

# Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Revocation of the North East of England Regional Strategy

## Environmental Report



AMEC Environment & Infrastructure UK Limited

November 2012

This Environmental Report is a consultation document on the likely significant environmental effects of revocation of the North East of England Plan and the Regional Economic Strategy (which together form the Regional Strategy in force for the North East of England). **Responses on any aspect of the report are invited by Thursday 10 January 2013.**

This report succeeds the previous Environmental Report for the revocation of the North East of England Regional Strategy which was consulted on between October 2011 and January 2012. It is a standalone document, the intention of which is to provide the reader with an up-to-date comprehensive assessment of the environmental effects of the revocation of the North East of England Plan and the Regional Economic Strategy without the need to refer back to the previous Environmental Report. Any reader who has also read the previous Environmental Report should note that, insofar as there is any difference between the two documents, this Environmental Report is to be preferred.

A summary of responses to this consultation will be published on the DCLG website in due course. Unless you specifically state that your response, or any part of it, is confidential, we shall assume that you have no objection to it being made available to the public and identified on the DCLG website. Confidential responses will be included in any numerical summary or analysis of responses.

Responses and comments about this consultation may be sent by email to:

[SEAConsultation@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:SEAConsultation@communities.gsi.gov.uk) or by post to:

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# Non Technical Summary

This **Non-Technical Summary** presents the findings of the **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the plan to revoke the North East of England Regional Strategy** contained in the accompanying Environmental Report. The assessment, Environmental Report and Non-Technical Summary have been completed by AMEC E&I UK Ltd on behalf of DCLG.

The following sections of the Non-Technical Summary:

- Explain what the plan is and its implications for the North East of England region by revoking the North East of England Regional Strategy;
- Provide a summary of the environment within the region;
- Outline the likely significant environmental effects of the plan, along with the reasonable alternatives;
- Propose mitigating measures for likely significant environmental effects identified;
- Propose monitoring measures; and
- Provide an indication of the next steps.

## The Plan to Revoke Regional Strategies

The Government announced in the Coalition Agreement its intention to “*rapidly abolish regional spatial strategies and return decision-making powers on housing and planning to local councils*”. The objective was to make local plans, and where desired neighbourhood plans, the basis for local planning decisions.

The Localism Act 2011 repealed Part 5 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, thereby removing the legal framework for the review of regional strategies or the adoption of new or revised regional strategies, and gave the Secretary of State powers to revoke in full or in part the existing strategies by order.

The Government’s proposal is to replace the eight regional strategies outside London with a more localist planning system, together with incentives such as the New Homes Bonus, to encourage local authorities and communities to increase their aspirations for housing and economic growth.

## The North East of England Regional Strategy

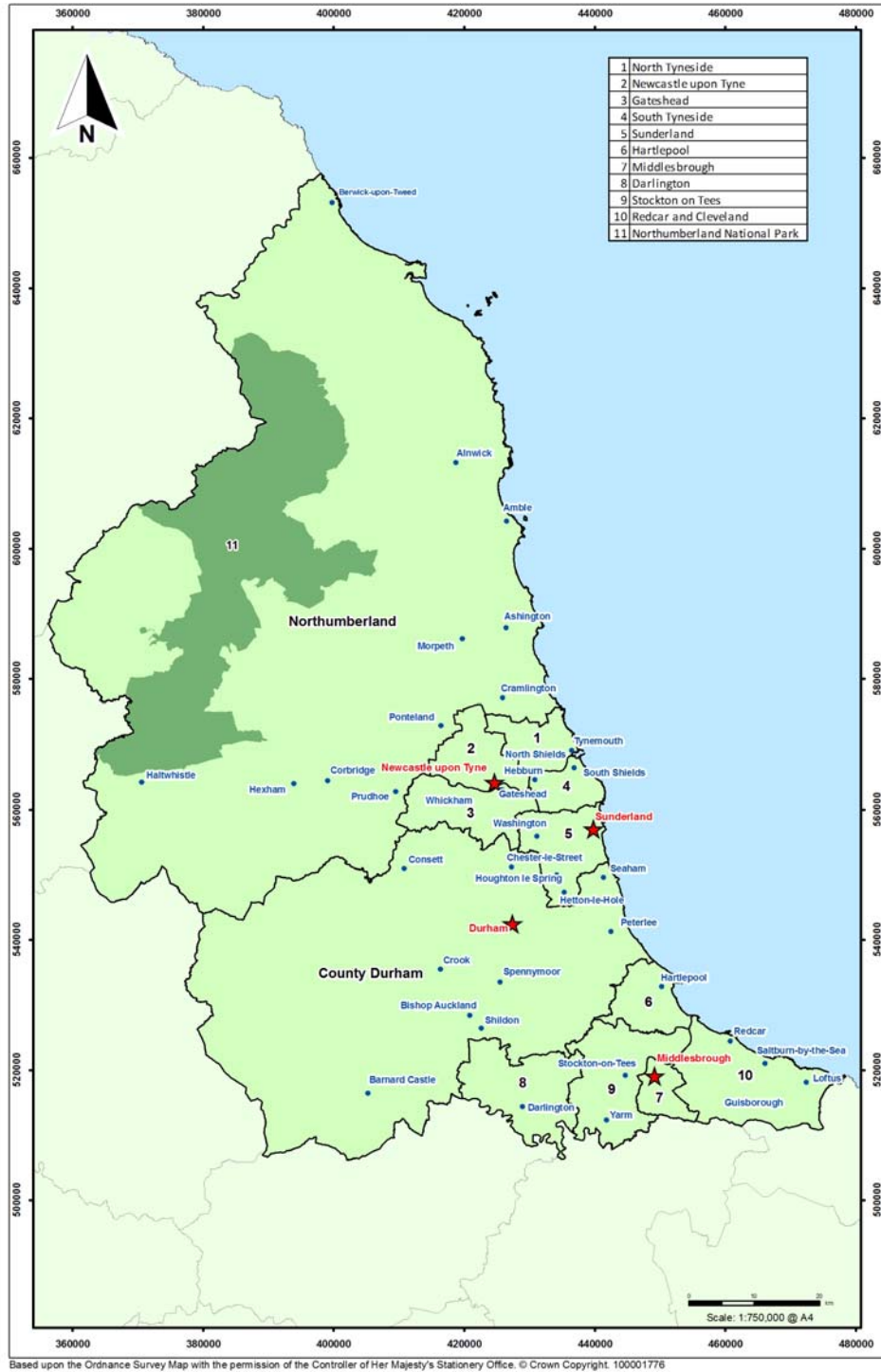
The North East of England Regional Strategy combines the contents of the **North East of England Regional Spatial Strategy** and the **North East of England Regional Economic Strategy**.

The North East of England Regional Spatial Strategy (the North East of England Plan) was introduced under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and, in accordance with Government policy at the time, provides a broad development strategy for the region for 15 to 20 years. In particular, it has sought to reduce the region's impact on, and exposure to, the effects of climate change and to put in place a development strategy with the potential to support continued sustainable growth up to and beyond 2021. It includes policies to address housing, environmental protection, transport and other infrastructure, economic development, agriculture, minerals, energy and waste, as well as sub-regional policies.

