North East economy and individuals' requirements for goods. Through the location and design of development, and transport investment, strategies should seek to promote the movement of freight by rail and water, whilst recognising the continuing importance of road-based transport. Strategies should also seek to give priority on the highway network to the movement of freight, where appropriate;

- **leisure, shopping and other personal movement** – such trips, which tend to be widely spread geographically, and over time, are increasingly important to the North East economy. Strategies should ensure that developments which give rise to a high demand for travel are located where they can be well served by public transport, cycling and walking. Strategies should also promote mixed-use developments that can reduce the overall need to travel and ensure that the most efficient use is made of transport infrastructure and services. Demand management measures should be used to encourage public transport use and cycling and walking in areas where car use gives rise to environmental, safety or congestion problems.

Public Transport

5.22 In accordance with the strategic transport objectives (paragraph 5.5) particular priority should be given to public transport in meeting travel requirements to, from and within the region. Local authorities and the Passenger Transport Authority in Tyne and Wear should work in partnership with transport operators to develop strategies to encourage the use of public transport.

T5 – Public Transport

Development Plans, Local Transport Plans and other strategies should, as part of a balanced transport strategy, encourage the use of public transport by:

- **ensuring that new development and redevelopment is located and designed to assist public transport provision;**

- **protecting sites with high public transport accessibility for development likely to give rise to a high level of demand for travel. Sites which are to benefit from firm proposals to improve public transport accessibility to a high level should be similarly protected;**

- **promoting the introduction of new public transport services, particularly to employment and retail developments, currently poorly served by public transport;**

- **introducing measures which improve the frequency, journey time and reliability of existing public transport services;**

- **facilitating the better integration of public transport with other modes;**

- **promoting taxis and private hire vehicles as an integral part of the public transport network;**

- **as far as possible making public transport accessible to all;**

- **promoting the continued development of Real Time Information and Traveline, the regional public transport information service;**

- **promoting the implementation of Travel Plans by schools and employers which encourage the use of public transport for the journey to work and school; and**

- **introducing complementary demand management measures to reduce car dependency.**

5.23 The North East is fortunate in having retained a generally comprehensive public transport network – particularly buses and Metro. Local authorities and transport operators should work together to ensure that existing services are as reliable and attractive as possible. However, the network is strongly focussed on radial routes to the traditional urban centres and many of the more recent employment and retail developments on the edge of the urban areas are relatively poorly served by public transport. Whilst new development will be located where it can be well served by public transport, there is a need to ensure that existing employment and retail opportunities are also well served by public transport.

5.24 Construction of the Stephenson Link is currently under way, which will provide a high quality bus-based public transport service linking the residential, employment and retail development in the A19 corridor in North Tyneside. The service will provide good integration with both Metro and Ferry services to the rest of Tyneside, and in addition to providing better access to employment and retail opportunities for people without access to a car, may help to reduce the pressure on the A19 Trunk Road. Work has also commenced on the similar "Centrelink" scheme that will link Gateshead Town Centre and Metro Station with the MetroCentre. The potential of additional schemes of this type in alleviating problems on the trunk road network is being considered as part of the Tyneside Area Multi Modal Study (see paragraph 5.45). Consideration should be given to similar schemes elsewhere in the region, in particular orbital links between residential areas and employment/retail opportunities.

5.25 In view of the significantly improved public transport such schemes can provide to employment and retail developments on the edge of urban areas, consideration should be given to parking and demand management measures which may be appropriate in order to ensure that the investment in public transport is as effective as possible, particularly in reducing pressure on the road network (see paragraphs 5.52 – 5.62).

5.26 Policies T6, T7 and T8 provide more detailed guidance on promoting the use of rail, metro and light rail and buses.

Rail

Regional Context

5.27 The rail network in the region supports Intercity, Trans-Pennine Express and freight services linking the region with other parts of the country. Passenger services, particularly to London, Yorkshire and Scotland, are fast and frequent and offer an attractive alternative to the car. The movement of freight by rail can be efficient and competitive, particularly for the movement of bulk products over relatively long distances. High quality strategic rail links, like road links, are important to maintain and improve regional competitiveness and to promote regeneration.

5.28 Regional and local passenger services are less extensive, with limited local services on the East Coast Main Line. The Tyne Valley line supports local services and inter-regional services connecting with the West Coast Main Line at Carlisle, whilst the Durham Coast Line links Newcastle with Sunderland, Hartlepool, Stockton and Middlesbrough. The Tees Valley and Heritage Lines support a local service from Saltburn and Middlesbrough to Darlington and Bishop Auckland. A limited service operates from Middlesbrough to Whitby. Many of the regional and local services are relatively infrequent and slow and do not offer an attractive alternative to the car for many journeys. A number of towns in the region, on freight and disused railway lines, are without passenger services, including Ashington, Bedlington, Blyth and Washington. Improving the network of local and regional rail services is seen as key to promoting use of public transport and to supporting regeneration.

5.29 The East Coast Main Line currently operates at, or near, capacity and without major investment there is very limited potential to meet train operators' and regional stakeholders' aspirations to provide more and/or faster intercity, local and freight services. Proposals are being developed to upgrade the line within the region, including the upgrading/reopening of the Northallerton-Eaglescliffe-Stockton-Stillington-Ferryhill-Leamside-Gateshead route to provide a "four track East Coast Main Line" from Northallerton to Newcastle. There are also proposals to improve trackwork, signalling and power supply between Newcastle and Berwick to increase the capacity of the line. Upgrading of the line is likely to be taken forward by a public-private partnership, involving the Strategic Rail Authority, Railtrack, the train operating company and other private sector interests.

5.30 A number of passenger services in the region are currently undergoing a process of re-franchising and until this is complete there remains uncertainty as to how rail infrastructure and services in the region will develop. It is anticipated that the re-franchising of Transpennine and local services will be complete by mid-2003. Commercial pressures are likely to be strongest for investment that enables an increase in the speed and frequency of intercity services. Whilst improvements to intercity services are supported there is concern that this should not be at the expense of the development of local and freight services to provide attractive, efficient and sustainable alternatives to road transport and to support regeneration. Capacity constraints on the East Coast Main Line immediately north of Newcastle remain a particular concern.

5.31 "*Transport 2010 – The Ten-Year Plan*" aims to increase rail patronage by 50% and Rail freight by 80%. Within the North East there are a number of aspirations to develop the rail network and services, which could contribute towards achieving the Ten Year Plan targets, whilst improving accessibility and reducing dependency on the car and road freight. The proposals have been subject to varying degrees of investigation.

Wider Context

Possible Rail Network Development Opportunities:

- the reintroduction of passenger services, on the existing freight-only line between Newcastle, Blyth and Ashington, providing improved public transport accessibility to and from South East Northumberland;

- the reinstatement of the Leamside Line between Pelaw (Gateshead) and Ferryhill (Durham) for passenger and freight services, providing improved public transport accessibility to and from the Coalfield Communities of Washington and North East Durham; and

- the reintroduction of passenger services, on the existing freight-only line between Ferryhill (Durham) and Stockton on Tees, enabling faster Tyne-Tees services;

Bids for the above schemes, for capital funding through the Local Transport Plan system and revenue support through the Rail Passenger Partnership, are currently under consideration. If successful, passenger services could be operating to Blyth and Ashington within the first five years or so of the RPG period .

- the upgrading of the East Coast Main Line to enable more and faster intercity, local and freight services and improved links to the Channel Tunnel;

- the reintroduction of passenger services on the line between Bishop Auckland and Stanhope to provide better public transport to rural Weardale;

- the reinstatement of the line between Middlesbrough and Saltburn via Guisborough and Skelton, improving public transport accessibility to and from these towns;

- a new rail, or multi-modal, crossing of the River Tees to provide a more direct link between Middlesbrough/Redcar and Cleveland and Billingham/Hartlepool;

- a new rail crossing of the River Tyne to provide a bypass of the congested Newcastle Central Station area for intercity and freight services;

- the reinstatement of the line between Alnmouth and Alnwick to connect Alnwick to the national rail network; and

- the provision of direct heavy rail services to Newcastle Airport from central Newcastle and other destinations within the region, to reduce car dependency for trips to the airport. Track sharing with Metro is under consideration.

In addition, improvements to the speed or frequency of a number of existing rail services in the region, and the provision of new stations, are dependent upon significant investment in track work and/or signalling in a number of locations. A particular need for improvements has been identified to serve Teesside Airport and on the Durham Coast Line, Tyne Valley Line, Newcastle to Morpeth Line, the Tees Valley Line and the Esk Valley Line. Funding for new stations on the Durham Coast Line has been secured through Local Transport Plans and a supporting Rail Passenger Partnership bid is currently under consideration.

5.32 Some of the identified improvements may be secured as part of the re-franchising process, whilst others may develop on a commercial basis as a result of the greater certainty that the completion of re-franchising will bring about. However, many proposals, in particular those to develop local services, are only likely to proceed with an element of public capital funding and/or revenue support through the Rail Passenger Partnership and Local Transport Plan schemes. As part of the development of the Regional Transport Strategy an assessment will be made of priorities for investment in the regional rail network, taking account of:

- the plans of the Strategic Rail Authority, Railtrack/Network Rail and train operating companies;
- the likely availability of public and private sector funding;
- the development and redevelopment proposals and the locational policies of RPG1;
- the outcomes of the Multi Modal Studies;
- the ability of other modes to meet the identified transport need; and
- the potential for integration with other modes of transport.

5.33 The region has many miles of disused railway alignments which, in terms of their segregation from the highway network and relatively easy gradients, are a unique asset, with potential for re-use as transport corridors – e.g. footpaths, cycleways, busways, light rail and heavy rail.

5.34 Part of the disused Sunderland – Consett railway line has been utilised for the recently completed Metro extension to South Hylton having been a footpath/cycleway for many years. Stephenson Link will utilise sections of disused mineral line in North Tyneside.

5.35 In view of their unique potential for improving facilities for a range of modes of transport Development Plans and other strategies should identify, and wherever possible seek to protect, the integrity of disused railway corridors.

T6 – Rail

Development Plans, Local Transport Plans and other strategies should seek to ensure that rail services provide an attractive alternative to the car and road freight and are as effective as possible in meeting transport needs. Policies should:

- **protect the integrity of disused railway corridors in order to retain their potential as strategic transport links;**

- **set out proposals for new or reopened railway lines, stations and services; and**

- **set out measures to ensure the better integration of heavy rail with light rail/Metro, buses, cycling, walking, taxis/private hire vehicles, community transport initiatives and the private car (Park and Ride).**

In considering such proposals, local authorities should work in close liaison with Railtrack, Train Operating Companies and the Strategic Rail Authority to ensure that the proposals are realistic and deliverable.

Metro and Light Rail

5.36 Light rail can offer frequent, fast and comfortable public transport service, along urban corridors with high passenger flows, providing an attractive alternative to the car for many journeys. The funding programme set out in Transport 2010 – The Ten-Year Plan is expected to deliver up to 25 new light rail projects in the UK over the next ten years. The Tyne and Wear Metro currently provides a high level of service to Newcastle and Sunderland city centres and to much of Tyneside and Wearside. The potential for new light rail schemes, particularly in the urban areas of Tyne and Wear and Tees Valley, should be investigated.

5.37 To ensure that Metro is as effective as possible in meeting transport needs measures should be implemented to improve convenient, safe and attractive integration with other modes of transport, in particular bus, rail, car and cycle.

T7 – Metro and Light Rail

Development Plans, Local Transport Plans and other strategies should:

- **consider the potential of Metro and light rail in meeting local transport needs by investigating the feasibility of new systems and extensions to, or new stations on, existing systems, particularly in Tyne and Wear and Tees Valley. The potential for joint running with heavy rail should also be assessed; and**

- **ensure that the best use is made of existing Metro/light rail infrastructure by promoting and introducing measures to facilitate integration with other modes, including buses, heavy rail, walking, cycling, taxis/private hire vehicles, community transport initiatives and the private car (Park and Ride).**

Buses

5.38 Whilst improvements to heavy rail and Metro/light rail are to be pursued, the majority of public transport journeys, within the region, will continue to be made by bus. Traffic congestion can cause bus services to become slow and unreliable and consequently unattractive to car users. Quality Partnerships have proved successful in increasing bus patronage through a combination of highway bus priority measures, new vehicles and improved passenger waiting facilities. Many bus services operate across local authority boundaries and the North East has a well-developed network of intra regional services. To

support these services authorities should seek to co-ordinate Quality Partnerships across local authority boundaries.

5.39 There are a number of proposals for new bus services in Tyne and Wear involving sections of dedicated busway, providing more direct routes and avoiding areas of congestion. Similar schemes should be investigated elsewhere in the region. There is also a need to ensure that there is convenient, safe and attractive interchange between bus services and rail, metro and the private car. The feasibility of formal bus-based Park and Ride schemes should be investigated, particularly in those urban areas where Metro/light rail is unlikely to be appropriate.

5.40 Bus services can be a life-line to rural residents without access to a car and can, more generally, help to reduce rural car dependency. Where possible bus services should focus on market towns and rural service centres (see paragraphs 4.52-4.53), where key facilities are located and there is the potential for interchange with other public transport services. A number of Rural Transport Partnerships have been set up in Northumberland and County Durham and the Rural Bus Challenge offers specific capital and revenue funding to support bus services in rural areas. In the deeply rural west and north, traditional bus services may not be able to adequately serve the dispersed pattern of travel demand and a number of more innovative services have been developed including post buses. These services should continue to be supported and developed. Taxis, Private Hire Vehicles and Community Transport Initiatives are an important part of the public transport network and strategies should promote their integration with other modes of transport.

T8 – Bus Services

To ensure that bus services provide an attractive alternative to the car, and are as effective as possible in meeting transport needs, Development Plans, Local Transport Plans and other strategies should:

- **promote partnership working with transport operators to improve all aspects of bus travel;**
- **set out measures to give priority to buses over other road traffic, particularly where they would otherwise be subject to delays and unreliability;**
- **assess the potential for segregated dedicated busways and guided busways to provide very high quality bus services;**
- **set out measures to improve integration with other modes, including heavy rail and light rail, walking, cycling, taxis/private hire vehicles and the private car (Park and Ride);**
- **ensure consistency with proposals in adjacent areas to enable the network of longer distance intra regional bus services to be maintained and improved; and**
- **set out specific proposals to meet the needs of rural residents and seek to improve interchange at rural service centres.**

Roads

5.41 The availability of capacity in the North East's road network has been cited as a factor in influencing the location of new development in recent years. A continuation of that trend would create unacceptable extra pressure on the highway network, as it is not anticipated that the capacity of the strategic roads (those of national, regional and sub-regional significance) will be significantly increased over the next 20 years. In accordance with the locational strategy set out at paragraph 2.52 – 2.56, in the future new development should be located on the basis of accessibility by public transport and reducing the need to travel. Nevertheless, like railways, the provision and maintenance of high quality strategic road links enabling travel to, from and within the region, have a role to play in maintaining and improving regional competitiveness and promoting regeneration.

Trunk Roads

5.42 Following the *Trunk Road Review, A New Deal for Trunk Roads in England* (DETR, 1998) identified a core network of nationally important roads which link the main centres of population; provide access to major ports, airports and rail terminals; provide access to peripheral regions and key cross-border routes to Scotland and Wales; and include the Trans-European Networks. Within the North East this network comprises the A1, A1(M), A19, A66 and A69. Responsibility for the A167 and A696/68, which are considered to be of regional, rather than national, significance is to be passed to local authorities.

5.43 Whilst there is a general consensus, amongst regional stakeholders, that the extent of the Trunk Road network is "about right", consultation within the region, during the preparation of the Trunk Roads Review, identified the following concerns:

- the lack of a motorway standard connection to the south from the region;
- safety concerns on, and the inefficient operation of, single carriageway sections of trunk roads, in particular the A1 north of Newcastle, the A66 and the A69;
- congestion particularly on the A1 and A19 around Tyneside;
- local traffic which interferes with the safe and efficient operation of the trunk roads as strategic long distance routes; and
- the environmental impact of traffic on local communities, in particular Haydon Bridge through the centre of which the A69 passes.

5.44 In response, *"A New Deal for Trunk Roads in England"* set out a targeted programme of improvements to address the most serious problems including in the North East:

- Dualling of the A1 (Willowburn – Denwick) to improve safety (currently under construction); and
- A19 Wolviston Second Samsung Access – a developer-funded scheme to improve access to an industrial site.

