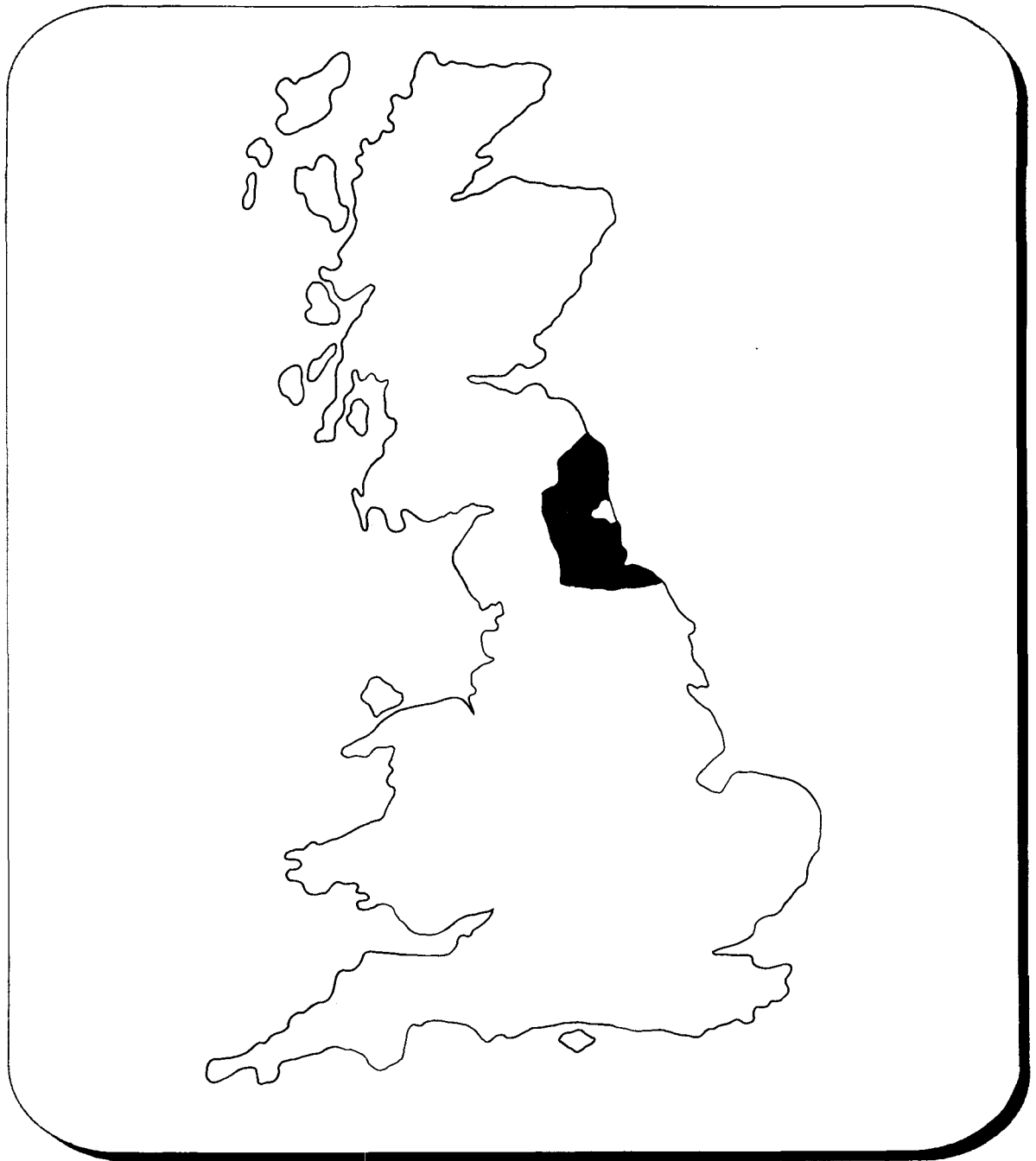

REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR THE NORTHERN REGION



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This regional planning guidance for the Northern Region is provided by the Secretary of State for the Environment to assist the County Councils of Cleveland, Durham and Northumberland in updating their approved County Structure Plans. The guidance is issued in response to advice prepared and submitted to the Secretary of State by the County Councils. Authoritative national planning policy guidance is set out in the planning policy guidance and minerals policy guidance notes and in circulars. This regional guidance should be read alongside those documents. It does not supersede them, but sets out issues specific to the Northern Region. A list of the planning guidance notes and circulars referred to in this Guidance is at Appendix A.

1.2 The primary aim of this guidance is to provide a framework for updating the Structure Plans for the three counties to the year 2006. Any reviews or alterations to the Structure Plans, or their equivalents following local government reorganisation, must have regard to the guidance. The monitoring of this regional planning guidance by the County Councils, or successor bodies, as indicated in the final section, would also allow for the guidance to be reviewed and updated to 2011.

1.3 The main theme of the guidance is that County Councils, through their Structure Plans, should continue to concentrate on the regeneration of the Region's existing urban areas, attracting employment to the area to improve its economic base. At the same time they should continue to pursue policies designed to safeguard the countryside, forests and coastline.

2. THE AREA COVERED

2.1 The guidance covers the county areas of Cleveland, Durham and Northumberland. The Region also includes the five Metropolitan Districts of Tyne and Wear (Gateshead, Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland). Strategic Guidance for Tyne and Wear was issued in April 1989 (Regional Planning Guidance Note No. 1), and Tyne and Wear is not, at present included in this regional planning guidance. Nevertheless, in the longer term, monitoring and review of the guidance will cover the whole of the Region, including Tyne and Wear, and the two sets of guidance will be merged.

2.2 There is a considerable amount of cross-boundary activity between the Metropolitan

Districts and the neighbouring districts in south and west Northumberland and north and east Durham. The Tyneside and Wearside conurbations contain not only a concentration of population but also many economic, social, cultural and tertiary education opportunities which serve a wider area. This regional planning guidance recognises the interrelationships between the Counties and the Metropolitan Districts, and the Secretary of State considers it to be compatible with the published strategic guidance for Tyne and Wear.

2.3 The Region has many attractive features, in particular outstandingly beautiful areas of extensive countryside, much of it upland moors and forest, river valleys and coast. It is rich in wildlife, with the uplands and much of the coast being of international importance for their wildlife heritage. Throughout the area there is a range of market towns, villages and other communities, which offer many opportunities for imaginative but sensitive development.

2.4 This setting offers the opportunity of a high quality lifestyle with relatively short journeys to work, a variety of leisure and shopping possibilities, excellent cultural and education facilities and a strong sense of community support. All these features are highly valued by those living in the area and should help to attract the employment the area needs to improve its economic base. Realising this potential will require a continuing effort to upgrade the environment of the urban areas, towns and villages and the Northumberland and Durham coalfield.

2.5 Map 1 shows the main physical features and population centres in the Region.

3. ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

3.1 Planning for the 'environment' is all-encompassing, ranging from issues as world-wide as global warming, down to detailed attention to the conservation of particular areas or the design of individual buildings. Plans must make adequate provision for development (the new homes and workplaces the nation needs) and at the same time take account of the need to protect the natural and built environment. The Government has made clear its intention to work towards ensuring that development and growth are sustainable. It will continue to develop policies consistent with the concept of sustainable development. The planning system, and the preparation of development plans in particular, can contribute to the objectives of ensuring that development and growth are

sustainable. The sum total of decisions in the planning field, as elsewhere, should not deny future generations the best of today's environment. This should be expressed through the policies adopted in development planning.

