

Planning Policy Guidance 11: Regional planning

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Preface

Planning Policy Guidance: PPG11

Regional Planning

Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPG) set out the Government's policies on different aspects of planning. Local planning authorities must take their contents into account in preparing their development plans. The guidance may also be material to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals.

This PPG provides advice on the preparation, scope and content of Regional Planning Guidance (RPG). It replaces the advice on RPG contained in the February 1992 version of PPG12. It does not attempt to summarise the Government's planning policies for particular issues or subjects although cross-references are made to the other PPGs, Minerals Planning Guidance notes and Circulars where this advice can be found. It applies throughout England apart from London following the establishment of the Greater London Authority where the Mayor is responsible for preparing a spatial development strategy for London.

This PPG advises on the main policy areas to be covered by RPG and:

- places greater responsibility on regional planning bodies, working with the Government Offices and regional stakeholders, to resolve planning issues at the regional level through the production of draft RPG. This promotes greater local ownership of regional policies and increases commitment to their implementation through the statutory planning process;
- strengthens the role and effectiveness of RPG by advising on:
 - the need for greater regional focus concentrating on strategic issues;
 - the adoption of a "spatial" strategy which extends beyond land-use issues;
 - the development of a sufficiently prescriptive strategy to determine the general location of regionally or sub-regionally significant development;
 - the incorporation of an integrated transport strategy for the region; and
 - the adoption of a complementary approach to the regional strategies of the Regional Development Agencies.
- provides a streamlined timetable which should be followed for the production of RPG;
- sets out the arrangements for the testing of the draft RPG at a non-statutory "public examination" in front of a Panel appointed by the Secretary of State and whose report is published;
- confirms the need for a "sustainable development appraisal" of the environmental, economic and social impacts of development options to inform and accompany draft RPG; and
- establishes a new focus on outputs with annual monitoring of performance against targets and indicators to ensure that RPG is kept up-to-date.

1. Introduction

1.1 PPG1 "General Policy and Principles" (1997) sets out the purpose of the planning system and the role within it of development plans produced by local planning authorities under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Local planning authorities are required, in formulating the general policies in a structure plan or part I of a unitary development plan, to have regard to any regional or strategic planning guidance given by the Secretary of State.

1.2 Since 1988 the Government has been issuing guidance to local authorities and others on national planning policies and the operation of the planning system in the form of Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs), Regional Planning Guidance notes (RPGs) and Minerals Planning Guidance notes (MPGs). RPG sets out broad strategic policies at the regional level where there are matters which, though not of national scope, apply across regions or parts of regions and need to be considered on a scale wider than the area of a single strategic planning authority.

1.3 The main purpose of RPG is to provide a regional spatial strategy within which local authority development plans and local transport plans can be prepared. It should provide a broad development strategy for the region over a fifteen to twenty year period and identify the scale and distribution of provision for new housing and priorities for the environment, transport, infrastructure, economic development, agriculture, minerals and waste treatment and disposal. Its task is not to provide a regional check-list of everything that should be covered in a development plan. By virtue of being a spatial strategy it also informs other strategies and programmes. In particular:

- by virtue of incorporating a regional transport strategy, it should provide the regional context for the preparation of local transport plans; and
- it should also provide the longer term planning framework for the Regional Development Agencies' (RDAs') regional economic strategies.

Further details of these functions are set out later in this PPG.

1.4 In order to provide effective regional guidance it is important that RPG:

- provides a concise spatial or physical development strategy, illustrated by a key diagram, with policies and proposals clearly highlighted;
- addresses regional or sub-regional issues that cross county or unitary authority boundaries and takes advantage of the range of development options that exist at that level;
- links policy objectives to priorities, targets and indicators so that the strategy can be monitored annually and reviewed as appropriate;
- is specific to the region, whilst it should refer to national policies it should not simply repeat them nor resort to platitudes;
- while being locationally but not site specific, does not descend into the level of detail more appropriate to a development plan; and
- should apply the test of adding value to the overall planning process.

1.5 To enable RPG to fulfil the broader role outlined above and, as part of the Government's agenda for modernising the planning system, new procedures for the preparation of RPG have been introduced. The regional planning bodies (RPBs) now have enhanced responsibility, working with

the Government Offices and regional stakeholders, to produce the draft RPG. The RPBs are mainly at present the regional fora of local planning authorities but may in the future increasingly be the Regional Chambers. With greater local responsibility for the production of the guidance should come increased commitment to implementation and greater accountability for the outcome.

1.6 Arrangements have been introduced to test the draft RPG at a non-statutory "public examination" in front of a Panel appointed by the Secretary of State and whose report will be published. A guide to the public examination arrangements is at [Annex A](#). The arrangements for the preparation of draft RPG, its consideration and final publication are set out in [Chapter 2](#) of this guidance.

1.7 In order to perform the wider spatial role the format and scope of RPG have been re-defined. Guidance on this is set out in [Chapter 3](#). Advice on the core strategic policy areas which should be covered in RPG is set out in Chapters 4 to 15. New monitoring and review procedures are also needed and these are outlined in [Chapter 16](#).

1.8 Whilst this PPG provides guidance on the issues which need to be addressed in RPG, there may be others which need to be considered in the circumstances of a particular region. However, the Government wishes to discourage over elaborate plan making at every level of the planning system. It is important that RPG is concise and easily understood. As highlighted above, in considering its scope it should apply the test of adding value to the overall planning process.

2 Arrangements For The Preparation Of RPG

RPG areas

2.1 In general, RPG should be prepared for each region as defined by the Government Office (GO) boundaries. The main exception to this is in the South East, where, at present, the counties of Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Essex fall within the area of the South East RPG, rather than that produced for the East of England region. From 1 April 2001, future reviews of RPGs for the East of England and South East regions are to be on GO boundaries. Within London, the Greater London Authority now has responsibility for preparing a spatial development strategy (SDS) providing a spatial context for the Mayor's policies. Given the economic, transportation and social interdependence of London and the wider South East region, consideration is being given to the co-ordination arrangements that may be necessary between the new RPBs in the South East and East Anglia, and the GLA. The other exception is where National Park boundaries do not coincide with the GO boundary. In these cases agreement needs to be reached amongst the relevant GOs and RPBs as to the most appropriate coverage such that each National Park is covered entirely by one RPG.

Responsibilities for producing RPG

Regional Planning Bodies

2.2 RPBs, in consultation with the GOs and other regional stakeholders, are responsible for reviewing RPG, preparing new draft RPG and for ensuring that a sustainability appraisal is carried out (see below). The draft RPG is then subject to public examination before being issued in final form by the Secretary of State.

2.3 RPBs have, in the past, largely consisted of regional conferences of the local authorities concerned. However, this is changing. Regional planning for London will be the responsibility of the GLA. In several regions outside London RPG is to become a responsibility of the Regional Chamber. Regional Chambers have been designated by the Secretary of State in all the English regions outside London under the Regional Development Agencies Act, 1998. This Act provides for the Secretary of State to designate a Regional Chamber to oversee the work of an RDA. In order to be designated, a Chamber will have had to satisfy a number of broad criteria set out by Government, including that non-local government members should comprise no less than 30% of the chamber. These include the business and voluntary sectors. Regional co-ordination is also assisted by the presence of 'observers' on the Chambers such as the Environment Agency.

2.4 Given the representation of a range of regional stakeholders on each Regional Chamber, and the latter's role in relation to the RDA under the RDAs Act, it makes sense for the Chamber to take on the regional planning function. Indeed a Chamber supported by a full time regional planning, monitoring and review team would be in an ideal position to provide the necessary leadership to produce and implement an integrated spatial strategy for the region. However, the arrangements to be adopted in any particular region must be for the region to decide.

2.5 Where a Chamber takes over the regional planning function the integrity of the process will be preserved by a requirement that members, including any from the private sector, must declare any commercial interest. Where these are affected by the draft RPG, the relevant member should be excluded from the decision process. Where a Chamber does not take on this role it should still be seen by the RPB and other stakeholders as a necessary reference point in the preparation of draft

RPG. The views of designated Chambers should be fully taken into account in the preparation of RPG.

Government Offices

2.6 The Government Offices will play an important role in the production of RPG. They can assist the RPB and other stakeholders in a number of ways, including by advising on relevant national policy, proposing issues that need to be addressed, commissioning joint research and assisting in the collection of data. In fulfilling this role they will need to work with other regional arms of Government (e.g. the Regional Offices of the NHS Executive in supporting work on health impact assessments). GO involvement needs to be conducted in an open and transparent manner, with all advice being made public.

Other stakeholders

2.7 It is essential that the production of draft RPG should involve the participation of regional stakeholders. Both the public examination Panel and the Secretary of State will expect the RPB to provide clear evidence of this. The stakeholders will include the Regional Development Agencies, other statutory agencies and bodies (including the statutory environmental bodies), business and commercial organisations (including representative bodies such as the CBI and the Chambers of Commerce), transport providers and operators, utility companies and the house builders, local regeneration partnerships and voluntary and women's organisations. Neighbouring RPBs should be consulted and bodies which cross regional boundaries, such as National Park Authorities, will need to be involved. Education and health authorities and health trusts, will also need to be consulted to ensure that the education and health implications of the draft strategy are properly examined. RPBs should consider establishing focus groups of these stakeholders as appropriate, reporting to a small central RPG steering group chaired by the RPB but with other key regional institutions also represented, including the Chamber, if it is not the RPB, and the RDA. As RPG develops, providing a more holistic spatial strategy, the range of interested stakeholders will increase even further.

2.8 On the basis of such involvement a collective view should be taken of regional objectives and issues, and of the studies which need to be undertaken to inform the appraisal of the options for future development. Consensus will not be easy to achieve with such a wide range of interests but it is important that the RPB does not fall back on a 'lowest common denominator' approach. The lead body in the preparation of RPG will be the RPB and it must be prepared to defend at a public examination the policies and proposals set out in draft RPG. Differences of view with the GO and other stakeholders may need to be aired at the public examination (see the guide at [Annex A](#)).

2.9 Regional planning bodies should consider how best they can encourage community participation in the RPG process. This could include the provision of free and readily available information about the preparation and content of draft RPG. Newsletters and RPG websites are means by which a wide range of neighbourhood and Local Agenda 21 groups can be encouraged to participate in the process. LA 21, community planning and community fora machinery via district and unitary authorities offer possible options. It is important that there are opportunities for the community to be kept informed and involved outside of the main stages of more formal consultation. These include the public conference on the draft brief, consultation on the draft RPG as submitted to the Secretary of State and consultation by the Secretary of State on the proposed changes to the draft RPG as outlined below.

Key stages and timetable for the RPG preparation process

2.10 The key stages in the RPG preparation (comprehensive review) process are summarised in the table overleaf. The table includes a target timetable. The Government firmly expects this timetable to be achieved or bettered. If RPG is to be sufficiently responsive, effectively complement other regional strategies and provide up-to-date guidance for development plans and local transport plans, it is essential that it keeps to this timetable. To do so, it will be helpful if the RPB in advance of drawing up the issues brief develops the necessary liaison arrangements with regional stakeholders. Once an RPB has decided to review RPG it should agree with the GO a project plan for the review. It will constitute a public statement of intent to produce the revised RPG. It should set out a project timetable enabling issue of RPG within approximately 31 months from the start of the review and it is the respective responsibilities of both parties for ensuring this timetable is met. It should be publicly available.

RPG as part of a continuous planning process

2.11 In meeting this timetable it is important that RPBs recognise the value of a continuous planning process. Once the core regional strategy is in place it should seldom be necessary to review everything all at once. Indeed, it would be difficult to implement the strategy through structure and local plans if the core strategy had to be comprehensively changed every few years. A robust regional strategy is needed with clear policy objectives, targets and indicators. This should provide the context within which selective review and up-date can occur in response to monitoring information and new policy imperatives. Selective review to up-date particular parts of the strategy should be capable of being completed within a significantly shorter timescale than for a comprehensive review, particularly where a public examination is unnecessary (see paragraph 2 of the guide at [Annex A](#)). However, even in these cases a project plan should still be agreed and made public.

Drawing up brief and identifying the options

2.12 In drawing up the brief for the RPG review, the RPB and other stakeholders will need to have regard to the existing RPG and the success or otherwise with which it has been implemented, as informed by the annual monitoring process. They will also need to take account of any relevant objectives, policies and programmes specified in related regional or sub-regional documents. In particular this will include the regional sustainable development framework. The Government made clear in its new UK sustainable development strategy (see below) that such a framework document, as endorsed by the Regional Chamber, should be in place in each region by the end of 2000. These are to be high-level statements of regional vision for achieving sustainable development and will set priorities expressed through regional indicators and targets. They will be particularly helpful to the review of both RPGs and the RDA economic strategies. "[Guidance on Preparing Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks](#)" was published by the Department in February 2000. Also of relevance will be the RDA economic strategies as explained in [Chapter 4](#).

2.13 On the basis of this background material and any new regional or sub-regional spatial issues which have emerged since the last RPG, the draft brief should set out the main objectives which are to inform the review. It should also outline the proposed list of issues which are to be addressed with a timetable for delivery of the draft strategy to the Secretary of State in accordance with the project plan referred to in [paragraph 2.10](#) above. The RPB should consider holding a one day public conference to debate whether the issues have been correctly identified.

Key stages and timetable for the RPG preparation (comprehensive review) process

Stage	Regional Planning Guidance prepared by regional planning body (RPB). in co-
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	operation with Government Office (GO) and other stakeholders, and issued by the Secretary of State (SoS)
1. Identifying the brief/issues	RPB in consultation with GO draw up the project brief for RPG review, including the relevant regional objectives and likely issues, and hold a one day public conference to seek agreement: 3.5 months.
2. Developing the draft strategy	RPB in co-operation with GO and other stakeholders, carries out technical/survey work, commences an independent sustainability appraisal of the impacts of the initial proposals for development etc. and then develops and refines options into draft RPG: 12 months.
3. Consultation on draft RPG	RPB submits draft RPG and appraisal to the SoS. Draft strategy is then published for consultation with a RPB letter inviting representations and a press notice issued announcing timing of the public examination. Written responses to Panel Secretary (which are copied to GO/RPB): 3.5 months.
4. Testing	Following receipt of responses, Panel in consultation with the RPB and GO agree a list of matters and invite participants to public examination. Draft RPG tested at examination in front of independent Panel appointed by the Secretary of State: 4 months.
5. Publication of Panel report	Panel reports to the SoS (which GO copies to RPB and other public examination participants) and report is published: 2 months.
6. Proposed Changes to RPG	Following Panel's report, SoS publishes proposed changes to draft RPG with a statement of reasons. 8 week consultation period on these changes before final RPG is issued: 6 months.
7. Issue of final RPG	RPG approved and issued by SoS. <i>Total time from start of process: approx 2.5 years.</i>
8. Development and local transport plan conformity	SoS (GO) with support of RPB, to ensure that development and local transport plans are consistent with RPG.

<p>9. Monitoring and review</p>	<p>RPB, in liaison with GO and other stakeholders, to establish monitoring machinery to check on achievement of RPG targets and review it either in whole or in part, as appropriate.</p>
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2.14 A key stage in the RPG review process will involve the generation of different strategic patterns of development and draft policies addressing the main issues identified in the brief. These should be informed by the objectives outlined in the brief and developed into draft revised RPG in the light of a sustainability appraisal (referred to below). RPBs may wish to test the sensitivity of different options and the favoured spatial strategy once it emerges, to different economic and housing requirement scenarios. Advice on the main policy areas which need to be considered is set out in Chapters 4 to 15 of this guidance. The regional stakeholders need to be fully involved in the consideration of the options, but it is for the RPBs to decide what further consultations to undertake at this stage. The main stage of public consultation will be when the draft RPG is submitted to the Secretary of State (including, by reference to the Sustainability Appraisal, an opportunity to comment on discarded strategic options).

Publication of draft RPG

2.15 Once the RPB has submitted the draft RPG and the sustainability appraisal to the Secretary of State, the RPB and the GO will arrange for the publication (including on the RPB's website) of the former and either a full copy or summary (with the full copy on request) of the latter. There should normally be a three month period of consultation unless the GO and the RPB agree that in the light of earlier consultation a lesser period is appropriate. On publication of the draft RPG the RPB, in consultation with the GO, should invite representations and issue a press notice. These should explain the status of the draft RPG and its key features. They should also give details of the consultation period and to whom responses should be sent (normally the Panel Secretary), announce the appointment of the Chair and other Panel members, and refer to the purpose and approximate timing of the public examination. It would also be helpful if the letter inviting representations outlined the main issues, as the RPB and GO see them, to inform the consultation process. It may be sensible to provide some of this material as a leaflet with the letter. Details of where a library or libraries of hard copies of documents will be available in advance of the public examination as well as on a website should also be published. If necessary, the GO may have to issue its own letter setting out the issues as it sees them to assist the process. The GO will also need to make representations on the draft RPG during this consultation period to draw attention to matters which it feels the Panel should be aware of, including any conflicts with national policy and possible changes to the draft RPG as a result. This will be without prejudice to the Secretary of State's subsequent consideration of the Panel's report.

2.16 In submitting draft RPG to the Secretary of State, the RPB may wish to set out any changes in national policies that it sees as helpful in implementing the draft strategy. Rather than including these advocacy policies in the draft RPG itself, however, they should be included in a publicly available letter or report accompanying the draft. Furthermore, the draft RPG must not be predicated on such changes happening.

2.17 The public examination is into the draft RPG as submitted by the RPB. The RPB should not then make significant changes to it or introduce major new material in the lead up to or during the examination. To do so would probably result in the examination having to be postponed to allow everyone time to consider the revised draft RPG or new material (see [Annex A](#)). However, before or during the examination, an RPB may wish to suggest more minor changes to the Panel in the

event of new information becoming available, national policy developments or in response to comments made by other stakeholders on the submitted RPG.

Role of public examination

2.18 The main purpose of the public examination is to provide an informal opportunity for discussion and testing, in public and before a Panel appointed by the Secretary of State, of selected matters arising from consideration of the draft guidance. A public examination into RPG is not an examination of all the submitted proposals nor is it a hearing of all objections. Anybody is free to make representations, although there is no right to be heard. The selection of matters and participants is for the Panel. The RPB and GO should be invited to all sessions and the Secretary of State expects that the RDA would normally be invited as well.