5.45 In accordance with the Transport White Paper, and to ensure that trunk roads are planned as part of an integrated transport network, *"A New Deal for Trunk Roads in England"* set out a new role for Regional Planning Bodies to consider and determine future priorities for the management and improvement of trunk roads, within the context of the regional transport network as a whole and regional planning priorities, in revised Regional Planning Guidance. To assist this work a number of studies were commissioned to investigate options to address the most serious of the identified concerns.

Wider Context

Road-Based and Multi-Modal Studies

Tyneside Area Multi Modal Study
The study aims to identify a long term, integrated strategy to alleviate existing and potential future problems of congestion and road safety on the A1(T) and A19(T) in Tyneside. Whilst the study is primarily concerned with problems on the trunk roads it will investigate the potential for measures on the local road network and across other modes of transport to assist in alleviating problems on the A1(T) and A19(T). Considering the potential for modal shift, as a means of reducing traffic demands on the trunk road network, is an important aspect of the study. The study will also consider the potential impact of the Private Finance Initiative proposal to dual the Tyne Tunnel, which is likely to be the subject of a Public Inquiry. The study will appraise options under the New Approach to Appraisal (NATA) and will make recommendations indicating costs, benefits, constraints and potential funding sources. It is anticipated that the study will report in Autumn 2002.

A66(T) Road Based Study
The aim of the study was to carry out a detailed analysis of, and make recommendations for a comprehensive strategy to address, safety problems on the A66(T) between Scotch Corner and Penrith. The Government has recently accepted the consultant's recommendations, to upgrade to dual carriageway the existing single carriageway sections of road, and to implement a programme of low cost safety measures in the interim period.

A1 (North of Newcastle) Multi Modal Study
The aim of the study, which reported in May 2002, has been to develop a long term, sustainable and integrated strategy to address current, and potential future problems on the A1(T) in Northumberland, in particular safety and operational inefficiencies. The study investigated a range of options using the New Approach to Appraisal and assessed the potential for economic development resulting from improved strategic transport links. The Government is currently considering the study recommendations and those of the North East Assembly.

5.46 The emerging outcomes of the studies will inform the further development of the Regional Transport Strategy. The RTS, which will be brought forward as part of the early review of RPG1, will identify a strategy and priorities for the management of, and investment in, the region's trunk road network as a whole The early review will also identify the need, if any, for further studies.

5.47 Whilst the detailed strategy and priorities for the trunk road network are currently emerging, there is broad agreement about the overall objectives for trunk roads in supporting regeneration, opportunity, accessibility and conservation. The objectives, which have themselves informed the studies, are:

- maintaining to a high standard, and making the best use of, existing infrastructure for long distance traffic;
- the efficient and sustainable movement of freight;
- improving safety;
- reducing the environmental impact of traffic at both the local and global level;
- reducing congestion;
- improving journey time reliability; and
- promoting the use of public transport and the movement of freight by rail and sea.

Principal Roads

5.48 In addition to trunk roads, the Principal Road Network ("A" Roads) comprises roads of regional and sub-regional significance including those non-core trunk roads that are to be de-trunked. These roads are important in enabling access, over longer distances within the region and its sub regions by car, bus and for road freight. The management and improvement of these roads is the responsibility of local highway authorities, although in view of their importance in regional and sub-regional terms, RPG1 has a role in determining the priorities for the management and improvement of the network.

5.49 Many of the principal roads in the region, particularly those within urban areas, have a number of functions in addition to their role as strategic routes. Many roads have residential or commercial frontages, or are local shopping streets with high bus, pedestrian and cyclist flows. It is important, therefore, that proposals for the management and improvement of the network reflect these functions.

5.50 In some cases it may be possible to improve principal roads to remove the conflict between local movements, in particular buses, cyclists and pedestrians, and longer distance traffic e.g. bypasses. However, in many instances the cost and wider environmental implications of such schemes will be prohibitive and development plans and local transport plans should seek to manage principal roads to strike a balance between the needs of different users.

T9 – Principal Roads

Development Plans, Local Transport Plans and other strategies should set out proposals for the management and improvement of the principal road network, as part of a balanced transport strategy, giving priority to:

- **maintaining to a high standard, and making the best use of, existing infrastructure;**
- **balancing the needs of local movement against longer distance traffic;**

- **the efficient and sustainable movement of freight;**
- **promoting travel by light rail, bus, cycle and on foot;**
- **improving safety of all highway users;**
- **reducing the environmental impact of traffic at both the local and global level;**
- **reducing congestion;**
- **improving journey time reliability; and**
- **integrated route management, particularly across highway authority boundaries.**

Local Roads

5.51 Local roads comprise the largest proportion of the highway network, and in addition to cars and goods vehicles are used in the majority of journeys made by bus, cycle and on foot. Virtually all trips involve the use of a local road at some point, and consequently they are essential to ensuring accessibility by all modes of transport. It is on local roads where conflicts between different modes of transport are often greatest and where most accidents occur. Consequently in promoting alternatives to the car, and improving travel choices, it is important that greater priority is given to pedestrians, cyclists and buses on local roads. It may also be appropriate to give priority to goods vehicles. Specific measures may include pedestrianisation, wider footways, pedestrian crossing points, improved street lighting, traffic management, calming and parking control measures, cycle lanes, bus lanes, goods vehicles lanes, no-car lanes etc.

T10 – Local Roads

Development Plans, Local Transport Plans and other strategies should set out proposals to manage and improve local roads, as part of a balanced local transport strategy, giving priority to:

- **maintaining to a high standard and making the best use of existing infrastructure;**
- **promoting travel by light rail, bus, cycle and on foot;**
- **improving the safety of all highway users;**
- **the efficient and sustainable movement of freight;**
- **reducing congestion whilst restraining traffic to complement investment in alternatives to the car; and**
- **reducing the environmental impact of traffic on local communities.**

Parking and Demand Management

5.52 There is evidence that the benefits of transport investment, particularly in alternatives to the car, are maximised if they are complemented by measures to manage demand for car use. Consequently, in seeking to promote accessibility whilst reducing the local and global environmental impacts of transport, it is part of the strategy of RPG1 to introduce a combination of public transport, cycling and walking improvements and management of car use.

5.53 The Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997 requires local traffic authorities to consider setting targets to reduce traffic levels or the rate of traffic growth. Authorities must also identify measures to achieve the targets and may find that demand management, complementary to improvements in alternatives to the car, is effective. Most of the region's local authorities have set targets in their Local Transport Plans.

5.54 The availability and price of car parking, both public and private, has a major influence on the choice of means of transport. Some studies suggest that levels of parking can be more significant than levels of public transport provision in determining means of travel, even for locations very well served by public transport. Car parking takes up a large amount of space in new developments and town and city centres and leads to reduced densities of development, making walking, cycling and the use of public transport less attractive. In particular, very high levels of parking provision at out-of-town retail and commercial developments, often relatively poorly served by means of travel other than the car, have undermined town and city centres where such parking provision cannot be accommodated.

5.55 Reducing the level of parking in new development and redevelopment is essential in promoting sustainable travel choices. It is therefore necessary to achieve lower levels of parking in association with development than has generally been achieved in the past, within the region. It is also necessary that the provision and management of public on-street and off-street parking provision in the region supports reducing car dependency, particularly for single occupancy commuter journeys. Public on-street and off-street car parking is already managed and charged in many town and city centres in the region. However, there is a need to ensure that public parking provision throughout the region is, where appropriate, managed and charged to support different travel choices. Whilst not all public parking in the region may need to be subject to controls or charging, it is important that all parking provision contributes towards achieving local and regional transport objectives.

5.56 The Transport Act 2000 empowers local authorities to introduce other demand management measures including road user charging and a workplace parking levy. The workplace parking levy gives local authorities greater power to control the large amount of existing private parking at workplaces throughout the region to complement controls over public parking as a measure of demand management. Road user charging enables local authorities directly to tackle problems of congestion. All net revenues from schemes introduced in the ten years following the introduction of the enabling legislation will be available, for a further period of at least ten years, for local authorities to spend on improvements to local transport.

5.57 A small-scale road user-charging scheme has come into operation in Durham City Centre to alleviate congestion and environmental problems in the historic core of the city. The scheme is the first road user-charging scheme to be introduced in the country.

5.58 Town and city centres are amongst the most congested locations in the region and also tend to offer the best accessibility by means of transport other than the car. It is in these areas where policies to manage and charge parking are currently most developed and, therefore, it is likely to be in such locations where the introduction of further demand management policies will be most appropriate to reduce congestion and promote different travel choices. However it is very important that a strategic view is taken in implementing demand management measures to ensure that they are supportive of the locational policies of RPG. In particular, measures to reduce car dependency in town and city centres should not favour out-of-town or peripheral locations, poorly served by alternatives to the car. Consequently measures may need to be applied over wide areas, and may require co-operation between neighbouring authorities.

5.59 It is of vital importance that local authorities do not adopt policies on demand management and parking control that are hostile to each other's competitiveness and detrimental to sustainable development. It is therefore necessary for RPG1 to set out the regional context for demand management and parking provision/control. The regional context, clearly identifying the approach to be adopted in each area of the region, is an important aspect of the Regional Transport Strategy and will be set out in the early review of RPG1. In developing the approach, consideration will be given to:

- the extent of congestion and environmental problems;
- the availability of alternatives to the car and the potential for their improvement;
- the locational policies of RPG1; and
- the outcome of the multi-modal studies.

5.60 It is in the conurbations of Tyne and Wear and the Tees Valley, where the scale of congestion problems are greatest, that the introduction of demand management measures, to complement investment in alternatives to the car, is likely to be most appropriate. However, demand management measures, albeit on a smaller scale, may also be necessary and appropriate in some of the smaller urban areas in the region. Consideration should also be given to their use in localised rural areas, particularly where the level of tourist traffic causes congestion and environmental problems. It is important that the implementation of such measures does not undermine other transport objectives, in particular safety, the efficient and sustainable movement of freight and promoting travel on foot, and by public transport and cycle.

T11 – Demand Management

Until a regional demand management strategy is in place, Local Transport Plans, Development Plans and other strategies should set out proposals for managing traffic levels and growth, which are complementary to their overall strategy and proposals for investment in public transport, cycling and walking. Development Plans and Local Transport Plans should also seek to secure the implementation of Travel Plans that reduce, or better manage, workplace parking in support of demand management policies.

Parking Standards for New Development

5.61 To assist in achieving reduced levels of parking provision, PPG 13 sets out national maximum parking standards for larger scale development, which should be incorporated in Development Plans and used in determining planning applications. As part of the early review of RPG1 consideration will be given to guiding more stringent maximum standards in all, or part, of the region in support of the overall regional strategy for demand management.

T12 – Parking Standards for New Development

Development Plans should set maximum parking standards for a range of types of development, at a level to promote use of alternatives to the car and in accordance with the national maxima set out in PPG13. Development Plans should not include minimum parking standards and developers should not be encouraged to provide more parking spaces than they themselves wish to. The shared use of parking, including existing parking provision, between neighbouring developments, should be encouraged.

Control of Public Parking

5.62 It is important that the level of provision and management of public on-street and off-street parking supports the overall strategy for demand management. In town and city centres secure and attractive parking should be managed to support the retail and commercial functions, priority being given to its use, on a short-stay basis, by shoppers and visitors. Such a management approach can also help to reduce car dependency for commuter journeys.

T13 – Control of Public Parking

Development Plans, Local Transport Plans and other strategies should set out policies and proposals for the provision and management of on-street and off-street public parking, which are complementary to parking standards for new development and the overall demand management strategy. In town and city centres secure and attractive parking provision should support the retail and commercial functions and priority should be given to short-stay parking for visitors and shoppers who are essential to the vitality of the centre. Policies should seek to reduce car dependency, particularly for single occupancy commuter journeys.

Walking and Cycling

5.63 A large number of car trips are less than two miles in length and could easily be undertaken on foot or by cycle. Walking and cycling are available to nearly all, are healthy, cheap and have minimal environmental impact. Walking is also an integral part of most journeys by public transport.

5.64 However, many people are deterred from walking and cycling by the 'threat' of vehicular traffic or segregated routes that are perceived to be circuitous, unattractive and insecure. Furthermore, the design of many developments, in recent years, has given priority to the car

over pedestrians and cyclists. To give a realistic choice in accessing local facilities there is a need to ensure that throughout the transport network as a whole, and in the detailed design of new development, greater priority is given to the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.

5.65 The North East is well served by the National Cycle Network, which is particularly important to the region in terms of leisure and tourism. Local cycleway networks should be planned to complement the national network, to provide co-ordinated routes across local authority boundaries and to provide convenient and attractive routes for short distance trips.

T14 – Walking and Cycling

As part of a balanced transport strategy Development Plans, Local Transport Plans and other strategies should:

- **locate and design development to promote walking and cycling, particularly for journeys to work and school;**
- **introduce measures to improve the safety, security and attractiveness of walking and cycling including the maintenance and improvement of street lighting, footways, pedestrian crossings, cycle routes and secure cycle parking (see also T6, T7 and T8); and**
- **promote the introduction of Travel Plans by schools and employers to promote walking and cycling for work and school trips.**

Freight

5.66 The efficient distribution of freight supports both the North East's economy and individual residents' requirements for goods ranging from the basic essentials of life to luxury items. It is important, therefore, that the requirements for the movement of freight are a primary consideration in determining the location and design of development and the management and improvement of strategic and local transport infrastructure. The distribution of goods is an overarching issue that encompasses many modes of transport, including air, water, rail, road and even cycle. It is important that Local Transport Plans set out a balanced transport strategy, which recognises the need for efficient and sustainable distribution on strategic routes and within both urban and rural areas.

5.67 The movement of goods to, from and within the region is dominated by road freight. The movement of freight by rail and sea has declined significantly over the last 30 years or so, both in actual volume and as a proportion of all goods moved. This primarily reflects the large growth in the volume and variety of non-bulk goods the region consumes and the decline in the region's traditional industries (particularly coal mining). Whilst road freight has proved to be the most economically efficient method of distributing many non-bulk goods, the significant growth in its volume has contributed to the problems associated with road traffic: congestion, pollution, noise, local amenity and road safety, both on the strategic road network and in urban areas. In turn, general road congestion is increasingly undermining the efficiency of road freight, as journeys take longer and become subject to greater unreliability.

RPG1 seeks to promote distribution that is both efficient and sustainable and supports measures that enhance the movement of goods by means other than road.

5.68 There is the potential for greater use of rail and water for the movement of goods and RPG1 seeks to promote this wherever possible. However, it must be recognised that in the foreseeable future the majority of goods are likely to continue to be moved to, from and within the region by road and there is a need to ensure that this distribution is efficient, whilst minimising environmental impact.

Wider Context

Promoting Alternatives to Road Freight

Sea Freight

Sea freight remains dominant for the movement of goods across the world, although there is a trend towards larger ships serving a small number of ports, with onward distribution by road. The North East Regional Ports Study (see paragraph 5.72) assesses the potential for the use of feeder ships and short-sea shipping services to enable goods to travel to and from the region directly by sea. RPG1 will support proposals that promote the movement of freight by water to, from and within the region.

Air Freight

Air freight, represents a very small proportion of all freight tonnage, although a significantly larger share of the market by value, and is the fastest growing sector in the aviation industry – average growth rates of 8% are predicted over the next 20 years. The majority of air freight is carried in the holds of passenger aircraft, although as the market grows there is likely to be greater use of dedicated freight aircraft. Airports in the south east, in particular Heathrow and Gatwick, currently dominate the UK air freight market, and are likely to do so in the foreseeable future. Newcastle and Teesside airports together handle less than 0.2% of total UK air freight, and the majority of air freight with an origin or destination in the region is transported to/from south east airports by road.

Whilst for the foreseeable future air is likely to remain a very small aspect of all freight movement there is the potential for a significant growth in air freight through Newcastle and Teesside airports. In terms of supporting the regional economy and reduced pressure on the trunk road network there could be advantages in handling a greater proportion of the air freight, currently travelling by road to and from south east airports, at the region's airports. Newcastle Airport has recently opened new freight handling facilities and Teesside Airport has outline planning permission for the development of a freight handling and distribution centre.