3.2 Section 6 of PPG12 gives guidance on how environmental considerations are to be taken into account in development plans. Many other PPGs give guidance on individual aspects of the environment and on issues that need to be taken into account in preparing development plans. Circular 17/91 gives guidance on the planning implications of the water industry's statutory requirements under EC Directives. The National River Authority's "Policy and Practice for the Protection of Groundwater" will have an impact on industrial development, waste disposal and other policies.

Environment Enhancement & Improvement

3.3 The environmental quality of the Region ranges from the very best to the very worst. There is a large amount of derelict land to be reclaimed, issues of waste disposal to resolve, changes in agricultural practices, increasing demands for leisure uses, new forms of mineral extraction, the need to alleviate congestion, and growth in traffic. Some stretches of the coast are seriously polluted by development and tipping of colliery waste on the beaches. Coastal water quality is poor in areas close to the estuaries, and the lower reaches of some of the rivers, notably the River Tees, are heavily polluted. MAFF studies have shown that the Region suffers some of the most acute urban fringe problems in England.

3.4 Structure Plans should contain policies which can improve and extend people's enjoyment of their environment. They should set relevant criteria for developing, protecting and enhancing an attractive built environment. Further advice on design considerations is contained within PPG1, and on the countryside in PPG7.

3.5 Structure Plans should allow Local Plans to propose changes in land use where reclaimed areas and redundant sites offer the opportunity for redevelopment to provide land for new uses and so reduce demand for greenfield sites. The re-utilisation of urban sites for housing, offices and other uses can help to revitalise urban areas, bring facilities closer together and reduce the need to travel. Some reclaimed/redundant areas should be retained for open uses to increase the provision of open space, offer sport and

recreation resources, or to provide or re-establish wildlife conservation sites.

3.6 Structure Plans must set the land-use framework for environmental and leisure management schemes, and reflect existing initiatives. Wildlife corridors, which link sites together and encourage the movement of plant and animal species throughout the region, should be identified, monitored and protected. In South-East Northumberland and East Durham wildlife corridors should link in with those already identified in Tyne and Wear and Cleveland. The County Councils should discuss strategic policies for river corridor areas with the National Rivers Authority so that the NRA's River Management Catchment Plans can be developed in concert with Structure and Local Plans.

3.7 Particular attention should be paid to the continuing need to tackle the problems of the mining areas of East Durham, South-East Northumberland and East Cleveland. Structure Plans should set out the strategic framework for improvement around the urban fringes of the Tyne and Wear conurbation and Cleveland. They should also take account of the major issues of coastal and river protection, and should contain policies to improve areas which are seriously polluted.

Conserving Special Environments

3.8 The Region contains two World Heritage sites, Durham Cathedral/Castle and Hadrian's Wall Military Zone and other areas of national or local significance, including the Northumberland and North York Moors National Parks, The North Pennines and Northumberland Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and Heritage Coasts in Northumberland and Cleveland. Much of the open countryside outside these designated areas is also of a very high landscape quality.

3.9 The Region is also of international and national importance to wildlife. It contains a World Biosphere Reserve at Upper Teesdale National Nature Reserve and internationally important coastal and upland sites either designated as Special Protection Areas under the EC Birds Directive (Holburn Moss, Lindisfarne, The Fame Islands, Coquet Island) or potential Special Protection Areas (Northumberland Shore, Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast, North Pennine Moors and the North York Moors). Lindisfarne, Holburn Moss and the Border (Irthinghead) Mires are sites listed under the

Ramsar Convention. The region also contains 9 National Nature Reserves and currently has 237 Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

3.10 The coast is a major asset for the Region. As noted above, much of the undeveloped coast is of international significance for wildlife. The ports and harbours offer key transportation links to mainland Europe and Scandinavia. New marinas have been developed at Amble and Hartlepool. In contrast some traditional seaside resorts need regeneration, and sections of the coast are despoiled by the tipping of colliery waste.

3.11 Map 2 shows the areas and locations in the Region which carry special designations or protection.

3.12 Structure Plans should contain policies to protect and conserve the World Heritage Sites, National Parks and other special environments and should take into account the intrinsic value of the countryside, areas of townscape, heritage, and archaeological importance, including listed buildings and conservation areas. Further advice is contained within PPG7, PPG16, and in the forthcoming PPGs on Nature Conservation and on Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas.

3.13 Structure Plans should contain policies to protect and conserve World Biosphere sites, designated and potential Special Protection Areas, sites listed under the Ramsar Convention, National Nature Reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Any proposals affecting such sites should be the subject of consultation with English Nature, and the procedures to be set out in the forthcoming PPG on Nature Conservation. Account should be taken of sites of county importance for wildlife and of Local Nature Reserves.

3.14 Structure Plans should show an integrated approach to policies for their coastal areas, developed in consultation with neighbouring strategic planning authorities. In addition to policies to protect and conserve the coastal area within the North York Moors National Park, sites listed under the Ramsar Convention, the Special Protection Areas designated and proposed under the EC Birds Directive and the Heritage Coasts, they should also contain policies for protecting the undeveloped coast and for the improvement and regeneration of the developed and despoiled coast. Further advice is contained in PPG20.

Green Belt & Open Land Policy

3.15 The approved Northumberland and Tyne

and Wear Green Belt lies to the south, west and north-west of Tyneside. There is no Green Belt in the rest of the Region. In Cleveland and south-east Northumberland the objectives of checking urban sprawl, safeguarding countryside, preventing neighbouring towns and villages merging, and assisting in urban regeneration are pursued through policies for setting limits to development and for the retention of green wedges in urban areas and open land between built-up areas. In Durham, these objectives are pursued by a policy of consolidating settlements. All these policies have been approved by the Secretary of State, in his approval of existing Structure Plans.

3.16 In preparing the Second Alteration to their Structure Plan, Northumberland County Council should consider an extension of the Green Belt in south-east Northumberland, compatible with the guidance in PPG2. This should complement the extension of the existing Green Belt which was recommended for consideration by North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council in the strategic planning guidance for Tyne and Wear (RPG1) and was designed to assist urban regeneration within the metropolitan area. On the same basis, and to cover a sufficiently wide area to secure effective protection from development pressures, Durham County Council should examine the case for an extension to the approved Tyne and Wear Green Belt to the south of the Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council area and to the west and south of the Sunderland City Council area.

3.17 In addition to defined Green Belts, it will be important to maintain open land between the towns and villages within Cleveland, Durham and in south east Northumberland. Structure Plans should recognise, maintain and, where necessary, strengthen existing open land and green wedge policies in these areas. Particular attention should be paid to strengthening policies to maintain the separate identity of communities along principal road and rail corridors and to safeguard the character and special setting of the City of Durham.

3.18 Structure Plans should also contain policies to safeguard valuable open land within urban areas from development pressures. Further advice on this is given in PPG17.

Agricultural Land

3.19 Farming is an important sector of the rural economy of the Northern Region and has a fundamental influence on the appearance of the countryside and its nature conservation resource. Over 80% of total land in the Region

is in agricultural use, ranging from high quality grade 2 land on soils with a good arable potential to extensive areas of poor quality land with a much more restricted range of potential farming uses.