The regional characteristics of the North East are identified in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). This identifies that the region covers an area of around 850,000 hectares lying between the Scottish Borders to the north, Yorkshire & Humber to the south and the North-West region to the west. The region has a population close to 2.5 million, primarily concentrated in the two conurbations of Tyne and Wear and Tees Valley. Two-thirds of the region, primarily to the north and west, are rural in character, sparsely populated with large tracts of attractive upland and coastal countryside. Economic activity is focused within the region's two conurbations and its main settlements. Key characteristics of the region include:

- Two main conurbations in Tyne and Wear and Tees Valley;
- Other major centres, such as Durham City and Darlington;
- A regional network of rural service centres which serve surrounding hinterlands;
- Some of the UK's finest high quality, diverse countryside and natural and built heritage including a varied coastline ranging from extensive sandy beaches, dunes and inter-tidal flats to spectacular cliffs, islands and rocky outcrops, and two World Heritage Sites;
- Six ports (Teesport being the second largest port in England) and two international airports (Newcastle International and Durham-Tees Valley);
- An improving and increasingly diverse and knowledge based economy with a decreasing emphasis on traditional industries such as mining, steel, shipbuilding, chemicals and heavy engineering;
- A housing stock characterised by geographical areas of high and low demand;
- Continuing problems of multiple deprivation in some areas.

Figure NTS 1 The North East of England Area Covered by the North East of England Plan



The Plan contains:

- The RSS vision for the North East of England; an overview of the region's main characteristics, the key challenges facing the region; and the international and national context for the RSS;
- Four main themes under which the locational strategy for the region is developed. The four main themes and locational strategy on which the rest of the RSS is based are:
  - delivering sustainable and inclusive economic prosperity and growth;
  - delivering sustainable communities;
  - conserving, enhancing and capitalising upon the region's natural and built environment, heritage and culture; and
  - improving connectivity and accessibility within and beyond the region.
- The RSS also contains thematic policies on matters such as Sustainable Communities, Environment and Transport.

Further details of the individual policies are set out in **Appendix A**.

**The North East of England Regional Economic Strategy (RES)** was produced in compliance with the Section 7 of the Regional Development Act 1998. It provides a vision for the North East of England economy to 2016. This includes the aspiration that the North East of England will close the economic gap with the rest of the country through improving levels of productivity, increasing levels of business start-ups, improving skill levels and increasing economic participation.

The RES also sets priorities to achieve sustainable, inclusive economic growth through a series of actions. These actions are:

- **Leadership** - a commitment to:
  - Work in partnership to improve leadership around sustainable development, including implementing the commitments and principles outlined in the Government's *Securing the Region's Futures Strategy*.
- **Business** - comprising:
  - Specialist business support for encouraging resource efficiency;
  - A strong focus on the development and deployment of low carbon technology and renewable energy within the 'Three Pillars' work;
  - A strong focus on the delivery of the Energy White Paper 2003.

- **People** - a strong focus on economic inclusion including activities to:
  - Improve access to employment;
  - Raise economic participation in deprived communities;
  - Promote equality and diversity.
- **Place** - a strong focus on delivering sustainable development best practice in regeneration and planning, including activities to:
  - Ensure the incorporation of sustainable development principles and best practice in the planning, management and design processes of regeneration schemes;
  - Concentrate on demand management and energy usage in transport schemes;
  - Promote, enhance and protect our natural, heritage and cultural assets.

It is intended to ensure that 'those responsible for economic decision-taking are working effectively together, with common goals and accepted priorities for regional development'<sup>1</sup>.

The RES was developed with regional partners and was subject to a formal consultation and SEA process.

There is a strong and complementary relationship between the North East of England Plan and the North East of England RES. The RSS identifies that there is a broad consensus amongst public and private sector organisations about the main challenges which the region faces. Whilst there are many strategies, the common, and agreed upon theme, is the need to reduce the economic and social disparities between the North East and other regions. Therefore, a single regional vision has been applied to the RSS, RES and Integrated Regional Framework (IRF)<sup>1</sup>. The vision states:

*“The North East will be a region where present and future generations have a high quality of life. It will be a vibrant, self reliant, ambitious and outward looking region featuring a dynamic economy, a healthy environment, and a distinctive culture. Everyone will have the opportunity to realise their full potential.”*

The RSS, RES and IRF are also underpinned by a set of common values to guide decisions. These states that *“in everything we do we will integrate the principles of:*

- *Nurturing the human, cultural and environmental assets of the region;*
- *Accelerating the renaissance of communities in urban and rural area;*

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<sup>1</sup> The IRF was the framework for sustainable development in the North East. The IRF presented a shared regional vision which aimed to ensure that regional strategies shared a common purpose in working towards a sustainable future for the region.



- *Recognising global responsibilities;*
- *Raising the aspirations and profile of the region; and*
- *Promoting leadership, good governance and corporate responsibility.*

The relationship between the RES and the North East of England Plan is set out in more detail in **Appendix H**.

### Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Plan to Revoke the North East of England Regional Strategy

SEA became a statutory requirement following the adoption of European Union Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. The objective of SEA, as defined in Directive 2001/42/EC is: *'To provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to contributing to sustainable development'*.

As part of its stated commitment to protecting the environment, the Government decided to carry out an assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the revocation of the 8 regional strategies, on a voluntary basis. A 12 week consultation on the Environmental Reports of these assessments commenced on 20 October 2011 and ended on 20 January 2012. There were 103 responses to the consultation process.

Since the completion of the consultation, the Government has published the final version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), a planning policy on Travellers sites and has commenced provisions in the Localism Act and made relevant regulations introducing the duty to co-operate between local authorities and other bodies.<sup>2</sup> In addition, in a judgement<sup>3</sup> by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), the Court held that..."in as much as the repeal of a plan may modify the state of the environment as examined at the time of adoption, it must be taken into consideration with a view to subsequent effects that it might have on the environment". The Government therefore decided to use the additional information gained through the public consultation process, as well as the developments in policy and recent CJEU case law, to update and build on the assessments which were described in the previous Environmental Reports. This assessment is the result in relation to the revocation of the North East of England Regional Strategy - it is a stand-alone document and there is no requirement to refer back to the previous report on the revocation of the North East of England Regional Strategy published on 20 October 2011.

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<sup>2</sup> Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011 duty to co-operate in relation to planning for sustainable development.

<sup>3</sup> The judgement in Case C-567/10 *Inter-Environnement Bruxelles ASBL v Région de Bruxelles-Capitale*.

## The North East Environment

To provide the context for the assessment, the SEA Directive requires that the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and its evolution without the plan are considered, along with the environmental characteristics likely to be significantly affected. This information is presented in detail for each SEA Topic considered in this assessment in **Appendix E**. Table NTS 1 provides a brief summary.