2.19 The public examination ensures there is public debate on selected issues where an examination could usefully provide further information. It tests the justification for the selected proposals and policies. It provides the main basis on which the Secretary of State can decide whether any changes need to be made to the draft guidance before it is issued as RPG. The public examination helps to increase the weight that can be given to RPG as a material consideration and makes decisions based on RPG more secure in the event of appeals or legal challenge. Above all, together with the resulting report of the Panel on the issues discussed at the examination, it significantly increases the transparency of the process by which draft RPG is turned into final guidance. For further details see [Annex A](#).

Publication of proposed changes and issue of final RPG

2.20 The report of the Panel which held the public examination will be submitted to the Secretary of State. The Panel report will form an important basis for the Secretary of State in considering what changes, if any, to make to the draft RPG. Other considerations will include all the representations made on the draft RPG. The Secretary of State's proposed changes to the draft RPG will then be published (including on the internet) with a reasoned statement of the decisions, allowing eight weeks for comment. The reasoned statement will not only explain the main changes made but also decisions not to make changes recommended by the Panel, unless these are minor. There may be changes which the Secretary of State needs to make which do not relate to matters which the Panel selected for the public examination, though these are likely to be relatively minor.

2.21 Once RPG has been issued by the Secretary of State it is essential that monitoring machinery is established to check on achievement of RPG targets and review it either in whole or in part, as appropriate. This may include monitoring the actions of non-planning bodies since, given the wider spatial role of RPG, the strategy cannot be delivered solely through the actions of local planning and highway authorities. Feedback from the monitoring process will be taken into account in the more continuous model of RPG referred to above. Further details of this are set out in [Chapter 16](#).

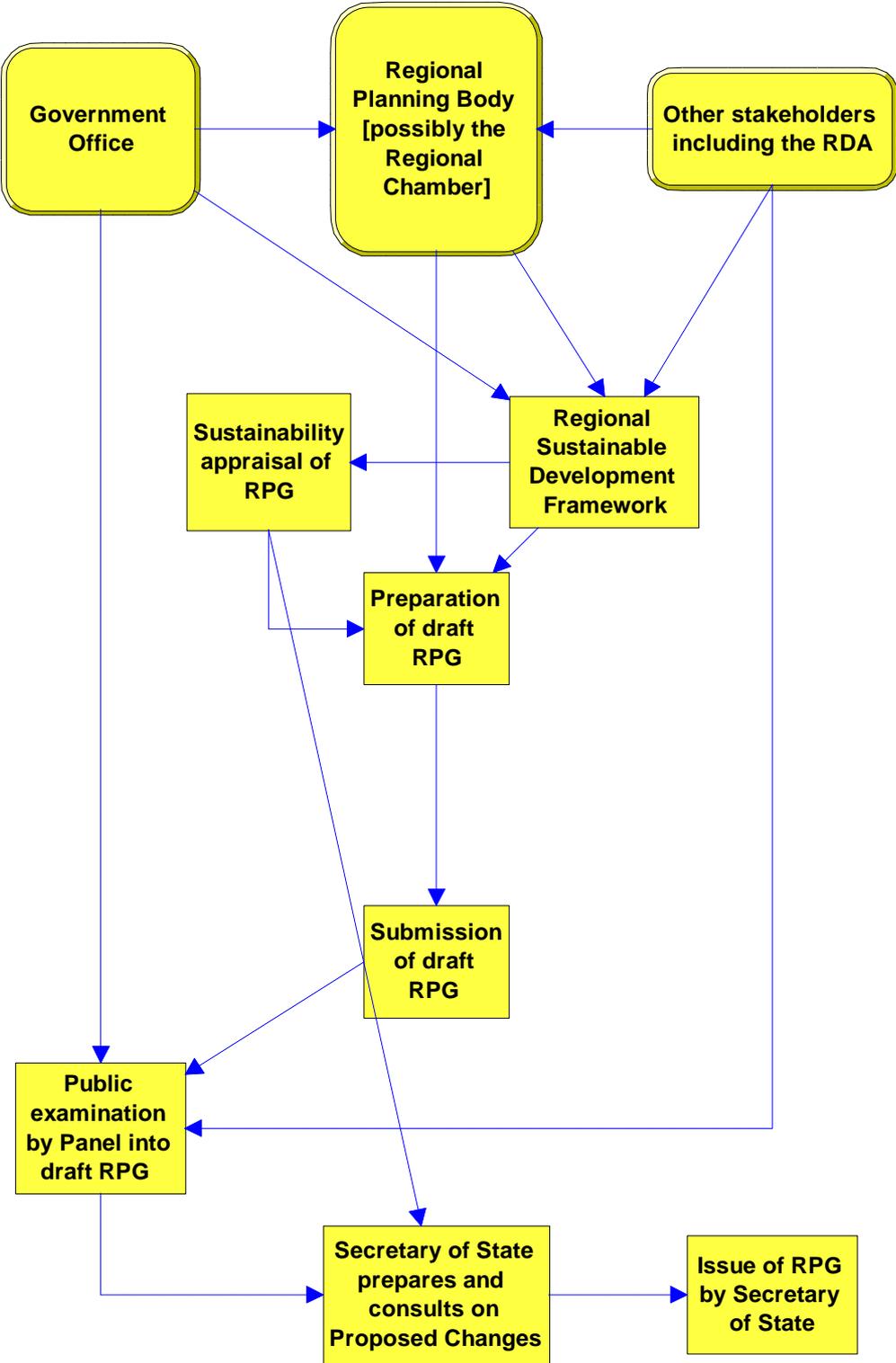
2.22 The new arrangements for producing RPG are set out in [Figure 1](#).

Figure 1: Production of Regional Planning Guidance (.pdf file size 11kb)

The sustainable development appraisal process

2.23 In May 1999, the Government published "[A Better Quality of Life: A strategy for sustainable development for the UK](#)". In December 1999 it followed this up with "[Quality of Life Counts: Indicators for Sustainable Development in UK: a baseline assessment](#)". The intention is that these headline indicators will help inform policy decisions. A handbook for local sustainable

FIGURE 1: PRODUCTION OF REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE



development indicators "[Local Quality of Life Counts](#)" has also been published as a menu for local authorities.

2.24 The Government's new national sustainable development strategy is based on four broad objectives:

- (i) maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment;
- (ii) social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
- (iii) effective protection of the environment; and
- (iv) prudent use of natural resources.

2.25 Consistent with the above, and having regard to the existing economic, environmental and social character of the region, a sustainability appraisal should be carried out. In carrying out the appraisal, the RPB and other regional stakeholders should have regard to the objectives set out in any regionally endorsed sustainable development framework (see para [2.12](#) above).

2.26 The appraisal is integral to the production of RPG and as such is an iterative process. It should help enable the emerging RPG to play its part in assisting the economy, reducing social exclusion, enhancing the environment and ensuring the prudent use of natural resources. It should also help avoid, reduce or mitigate any adverse impacts in these key areas. The potential direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of different strategic options need to be appraised in order to integrate sustainable development objectives in the formulation of policies and inform decisions on which options should be promoted in the draft strategy. A summary of the main types of impact to be considered in the appraisal and to be taken into account by the RPB is set out below. More detailed guidance is set out in the "Department's Good Practice Guide to Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Planning Guidance" published with this PPG.

2.27 The Government is committed to taking fully into account the needs and experiences of those affected by their policies. The Secretary of State expects the RPB in considering different strategic options to have considered the potential impacts of the strategic options on different groups in society as part of this overall appraisal. These will include, women as well as men, the elderly, people of different ethnic or religious backgrounds, disabled people, single person families and other disadvantaged groups. Although aimed at Government Departments, "Policy Appraisal for Equal Treatment" (1998) contains guidelines on appraising different impacts on different groups in society. It is available on the internet at 'www.womens-unit.gov.uk' or from the Women's Unit at the Cabinet Office tel: **020-7273-8880**. RPBs may also find it helpful to consult the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality, the Women's National Commission and the National Disability Council Secretariat: details are given in the guidelines. In carrying out its appraisal the RPB may also find it helpful to look at guidance on appraising health impacts contained in "Policy Appraisal and Health, a guide from the Department of Health" (1995) available from the **Department of Health Distribution Centre, PO Box 410, Wetherby, West Yorkshire, LS23 7LN**.

Economic impacts

2.28 One of the Government's central objectives is to encourage sustainable economic development and growth. The sustainability appraisal should identify the extent to which different options help achieve this. Guidance on the economic role of RPG and its relationship with the RDAs' economic strategies is set out in [Chapter 4](#). Some of the economic considerations that will need to be taken into account in the appraisal are whether the different options:

- increase competitiveness at the regional level and thereby help achieve the Government's overall objective to raise the rate of trend growth and narrow the productivity gap with our main competitors;
- are consistent with priorities identified by the RDAs in their regional economic strategies which are required to contribute to sustainable development; and
- encourage development plans to allocate a range of sites for employment, including for clusters of knowledge driven companies, that will facilitate economic growth and narrow the productivity gap, whilst also ensuring that new development, as far as possible:
 - occurs on previously-developed land, including conversions and reuse of vacant buildings;
 - is accessible by a wide range of modes (although this may not be possible in the more rural areas - see [Chapter 9](#)); and
 - provides access to employment for areas with high unemployment.

Social impacts

2.29 Social impacts will need to be appraised, including such impacts as:

- improving access to key services in rural areas;
- increasing the range of employment and housing opportunities; and
- maximising health benefits and reducing health inequalities.

2.30 The draft strategy submitted to the Secretary of State must promote social inclusiveness by promoting measures to address regional inequalities in the provision of employment, affordable housing and regional health and other community facilities.

Environmental impacts

2.31 The RPB will need to form an overview of the environmental constraints and opportunities for improvement of the region. They will need to work in conjunction with MAFF, the Forestry Commission, the statutory environmental bodies - the Environment Agency, English Heritage, the Countryside Agency (also concerned with rural economic and social issues) and English Nature - and the national voluntary environmental groups. Environmental capacity studies or environmental stock techniques may be useful tools, although their application at the regional level is necessarily more coarse than at the development plan level. Further guidance on the use of environmental capacity approaches is given in "The Application of Environmental Capacity to Land Use Planning" (DETR, 1997). Countryside characterisation can help ensure that new development respects or enhances local character. A national map and regional volumes are available, published by the then Countryside Commission and English Nature, which identify broad areas of cohesive character defined in terms of their landscape, sense of place, wildlife and natural features.

2.32 One of the key objectives of the spatial strategy should be to optimise the use of previously-developed land in urban areas. This and other environmental considerations that need to be taken into account in appraising different RPG options are set out in the discussion of individual topics later in this PPG. Where appropriate the sustainability appraisal should show how the potential impacts of strategic options have been appraised against the Government's aims in these areas.

Climate change

2.33 However, one important consideration which is not discussed in any detail later, is the impact of climate change on the region and its natural and human resources. RPBs should consider their

regions' vulnerability to climate change using the most recent climate change scenarios available from the draft UK climate impacts programme. These can be obtained from the **DETR's Free Literature** service (tel: **0870 1226 236**, fax: **0870 1226 237**). The spatial strategy for the region should take account of the need to avoid new development in areas that increase vulnerability and consider possible adaptation options for vulnerable areas. RPBs should consider how their regions' activities affect the production of the greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. They should also account of national climate change targets in reviewing RPG. The draft UK climate change programme sets out a number of ways in which greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced. The main RPG mechanisms will include reducing the need to travel, promoting public transport, considering demand management measures in towns and cities, and promoting sustainable waste management. RPG also has a role to play in promoting renewable forms of energy supply and energy efficiency as discussed in [Chapter 14](#).

Natural resource impacts

2.34 Consideration of the implication of different spatial development options for natural resources is a key element of RPG. The availability of water resources should be taken into account in framing policies, and RPBs must bear in mind that the implications of planning policies in neighbouring regions will also need to be taken into account. RPBs should consider, with the Environment Agency and the water industry, what the implications of different policy or spatial options are for the provision of major new water resources and in turn what their environmental effects may be in order to ensure sustainable development. Water companies now produce water resource plans setting out how they propose to maintain the supply/demand balance over the next 25 years. These plans are reviewed annually, by both the companies concerned and the Environment Agency, and rolled forward. RPBs must, therefore, take full account of those plans. RPG should help foster co-operation between local planning authorities, water companies and the Environment Agency to ensure that water supply sources are protected and that rates of development do not exceed the capacities of existing or planned water supply systems, taking into account environmental constraints, to meet projected demand. Therefore, RPBs should bear in mind that new large users of water should be located where abstraction will not put supplies to other users or the local environment at risk. The guidance on utilities infrastructure in [Chapter 6](#) of PPG12 covers regional as well as local planning considerations.

2.35 Whilst forestry is not regulated by the statutory planning system, the Government believes that trees and woodlands have an important part to play in delivering social, economic and environmental benefits. RPG can play an important part in defining an appropriate local balance between the various functions of our forests. In accordance with the Government's forestry strategy, "A New Focus for England's Woodlands" (1998), RPBs need to consider the care afforded to the existing heritage of trees, woods and forests, and also how new woodlands can be created where they are needed. The Government's priorities for modern day multi-purpose forestry were set out in the Strategy's four key programmes.

2.36 There is a strong presumption in favour of the realisation of urban potential through higher densities, lower car parking standards and the re-use of previously-developed sites. RPG should take account of the national target that 60% of the additional housing should be provided on previously-developed land or through conversions (a definition of previously developed land is set out in PPG3). This should not be at the expense of existing green spaces in the urban areas, including playing fields, unless land of an equivalent or greater public value as green space is provided in return, for example through reclamation. Indeed, for this urban renaissance to be realised there will need to be adequate provision of suitable open and other green spaces,

particularly in areas of high housing density. Wherever possible, the best agricultural land should be protected and minerals conserved whilst ensuring an adequate supply to meet needs.

Overall assessment

2.37 The sustainability appraisal should also evaluate the cumulative effects in relation to options including an assessment of distributional effects, both geographic and socio-economic. Advice on this is contained in the good practice guidance. Whatever techniques are used to appraise options, it is important that those selected will meet the four sustainable development objectives set out in paragraph [2.24](#). Having carried out the appraisal, judgements can be made on which options should be promoted in the draft strategy. A report of the appraisal should be published at the same time, or shortly after the draft RPG is submitted to the Secretary of State. The appraisal report should set out the appraisal process carried out during the preparation of RPG, summarising how in the view of the appraisal team, the appraisal shaped the draft RPG and the consistency of the final draft RPG with the sustainability objectives. The Secretary of State will pay careful regard to the appraisal in forming a view of whether the RPB has developed an integrated approach to development which delivers economic, social and environmental benefits in both urban and rural areas and is consistent with the principles of sustainable development. The appraisal process does not end at the stage of submission of draft RPG to the Secretary of State but will also assist the Secretary of State in considering changes to the draft RPG following receipt of the Panel report. Once the draft RPG has been submitted, it will be for the GO to decide what further sustainability appraisal is required and the GO will manage any such appraisal work carried out by an independent team.

2.38 The RPG strategy must be capable of being kept under review and its implementation and associated impacts should be monitored where possible on an annual basis (see [Chapter 16](#)) as part of a more continuous process of reviewing and keeping RPG up-to-date. The appraisal framework will have a continuing value in informing the monitoring process.

3. The Scope And Format Of RPG

The European context

3.1 Widening the spatial planning scope of RPG is in keeping with trends elsewhere in Europe. Moreover, both the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) and the Community Initiative on Transnational Co-operation on Spatial Planning - INTERREG II C and INTERREG III B - programmes will provide a European context for the preparation of RPG. So too, will other European funding regimes, in particular the EU Structural Funds.

3.2 The ESDP highlights three important policy principles all of which are relevant to RPG. These are:

- development of a balanced and polycentric urban pattern of development and a new urban-rural relationship which recognises inter-dependence and fosters partnership;
- securing parity of access to infrastructure and knowledge; and
- sustainable development, prudent management and protection of nature and cultural heritage.

3.3 Implementation of the ESDP requires co-operation across national, regional and local boundaries. Of particular relevance to RPG, the ESDP emphasises the need for co-operation between cities and their surrounding countryside/region in developing spatial policies and strengthening regional competitiveness.

3.4 The availability of the EU Structural Funds have already led, in some areas, to the preparation of what are, in effect, regional or sub-regional plans covering land-use, transport, economic development and other matters as a basis for attracting funding. Although the RDAs will take a leading role in the new Structural Funds programmes, the wider spatial framework provided by RPG can make a significant contribution to the Single Programming Documents required to access these funds. It will be important, therefore, that the RDAs' strategies, RPG and the Single Programming Documents share, as far as possible, a consistent vision of the future of the region.

3.5 In preparing RPG, therefore, the RPBs and other stakeholders will need to take account of inter-governmental and EU legislation, policies, programmes and funding regimes that impact on the region. They should assess with neighbouring regions and regional bodies in other member states, as appropriate, what the role of RPG should be in reacting to and anticipating these. Before issuing RPG, the Secretary of State will need to be satisfied that the spatial strategy for the region has had sufficient regard to these European considerations, including the main policy themes of the ESDP, set out in paragraph [3.2](#) above, and reflected in this guidance note.

A spatial strategy for the region

3.6 In addition to this European dimension, another key consideration will be the regional sustainable development framework as endorsed by the Regional Chamber (see [Chapter 2](#)). RPG should give spatial expression to this framework. Together with the RDA regional economic strategies (see [Chapter 4](#)), RPG will be central to the implementation of the vision and objectives set out in the framework documents.

3.7 Taking account of the above and other relevant regional strategies, such as the regional cultural strategies (see [Chapter 8](#)), policies and programmes, RPG should examine the main regional constraints, demands and opportunities. The RPB, in conjunction with regional stakeholders, will then be in a position to consider how best to manage this process of spatial change. The long-term

objective of RPG should be to develop into a comprehensive spatial strategy for the region; ie. to set out the range of public policies that will manage the future distribution of activities within the region. There should be a two-way relationship with RPG informing as well as taking account of the development of other strategies, including air quality, energy, and strategies to adapt to the effects of climate change. The same should be true of the investment and operational plans of relevant infrastructure and public service providers. Any policies and proposals in RPG which cannot primarily be delivered through the development or local transport plan system should be clearly identified and the means of delivery clarified in agreement with the bodies concerned.

Format of RPG

3.8 RPBs and other stakeholders should have regard to broad planning policies established at the national level in preparing RPG as referred to elsewhere in this PPG. However, this should not mean a simple repetition of the contents of PPGs, although they will need to be cross-referred to as appropriate. Within its regional focus RPG should set out a clearly articulated locational strategy in the form of policies and proposals supported by a reasoned justification. It should identify investment priorities and targets to measure the delivery of that strategy. Where possible it should illustrate the relevant constraints, opportunities and proposals in a key diagram. In the case of major infrastructure investment RPG should identify priorities for the first five years and then for the remainder of the fifteen to twenty years covered by the strategy.