3.20 The Region as a whole contains a considerable variety of farming enterprises. There is relatively little horticulture but arable cropping, especially cereals, is characteristic of much of the lowlands, where farms often also have some livestock. Livestock farming dominates poorer land in the western part of the area, but is also widespread elsewhere. Sheep and beef cattle are most important, but there is also a significant number of dairy herds and some pig and poultry units. In the more urbanised parts of the Region, farms are vulnerable to the problems associated with urban fringe farming, notably trespass. This particularly affects livestock farms.

3.21 The environmental importance of traditional grassland farming in the Region has recently been recognised by a major extension of MAFF's Pennine Dales Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) scheme into the northern Pennines. The ESA now includes land in East and West Allendale, the South Tyne Valley, Weardale, Rookhope, Teesdale and Baldersdale/Lunedale.

3.22 The increasing efficiency of agricultural producers and changes in agricultural policy mean that retaining as much land as possible in agricultural use no longer has the same priority. Structure Plan policies for the protection of agricultural land should therefore now be focused on the higher quality best and most versatile land, which in this Region will be grades 2 and 3a. This land is regarded as a long term national resource and considerable weight should be given to protecting it against development.

3.23 Throughout the Region, farmers are under considerable pressure to diversify, because of recent reductions in real income. Farms close to towns and cities may have opportunities linked to nearby urban markets while those in rural locations are often limited to tourism-related projects. Structure Plans should include policies which allow for strengthening the rural economy, in order to help sustain the fabric of farming and the rural communities that depend on it. Further advice on integrating development with protection of the countryside for its own sake is contained in PPG7.

3.24 Structure Plans should recognise the scope for outdoor recreational uses on agricultural land

and for re-using and adapting existing rural buildings for new commercial, industrial, tourism and recreational uses.

Community Forests

3.25 Business plans are being prepared for the creation of the Great North Forest and the Cleveland Community Forest. These are being promoted jointly by the Countryside Commission and the Forestry Commission and, subject to the approval of the business plans, are expected to form valuable new environmental features in the longer term. Agriculture is expected to remain the dominant land use within these forest areas, but the principle of a better environment for people to use, cherish and enjoy will need to be reflected in Structure Plan policies for agriculture; the countryside; nature conservation; mineral extraction and tipping; land reclamation; tourism, sport and recreation and the designation of areas of particular landscape value.

4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

4.1 The Northern Region has suffered from severe job losses as its economy has become less dependent on primary and heavy manufacturing industries. With the introduction of the European Community's Single Market, competition is opening up and having its effect on a wide range of businesses. There is a need to continue to encourage the broadening of the economic base of the Region, including the development of a high productivity, high skills and high technology economy, retaining in the Region graduates from local universities and colleges and increasing the range of talent available to local employers. A number of initiatives are being undertaken with EC funding, such as RENAVAL, RECHAR, the Integrated Development Operations Programme for Durham and Cleveland, South East Northumberland (part of TAWSEN) and for encouraging the development of high technology. There are designated City Challenge areas in East Middlesbrough, Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees.

4.2 A range of employment opportunities and services is provided in market and other towns serving rural areas. Many of these centres have a high environmental quality and the potential to attract inward investment. The more remote rural areas suffer by being distant from the facilities provided in the larger towns and cities. The special economic and social problems of these areas has been recognised by the designation of Rural Development Areas in each of the three counties in Northumberland, East and West Durham and East Cleveland.

4.3 Structure Plan policies for both the urban and rural economy should aim to achieve an increase in the number, range and quality of jobs available to reduce current levels of unemployment and out-migration, as part of a strategy to create a soundly-based and self-sustaining economy for the Northern Region. Structure Plans should set the framework for Local Plans to take account of both the locational demands of business and wider environmental objectives. They should ensure that a satisfactory supply of land is available in a variety of locations, meeting the access needs and travel demands of differing types of development as set out in PPG12 and the draft PPG13. They should also recognize the economic benefits of tourism and leisure activities – see section 8 below. Tourism is already an important industry in the Region, and can contribute positively to other objectives, such as economic development, conservation and urban regeneration.

4.4 The Government believes that the Region contains many sites suitable for Simplified Planning Zones to help secure development or redevelopment. Further advice is contained within PPG5.

4.5 In order to encourage inward investment, Structure Plan policies should enable a variety of ‘prestige’ sites to be reserved in Local Plans for high quality development and for the development and application of modern technology. These locations should be situated in a pleasant environment, be easily accessible by a range of forms of transport, and should include sites suitable for offices and for research and development units. The locational and financial criteria of the Department of Trade and Industry’s Assisted Areas will also be factors to be considered. Consideration should be given to imaginative re-utilisation of existing sites. It is unlikely to be possible to plan ahead for the locational requirements of all potential inward investors, especially single firms seeking very large sites. In order to meet such needs, Structure Plans may therefore set criteria for the release of additional suitable sites which do not conflict with environmental restraints and are in general conformity with other policies.

4.6 Structure Plans should re-assess the land requirements for special and heavy industry. Some of the 800ha of land currently allocated for this type of industry in Cleveland and Northumberland may no longer be needed. Similarly, the amount of land currently reserved for port and port-related uses should be reassessed in the light of possible future development needs, taking into account that such

waterside sites, especially those with deep water frontage, are a unique resource.

4.7 The forthcoming PPG on Planning and Pollution Control will give advice on the inclusion in Structure Plans of strategic policies on the location of potentially polluting developments and on the location of sensitive developments in the vicinity of existing polluting developments.

4.8 Outside the main urban areas, development should be based on the needs of local communities, businesses and the labour supply, and transport considerations. Policies should promote diversification of the rural economy, so as to provide wide and varied employment opportunities for rural people while avoiding excessive travel needs. Structure Plan policies should set the strategic framework for economic development and inward investment, focusing on market and other towns serving rural areas, provided this is consistent with maintaining or enhancing their character and environmental quality.

4.9 Further advice on integrating the pursuit of economic growth and a high quality environment, and transport considerations, is contained in PPG4.

5. HOUSING

5.1 The total population of the three counties, of around 1,470,000, has been decreasing steadily for many years, although the population of Northumberland has increased, contrary to the general trend. During the 1980s the total population decreased by around 12,000. The future number of additional dwellings required will depend on household formation rates, the rate of replacement of the existing dwelling stock and on demand factors, as well as demographic change. The combination of all these factors resulted in a reduction in the five-year annual average building rate in the three Counties from around 7,500 dwellings in the mid-1970s to around 4,500 in the early 1990s.

5.2 The Region has a large stock of 19th century terraced housing and of pre and post-war local authority-built housing. The majority of such housing is generally well located in relation to services and facilities and is well placed to meet the demands arising from projected increases in single and multiple person households. Some areas of older housing are, however, in need of revitalisation and environmental improvement, and some of the older housing stock has a limited life.

5.3 Structure Plans should continue to seek to reduce population losses in Cleveland, stabilise population levels in Durham and cater for modest population increases in Northumberland. Stemming from this policy approach, Structure Plans should provide for a basic requirement of 50,500 new dwellings between 1991 and 2006, distributed as follows:

NEW DWELLINGS	
Cleveland	14,000
Durham	21,000
Northumberland	15,500
Total	50,500

5.4 These figures have been arrived at following wide consultation and after consideration of demographic forecasts, environmental constraints and the implications for urban regeneration in Tyne and Wear. They are neither prescriptive nor inflexible. The Councils and the housebuilding industry will need to monitor the situation with regular joint assessments of market demand and its implications for future land supply. The County Councils may propose variations from these figures in the process of preparing their individual Structure Plans, on the basis of changed circumstances, new evidence or specific policy proposals. They should take into account the inter-relationship between housing markets in adjoining areas. There are particularly close links between the markets in north and central Durham and in south and central Northumberland with those in Tyne and Wear; and some links between those in Cleveland, south Durham and North Yorkshire.