**Table NTS 1 Summary of State of the Environment in the North East of England**

SEA Topic	Summary of the Environment and Key Characteristics in the North East of England
<p><b>Biodiversity and Nature Conservation</b> (which includes flora and fauna, and the functioning of ecosystems)</p>	<p>Significant parts of the region's countryside are protected by national and international laws. National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) cover 30 per cent of region and Sites of Special Scientific interest (SSSIs) cover about 13 per cent of the land area of the region. The protected areas are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);</li> <li>• 254 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs);</li> <li>• 19 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) – listed in <b>Appendix G</b>;</li> <li>• 8 Special Protection Areas (SPA) – listed in <b>Appendix G</b>;</li> <li>• 16 National Nature Reserves (NNR – the region's most vulnerable wildlife-rich landscapes);</li> <li>• 122 Local Nature Reserves (LNR);</li> <li>• Two National Parks (Northumberland, which comprises 13% 113,000 hectares of the region, and part of the North York Moors).</li> </ul> <p>The main concentrations of designated wildlife habitats and geological features are found in the North Pennines, Northumberland National Park and the Northumberland, Teesmouth, Cleveland and Durham Coasts.</p>
<p><b>Population</b> (including socio-economic effects and accessibility)</p>	<p>The North East covers 8,600 square kilometers (sq km) and is the second smallest region in England after London. In 2010, the North East had a population of around 2.6 million, making it the least populous region in the country with 5% of the English total<sup>4</sup>. The local authority area with the largest population was County Durham and fewest people lived in Hartlepool.</p> <p>The population of the region grew by just over 2% between 2000 and 2010. This is considerably slower than the average pace of population growth across England (6%).</p> <p>Overall, 281 of the 10% most deprived Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LLSOAs)<sup>5</sup> in England are located in this region.</p> <p>The North East has 1,656 LLSOAs in total and 17% (281) of all its LLSOAs are amongst the 10% most deprived in England. The North East has a greater proportion of its LLSOAs in the most deprived quintile (32.7%) of any region in England. In all, 32% of the North East's population live in these most deprived areas – the highest of any English region.</p> <p>Severe multiple deprivation is particularly prevalent in the former steel, shipbuilding and mining areas such as Easington, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool, Redcar and Cleveland, and Stockton-on-Tees. These places contain many of the most deprived LLSOAs. There are also concentrations of very deprived LLSOAs in Newcastle upon-Tyne, South Tyneside, Sunderland and Gateshead.</p>

<sup>4</sup> Office for National Statistics, *Population estimates, mid 2010*, <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcn%3A77-231847>.

<sup>5</sup> Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LLSOA) are a geography designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics. They were introduced initially for use on the Neighbourhood Statistics (NeSS) website, but it was intended that they would eventually become the standard across National Statistics. LLSOAs typically have a minimum population of 1,000 and a mean population of 1,500.

Table NTS 1 (continued) Summary of State of the Environment in the North East of England

SEA Topic	Summary of the Environment and Key Characteristics in the North East of England
<p><b>Population</b> (including socio-economic effects and accessibility) ..... continued</p>	<p>Housing delivery in the North East increased steadily between 2001-02 and 2007-08. The number of net additional dwellings per annum rose from 3,100 to 7,510 during this period<sup>6</sup>. However as the economy entered recession in 2008, the number of net additions in the region fell by half over a two year period. Net additions hit a low of 3,740 in 2009-10, before rising to 4,710 in 2010-11. Future housing supply is likely to continue to be related to wider economic conditions.</p> <p>The North East Gypsy and Traveller community is small compared with other regions and is made up mostly of Romany Gypsies. The number of people this comprises in the region varies and depends on the time of year. According to the latest bi-annual caravan count<sup>7</sup> for the Government in January 2006 there were 530 caravans in the North East. Over 91 percent of these were on authorised sites. The vast majority of the North East community lives on authorised sites owned by local authorities. There are a small number of authorised sites in private ownership. Unauthorised encampments do exist in some places but represent a very small proportion of all sites. The Gypsy and Traveller population live throughout the North East but are particularly concentrated in the southern part of the region in County Durham and Tees Valley and have close links with Yorkshire and across the Pennines. At present there are over 350 pitches in the region.</p> <p>Economically, the North East faces a number of challenges. The employment rate amongst people aged 16-64 in the region is 66.6%, compared to 70.5% across the UK<sup>8</sup>. In 2010, the North East had the lowest Gross Value Added (GVA) per head of any region: £15,700 compared to the England average of £21,000<sup>9</sup>. However, total GVA in the region rose slightly faster than the English average between 2009 and 2010 (3.8% compared to 3.2%) after falling 1.8% during the preceding year. In 2011, median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees in the region were £450. This is lower than all other regions and compares to a UK average of £500 per week.</p> <p>In April-June 2011, the region had the highest proportion of workless households of any region (24.9% compared to England average of 18.6%)<sup>10</sup>. The proportion of households in the North East who had never worked was 2.2%, which is higher than the England average of 1.8%.</p>
<p>Human Health</p>	<p>Over the past five years there has been a steady upward trend in life expectancy across English regions<sup>11</sup>. The North East is no exception to this positive trend, although life expectancy at birth is below the national average for both men and women. Male life expectancy at birth is 77.2 years and female life expectancy is 81.2 years compared to England averages of 78.6 and 82.6 years respectively<sup>12</sup>.</p> <p>The death rate in the North East was 10.1 per 1,000 population in 2009, compared to 8.9 across England as a whole<sup>13</sup>. This is the highest death rate of any English region. The age-standardised mortality rate, which takes into account the age structure of the population, was 6.2 per 1,000 people – higher than the England average of 5.5<sup>14</sup>. The infant mortality rate in the region is 17% lower than the national average at 3.8 per 1,000 live births.</p> <p>The North East Strategic Health Authority area had the highest prevalence of adult obesity of anywhere in England (13.1%). This is significantly higher than the national average of 10.5%.</p>

<sup>6</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government, *Table 118: Annual net additional dwellings*, <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/xls/118.xls>

<sup>7</sup> Association of North East Councils (2010) Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Sites Regional Analysis

<sup>8</sup> Office for National Statistics, *Official Labour Market Statistics*, <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

<sup>9</sup> Office for National Statistics (December 2011), *Regional Gross Value Added (Income Approach)*, <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-250308>

<sup>10</sup> Office for National Statistics (September 2011), *Working and workless households*, <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lmac/working-and-workless-households/2011/index.html>

<sup>11</sup> Office for National Statistics (October 2011), *Life expectancy at birth and at age 65 by local areas in the United Kingdom 2004-06 to 2008-10*, <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/subnational-health4/life-expec-at-birth-age-65/2004-06-to-2008-10/statistical-bulletin.html#tab-Regional-life-expectancy>

<sup>12</sup> Office for National Statistics (February 2012), *Region and Country Profiles: key statistics*, <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-227575>

<sup>13</sup> Office for National Statistics (February 2012), *Region and Country Profiles: key statistics*, <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-227575>

<sup>14</sup> Office for National Statistics (June 2011), *Regional Trends online tables; 06: health and social care*.

Table NTS 1 (continued) Summary of State of the Environment in the North East of England