Rail Freight

The movement of freight by rail can help reduce pollution and road congestion, and through the Ten Year Plan the government is aiming to achieve an 80% increase in rail freight, at which level rail would have a 10% share of the overall market. However, to achieve this there is likely to be the need for significant investment in infrastructure improvements – in particular in track capacity, gauge enhancements and new and/or improved rail freight terminals. Freight Facility Grants are a possible source of public sector investment. The proposal to reopen/upgrade the Leamside and Stillington lines, would provide significantly increased track capacity for freight trains to access other UK regions and Europe via the Channel Tunnel. Nevertheless, there is likely to be an increasing conflict in the demand for limited track space between freight and passenger services. In setting out a clearer strategy for the promotion of rail freight, the early review of RPG1 will need to take account of the SRA's Strategic Plan, National Freight Strategy and proposed North East Regional Freight Strategy.

In the meantime it is important that new development with distribution requirements, which could feasibly be met by rail, is located and designed so as to assist promoting this wherever possible. In considering such proposals local authorities and developers will need to work in close liaison with Railtrack, the SRA and rail freight operators.

Intermodal Terminals

Intermodal terminals are essential to promoting the movement of freight by modes other than road, and can also assist in promoting more efficient road freight movements. The region's ports and airports are points of interchange between road freight and water/air freight. The ports of Blyth, Tyne, Sunderland and Tees and Hartlepool also have rail links, and rail access to Seaham will be implemented in the near future. The Ports of Tyne and Tees and Hartlepool have intermodal facilities enabling freight to be moved in and out of the port by road, rail or water. Freightliner operates a container based intermodal terminal at Wilton on Teesside. There are a number of regional aspirations and proposals from the freight industry for new, or expanded, intermodal terminals within the region. RPG1 supports such proposals that can be shown will lead to an overall reduction in lorry movements by road. Working in close liaison with the freight industry, Railtrack and the Strategic Rail Authority, local authorities should identify and, where appropriate, protect sites and routes that could be critical in developing such infrastructure. As part of the early review of RPG1 consideration should be given to the requirements for intermodal terminals within the region, including consideration of potential sites, which would assist in promoting the movement of freight by rail and/or water.

5.69 Freight Quality Partnerships, between local authorities, the freight industry, business and residents and environmental groups can be an effective way in promoting efficient and sustainable distribution at both the local and regional levels. Local authorities can do much to improve the efficiency of distribution through traffic management measures, provision for loading/unloading and reviewing access restrictions. A number of designated 'Bus and HGV' and 'No Car' lanes have been introduced in the region and their further expansion is

encouraged. Overall measures should seek to promote the vitality of urban areas, ensuring that distribution is made as efficient as possible without compromising local amenity and the environment, which are themselves an important part of the vitality of towns and cities. In partnership the freight industry should seek to ensure that vehicles are achieving the best possible performance in terms of noise, pollution and safety and that distribution is managed to minimise vehicle movements and vehicle size.

T15 – Freight

Development Plans, Local Transport Plans and other strategies should set out measures to promote the vitality of urban and rural areas, securing the more efficient movement of freight, whilst protecting the local environment. Freight Quality Partnerships may be an effective way of implementing these objectives. Particular priority should be given to:

- **a balance of physical and management measures which give greater priority to goods vehicles, whilst protecting local amenity;**
- **protecting sites which are, or could be, critical in developing infrastructure for the movement of freight, in particular by rail or water;**
- **protecting sites adjacent to railways and ports for development likely to maximise the usage of movement of goods by rail and sea; and**
- **locating development generating significant freight movements, such as distribution and warehousing, away from congested central areas and residential areas and, where there is good (preferably indirect) access to trunk roads.**

Ports

5.70 The ports of Tees and Hartlepool, Seaham, Sunderland, Tyne, Blyth and Berwick are an important part of the region's strategic transport network. In addition the region has a number of smaller ports and harbours, primarily serving the fishing and leisure industries. As the second largest port in the UK, Tees and Hartlepool is of national significance, whilst other ports in the region are important as part of the strategic route between Ireland and Northern and Eastern Europe. Some 700,000 passengers per year are handled by the Port of Tyne on services to/from Norway, Sweden and Holland, these services being of particular benefit to the region's tourism industry. The movement of people and freight by sea has environmental benefits, over transport by road or air, and can help to reduce road congestion, particularly on the strategic road network. RPG1 seeks to promote the movement of passengers and freight by water.

5.71 The region's ports developed primarily in support of the coal trade, and tonnages through all the ports, except Tees and Hartlepool, have declined significantly since the 1960s mirroring the decline of coal mining in the region. There are currently significant levels of under-utilised capacity in the region's ports.

5.72 A recent study, commissioned by One North East, in partnership with the ports, the Government Office and the Association of North East Councils, has investigated ways in which the contribution of the ports to the region's economy and transport infrastructure can be maximised. The study assessed existing facilities, surface access, and current, and forecast future, trade patterns, identifying how each port can best play to its own strengths in contributing to the local and regional economies and transport needs. The study findings are currently being assessed and will inform the further development of the RTS, and the early review of RPG1, in relation to port development and access requirements.

T16 – Ports

Development Plans, Local Transport Plans and other strategies should assist the role of ports in supporting the regional economy and meeting transport needs by:

- **safeguarding land for port use where necessary, whilst ensuring the protection of sites of nature conservation importance;**
- **safeguarding sites adjacent to ports for development likely to maximise usage of the movement of goods by sea; and**
- **seeking to maintain and improve surface access to ports by both road and rail.**

Airports

5.73 The importance of the two regional airports to the economic infrastructure of the region is set out in paragraphs 4.43 – 4.44. There has been a consistent growth in traffic through Newcastle and Teesside Airports in recent years – Newcastle currently catering for 3.4 million and Teesside 0.76 million passengers per year. Together the airports' local catchment areas extend beyond the region, covering North Yorkshire, Cumbria and southern Scotland. Growth is expected to continue, in terms of both the destinations served and passenger numbers. The Transport White Paper details the Government's commitment to promoting the sustainable development of regional airports. The expansion of Newcastle and Teesside airports offers the opportunity for people to fly directly from the region, helping to reduce congestion at, and lengthy surface access trips to, airports in the south-east, whilst assisting in the support of North East economy.

5.74 The Government is committed to preparing a UK air transport policy within the framework of sustainable development principles, looking 30 years ahead. In consulting widely on the production of an air transport White Paper, there will be a number of stages. "*The Future of Aviation*" (December 2000) sought views on a wide range of strategic issues, including the overall role of aviation, consumer issues, economic effects, environmental effects, airport capacity and integrated transport. This was followed, in July 2002, by a series of regional consultation documents covering the north of England (the North West, North East and Yorkshire and Humber), the south-west of England, the midlands, south-east and east England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. They will be based on a number of regional studies of air services and a Regional Air Services Co-ordination Study, which have examined the economic, social and environmental impacts of a range of air services and capacity

options in each region. The consultation process on these documents will be completed by November 2002.

5.75 An Air Transport White Paper, setting out policy for air transport and airports across the UK, will be the culmination of the process. In accordance with PPG 11, RPG1 does not attempt to pre-empt the development of national policy, which will inform the RTS in due course.

5.76 Nevertheless, the region requires first class global transport connections, and in accordance with the Transport White Paper, RPG1 seeks to promote further development at both Newcastle and Teesside airports to meet local demand for air travel and air-freight. Such development is vital to achieving the overarching objectives of regeneration, opportunity and accessibility, however, it should not be undertaken in ways that cause unacceptable environmental damage and noise levels. Where appropriate development proposals will be subject to environmental assessments and sustainability appraisals.

5.77 In order to increase travel choices for journeys to airports public transport access to both Newcastle and Teesside airports needs to be improved. Newcastle airport is served by Metro, although it directly serves only a small part of the airport's catchment area and interchange with other modes of transport can be difficult for passengers with heavy luggage. There are proposals to improve interchange between Metro and heavy rail services at Newcastle Central Station. There are longer-term aspirations to operate heavy rail services to the airport, possibly over the existing Metro line. Such a service, which would also operate over the section of East Coast Main Line immediately north of Newcastle Central Station, will be considered in detail in determining priorities for future rail investment as detailed in paragraphs 5.31 – 5.32. Bus services to Newcastle airport are currently limited, but could provide effective access to the airport from areas not served by Metro/heavy rail.

5.78 Teesside airport has its own station, although it is located some distance from the terminal building and is currently effectively without a train service. Consideration should be given to securing regular passenger services and to ways in which access between the station and airport terminal can be made more convenient (see paragraphs 5.31 – 5.32). The potential for Remote airline check-in facilities at key rail stations should also be investigated as a means of promoting travel to Newcastle and Teesside airports by rail.

T17 – Airports

Development Plans, Local Transport Plans and other strategies should assist the development of Newcastle and Teesside airports in meeting demand for air travel, from within their local catchment areas, by:

- **protecting land to meet demand for runway, apron, terminal, freight and maintenance facilities;**
- **protecting flight corridors against development which would prejudice air safety;**
- **protecting land adjacent to the airports for airport related development; and**
- **working with Newcastle and Teesside Air Transport Fora in developing and promoting proposals to improve access to the airports, particularly by public transport to increase travel choices and reduce requirements for car parking.**

In advance of the publication of the *Air Transport White Paper* local authorities should consult the Department for Transport on draft Development Plan policies relating to airports.

CHAPTER 6
Minerals, Waste and Energy

Introduction

6.1 Many of the major industries and settlement patterns of the region have their origins in the distribution of mineral resources. The importance of extractive industries has declined considerably, even compared with 25 years ago, although employment in the minerals and waste disposal industries continues to play a significant part in the rural economy. Many of the region's energy supplies and raw materials are now "imported" by pipes and overhead transmission lines and other means of transport. Placing greater emphasis on renewable energy resources, recycling and land filling using methods that recover latent energy in waste materials for example, can reduce dependence on "imported" energy supplies and reduce the region's contribution to global environmental problems in particular climate change. Any significant proposals for minerals or waste need to be assessed for their effects on the transport infrastructure of the region. The regional importance of water as an economic and environmental resource is addressed in Chapter 3 – Environment.

Minerals

6.2 The policy guidance on minerals contained in this version of RPG1 will be revised as part of the early review in 2002/03. Minerals were not discussed as a matter in the Public Examination held in the summer of 2000, as it was considered premature, pending the publication of the review of MPG6 on aggregate provision. The intention is to publish a guidelines paper, which will cover revised national demand forecasts and regional apportionments. This is expected to be issued for consultation in summer 2002.

Objective for Minerals
To ensure prudent use of the region's indigenous natural resources in line with sustainable development objectives.

6.3 The region is rich in mineral deposits and it is a major producer of a variety of important minerals. Minerals currently or potentially commercially exploitable in the region include coal, brick-making material (shales, fireclay, glacial clay), Magnesian Limestone, Carboniferous Limestone, igneous rock, sandstone, sand and gravel, Brine, fluorspar, barytes and peat. Government policy recognises the importance of ensuring that there is an adequate and steady supply of minerals, whilst ensuring that environmental impacts are kept to a minimum. The main planning policy guidance note for minerals planning is *MPG1: General Considerations and the Development Plan System* (DETR, June 1996).

6.4 The most important minerals, in tonnage terms, are primary aggregates and opencast coal. In 1997, the region produced 9.6 million tonnes of primary land-won aggregates, comprising 1.7 million tonnes of sand and gravel and 7.9 million tonnes of crushed rock. A further 1.1 million tonnes of marine dredged sand and gravel were landed at six wharves in Tyne & Wear and Tees Valley. The proportion of sand and gravel sales met from marine sources has increased in recent years to 39% in 1997. Coal extraction is now undertaken largely through opencast methods, mainly in Northumberland and County Durham. Levels of annual opencast coal production have declined in the region from 4.1 million tonnes in 1990/91 to 3.5 million tonnes in 1997/98. In 2000, the total opencast coal production in the region was over 2.1 million tonnes, 16% of UK production and 43% of English production. A further 460,000 tonnes was produced from underground mines in the region. Permitted reserves have fallen from 20 million tonnes in 1990/91 to 8.4 million in 1997/98.

Specialised Minerals

6.5 The region is the only producer of potash in Great Britain, at Boulby Mine in the Borough of Redcar and Cleveland. High-grade dolomite of national importance is quarried from the Magnesian Limestone escarpment in County Durham for use in the chemical and metallurgical industries. The extraction of these specialised minerals is expected to continue over the period of the guidance.

MIN1 – Specialised Mineral Resources
Development Plans and other strategies should consider the issue of the extraction of the region's specialised minerals and in particular should address the issue of depleted reserves in the longer term.

6.6 Quarrying of sandstone for high quality building stone takes place in parts of Northumberland and Teesdale in County Durham.

MIN2 – Local Mineral Resources
Development Plans and other strategies should recognise the local importance and contribution to the character of the area of maintaining a supply of natural stone for conservation work, renovations, extensions and new buildings.

6.7 Small-scale commercial peat extraction takes place in Northumberland and the product is sold nationally for horticultural and garden use. The development and use of alternatives to peat is being encouraged. Advice to mineral planning authorities and the peat extractive industry on the exercise of planning control over the extraction of peat is contained within *MPG13: Guidelines for Peat Provision in England* (DETR, July 1995)

MIN3 – Peat
Development Plans and other strategies should assess new proposals for peat extraction against national guidance contained in MPG13, which seeks to restrict new extraction to areas which have already been significantly damaged by recent human activity and are of limited or no current nature conservation or archaeological value.

6.8 The majority of issues relating to mineral workings concern impacts on their immediate locality and can be dealt with satisfactorily at a local level, in terms of the general principles set out in the following section. However, matters of regional significance have been

identified in relation to opencast coal mining, encouraging the increased use of secondary and recycled aggregates and the extraction of aggregates, which are addressed separately.

Meeting the Need for Minerals

6.9 Minerals are an important national resource and their supply is essential to the national and regional economy. An abundance of minerals, both energy and other minerals, gives a competitive advantage. However, their extraction, processing and transportation can have significant adverse environmental impacts. Some older permissions do not contain adequate environmental safeguards. The Environment Act 1995 provides for the review and updating of such permissions. Minerals planning authorities should seek to identify deficiencies and secure improvements to ensure the satisfactory working of sites. Government planning policies aim to conserve minerals as far as possible whilst meeting the needs of society, by making the most efficient use of resources, encouraging the use of recycled and waste materials, ensuring that high quality minerals are not used where lower grade alternatives are available and minimising the impacts of extraction on the environment and local communities.

MIN4 – Need for Mineral Extraction

Development Plans and other strategies should make appropriate provision for mineral working, having regard to:

- **the established need for the mineral, in a national, regional or local context, as set out in paragraph 40 of MPG1;**
- **the contribution to be made by existing workings and planning approvals;**
- **the location and extent of known deposits; and**
- **the contribution to be made by secondary or recycled materials.**

6.10 The provision set out in MIN4, above, could be achieved by an appropriate combination of broadly based areas of search within which extraction may be permitted, preferred areas or more specific areas for the working of particular minerals, including extensions to existing sites. At the same time areas with international or national designations, such as National Parks, SSSIs, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, should be identified where minerals extraction should be subject to the most rigorous examination and only be allowed in exceptional circumstances. Any extraction works should not result in the irreversible loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

MIN5 – Areas of Search

Development Plans should identify:

- **broadly-based areas of search where extraction may be permitted, preferred areas or more specific areas for the working of particular minerals, including extensions to existing sites; and**
- **locations where damaging extraction of minerals will not generally be permitted.**

MIN6 – Development Control Criteria

Development Plans should include criteria-based policies to be applied in determining planning applications, aimed at:

- **protecting the environment and quality of life for local people;**
- **ensuring high standards for site operations and restoration to beneficial after-uses with appropriate aftercare, including nature conservation and amenity uses where appropriate;**
- **identifying appropriate locations for recycling facilities which could be associated with mineral working, as well as suitable industrial sites, especially where served by rail; and**
- **ensuring that significant mineral resources are protected from unnecessary sterilisation by other development proposals, or where this is unavoidable, allowing for the prior extraction of the minerals.**

Coal

6.11 Significant areas within the exposed coalfields of Durham, Tyne & Wear and Northumberland have been subject to opencast coal working over the past 20 years. Many of the less intrusive sites have already been worked and it is likely to become increasingly difficult to continue identifying sites that can be worked without unacceptable damage to the environment or the amenity of local communities.