5.5 The provision of new housing can make an important contribution to the regeneration of the Northern Region. Housing development should make maximum use of the availability of existing urban sites and of land adjacent to urban areas in close proximity to a range of local facilities. The quantity of housing land already identified in the three counties is broadly in line with likely future needs. However, development plans should recognise that not all this land is genuinely available, and should allow for a satisfactory supply of land in a variety of locations to meet a range of housing needs. These include high quality housing, special needs housing and affordable housing. Housing development should respect the environment. Its distribution should be determined within the framework of policies designed to protect the countryside, both for its intrinsic value and for its strategic importance in separating areas of urban development.

5.6 Development plans should ensure that an adequate supply and choice of housing sites is available at all times. Local planning authorities should monitor closely the take up of sites and the general progress of development against approved policies. This will be assisted by the regular updating of joint studies undertaken with the House Builders' Federation.

5.7 Further guidance on the provision of land for housing is contained in PPG3. This also contains advice on new settlements, which should normally only be promoted through the Local Plan.

5.8 Rural areas can play a part in meeting a range of housing demands. The provision of an appropriate scale of housing will also be important in securing the revitalisation of the more rural parts of the Region. In the three counties, including those areas subject to restraint for strategic or environment reasons, policies should allow for the provision of land to meet justified local housing needs on suitable sites. In addition, PPG3 gives advice on the release of sites for local affordable housing needs as an exception to normal policies. Development plan policies may indicate that the planning authority will seek to negotiate with developers for an element of low cost housing in other housing sites in urban and rural areas.

5.9 Structure Plan policies should discourage the consumption of greenfield sites, as this would prejudice the general aim, throughout the area, of securing urban regeneration, reducing the need to travel, maintaining attractive towns and villages and conserving open land for its agricultural and environmental value. Whenever possible, housing development should be located in larger communities close to local facilities, employment opportunities and to public transport, in order to reduce the need to use the private car.

6. TRANSPORT & COMMUNICATIONS

6.1 Good communications, both within the Region, to other regions in the UK and to Europe play an important part in the economic revitalisation of the Region. The East Coast main railway line is now electrified throughout its whole length. Improvements to the A1 Trunk Road between Newcastle upon Tyne and the Scottish border have already been announced. Vital national and international passenger and freight links are provided by Newcastle and Teesside airports and by the Region's ports. Tees and Hartlepool is particularly important as one of the country's ports for oil, chemicals,

iron ore and steel goods and for North Sea offshore oil and gas production services.

6.2 Proposals for improvements to the transportation network should be designed to assist in the regeneration of the Region, support town centres, facilitate industrial investment, support the rural economy, serve development and enhance the environment. All forms of transportation should be considered, as should the priority to be given to the different types of transport, including walking and cycling. Highway improvements and car-parking policies should be designed to ease congestion, reduce the need to travel by private car and contribute to road safety and environmental improvement. The quality of the environment along transport corridors is an important strategic consideration.

6.3 Structure Plans should provide the land-use framework for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods within the Region and enable the co-ordination of national and international transportation links. They should have regard to links with Europe and the consequences of the opening of the Channel Tunnel. They should allow for the continued development of the ports and airports, and their links with the local transportation network. All plans should recognise their Council's "safeguarding" responsibilities under the Aerodromes and Technical Sites Direction, reproduced in Circular 2/92.

Environmental Impact

6.4 The White Paper "This Common Inheritance" (Cmd 1200) expresses the Government's belief that, in most cases, it does not make economic or environmental sense to increase capacity on roads leading into already congested areas simply to facilitate additional car commuting. Projected increases in traffic and congestion will have consequences for the environment, in particular emissions of carbon dioxide, a major contributor to the greenhouse effect. The location of major developments for residential and commercial purposes will influence the amount and type of traffic movement. An efficient transportation system, and a land-use pattern which minimises the demand for movement, will help to reduce conditions that produce more CO₂ emissions. Policies in Structure Plans should have regard to the benefits of minimising the environmental effects of the demand for movement. They should also take into account options for the use of public transport. Development plans provide the framework for the preparation of local highway authority Transport Policies and Programmes, and should reflect the new advice in draft PPG13.

6.5 Traffic management and calming measures, together with the positive use of parking controls, can provide effective environmental benefits and contribute to road safety at less cost than new road construction. Structure Plan policies should take account of the strategic land use and environmental implications of these alternative measures.

6.6 It is important that development plans recognise the interrelationship between land use and transport and that the implications of both are considered in making policies and proposals. The impact of development on existing roads, and of new roads on likely development pressures and travel demands, needs to be made explicit in plans. Plans should also reflect the need to integrate land-use and transport planning and to reduce the need to travel, as set out in PPG12.

Roads

6.7 The Primary Route Network identified by the Department of Transport should be used as a framework in assessing the need for new roads, road improvements and for the definition of lorry routes. The use of an agreed road network will assist consistency and co-ordination between County Councils and with the adjoining Tyne and Wear Metropolitan Districts. The Strategic Guidance already issued for Tyne and Wear will assist this co-ordination and should be taken into account in considering road proposals.

6.8 Schemes in the current Trunk Road Programme are set out in Appendix B. In addition, the Department of Transport has announced the desirability of dualling the A1 north of Newcastle upon Tyne. Other priorities within the timescale of this guidance are likely to be dualling the A66 between Scotch Corner and Penrith and improvements to the A69 west of Hexham, widening the A1 south of Scotch Corner and improvements to the A1M and A19 in Durham and Cleveland.

6.9 New county road construction should ensure that the existing trunk road network operates efficiently, particularly for heavy goods vehicles, and attracts through traffic and major movements across the area. Structure Plans set the land-use planning framework for the preparation of local highway authority Transport Policies and Programmes and enable the improvement of county roads to be co-ordinated with the Department of Transport's Trunk Road Programme. Environmental benefits through the removal of through traffic from towns and villages should be assisted by this programme.

New roads should be designed to blend effectively into the landscape. The environmental impact of local road proposals needs to be assessed through the development plan process, as advised in Section 6 of PPG12. Plans should avoid creating pressures on trunk roads from local traffic or specific development. The advice on conserving special environments in the Region, given in paras 3.8-3.18 of this guidance, applies equally to road proposals as to other types of development.

6.10 Structure Plan policies should have regard to the need for adequate roadside service facilities on the motorway A1(M), the trunk roads A1, A66, A69 and A19, and other major through routes, with suitable access for lorry, coach and car traffic.

Public Transport

6.11 An efficient, modern and well maintained public transport system, utilising both buses and railways, makes an important contribution to meeting the overall transport needs of the Region, relieves pressure on roads by reducing congestion and is less damaging to the environment than the private car. Public transport can only function properly if it is well related to development. Structure Plans should take account of this when identifying strategic locations for development. Major traffic generators should be sited at locations which are, or can be, well served by public transport. All development proposals should allow for convenient access by public transport.