Sub-regional solutions

3.9 In some regions or parts of regions it will be appropriate for RPG to contain sub-regional strategies. These should not be confused with county structure plans and their purpose is not to move local decisions to the regional tier. Rather, they address issues and relationships that cannot be resolved if left to individual county or unitary authorities, that need to take advantage of the range of development options that exist at the sub-regional level but which are not general enough to be addressed at the regional level. There may also be instances where sub-regional solutions need to be developed for issues that cross regional boundaries and which require complementary policies and proposals to be identified in RPGs in neighbouring regions. Sub-regional strategies can help ensure ownership by more local organisations, including those from the voluntary and community sector.

3.10 Although subsequent parts of this PPG are structured by topics, such as transport and housing, it is important that in drafting RPG, RPBs and other stakeholders consider how the different policies interrelate in different areas, or types of area, within the region having regard to sustainable development objectives.

Degree of locational specificity

3.11 For the reasons set out below, RPG should avoid identifying specific sites as suitable for development. However, RPG will need to establish the locational criteria appropriate to regionally or sub-regionally significant housing, business, retail and leisure uses, or to the location of major new inward investment sites. The broad location of such sites may also be identified. "Broad location" may be defined as the area of search suitable for the development in question, consistent with criteria set out in the RPG, within which a number of suitable sites may exist. Broad locations may include town or city centres. Criteria set out in RPG may also assist development plan authorities to identify more precise locations for major land-uses or to allocate suitable sites, having regard to a range of factors including the importance of urban design in making successful places.

3.12 Partly because of the way in which the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, as amended, refers to the role of RPG in informing the general policies of a structure plan or Part I of a unitary development plan, site specific proposals should be avoided in RPG. Consideration of specific sites could dominate and delay the production of RPG and the public examination process is not suitable for the hearing of site specific objections. The inclusion of site specific proposals would, in any case, have to be without prejudice to later formal consideration at the development plans and project application stages. At the latter stage the proposal might need to be subject to formal environmental assessment. Issues of blight could also be raised well in advance of any statutory procedures which determine whether the particular development should take place.

3.13 The degree of locational specificity in RPG may need to vary depending on the topic under consideration. For example, the need for particular road schemes of national or regional significance has been remitted for consideration by the RPBs in the Roads Review "[A New Deal for Trunk Roads in England](#)". While it is legitimate for RPG to consider the principle of the need for such schemes and whether there are alternatives to them as part of its regional strategy, the normal statutory approval process, including where appropriate a public inquiry and formal environmental impact assessment, will continue to apply, focusing on more localised matters concerning alignment etc. Nevertheless, studies to assist the RPG process will need to be carried out in sufficient depth to produce a reasonably reliable assessment of the costs and benefits of alternative solutions. Without this, RPBs will not be able to reach an adequately informed view on the type of solution that is appropriate and the priority it deserves.

3.14 There may be some exceptional types of development, such as major waste facilities, which are of regional or sub-regional significance in the functions they fulfil and where the precise location is of greater than local interest. These should be treated as outlined above as far as RPG itself is concerned. However, the regional machinery established for the preparation of RPG may provide a suitable forum for the discussion of specific sites, as an input to the preparation of the relevant development plans.

4. Economic Development

4.1 The Government's central economic objective is to achieve high and stable levels of growth and employment, while ensuring that the benefits of that economic growth can be shared by everyone and so deliver a better quality of life. It means taking a long-term view and looking at ways in which economic growth can go hand in hand with ensuring a fairer society and protecting the environment to achieve sustainable growth and economic prosperity. The Government has targets to raise the trend rate of growth and to narrow the productivity gap with our major competitors. RPGs and more particularly the RDA economic strategies will play an important part in realising these goals, through the shared objectives of promoting competitiveness, enterprise and innovation, raising the level of skills and increasing the quantity and quality of investment.

Economic role of RPG

4.2 RPG should complement and assist the implementation of the RDAs' economic strategies in the achievement of the goals set out above. In line with the Government's guidance to the RDAs, there are strategies in each region which seek to take an integrated and sustainable approach to economic development and regeneration by tackling business competitiveness, productivity and the underlying problems of unemployment, skills shortages, social exclusion and physical decay. RDA economic strategies provide:

- a regional framework for economic development, skills and regeneration to ensure better strategic focus for and co-ordination of activity in the region whether by the agency or by other regional, sub-regional or local organisations;
- a framework for the delivery of national and European programmes and influence the development of Government policy; and
- the basis for the RDAs' detailed action plans.

4.3 In developing policies to assist economic development and regeneration, the RPB will need to draw on the RDAs' work in identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the regional economy. This will enable the RPB to identify the areas where land needs to be released for economic development or where policies targeted at facilitating regeneration need to be focused. RPG should:

- identify the regional or sub-regional priority areas for economic development and regeneration. This will include, where appropriate, making provision for the location, expansion and promotion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven industry;
- ensure that regionally, or sub-regionally, significant housing, transport and other infrastructure proposals support the above priorities and, where necessary, provide advice on phasing and programming; and
- advise on general locations and criteria for strategic site selection, including major inward investment sites, so that sufficient sites are made available to meet business needs while ensuring that major "greenfield" sites are not released unnecessarily as part of a process of competition between nearby authorities. The RPB should review with other stakeholders, including the RDA, whether all existing strategic employment sites are still needed. For the reasons set out in [Chapter 3](#), RPG cannot itself identify specific sites for inward investment.

4.4 RPG should have regard to regeneration initiatives, including programmes and projects funded through RDA regeneration programmes (e.g. the Single Regeneration Budget) and the European Structural Funds. In addition consideration should be given to how best to assist the sustainable

economic development of rural areas having regard to both land based rural businesses, such as agriculture and forestry, and non-land based.

4.5 RPG should not set out non land-use policies in respect of the economy, for example in respect of skills training, but rather cross-refer to the relevant initiatives being taken or proposed by the RDAs or others.

Clusters

4.6 As mentioned above, RPG has a particular role to play in facilitating cluster development. The Competitiveness White Paper, "Our Competitive Future: Building the Knowledge Based Economy", and the 1999 Pre-Budget Report and the 2000 Budget, emphasised the importance of promoting the expansion and creation of clusters or networks of knowledge driven companies. Clusters may be concentrated in a particular location, such as technology parks, or linked in 'Innovative Cluster Areas'. ICAs comprise networks 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. Such links between businesses, and between business and the science and research base, need to be encouraged if UK business is to compete successfully in world markets. Geographic proximity, and the flexible use of space, can be factors in cluster success. RPG should plan proactively to facilitate the establishment and expansion of innovative cluster areas. It should contain transport and other policies and proposals to assist the creation of the necessary physical infrastructure to support such networks. RPG should also encourage development plans to set clear policies to allow incubator units to be at the heart of clusters. This is particularly important in the light of the Budget 2000 announcement of a new £50m fund for RDAs to co-ordinate incubator units and small-scale infrastructure as part of cluster development. Further guidance on facilitating clusters through policies in development plans is included in PPG12.

RPG/RDA relationship

4.7 There should be a two-way relationship between RPGs and the RDA economic strategies. As well as the former assisting in the delivery of the latter it is equally important that, if they are to be sustainable, the RDA economic strategies operate within and alongside the long term spatial context for the region provided by RPGs. RPG provides the regional spatial development framework and an analysis of environmental constraints and opportunities. It is only through such an interactive and iterative relationship that the two types of regional strategy will be broadly consistent and sustainable economic development secured across the regions. This should contribute to urban regeneration, minimise the amount of greenfield development for both business and housing, and reduce the need to travel.

4.8 All the RDA economic strategies cross-refer to RPG and liaison arrangements have been established with the regional planning bodies, assisted by the Regional Chambers where the latter is not the regional planning body. The Regional Chambers are of central importance in bringing together local authority and business stakeholders. The East Midlands provides an example of best practice where the regional economic strategy and RPG are two components of an integrated regional strategy, co-ordinated by the Regional Chamber. It is important that the RPBs and the RDAs maintain and improve their liaison arrangements to foster a shared understanding of issues, objectives and opportunities and take due account of one another's respective timetables for strategy review and up-date. Normally the RDA should be represented at the public examination into RPG, as the statutory body responsible for economic development and regeneration policy at the regional level.

4.9 Any significant inconsistencies between an RDA's economic strategy and RPG will be highlighted by the GO at an early stage in this process and, if they persist, will be taken into account by the Secretary of State before issuing RPG and in commenting on the RDA economic strategy as appropriate.

4.10 For guidance on targets and monitoring indicators see [Chapter 16](#).

5. Housing

5.1 The housing strategy is a key component of the regional spatial strategy and should be formulated as part of it. The aim should be an integrated, strategic, approach to planning housing development which supports an urban renaissance and delivers sustainable development. RPG should define the spatial objectives for the region, consistent with the regional sustainable development framework (see [Chapter 2](#)) and with the Government's objectives for housing as set out in PPG3. The latter include the objective that everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home. The housing strategy should flow from these objectives.

Preparing the housing strategy

5.2 The housing strategy will comprise housing policies, an envisaged pattern of housing development and a distribution of housing provision. As mentioned in [Chapter 2](#), a key consideration will be the opportunities to focus housing development on suitable previously-developed sites in urban areas in preference to developing greenfield sites. In developing the housing strategy, as with the wider spatial strategy within which it sits (see [Chapter 2](#)), RPBs may wish to test its sensitivity to different assumptions of economic performance and housing demand.

5.3 As with other aspects of the overall strategy, RPG may need to depart from strategic authority administrative boundaries and define sub-regional areas that cut across those boundaries where particular housing policies or patterns of housing development may be appropriate.

5.4 In developing an understanding of housing requirements, among the factors which RPBs will wish to take into account are regional economic needs (see [Chapter 4](#)), the changing composition of households over time and the need to provide wider housing opportunity and choice, taking account, inter alia, of the condition of the existing housing stock. In taking account of household projections, RPBs should avoid giving them undue weight particularly where the underlying assumptions (based on long-term trends) may not be consistent with the emerging spatial strategy. There may also be intra-and inter-regional migration issues that need to be considered. Depending on how these inter-regional issues are resolved, adjoining RPBs may need to be represented at the public examination.

5.5 RPBs will need to have regard to the capacity of urban areas to accommodate more housing, including the physical and social infrastructure needed to support additional housing and the environmental implications of doing so. RPBs should co-ordinate a programme of urban capacity studies to be undertaken by the constituent local authorities and maintain consistency of approach by agreeing the standards to be applied. RPBs should draw on these urban housing capacity studies in preparing their housing strategies. The Department will publish good practice guidance on urban capacity studies.

5.6 The RPB should work with the GO and other regional stakeholders. Housing stakeholders include the Housing Corporation and organisations representing housing providers, such as the HBF, and people in housing need such as the National Housing Federation and Shelter. Other stakeholders will need to be involved including the RDAs and environmental bodies, such as the CPRE. Neighbouring RPBs should also be consulted. An example of best practice is the West Midlands where a steering group of representatives from the RPB, HBF and CPRE, with an observer from the Government Office, was set up in 1995/96 to review housing provision for the region.

Creating more sustainable patterns of development

5.7 The principles set out in PPG3 should be followed in creating more sustainable patterns of housing development. The focus of housing development should be the re-use of suitable previously-developed land and buildings within urban areas. Not all development, however, can take place within urban areas. How much development should take place outside existing areas will depend on the overall need for housing land, the capacity of existing urban areas to accommodate additional housing and the efficiency with which land is developed. Where development has to take place outside urban areas, the most sustainable option should be utilised as outlined below having regard to economic, environmental, social and natural resource considerations.

5.8 Where necessary, RPG should identify the broad locations and priorities for regionally or sub-regionally significant expansion of existing settlements and the creation of new settlements. Of these, planned extensions to existing urban areas are likely to prove the next most sustainable option after building on appropriate sites within urban areas. This will be especially where it is possible to utilise existing physical and social infrastructure, there is good access to public transport (or where new public transport provision can be planned into the development), and there is good access to jobs, schools, shopping and leisure facilities.

5.9 However, where sufficient land and buildings cannot be found through the above means, there may be circumstances where a new settlement is a sustainable option. This will be particularly where it can be located around an existing or planned node in a well-served public transport corridor. However, the cost of developing a new community from scratch, including the full range of new services and infrastructure, means that they will only infrequently be a viable option due to their scale and the time required to develop them. New settlements will not be acceptable if they will simply function as a dormitory of an existing larger settlement.

Managing the release of land

5.10 In order to ensure a sequence of development that supports the housing strategy, the RPG should set out principles for the managed release of sites. It will be for local plans and UDPs to include detailed policies for the release of housing sites, drawn up in the light of the principles set out in the RPG and the policy contained in PPG3. The Department will issue good practice guidance.

Making best use of land

5.11 RPG should be clear that developments which make inefficient use of land (those of less than 30 dwellings per hectare net) should be avoided. PPG3 advises on how to achieve more efficient use of land as part of well designed and better quality development. RPBs should consider whether there are regional policies or advice that can be set out in RPG to assist in the delivery of better urban design, higher quality development and more efficient use of land.

Reuse of previously-developed land and buildings

5.12 The Government has set a national target that by 2008 60% of additional housing should be provided on previously-developed land and through conversions of existing buildings. Each RPB should propose a recycling target and, if appropriate, sub-regional targets in RPG which should contribute to achieving the national target. Development plan authorities should adopt their own land recycling targets which contribute to attaining the regional or sub-regional targets.

5.13 RPBs should draw on urban housing capacity studies in proposing the recycling target for their region. In doing so, they will wish to make use of information from the National Land Use Database (NLUD). NLUD provides information on the potential for future recycling by recording areas of vacant, derelict and other previously-developed land that may become available for

redevelopment. The website address is: www.nlud.org.uk. Further information on the National Land Use Database can be obtained from PLUS2 at the Department (020-7944-5533).

5.14 RPBs should also take into account the number of empty homes in the region and any strategies which local authorities have in place to reduce those numbers.

Creating mixed communities and providing a greater choice of housing

5.15 The housing strategy should help create mixed and inclusive communities which provide wider housing opportunity and choice. RPG should promote an appropriate mix of dwellings in terms of size, type, affordability and location. In preparing the strategy the RPB may wish to estimate the future balance between general market and affordable housing. In deriving this estimate, an RPB should identify and assess regional and sub-regional trends and factors which are likely to influence local housing need. Estimates of affordable housing should be regarded as indicative and should not be presented as targets or quotas for local planning authorities to achieve. Regional targets are inappropriate since assessments of housing need are matters for local authorities to undertake in the light of their local circumstances.

5.16 The Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme continues to have a significant role in the delivery of new social housing. Regional Housing Statements, which now exist in every region, assist in a more strategic allocation process for the ADP. These statements are developed by Government Offices and the Housing Corporation in consultation with local authorities, RPBs, RDAs, registered social landlords and others. Among their purposes are to provide a regional context for local authorities in drawing up their own housing investment strategies and to identify regional priorities for housing investment to be funded from the ADP through registered social landlords. Therefore, it is essential that there is ongoing dialogue between the Corporation and the RPBs so that up-dated statements and revised RPGs take sufficient account of each other.

Annual rates of housing provision

5.17 Housing provision is an important part of the housing strategy. But plan, monitor and manage does not require a fixed total of housing provision to be identified over the full period of the strategy. Instead it is more appropriate to set out annual rates of provision to be kept under review. Annual rates may vary over the period covered by the strategy to reflect, for example, the lead-time necessary to secure substantial proposals within urban areas or major, sustainable, urban extensions. Spurious precision should be avoided. The annual rates provide benchmarks for the monitoring and review process, enabling adjustments to be made every five years or sooner if necessary.

5.18 Rates of housing provision should be distributed in RPG by structure plan and UDP area or, as referred to above, by sub-regional areas that cut across those boundaries where particular housing policies or patterns of housing development may be appropriate.

5.19 Structure plan and unitary plan authorities will, of course, be party to the above process. Once the annual rates of housing provision in RPG have been established and confirmed by the Secretary of State, following the public examination, they should be carried forward into structure plans and UDPs. There should be no need to reopen consideration of the housing strategy, including the annual rates of provision. Where circumstances have changed significantly since RPG was prepared or there is important new information to be taken into account, the presumption should be that the RPG housing strategy should be revised before development plans are reviewed. Where this is not practicable, revisions to the proposed level of housing provision in the structure plan or

UDP should take place in the context of advice from the RPB, information from the RPB's monitoring report, comments from other stakeholders and advice from the Government Office.

Monitoring and Review

5.20 It is fundamental to the plan, monitor and manage approach to planning for housing that the application of the housing strategy, and its implementation, is kept under review. Monitoring forms the basis on which the RPB periodically manages the review and roll forward of its housing strategy. Reviews should occur at a minimum every five years, and sooner if there are signs that the strategy is not having the intended effects. These reviews are unlikely to reveal that fundamental change to the housing strategy is required every five years but some adjustment may well be necessary. Monitoring and review should ensure the strategy, including the annual rates of housing provision, is kept up-to-date and remains relevant.

5.21 Focusing in isolation on any one aspect of the housing strategy is unlikely to be appropriate. A range of indicators will need to be monitored. Output targets and indicators should be set for those matters where the housing strategy is likely to have a major impact. These will be central to the RPB's ability to check that the strategy is being implemented as intended. As part of this, the monitoring process should examine how the housing strategy is taken forward in development plans. PPG3 highlights a number of housing indicators that should be monitored. Contextual indicators should also be set which help to assess the performance of the strategy in achieving changes in regional outcomes which will only to a limited extent have been influenced by it and in understanding the evolving context in which the strategy operates. Contextual housing indicators that an RPB might wish to monitor include house prices and the affordability of housing, sharing, homelessness and vacancy rates. Good practice guidance '[Monitoring Provision of Housing through the Planning System: Towards Better Practice](#)' was published by the department in October 2000.

5.22 There will also be indicators going wider than housing issues, for example those relating to environmental quality, relevant to understanding the impact of the housing strategy. Information should be collected on these as part of the wider monitoring of the RPG as a whole.

5.23 Monitoring of RPG should be reported on and made public, including on the RPB's website, via an annual monitoring report.