6.12 Planning authorities will need to continue to give careful consideration to the environmental, social and economic implications of coal extraction. In March 1999, the Government published revised guidance in MPG3, which applied the principles of sustainable development to coal extraction. There are also additional tests to be applied in designated areas, including the Green Belt. Potential benefits may include continuity of employment or the scope for landscape and amenity improvements through the reclamation of derelict or contaminated land. Developers should avoid the piecemeal working of reserves, as local communities can face unpredictable and prolonged activity and it becomes more difficult to achieve a satisfactory comprehensive restoration scheme. There is the need for close liaison between local authorities, the Coal Authority, and mineral operators to ensure comprehensive and planned workings and a forward programme of potential sites which takes account of planning and environmental concerns.

MIN7 – Opencast Coal Extraction

Development Plans should include policies that have regard to the cumulative impact that a concentration of opencast coal extraction may have on the environment, local communities and the visual amenity of an area. There will be a presumption against development, unless the proposal is environmentally acceptable or, where it is not, local or community benefits will be provided that clearly outweigh any damaging impacts.

Aggregates

Secondary/Recycled Aggregates

6.13 A sustainable approach to the supply of aggregates means that secondary and recycled materials should be used whenever possible. Secondary aggregates that are by-products of quarrying and mining and industrial processes are materials usable as aggregates. The increased use of alternative sources of aggregates will reduce the need to extract primary aggregates, result in less waste going to landfill and assist in achieving both the RPG1 strategy, and Government's overall objective of sustainable development.

6.14 Although current levels of use of secondary and recycled material within the region have increased to about 8% of total aggregate sales, further improvements will be necessary if the Government's regional assumptions of 35 million tonnes (about 11% of the total supply of aggregates) made in MPG6 are to be met in the period up to 2006.

MIN8 – Secondary Aggregates
Development Plans should include policies to meet the regional targets for the use of secondary and recycled aggregates. All local planning authorities should include policies to encourage and facilitate the increased use of secondary and waste materials where there are environmental benefits to be gained.

Primary Aggregates

6.15 Government guidance on aggregate provision is set out in MPG6, which defines regional figures, based on projections of future aggregates consumption which are translated through the Northern Region Working Party on Aggregates (RAWP) into sub-regional apportionments. The RAWP annually monitors landbanks of aggregates in the region. MPG1 states that land banks for sand and gravel should be sufficient for at least 7 years extraction with a longer period for crushed rock. On the basis of existing land banks, there appears to be no significant overall regional supply problems in the short term.

6.16 Although sub-regional levels of provision to 2006, based on past production trends, have been agreed by the RAWP, a longer-term view of the spatial distribution of aggregate production within the region is needed. The early review of the RPG1 in 2002/03 will need to take account of the guidance on the supply of aggregates in revised guidelines published for public consultation in Summer 2002. In the meantime, PPG11 advises that RPG should have regard to the regional apportionment of aggregates supply to 2006, contained in existing MPG6. The early review of RPG1, advised by the RAWP, will need to provide indicative figures for the volume of aggregate production for each Minerals Planning Authority to address in its respective plan. When reviewing future sub-regional apportionments, an assessment of environmental capacity may be necessary and would include assessments such as landscape impact, proximity of extraction to markets, and availability of non-road based transport facilities.

6.17 The practicality and environmental acceptability of the review figures should be tested through the Development Plan process, indicating general locations within which mineral

working may be acceptable or not acceptable and criteria against which they will be considered.

MIN9 – Sites for Aggregate Extraction

Development Plans should demonstrate that all options for aggregate extraction have been assessed, including the results of inter-authority studies where cross-boundary issues arise in relation to regional aggregates supply. The land-use options selected should represent the best balance of economic, social and environmental considerations, bearing in mind the principles of sustainable development and the need to maintain an adequate supply of minerals.

MIN10 – Aggregate Reserves

Development Plans should ensure that:

- **a sufficient stock of permitted reserves (a landbank) is maintained for all aggregate minerals for the region as a whole in line with national policy guidance; and**

- **take account of the contribution to be made by the use of secondary and recycled aggregates and also of marine-dredged aggregates, where these can be obtained in a sustainable way.**

Waste

6.18 The National Waste Strategy, "*Waste Strategy 2000*" (Cm 4693,1 & 2) was published in May 2000. National planning guidance for waste management is set out in *PPG10: "Planning and Waste Management"* (DETR, September 1999) and *PPG 11: "Regional Planning"*, (DETR, October 2000). The Government wishes to see regional strategies developed for meeting likely demands for waste management. These should become an integral part of RPG. The Regional Waste Strategy for the North East is currently being developed. The Regional Technical Advisory Body (RTAB) for waste for the North East, published its First Technical Report (May 2000) and appointed consultants in September 2001 to assist in the production of a regional strategy. It is anticipated that the Regional Waste Strategy will identify the region's waste arisings, set targets for waste reduction, re-use and recycling, composting, energy from waste and landfill and provide a context for decisions on the number, size, and locations of existing and new waste facilities within the region. This study is due to report in September 2002 to enable it to inform the early review of RPG1.

6.19 The amount of controlled (i.e. household, commercial and industrial) waste produced per annum within the region is estimated to be some 8 million tonnes. Apart from special waste, (e.g. acids, alkali, pharmaceutical compounds, solvents, asbestos and other hazards) the region is self-contained as regards the generation and management of waste. Landfill is currently the means of disposal for over 90% of the region's waste. There are significant internal movements of waste, particularly from the Tyne and Wear conurbation to surrounding counties, for landfill. This reflects existing contracts for handling waste, rather than lack of alternative facilities in Tyne and Wear. In the Tees Valley area, apart from

Darlington, a new waste to energy plant, opened in 1997 at Haverton Hill, Billingham, handles virtually all its household waste.

6.20 The dumping of sewage sludge from large treatment plants serving Tyneside and the Tees Valley in the North Sea disposal grounds ceased in 1998. Higher standards of waste treatment in the region are likely to increase the amount of sludge produced. The Environment Agency and DEFRA consider that the Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO) for the re-use of sewage sludge is in agriculture where it can act as a natural fertiliser and soil conditioner. The majority of treated sewage sludge is re-used in this way. There will however, remain the need for a small proportion of de-watered sewage sludge cake to be landfilled. The combined effluent and sewage treatment works at Bran Sands in the Tees Estuary provides a regional facility for the treatment of sewage wastes. It will also generate electricity, using dried sewage sludge pellets as fuel, when the plant is complete. Further work will continue over the guidance period to develop viable economic outlets for sewage sludge and other sewage derived waste.

6.21 The region is a major net exporter of special wastes to specialist treatment facilities elsewhere in England and Wales. Because of its economic base, the Tees Valley is both the largest producer and exporter of special waste in tonnage terms contributing as much as three quarters of the regional totals.

6.22 Recycling initiatives have concentrated on household waste but currently only about 3% of such waste within the region is recycled.

Priorities for Waste Management

Objective for Waste Management

To ensure that Development Plans, local authority waste recycling plans, municipal waste management strategies and the Environment Agency's Strategic Waste Management Assessments, make provision for appropriate methods of waste management which will assist in achieving the objectives and targets of Waste Strategy 2000.

6.23 Fundamental to the Government's approach to sustainable waste management is the need to curb waste growth, particularly in the household sector, which stands at around 3% per annum nationally, and to consider waste as a resource from which value can be recovered. The approach is based on the principles set out in PPG10 and in Waste Strategy 2000.

6.24 The Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO) establishes the solution that provides most benefit or least damage to the environment as a whole, at acceptable cost, over both the long and the short term. This can vary from waste stream to waste stream and from area to area. The waste hierarchy is a theoretical framework of waste management options to be considered when assessing the BPEO. The options are ranked to give a broad indication of their relative environmental benefits and disbenefit:

- reduction;
- re-use;

- recovery (with consideration given first to recycling and composting, before energy recovery from waste); and

- disposal.

6.25 Greater emphasis is given to the options at the top of the hierarchy and less reliance on simple disposal without energy recovery. Waste Strategy 2000 advises that, where energy from waste plants are needed, they should be appropriately sized to avoid competition with recycling (to ensure that they do not hamper the achievement of statutory targets) and incorporate Combined Heat and Power technology where practicable.

6.26 The Government also subscribes to both the "proximity principle" (the recovery or disposal of waste close to the point of generation) and "regional self-sufficiency" in order to assist in the sustainable approach to the management of waste and limit the need to transport waste. It is the Government's aim that plans and decisions on waste management should choose the BPEO, taking into account the waste hierarchy, regional self-sufficiency and the proximity principle. It is recognised that there may be tensions between some of these principles. For example, transporting re-cyclable materials over long distances may cancel out the environmental benefits of recycling. However, as set out in Waste 2000, the concept of BPEO is that local environmental, social and economic preferences will be important in any decision. For example, where the BPEO for a waste stream is towards the lower end of the waste hierarchy, this can often be because the environmental cost of transport to a distant reprocessing facility or market outweighs the benefit of recovering the waste. These may well result in different BPEOs for the same waste in different locations, or even different BPEOs for the same type of waste in the same area but at different times. This will need to be considered in the preparation of the Regional Waste Strategy for the early review in 2002/03.

6.27 A number of national targets are set out in Waste Strategy 2000. These are adopted as interim targets for this version of the RPG1. These will be amended to reflect the regional targets which will be developed as part of the regional waste strategy, and included as part of the early review of RPG1 in 2002/03. The national targets are:

- to reduce the amount of industrial and commercial waste landfilled to 85% of 1998 levels by 2005;

- to recover value from 40% of municipal waste by 2005, to include recycling or composting of at least 25% of household waste;

- to recover value from 45% of municipal waste by 2010 to include recycling or composting of at least 30% of household waste; and

- to recover value from 67% of municipal waste by 2015 to include recycling or composting of at least 33% of household waste.

6.28 The Government proposes to set statutory performance standards for local authority recycling for 2003, 2005, and 2010 to ensure the national targets are achieved. Different standards will be applied, recognising the variation in current levels of recycling among different groups of authorities. Tradable permits for local authorities are to be introduced to restrict the amount of biodegradable municipal waste landfilled. There will also be increased

public involvement in decision making and in the promotion of reuse and recycling schemes together with the use of economic incentives such as landfill tax.

6.29 The recently adopted EU landfill directive will require substantial changes to the way in which waste is managed in the UK and in the region. Its main objectives are to ensure high standards for the disposal of waste and to reduce methane emissions. Of particular importance are the requirements by 2020 to reduce biodegradable municipal waste to landfill to 35% by weight of the 1995 figure. Intermediate targets of 75% and 50% of the 1995 figure by 2010 and 2013 respectively are also set. The Directive also requires banning the co-disposal of hazardous and non-hazardous waste by providing separate landfills for hazardous, non-hazardous and inert wastes. Dates are also set for banning landfilling of whole tyres (2003), shredded tyres (2006), liquid wastes, infectious clinical waste and certain types of hazardous waste.

6.30 A waste strategy for the region based on the BPEO, the proximity principle and self-sufficiency will only be achieved if the appropriate mechanisms are in place and action is taken to ensure that they are delivered. The North East Regional Technical Advisory Body on Waste (NERTAB) was inaugurated in February 1999 and has a fundamental role to play in developing a distinctly regional waste strategy to feed into RPG1 at the early review in 2002/03. One of the main problems in developing guidance on waste planning for the region has been the lack of basic data on which sound advice can be formulated. This situation is now improving.

6.31 The Environment Agency has a key role in providing base information. They have produced a number of useful baseline documents including the results of its National Waste Survey in 1999, and a "*Strategic Waste Management Assessment 2000: North East*" published in December 2000. In the North East, the Environment Agency are also currently preparing an update to their Waste Management Report which has been produced annually since 1996 and will be published in the summer.

6.32 NERTAB will produce reports, as and when required, to update information on waste arisings, existing waste management facilities, and capacity of treatment/disposal facilities, and European and national planning policy background. From such data achievable regional targets for the reduction of waste going to landfill and for the recovery of waste and waste minimisation can be set, appropriate indicators to assess progress towards targets can be determined and the need for various facilities within the region can be determined. NERTAB will then be able to recommend preferred options for inclusion in RPG1. In the interim, Development Plans should, in conjunction with local authority waste management strategies and the Environment Agency's Strategic Waste Management Assessments, make provision for appropriate methods of waste management, which will assist in achieving Government targets.

Waste Sites and Facilities

6.33 Currently, the majority of waste in the region goes to landfill. Existing contracts determine that, in the short to medium term, landfill will continue to be the main means of disposal. It is important that local authorities should seek alternative solutions to landfill to ensure that the waste strategy for the North East contributes to the achievement of the Waste Strategy 2000. Alternative disposal solutions will form an important part of the regional waste strategy.

The waste management and disposal targets, which will be identified through the regional waste strategy will promote sustainable waste management, waste minimisation and alternatives to landfill. In addition, RPG1 gives positive support to the consideration of integrated waste management facilities, which would include a range of waste disposal options on a single site.

6.34 The future direction of waste management in the region, whilst constrained by existing waste contacts and their operation of the market in waste management, will largely be driven by European and national legislation. Planning policies have a role to play in achieving an integrated and adequate network of waste management facilities to reflect local needs and priorities throughout the region. Policies should be guided by the BPEO and the proximity principle, and should contribute towards an overall waste strategy based on regional self-sufficiency.

6.35 When waste has to be moved, priority should be given to bulk transport schemes, such as rail, where this would reduce the overall environmental impact and is economically possible. Other waste treatment options involving waste recovery, including recycling, composting and energy from waste, are likely to become relatively more important as more sustainable alternatives to landfill. These types of facilities bring their own set of issues for consideration such as transport, traffic and access, dust, odours, noise, litter, visual intrusion, hours of operation, and compatibility with adjacent development.

6.36 When considering the acceptability of proposals for waste management facilities account should be taken of the possible adverse effects on the environment and local communities, including such problems as noise, dust, odour, air and groundwater pollution, damage to nature conservation and archaeological interests, and adverse visual impact.

6.37 The generation of heat and power and the restoration of derelict or contaminated land are examples of the possible benefits arising from the use of waste. In appropriate cases and subject to environmental considerations, landfill disposal can also contribute to the phased and proper restoration of mineral workings, which can also provide suitable locations for the recycling and recovery of waste material, concurrent with the disposal operation. Wherever possible, Development Plans should identify positive environmental improvements or development opportunities that might arise from the use of waste materials.

W1 – Waste Sites & Facilities

Development Plans and other strategies should:

- **identify sufficient sites or areas of search to fulfil the requirements of a sustainable waste strategy for the region based on the Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO) and informed by options towards the top of the waste hierarchy, whilst having regard to the proximity principle;**

- **provide for an appropriate range of waste management facilities, including wherever possible those for materials and energy recovery, and the provision of sites for integrated waste management solutions;**

- **contain criteria-based policies for assessing proposals for large scale waste management facilities including the potential issues of visual intrusion, noise, odours, impact on health, and traffic generation; and**

- **recognise that the priorities set by the waste hierarchy will not always hold true for all types of waste and the BPEO needs to be established in each case.**

6.38 Although the tonnage of special waste forms only a small proportion of the total waste generated, the region is a large net exporter of special waste for treatment. A co-ordinated approach is required to the provision of one or more facilities for the treatment of special and toxic waste in the region, preferably within easy reach of the conurbations where the majority of such waste is generated, with the aim of achieving self-sufficiency. The NHS as a large producer of special waste should be consulted on the management of special waste.

W2 – Special Waste

Development Plans and other strategies should consider:

- **the need for facilities in the region involved with the treatment and disposal of toxic and clinical wastes; and**

- **the need to address the special problems presented by the treatment of waste water and sewage sludge as a result of the higher standards now required.**

Energy Generation and Use

Objective for Energy

To ensure that the North East contributes to the Government's targets of reducing greenhouse gases and maximising energy generation from renewable sources.

6.39 Planning and energy have a number of important points of contact. At the most fundamental level, the availability and price of energy have a direct influence on building design, urban form, and the distribution of activities. At a more site-specific level, planning policy influences the exploitation of energy resources, such as oil, gas, coal and renewables, and the location of plant used for its conversion, along with transmission lines. Transport energy is dominated by private motoring and is a major energy user in terms of fuel. It is also a major contributor to greenhouse emissions. Government and regional policy therefore aim to reduce the need to travel, reduce journey lengths, and ensure that development can be accessed by all modes of transport, including public transport, walking and cycling. The Transport policies are set out in Chapter 5.