6.12 The local rail network, including the Tyne and Wear Metro system, makes an important contribution to efficient passenger transport throughout the North East and is vital to the cohesion of the Region. Structure Plans should take account of the strategic impact of any proposed extensions and improvements to the rail system, including possible extensions to the Metro, proposals for the retention of the Leamside line, and plans for public transport in Cleveland. Proposed extensions and improvements to the rail system should be assessed in relation to their economic viability and also by their ability to improve strategic links in the transport system, to stimulate economic development or urban regeneration, to relieve pressure on the road network and other environmental benefits. Authorities should explore the potential for existing rail lines to act as focal points for development through the provision of new stations or passenger services.

Freight

6.13 Structure Plans should include strategic

land-use based policies to facilitate, wherever possible, the transfer of long haul and bulk freight from road to rail. They should, however, take into account the local impact of road distribution of freight carried by rail. Structure Plans will also need to set criteria for possible locations for the construction of rail/road interchanges related to the major opportunities provided by the Channel Tunnel.

Telecommunications

6.14 During the late 1980s the Region experienced considerable pressure for improved communication networks and this is a technological trend that is likely to continue with the development of new fixed link, cellular and personal communication network (PCN) telecommunications services, as well as other changes in television broadcasting. Improved communications help to attract industry and office development and to make existing administration, economic and security systems more competitive and efficient. Structure Plan policies should set the strategic land-use framework for the development of telecommunications services, while balancing these requirements against the need to protect the environment. Particular care will be needed in sensitive areas along the coasts, in National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, World Heritage Sites, Special Protection Areas, Sites listed under the Ramsar Convention, National Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Conservation Areas, and near listed buildings. In drawing up Structure Plan policies, County Councils should have regard to the advice set out in PPG8.

7. TOWN CENTRES & SHOPPING

7.1 The town and district centres throughout the Region serve an important social and economic function, and a thriving shopping centre is one essential element in maintaining this function. Newcastle, the regional centre, lies outside the area covered by this guidance, as do other key facilities in Tyne and Wear which serve a wider market.

7.2 Structure Plan policies should identify strategic locations and criteria for retail development. Wherever possible, such development should be located within, or on the edge of existing town and district centres. In some exceptional cases, such as certain market towns and historic cities, this may not be possible or desirable. Alternative locations for superstores and retail warehouses should fully

reflect the policies to regenerate the urban areas, reduce the need to travel and protect the countryside. Sites should be easily accessible by public and private transport. Out-of-centre developments must not adversely affect the vitality and viability of town centres. Structure Plan policies should set the strategic land-use framework for further improvements to the economic health and attractiveness of the town and district centres.

7.3 Further advice is given in PPG6.

8. TOURISM, LEISURE, SPORT & RECREATION

8.1 As noted in section 4 above, tourism is already an important industry in the Region and there is likely to be a significant increase in leisure and tourism activities over the next fifteen years, with associated employment growth. PPG21 gives guidance on the interaction between tourism, its environmental impact and land-use planning.

8.2 Structure Plan policies for both tourism and leisure and recreation should encourage a sustainable pattern of development based on the Region's outstanding coast and countryside, historic sites of international, national and local importance, and attractive towns and villages. They should also recognise the need to protect the very high quality environment which attracts such visits. The attractiveness of built and natural amenities, including archaeological sites and areas of nature conservation interest, should be maintained for the general public and specialist interests.

8.3 Strategic long distance routes and regional routes such as the Cleveland Way, Pennine Way, Northumberland Coastal Path, Durham Railway Walks and Teesdale Way and the proposed Hadrian's Wall Path and Pennine Bridleway should be included in Structure Plans. Structure Plan policies should set the framework for a consistent approach to both development and conservation along the length of such routes, as they pass through different districts and counties.

8.4 Structure Plans should set out land-use policies and proposals for developments which are extensive users of land, rivers, lakes, reservoirs or coast and which have major implications for the environment, traffic generation and employment. In particular, Structure Plans should identify national or regional sporting, cultural and tourist facilities attracting significant numbers of people and proposals having a wide environmental impact.

The location of such facilities should have regard to accessibility from major centres of population, particularly by public transport. County Councils should seek the views of the Northumbria Tourist Board, the Northern Council for Sport and Recreation and the Sports Council (Northern Region). Further advice is given in PPG17.

8.5 Structure Plan policies should seek to minimise conflict between different forms of recreation and between tourism, nature conservation and farming activities. Leisure uses can be regarded as beneficial ways of improving vacant or derelict areas. Structure Plans should make provision for leisure in the countryside and in significant urban open space areas. Large stadia are generally not appropriate uses of land in Green Belts and very special circumstances would be needed to set aside this presumption. PPG17 provides further advice and makes clear that it would be unusual for a stadium proposal to meet those special circumstances unless all other practicable options for location had been exhausted and other considerations had been fully addressed.

9. MINERALS

9.1 The Northern Region is a significant producer of minerals, including coal, crushed rock, sand and gravel, and brine; in 1991 the Region produced 3.8 million tonnes of sand and gravel and 13.5 million tonnes of crushed rock. It has the only producer of potash in Britain at Boulby mine in Cleveland, over 50% of the annual production of which is exported. The Region is also an important producer of cement. North Sea oil and gas is landed in Cleveland by pipeline; at present this is expected to continue over the period of this guidance but, in the longer term, the implications of depleted reserves will have to be taken into account.

9.2 Minerals are an important element in the economy of the region but their extraction can have a significant environmental impact. Government planning policies for minerals aim to ensure that there is an adequate supply of minerals, with due regard for the protection of the environment. The Government has issued a series of Mineral Planning Guidance Notes (MPGs) which give specific advice to the mineral planning authorities and to industry. In the preparation of Minerals Local Plans, the County Councils should take account of the general government policies for minerals and land use planning, as set out in MPG1, which is currently under review.

9.3 Mineral planning authorities will need to recognise that in providing for a supply of minerals, a balance must be struck between the economic and environmental requirements of the community. The Government is committed to the principle of sustainable development, which should ensure that special environments are not adversely affected by mineral exploitation. In particular, the value of the countryside and coast in terms of nature conservation, landscape, agriculture, recreation and tourism, and the quality of life for local residents should be taken into account. Structure Plans should indicate general locations within which mineral working would normally be acceptable or would not be acceptable. Such locations should be defined more precisely in Minerals Local Plans.

9.4 Specific planning guidance on the provision of aggregate minerals is given in MPG6, which is currently under review. This sets out Government policy on aggregates provision, which is operated in this Region with the assistance of the Northern Regional Aggregates Working Party, and which provides guidance on the levels of provision from the various sources of construction aggregates. Structure Plans should contain sufficient provision to meet the apportionment of the regional guidelines in MPG6. They should ensure that a sufficient stock of permitted reserves (a landbank) is maintained for all aggregate minerals. Paragraphs A63 to A65 of MPG6 provide further detailed guidance on the provision of aggregates in the Northern Region.

9.5 Structure Plans should include policies for the working of other minerals in line with the guidance set out in MPG1 and, for industrial (silica) sand, Circular 24/85; for cement minerals in MPG10; for oil and gas in Circular 2/85; and for opencast coal mining in MPG3, which is currently under review.

9.6 The Government announced on 15 July 1992 its intention to revise the planning guidelines on opencast coal and replace them with guidance on coal extraction generally and the disposal of colliery spoil. Revision of the guidelines has had to await the outcome of the Government's Coal Review. The White Paper "The Prospects for Coal – Conclusions of the Government's Coal Review" (Cm 2235 – March 1993) sets out the results of the Review. It describes the framework of energy policy within which the prospects of the coal industry have been assessed. It examines the market for coal, particularly in the light of developments in the electricity supply industry and the development of other sources of supply, and it considers the employment and wider consequences of pit closures.