5.24 Additional advice on RPG targets and indicators is set out in [Chapter 16](#).

6. Transport

6.1 National policies and objectives to promote sustainable transport are contained in the Transport White Paper (TWP), "[A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone](#)" together with its daughter documents. It recognises that a vital element of an integrated transport policy is one where transport policies and proposals are fully integrated with land use planning at the national, regional and local levels. Better integration is critical to supporting more sustainable travel choices and in reducing the need to travel, with major travel generating uses being located where they can be more effectively served by public transport. These policies are supplemented in the Roads Review, "[A New Deal for Trunk Roads in England](#)", which sets out new objectives for the trunk roads network and a new role for the Highways Agency as a network operator. PPG13 "Transport" is currently under review and a revised draft was published in October 1999, providing further advice on the integration of transport and land-use planning. A final version will be published later this year and RPBs should follow its advice.

6.2 Of key importance to achieving this integration is the preparation of a regional transport strategy (RTS) as an integral and clearly identifiable part of RPG.

Main Aims of the Regional Transport Strategy

6.3 The RTS should provide:

- regional priorities for transport investment and management, across all modes, to support the regional strategy, including the role of trunk roads and local highway authority roads of regional or sub-regional significance;
- a strategic steer on the role and future development of railways, airports, ports and inland waterways in the region, for both passenger and freight, consistent with national policy;
- guidance on measures to increase transport choice, including the better integration of rail and bus services;
- public transport accessibility criteria for regionally or sub-regionally significant levels or types of development, to be set out in development plans and local transport plans, to guide the location of new development and the provision of new transport services or infrastructure;
- advice on the approach to be taken to standards for the provision of off-street car parking; and
- guidance on the strategic context for demand management measures such as road-user charging and levies on workplace car parking.

6.4 Provided it covers those aspects set out in the above bullet points which are relevant to the region, the RTS will provide the long-term regional framework for structure plans and Part I UDPs, local transport plans and for transport operators in developing their plans and programmes. Although RPG covers a fifteen to twenty year period, it is important that it specifies the immediate five year regional transport priorities on a cross-modal basis within the long-term strategy. This will assist the development of shorter-term transport plans and programmes, including local transport plans. More detailed advice on the matters listed in paragraph [6.3](#) above is provided in [Annex B](#) to this note.

Stakeholder involvement in preparing the RTS

6.5 The successful implementation of the transport strategy will depend upon the co-operation of a large number of different organisations in both the private and public sectors, including the local

planning and highway authorities. In preparing the RTS, therefore, it is important that the RPB (including the local planning and highway authorities represented on it) works closely with a wide range of relevant bodies. These will include the GO, RPBs for neighbouring regions and a wide range of transport bodies, including the Highways Agency, the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA now existing in shadow form), Passenger Transport Executives and Authorities, Railtrack, train and bus operators, port and airport authorities, freight associations, inland water transport bodies including British Waterways, and transport user committees. These bodies should be invited to outline their current transport plans and proposals for the region and to discuss how these support the sustainable development objectives for the region. Other bodies will also need to be involved including the RDAs, businesses, the Countryside Agency (in view of its rural transport responsibilities), environmental organisations, disabled groups, health bodies and women's groups. Cross border issues with other regions and with Scotland and Wales will require appropriate consultation and liaison arrangements. Given the range of bodies involved, RPBs should consider establishing regional transport forums of key stakeholders to develop particular aspects of the draft RTS.

6.6 As with the rest of RPG, the RDA will be a key stakeholder and it will be important that the regional transport strategy and the RDA's economic strategy and action plans pursue complementary approaches. The RPB will need to take account of the transport implications of the RDA's proposals and similarly the regional transport strategy should inform and assist the RDA in the development and implementation of its strategy.

The ten-year national transport plan

6.7 The ten-year national transport plan "[Transport 2010](#)", published by the Department in July 2000, provides an important national context for the further development and review of the RTS element of RPG. The ten-year plan is concerned with overall levels and priorities for investment with targets and outputs, rather than specific schemes. In setting out the Government's plans for expenditure on transport outputs and outcomes, it identifies ways in which private finance will be levered in. It provides a more stable framework in which the RPBs, and the public and private sectors more generally, can plan.

An objectives-led approach

6.8 Critical to developing an RTS, as an integral part of RPG, will be the objectives set for the spatial strategy for the region, and the environmental, economic and social impacts of integrated planning and transport options as assessed in the sustainability appraisal (see [Chapter 2](#)). It should not start from an overly narrow approach with objectives being defined in terms, for example, of solving specific road capacity or road safety problems. Instead, the RPB, in conjunction with other stakeholders, should identify broader strategic objectives from which integrated transport and planning options can be developed. An example would be facilitating the regeneration of particular urban areas identified in the strategy through improved transport accessibility. Among the considerations would be the extent to which the spatial strategy could alter the distribution of employment and housing, demand management measures, improvement to existing public transport services and transport infrastructure improvements both in terms of investment and management. A sub-regional approach may be necessary and the poor access to public transport of many rural communities will need to be taken into account (see [Chapter 9](#)).

6.9 Outputs from this process should include integrated planning and transport proposals and objectives for both the major transport corridors in the region and the major urban areas as part of the wider land-use and transport planning of the region. Effects on other regions, should also be

taken into account in formulating RPG. It is important that draft RPG takes an integrated approach with transport policies and proposals structured by objective or problem rather than by mode.

Multi-modal appraisal and studies

6.10 Consistent with this integrated and multi-modal approach, two interrelated tools in assisting in the development of integrated planning and transport solutions are the multi-modal study and the multi-modal appraisal. These tools can be used to inform the RPB of alternative modal solutions in addressing issues which have been identified for the RTS to resolve.

6.11 Multi-modal studies (MMSs) provide a new way of identifying planning and transport options. Instead of focusing on a particular mode, an MMS examines the role of each of the transport modes in the area or corridor concerned to examine the contribution that each can make to meeting the objectives for the sustainable development of the region, area or corridor under consideration. The studies should reflect the strategic priorities set by the RPB and regional stakeholders for future land-use and examine how transport options can support them. The areas covered by the existing studies have varied in size depending on the nature of these objectives and problems. In each case however, the aim has been that the study should be cast wide enough to enable a range of possible solutions to be examined. Future studies should adopt the same principles. Broad-based consultation should take place to inform the options put forward to the RPB thereby enabling the public to have a say before ideas are firmed up and facilitating the narrowing down of options more quickly. This is one of the ways in which a fast-track and inclusive process of delivering new transport projects can be achieved. The options should be expressed as cost effective and integrated packages of measures that consider, as appropriate, land-use changes, demand management techniques, public transport service improvements and new transport infrastructure investment needs. The Department's "[Guidance on Methodology for Multi-Modal Studies](#)" (GOMMS) published in March 2000, sets out the framework for these studies and provides more detailed guidance on how the Department's "New Approach to Appraisal" should be applied.

6.12 The Department is taking forward in partnership with RPBs an initial programme of MMSs to address the most serious problems on the trunk road network not addressed by measures announced in the roads review report, "[A New Deal for Trunk Roads in England](#)". The Department consulted RPBs on this programme. The first tranche of studies are due to be completed by the end of 2001. A second tranche of studies are now being commissioned. From 2001 for the third tranche of studies onwards, RPBs are expected to commission and lead their own multi-modal studies with financial assistance from the Department where appropriate.

6.13 Once a particular MMS has been completed, the resulting options should be considered by the RPBs and other stakeholders in the context of the rest of the draft RPG. Decisions can then be taken with the benefit, if necessary, of any further testing of the results against the RPG objectives and targets. The results of the first tranche of studies will feed into additions/amendments or reviews, as appropriate, of the RTSs in 2001/2002. RPBs should ensure that further development of the RTSs is planned to take account of the outputs from further MMS tranches.

6.14 Multi-modal appraisal assists with developing and refining options in the multi-modal studies. Multi-modal appraisal is concerned with alternative transport strategies or projects, while the sustainability appraisal is concerned with broader strategic options as part of the overall spatial framework (see [Chapter 2](#)). The Department published guidance on a multi-modal, objectives-led approach to appraisal in March 2000 as part of the MMSs methodology referred to above.

6.15 A flow chart setting out how the MMSs fit into the new arrangements is set out in [Figure 2](#).

Figure 2: Multi Modal Studies and Regional Planning Guidance

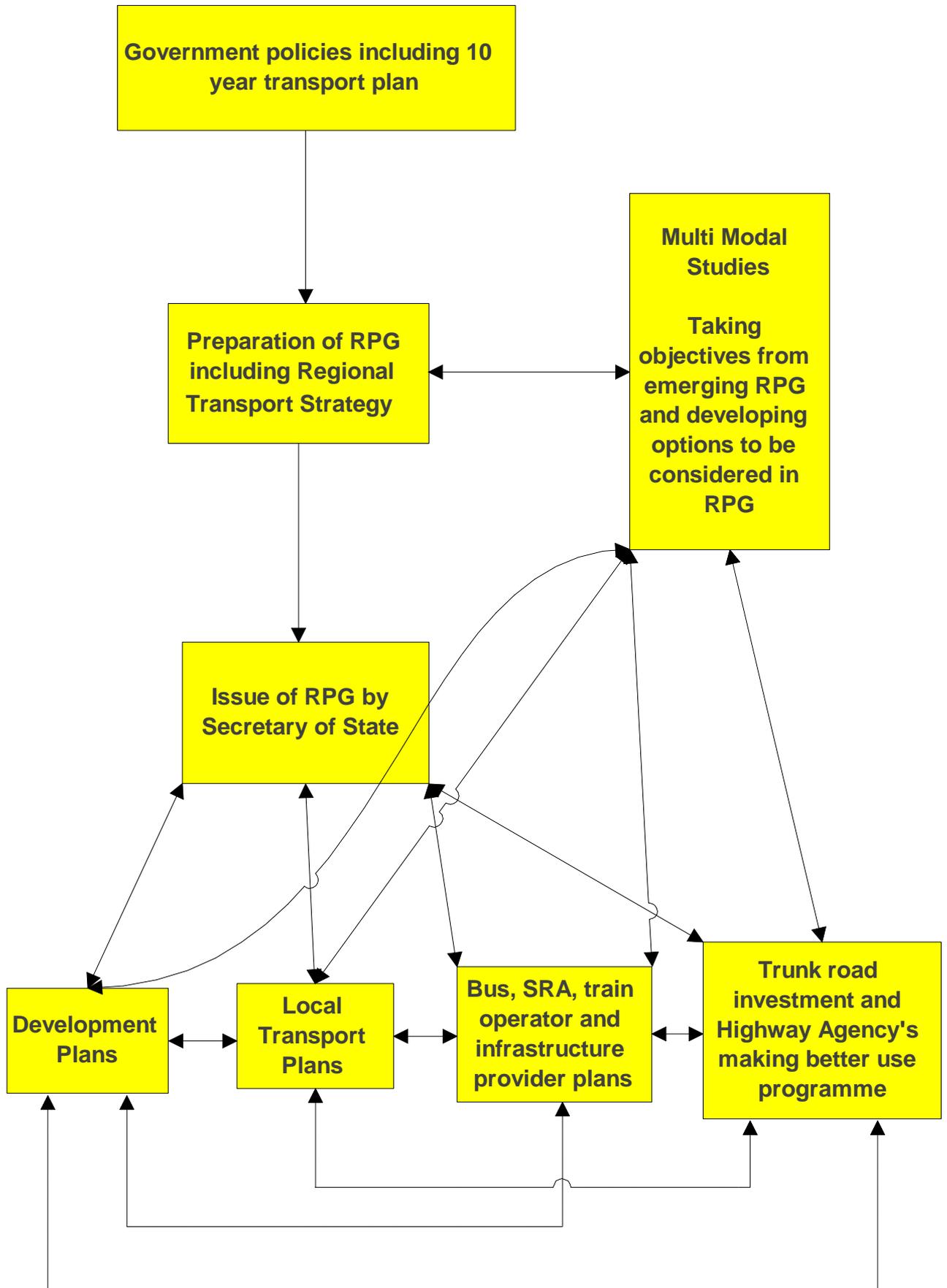


Figure 2: Multi Modal Studies and Regional Planning Guidance (.pdf file size 9kb)

Funding and status of transport proposals in the RTS

6.16 Any new proposals for infrastructure improvements should be defined in broad terms only. The normal statutory approval process for specific projects will continue to apply, including, where appropriate, a public inquiry and formal environmental impact assessment.

6.17 It is important that draft RPG avoids creating generalised blight by including wish lists of projects which are unlikely to be affordable, or are not viable, whether undertaken by the public or private sectors. The RPBs should take account of advice from the GOs, the HA, the SRA, transport operators and infrastructure providers on likely expenditure programmes and resource constraints so that the draft RPG is realistic in the transport priorities it identifies. The RPB should have regard to the ten-year transport plan and advice from the GO. Looking beyond the initial ten-year period, the RPB may find it helpful to carry out sensitivity testing of the draft transport strategy in relation to higher or lower levels of expenditure to assess the degree to which priorities would change and how robust the strategy was. As a result a RPB may propose different transport priorities in relation to different expenditure assumptions within a core transport strategy that remains the same. The RPBs should also look to the GOs for advice on how consistent the emerging regional transport priorities, particularly improvements on the core transport network, are with national policies and the ten-year transport plan. The Secretary of State will wish to be satisfied on this before he issues RPG given the importance of a coherent national transport strategy.

6.18 By issuing RPG, the Secretary of State will be committed to taking forward those transport proposals for which central government is responsible subject to the statutory procedures that apply and the development of viable schemes that represent good value for money. The precise timing will depend on the circumstances of the particular public expenditure round and on transport priorities in other regions.

6.19 For guidance on targets and monitoring indicators see [Chapter 16](#) and the national targets set in the ten-year transport plan.

Transitional arrangements

6.20 The RTSs will continue to develop and the current draft RTSs do not address all the topics set out in paragraph [6.3](#) above. In some areas such as air transport, the national policy is being developed. In others, such as workplace parking levies and congestion charging schemes, the Transport Bill has yet to receive Royal Assent and experience from the early schemes analysed. Furthermore, results from the second and third tranches of the MMSs will not be available for some time. In the meantime it is important that in completing any current reviews on RPGs an initial set of cross-modal regional transport priorities for investment and maintenance are identified, particularly for the first five years. Where practicable, transport policies should be defined for the topics covered in paragraph [6.3](#) to help the transition to the full RTS and support the objectives of the regional spatial strategy. In particular, reviews of RPGs should set maximum parking standards, subject to the advice in revised PPG13 when finalised, to ensure regional consistency.

6.21 Preparation of the first 'full' local transport plans for 2001/02-2005/06, therefore, has not had the benefit of fully developed RTSs. It is important that the next round of LTPs in preparation in 2004 does have the benefit of a much more developed set of RTSs as part of RPGs. Although there will be additions/amendments or partial reviews of RTSs before then, all RPBs should ensure that they carry out comprehensive reviews of their RTSs in 2003 prior to preparation of the next round of LTPs. Thereafter, there should be a common, comprehensive review date for the RTS of every

five years to inform each new round of LTPs with amendment or selective review between cycles. This would also assist consideration of inter-regional transport issues and could lead to cost savings through, for example, joint regional studies. Naturally it makes sense to consider whether other RPG topics need to be reviewed at the time of the comprehensive RTS review.

7. Retail And Leisure

7.1 PPG6: "*Town Centres and Retail Developments*" provides the primary policy guidance on the preferred locations for key town centre uses, including retail and leisure. In reviewing RPGs, the regional planning bodies should:

- indicate the role that the network of town centres should play and propose a broad strategy for its development;
- assess the need for major new retail facilities or large-scale expansion of existing retail facilities of regional or sub-regional importance. The role and scope for such major retail facilities should be addressed initially in RPG rather than developed unilaterally in development plans; and
- taking full account of sustainability considerations, identify which town centres, well served by public transport, should be the focus for major new retail development, so as to harness it in the regeneration of existing town centres.

7.2 The Government's policy is to ensure that the vitality and viability of existing town centres is sustained and enhanced by focussing new retail development within existing city, town and district centres and thereby facilitating access for all and promoting a more sustainable pattern of development. PPG6 states that in most regions there is unlikely to be scope for an additional regional shopping centre without offending these objectives. The Government has also made clear that the policy set out in PPG6 applies equally to proposals for extending existing edge-of-centre and out-of-centre development to create additional floor space, and that proposals for such additional facilities will need to demonstrate why they could not be located in more central locations in accordance with the sequential approach.

7.3 Similar considerations apply to major leisure and entertainment facilities. As with major retail development it is for the RPB, working with other stakeholders, to determine what is 'major' having regard to regional or sub-regional as opposed to more local importance. The need for such major new leisure and entertainment will have to be carefully examined and tested against sustainability objectives. The common aim should be to ensure that such major new facilities, serving a regional or sub-regional catchment, promote the vitality and viability of existing town centres and are accessible by a variety of transport modes including good quality public transport. Where there are good reasons why a major facility of this type cannot be located within an existing town centre it should still be readily accessible by public transport.

7.4 For guidance on targets and monitoring indicators see [Chapter 16](#).

8. Culture

Regional Cultural Consortiums

8.1 Regional Cultural Consortiums (RCC) have been established in each of the English regions outside London to bring together the regional cultural and creative interests, including tourism and sport. The RCCs bring together the bodies responsible for public expenditure in these sectors so that they can increasingly focus on working towards common outcomes. Membership reflects regional characteristics drawing on regional cultural agencies (Regional Arts Board, Area Museums Council, Regional Tourist Board, English Heritage, Regional Sports Board, Regional Library System), local government and the creative industries such as architecture. RCC boundaries are the same as those of the GOs.

8.2 Each RCC is drawing up a regional cultural strategy to identify priorities for the cultural sectors and to influence and complement other regional strategies. The regional cultural strategy will:

- promote public appreciation of the contribution of culture in the region;
- set commonly agreed cultural priorities and themes;
- explain links with relevant national, regional and local policies, e.g. tourism strategy, RDA's economic strategy and local cultural strategies produced by local authorities; and
- provide a coherent framework of regional cultural priorities to inform Lottery distributors' strategies and within which Lottery bids can be assessed.

8.3 In formulating the regional cultural strategy each consortium will have to have regard to the long-term spatial planning context for the region, as set out in RPG. RPG will have implications, for example, in relation to the location of new cultural facilities. The RCC will, therefore, provide a useful contact point for the RPB. The cultural strategies should be taken into account by the RPBs when reviewing RPGs. Matters of mutual interest should be discussed with the RCC since a shared understanding of issues, objectives and opportunities will ensure that the strategies develop in a complementary manner. The RCC may comment on draft RPG and may also be invited to the public examination.