SEA Topic	Summary of the Environment and Key Characteristics in the North East of England
<p><b>Soil and Geology</b> (including land use, important geological sites, and the contamination of soils)</p>	<p>Around eight per cent of the land in North East is urban. About three per cent of the North East region is covered by very good quality agricultural land and 39 per cent by good or moderate quality agricultural land. Nearly 80% of agricultural land in the North East is under some sort of agri-environment management which is an indicator of the extent to which land is being managed in a sustainable way.</p> <p>The Environment Agency's state of the environment report published in 2011 estimated that 5,700 hectares of brownfield/contaminated land in the region is either derelict, vacant or is in use with the potential for development. Between 2006-2009, 62% of new properties (on average) were built on previously developed land, compared to the average for England over the same period of 76%. The 2004 sustainability appraisal recorded 51% of housing built on brownfield sites between 1989-1993, and 59% between 1999-2002.</p>
<p><b>Water Quality and Resources</b> (including as inland surface freshwater and groundwater resources, and inland surface freshwater, groundwater, estuarine, coastal and marine water quality)</p>	<p>Northumbrian Water provides water and sewerage services from the Scottish border to North Yorkshire. It provides public water supply for major cities including Newcastle upon Tyne, Durham and Darlington. They also operate Kielder Water which is Northern Europe's largest manmade lake, located in the headwaters of the River North Tyne.</p> <p>The Water Framework Development identifies that 43% of surface waters are at good or better ecological status/potential and 37% of assessed surface waters are at good or better biological status now.</p> <p>The coastline between the Scottish Border and the River Tyne supports a number of coastal communities and an important industrial base. It broadly comprises a series of dune systems and wide, sandy bays separated by lengths of cliffs and small islands (such as Holy Island, the Farne Islands and Coquet Island). Only a relatively small proportion of the overall coast is protected by man-made defences, most notably in the more urban areas. Due to this, much of the coastline is also important because of its natural landscape character, and because of the wildlife and habitats which are of great nature conservation value. The coast is also important for tourism and local industry.</p>
<p><b>Air Quality</b></p>	<p>As of 2008 there were four authorities in the region, Blyth Valley (now part of Northumberland), Gateshead, Newcastle and South Tyneside, that had declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) indicating that they were unlikely to meet the target for levels of nitrogen oxide/ dioxide/ particulate pollutants in their city/town centres.</p> <p>There are growing pressures on air quality in particular locations, most notably due to the increasing traffic across the region.</p>
<p><b>Climate Change</b> (including greenhouse gas emissions, predicted effects of climate change and the ability to adapt)</p>	<p>Between 1990 and 2005, there was a marked reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, largely due to falls in nitrous oxide emissions associated with industrial changes and a widespread switch to gas from coal for primary energy generation and domestic heating. In 2005, more than 80% of greenhouse gas emissions were due to carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), and as such, most targets are now based on this gas.<sup>15</sup></p> <p>Over the period 2005 to 2007, the industrial and commercial, and domestic sectors saw significant reductions in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 5.3% and 4.2% respectively. However emissions in relation to road transport have not changed significantly, with less than a 1% reduction.</p> <p>When broken down by sub-region, it is clear that Tees Valley's industrial and commercial sector accounts for more than 50% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions associated with industry. In 2007, Redcar and Cleveland accounted for 31% of these emissions, and Stockton-on-Tees 16%.</p> <p>As of the 31 December 2011 there were 6,838 sites in total are generating renewable energy in the region. Outside of London this is the lowest level of sites generating electricity from renewable sources of any region within England. It is approximately 3.85% of the total for England. The 312.7 MWe of renewable energy produced within the region is the third lowest producing region in England and only provides approximately 5.3% of the installed capacity of renewable energy in England.</p>

<sup>15</sup> The North East England Greenhouse Gas Emissions Baselines and Trajectories Study (2009).

Table NTS 1 (continued) Summary of State of the Environment in the North East of England

SEA Topic	Summary of the Environment and Key Characteristics in the North East of England
<b>Waste Management and Minerals</b>	<p>Recycling rates for general municipal solid waste are expected to increase by between 10,000 to 20,000 tonnes approximately across the region across each 5 year period up until 2020. This will be counterbalanced by the disposal rates which will reduce by between approximately 10,000 to 30,000 tonnes over the 10 year period depending on the size of authority and comparative rates.</p> <p>North East England is rich in mineral resources. Minerals currently extracted or which are potentially exploited, include coal, clays for brick-making, igneous rock, limestone, sandstone, sand and gravel, peat and oil and gas.</p> <p>The guidelines for land won primary aggregate production in North East England are 20 million tonnes of sand and gravel and 119 million tonnes of crushed rock</p>
<b>Cultural Heritage</b> (including architectural and archaeological heritage)	<p>The region is home to 12,252 listed buildings, 387 listed Grade I and 754 listed Grade II* buildings. In 2011, 6.3% of Grade I and II* buildings were deemed at risk (compared to the National average of 3.0%). The North East has two World Heritage Sites (Durham Cathedral and Castle and Hadrian's Wall).</p>
<b>Landscape and Townscape</b>	<p>The region includes two National Parks, Northumberland and a small area of the North York Moors which extends into the southern part of Redcar &amp; Cleveland. This area is covered by the Yorkshire and Humber RSS. The North East also contains two AONB's, the Northumberland Coast and the Pennines (the latter of which is also within the North West region).</p> <p>The coast at North Northumberland, along with Durham and North Yorkshire &amp; Cleveland are designated as Heritage Coasts.</p>

A more detailed description of issues and existing environmental problems that relate to sites designated under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC, which updates and replaces the earlier Directive, 79/409/EC) is set out in **Appendix G**.

The evolution of the environmental baseline is likely to include the following changes:

- Loss of habitat through land take for residential and economic development and transport infrastructure;
- Projections based on the mid-2008 population estimates show that by 2030 the population in the North East could reach 2.8 million. The projected increase between 2010 and 2030 is 8.2 per cent, just over half the projected increase for England of 14.4 per cent. The proportion of the population aged 65 and over is projected to increase to 23.6 per cent in 2030 compared with 21.7 per cent for England. This would be the highest after the South West, and the largest regional increase in the percentage of people aged 65 and over;
- Regional groundwater resources used for domestic, industrial and agricultural supply could be susceptible to long term reduction with a lowering of groundwater levels induced by lower recharge rates;
- The additional growth in the region put forward in the North of England are likely to increase levels of traffic leading to additional pressure on the road network and decreasing levels of air quality, particularly within urban areas and around strategic transport corridors;

- Average seasonal temperatures will increase, with extreme hot temperatures increasing by around 3 degrees centigrade and heatwaves likely to occur more often;
- Increased urbanisation and reduced tranquillity because of built development and traffic growth.

**Appendix E** contains more detailed information on the evolution of the baseline.

### The Relationship of the Plan to Revoke the North East of England Regional Strategy with Other Policies, Plans and Programmes

Consistent with the SEA Directive requirements, this assessment has identified and reviewed other relevant policies, plans and programmes at an international (European), national, regional and local level. The review has identified how these other policies, plans and programmes could influence the plan to revoke the Regional Strategy. It also identifies how the plan to revoke could contribute to the achievement of any environmental or sustainability objectives set out in these other policies, plans and programmes. Of particular relevance is the National Planning Policy Framework, as well as the single saved Structure Plan policy S5 – Extension to the Green Belt (the policy was retained to maintain a coherent strategic planning framework for the preparation of local plans) 25 local plans (includes plans produced for those 13 authorities which now form part of the Unitary Authorities of Northumberland and Durham) and 11 Plans that contain mineral and waste policies in the region. The relevant policies from the local plans and Mineral and Waste Plans are presented in **Appendix C**.

The relevant environmental protection objectives are reviewed and provided in **Appendix E**. Examples include:

- Protection and enhancement of the levels and variety of biodiversity, including designated sites, priority species and habitats;
- Protection and enhancement of soil quality and landscape character;
- Protection and enhancement of water supplies and resources; and
- Promoting the efficient use of water.

The review also helped to inform the development of the baseline, aid the determination of the key issues and provide the policy context for the assessment.

### Which Environmental Topics Has the Plan to Revoke the North East of England Regional Strategy Been Assessed Against?

The plan to revoke the Regional Strategy has been assessed against the 12 topic areas, identified below. These include all of the topics set out in the SEA Directive. The methodology used within the assessment is in **Section 3** of the Environmental Report.