9.7 Following the publication of the White Paper, the Department intends to proceed as quickly as possible to consultation on revised draft planning guidelines. In the meantime, however, the Secretary of State announced on 25 March 1993 the broad principles on which it is intended that the revised guidelines should be based and set out interim guidance on the consideration of opencast coal applications pending full revised guidelines. Mineral planning authorities should therefore have regard to that statement in preparing development plan policies for coal extraction and colliery spoil disposal.

9.8 The Region contains some small workings of peat for horticultural uses. Resources of peat which may be of commercial quality for mineral extraction in England and Wales are generally found in lowland areas which, in their natural state, formed raised mires (domes of peat) or fen (sedge) peats. These can provide particularly rare and distinctive habitats. Proposals for the working of peat should therefore be subject to special consideration, and mineral planning authorities should consult English Nature about any proposals which could affect sites of nature conservation importance. Further advice will be issued in the forthcoming PPG on Nature Conservation, and following the outcome of the Department's Working Group on nature conservation, peat extraction and other land use matters affecting peatlands (Commons Hansard, 7 July 1992, Col. 158).

9.9 Development Plans should provide for development in such a way as to avoid unnecessary sterilisation of significant mineral resources or, where sterilisation is unavoidable, to allow for the prior extraction of the minerals. Mineral planning authorities should set out the criteria to be applied in determining applications. These criteria should include an assessment of environmental considerations, the effect on any local communities and the scope for restoring previous mineral working. Policies should also set out provisions to ensure high standards for site operations; satisfactory landscaping; restoration to a beneficial after-use and after-care of sites, including the creation and enhancement of wildlife habitats where appropriate; and the implementation of measures to minimise adverse environmental impacts through agreed working schemes, the attachment of conditions on planning permissions or the use of planning obligations. Further guidance is given in MPG2.

9.10 The best and most versatile agricultural land is a national resource for the future and considerable weight should be attached to the

protection of such land against development, When considering the allocation of land for mineral development, the agricultural implications must be considered, together with the environmental and economic aspects, and the feasibility of a high standard of reclamation. On the better land, after-uses for amenity, nature conservation, sport and recreation or forestry may be suitable as alternatives to agriculture, if the methods used in restoration and aftercare enable it to retain its longer term potential as an agricultural resource. Further advice is given in PPG7 and MPG7.

9.11 Some mineral working in the Region takes place at locations where the local authority road network has not been designed to carry heavy vehicular traffic. It is important that mineral planning authorities seek to minimise the adverse effects on the environment and local communities caused by the transportation of minerals. Policies should encourage the greatest possible use of the rail network and coastal shipping, and where these are not possible, the use and improvement of lorry routes which minimise the impact on local communities. Mineral planning authorities should, jointly or individually, in their development plans make every effort to identify, safeguard and – where possible – make provision for suitable locations for rail depots to receive and distribute imported aggregates.

9.12 Mineral planning authorities should include policies in their development plans which aim to encourage the use of secondary and waste materials where there are environmental benefits to be gained. They should also include policies for the location of recycling facilities. As constraints on resources of primary aggregates increase, greater use will need to be made of alternative sources of aggregates.

10 WASTE DISPOSAL

10.1 Landfill is the main method of waste disposal in the Region, although quantities of waste are incinerated in Cleveland and Tyne and Wear. International Conventions, to which the UK is a signatory, will prevent the continued disposal of sewage sludge to sea by 1998. The disposal of colliery spoil on the shoreline can be expected to cease within the lifetime of this guidance. All liquid waste disposal to outfall or sewer is subject to a Consent to Discharge issued by the National Rivers Authority or Water Service Company. Requirements to satisfy the EC Groundwater Directive and the NRA's "Policy and Practice for the Protection of Groundwater" will severely limit the disposal of liquid waste on land. Although all these

requirements will provide significant environmental benefits, it is likely that they will lead to a further increase in demand for chemical treatment and landfill disposal facilities.

10.2 The availability of landfill capacity is a growing problem in parts of the Region, particularly in Cleveland, and there is a shortage of capacity for liquid disposal generally throughout the area. The uneven distribution of potential landfill sites in the Northern Region, together with changes introduced by the Environmental Protection Act 1990, may result in an increased demand to transport waste between local authority areas in the Region. Disposal charges are rising sharply and this trend can be anticipated to continue because of the limited availability of suitable landfill sites and the cost of improving operational standards to meet more stringent pollution control requirements.

10.3 The Government's waste management strategy aims to make economic development more sustainable by encouraging less use of valuable natural resources, less use of land for disposing of waste and less atmospheric pollution. It aims to prevent pollution by minimising waste at source, by recycling as much waste material as possible and by ensuring stricter controls over material for disposal. Policies in Structure Plans should recognise waste treatment, recycling and disposal options which minimise environmental damage and seek to improve environmental standards.

10.4 The forthcoming PPG on Planning and Pollution Control will give advice on the inclusion in Structure Plans of strategic waste policies and on the criteria for the acceptability of sites. The local rail network offers opportunities for the transport of waste within the Region to potential disposal sites whilst avoiding the environmental damage created by increased road traffic. Policies should encourage the transport of waste by rail rather than road wherever possible.

10.5 Structure Plans should identify strategic environmental improvements or development opportunities which may arise from the use of waste, taking into account local authority Recycling Plans. Consideration should also be given to the land-use implications of utilising waste as a potential energy source. The co-ordinated approach to the treatment and disposal of waste throughout the Region, which is being undertaken by the Joint Coordinating Committee of Waste Regulation Authorities, should be reflected in Structure Plans and in Waste Local Plans.

10.6 Structure Plans should address strategic issues relating to incineration as an option for the disposal of waste, including plants to dispose of toxic wastes, clinical wastes and sewage sludge. These issues include impact on the local and wider environment. New incinerators should not be located close to residential or employment areas or where they would inhibit urban regeneration. It is the responsibility of producers to ensure that the production of toxic waste is kept to a minimum. The County Councils, when preparing their Structure Plans, should consider the question of the incineration of toxic waste produced within the Region, together with the locational and environmental criteria for any necessary incinerators.

10.7 Planning authorities should have regard to the guidance given in Circular 17/91 on sewage sludge disposal, in Circular 17/89 on landfill sites and in Circular 21/87 on the development of contaminated land. Advice on landfilling of old mineral sites is also included in MPG7. County Councils should consider the possibilities of co-ordinating waste disposal with mineral extraction if suitable opportunities arise.

11. ENERGY

11.1 The overall aim of planning policy towards energy should be to achieve forms of development which reduce consumption as far as possible and to increase the efficiency of energy production.

11.2 There would appear to be sufficient capacity in existing and approved generating facilities to meet the base load electricity requirements of the Region during the period covered by this guidance. The transmission network includes 400kv links between Tyneside and Scotland and between Cleveland and Yorkshire. There are also 275kv links from Tyneside to Scotland and to Cumbria and within the Region between Tyneside and Cleveland. High pressure gas pipelines pass through the Region from North Sea terminals in the north of Scotland to demand areas in Central and Southern England. There are also terminals fed by North Sea pipelines in Cleveland. These pipelines are placed within safety corridors which any development proposals must recognise.