8.4 Three key cultural aspects of particular relevance to RPG are the built and archaeological heritage, sport and physical recreation and tourism.

Built and Archaeological Heritage

8.5 In any region there is a wealth of archaeological and built heritage which may range from being of local to even international significance, such as World Heritage Sites. Those of sub-regional importance and above should be considered as part of an overview of environmental constraints and opportunities for improvement of the region as described in [Chapter 2](#). RPG should complement the cultural strategy in preserving and enhancing those assets of regional or sub-regional importance and consider whether there is a regional planning dimension to managing, for example, their tourism potential. In doing so RPBs should have regard to PPG15 on the historic environment and PPG16 on archaeology. RPBs should also consider whether there are appropriate opportunities to be taken forward in development plans, in conjunction with the RDA economic strategies, for the sensitive exploitation of the built heritage to assist in sub-regional regeneration.

Sport and Physical Recreation

8.6 Most sports and physical recreation developments serve primarily a local catchment. However, some will have regional or sub-regional significance, and may fulfil a regional function in a national hierarchy of facilities, such as forming part of the network linked to the English Institute of Sport. In preparing RPG it will be important to examine the region's key sports and physical recreational resources, including those assets based on natural features such as mountains and estuaries. RPBs should take account of the broad pressures and demands that exist, and particularly proposals for new regional or national facilities, including those which may be required in support of bids for major international sporting events. These will be identified in the regional cultural strategy or the regional sports statement as appropriate. Based on these strategies, and in consultation with Sport England and other stakeholders, RPG should provide strategic guidance to planning authorities on the scale and broad locational options for major new sports and physical recreation developments of regional or sub-regional importance.

8.7 As with other types of development, RPG should encourage major sports facilities to be located, where possible, within urban areas in locations well served by public transport. This and other key principles of planning for sport and recreation will be set out in the forthcoming revision to PPG17 (Sport and Recreation).

Tourism

8.8 The Government's policies for sustainable tourism at regional and local level are set out in the tourism strategy document, "Tomorrow's Tourism". National planning advice is contained in PPG21. RPBs will need to liaise with the Regional Tourist Boards (RTBs) to ensure that RPGs have regard to the regional tourism statements. They should take account of the needs of current and future visitors as well as the needs of local residents. Tourism will be included in the cultural strategy complementing its role in the RDA's economic strategy. RPBs will need to consider with the RTBs:

- whether there are potential new regional or sub-regional tourist facilities required for which location criteria need to be specified in RPG; and
- how to encourage tourism development to assist in the implementation of the regional spatial strategy.

8.9 For guidance on targets and monitoring indicators see [Chapter 16](#).

9. Rural Development And Countryside Character

9.1 The Government believes in a living countryside, with thriving rural communities, where public services are properly supported and maintained; and in a working countryside, with a balanced mix of homes and jobs which limits unsustainable commuting. At the same time, the Government recognises the interdependence of town and country, and wishes to strengthen the relationships between the two. The Government also wants a countryside in which the environment is properly protected, conserved and where necessary enhanced; and a countryside for all, where there is genuine access so that the beauty and tranquillity of the countryside can be enjoyed widely. The Government's vision will be set out in more detail in a Rural White Paper which is due to be published later this year. In preparing RPGs the RPBs and other stakeholders will need to take account of these objectives and national planning guidance on the countryside set out in PPG7.

9.2 In developing advice on rural development, RPBs will need to involve a wide range of organisations including the GOs, RDAs, the Countryside Agency, National Park and Broads Authorities, Association of National Parks Authorities, Association of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, English Nature, English Heritage, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, MAFF, AONB Joint Advisory Committees/Conservation Boards, the Regional Tourist Boards and the Rural Community Councils. They should take account of work undertaken by these bodies, for example, the programmes of the statutory countryside bodies, MAFF's England Rural Development Programme and related programmes, the forestry strategy for England (see para 2.35) and agri-environment and related programmes.

9.3 In preparing regional or sub-regional rural policies in RPG it will be important to identify and take account of environmental, economic and social needs, opportunities and capacities. RPG should take account of the diverse nature of rural areas with policy being focussed on finding ways to address the needs of rural communities while respecting environmental quality and enhancing the quality of life. Here the sustainability appraisal mentioned in [Chapter 2](#) will be particularly relevant. On the basis of this sustainability appraisal the RPB and other stakeholders can ensure that the development strategy in RPG supports sustainable rural communities thereby combating social exclusion and protecting and enhancing the countryside and wildlife.

9.4 Rural people often have greater distances to travel to work, fewer services including public transport and may have more difficulty in accessing jobs (especially year round), training, housing, shops or leisure facilities. There may be a shortage of affordable housing to rent or buy. Farming makes a major contribution to the economy of rural areas but increasingly farm businesses need to diversify and new businesses need to be established in order to maintain the economic vitality of rural communities. This is something which the Government wishes to encourage. Rural businesses are frequently very small and may have difficulties in gaining access to business advice and support, training services, good communications and suitable premises. Therefore, it is essential that the advice in other chapters of this PPG should not be applied in a way which would undermine the objective of sustainable and economically active rural communities. For example, it would be inappropriate to apply a public accessibility criterion for new development throughout the region which did not discriminate between rural and urban areas, given how poorly served many rural areas are by public transport. This does not, however, justify large-scale development argued for on the basis of rural development which would have an unacceptable environmental impact. Where appropriate, RPG should set out how its policies and proposals differ between urban and rural areas recognising the generic differences between urban and rural living.

9.5 RPG should:

- define regionally significant rural economic diversification and regeneration priorities consistent with those set by the RDA's economic strategy, where possible building on the economic and social potential of conservation and environmental activities;
- consider the future balance between market and affordable housing in the rural areas as part of the process of establishing the distribution of housing provision in the region;
- set sub-regional targets for the improvement of accessibility to public transport and local services consistent with policies for promoting local services, jobs and housing;
- where these have not already been defined, establish regional or sub-regionally specific principles, for the management or enhancement of environmental assets of regional or sub-regional importance, including designated countryside areas and landscapes. These may range from internationally and nationally designated areas, such as World Heritage Sites and AONBs, to local authority designated areas of regional or sub-regional importance. In line with the Government's commitment to greater public access to the open countryside, an example of where regional or sub-regional action is necessary would be visitor management where an integrated approach to access to areas cutting across county boundaries may be necessary;
- consider regional or sub-regional Green Belt issues, including setting criteria consistent with national policy for any review of Green Belt boundaries in the region; and
- indicate on the key diagram the major international and national countryside designations.

9.6 Where RPG incorporates sub-regional strategies these should recognise the characteristics of rural areas, taking account of the above and considering the scope for more local initiatives which cross county or unitary authority boundaries. This includes promoting rural regeneration, enhancing the local environment and increasing recreation opportunities through promotion of such initiatives as restoring inland waterways and extending Community Forests. Sub-regional strategies, which cut across county boundaries, may be particularly appropriate for tackling rural regeneration issues.

Green Belts

9.7 In amplification of the fifth point in paragraph [9.5](#) above, RPG should make clear whether its spatial development strategy has implications for Green Belt boundaries, taking account of the guidance in PPG2. That PPG makes clear that the essential characteristic of Green Belts is their permanence. Once the general extent of Green Belt has been approved, it should be altered only in exceptional circumstances, after opportunities for development within the urban areas contained by and beyond the Green Belt have been thoroughly considered. In considering any changes to Green Belt boundaries the regional planning body should ensure that the purposes and land-use objectives for including land in the Green Belts, as set out in PPG2, are respected.

9.8 Where, in producing RPG, the conclusion is reached that longer-term development needs, consistent with the emerging regional spatial strategy, are likely to require development in an area currently included within the Green Belt, the general location for that development should be indicated. RPG should then set the regional or sub-regional parameters for Green Belt review. A key criterion for such a review is that revised boundaries should be robust and capable of enduring over the time horizon of RPG. Structure plans and Part 1 of UDPs can then develop those criteria and refine the broad locations where the development should take place, as appropriate. Local plans and Part 2 of UDPs will in turn consider the detailed location of the development and the consequent changes to the Green Belt boundary. However, where RPG does not identify the need for development on land within the Green Belt, development plans should contain proposals for any significant change to Green Belt boundaries only exceptionally, and set out clearly the reasons for doing so.

9.9 For guidance on targets and monitoring indicators see [Chapter 16](#).

10. Biodiversity And Nature Conservation

10.1 Biodiversity means the variety of life, among both plants and animals. Government policies aim to conserve and enhance this variety. Their success will be a key test of sustainable development. The Government has set out its general policy in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (1994) and it has also broadly endorsed the approach of the UK Biodiversity Steering Group report (1995). Central to this is the preparation and implementation of costed action plans for priority species and habitats. Although these action plans are the key implementation mechanism, RPG has a role in conserving the existing wildlife resource and in providing guidance on how structure plans and Part I UDPs should seek to mitigate adverse effects, foster biodiversity and protect ecosystems both in rural and urban areas. Advice on how nature conservation should be taken into account in planning policies and decisions is set out in PPG9. This highlights the special importance of areas which are designated for their intrinsic environmental value of either international importance - RAMSAR Sites, Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation - or national importance - National Nature Reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. It is intended to tighten up and clarify guidance on such matters by revising PPG9. Also of relevance is the Government's programme of forestry for the environment and conservation (published as part of the Government's Forestry Strategy, see para 2.35) and the Government's forthcoming soil strategy for England and Wales which will set out objectives and measures for soil protection. The variety of soil quality is important in supporting biodiversity.

10.2 In order for RPG to fulfil these objectives and complement any regional biodiversity strategies, RPBs should liaise closely with regional biodiversity fora or equivalent bodies, English Nature and the Environment Agency, and also with bodies working on sub-regional initiatives such as management schemes for European marine sites and integrated plans for coastal zone management. In drawing up the spatial strategy in RPG it will be important to identify and take account of the regional distribution and sub-regional concentrations of priority habitats and species, and the internationally or nationally designated areas referred to above, to inform the regional spatial strategy. In doing so the RPB should consider how the distribution of these nationally or regionally significant species and habitats may change as a result of climate change. RPG should:

- incorporate biodiversity and nature conservation objectives into regional development objectives;
- conserve and promote biodiversity at the regional and sub-regional level including by flagging up the potential for enhancing biodiversity. An example would be by drawing attention to the scope for meeting re-creation targets for declining habitats of regional or sub-regional importance, such as reed beds, when permitting sand and gravel workings in large river valleys which can also promote biodiversity;
- establish regional targets, where appropriate, for community forest cover and creation of strategic green open spaces in the urban areas;
- identify regional 'cross-boundary' issues where these are not already being addressed by joint working. These would include those pertaining to natural areas of distinctive character cutting across regional and national boundaries. RPG should encourage close working with authorities and agencies in other English regions, Wales and Scotland.

10.3 In relation to the second point above, English Nature has published regional Natural Areas Reports for the eight English regions (taking London and the South East together) which assist understanding of the conservation priorities for the wildlife and natural features of each region.

10.4 For guidance on targets and monitoring indicators see [Chapter 16](#).

11. The Coast

11.1 National policy is set out in PPG20, "Coastal Planning", published in September 1992, and in Circular 30/92 "Development in Flood Risk areas". The Government is currently revising the latter. Consultation on a new PPG25 'Development and Flood Risk' has taken place, and the new PPG is expected to be published before the end of 2000.

11.2 When preparing RPG in regions with coastal areas, RPG should identify the key characteristics of the region's coast of regional or sub-regional significance, its problems, the development pressures and opportunities for more environmentally sensitive use. This should include regionally or sub-regionally significant natural, semi-natural and historic features, major areas of coastal land at risk from flooding or substantial coastal erosion, major on-shore and off-shore development pressures upon the region's coast, major regional sources of coastal pollution, regionally significant tourism and recreational potential. Shoreline Management Plans, together with any related coastal defence strategies and Estuary Management Plans, should help in assessing these characteristics.

11.3 It is important that the RPB takes account of the climate change scenarios mentioned in [Chapter 2](#) to assess the risk of flooding and erosion and to avoid major new development in areas which are likely to be at risk. In the longer-term, adaptation options may involve a strategy of managed retreat in some locations in the face of forecast rises in sea level.

11.4 Based upon this survey information, the RPB should consider the scope for integrated coastal planning in the region and:

- indicate on the key diagram the major international and national coastal designations;
- set out in RPG a vision for sustainable and environmentally sensitive land-use planning of the region's coast as a whole and of sub-regional units along it, to be taken forward through structure plans and Part I UDPs. This should ensure an integrated approach to its future use, with an emphasis on protecting and enhancing the biodiversity, natural character, built environment, and landscape quality of the coast. Regional or sub-regional priorities should be identified; and
- as with biodiversity and nature conservation, identify 'border' issues requiring close working with authorities and agencies in other English regions, Wales, Scotland and (exceptionally) areas beyond.

11.5 For guidance on targets and monitoring indicators see [Chapter 16](#).

12. Minerals

12.1 The main policy document on minerals planning is MPG1, "General Considerations and the Development Plan System", published in June 1996. Other MPGs deal with mitigation of environmental effects of mineral working, procedures for reviewing old minerals permissions, and on planning policies for specific groups of minerals. The MPGs dealing with specific minerals, together with MPG1, are the most important of these: MPG3 on coal published in March 1999; MPG6 on aggregate provision, published in April 1994; MPG10 on cement, published in November 1991; MPG13 on peat, published in July 1995; and MPG15 on silica sand, published in September 1996. RPBs may also wish to have regard to DOE Circular 2/85 on onshore oil and gas.

12.2 A review of MPG 6 is taking place following the publication of an issues paper for public consultation in January 2000. It is hoped to publish a consultation draft of revised MPG6 later this year, taking into account the results of the first consultation exercise. The aim is to publish a final version of the new MPG by the end of 2001. Amongst the issues for discussion will be sustainable development, forecasts of need and options for meeting it, and the new aggregate planning role of the RPBs as set out in this note. A new MPG is in preparation on marine sand and gravel extraction. Circular 2/85 on onshore oil and gas is under review following the publication of the consultation paper "On-Shore Oil, Gas and Coalbed Methane Development" in October 1999.

12.3 Aggregate minerals, whilst of widespread occurrence, have essentially regional supply patterns. For that reason, Regional Aggregates Working Parties exist to provide technical advice to Government and RPBs on the need for, and the supply of, aggregates. Current national policies for aggregate minerals are set out in MPG6, "Guidelines for Aggregates Provision in England". It sets down regional guideline figures to be broken down into Mineral Planning Authority (MPA) apportionments. It also provides guidance on all the nationally relevant policies constraining aggregates extraction in sensitive areas such as Green Belts, National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These are taken into account by the MPAs when producing their local plans.

12.4 The Department is consulting on options for identifying appropriate regional levels of supply of aggregates within new national guidelines. Assuming the present broad principles of management of supply are to be continued, one option would be for these to be handed to the RPBs for consideration and testing in revising RPG and for apportionment to individual MPAs. An alternative would be for the MPAs to identify the potential for supply and for this to be aggregated to the regional level for testing against an indicative regional estimate in order to make sure that, overall, the provision is likely to be adequate. Under either option the Regional Aggregates Working Parties would provide publicly available advice to the RPBs. Any regional or sub-regional supply option would be subject to the sustainability appraisal referred to in [Chapter 2](#). In the meantime, RPBs should have regard to the regional apportionment of aggregates supply to 2006 contained in the 1994 edition of MPG6.

12.5 Once approved by the Secretary of State in RPG, both the regional total and the sub-regional apportionment will be subject to monitoring and review through the national and regional machinery as appropriate. It is important that RPG sets regional priorities for such monitoring. These should include, where sensible, targets for reducing the level of primary aggregates extracted from the region and increasing the use of alternative materials.

Transitional arrangements

12.6 Until the publication of the final version of MPG6, RPBs will be guided by the regional guidelines as set out in the April 1994 version of MPG6.

Other minerals

12.7 A number of other minerals are of national or regional importance such as coal, hydrocarbons, silica sand, brick clay and other industrial minerals. Some are, for geological reasons, limited to only a few regions. In those regions the RPB will need to consider whether there is a role for specific RPG. The minerals will include: china and ball clay (South West), silica sand (North West, South East and East Anglia), fuller's earth (South East), potash (North East), fluorspar (East Midlands), salt (North West), gypsum (East Midlands, West Midlands, South East and North West) and peat (South West, North West and Yorkshire and the Humber). There may be others and this is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Coal may also merit attention in RPG for the Midlands, North East, North West and Yorkshire and the Humber. Where appropriate RPBs should liaise with the Coal Authority at an early stage in reviewing RPG. The Authority has an important role to play in making available information in its possession on the location and extent of coal deposits.

12.8 For further guidance on targets and monitoring indicators see [Chapter 16](#).

13. Waste

13.1 A new national strategy for managing waste "[Waste Strategy 2000](#)" was published in May 2000. This sets the policy context for the preparation of all levels of land-use plans on waste management. It builds on proposals consulted on in the draft strategy "[A Way With Waste](#)" and on mechanisms to meet the EC Landfill Directive's targets for reducing the landfill of biodegradable municipal waste in "[Limiting Landfill](#)" (October 1999). It announced that the Government will make municipal waste management strategies mandatory, and will set statutory performance standards for recycling by local authorities in England. National planning guidance on the management of waste is contained in PPG10 "Planning and Waste Management" (September 1999). This provides guidance about how the land-use planning system should contribute to sustainable waste management through the provision of the required waste management facilities in England. In particular, it states the Government's wish that waste management decisions should be based on consideration of the best practicable environmental option for each waste stream.

13.2 The Government also seeks to strengthen planning for waste management at the regional level, by encouraging waste management decisions to take account of the need for regional self-sufficiency and the proximity principle. This means that most waste should be treated or disposed of within the region in which it is produced. The Government therefore wishes to see regional strategies developed for meeting likely demands for waste management. These should form an integral part of RPGs in the same way that the RTSs are, and should be reflected in the more detailed policies of waste development plans.

13.3 PPG10 recommends that each region sets up a Regional Technical Advisory Body (RTAB) to provide advice to the Regional Planning Body on options for the management of waste within the region. This should inform preparation of RPG. Any RTAB's report on options to the RPB, to inform any of the matters set out in paragraph [13.4](#) below, should be publicly available so that it could be referred to at the public examination. Guidance is provided in [Annex B](#) to PPG10 on planning for waste management at the regional level and on the role and composition of RTABs.