<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Biodiversity</b></li> <li>2. <b>Fauna</b></li> <li>3. <b>Flora</b></li> <li>4. <b>Population</b> including demographics, socio-economics</li> <li>5. <b>Human Health</b></li> <li>6. <b>Soil</b> including geology and land use</li> <li>7. <b>Water</b> quality (including surface and ground water quality and availability)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. <b>Air Quality</b></li> <li>9. <b>Climatic Factors</b> including climate change and adaptation and flood risk</li> <li>10. <b>Material Assets</b> including waste management and minerals</li> <li>11. <b>Cultural Heritage</b> – including architectural and archaeological heritage</li> <li>12. <b>Landscape</b></li> </ol>
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The baseline data and information required under the SEA Directive for each of these topics is presented in **Appendix E** to the Environmental Report.

### What Reasonable Alternatives Were Identified and Assessed?

Consideration of the reasonable alternatives for a proposed policy or plan is a fundamental aspect of policy and planning development and a pre-requisite for the preferred direction to gain wider and long term support. In turn, recording the reasons for the selection of the preferred option can also aid subsequent review, particularly if the assumptions that underpin any alternatives change over time.

Article 5(1) of the SEA Directive requires the identification, description and evaluation of reasonable alternatives, taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme. On this basis, the starting point for identifying alternatives to the revocation of the North East of England Regional Strategy has been the scope of the powers of the Secretary of State to revoke, partially revoke or fully revoke the Regional Strategies.

Following the application of the reasonableness test in compliance with Article 5(1) of the SEA Directive, the following alternatives have been taken forward for assessment within the SEA:

- **Revocation** of the entire North East of England Regional Strategy;
- **Retention** of the North East of England Regional Strategy, but not updating it in the future;
- **Partial revocation** of the North East of England Regional Strategy either by:
  - Revoking all the quantified and spatially specific policies (for instance where a quantum of development, land for development or amounts of minerals to be extracted or waste disposal is allocated to a particular location in the region) and retaining for a transitional period the non spatial policies, ambitions and priorities;
  - Retaining for a transitional period all the spatially specific policies (for instance where a quantum of development, land for development or amounts of minerals to be extracted or waste disposal is allocated to a particular location in the region) and revoking the non spatial policies, ambitions and priorities; or

- Retaining for a transitional period policies, ambitions and/or priorities, the revocation of which may lead to likely significant negative environmental effects.

Under either revocation or retention local authorities will need to prepare and implement their local plans and other planning policy documents and to take planning decisions having due regard to the NPPF. The importance placed on the retained Regional Strategy and the NPPF may change over time, particularly when the Regional Strategy is not revised and so becomes out of date and less relevant to local community circumstances. Revocation of the Regional Strategy also has potential to affect local plans and planning decisions more immediately as in some cases, removing the Regional Strategy will remove a regional policy that the local planning authority used to make local development decisions and local policy. The implications and effects on relevant Local Plan policies have therefore also been considered in the assessment.

### What Are the Likely Significant Effects of the Plan to Revoke the North East of England Regional Strategy and the Reasonable Alternatives<sup>16</sup>?

The assessment of the revocation of the North East of England Regional Strategy has shown that **there will be significant positive environmental effects**, although these will be largely similar to those if the Regional Strategy were retained.

**For the majority of policies, it is difficult to identify clear differences** between the effects of retention and revocation. This reflects the broad strategic nature of the Plan policies and the degree to which responsibilities are already devolved to local authorities to reflect the principles in their local plans. It also reflects the fact that both the NPPF and North East of England Regional Strategy have sustainable development principles at their core.

**Where it occurs, differences between retention and revocation are most clear in respect of housing and employment allocations.** Whilst the benefits to communities of housing and employment opportunities and the impacts on biodiversity, air quality, soils, water and material assets will be similar, a locally-led approach could ensure that the adverse effects are more effectively mitigated. This could be through a more detailed understanding of local environmental capacity issues and possibly more diverse and locally-specific spatial distributions of development. In the case of revocation, it is AMEC's view that there is more uncertainty about whether these benefits will be realised in the short to medium term for those local authorities that need to establish Local Plan policies for housing and economic development that reflect the objectively assessed and up to date needs of their respective local communities. This issue may be relevant for those nine North East local planning authorities who adopted local plans before 2008 (the date of the adoption of the North East of England Plan)<sup>17</sup>. The

<sup>16</sup> This includes consideration of the effects in the short, medium and long term, permanent and temporary and positive and negative effects. Secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects are also specifically considered in Table NTS3.

<sup>17</sup> At the time the North East RSS was published, there were 26 Local Authorities. In 2009 Northumberland and Durham received unitary status resulting in the establishment of two single authorities to replacing the former districts and county councils. As of 2009 there are now 13 Local Planning Authorities in the north east.



application of the NPPFs presumption in favour of sustainable development and its policies to boost the supply of housing will help where local plans or policies are absent, silent or out of date.

**Where a Regional Strategy policy provides a strategic direction whose requirements extend beyond the boundaries of a single authority, such as strategic employment sites, there is also likely to be a difference in the short term between retention and revocation.** Retention of the policy and the resulting development is likely to have significantly positive effects on the community and negative effects on biodiversity, air, water and material assets, in part because of the clarity and certainty provided by the retained policy. As in the previous example, it is AMEC's view that the effects of revocation will be more uncertain until authorities define, agree and implement the duty to co-operate and then reflect this in their adopted plans. In the interim where local plans or policies are absent, silent or out of date, the application of the NPPFs presumption in favour of sustainable development is likely to lead to an increase in the number of approvals of development which is sustainable which will help counter the effects of this uncertainty.

Many of the benefits relate to spatial planning issues that cross local authority boundaries (for example green infrastructure) and require direction and co-operation from a number of stakeholders including local authorities to be realised. Therefore, in the case of revocation, it is AMEC's view that there may be more uncertainty about impacts coming forward in the short to medium term where local authorities need to establish arrangements under the duty to co-operate to deliver such strategic policies and then reflect those arrangements in their adopted local plans. So, **whilst the duty to co-operate could well address a wide range of strategic issues, it is AMEC's opinion that there is uncertainty as to how this might work particularly in the short to medium term, both by topic and geography.** Some issues such as renewable energy, biodiversity enhancement or landscape conservation, which typically benefit from being planned at a wider geographical scale, may not have their full potential realised.

It should be noted that the effects of the recent Government housing and planning package changes have not been considered in detail in this assessment as policy detail is still being developed; however it may prove that the increased emphasis on growth and development given by these proposals addresses some of the effects on the short and medium term arising from the uncertainties in those nine authorities without local plans in general conformity with the Regional Strategy.

The following table presents a summary of the environmental effects of revocation, retention and partial retention of each of the five policy areas contained in the North East of England Plan. These cover a broad range of policy issues and encompass those contained in the Regional Economic Strategy, namely: enterprise, skills, economic inclusion, regeneration, delivering high quality business accommodation, enhancing the region's transport and ICT connectivity and promoting, enhancing and protecting the region's natural, heritage and cultural assets.