11.3 Structure Plans should include locational policies to guide the development of new power generation and transmission facilities. New power stations based on fossil fuels or using waste to heat technology should be well related to existing urban development and located within or adjacent to industrial areas in order to

minimise their effect on undeveloped open countryside and to avoid the unnecessary proliferation of overhead power lines. The siting of such power stations should not adversely affect residential areas or prejudice the development of industrial land; due regard should be given to environmental considerations. When drawing up locational policies, the overall impact of both generating and transmission components should be considered.

11.4 If facilities to incinerate waste are proved to be necessary, Structure Plan policies should enable, wherever possible, the results of combustion to be used to generate useable energy. Structure Plans should also allow for schemes which vent methane from landfill refuse disposal sites to utilise the gas for energy purposes wherever this is economically viable.

11.5 Structure Plans should include general policies and proposals on providing renewable energy, including the general location of any individual project likely to have a significant effect on their areas. While such developments are to be encouraged in the context of the global environment, they can be intrusive locally. Regard should therefore be paid to their overall environmental impact and the need to safeguard environmentally important areas – in particular the National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, World Heritage Sites, Special Protection Areas, sites listed under the Ramsar Convention, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserves. Further advice is given in PPG22.

11.6 Where changes in power generation facilities occur, Structure Plan policies should enable opportunities to be taken to rationalise the existing pylon network, so as to reduce and minimise its visual impact on the landscape. They should also ensure that new overhead transmission lines avoid statutorily protected landscapes, other recognised areas of high conservation value and residential areas. Lines should be placed underground where this is the only way to safeguard environmentally important areas; but each case must to be considered on its own merits.

11.7 Structure Plans should include policies to ensure that new gas or oil pipelines are routed so as to avoid areas of sensitive environment, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest and ancient monuments, and to minimise conflicts with the existing and proposed land use pattern, so far as possible.

12. CONSULTATION

12.1 There has been wide consultation by the County Councils in the preparation of their advice, and this guidance has itself been the subject of consultation before publication. Under Section 33 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, County Councils are required to carry out public consultation before submitting proposals for updating Structure Plans. Effective consultation should help to ensure that the policies adopted receive wide acceptance.

13. MONITORING AND REVIEW

13.1 It is important that the effectiveness of development plan policies be closely monitored. This will require the close cooperation of all planning authorities in the Region. From time to time a full review of the regional guidance will be required. Monitoring and review of regional guidance should in future cover the whole of the Region.

13.2 Monitoring will need to pay particular attention to:

- a. the pace and scale of both urban and rural regeneration; efforts to stimulate economic development, new housing and to improve the environment;
- b. trends in factors affecting housing provision, and demand, including the condition and life of the older housing stock and demographic changes;
- c. trends in industrial and employment location;
- d. transportation in terms of its performance and the functioning of the

strategic roads network and adequacy of public transport; and the success or otherwise of relating land use to transport and reducing the need to travel;

e. the success of Green Belt, green wedge and other limits to development in restricting urban sprawl and the development of greenfield sites; and the success of encouraging development in reclaimed or inner areas;

f. the success of policies in protecting and enhancing the countryside, especially National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Special Protection Areas, Sites listed under the Ramsar Convention, National Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, the coast, river corridors and uplands, wildlife corridors and other sites of natural or historic conservation interest;

g. the location of shopping development and the impact of retail developments on existing town centres;

h. minerals and waste disposal and their environmental consequences;

i. the development of more comprehensive regional information about issues affecting the environment, particularly matters such as pollution, waste disposal and recycling, nature conservation, agricultural changes, energy saving and the impact of transport policy.

13.3 Monitoring and review of regional guidance should also take into account the form of consultation and the means whereby a wide cross-section of organisations can contribute to the planning process.