13.4 In particular RPG should:

- set regional waste management capacity and disposal targets, including for the recycling and recovery of waste, to promote sustainable waste management, waste minimisation and alternatives to landfill. The targets should be consistent with local authorities achieving statutory performance standards for household waste recycling and composting. In general they should promote the moving of waste up the hierarchy of treatment methods (reduction, reuse, material recycling and composting, energy recovery, and disposal without energy recovery);
- set indicators for the measurement of progress against these targets, which can be regularly monitored;
- in line with the national strategy and the Best Practicable Environmental Option principle, specify the number and capacity of the different types of waste management facilities required, identify their broad locations in the region, supported, where appropriate, by a criteria based approach; and
- assess the need for any facilities to deal with special/hazardous waste in the region.

13.5 For guidance on targets and monitoring indicators see [Chapter 16](#).

14. Energy

14.1 There are two main energy dimensions to RPG; reducing demand for energy and facilitating the provision of renewable energy.

Regional dimension to energy efficiency

14.2 Energy efficiency underpins a number of Government policies and initiatives, both environmental and social, such as the reduction of CO₂ emissions and fuel poverty. An energy efficient pattern of development and energy efficient buildings will form an essential part of the UK's response to international climate change agreements and to sustainable development strategies. Therefore, RPG should promote energy efficiency both in the pattern of development proposed in the spatial development strategy and in the more general advice it may set out for the preparation of development plans. The spatial strategy can assist in the promotion of energy efficiency through encouraging a more efficient use of land and locating major new development in a way which reduces the need to travel, and by facilitating access within and to existing major urban areas by a wider range of modes (see [Chapter 6](#)).

14.3 RPG should also encourage development plans and other regional partners in their investment programmes to promote more local energy-efficient development through such measures as Combined Heat and Power (CHP) and Community Heating schemes. These need to be considered at the earliest stage of development because of the infrastructure required. CHP along with a Community Heating scheme can offer optimum energy efficiency and contribute towards urban regeneration and a sustainable environment. CHP/Community Heating schemes are particularly relevant to assisting an 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.

14.4 RPG can also encourage development plans to take account of the planning dimension of the input fuel used. In rural areas, there may be facilities to access bio-gas or other biofuels.

Renewable energy

14.5 The Department's guidance on "[Preparing Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks](#)" (February 2000) made clear that the Government hopes that these frameworks will elaborate a regional approach to renewable energy. This should include regional renewable energy generation targets flowing from the assessments of each region's capacity to generate electricity from renewable energy sources. These assessments should take account of environmental considerations and advice from the Energy Technology Support Unit. RPG should then assist in the delivery of these targets by defining broad locations for renewable energy development and setting criteria to help local planning authorities select suitable sites in their plans. RPBs should also set targets in draft RPG, where sensible to do so, for the structure plan and unitary development plan areas within the region consistent with the regional targets provided by the frameworks. More positive planning at regional and local levels will contribute to greater public familiarity with, and acceptance of, prospective renewable energy developments.

15. Other Topics

15.1 There are a range of other topics in addition to those set out above which may also need to be addressed, taking account of the circumstances of each region. However, it is important that RPG concentrates on those matters which genuinely need to be addressed at the regional or sub-regional level rather than covering all topics which may be covered in development plans. Among the other topics which are likely to pass this test and which RPBs should consider are air quality and health.

Air quality

15.2 RPBs should take account of regional air quality considerations in reviewing RPGs. The regional or sub-regional air quality management groups, which local authorities have established, can make an important input to this process. The reviews and assessments of air quality, which local authorities have a duty to carry out under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995, can help inform the sustainability appraisal of RPG, and can highlight any regional air quality issues which need to be considered. RPG can assist in addressing these issues and help meet the air quality objectives, as set out in the Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and prescribed in regulations. The main RPG mechanisms will be through advising on the location of regionally significant development, reducing the need to travel and promoting public transport.

15.3 For further guidance on the links between the land-use planning system and policies to improve air quality, regional planning bodies may wish to be aware of the local air quality management (LAQM) guidance booklet, "[Air quality and land use planning](#)" (.pdf file) LAQM.G4(00). The guidance is also available on the Department's website: www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/.

Health

15.4 The need for health impacts to be considered in appraising the draft spatial options and proposed policies has already been mentioned in [Chapter 2](#). Such health impact assessments of regional and sub-regional planning proposals may be best undertaken by an RPG health focus group or by existing health partnership forums at regional level. GOs, working with NHS Executive Regional Offices, will be able to advise and support this work. Some RDAs are already working with NHS Executive ROs to develop a health improvement focus within regeneration work and these forums will be valuable to RPBs.

15.5 Of particular relevance to RPBs will be the local Health Improvement Programmes (HImPS) which set out the strategic programmes for health care and health improvement developed by the local NHS (health authority, hospital trusts and primary care groups and trusts), local authorities and the local community. RPBs may be able to identify common regional and sub-regional objectives and may wish to contribute to HImP development, via GOs and NHS Executive ROs, to ensure joined up planning arrangements are in place. RPBs, in discussion with relevant stakeholders, and in particular health authorities and health trusts, should identify the preferred broad locations for hospitals where there is a need for new regional facilities consistent with the Government's national NHS Plan and HImP. This should help ensure a balanced distribution and the facilities should ideally be located within the urban areas in locations well served by public transport and accessible by all modes.

15.6 RPBs which are operating within any part of a Health Action Zone (HAZ) boundary will also want to ensure they are familiar with HAZ programmes. HAZs are multi agency partnerships which

are undertaking whole system activity over 7 years to tackle the root causes of illhealth and modernise services in the most deprived part of England. Programmes, amongst other things, include activity to reduce unemployment, improve housing and social infrastructures. Details about location of HAZs and their individual programmes can be found on website www.haznet.org.uk.

The [publications home page](#) contains information on how and where you can obtain publications produced by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

16. Monitoring And Review

16.1 An essential feature of new style RPG is that both its implementation, through development and local transport plans and other means, and its real world outputs should be monitored. In this way a check can be kept on whether the strategy is working and if any changes are necessary to it. General and unquantified policies should be avoided and systematic use should be made of quantified regional and sub-regional targets that provide the benchmark for RPG success. In setting targets and indicators, RPBs should have regard to the aims and objectives set out in the regional sustainable development framework and to the sustainability appraisal and the predicted impacts assessed in it (see [Chapter 2](#) above). There should be a clear link between these and the draft strategies' objectives, the draft policies, implementation programmes (including delivery through development plans and local transport plans) and the proposed output targets and related indicators.

Output targets and indicators

16.2 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, principally local planning and local highway authorities. These output targets and indicators will be central to the RPB's ability to check that the strategy is being implemented as intended through these bodies. There should be sufficient consistency in approach between regions to enable inter-regional comparisons to be made. To facilitate this, the main topics for which output targets and related indicators should be considered are:

- economic development and regeneration - e.g. land developed or safeguarded in priority areas for development or regeneration as opposed to elsewhere in the region, including for cluster development;
- housing - e.g. regional and sub-regional rates of housing provision; recycling targets, i.e. the development of previously-developed as opposed to greenfield sites; densities; variety of housing types and mix of sizes;
- transport - e.g. car-parking and accessibility standards for major development sites;
- retail and leisure - e.g. provision of enhanced regional or sub-regional facilities in city/town centres;
- biodiversity and nature conservation - e.g. enhancement of existing and re-creation of declining habitats of regional or sub-regional importance; community forest cover; creation of strategic green open spaces in the urban areas;
- the coast - e.g. enhancing the biodiversity, natural character and landscape quality of the coast by specified dates; minimising development along the undeveloped coast;
- minerals - e.g. the volume of aggregate production in each MPA; use of recycled/secondary materials as aggregates;
- waste - e.g. number of waste management facilities developed or allocated in development plans, by nature (e.g. for the recycling and recovery of waste; and other alternatives to landfill) and capacity, by particular dates;
- renewable energy - e.g. the capacity of new renewable energy sources given planning permission; and
- previously developed land - e.g. extent of reclamation of previously-developed land.

16.3 These targets may need to distinguish between rural and urban areas as appropriate. For example, output targets for rural development and countryside character might include land developed or safeguarded in rural regeneration areas as opposed to other rural parts of the region; accessibility to services and employment by mode;

16.4 Ideally only one indicator should be chosen for each output target in order to make data collection and handling more manageable.

Contextual indicators

16.5 RPBs should also consider identifying contextual indicators which help to assess the performance of the strategies in achieving changes in regional outcomes which will only to a limited extent have been influenced by RPG. These indicators may also assist understanding of the evolving context in which the strategies operate. Examples of these contextual indicators include:

- economy - e.g. GDP per head, jobs created; growth of SMEs and business formation rates; commercial and industrial property prices;
- housing - e.g. house prices and affordability of housing; sharing; homelessness and vacancy rates;
- transport - e.g. air quality; overall change in traffic levels;
- modal split, particularly proportions of trips by foot, cycle, cars and public transport; road, rail and water borne freight;
- retail and leisure - e.g. trends in development of town centre versus out-of-town retail floorspace, type of town centre retail provision and provision of sports and leisure facilities;
- rural development - e.g. diversification from agriculture;
- biodiversity and nature conservation - e.g. changes in number of regionally distinctive species or areas of regionally distinctive habitats;
- the coast - e.g. trends in marine quality;
- minerals - e.g. use of alternatives to land won aggregates; quantities of aggregates imported into the region;
- waste - e.g. proportion of waste going to landfill;
- renewable energy - e.g. trends in application of CHP technology;
- scale of deliverable renewable resource; and
- natural resource and social indicators - e.g. river quality;
- conservation of water resources and social deprivation; and
- health - e.g. morbidity and mortality rates, trends in accidents, asthma in children, mental ill health, cancer, coronary heart disease.

16.6 The Department will shortly be issuing good practice guidance on RPG targets and indicators based on work produced for the Department by ECOTEC. The guide takes account of other Government advice on setting targets which RPBs may also wish to have regard to. This includes the approach taken in "[Tackling Congestion and Pollution](#)" (DETR, January 2000), the housing monitoring advice in PPG3 (DETR, April 2000), the core set of sustainable development indicators

in "[Quality of Life Counts](#)" (Government Statistical Service/DETR December 1999) and the indicators set out in the guidance on RDAs' economic strategies (DETR, February 1999).

Local government PSA targets

16.7 In the light of both these output and contextual indicators, the RPBs will be able, amongst other things, to keep track of progress towards those targets set in the Local Government Public Service Agreement which are relevant to RPG. The Government relies on local authorities and their partners to deliver these targets. The current waste, housing, planning and transport targets, published in the PSA White Paper of July 2000, include:

- enable 17% of household waste to be recycled or composted by 2004;
- ensure that all social housing meets set standards of decency by 2010, by reducing the number of households living in social housing that does not meet these standards by a third between 2001 and 2004; with most of the improvements taking place in the most deprived local authority areas as part of a comprehensive regeneration strategy;
- reduce congestion on the inter-urban trunk road network and in large urban areas in England below current levels by 2010 by promoting integrated transport solutions and investing in public transport and the road network;
- increase bus use in England (measured by the number of passenger journeys) from 2000 levels by 10% by 2010, while at the same time securing improvements in punctuality and reliability;
- double light rail use in England (measured by the number of passenger journeys) by 2010 from 2000 levels;
- 60% of new housing should by 2008 be provided on previously developed land and through conversion of existing buildings. Brownfield land will be reclaimed at a rate of over 1,100 hectares per annum by 2004 (reclaiming 5% of current brownfield land by 2004 and 17% by 2010).

Monitoring arrangements

16.8 The regional monitoring arrangements will need to make full use of the monitoring machinery already established by local planning and highway authorities so that local monitoring feeds into the regional machinery and common data is used. The regional machinery could also be linked as appropriate to the Regional Observatories, where they exist, and consider arrangements for defining, collecting and using contextual indicators.

16.9 Before issuing RPG the Secretary of State will expect the RPB to provide him, via the GO, with details of the proposed monitoring arrangements if they are not set out in the draft RPG. In particular, the Secretary of State will need to be satisfied that the RPB has established a monitoring and review mechanism, with member local authorities and other bodies as appropriate, that can respond sufficiently quickly to any adverse impacts of the strategy (see the plan, monitor and manage approach in [Chapter 5](#)). Regular monitoring reports of progress in relation to targets and indicators should be produced on an annual basis if possible and made publicly available, including on the RPB's website. Rather than having a fixed and arbitrary review cycle for RPG it is more appropriate for selective reviews of the more urgent issues to be triggered by the results of this monitoring.

Amendment or review of RPG

16.10 Both additions/amendments to and selective review of RPG in response to a monitoring report should be capable of being produced under a faster track process than that outlined in

[Chapter 2](#). Where a change is proposed the RPB should discuss with the GO the best way of handling it and the timetable consequences. Where a minor change is proposed which would have no significant effect on the rest of the spatial strategy, then RPG can be amended and the only issue will be whether the change will need to be considered at a public examination. Where the change would have strategic implications, a review of the relevant features of the spatial strategy may be necessary. In this case although many of the stages outlined in [Chapter 2](#) might have to be gone through, some might still be omitted, depending on the scale, complexity and degree of controversy of the revised sections. The Secretary of State, for example, might take the view that the degree of change proposed, the extent of public consultation already carried out, the degree to which the issues have been examined in the recent past, and the nature of the objections, are such that a public examination would not be warranted. Before taking a decision not to carry out a public examination, the Secretary of State will consult the RPB, and other regional stakeholders as appropriate.

Annex A

Guide To Public Examinations Into Regional Planning Guidance

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Public Examinations Of Draft Regional Planning Guidance: A Guide For Participants

Introduction

1. Whilst it remains the responsibility of the Secretary of State to issue Regional Planning Guidance (RPG), regional planning bodies now have more responsibility and accountability in deciding, in co-operation with other regional stakeholders, the most sustainable way of meeting the planning needs of their regions. An important feature of the new arrangements for finalising RPG is the holding of a public examination into draft RPG once that has been submitted by the regional planning body to the Secretary of State. The term "regional planning body" is used throughout this guide to refer to the regional organisation or association which is in the lead in the production of draft RPG. This may be a solely local authority body or a body which has other stakeholders represented on it, such as a Regional Chamber.

2. The only possible exception to the need for a public examination will be in the case of an addition/amendment or possibly a partial review of RPG. In these cases the Secretary of State may take the view that the degree of change proposed, the extent of public consultation already carried out, the degree to which the issues have been examined in the recent past and the weight of objections are such that a public examination would not be warranted. Before taking a decision not to carry out a public examination, the Secretary of State will consult the regional planning body and other regional stakeholders as appropriate.

3. The lead responsibility for organising the public examination falls to the relevant Government Office or Offices (referred to as the "GO" hereafter), in liaison with the regional planning body. The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (referred to as the "Department" hereafter) will pay for the hire of accommodation, the payment of fees and expenses of the Chair, the payment of the Panel Secretary and Programme Officer and such other costs which are reasonably incurred by the GO and agreed with the Department within the budget ceiling set by the Department for its payment of public examination costs.

4. This guide sets out the non-statutory procedures which will be followed and practical advice for participants at the public examination. The main stages in the public examination process, with an indicative timetable, are set out in [appendix \(i\)](#).

Purpose of a public examination

5. The main purpose of a public examination of draft RPG is to provide an informal opportunity for the discussion and testing, in public and before a Panel appointed by the Secretary of State, of selected matters (see [paragraphs 13 to 15](#) below) arising from consideration of the draft guidance. This will provide the main basis on which the Secretary of State can decide whether any changes need to be made to the draft guidance before it is issued by him or her as RPG. Therefore, a public examination into RPG is not an examination of the whole of the submitted proposals, nor is it a hearing of all objections. It will ensure there is public debate on selected issues where an examination could usefully provide further information and examine the mutual compatibility of draft policies with particular reference to sustainable development objectives. It will test the justification for the selected proposals and policies. Together with the resulting report of the Panel into those issues, it will significantly increase the transparency of the process by which draft RPG is turned into final guidance.

Appointment of Panel

6. The Planning Inspectorate will normally appoint the Chair and other members to the Panel at least seven months prior to the public examination. The short list of possible Chairs will be derived from the Panel of chairmen/chairwomen appointed to conduct structure plan EIPs and public examinations into RPGs. The Chair will be an independent person with a wide range of relevant

experience. All contact between him/her and the regional planning body and the GO should be through the Panel Secretary or the Programme Officer once they are appointed.

7. It may be sufficient for the Panel to consist of the Chair and one or more Planning Inspectors. However, a technical assessor may also be needed to provide specialist expertise if there are areas where the Chair or Inspector may not have relevant knowledge and experience. For example, this may be necessary in order to assess the adequacy of the sustainability appraisal supporting the draft guidance or technical information which has been submitted.

Appointment of Panel Secretary and Programme Officer

8. The GO will appoint, following public advertisement, a Panel Secretary and a Programme Officer as soon as practicable after an indicative date for a public examination is known and normally before the draft RPG is submitted to the Secretary of State. This should normally be at least six months prior to the public examination. The Chair should be consulted on both appointments.

9. The Panel Secretary's duties include the provision and commissioning of briefing for the Panel, dealing with all correspondence on behalf of the Chair, and assisting the Panel in the preparation of its report. As soon as he/she is appointed, the regional planning body and the GO should each nominate a lead officer or officers for him/her to liaise with. Selection of matters for discussion and participants at the Public examination is for the Panel taking into account advice from the regional planning body and the GO via the Panel Secretary. It is the responsibility of the Panel Secretary to examine representations in order to advise the Chair and the other members of the Panel on the matters to be selected. The Panel Secretary, the GO and the regional planning body will need to see all the representations. The use of the term "representations" in this guide refers to both representations in favour of and objections to the draft RPG. A specification of the Panel Secretary's duties is at [appendix \(ii\)](#).

10. The Programme Officer will manage all the arrangements for the public examination and assist the Panel on administrative matters. A specification of the Programme Officer's duties is at [appendix \(iii\)](#). The GO will also provide the Secretary and the Programme Officer with adequate clerical support to help them discharge their functions quickly and efficiently. This would normally be at least an administrative officer and a team of two administrative officers and an executive officer may be needed during the public examination. The Planning Inspectorate may also appoint one or more of its planning assistants or employ consultant Inspectors to work with the Panel secretariat in analysing statements and providing summaries for the Panel before and during the public examination.

