

Subject: Integrated Regional Strategy
Consultation Document

Status: For Publication

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 17th February 2010

Report of: Planning Manager

Portfolio

Holder: Regeneration

Key Decision: No

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. This report seeks Cabinet approval of proposed comments in response to a consultation on Part 1 (the strategic overview) of the Integrated Regional Strategy for England's Northwest (RS2010).
- 1.2. It is important that the Council submit a coherent representation to 4NW / NWDA to ensure that Rossendale's priorities and aspirations are reflected in the latest statutory regional planning policies.
- 1.3. A combined Pennine Lancashire response to the consultation will be prepared by the Pennine Lancashire Strategy Unit. This Cabinet Report has been prepared early in the consultation process in order to meet internal deadlines.

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 2.1. The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:
 - Delivering quality Services to our customers
 - Delivering regeneration across the Borough
 - Encouraging healthy and respectful communities
 - Keeping our Borough clean, green and safe
 - Promoting the Borough
 - Providing value for money services

3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:
 - The upcoming IRS will form a statutory part of Rossendale's Development Plan. If the Council does not submit representations to this consultation, there is a risk that Rossendale's development and

regeneration aspirations may not be adequately reflected in the final policies.

4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

What is RS2010 and how is it structured?

- 4.1. Regional Strategy 2010 (RS2010) will replace both the existing Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and Regional Economic Strategy (RES) with a single document known as the Integrated Regional Strategy (IRS).
- 4.2. The (Part 1) document is split into five sections, as follows:
- *Section A* – This section identifies the key issues, problems and assumptions upon which the document is based. It also articulates a vision of where the NW wants to be – and proposes a set of indicators to monitor the implementation of the plan.
 - *Section B* – sets out the strategy for achieving the above vision. The document promotes regeneration in Pennine Lancashire – targeting economic deprivation, social exclusion, health issues and inequality. It sets out a strategy for improving infrastructure, providing 23,000 – 29,000 new homes per year in the region, and developing the region’s green infrastructure.
 - *Section C* – splits the NW into sub-regions; Rossendale being included in the Lancashire sub region. Rossendale is not dealt with individually within the document; however the key diagram does suggest continued support for the HMR Pathfinder across the east of the borough and increased rail connectivity between Pennine Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Preston.
 - *Section D* – sets out four options for development in the NW:
 1. Business as usual.
 2. Focus on economic opportunity (majority of growth in Manchester and Liverpool).
 3. Focus on protection of environmental resources and taking full advantage of environmental opportunities.
 4. Focus on regeneration and development to tackle deprivation. This section raises the issue of the balance between growing Pennine Lancashire’s local economy versus linking the area better to economic growth points elsewhere (such as Greater Manchester).
 - *Section E* – includes questions on the strengths and weaknesses of various parts of the RS2010 document.
- 4.3. Pennine Lancashire is identified in the consultation document as an area facing substantial social and economic regeneration challenges. The document sees Manchester and Liverpool as the key economic drivers within the region, supported by a network of smaller, “growth” centres such as Preston and Lancaster.
- 4.4. RS2010 identifies the transition to a low-carbon economy as a key aim, in order to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change whilst creating a new skill base and employment opportunities. It emphasises capitalising on the NW’s

strong position in the energy sector, flood risk management and capitalising on the region's natural assets.

Key Observations and Recommended Council Comments

- 4.5. Of the four proposed strategic options, Option 4 should be pursued as the most appropriate to Rossendale, as it centres on investment, renewal and new development in areas associated with existing regeneration programmes – including Pennine Lancashire as a named key focus area.
- 4.6. *Option 3* also includes benefits – such as the strong protection afforded to landscapes, investment in green infrastructure, and a focus on reducing energy demand. This option however focuses the majority of economic growth in Manchester and Liverpool, and as such puts at risk the economic growth of Rossendale. If the climate change benefits of this option could be combined with the regeneration element of *option 4*, it would present a far more acceptable scenario.
- 4.7. If in light of other comments from throughout the region NWDA / 4NW do not pursue *option 4*, it will be necessary to ensure that the best possible outcome is obtained for Rossendale. *Options 1 and 2*, like *option 3*, focus the majority of growth in Manchester and Liverpool – an approach that risks widening economic disparities between Rossendale and the big conurbations. If such options were to be pursued, Rossendale could become a largely residential commuter settlement without a strong economic base of its own. Significant transport improvements would be required to link Rossendale to economic opportunities in Greater Manchester and elsewhere. Whilst a commuter rail link should be pursued under all of the above options, it would be essential under options 1 and 2.
- 4.8. The RS2010 Part 1 document is very broad-brush in its approach and fails to specify the role it envisages for Pennine Lancashire, namely the balance between developing the local economy versus linking the area better to growth opportunities in Manchester and Preston.
- 4.9. Development in Rossendale must focus on creating new local economic opportunities as opposed to the area being developed solely as a commuter settlement. This would help to reduce deprivation within the borough whilst contributing to reducing carbon emissions and increasing the sustainability of communities by reducing large scale commuting by car.
- 4.10. Following this consultation exercise, a revised Part 1, along with Part 2 (the detailed policies) will be available for further consultation around summer 2010.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 5.1. There are no immediate financial implications arising from the recommendations however this may not be the case in the longer term as Members seek to support regeneration initiatives across the Borough.

6. MONITORING OFFICER

6.1. No additional comments.

7. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND POLICY (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

7.1. No additional comments.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 Option 4 is likely to be the most favourable option for the borough. Whichever approach is taken should seek to maximise the social, economic and environmental potential of the Pennine Lancashire sub region and the Rossendale borough.

9. RECOMMENDATION(S)

9.1. That members approve the above comments as the views of Rossendale Borough Council and approve their submission as the Council's consultation response to 4NW / NWDA.

10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

10.1. Regeneration team were consulted on the proposals.

11. COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is a Community Impact Assessment required Yes No

Is a Community Impact Assessment attached Yes No

12. BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment required Yes No

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment attached Yes No

Contact Officer	
Name	James Dalglish
Position	Technician
Service / Team	Forward Planning
Telephone	01706 252586
Email address	jamesdalglish@rossendalebc.gov.uk

Background Documents

Document	Place of Inspection
Regional Strategy for England's Northwest RS2010: Part 1 (Consultation Document)	Forward Planning Section, One Stop Shop