6.40 The Government has made a number of important policy commitments, which the planning system can assist in achieving. The aim is, within the framework of its national Climate Programme, to deliver the UK's binding target, under the Kyoto Protocol, to reduce emissions of six greenhouse gases by 12.5% from 1990 levels during the period 2008–12. The Government wishes by 2010 to:

- reduce emissions of Carbon Dioxide (CO_2) by 20%;

- increase installed capacity of Good Quality Combined Heat and Power (CHP) to at least 10 Giga Watts equivalent (GWe);

- increase installed renewable energy capacity to 10% of the total generation capacity, and to 20% by 2020.

6.41 Local authorities also have domestic energy efficiency targets that they are charged with setting themselves under the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995.

6.42 In recent years power station closures at Dunston and Stella North and South, and most recently at Blyth Power Station, have made the northern area of the region more dependent on the National Grid for its power. In contrast the southern area of the region is served by two large power stations, at Hartlepool and Wilton, which will continue operating throughout the period of this Guidance. While there is an adequate supply of power from existing stations and the National Grid, it would be inherently more efficient to encourage new, relatively small scale, 'distributed' power generation facilities within the region, particularly using CHP technology and the gas grid. In addition, new transmission lines can have significant impacts, although duties imposed under the Electricity Act 1989 seek to mitigate any adverse impacts. Wherever possible additional generating capacity should be met locally to reduce the need for new extensions to the National Grid system.

6.43 The North East is well endowed with potential renewable energy resources. The most promising technologies in the short to medium term are wind, landfill gas, small-scale hydro, and municipal, agricultural and forest waste combustion. Other prospects include photovoltaics in urban areas, and agricultural fuel combustion from bio fuel crops such as coppice. There are opportunities for farmers to diversify into the energy market through the Energy Crops Scheme under the England Rural Development Programme.

6.44 The Energy sector has considerable potential for economic regeneration. Traditionally this has been achieved by the exploitation and conversion of fossil and nuclear fuels. New manufacturing opportunities are possible as the region's renewable energy resources are brought into practical use.

EN1 – Energy

Development Plans and other strategies should:

- **consider the relationship between planning, energy and the environment;**

- **support action to meet Government targets for CO_2 reduction, greater use of renewable sources, improvements in energy efficiency and conservation, and installation of combined heat and power and community heating; and**

- **recognise that opportunities for action vary across the region and between urban and rural areas, but an important underlying theme should be local energy generation and conservation.**

6.45 Preparation of Development Plans should take into account '*Energy for a new century – an energy strategy for the North East of England*', (The Northern Energy Initiative, 1999). Planning authorities should consider the inclusion of local targets in Development Plans, based on national and regional targets. However, these will only be meaningful if supported by a broader corporate strategy for energy.

Renewable Energy

6.46 The Government has set a national target of 10% of UK electricity to be supplied by renewable energy by 2010, increasing to 20% by 2020. To achieve this it is acknowledged that a positive strategic approach to planning for renewable energy at the regional level is essential to deliver the Government's targets and goals for renewable energy and climate change.

6.47 In 2000 the Government Office for the North East (GONE) was asked by DTI and DETR to commission an independent study examining the potential of, and recommending targets for, the development of renewable energy in the North East. The findings of the report would inform both RPG1 and the Regional Sustainable Development Framework. Under the guidance of a regional steering group, Chris Blandford Associates was appointed to lead the study. The final report was submitted to the steering group in December 2000, and is available on the GONE web-site (www.go-ne.gov.uk). The report found that the region has significant potential for renewable energy, with wind energy being the major resource option. Currently less than 1% of the North East's electricity generating capacity is provided by renewable energy sources. The report also recommended both regional and sub-regional targets for renewable energy generation.

6.48 The consultants proposed a regional target range of between 240–416 MW (excluding energy from waste). This represents 5–9 % of the total potential installed capacity (MW) of all electricity generation located in the North East. It is acknowledged that the regional target should be challenging and aspirational, and should therefore be towards the upper end of the range suggested by the consultants. However, further work is required before setting a specific regional target, and identifying appropriate sub-regional targets. The North East Assembly, together with GONE, local authorities, environmental groups and the renewables industry are currently preparing a North East Renewable Energy Strategy which will inform the early review of RPG1. This will allow regional and sub-regional targets for renewable energy to be set from all sources for the period to 2020. The study will also allow local authorities to identify, on a consistent basis, Strategic Wind Resource Areas, and to develop a consistent policy framework for the development of other renewables.

6.49 However, for this version of RPG1 it is possible to include some of the recommendations from the report to assist in achieving the renewable energy target for the region. Contributions to this target would come from a range of potential renewable sources. Local planning authorities should therefore consider identifying "Strategic Wind Resource Areas" (SWRA's), and areas of search for other renewable technologies, where appropriate, to assist developers in selecting and proposing sites that are more likely to be acceptable. It is recognised, however, that wind power is the major resource option in the region. The SWRA's will be broad locations with average wind speeds of 7 m/sec or greater at 45m above ground level. These speeds should form the basis of SWRA's as they are considered by the wind industry to be economically feasible for commercial wind farms. It is recognised that a large proportion of the accessible wind resource with high average mean speeds (i.e. over 8 m/sec) are found within the northern uplands of Northumberland and in the western uplands of County Durham, much of which is designated for its national landscape value. One of the key issues of strategic importance for SWRA policies and criteria, therefore, concerns the potential landscape and visual cumulative effects of wind development. However, there are significant lowland and coastal locations not covered by national landscape designated landscapes with suitable wind speeds of between 7 and 8 m/sec that could be considered.

Circumstances may also arise during the guidance period where locations with lower wind speeds of 7m/sec could offer potential for wind energy projects.

6.50 Where appropriate local planning authorities should consider developing development briefs for specific SWRA, which would set out guidance on issues of turbine design, layout, scale, and key views to be assessed. These should clarify the appropriate scale of development in terms of heights and numbers of turbines that are considered to be the most appropriate within the different types of landscapes. Development briefs should also be prepared for other renewable energy sources where appropriate. Consideration should be given to adopting these development briefs as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

EN2 – Renewable Energy

Development Plans and other strategies should:

- **identify "Strategic Wind Resource Areas" (SWRAs) where appropriate to identify the general locations where positive consideration will, in principle, be given to major wind energy developments, (including offshore locations). Areas of Search should also be identified for hydro-generation and other renewable technologies;**

- **prepare formal assessments of the capacity of landscapes within the plan area to accommodate different types and scale of scheme;**

- **give careful consideration to the appropriate type and scale of renewable energy scheme which could be located in, or visible from, the more sensitive locations of the Northumberland National Park, the North Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;**

- **encourage forms of renewable technology compatible with urban and rural environments, such as photovoltaics, biomass (including energy crops), active solar panels and single wind turbines which are of a type and scale appropriate to the particular character of the surrounding environment;**

- **adopt development briefs for the location and appearance of renewable energy developments as Supplementary Planning Guidance where appropriate;**

- **produce guidelines for passive solar design in housing and commercial/institutional buildings, and for photovoltaics and active solar panels; and**

- **investigate the potential of Energy from Waste as a potential source .**

6.51 It is recognised that some major schemes for renewable energy generation can have significant environmental impacts, both negative and beneficial. The significance of these impacts will vary, depending in part on the sensitivity of the location. The impact of a renewable energy scheme will also be dependent on the type and size of the proposal as well as on the location.

6.52 The Chris Blandford report also identified planning guidance for various renewable energy technologies developed from examples of good practice in planning policies. This gives details of the criteria which planning authorities should consider for inclusion in their policies to

assess renewable energy projects. Of particular importance is the need for local planning authorities to work with the Renewable Energy industry to encourage and facilitate meaningful stakeholder dialogue in planning for renewable energy at the local level. This will relate to the development of policy and in discussing individual schemes. This detailed guidance is contained in the report and can be accessed through the GONE website. These recommendations should also be developed further alongside the work to be undertaken on targets and incorporated into the early review in 2002/03. However, in the interim the following criteria should be considered for inclusion in Development Plans.

EN3 – Assessing Renewable Energy Applications

In developing policies to assess renewable energy proposals, Development Plans should consider :

- **the impact of development on sensitive habitats;**
- **proximity to suitable grid connection point;**
- **appropriateness of the location in relation to the local and wider landscape;**
- **operational effects such as air quality, noise, visual intrusion odour and water pollution; and**
- **opportunities for environmental enhancements through the improvement of degraded landscapes.**

6.53 Clean and new technologies are being developed, and will continue to be developed, to provide the basis for continuing growth of the contribution to renewables in the longer term. Local planning authorities will need to be able to address the land use implications of new technologies in a flexible manner. One way of being able to achieve this is through the production of supplementary planning guidance, which can be updated as new technologies emerge.

EN4 – New Energy Technologies

Local planning authorities should consider the use of Supplementary Planning Guidance to allow for flexibility in addressing the land use implications of the development of new renewable energy technologies.

6.54 Combined Heat and Power (CHP) and Community Heating schemes provide the opportunity to promote more local energy-efficient development. These offer optimum energy efficiency and contribute towards urban regeneration and a sustainable environment. Such schemes also contribute towards urban renaissance since they work most efficiently when they are supplying a mix of nearby residential and commercial buildings, particularly in high-density city areas, because of the diverse heating and electricity requirements throughout the day. The Government published a draft CHP Strategy to 2010 on 15 May 2002. It includes measures to encourage the wider uptake of CHP.

EN5 – Combined Heat and Power (CHP)
Development Plans and other strategies should:

- **encourage the widespread application and development of CHP technology, in preference to electricity only thermal power stations;**
- **encourage the development of heat networks as a new infrastructure assisting the wider development of CHP; and**
- **ensure that the scale of such developments should as far as possible be related to demands that can be met without the need for additional power transmission lines.**

Natural Gas

6.55 Ever-increasing proportions of the North East's energy needs are supplied by natural gas. This trend will continue, encouraged in particular by new gas-fired power stations. The Region's gas grid has a negligible environmental impact and provides the basic infrastructure for increasing the number of small-scale CHP plants, which in turn can avoid the need for overhead transmission lines.

EN6 – Natural Gas
Development Plans and other strategies should encourage the use of the gas grid to support distributed power generation, rather than single site large power units relying on and requiring new overhead transmission lines.

Energy Efficiency

6.56 The RPG Strategy encourages a reduction in the demand through greater energy efficiency both in existing and new development. Energy efficiency measures in new and existing dwellings can go a long way to meeting the Government's policy commitments, given that 30% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions are from the domestic sector. Such measures include: improved standards of insulation, energy efficient lighting and appliances, draught-stripping, double glazing, efficient heating controls and thermostats, and condensing boilers.

6.57 All new buildings should be designed to minimise energy consumption by: incorporating energy efficient best practice measures in the design, layout and orientation of all building types, domestic and non–domestic. A general design policy is contained in Chapter 3, Policy ENV22.

EN7 – Energy Efficiency in Buildings
Development Plans and other strategies should seek to maximise energy efficiency in all new development, and in existing building stock.

CHAPTER 7
Implementation and Monitoring

Introduction

7.1 It is important for a monitoring system to be in place to assess the effectiveness and implementation of RPG1. The success of the RPG1 strategy and policies will require the contribution and participation of many partners and stakeholders, as well as the preparation and realisation of separate local authority development plans.

7.2 PPG11 '*Regional Planning*' advises that output targets should be set for those matters where RPG is likely to have a significant effect as implemented through the actions of other bodies. These will be central to check that the RPG1 strategy is being implemented as intended. In addition, consideration needs also to be given to contextual indicators that help to assess the performance of strategies in achieving regional outcomes that will only have been influenced to a limited extent by RPG1.

7.3 To form an effective strategy the key policies in RPG need to be based on a clear assessment of the baseline situation, the action required of a named agency in implementing that policy, an objective for change, feeding into a target and a means of monitoring its achievement, if not in quantified terms, at least in terms of the direction of change. A Baseline Monitoring Report was prepared by ANEC in March 2002. An interim annual monitoring report should be prepared by Spring 2003 which covers the key targets and indicators relating to the review topics to help inform the early review of RPG1.

Work on Indicators in the North East Region

7.4 The Regional Sustainable Development Framework published in January 2002 establishes a common set of objectives, targets and monitoring indicators for use by the Regional Development Agency (One NorthEast), Government Office for the North East (GONE), and the North East Assembly (NEA) to assess and to report on progress towards sustainable development.

7.5 One NorthEast, in preparing the Regional Economic Strategy, has developed a number of targets to monitor the progress of the region against sustainable development objectives. These tend to concentrate on the economic related aspects of growth, social progress, environmental protection and prudent use of resources. This will help to ensure that the strategy for economic prosperity is rooted in the principles of sustainable development.

Monitoring of RPG1

7.6 The policies and targets set out in this guidance will be monitored by the region's local authorities through the North East Assembly, in conjunction with partners. A number of output targets and indicators have been selected in line with the advice in PPG11 to address those matters where RPG1 is likely to have a significant effect through direct implementation. These targets and indicators are set out on a chapter by chapter basis in Table 7.1 and are clearly linked to the relevant RPG1 policies. These output indicators have also been supplemented by contextual indicators. RPG1 has used some of the contextual targets and indicators identified and agreed in the RSDF, to ensure consistency in monitoring with this important regional framework document. These targets and indicators are marked with an asterisk (*).

Monitoring Arrangements

7.7 Chapter 16 of PPG11 sets out the importance of monitoring of RPG. It is essential that RPG1 is regularly monitored and kept under review. It is the responsibility of the NEA to carry out this monitoring and review in liaison with GONE and other stakeholders.

7.8 ANEC's baseline monitoring report provides the basis of the future monitoring of the implementation and impact of the RPG1 strategy and policies. Effective monitoring requires the establishment of regionally consistent and regularly updated data collection procedures. The NEA in partnership with local authorities and other organisations identified in Table 7.1 A Framework for Monitoring will collect and share information which will form the basis of annual monitoring reports.

7.9 More detail on the contextual indicators could be included in a full monitoring report produced, possibly, every 4–5 years, depending on the timetable for RPG1 Review. Changes on many of the background indicators will inevitably be slow and could not justify monitoring on an annual basis.

7.10 The success of RPG1 monitoring will depend on the combined efforts of the local authorities in the region, as well as various national and regional agencies and organisations. For example the urban capacity studies proposed in RPG1 (see Chapter 4) to be carried out by local authorities and the house-building industry, would allow the development of previously used and greenfield sites to be monitored. An urgent issue to be addressed concerns the availability of data, particularly for the North East region.

Resources

7.11 RPG1, in conjunction with other plans and strategies, needs to help create the right climate for encouraging private investment. Such investment is essential to implement proposals for housing, retail, leisure and other developments outlined in this guidance. The public sector will continue to have an important role as a 'pump primer' to help development get started.

7.12 The implementation of RPG1 will call upon significant public or public/private partnership resources. Funding restrictions have meant that public expenditure on housing, transport, environmental and other projects has been limited in the recent past. However sources of funding such as the Single Regeneration Budget and Capital Challenge Fund have provided invaluable assistance to certain areas.

7.13 The Regional Development Agency, One NorthEast, will have a key role to play in attracting funds and investment into the region. Other agencies and organisations, such as English Heritage, the Countryside Agency and the Community Forests, will also have an important role in regeneration and investment activity in the region.

Implementation

7.14 RPG1 will be largely implemented through setting a framework for key regional issues to be included in future Structure, Local and Unitary Development Plans and Local Transport Plans. Strategic and local planning authorities through the development plan process will be key implementers of RPG1. This will be complemented by action from a large number of organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors taking forward many of the policies through different mechanisms.

7.15 A large number of strategies (set out in Annex 3) are being produced in the region which will play a part in the implementation of RPG1, and close co-operation will be needed between different organisations to ensure successful action and integration.