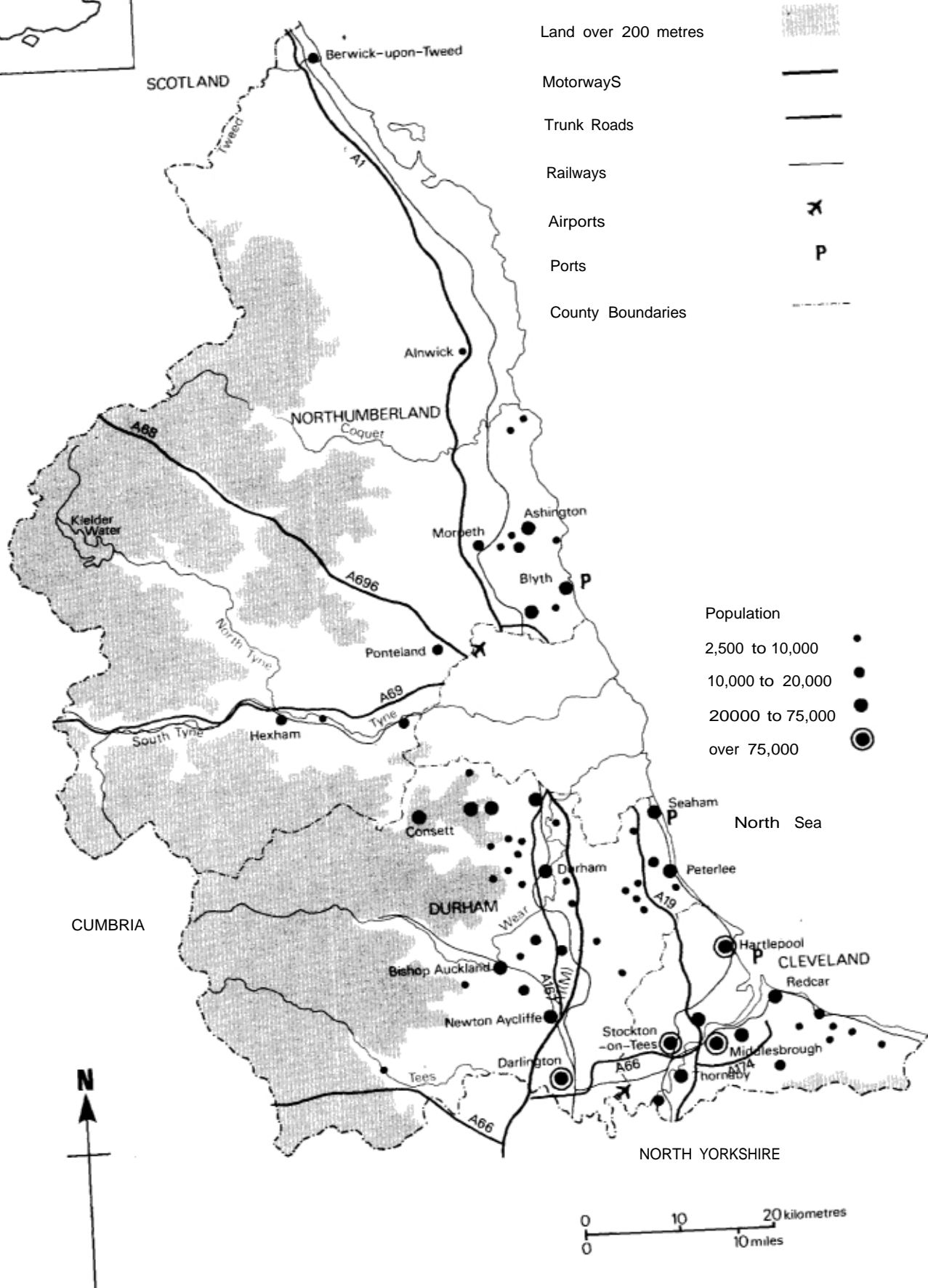
LIST OF PLANNING GUIDANCE NOTES AND CIRCULARS REFERRED TO IN TEXT

RPG1	STRATEGIC GUIDANCE FOR TYNE AND WEAR
PPG1	GENERAL POLICY AND PRINCIPLES
PPG2	GREEN BELTS
PPG3	HOUSING
PPG4	INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND SMALL FIRMS
PPG5	SIMPLIFIED PLANNING ZONES
PPG6	TOWN CENTRES AND RETAIL DEVELOPMENTS
PPG7	THE COUNTRYSIDE AND THE RURAL ECONOMY
PPG8	TELECOMMUNICATIONS
PPG12	DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE
PPG 13 (draft)	TRANSPORT
PPG16	ARCHAEOLOGY AND PLANNING
PPG17	SPORT AND RECREATION
PPG20	COASTAL PLANNING
PPG21	TOURISM
PPG22	RENEWABLE ENERGY
MPG1	GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN SYSTEM
MPG2	APPLICATIONS, PERMISSIONS AND CONDITIONS
MPG3	OPENCAST COAL MINING
MPG6	GUIDELINES FOR AGGREGATES PROVISION IN ENGLAND AND WALES
MPG7	THE RECLAMATION OF MINERAL WORKINGS
MPG10	PROVISION OF RAW MATERIAL FOR THE CEMENT INDUSTRY
Circular 2/85	Oil and Gas
Circular 24/85	Guidelines for the Provision of Silica Sand in England and Wales
Circular 21/87	Development of Contaminated Land
Circular 17/89	Landfill Sites: Development Control
Circular 17/91	Water Industry Investment: Planning Considerations
Circular 2/92	Safeguarding Aerodromes, Technical Sites and Explosives Storage Areas: Town and Country Planning (Aerodromes and Technical Sites) Direction 1992

**NATIONAL TRUNK ROAD PROGRAMME SCHEMES
IN PREPARATION AT 1 JULY 1993**

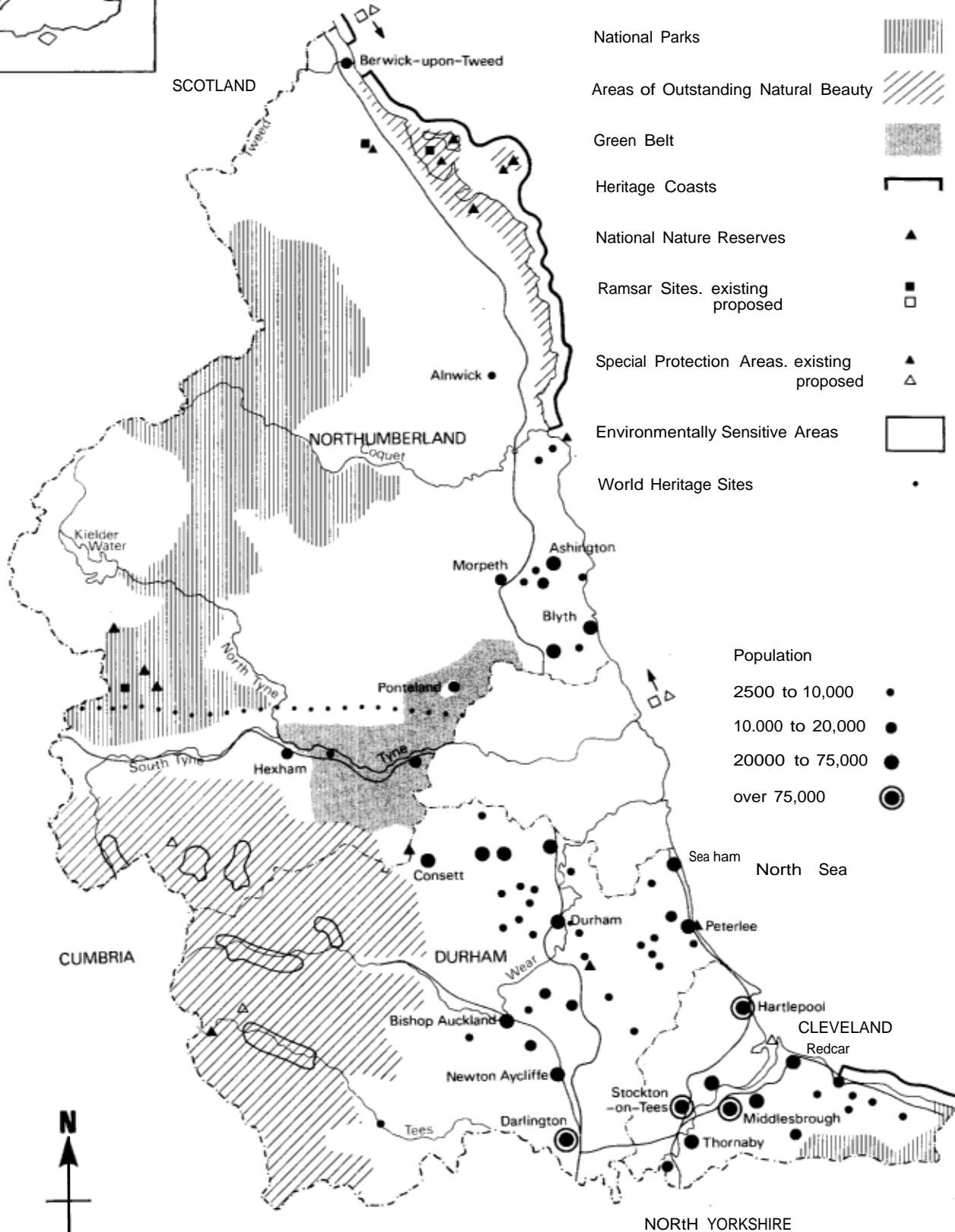
Route No.	Scheme	Proposed Standard	Estimated Works Cost £M	Approx Length Miles	Next Key Preparation Stage
A1	Marshall Meadows Improvement	D2	4.3	1.7	Completion
A1	Brownieside Improvement	D2	4.7	2.2	Completion
A1	Gateshead Western Bypass	D3	78.0	7.0	Preferred Route Announcement
A1	Willowburn to Denwick	D2	2.5	2.0	Orders Publication
A1	Hitchcroft to Cawledge	D2	1.6	1.5	Orders Publication
A19	Norton/Parkway Interchange	D3	28.0	5.0	Orders Publication
A66	Longnewton Grade Separated Junction	GSJ	2.9	—	Preferred Route Announcement
A69	Haltwhistle Bypass	S	9.5	2.0	Public Inquiry
A167	Durham Western Bypass	D2	19.1	3.3	Decision
A167	Cock o' the North! Aycliffe Improvement	D2	13.0	10.0	Public Consultation

Map of Northern Region STRUCTURE







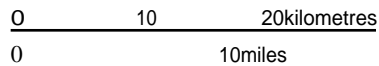
Map2

Northern Region DESIGNATED AND OTHER SPECIALLY PROTECTED AREAS



- National Parks 
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty 
- Green Belt 
- Heritage Coasts 
- National Nature Reserves 
- Ramsar Sites. existing  proposed 
- Special Protection Areas. existing  proposed 
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas 
- World Heritage Sites 

- Population
- 2500 to 10,000 
 - 10,000 to 20,000 
 - 20,000 to 75,000 
 - over 75,000 



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