Table NTS 2 Summary of the Effects of Revocation, Retention and Partial Revocation by Topic

North East of England Plan Policy Area	Revocation	Retention	Quantified and Spatially-specific Policies	Partial Revocation	
				Non Quantitative and Non-spatially Specific Policies	Policies with Significant Negative Effects
Development Principles and Locational Strategy (Policies 1-12 but excluding policies 9 and 10)	<p>There are no areas where revocation of those policies which make up the core spatial strategy would have any negative effects.</p> <p>There may be a delay in realising the benefits in the short and medium term due to the time required to put in place up to date local plans and implement the duty to co-operate.</p>	<p>There would be similar range of effects to revocation. Effects in the short and medium term would be more pronounced as there would be no delay in implementation.</p>	No significant effects identified.	No significant effects identified.	No significant effects identified.
City-Region Policies 9 and 10	<p>There are no areas where revocation of those policies which make up the Core Spatial Strategy would have any negative effects.</p> <p>There may be a delay in realising the benefits in the short and medium term due to the time required to put in place up to date local plans and implement the duty to co-operate.</p>	<p>There would be similar range of effects to revocation. Effects in the short and medium term would be more pronounced as there would be no delay in implementation.</p>	No significant effects identified.	No significant effects identified.	No significant effects identified.
Theme 3A Delivering Economic Prosperity and Growth (Policies 13-23)	<p>The revocation of the policies is unlikely to affect local authorities planning for growth and in providing for these needs, there are expected to be significant benefits to the population in the long term. Adverse effects would be similar to those of retention.</p>	<p>There would be similar range of effects to revocation. Effects in the short and medium term would be more pronounced as there would be no delay in implementation.</p>	<p>There would be similar range of effects to revocation.</p>	<p>There would be a similar range of effects to revocation although it might result in some confusion with the intent of the NPPF and how the retained policies are to be applied.</p>	No significant effects identified.
Theme 3B Delivering Sustainable Communities (Policies 24-30)	<p>The revocation of the policy is unlikely to affect local authorities' provision and planning for housing. The NPPF requires all authorities to objectively assess their own housing markets and make provision accordingly. The negative effects on the region's water resources, noted above have been identified as being significant. The effects could be lessened or delayed due to some authorities needing to update and revise their local plans.</p>	<p>There would be similar range of effects to revocation. Effects in the short and medium term would be more pronounced as there would be no delay in implementation.</p>	<p>There would be similar range of effects to revocation.</p>	<p>There would be a similar range of effects to revocation although it might result in some confusion with the intent of the NPPF and how the retained policies are to be applied.</p>	No significant effects identified.

Table NTS 2 (continued) Summary of the Effects of Revocation, Retention and Partial Revocation by Topic

North East of England Plan Policy Area	Revocation	Retention	Quantified and Spatially-specific Policies	Partial Revocation	
				Non Quantitative and Non-spatially Specific Policies	Policies with Significant Negative Effects
Theme 3C Conserving, Enhancing and Capitalising upon the Regions Diverse Natural and Built Environment, Heritage and Culture (Policies 31-47)	The revocation of the policy is unlikely to affect local authorities' provision and planning for cultural heritage. There will continue to be significant positive effects on population and cultural heritage from the protection and enhancement of the historic environment and landscapes.	Similar effects to revocation.	No significant effects identified.	No significant effects identified.	No significant effects identified.
Theme 3D Improving Connectivity and Accessibility within and beyond the Region. (Policies 48-57)	The revocation of the policy is unlikely to affect local authorities transport infrastructure provision and planning. Significant positive effects for population and health, air and climatic factors have been identified due to improved air quality and reduced potential for greenhouse gas emissions due to the emphasis on sustainable transport modes.	Similar effects to revocation.	No significant effects identified.	No significant effects identified.	No significant effects identified.

### What Are the Secondary, Cumulative and Synergistic Effects of the Plan to Revoke the North East of England Regional Strategy?

In determining the significance of effects of a plan or programme, the SEA Directive requires that consideration is given to (amongst others) the secondary, cumulative, synergistic effects on the environment.

The plan to revoke the regional strategies is national in scope as well as applying to the eight regions. In consequence the national implications and effects of the plan have also been considered in the cumulative assessment. In respect of setting local housing targets, over the medium and longer term, the wider effects could yield increasing differences between regions with growth concentrated in those areas of greatest demand.

The following table summarises the secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects by assessment topic.

Table NTS 3 Summary of Cumulative Effects

Assessment Topic	Summary Cumulative Effects
<b>Biodiversity and Nature Conservation</b> (which includes flora and fauna, and the functioning of ecosystems)	<p>Revocation will not affect the maintenance of favourable condition status as existing legislation protecting SAC, SPA, SSSI and protected species remains in place, strengthened by the commitments in the NPPF in relation to protecting biodiversity resources. It is therefore expected that revocation of the Regional Strategy would not change the positive direction of travel.</p> <p>The achievement of legally binding targets for water and air quality will also be significant contributory factors (due to secondary and synergistic effects) in improving the quality of areas important for wildlife while enhanced provisions on aspects such as the delivery and protection of green infrastructure will play an important role in increasing the overall biodiversity value.</p> <p>There will, however, be some development anticipated on greenfield sites, and where this occurs, this will lead to some local loss of biodiversity (either directly through land take or indirectly through effects associated with disruption and disturbance of habitats adjacent to the developed sites, from construction, traffic and recreational activity). The local effects however, will depend on decisions taken by local authorities in consultation with their communities, and by businesses and other partners, on the future scale, nature and location of housing and other development in order to meet identified need.</p> <p>There may be gradual change to biodiversity resources over time due to factors, such as, climate change and coastal erosion. However, in the long term, revocation could have a positive cumulative effect due to the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure across the region.</p>
<b>Population</b> (including socio-economic effects and accessibility)	<p>There is a range of significant direct and secondary positive benefits anticipated to accrue to communities from the provision of employment and housing land, improvements in local facilities and enhancement from local environmental quality. Revocation is unlikely to affect this due to the presence of the NPPF together with legislation and a range of Local Economic Partnerships with clear commitments and visions to address issues in their respective areas.</p> <p>Cooperation between local authorities will continue in respect of regeneration and renewal resulting in secondary and cumulative benefits on population e.g. Stockton/Middlesbrough Initiative.</p>
<b>Human Health</b>	<p>Revocation will still enable secondary positive benefits on health to be delivered as local authorities are expected to work collaboratively with neighbouring authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships to determine and deliver the socio-economic needs of their area (e.g. employment and housing quality) and protect and enhance green infrastructure.</p> <p>New homes are to be in locations accessible by sustainable means of transport, walking and cycling in particular are healthy activities and the NPPF is complementary to national initiatives such as the cycle to work scheme all of which will result in positive secondary effects on health.</p>
<b>Soil and Geology</b> (including land use, important geological sites, and the contamination of soils)	<p>Cumulative effects are likely to be uncertain (under both retention and revocation). Whilst adverse impacts on soil are likely to arise due to the ongoing demand for development land associated with housing and employment development, local planning authorities will be able to rely on the policy in paragraph 111 of the NPPF which states that planning policies and decisions should encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed.</p>
<b>Water Quality and Resources</b> (including as inland surface freshwater and groundwater resources, and inland surface freshwater, groundwater, estuarine, coastal and marine water quality)	<p>Revocation is not considered to affect the need to sustainably manage water resources and improve water quality as the need will remain.</p> <p>Water resource management will be delivered by other policy and legislation, by a range of organisations, in order to avoid negative secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects on water resources and in relation to biodiversity sites. Thus, although housing and employment development (under retention or revocation) will increase pressure on water resources (compounded by the effects of climate change), the cumulative effect is considered to be uncertain given the ongoing commitments by Northumbrian Water to manage water resources over the long term.</p>
<b>Air Quality</b>	<p>Revocation is not considered to affect the need to achieve good air quality levels across the region. Air quality management will be delivered by other policy and legislation, by a range of organisations, in order to avoid negative secondary and cumulative effects. Thus, although employment and housing development will increase the magnitude of secondary effects on air quality by virtue of increasing the amount of traffic generated (under retention or revocation), the cumulative effect is considered to be uncertain particularly since the AQMA's in the north east are located primarily within the Tyne and Wear City-Region and are designated to minimise any adverse effects on local air quality from specific pollutants and are likely to coincide with where development will take place.</p>