Framework for Monitoring

Table 7.1 A Framework for Monitoring

Chapter 2 – Strategy		
Output Target Indicators		
Policy/Para No.	**Target**	**Indicator**
2.5	100% of development plan reviews to be accompanied by a sustainability appraisal.	No. of sustainability appraisals carried out of development plan reviews. Source: Local authorities
2.53	To increase the proportion of all the region's new development located within existing settlements by 2016.	% of development plan allocations within existing settlements. To set a target in the next review of RPG1. Source: Local authorities/NEA
Contextual Target Indicators		
Population	Regional population target of 2,550,000 at 2016.	Regional net migration balance. Population totals to be monitored in comparison with national projections every 5 years – 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016. Source: ONS
Health	By 2010 reduce inequalities in health outcomes by 10% as measured by infant mortality and life expectancy at birth. This single target is supported by the following two specific targets: • starting with children under one year, by 2010 to reduce the gap in mortality by at least 10% between 'routine and manual' groups and the population as a whole; • starting with local authorities, by 2010 to reduce the gap by at least 10% between the fifth of areas with the lowest life expectancy at birth and the population as a whole. To reduce the death rate from coronary heart disease, stroke related diseases in people under 75 years by at least 40% by 2010.* To reduce the death rate from cancer in people under 75 years by at least 20% by 2010.*	A narrowing of the health inequalities gap. Source: "Tackling Health Inequalities" consultation document/PSA Data Source: ONS Health improvement Source: NHS Plan/PSA Data Source: ONS

Table 7.1 **A Framework for Monitoring (contd)**

Chapter 3 – Environment		
Output Target Indicators		
Policy/Para No.	**Target**	**Indicator**
ENV 4	No increase in the number of properties in the region exposed to the risk of flooding.	Number of planning applications permitted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency where the objection was made on flood risk grounds. Source: Environment Agency
ENV 7 / ENV 19	Loss or damage to nationally, internationally designated habitats or sites of historic importance to be zero.	Status of nationally, internationally designated sites (e.g. condition of SSSI's). Source: English Nature Area (ha) of regional priority habitats lost or damaged on nationally and/or internationally designated sites. Source: English Nature Loss and damage to scheduled monuments, battlefields, historic parks and gardens, and Grade I and II* listed buildings, numbers of listed buildings and conservation areas. * Source: English Heritage
ENV 13	To increase the percentage of woodland area cover in the region.	Area of woodland created within the Great North Forest and Tees Forest. Area of woodland created in regeneration areas. To set a target in the next review of RPG1. Source: Forestry Commission
ENV 20	To increase the reclamation of derelict land by 2016.	Extent of contaminated land. * Extent of derelict land. * Area of derelict land reclaimed. Area of derelict land re-categorised. Source: Local authorities/ODPM
ENV 19	To minimise the number of Grade I and II* listed buildings at risk throughout the RPG period.	Number of Grade I and II* listed buildings at risk. * Source: English Heritage
Contextual Target Indicators		
Habitats and species	Halt the declining trend in the regional wild bird population index by 2005, and thereafter see the return of the wild bird population to favourable conservation status. To maintain and increase biodiversity of priority habitats as set out in Local Biodiversity Action Plans.	Population of wild birds. * Source: RSPB Net increase/decrease (ha) in priority habitats as set out in Local Biodiversity Action Plans. Source: Regional Biodiversity Audit / Local authorities
Air quality	Reduction in the number of days when air pollution is moderate or high to meet the Air Quality Strategy objectives.	Days when air pollution is moderate or high or above the Air Quality Strategy objective by the required date. * Source: RQOLC
Water quality	91% of river length to meet the inland river quality objectives by 2005. To ensure that all bathing waters continue to meet the Bathing Water Directive's mandatory standard and improve guideline compliance. To maximise the number of groundwater bodies achieving good chemical status by 2016.	% of river length of good quality (chemical and biological). * Source: Environment Agency Number of beaches which meet bathing water guideline standards. * Source: Environment Agency Number and percentage of groundwater bodies achieving good chemical status. Source: Environment Agency

Table 7.1 **A Framework for Monitoring (contd)**		
Chapter 4 – Development Patterns		
Economy **Output Target Indicators**		
Policy/Para No.	**Target**	**Indicator**
EL1 / EL2	100% of local authority areas to have completed their input to the Regional Employment Land Survey by Spring 2003.	Number of employment land reviews undertaken. Area of employment land re-allocated/de-allocated. Amount of employment land by category: • strategic employment sites • premier division sites • sites of 10 ha – 40 ha Annual take-up rates of employment land. Source: Local authorities
4.23	To increase the use of previously-developed land and sites for employment purposes.	% employment land allocations on previously-developed land. % of employment land allocations within urban areas. % employment land developed on previously-developed land. % employment land developed within urban areas. Source: Local authorities
EL5	To increase the development of business clusters.	Number of jobs created through cluster development. Source: One NorthEast
Contextual Target Indicators		
Economy	Achieve stable average growth in the regional GDP per head of 3.4% per annum by 2010.	GDP per head. * Source: ODPM
	Increase business start ups to UK average by 2010.	Level of new business start-ups net of closures. * Source: One NorthEast
Economy **Output Target Indicators**		
Rur 1	To increase the range and diversification of employment opportunities in rural areas by 2016. Number of rural diversification schemes approved. Sq. m. of space created through conversion schemes. Number of schemes supported by Rural Enterprise Scheme. Source: Local authorities/DEFRA	Number of farm diversification schemes approved.
Contextual Target Indicators		
Unemployment	To minimise unemployment in rural areas.	Unemployment rates in rural areas. Source: ONS

Table 7.1 **A Framework for Monitoring (contd)**

Housing
Output Target Indicators

Policy/Para No.	Target	Indicator
H1	To create a better balance between housing supply and demand.	% change in house prices of specific areas/sectors in relation to % change in national average. Source: HM Land Registry Number of households in temporary accommodation. Number of households in B & B
	To reduce vacancy rates in the region to 3% by 2016.	Source: Local authorities % long term vacant dwellings in the region. Number of demolitions by local authority area. % demolitions not replaced. % vacant dwellings in the region. Source: Local authorities
	To turn around the incidence of low demand and abandonment by 2010.	Number of dwellings in low demand (as reported by local authority HIP returns). Number of sub-regional partnerships tackling the problem. Source: Local authorities
H2	To assess whether the RPG1 housing provision to 2006 set out in Table 4.3 is still appropriate.	Number of net annual completions by strategic planning area. Source: Local authorities Household growth in line with projections. Migration in and out in line with expectations. Source: ONS Regional economic performance in line with RDA projections. Source: ONE NorthEast
H4	65% of all new housing should be built on previously-developed land or through conversions by 2016. 100% of urban housing capacity studies to be completed by Spring 2003.	New homes on previously-developed land and through conversions. * New homes on greenfield sites. Number of dwellings provided on brownfield windfall sites. Number of urban housing capacity studies completed by local authority area. Source: Local authorities
H6	A regional average density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare.	Average density of new housing developments by strategic planning area. Source: Local authorities
H7	Improve the range and choice of dwelling types and sizes to meet all sectors of the community throughout the RPG1 period.	Net change in the number of affordable homes. Source: Local authorities
Contextual Target Indicators		
Housing market	To monitor variations in house prices.	House prices.
Low Demand and Abandonment	To turn around the incidence of low demand by 2010. To monitor the number of residents on local authority waiting lists. To monitor the number of homeless people in the region.	Proportion of housing stock unfit. * Number of empty property strategies. Numbers on local authority waiting lists. Number of homeless. *

Table 7.1 **A Framework for Monitoring (contd)**

Policy/Para No.	Target	Indicator
Retail Output Target Indicators		
TC1	Maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres.	Area of floorspace permitted for town centre uses in town centres. Area of floorspace permitted in town centre uses in out-of-centre locations. Source: Local authorities
Sport and Recreation Output Target Indicators		
SR1	To increase the level of sport and recreation facilities accessible to all sectors of the community.	Number of local authorities carrying out audits of open space, sport and recreation facilities. Source: Local authorities
Chapter 5 – Transport Output Target Indicators		
T1	All development plans to be consistent with the RTS and LTP's by 2006.	Number of development plans which contain accessibility standards for major development. Source: Local authorities
T5	To encourage use of public transport, walking and cycling.	Length of new: No car lane; Bus lane; Segregated cycle lane. Number of cycling trips. Number of work place and school travel plans implemented. Source: Local authorities
T12	All Development Plans to reflect national maximum car parking standards by 2006.	Number of Development Plans which contain . maximum car parking standards in line with PPG13.
Contextual Target Indicators		
Congestion	To reduce road traffic congestion in the region.	Average time lost per vehicle kilometre. Source: DfT
Road Safety	To improve road safety.	Number of deaths and serious injuries (all ages). Number of children killed and seriously injured. Source: Local Authorities
Freight	To promote the efficient and sustainable movement of freight.	Number of freight quality partnerships implemented. Number of travel plans implemented (including freight content). Number/length of freight vehicle priority lanes implemented. Source: Local authorities
Chapter 6 – Minerals, Waste and Energy Output Target Indicators		
6.27	To reduce the amount of industrial and commercial waste landfilled to 85% of 1998 levels by 2005.	Proportion of regions industrial and commercial waste diverted from landfill. Source: NERTAB / ODPM
6.27	To recover value from 40% of municipal waste by 2005 to include recycling or composting of at least 25% of household waste.	Proportion of region's municipal waste recovered. * Proportion of region's household waste recycled. * Source: NERTAB / ODPM
6.48	To increase the amount of renewable energy generating capacity in the region to 240 – 416 MW by 2010.	Number of renewable energy schemes given planning permission. Source: Local authorities

ANNEX 1

Indicative Timetable of the Key Stages in the RPG Review Process

Action	Date
RPG1 Review Issues Report	Summer 2002
Public Consultation on Draft RPG1	Summer 2003
Submission of Draft RPG1 to First Secretary of State	Spring 2004
Public Examination of selected matters	Autumn 2004
Consultation on First Secretary of States proposed changes	Summer 2005
Revised RPG1 issued	Winter 2005

ANNEX 2

Indication of work areas to be progressed as part of the early review*

Topic Area	Issue
General	• The need for policies to be more regionally-specific • Spatial implications of health, crime and education strategies (paragraphs 1.47 – 1.52)
Strategy	• Development of sub-regional guidance (paragraph 2.60)
Environment	• Identification of regionally important habitats and species in the emerging Regional Biodiversity Plan (paragraph 3.15)
Employment Land	• Completion of Regional Employment Land Survey (Policy EL1) • Consideration of the sub-regional distribution of employment land (paragraph 4.22) • Identification of broad location for a strategic employment site "West of Stockton" (paragraph 4.26) • Spatial implications of cluster development (paragraph 4.35)
Housing	• Assess the provision of replacement dwellings for cleared stock (paragraph 4.69) • Assess the indicative annual average rates of housing provision post-2006 (paragraph 4.72) • Distribute the "unallocated" annual rates between the Tyne, Wear and Tees conurbations (paragraph 4.72) • Identify sub-regional targets for the re-use of previously-developed land and buildings for new housing (paragraph 4.79) • Completion of Urban Housing Capacity Studies
Town Centres, Retailing and Commercial Leisure	• Consider the recommendations of the Regional Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment Study in developing a regional retail strategy (paragraph 4.101)
Transport	• Integrate the Regional Transport Strategy report into RPG1 (paragraph 5.2) • Consider the implications of the Tyneside Area Multi Modal Study; the A66 Safety Study; A1 (North of Newcastle) Multi Modal Study (paragraph 5.3) • Consider the implications of the findings of the Regional Ports Study (paragraph5.72)
Minerals	• Revision to the minerals policies in the light of the publication of MPG6 (paragraph 6.2)
Waste	• Integrate the recommendations of the consultants work in developing a Regional Waste Strategy (paragraph 6.18)
Energy	• Identify a regional, and sub-regional, targets for the generation of electricity by renewable energy (paragraph 6.48)

* *This list is not exhaustive. It is for the NEA to determine all the areas of RPG1 which it may wish to review*

ANNEX 3
List of Regional Strategies

Strategy	Lead Organisation
Regional Sustainable Development Framework 2002	NEA / One NorthEast / GONE
Regional Planning Guidance 2002 including: • Regional Transport Strategy • Regional Waste Strategy	NEA/GONE
Regional Economic Strategy for the North East "Unlocking our Potential 1999	One NorthEast
Regional Housing Statement "Housing in the North East – A Framework for Action" (RHS) 2000	GONE/ Housing Corporation North Eastern
EU Structural Funds, Objective 2 Single Programming Document 2001	GONE
EU Structural Funds, Objective 3 Programme 2001	GONE
Regional Cultural Strategy	Culture North East
England Rural Development Programme (ERDP), North East Regional Chapter 2000	DEFRA
North East Rural Action Plan 2002	One NorthEast
Regional Skills Strategy 2000	One NorthEast
Regional Image Strategy 2002	One NorthEast
"Energy for a New Century – An Energy Strategy for the North East of England" 1999	The Northern Energy Initiative
Regional Sports Strategy 2001	North East Sports Board
Strategy for Tourism in Northumbria 1999	Northumbria Tourist Board
ICT Strategy	One NorthEast/NEA

ANNEX 4
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ANNEX 5

Policy relationships to the four key themes: regeneration, opportunity, accessibility and conservation

Policy No.	Policy Title	Regeneration	Opportunity	Accessibility	Conservation
Introduction					
HAW1	Health and Well-being	•	•	•	
Strategy					
DP1	The Sequential Approach to Development	•	•	•	•
DP2	Sustainability Criteria	•	•	•	•
Environment					
ENV1	Air Quality			•	•
ENV2	Water Resource Management				•
ENV3	Water Quality				•
ENV4	Flooding	•			•
ENV5	Biodiversity				•
ENV6	Landscape Character	•	•		•
ENV7	National Designations			•	•
ENV8	Local Designations	•	•		•
ENV9	Tranquil Areas	•	•		•
ENV10	Open Space				•
ENV11	Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land		•		•
ENV12	Rural Diversification	•	•	•	•
ENV13	Tree Cover	•			•
ENV14	Historic Landscapes		•		•
ENV15	Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site		•		•
ENV16	Durham Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site		•		•
ENV17	Historic Settlements	•	•		•
ENV18	Views of Strategic Importance				•
ENV19	Listed Buildings	•			•
ENV20	Conservation Initiatives	•			•
ENV21	Built Development	•	•		•
Development Patterns					
EL1	Regional Employment Land Survey	•	•	•	•
EL2	Reassessment of Current Employment Land Allocations	•	•	•	
EL3	Renewal and Modernising of Existing Employment Areas	•	•		
EL4	Strategic Employment Site in the Broad Location of 'North of Sunderland'	•	•	•	
EL5	Business Clusters	•	•	•	
EL6	ICT Services	•	•	•	
EL7	Airport, Port and Rail-based Development	•	•	•	•

Policy No.	Policy Title	Regeneration	Opportunity	Accessibility	Conservation
Rur1	Facilitating Rural Regeneration	•	•	•	
Rur2	Identification of Rural Service Centres	•	•	•	
Rur3	Development in Rural Settlements	•	•		•
Rur4	Agriculture		•		•
Rur5	Forestry	•	•		•
H1	Existing Housing Stock, Housing Clearance and Renewal	•	•		
H2	Housing Distribution	•	•	•	
H3	Managed Release of Land for Housing				•
H4	Re-use of Previously-Developed Land	•	•		•
H5	Windfall Sites	•	•	•	
H6	Housing Density	•	•	•	•
H7	Affordable Housing	•	•		
GB1	Role of the North East Green Belt				•
GB2	Green Belt Extension / Alteration	•	•		•
GB3	Future Changes to Green Belt Boundaries		•		•
OL1	Open Land				•
TC1	Town Centres	•	•	•	
TC2	Hierarchy of Centres	•	•	•	
TC3	Function of Centres	•	•	•	
TC4	Traffic Management	•	•	•	
RD1	Retail Development	•	•	•	•
RD2	Retailing in Rural Areas	•	•	•	•
RD3	Out-of-centre Shopping Centres	•	•	•	•
LD1	Urban Commercial Leisure Development	•	•		
SR1	Sport & Recreation	•	•	•	•
SR2	Sport & Recreation in the Countryside		•		•
SR3	Intrusive Leisure Development in the Countryside		•		•
SR4	Sport & Recreation Development in the Green Belt and Urban Fringe		•		•
SR5	Sport & Recreation in Urban Areas	•	•		
SR6	Water-based Sport & Recreation		•		•
SR7	Recreational Routes		•	•	•
TOUR1	Sustainable Tourism	•	•	•	•
Transport					
T1	Location of Development	•	•	•	•
T2	Design of Development and promoting mixed use development	•	•	•	•
T3	Transport Infrastructure and Services of Regional Significance	•	•	•	
T4	Transport Infrastructure and Services of Local Significance	•	•	•	
T5	Public Transport	•	•	•	•
T6	Rail	•	•	•	•
T7	Metro and Light Rail	•	•	•	•

Policy No.	Policy Title	Regeneration	Opportunity	Accessibility	Conservation
T8	Bus Services	•	•	•	•
T9	Principal Roads	•	•	•	
T10	Local Roads	•	•	•	
T11	Demand Management			•	•
T12	Parking Standards for New Development			•	•
T13	Control of Public Parking			•	•
T14	Walking and Cycling		•	•	•
T15	Freight		•	•	•
T16	Ports	•	•	•	•
T17	Airports	•	•	•	
Minerals, Waste and Energy					
MIN1	Specialised Mineral Resources		•		•
MIN2	Local Mineral Resources		•		•
MIN3	Peat				•
MIN4	Need for Mineral Extraction		•		•
MIN5	Areas of Search		•		•
MIN6	Development Control Criteria				•
MIN7	Opencast Coal Extraction		•		•
MIN8	Secondary Aggregates	•	•		•
MIN9	Sites for Aggregate Extraction		•		•
MIN10	Aggregate Reserves				•
W1	Waste Sites & Facilities	•	•	•	•
W2	Special Waste		•	•	
EN1	Energy	•	•	•	•
EN2	Renewable Energy	•	•	•	•
EN3	Assessing Renewable Energy Applications				•
EN4	New Energy Technologies		•		•
EN5	Combined Heat and Power (CHP)		•	•	•
EN6	Natural Gas		•	•	•
EN7	Energy Efficiency in Buildings	•	•		•

GLOSSARY

Accessibility
A measure of the level or ease of access to goods, services, information and locations.