11. The Panel Secretary, the Programme Officer and any planning assistants or consultant inspectors work under the direction of the Panel Chair. For the duration of their appointment they should be seen as officers of the public examination. The planning assistants or consultant inspectors are appointed by the Planning Inspectorate to assist the Panel. The Panel Secretary and the Programme Officer are recruited for the examination and should have suitable administrative experience. They should not be current or recent members of the GO or Department nor local authority planning department staff in the area covered by the draft RPG. Nor should they in any other way have been connected with the preparation of the draft RPG or have a vested interest in its outcome.

Press notice of Panel appointments

12. When publishing draft RPG, the regional planning body in consultation with the GO should issue a letter inviting representations and a press notice. These should clarify the status of the document and summarise its key features. They should explain that the purpose of this consultation is to inform the public examination, invite responses to the Panel Secretary, announce the appointment of the Chair and other Panel members, and refer to the purpose and approximate timing of the public examination. This would put the draft RPG in context and would be made well in advance of the publication of the list of matters and participants (see [paragraph 21](#) below).

Selection of matters for examination

13. It is the responsibility of the Panel to select matters that it considers ought to be examined and which it will then report upon to the Secretary of State. In doing so, the Panel will be advised by the Panel Secretary. The Secretary should look at all representations and provide the Panel with a written analysis of them together with a reasoned justification for the selection of those matters which he or she recommends for consideration at the examination. This should also explain why any topics of significant controversy are proposed to be omitted. In preparing this analysis and recommendations the Secretary should look to the regional planning body and the GO for advice through the nominated officer arrangements (see [paragraph 9](#) above). Similarly the GO and the RPB should be consulted on the preliminary list of matters.

14. Close examination of representations will reveal what matters need to be covered, but they should normally include those which arise from:

- (i) representations which have been made about the adequacy of particular policies and proposals and their justification;
- (ii) issues involving significant controversy;
- (iii) conflicts between draft RPG and national policies;
- (iv) tensions between draft RPG and regional strategies for adjoining regions or of other regional stakeholders; and
- (v) internal inconsistencies in the draft RPG or, in the case of a partial review of RPG, between the new or up-dated policies and proposals and the remainder of the document.

15. The list of matters should be drafted as precisely as possible. The reason for selecting each matter and the ground to be covered in the discussion should be made clear. It will often help to steer the discussion in the right direction if the selected matters are drafted in the form of questions. The public will have an opportunity to comment upon the list of selected matters (see [paragraph 21](#) below).

Selection of participants

16. As the public examination is directed to the discussion of selected matters, and not to the hearing of all representations, individual objectors do not have an automatic right to appear. Participants have to be invited. As with the list of matters, the Panel should draw up the list of participants taking into account advice from the regional planning body and the GO via the Panel Secretary.

17. In general, the choice of participants will flow from the matters selected for examination. The main criterion for selecting participants will be the significance of the contribution they can be expected to make to the discussion, having regard to their knowledge and expertise and/or the views they have already expressed. The Panel will need to ensure that it does not invite so many participants as to preclude meaningful debate.

18. As the public examination is not a forum for hearing all representations, there is no need to invite all those who objected to the proposals. Nor will it normally be necessary or appropriate to invite everyone who objected or made representations in respect of the selected matters. The Panel will need to ensure that it invites sufficient participants to ensure an effective examination of the strategic issues. This may involve inviting participants who have not made representations in order to contribute to an understanding of the strategic issues. The aim should be to select participants who between them represent a broad range of view-points and have a relevant contribution to make thereby enabling an equitable balance of differing viewpoints to be achieved in discussion. These would include, as appropriate, the following: the regional planning body and possibly adjoining regional planning bodies, the GO, Government departments, the Regional Development Agencies, business and commercial organisations, environmental organisations, women's groups, private interest groups or individuals. The regional planning body and the GO will always need to be represented (probably for each matter) and normally the RDA would be invited as well. Normally one would expect member local authorities to be represented by the regional planning body. However, exceptionally, there may be occasions when a representative or representatives of groups of local authorities may need to be invited in view of the matters to be discussed. Where there are matters which cut across regional boundaries the Panel will need to obtain the views of neighbouring regional planning bodies and in such cases one would normally expect them to be invited to the public examination.

19. The GO and, where appropriate, the Department and possibly other Government Departments, will need to be invited to explain relevant national policy and other factual information such as the basis of the national household projections. Government officials should not, however, be called upon to explain the merits of government policies. The public will have the opportunity to comment upon the list of those invited to participate (see [paragraph 21](#) below).

Participants' expenses

20. The Department will meet travel and subsistence claims from any private individuals invited and appearing on their own behalf, (not as a representative of an organisation or as a participant's adviser), and from representatives of voluntary organisations who can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the relevant GO that they are unpaid volunteers. In the latter cases, letters from the voluntary organisations concerned will be required to verify this.

Publication of list of matters and participants

21. When the preliminary list of matters and participants has been finalised, the Panel Secretary will arrange for it to be available for public inspection and give notice by local or national advertisement, allowing an opportunity for those who wish to send written comments on the list a period of 28 days in which to do so. The advertisement should include the names of the Chair and the other Panel members as well as the date and place of the public examination. It should be published 12 weeks in advance of the public examination. Where possible the announcement should provide an indicative timetable for the consideration of the selected matters.

22. Following the 28 day consultation period, the Panel Secretary will then consult the nominated officers from the regional planning body and GO, having copied both all the representations received on receipt. The Panel Secretary will then advise the Panel and arrange for the publication of an amended list of matters and participants to be advertised at least 4 weeks before the public examination. This will be the final list of matters although the Panel may invite additional participants before or during the examination.

23. The list should also be sent by the Panel Secretary to the selected participants together with an invitation to them to take part. This will give them an opportunity to confirm that they wish to attend, and (for those who had previously made representations) to consider whether they need to provide a further statement specifically directed at the selected matters. This will be essential where the invited participant has not yet made representations on the draft RPG. Interested parties who were not invited to the public examination may also wish to submit statements in connection with the selected matters. All statements should be as brief and to the point as reasonably practicable. The Panel should set a word limit of 2,000 words per issue or such other limit as it may consider necessary.

24. All statements and any supporting documents should be submitted no later than 4 weeks in advance of the public examination. If submitted later, the Panel, save where they are in response to a request from it, will not normally be able to take them into account. Participants should provide sufficient copies, as prescribed by the Panel, of submitted statements and supporting documents for circulation to other participants before the public examination begins. Circulation of documents will also be assisted by the Panel Secretariat circulating e-mail addresses of participants or preferably by itself placing any electronic copies of documents received on the internet. The Panel, for obvious reasons, cannot consider copyright material. The Panel will expect participants to have read the documents relevant to a particular session and the examination will proceed on the assumption that they have done so.

Accommodation

25. An early search should be made for suitable accommodation as soon as it is clear when a public examination is to be held. The general rule should be to fix a single location, convenient to participants and with good access to public transport.

26. The accommodation should be adequate to facilitate a "round table" discussion together with public seating (see [paragraph 43](#) below on the conduct of the examination). It should comprise a hall or room where the main discussion between the Panel and the participants can take place and where members of the public and the press will be able to observe. Adequately equipped ancillary rooms will be necessary in the form of a large room for the secretariat (since the programme officer will need clerical support during the examination) with possibly a separate room for the Panel Secretary, a room for the Panel to retire to and one or more rooms for participants' discussions. Suitable copying and IT facilities will be needed in the secretariat room. A reception point will also be needed. Security storage should be made available for Panel papers. If possible, public telephones for the use of participants should also be available. There should be ready and convenient access for disabled people.

27. A table and seating may be necessary for the press. It should be situated near the door so that they can come and go without disturbing the proceedings.

28. Provision should also be made for a document room which should be accessible to the public. It should contain a copy of the draft guidance, supporting material including the environmental or sustainability appraisal, copies of representations and any subsequent clarifications and briefing to the Panel. It would also be helpful to include copies of PPG 11, other relevant planning policy guidance notes, Circulars and White Papers.

29. Photocopying facilities should be readily available, and a reasonable charge may be made to defray the cost of copying. The Panel may decide to make documents available electronically as well as in hard copy form.

Public address system and recording equipment

30. A good public address or amplification system is essential for the efficient operation of the public examination proceedings. It should be linked to recording equipment so that a full recording of the proceedings can be made available to the Panel and subsequently made available for public purchase.

31. Participants should be asked to announce themselves each time they speak so that they can be identified on the recording.

Notes for participants

32. 'Notes for Participants' comprising information which participants will need to know, or will find helpful, about the conduct of and arrangements for the public examination should be prepared by the Programme Officer in consultation with the Chair. They should specify the dates for submission of documents and final statements ([paragraph 24](#) above refers) and refer to the conduct of the examination (see [paragraph 43](#) below). They can usefully cover a wide range of other matters, such as the location of the public examination, public transport access and any car parking and other facilities, the provision for recording the proceedings, and the programme for the public examination. The Notes should also deal with the eligibility of participants for expenses (see [paragraph 20](#) above). If possible, the Notes should be sent out before the first preliminary meeting (see below) so that the Chair can refer to them. Any new participants should be given a copy of the Notes with their invitations.

Preparations for a public examination

(a) Preliminary Meetings

33. The Chair may wish to call two preliminary meetings. The first should be 12 weeks before the start of the public examination to coincide with publication of the preliminary list of matters. The second should be 5 weeks in advance of the examination. A note of each meeting, and of any action to be taken as a result, should be made publicly available. It should be prepared by the Panel Secretary and approved by the Chair. The first meeting will enable the Chair, in the light of the preliminary list of matters, to invite appropriate participants to consider whether there are any matters of fact which they can resolve before the public examination. If they are able to resolve any matters participants should report back to the Panel Secretary at least 7 weeks before the date of the public examination. Participants may also be encouraged to agree on what they consider to be the main issues or areas of disagreement in relation to the preliminary list of matters. The Planning Inspectorate has piloted a mediation service which has proved successful. Consideration is now being given to making it available to participants as part of the future examination process, possibly around the time of publication of the preliminary list of matters. A member of the Panel may also be available, if time permits, to chair pre-public examination meetings to help resolve such matters and agree data. This will assist the finalisation of the list of matters and participants some 6 weeks before the examination and help focus discussion at the public examination on the main issues in dispute. The Chair by reference to the Notes for Participants will also be able to outline the next steps before the start of the public examination and any key arrangements for the examination which it may be helpful to refer to at that stage.

34. The main purposes of the *second meeting* are to let participants and the press know in more detail how the examination will be conducted, to answer questions from participants about problems or uncertainties which have not been resolved and to outline the programme for the examination. Both meetings should be open to the press as well as the public.

35. It will often be helpful for the Panel Secretary to write to participants (on behalf of the Panel) setting out the particular issues to be discussed under the various selected matters and those aspects on which the Panel would particularly like further information.

36. It is preferable (though not essential) that the same venue should be used for the preliminary meetings and the public examination. The Panel Secretary should inform the participants about the preliminary meetings at least 2 weeks before they are due to be held. They will need to be advertised for the benefit of press and public.

(b) Briefing the Panel

37. It is important that the public examination discussions should be properly focused and that the Chair and other members of the Panel should play a positive part in the proceedings. To do this the Panel will require thorough background briefing. Some of this may be provided directly by the Panel Secretary. However, the Panel is likely to commission written briefing from others through the Panel Secretary. In particular this is likely to be from the GO and the regional planning body. This briefing should be agreed between them, where it is sensible and reasonably practicable to do so in the time available, although there may be issues where separate briefs are necessary. It is also sensible for both bodies to provide background briefing on matters of fact before being asked by the Panel Secretary given the initial unfamiliarity of the Panel with the region and its spatial planning issues.

38. Any such briefing should be made publicly available in the document room (see [paragraph 28](#) above) and it may be appropriate to circulate some or all of the briefing to interested participants before the start of the public examination. The Panel Secretary may also be asked by the Chair or other Panel members to provide briefing on suggested issues needing further probing. The Panel may also require agreed position statements on factual matters that have been agreed between participants in advance of the public examination where this has not happened following the first preliminary meeting ([paragraph 33](#) refers). This will avoid unnecessary time being taken up in agreeing these matters at the examination.

(c) Panel Tours

39. The Panel may decide to make tours of the area to give themselves a general feel for areas within the region where key issues have been raised and to allow them to see any broad locations which are likely to feature in discussion. As well as being accompanied by members of the Panel Secretariat, the Panel may also decide that the GO and RPB should also accompany them to point out matters of fact and a note should be kept of these and made publicly available on request.

Public Examination Timetable

40. The need for an efficient and expeditious public examination should be balanced against the need for a thorough discussion of the selected matters. The aim should be to ensure that participants feel satisfied that they have had a fair hearing and that the Panel has given serious consideration to their statements and points of view.

41. The Panel and its supporting staff will have a considerable amount of work to do before and after each day's session. Since an RPG public examination is likely to last at least two weeks, the Programme Officer is likely to limit the programme to 4 days a week, arranging discussions in half-day units where possible.

42. To speed the production of the Panel Report, it is likely that the Panel will spend time each evening discussing their interim conclusions on the day's proceedings. The programme will be scheduled to finish early enough to allow time for this evening work.

Conduct of a public examination

43. It is important that the public examination is conducted in an informal manner to create the right atmosphere for discussion. If possible a round table arrangement should be followed. Debate of the issues rather than the reading out of prepared position statements should be encouraged, particularly since written statements should have been circulated well before the examination (see [paragraph 24](#) above). The Panel should encourage discussion on the key points of contention in relation to each issue and sub-issue identified in the list of matters. In exploring these points the Panel will need to go beyond submitted material and lead the debate. The Panel should, therefore, pursue 'inquisitive chairing' rather than allow a general airing of views which would not be a productive use of examination time. Some participants may wish to present their views on the selected matters through an agent or adviser. However, it is essential that this does not undermine the informal nature of the public examination. Legal representation should not be necessary. Formal legal advocacy and cross-examination is inappropriate to an informal "round table" type discussion. The Notes for Participants should make this clear. In conducting the discussion the Panel should ensure there has been sufficient discussion of the selected topics and sufficient information obtained so that properly informed recommendations can be made about them.

44. Following an introduction by the Panel, the regional planning body or lead objector should be asked to start the discussion on a selected matter. Exceptionally, if in relation to a selected matter there are issues of contention between the member authorities of a regional planning body, it may be necessary to have representatives of the relevant groups of authorities present their differing views to the Panel rather than seeking a single view from the regional planning body itself. It may be helpful if the Panel encourages groups of participants to meet away from the main table during breaks in proceedings to meet informally and resolve differences.

45. Written statements should have been circulated well before the examination (see [paragraph 24](#) above) and will not normally need to be read out at the examination. Every effort should be made by the participants not to introduce new material during the examination and the Panel may refuse to accept it if in its view it would impose an unacceptable burden on the proceedings given the lack of time which the Panel and other participants have to consider it. However, there may be occasions where the Panel needs additional information to be provided to enable it to complete its consideration of a matter.

46. In carrying out the examination and in reporting to the Secretary of State, the Panel will need to have regard to the guidance provided in this PPG on the procedures for preparing and the content and format of RPG.

47. The examination should be open to the press and where reasonably practicable space should be provided so that the public can attend.

Adjournment or postponement of a public examination

48. Exceptionally the Panel may decide that the public examination should be adjourned or even postponed. For example, this may be necessary where important new information comes to hand during the examination requiring consideration by the Panel and participants prior to discussing the related matter at the examination. This could include new factual information or new national planning policy guidance.

49. The Panel will need to take a view on whether the new information can be readily taken into account by itself and the relevant parties without an adjournment, whether an adjournment of a few weeks would significantly facilitate the public examination or whether the new information is so extensive in its implications for the draft guidance that it could not properly be taken into account without a new draft being prepared and consulted upon. The Panel may even decide that the information should be set aside and considered in the next review of RPG. In forming its view the Panel should provide participants and the GO, even where the latter is not a participant, with an opportunity to comment.

Preparing the Panel's report

50. The Panel members have overall responsibility for the preparation of the report on the issues discussed at the examination, although they may wish to be assisted by the Panel Secretary in its drafting. It is for the Chair to decide to what extent he/she requires the assistance of the Panel Secretary in preparing the report. The Chair's formal letter of appointment will make it clear that the Panel report is expected to be completed and signed within a short period of the close of the public examination. The aim should normally be to complete the report two months after the end of the public examination although this will naturally depend on the length and complexity of the public examination. The report should be succinct and centred on recommendations, where possible in the form of textual amendments to the draft RPG. The necessary justification should be given linked to key representations made either before or during the examination. There is no need for the Panel report to provide a detailed account of the representations made not least because a full taped recording of proceedings is available (see [paragraph 30](#)). It is helpful if the report contains an executive summary in the form of a list of all the recommendations.

51. The report should be sent to the GO who will receive it on behalf of the Secretary of State. The GO will then arrange for its publication in hard form and on the Internet. At that stage the GO will send copies to the regional planning body and other participants at the public examination so that it is available to everyone at the same time. Additional copies will be available for purchase. A press notice will also be issued to explain the status of the report and to outline the remaining stages of the process.

Handling of the Panel's report

52. Representations are not invited on the Panel report prior to publication of the Secretary of State's proposed changes. Nor will Ministers or officials be able to enter into correspondence on possible changes to the draft RPG in the light of the Panel report prior to publication of the proposed changes. To do so would undermine the examination process and be prejudicial to other participants.

53. The Panel report will form an important basis for the Secretary of State in considering what changes, if any, to make to the draft RPG. The Secretary of State's proposed changes to the draft RPG will then be published (including on the Internet) with a reasoned statement of the decisions, allowing eight weeks for comment. In commenting on the proposed changes, reference may, of course, be made to the Panel report. The reasoned statement will not only explain the main changes made but also where the Secretary of State has decided not to make changes recommended by the Panel unless they are very minor. Copies of the report and statement will be sent to participants in the public examination and made available to anyone else on request.

54. When publishing the proposed changes, the Secretary of State may indicate policies or proposals where advice from the RPB and other participants would be particularly welcome. Exceptionally, the GO or Department may then wish to hold meetings or otherwise contact the RPB

and certain other participants as appropriate, in two sets of circumstances. Firstly, where the Panel had insufficient evidence on certain matters which were left unresolved in its report. Secondly, where the changes proposed by the Secretary of State are such that further information is required to assess whether they could be effectively applied. Publicly available minutes of such meetings or notes of the outcomes of other contacts should be kept. Where there has been such selective contact, and depending on its nature and outcome, a further consultation period may be necessary in order to give others an opportunity to comment. The above-mentioned notes and minutes should be made available as part of this process.