Table NTS 3 (continued) Summary of Cumulative Effects

Assessment Topic	Summary Cumulative Effects
<b>Climate Change</b> (including greenhouse gas emissions, predicted effects of climate change and the ability to adapt)	Revocation of the North East of England Plan will not affect the intent (to move towards a low carbon economy) behind these policies although carbon reduction may be lower than if the target in the North East of England Plan were realised.
<b>Waste Management and Minerals</b>	The main adverse secondary impacts on material assets are a result of development both within and outside of the region increasing demand for minerals resources and increasing the amount of land required for mineral and aggregate working. Cumulative effects are likely to be negative due to the ongoing demand for resources and waste generated under both retention and revocation. However, ensuring timely provision of appropriate waste management facilities will have significant secondary benefits on human health.
<b>Cultural Heritage</b> (including architectural and archaeological heritage)	Revocation will not affect the intent behind the policy as existing legislation protecting listed buildings, scheduled monuments, conservation areas and registered parks and gardens remains in place, strengthened by the commitments in the NPPF.
<b>Landscape and Townscape</b>	Revocation will not affect the protection given to the North East of England's designated landscapes as existing legislation protecting National Parks and AONBs remains in place, strengthened by the NPPF's commitments. There may be gradual change to landscapes over time due to factors, such as, climate change, change in agricultural practices and economic conditions. However, long term, revocation could have a positive cumulative impact due to the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure across the region.

## Proposed Mitigation Measures

A number of mitigation measures have been identified in the detailed assessment in **Appendix D** and **Appendix E**.

Mitigation of the effects will be diverse and may need to be topic or sub-regionally specific.

## Monitoring Proposals

It is a requirement of the SEA Directive to establish how the significant effects of revoking the RS will be monitored. As set out in ODPM Guidance<sup>18</sup>, *"it is not necessary to monitor everything or monitor an effect indefinitely. Instead, monitoring needs to be focused on significant sustainability effects."*

DCLG's Business Plan<sup>19</sup> under section 5 'Put Communities in charge of planning' includes specific monitoring actions for the department regarding the Local Plan making progress by authorities and on compliance with the duty to co-operate. The results of this monitoring will provide clarity over the extent of any delay in adoption of revised local plans. When reviewing the environmental effects of the final decision on revocation, it is proposed that DCLG will make periodic reference to the following metrics

<sup>18</sup> ODPM, September 2005: *Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive*.

<sup>19</sup> DCLG May 2012, Business Plan 2012-2015.

and sources of information contained in Table NTS 4. Any resulting analysis of long term trends will be used to consider whether any further mitigation or intervention is needed for:

- The significant effects identified in the assessment that may give rise to irreversible damage where it is appropriate to implement relevant mitigating measures before such damage is caused; and
- Uncertain effects where monitoring would enable preventative or mitigating measures to be undertaken.

Taking this into account, of the 12 topics considered in this SEA, it is proposed that monitoring should focus on the following:

**Table NTS 4 Proposed Monitoring Measures**

SEA Topics	Monitoring Measure	Source(s) of Information
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	Annual (where information allows) trends in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Condition of designated sites;</li> <li>• Threatened habitats and species;</li> <li>• Populations of countryside birds;</li> <li>• Surface water biological indicators.</li> </ul>	<p>Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) report under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive (completed every 6 years) on the conservation status of protected habitats.</p> <p>JNCC.</p> <p><a href="http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-4241">http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-4241</a></p> <p><a href="http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4239">http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4239</a></p> <p><a href="http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4238">http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4238</a></p> <p><a href="http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4235">http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4235</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/Special/sssi/report.cfm?category=R,RF">http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/Special/sssi/report.cfm?category=R,RF</a></p> <p><a href="https://restats.decc.gov.uk/cms/historicregionalstatistics">https://restats.decc.gov.uk/cms/historicregionalstatistics</a></p> <p>Department of Food, Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra)</p> <p><a href="http://www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/environment/inland-water/">http://www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/environment/inland-water/</a></p> <p>The Environment Agency (EA) is responsible for monitoring water quality under the Water Framework Directive.</p>
Population	Annual (where information allows) trends in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment Information;</li> <li>• Population;</li> <li>• Housing and additional net dwellings.</li> </ul>	<p>Office of National Statistics (ONS) reports, specifically Regional Trends and Regional Gross Value Added.</p> <p>Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) statistics: Annual net additional dwellings, Housebuilding: permanent dwellings completed by tenure and region.</p>
Human Health	Annual (where information allows) trends in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Statistics – Long term illness, etc;</li> <li>• Crime;</li> <li>• Deprivation;</li> <li>• Access to and quality of the local environment.</li> </ul>	<p>ONS on health.</p> <p>Home Office, Crime Survey for England and Wales.</p> <p>DCLG statistics: Indices of Deprivation.</p> <p>ONS (proposed measures of wellbeing).</p>
Soil and Geology	Annual (where information allows) trends in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land use.</li> </ul>	DCLG statistics.

Table NTS 4 (continued) Proposed Monitoring Measures

SEA Topics	Monitoring Measure	Source(s) of Information
Water	Annual (where information allows) trends in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of catchments with good ecological status;</li> <li>• Water resource availability;</li> <li>• Per capita water consumption.</li> </ul>	EA and Defra. <a href="http://www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/environment/inland-water/">http://www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/environment/inland-water/</a> Northumbrian Water. Northumbrian Water.
Air	Annual (where information allows) trends in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of AQMAs;</li> <li>• Number of AQMAs where exceedances occurred.</li> </ul>	Defra. Defra.
Climatic factors	Annual (where information allows) trends in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emission of greenhouse gases;</li> <li>• Number of properties at risk of flooding.</li> </ul>	Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) Statistical Release: Local and regional CO <sub>2</sub> emissions. EA.
Material Assets	Annual (where information allows) trends in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volume of construction waste and proportions recycled;</li> <li>• Volume of hazardous waste;</li> <li>• Volume of controlled wastes and proportions recycled;</li> <li>• Volume of minerals extracted.</li> </ul>	EA. EA. EA. North East of England Mineral Planning Authorities'.
Cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage	Annual (where information allows) trends in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of heritage assets of different types that are at risk.</li> </ul>	English Heritage 'Heritage at risk report'.
Landscape and Townscape	Annual (where information allows) trends in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in AONBs (area, threats and quality);</li> <li>• Changes in Conservation Areas;</li> <li>• Percentage who are very or fairly satisfied with local area;</li> <li>• Trend in number of vacant dwellings.</li> </ul>	National Association of AONBs. English Heritage (if 2003 survey repeated). ONS (proposed measures of wellbeing). DCLG. <a href="http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/xls/1815794.xls">http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/xls/1815794.xls</a>

### What Were the Challenges Faced in Completing this Report?

A number of technical difficulties were incurred in carrying out the assessment. These reflect a number of factors, principally that undertaking an assessment of the effects of revocation is new and that there are some uncertainties over future effects. The environmental effects of revoking the Regional Strategy will clearly be dependent on future decisions by local authorities, individually and collectively. The uncertainty arising from local decisions has been reflected as appropriate in the assessment of the

individual policies in **Appendix D** and in the consideration in the topic chapters contained in **Appendix E**.