Affordable housing
Low-cost market housing and subsidised housing, irrespective of tenure, ownership or financial arrangements, available to people who cannot afford to occupy houses generally available on the open market.

Agenda 21
A comprehensive programme of action prepared by local authorities and designed to achieve sustainable development.

Aggregates
Granular or particulate material which is suitable for use in construction as concrete, mortar, roadstone, asphalt or drainage courses, or for use as constructional fill or railway ballast.

Agri-environment schemes
Focus on promoting environmental awareness and good practice with farmers. They are an important tool in compensating farmers for income lost when establishing or improving environmentally beneficial aspects of farmland.

Association of North East Councils (ANEC)
The Regional Body comprising representatives of all local planning authorities.

Aquifers
The special underground rock layers that hold groundwater, an important source of water for both agriculture and industry. Groundwater abstractions account for around 35 per cent of public water supply in England and Wales.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
Site with statutory national landscape designation to provide special protection of the area's natural beauty. Designated by the Countryside Agency, the primary objective is to conserve the natural beauty of the landscape.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land
Land identified by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food as falling within classification grades 1, 2 or 3a, based on the physical characteristics of the land and the limits these impose upon its agricultural uses.

Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO)
The outcome of a systematic and consultative decision-making process which emphasises the protection and conservation of the environment across land, air and water.

Biodiversity
The whole variety of life encompassing all genetics, species and ecosystem variations.

Brownfield land
See previously-developed land.

Climate change
Changes in temperature brought about by human activities.

Clusters
Networks of specialised creative, industrial or high-tech businesses concentrated within a particular location, or linked through "Innovative Cluster Areas".

Combined Heat and Power (CHP)
A highly fuel efficient technology which produces electricity and heat from a single facility.

Community forestry schemes
A large area of land transformed into a wooded landscape by a partnership of local authorities, national agencies, and private and voluntary sector organisations to support employment, recreation, education and wildlife.

Countryside Character Areas
Areas of distinctive landscape, wildlife and natural features as defined by the Countryside Agency. There are 15 Countryside Character Areas in the North East region.

Development Plans
These can be Structure Plans, Unitary Development Plans (UDPs) or Local Plans.

Edge-of-centre
For shopping purposes, this is a location within easy walking distance, ie 200-300 metres, of the primary shopping area. For leisure and other uses the definition would be based on how far people would be prepared to walk.

Employment land
Land allocated in development plans as business, industrial and storage/ distribution uses (B1, B2 and B8 uses).

Environmentally Sensitive Areas
Areas of special landscape, wildlife or historic interest, where local farmers are offered incentives to join voluntary management schemes that encourage the use of traditional farming methods to maintain and enhance conservation interests.

Farm diversification
The development of a variety of economic activities linked to working farms, designed to support farm income and use surplus land eg forestry, leisure, tourism.

Global warming
The enhancement of greenhouse gases (such as carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) in the atmosphere caused by human activity, which have increased the natural greenhouse effect, leading to climate change and potentially irreversible effects on coasts, agriculture, water, natural vegetation and human health.

Green Belt
Areas of land where development is particularly tightly controlled. The purposes of Green Belt are to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas; to prevent neighbouring towns from merging; to safeguard the countryside from encroachment; to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and to aid urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. The broad extent of the Green Belt is designated in Structure Plans, with detailed boundaries defined in UDP's/Local Plans.

Greenfield land
Land which has not previously been developed.

Health Action Zone (HAZ)
Aim to reduce health inequalities in areas with particularly high levels of ill health. The key objectives of the seven-year programmes are to develop local solutions to reducing local health inequalities and factors leading to social exclusion, to modernise services and to develop partnerships. There are currently two HAZs in the North East region – in Northumberland and in Tyne and Wear.

Health Improvement Programme (HImP)
Developed locally by Health Authorities, in partnership with local authorities, NHS Trusts and Primary Care Groups, HImPs provide a three-year framework for the improvement of health within the local area, within which all NHS bodies will operate.

Heritage Coasts
Non-statutory designations as defined by local authorities in consultation with the Countryside Agency, they provide a flexible management tool for balancing the requirements for conservation, protection and enhancement of the natural beauty of these coasts with the need for social and economic development.

Infrastructure
Services necessary to serve development e.g. roads and footpaths, electricity, water, sewerage.

Innovative Cluster Area (ICA)
ICAs comprise networks of locations with a central research or development base, with incubator units, connected through both digital and land-based communications links to growth points for specialised production, analysis, testing and services.

Inward Investment
New investment or expansion of an existing investment to the Region from either an overseas or UK source.

Local Plan
Prepared under the Planning Acts, usually by District Councils, this sets out detailed policies and proposals for the development and use of land. Planning law now requires that all District Councils prepare a Local Plan covering the whole of their area. Some Local Plans are prepared for specific subjects like minerals and waste disposal.

Local Transport Plan
A five year integrated transport strategy prepared by local authorities in partnership with the community. The plan includes a bid for capital resources for transport investment. Local Transport Plans should be complementary to development plans.

Low Demand Housing
Low demand housing is defined as:

(i) in the case of private sector housing, neighbourhoods of at least 50 dwellings where private sector housing is predominant and one or more of the following symptoms apply:

- private property value particularly low and/or falling in absolute terms;
- high private sector void rate;

- high turnover of population;
- significant incidence of long-term private sector voids or abandoned properties;
- visibly high incidence of properties for sale or let.

(ii) in the case of social housing, housing in blocks or management patches of at least 50 dwellings where one or more of the following symptoms is exhibited:

- a small or non-existent waiting list;
- tenancy offers frequently refused;
- high rates of voids available for letting;
- high rates of tenancy turnover;

(iii) or where marketing initiatives or exceptional allocations polices have been implemented to counter low demand/unpopularity.

Main Rural Service Centres
Variety of towns outside the main urban areas which act as local service centres.

MPG
Minerals Planning Guidance Note prepared and issued by central Government as advice to minerals planning authorities and the minerals industry.

Multi-modal studies
A detailed study of options to address a specific transport problem. The study assesses a range of options across a number of modes of transport against the Government transport objectives of environment, safety, economy, integration and accessibility.

National Land Use Database (NLUD)
Aims to provide central and local government (and, in the long-term, private sector organisations) with key information on the amount of previously-developed land that may be available for development. Will assist in the setting of regional targets for the proportion of new homes to be built on previously-developed sites, and help the Government review the national target for the proportion of new homes built on previously developed land, or provided through conversion of existing buildings, which should rise to 60% over the next 10 years.

National Parks
Designated by the Countryside Agency, subject to confirmation by the Secretary of State, under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. The statutory purpose of National Parks is to conserve and enhance their natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage, and to promote opportunities for public understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities. There are two National Parks in the North East region: Northumberland and the North Yorkshire Moors.

National Nature Reserves (NNR)
Designated by English Nature under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, the aim is both to secure protection and appropriate management of the most important areas of wildlife habitat, and to provide a resource for scientific research. All NNRs are also SSSIs.

North East Assembly (NEA)
The partnership body which brings together the local authorities, MP's, MEP's and regional stakeholders to help develop and promote, at the regional level, the economic, social and environmental well-being of the people of the North East of England. The Assembly has formally taken on the role of Regional Planning Body.

One NorthEast
The Regional Development Agency for the North East of England.

Open space
Publicly accessible open space which is readily available to the population for regular casual use.

Out-of-centre
A location that is clearly separate from a town centre but not necessarily outside the urban area.

Plan, Monitor and Manage (PMM)
Approach to housing provision involving: Plan for an overall annual rate and distribution of housing; Monitor the proposed provision against targets and indicators; and Manage the process.

Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs)
Issued by central Government setting out its policies on different areas of planning.

Previously developed land
Defined in Annex C of PPG3 as:

"Previously-developed land is that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings), and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The definition covers the curtilage of the development. Previously-developed land may occur in both built-up and rural settings. The definition includes defence buildings and land used for mineral extraction and waste disposal where provision for restoration has not been made through development control procedures.

The definition excludes land and buildings that are currently in use for agricultural or forestry purposes, and land in built-up areas which has not been developed previously (eg parks, recreation grounds, and allotments – even though these areas may contain certain urban features such as paths, pavilions and other buildings). Also excluded is land that was previously developed but where the remains of any structure or activity have blended into the landscape in the process of time (to the extent that it can reasonably be considered as part of the natural surroundings); and where there is a clear reason that could outweigh the re-use of the site – such as its contribution of nature conservation – or it has subsequently been put to an amenity use and cannot be regarded as requiring redevelopment."

Principal Roads
Roads of regional or sub-regional significance for which County and Unitary authorities are the highway authorities.

Ramsar sites
Designated by the UK Government under the Ramsar Convention to protect wetlands that are of international importance, particularly as waterfowl habitats. All Ramsar sites are also SSSIs.

Renewable energy
The term used to cover energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment, ie from the sun, wind, oceans and the fall of water. Plant material is an important source of renewable energy and combustible or digestible industrial, agricultural and domestic waste materials are also normally categorised as renewable sources.

Shoreline Management Plans
Non-statutory plans prepared by coastal defence authorities (the Environment Agency and maritime Local Authorities) which set out a strategy for sustainable coastal defence within coastal sediment cells.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)
SSSIs are designated by English Nature as being of special value for nature conservation and represent the best examples of the nation's heritage of wildlife habitats, geological features and landforms.

SMEs
Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises.

Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Designated by the UK Government under the European Community Directive, "Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora". The areas of the UK proposed as SACs are SSSIs that contribute most to the survival of species and habitats of European importance.

Special Protection Area (SPA)
Areas designated by the UK Government under the European Community Directive, "Conservation of Wild Birds", to safeguard the habitats of migrating birds and certain threatened species. All SPAs are also SSSIs.

Special Waste
Defined by the Control of Pollution (Special Wastes) Regulations 1980 as any controlled waste that contains any of the substances listed in Schedule 1 to the Regulations, or is dangerous to life, or has a combustion flashpoint of 21ºC or less, or is a medical product as defined by the Medicines Act 1968 (Part 2 Chapter 6).

Strategic Employment Site
Land set aside for industrial use which is of sufficient size, quality and has the appropriate infrastructure.

Strategic Wind Resource Areas (SWRA)
Broad locations with average wind speeds of 7m/sec or greater at a 45m hub height.

Structure Plan
Development Plan which sets out strategic planning policies for a particular shire county and forms the basis for detailed policies in local plans.

Sustainable Development
The most commonly used definition is that of the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development, the Brundtland Commission: "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)
A means of controlling surface water run off as close as possible to its origin before it enters a watercourse.

Tranquil Areas
Areas sufficiently remote from visual or audible intrusion from development or traffic to be considered unspoilt by urban influences.

Trunk Road
A road for which the Secretary of State for Transport is legally responsible. The Highways Agency is responsible for discharging the Secretary of State's duties, including the planning, funding and execution of maintenance and other works.

Unitary Development Plan
A plan prepared by a Metropolitan District and some Unitary Local Authorities which contains policies equivalent to those in both a Structure Plan and Local Plan. In the North East, the Metropolitan Districts of Newcastle, Gateshead, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland are all responsible for preparing a UDP for their area.

Urban fringe initiatives
The urban fringe is areas of greenspace around conurbations where land use conflicts and environmental problems arise. Local authorities are encouraged to set up initiatives which will promote more active management of these areas.

Vernacular architecture
Architecture of a locality or a region. Its structure, form and constructional materials are determined by local climate, geology, geography, economy and culture.

White land
Safeguarded land between urban areas and the Green Belt, to ensure that Green Belt is protected from development in the long-term.

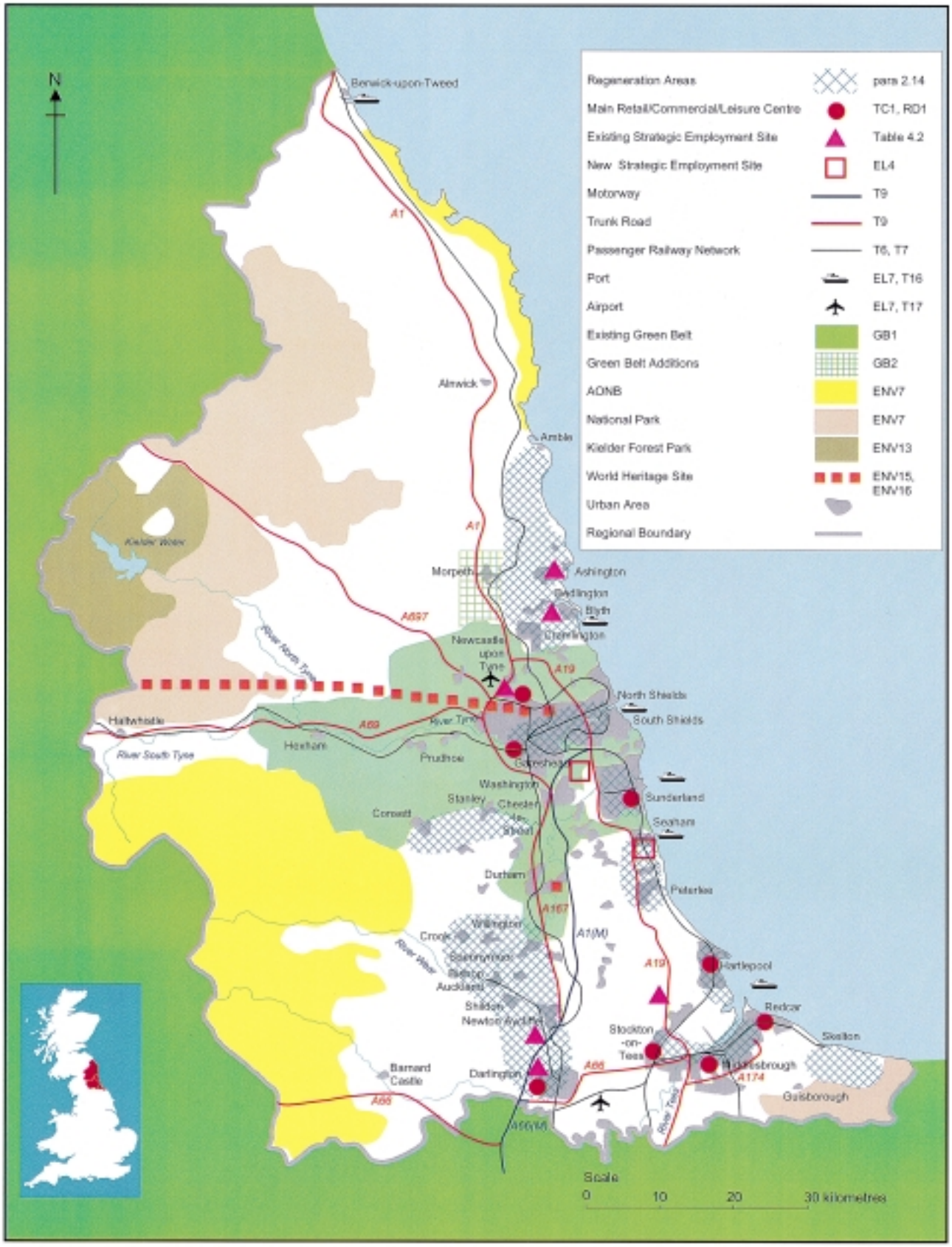
Windfall Site
A site not specifically allocated for development in a Local Plan or UDP but which becomes available for development or is granted planning permission during the lifetime of a plan.