55. In making changes to the draft RPG, the Secretary of State will need to take account of all representations made and not just those considered at the public examination and reported on by the Panel. There may be changes which the Secretary of State needs to make which do not relate to matters which the Panel selected for the public examination, though these are likely to be relatively minor.

Appendix (i)

Indicative Timetable

- Appointment of Chair and Inspector/Inspectors (the Assessor/Assessors if needed can be appointed at a later date) - at least 7 months before the public examination.
- Appointment of Panel Secretary and Programme Officer - at least 6 months before the public examination.
- Consultation on draft RPG - normally 12 weeks in duration except where the regional planning body has previously carried out consultation on an earlier draft and the draft submitted to the Secretary of State does not significantly differ from that.
- Panel, in consultation with GO and regional planning body, publishes draft list of matters and participants some 12 weeks in advance of examination and allowing 28 days for comments on the list.
- First preliminary meeting to coincide with the start of consultation on draft list of matters and participants some 12 weeks in advance of examination.
- Revised list published at least 6 weeks before the examination.
- Second preliminary meeting and final preparations for examination some 5 weeks before the examination.
- Public examination - 2 to 4 weeks in duration.
- Panel report - 2 months.
- Secretary of State publishes draft changes with a statement of reasons - 2 months.
- 8 week period for comments on draft changes.
- Exceptionally, where there have been meetings with the RPB or other participants, a further 6-8 week consultation period may be necessary with minutes of any meetings made available.
- Final RPG issued - up to 2 months after the end of the consultation period.

Nb some of the early stages may be carried out in parallel

Appendix (ii)

Panel Secretary

Duties include:

- acting as the point of contact between the regional planning body/GO and the Panel;
- dealing with correspondence on behalf of the Panel Chair;
- examining all representations in consultation with nominated officers in regional planning body and GO to advise the Panel on issues for discussion at the public examination;
- examining comments on published list of matters and participants to advise the Panel;
- commissioning briefing for the Panel;
- preparing notes of the preliminary meetings, and of any action to be taken as a result;
- writing to participants about the topics to be discussed under the selected issues and, if possible, giving a preliminary indication of the likely order or speakers;
- sending participants the "Notes for Participants";
- helping to arrange the Panel tour and accompanying the Panel;
- assisting in the preparation of the Panel's report (for example, by preparing an outline structure) while not being a party to its decisions and recommendations, and
- certifying any claims for expenses from participants.

Note: The Panel Secretary works under the direction of the Chair, and for the duration of his/her appointment should be seen as an officer of the public examination. He or she should have suitable administrative experience but should not be a current member of the GO, Department or local authority planning department in the area covered by the draft RPG. Nor should he/she in any other way have been connected with the preparation of the draft RPG or have a vested interest in its outcome.

Appendix (iii)

Programme Officer

Duties include:

- managing the day-to-day arrangements of the public examination, before and during the proceedings;
- assisting the Panel Secretary as appropriate in examining representations and comments on the published list of matters and participants;
- arranging any Panel tours;
- drawing up a provisional programme and timetable for the proceedings;
- preparing the "Notes for Participants";
- circulating any additional statements prepared by participants;

- recording all documents and plans submitted during the course of the proceedings, and
- informing participants of timetable changes.

Note: The Programme Officer works under the direction of the Chair, and for the duration of his/her appointment should be seen as an officer of the public examination. He or she should have suitable administrative experience but should not be a current member of the GO, Department or local authority planning department in the area covered by the draft RPG. Nor should he/she in any other way have been connected with the preparation of the draft RPG or have a vested interest in its outcome.

Annex B

Guidance On Regional Transport Strategy Topics

Public transport accessibility criteria

1. A key planning objective is to ensure that jobs, retail and leisure facilities and other services are highly accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) should provide a strategic framework by specifying public transport accessibility criteria for development and local transport plans to apply in the detailed planning of regionally or sub-regionally significant levels or types of development. The Department will issue guidance on a broader approach to transport assessment of development proposals, including advice on setting public transport accessibility criteria at the regional level, in 2001.

Strategic approach to parking standards

2. The availability of car-parking is a major influence on the choice of means of transport. RPG has a major role to play in co-ordinating planning policies for the location of development with policies for parking standards and charges. It is vital that the RTS avoids wasteful competition between locations, based around the supply or cost of parking, to the detriment of sustainable development. PPG13 sets out maximum standards for a range of developments above specified thresholds. This should encourage sustainable transport choices and promote development in locations well served by public transport, walking and cycling. Subject to the advice on parking in revised PPG13 when finalised, it may be appropriate for RPBs to consider adopting more rigorous standards. RPG should also help ensure that charges for parking do not damage the competitive positions of other town centres.

Strategic park and ride facilities

3. The Government is keen to encourage park and ride (P&R) schemes which are well-conceived and well-integrated with other measures to reduce the number and length of car journeys and to reduce congestion in urban areas. In some cases, P&R schemes could be of regional or sub-regional significance, and occasionally even of inter-regional importance. This might particularly apply to rail-based parkway schemes targeted at long-distance commuters, or schemes involving the motorway network. Where P&R schemes are of such significance, the RTS will need to advise on the regional or sub-regional criteria which should be taken into account in their planning to ensure the optimum benefit from an integrated planning and transport point of view.

Managing demand

4. The RTS should provide guidance on the regional context for demand management measures which local authorities may include in their local transport plans and development plans. Once the Transport Bill has received Royal Assent, such measures may include workplace parking levy and road-user charging schemes. The Department has established a Charging Development Partnership with local authorities who expressed an interest in introducing charging schemes in their provisional transport plans. This should be a source of advice to other local authorities considering such schemes. In addition to being valuable traffic management tools these schemes also have the potential to be important sources of additional revenue for local authorities to invest in providing greater transport choice. The Government has said that local authorities introducing a scheme, at any point up to 10 years after the enabling legislation has been passed, will be able to keep all the net revenues for at least 10 years after the scheme commences for spending on improvements to local transport. Where such schemes are to be introduced to a significant extent in any region, the

RTS will have a role in advising on any regional priorities for the use of those monies in the interests of a co-ordinated approach across local transport plan boundaries.

5. The following conditions must be met before the Secretary of State will approve any road-user charging or workplace parking levy schemes:

- the schemes must directly help to tackle congestion;
- public transport must be improved to offer motorists choice;
- local people and business must be consulted;
- there must be well thought out plans for spending the net proceeds on improving local transport; and
- the appropriate technology must be in place to make any scheme work.

6. In the meantime a range of other measures is open to authorities. These include enhancing public transport, cycling and walking, steering development to locations accessible to public transport and restraint measures such as on-street parking policies and the allocation of highway space. The RTS should seek to set clear regional objectives and priorities for such policies having regard, inter alia, to the targets set in the National Cycling Strategy published by the Department in 1996. RPBs should also have regard to the Department's advice in "*Encouraging Walking: Advice to Local Authorities*" which was published earlier this year.

7. The RTS has a central role in ensuring that demand management tools are used in ways which avoid wasteful competition between neighbouring urban centres in a region, or between an urban centre and peripheral centres to the detriment of sustainable development. These tools should be used in a way which supports the economic vitality of urban centres rather than undermining them. It is also important that local authorities in the same region and in adjoining regions do not adopt demand management transport policies that are hostile to each other's competitiveness.

Trunk Roads

8. The Roads Review made clear that the priorities for trunk roads are to improve road maintenance, make better use of existing roads by investing in network control, traffic management and safety improvements and tackle some of the most serious immediate problems through a carefully targeted programme of improvements. As part of the Roads Review, the Secretary of State announced a Targeted Programme of 37 schemes to go ahead subject to the completion of any remaining statutory procedures. Since this programme was established following extensive public consultation, RPBs should regard these schemes as a given in the RPG process. Subject to that one reservation, the RPB has an important new function of working with regional partners to consider the objectives and, in broad terms, the regional priorities for managing and improving trunk roads. Minor schemes and maintenance, not of regional or sub-regional importance, would not warrant RPG consideration.

9. To start the process, Annex C of the Roads Review, "[A New Deal for Trunk Roads in England](#)", as well as listing the 37 schemes referred to above, identified schemes on the national network which the RPBs were specifically asked to consider through the RPG process. The multi-modal appraisal, referred to in [Chapter 6](#), has been used to evaluate options since the Roads Review makes clear that non-road solutions should also be assessed.

10. In addition to these scheme specific appraisals, Annex D of the Review proposed a programme of studies to address serious problems on the trunk road network. The final programme of studies, agreed with the RPBs, encompasses both large scale multi-modal studies (MMSs), addressing

problems and looking for solutions across all modes, and more narrowly focused roads-based studies which look for solutions to more localised problems on the trunk road network with the emphasis on solutions which make best use of road infrastructure. The roads-based studies should all have reported by Summer 2001 while the results of the first tranche of MMSs are due by the end of that year.

11. In most regions it was unrealistic to expect the RPBs to take the lead on this initial programme of studies. Therefore, responsibility for managing them rests with the appropriate GO. In cases when the area to be studied covers more than one region, the GO with the main interest takes the lead. For the MMSs the GOs have established steering groups with representatives drawn from RPBs, the Highways Agency, SSRA, Railtrack and other regional partners, including the RDAs and transport operators and user bodies as appropriate. The GOs have taken the lead on appointing consultants to undertake these initial MMSs. In the case of the roads based studies, the GOs have looked to the Highways Agency to carry out the study on its behalf, and to bring in other interested parties as appropriate.

12. From 2001, RPBs will normally be expected to take the lead and commission studies to help develop RPG. In cases where studies relate to issues that cross a number of regional boundaries it may be sensible for the Department, in agreement with the RPBs, either to take the lead centrally or to nominate a particular GO to do so. The studies will address objectives and problems that the RPBs or other stakeholders identify, including the local Network and Customer Services division of the Highways Agency (as the agency responsible for managing the trunk road network).

13. The decision of the Secretary of State about changes to the trunk road programme as a result of the above process will be incorporated in the final RPG. The Secretary of State will indicate

- any changes to the strategic management objectives for the network;
- whether any existing schemes should be withdrawn or replaced by amended schemes;
- whether any new scheme should be added;
- whether any new scheme should be identified as worthy of further study; and
- whether any other proposals should be considered for possible inclusion in the programme.

14. A trunk road scheme has to be worked out before it can be added to the programme. The intention is that the MMS, when taken together with the emerging spatial strategy, would provide sufficient information about the individual options evaluated so as to provide a sound basis for deciding whether or not a particular scheme was worth pursuing. It ought, therefore, to be possible to take a clear decision on scheme entry. The scheme might, nevertheless, still be at a relatively early stage of development and require considerable work by the HA before it is ready for consultation, or the identification of a preferred route. Other proposals which are put forward in RPG, but which are not so well evaluated, might be identified in RPG as being worthy of further study, without commitment as to whether they should be taken forward. Since the Targeted Programme was announced, schemes have already been added by the Secretary of State in response to RPG/RTS reviews.

Road schemes and amendment or review of the RTS

15. There will be road schemes which can be treated as additions/amendments to the RTSs rather than requiring RTS reviews. The Highways Agency may, in exceptional circumstances, wish to propose a major road scheme in advance of the next planned RTS review if this is necessary to meet some pressing objective. However, it is essential to consider whether the proposed scheme is

consistent with and what its impact will be on the existing RTS/RPG, and whether a roads based approach is the right solution in the first place. If these tests are not satisfied the scheme may need to be considered as part of an RTS review and/or an MMS may be needed. Therefore, where the HA proposes such a scheme it should consult the RPB at the earliest opportunity about the impact of the scheme on the RTS/RPG and how best to work with the RPB before submitting to the RPB an analysis of the options.

16. Where the scheme does not have major implications for the rest of the RTS/RPG it can be handled by an addition/amendment to the RTS. The Secretary of State then has to decide whether a public examination is necessary (see Annex A). It may be that, in view of the public consultation already carried out as part of an MMS or road-based study and/or since the issues could be dealt with by a second stage consultation on the favoured route, a public examination is unnecessary. What is essential, however, is that there should have been an opportunity for public involvement.

Where a scheme cuts across more than one Region

17. There will be major road schemes, and indeed other transport proposals, which cut across a number of regions and have major implications for more than one RTS/RPG. If the proposal is predominately in one region then there is clearly a lead RPB and a public examination, if needed, could be held in that region to which other concerned RPBs are invited. However, where a major transport proposal is equally important to more than one region the Secretary of State may decide that the proposal is of such national importance that it does not make sense to handle it through the normal RTS process in one region. The relevant GOs may need to facilitate joint RPB consideration and exceptionally, depending on the impact and importance of the scheme, a public examination just on that proposal.

Local road schemes

18. RPG will set the context for Local Transport Plans. From 2003 there should be a common comprehensive review date of the RTS every five years to inform each new round of LTPs. Individual problems which might require major improvement schemes on local roads (including those on non-core trunk roads subject to "virtual de-trunking") will only need to be addressed in RPG insofar as they raise issues of regional or sub-regional significance and will support the regional spatial strategy.

Railways

19. The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) will provide a national strategic framework for the rail network. In 1999 the shadow SRA provided an assessment of the type and level of service the network should provide. It considered a number of long-term issues including demand, capacity, service levels, performance and investment. It indicated the outputs that Government wants Railtrack to provide for the period to 2006. In the longer term, the SRA will bring together passenger and freight interests, promote better integration and interchange and ensure clear, coherent and accountable planning and regulation of the rail network.

20. The SSRA operates in accordance with Objectives, Instructions and Guidance issued by the Secretary of State and which stress the need for close liaison with RPBs. Accordingly, in preparing the 1999 assessment the SSRA worked closely with the RPBs and had regard to emerging RPG. It is important that the RPBs and other regional stakeholders identify rail infrastructure or service improvements which they consider are important in supporting the regional strategy. These may include proposals which the RPBs consider Railtrack will have a commercial self-interest in implementing and proposals dependent on public sector support. There may also be priorities which

local authorities will be prepared to contribute to and regional priorities which RPBs may press for national funding. In assisting the SRA review its priorities for the rail network and in liaising with Railtrack on its investment priorities, some of the MMSs will be relevant. It is vital that the SRA is fully involved through the RPG process. The SRA will be able to advise on what might be deliverable and liaise as necessary with Railtrack. The SRA will produce a Strategic Plan by the end of 2000 and will keep its strategies updated in subsequent years. RPBs should have regard to the SRA's Plan and any associated strategies in developing RPGs, including in particular the RTSs.

21. The position on rail investment referred to in RPG is not, in principle, any different from that on roads. There will be some specific projects listed in the RTS where the Secretary of State is prepared to secure their delivery. In cases where a firm commitment cannot be made the RTS will be drafted to reflect the level of uncertainty. This will be where there is as yet an insufficient case for these projects to be funded in whole or large part by Government subsidy or the improvements have not yet been negotiated with Railtrack. The availability of Government subsidy (paid through franchisees by the SRA) and the existence of the licensing regime operated by the Rail Regulator give the Secretary of State additional routes for bringing forward schemes of infrastructure improvements which support the implementation of the approved spatial strategy. Funding is also available from the Rail Modernisation Fund, announced in the ten-year transport plan, and from the Rail Passenger Partnership Scheme. The former will make available £7bn over the ten years of the plan and lever in a much greater amount of private capital. It will be a most important source of funding for major projects recognising the long life of assets and the slow growth in cash flows in the rail industry. The latter is targeted at relatively small projects which produce social benefits and offer the greatest opportunities for modal shift and integration with other modes.

Buses

22. Bus services are at the forefront of achieving more sustainable transport patterns, and local transport plans will play an important role in promoting them. Although the RTS role is a limited one in this area, it is important that it goes beyond broad statements of encouragement. RPBs should consider identifying a regional and sub-regional network of public transport routes. Having identified these routes the RTS may be able to advise, for example, on regional or sub-regional priorities for modal interchanges and identify needs for new or expanded intra-regional services in relation to major new planned development in the region. In conjunction with bus and coach operators, the RPBs should consider what guidance needs to be given to authorities in developing their local transport plans on how best to work together to meet the Government's Transport White Paper objectives for sustainable development. Other transport bodies may need to be involved in this, including the Highways Agency since service improvements may have implications for the trunk road network.

Aviation

23. The Transport White Paper made clear that the Government will prepare a UK air transport policy looking ahead some 30 years. This will take account of the Inspector's report on the Heathrow T5 inquiry. The RPBs will be consulted about the implications for regional airports and have been involved in a number of regional air services studies. These have focused on the role of the regional airports, commercial opportunities, and the link between air services, economic growth and regeneration. The findings of the studies are being co-ordinated and audited for consistency as part of the Regional Air Services Co-ordination (RASCO) Study. Once the RASCO work has been completed a series of RAS Consultation Documents presenting options for the development of air services and airports in each of the component regions will be published as part of a major consultation exercise informing the preparation of the Air Transport White Paper. Although the

Transport White Paper does not make specific reference to airports policy in the South East, in early 1999 the Department set in hand a study of airport issues in the South East and East of England. This study will also feed into the preparation of the Air Transport White Paper. RPBs are involved in the consultation process for this study. Future RPG reviews will need to be consistent with the White Paper and in the meantime RPBs should not anticipate or pre-empt national policy.

24. The RTS will also need to consider what regional or sub-regional initiatives can be taken so that surface access to airports is less car dependent. In doing so they will need to work closely with the Airport Transport Forums, involving the airport operators and other related interests, who will be responsible for drawing up strategies with targets for increasing the proportion of journeys to the airport made by public transport. The Department issued guidance in March 2000 on how the forums should be established and on the preparation of these airport transport strategies. Most, if not all, qualifying airports have now established forums.

Freight and Ports

25. Advice on freight is set out in the Government's paper "Sustainable Distribution: A Strategy", published in March 1999, and RPBs should ensure that RTS policies for freight are consistent with the principles set out in it. With the close involvement of the freight operators and other relevant interests, including the SRA, RPBs should ensure that the RTS provides regional strategic advice on an integrated freight distribution network. In particular it should look at the siting of rail/road terminals and port and airport links to rail and inland waterways. In doing so it should help promote the carriage of freight by rail and water. RPBs should also consider whether the RTS can provide guidance on the scope for the development of regional air-freight centres in order to meet local demand and to optimise the contribution of regional airports in the regeneration and competitiveness of their regions, while helping to reduce the need for long-haul road journeys to South East airports. Government policy in relation to shipping is set out in more detail in "British Shipping: Charting A New Course". Its policy on ports will be set out in a forthcoming paper.