World Heritage Site
Designated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), which seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity. This is embodied in an international treaty called the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by UNESCO in 1972.

MAPS

STRATEGY DIAGRAM

Regional Planning Guidance for the North East



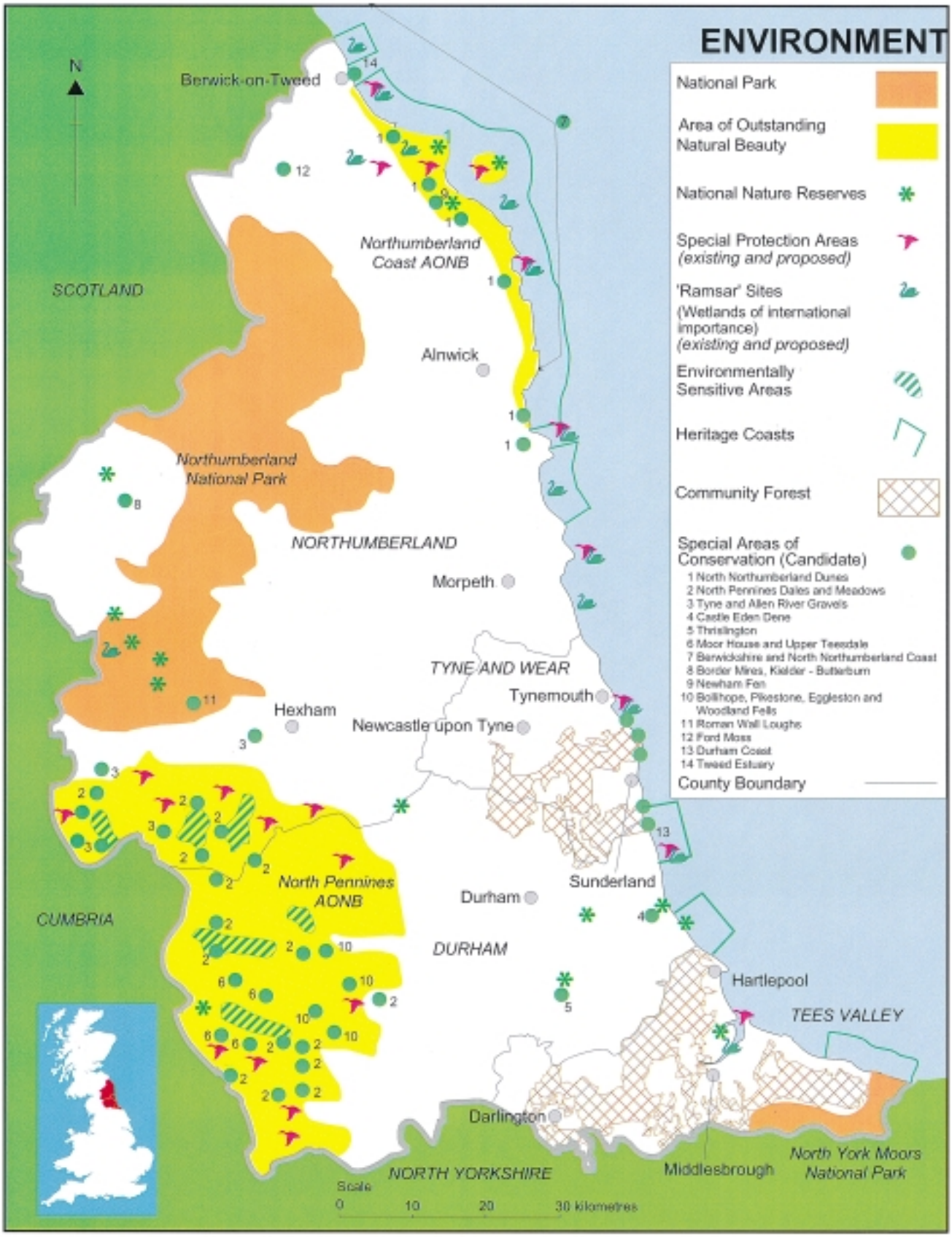
Based upon the Ordnance Survey map

MAP 1

Regional Planning Guidance for the North East

MAP 2

Regional Planning Guidance for the North East

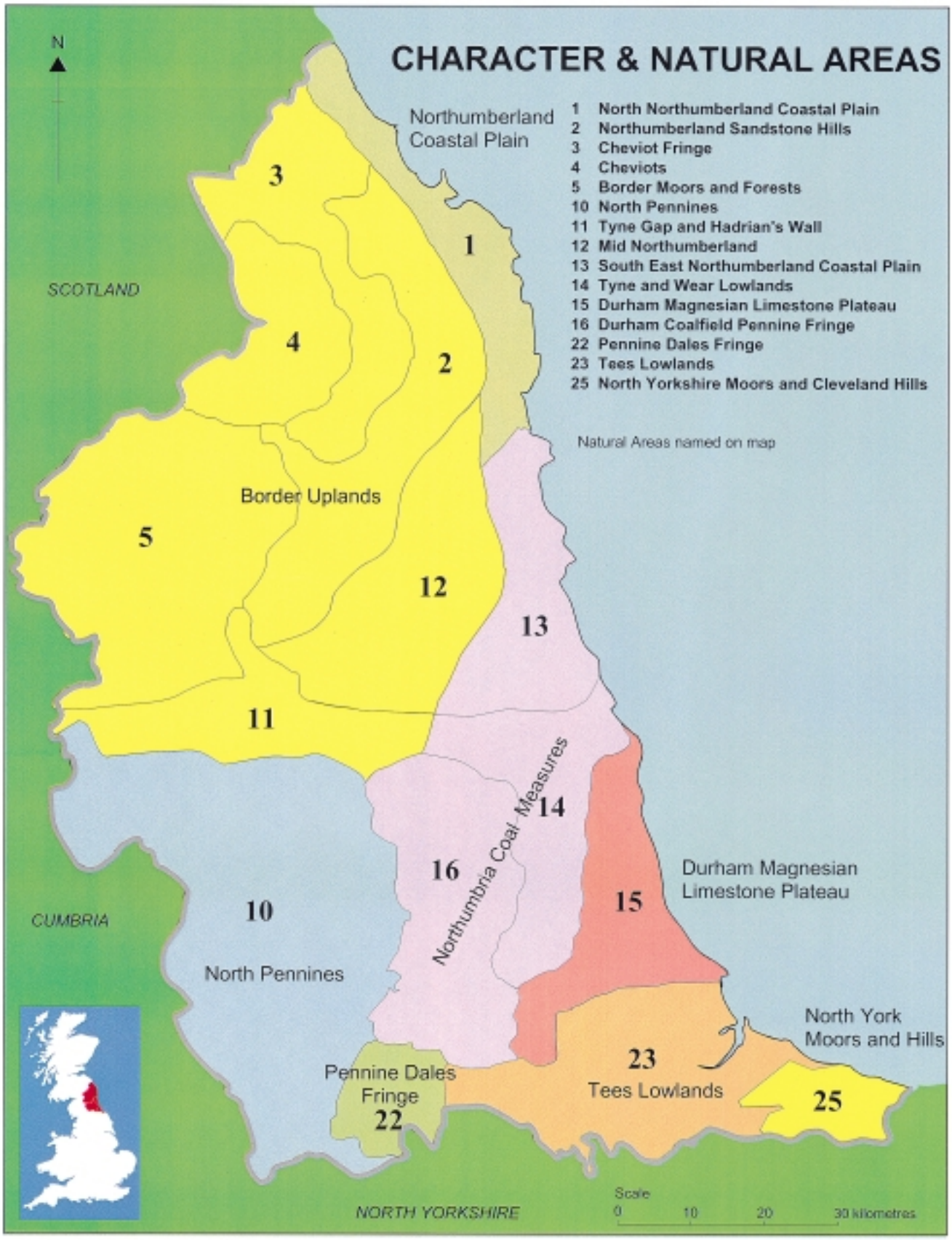


Based upon the Ordnance Survey map

N.B. Illustrative purposes only

MAP 3

Regional Planning Guidance for the North East



Source: Countryside Commission & English Nature
Based upon the Ordnance Survey map

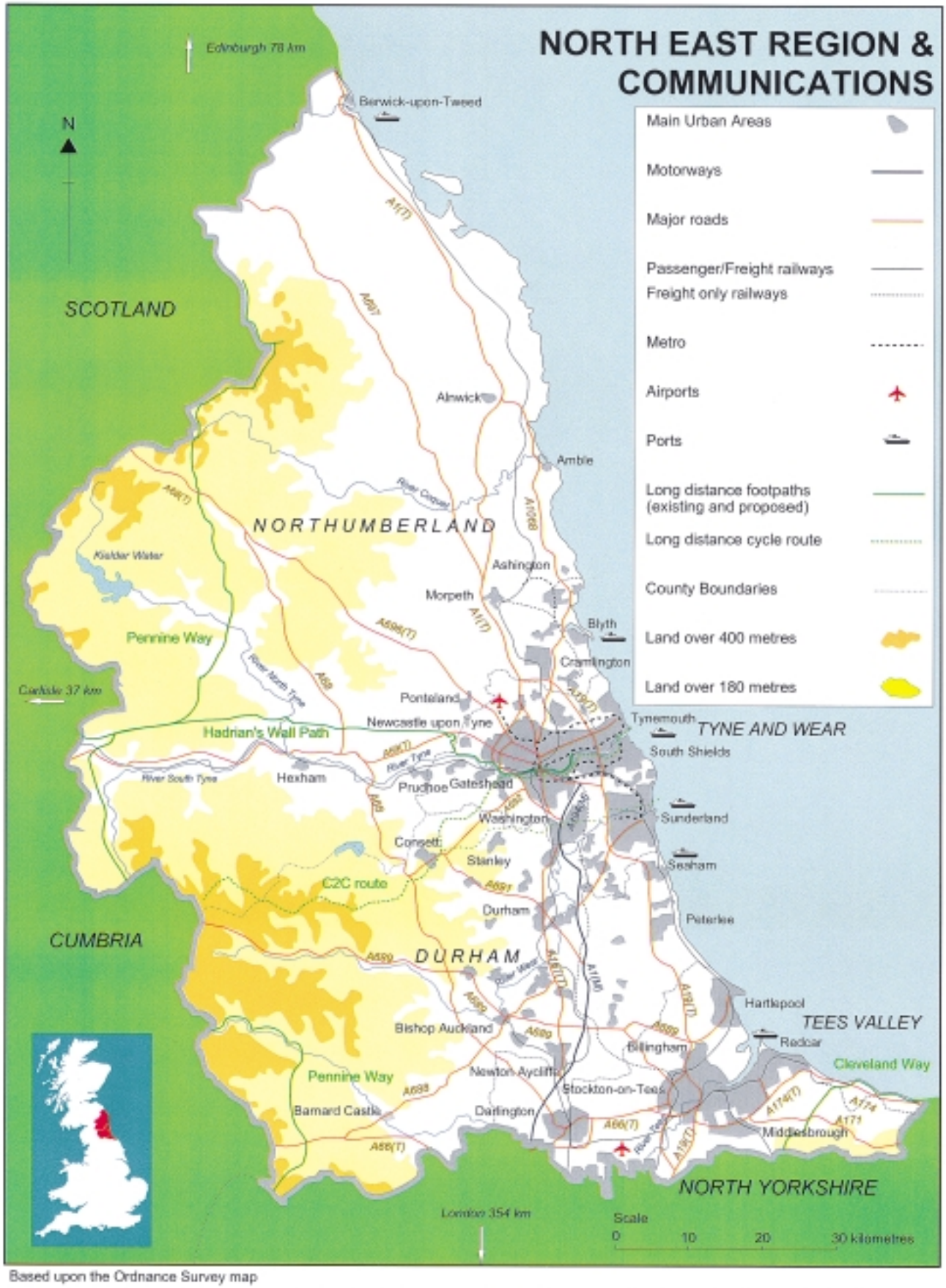
MAP 4

Regional Planning Guidance for the North East

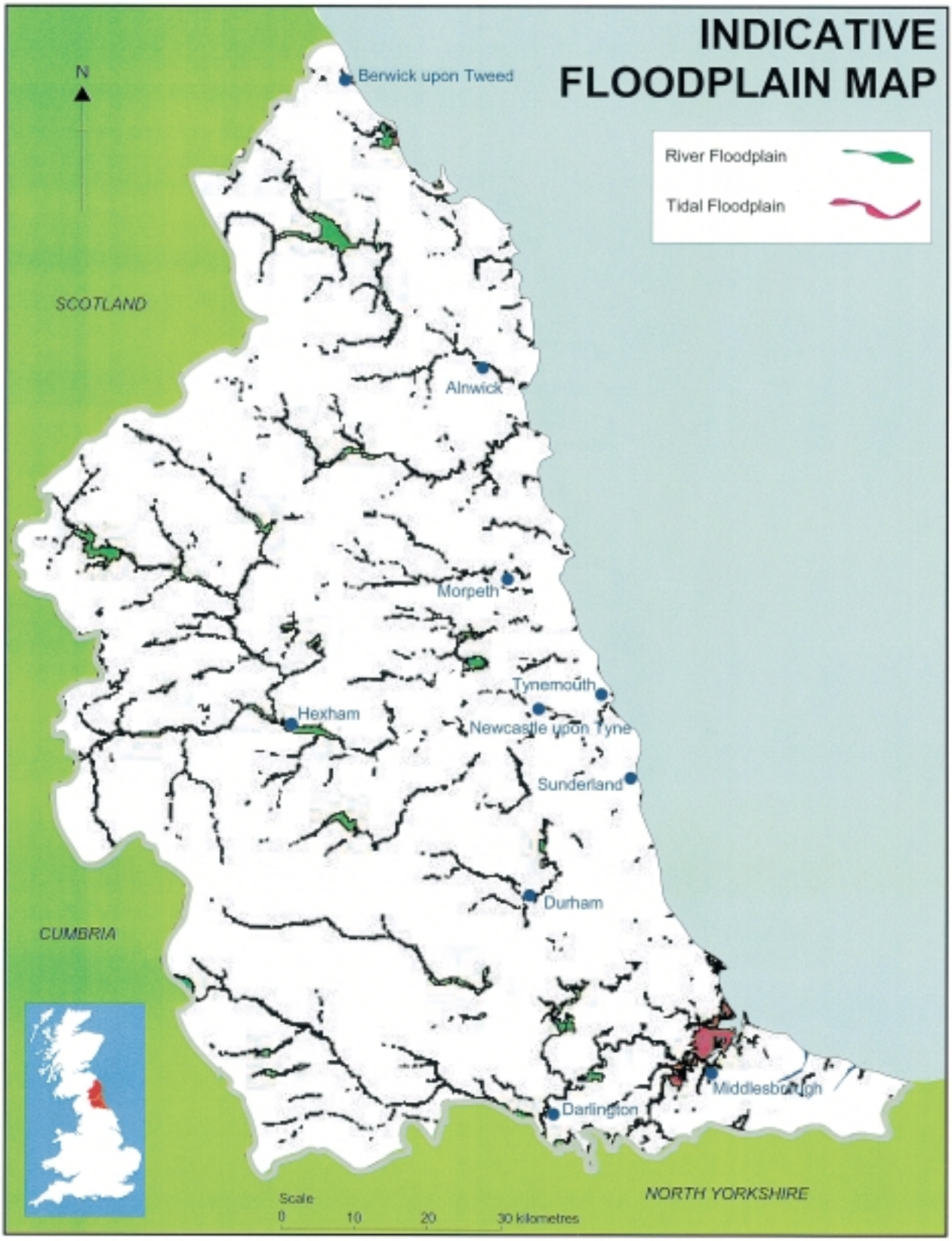
Based upon the Ordnance Survey map

MAP 5

Regional Planning Guidance for the North East



Based upon the Ordnance Survey map



Based upon the Ordnance Survey map

Source: Environment Agency
As at April 2000