### The Next Steps

This Environmental Report will be presented for consultation until Thursday 10 January 2013. Feedback received from consultees in relation to the SEA will be documented and considered in reviewing the proposals to revoke the regional strategies. A Post Adoption Statement will summarise how the SEA and the consultation responses have been taken into account and how environmental considerations have been integrated into the final decisions regarding the proposals to revoke the regional strategies.





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Appendix H	Mapping of Regional Economic Strategy and Regional Spatial Strategy



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 The Plan to Revoke Regional Strategies

The Government announced in the Coalition Agreement its intention to “*rapidly abolish regional spatial strategies and return decision-making powers on housing and planning to local councils*”. The objective was to make local plans, and where desired neighbourhood plans, the basis for local planning decisions.

The Localism Act 2011 repealed Part 5 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, thereby removing the legal framework for the review of regional strategies or the adoption of new or revised regional strategies. It gave the Secretary of State Powers to revoke in full or in part the existing strategies by order.

The Government’s proposal is to replace the eight regional strategies (comprising the relevant regional spatial and regional economic strategies) outside London with a more localist planning system. Together with incentives such as the New Homes Bonus it aims to encourage local authorities and communities to realise their aspirations for housing and economic growth.

## 1.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

SEA became a statutory requirement following the adoption of European Union Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. This was transposed into UK legislation on the 20 July 2004 as Statutory Instrument No.1633 - The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI2004/1633). The objective of SEA, as defined in Directive 2001/42/EC is:

*‘To provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to contributing to sustainable development’.*

Throughout the course of the development of a plan or programme, the SEA should seek to identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme and to propose measures to avoid, manage or mitigate any significant adverse effects and to enhance any beneficial effects.

### 1.2.1 Applying SEA to the Revocation of the Regional Strategies

Regional strategies are plans for the purpose of the European Directive 2001/42/EC because they are land use plans, are required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions and set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II of the European Directive on environmental impact assessment. They are also subject to an appraisal of sustainability under the

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Both requirements were met in a single process called sustainability appraisal, as set out in guidance issued by the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2005.

As part of its stated commitment to protecting the environment, the Government decided to carry out an environmental assessment of the revocation of the existing regional strategies, on a voluntary basis. These assessments were prepared to be compliant with the procedure set out in the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. A 12 week consultation on the Environmental Reports of these assessments commenced on 20 October 2011 and ended on 20 January 2012.

Since the start of the consultation on the assessments, there have been a number of developments that are relevant to assessing the likely significant environmental effects of the proposal to revoke the regional strategies. These are:

- The **National Planning Policy Framework** was published in March 2012. This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and provides a framework within which local communities can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans reflective of the needs and priorities of their communities. It includes Government's expectations for planning strategically across local boundaries and within that the role of the planning system in protecting the environment;
- The **planning policy for Traveller sites** was published in March 2012 (to be read in conjunction with the NPPF);
- The provisions which create a **new duty to co-operate** were commenced when the Localism Act received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011. They require local planning authorities to work collaborate to ensure that strategic priorities across local boundaries are properly co-ordinated and clearly reflected in local plans.

Additionally, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) gave judgment in March on the applicability of the SEA Directive to a procedure for the total or partial revocation of a land use plan<sup>20</sup>. It held that such a procedure in principle falls within the scope of the Directive and is subject to the rules relating to the assessment of effects on the environment as laid down by the Directive.

The public consultation generated many helpful and informative responses. Some of these provided additional information and suggested other analysis to help improve the assessments. The Government has therefore decided to use the additional information gained through the public consultation process, as well as the developments in policy and CJEU jurisprudence, to update and build on the earlier assessments. Details of this additional analysis are given in **Section 3.1**. This Environmental Report reflects this decision and, in line with the requirements of the SEA Directive, is subject to consultation. As this is further to the consultation in 2011 on the environmental assessments, the Government considers it reasonable for the consultation period for this subsequent consultation to run for eight weeks.

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<sup>20</sup> The judgment in Case C-567/10 *Inter-Environnement Bruxelles ASBL v Région de Bruxelles-Capitale*.

The assessment in this Environmental Report can be considered as standalone and has been intentionally written to provide sufficient information for consultees to consider whether the likely significant environmental effects have been identified of the plan to revoke the Regional Strategy (and reasonable alternatives) without recourse to the previous Environmental Report.

All responses to this consultation will be given careful consideration alongside those received in response to the earlier consultation. The Government would particularly welcome responses on:

- Whether there is any additional information that should be contained with the baseline or review of plans and programmes;
- Whether the likely significant effects on the environment from revoking the North East of England Regional Strategy<sup>21</sup> have been identified, described and assessed;
- Whether the likely significant effects on the environment from considering the reasonable alternatives to revoking the Regional Strategy for the North East of England have been identified, described and assessed; and
- The arrangements for monitoring.

### 1.3 Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

- Present relevant environmental baseline information, including a review of plans and programmes;
- Identify, describe and assess the likely significant environmental effects associated with the plan to revoke the regional strategies and reasonable alternatives;
- Propose measures to avoid, reduce and/ or offset any potentially significant adverse effects and, where appropriate, to enhance any potential positive effects from the plan;
- Outline and describe the measures envisaged for monitoring any significant effects identified by the Environmental Report; and
- Demonstrate that the plan to revoke the regional strategies has been developed in a manner consistent with the requirements of the SEA Regulations.

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<sup>21</sup> For the purposes of this Environmental Report, the Regional Strategy means the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North East of England and the Regional Economic Strategy for the North East.



## 1.4 Habitats Regulations Assessment

The Habitats Directive prohibits the adoption of plans or projects which have an adverse effect on the integrity of European sites unless there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must be adopted for imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

The revocation of regional strategies does not affect the legal requirement set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 that a competent authority, such as a local planning authority, in exercising any of their functions must have regard to the requirements of the Habitats Directive (Regulation 9). Part 6 of the Regulations also contains provisions which require the assessment of implications for European sites of any plan or project, which is likely to have a significant effect on it, before it proceeds in accordance with the Habitats Directive.

Where a competent authority other than the Secretary of State proposes to agree to a plan or project despite a negative assessment of the implications for a European site, they must notify the Secretary of State and they must not approve the plan or project. The Secretary of State may give directions to the competent authority in any such case prohibiting them from agreeing to the plan or project, either indefinitely or for a specified period (Regulation 62).

Given these safeguards, the Government's view is that the revocation of the regional strategies will therefore have no effects requiring assessment under the Habitats Directive.

## 1.5 Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

### 1.5.1 Overview

As part of the environmental assessment of the revocation of the regional strategies, there has been consultation with the statutory consultation bodies on the scope and level of detail of the environmental reports, followed by a public consultation on the environmental reports on the effects of revoking each of the eight regional strategies.

Detailed responses to the environmental reports published in October 2011 were provided by consultees, and in the intervening period several key pieces of planning policy and legislation have been put in place. The Government has therefore decided to consult again on the environmental reports to allow the developments in policy and legislation, as well as the comments from respondents to be taken into account in the assessment of the likely significant environmental impacts of revocation of the regional strategies.

### 1.5.2 Scoping Consultation

The designated consultation bodies for strategic environmental assessment in England (the Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England) were consulted on the scope and level of detail to be

included in the environmental reports in May 2011 for five weeks. The corresponding bodies for Scotland and Wales were also consulted on the reports for regions on their boundaries. Their comments on individual regions have been taken into account in the environmental reports.

They were consulted on the method proposed to assess the likely significant environmental effects of revoking the regional strategies which was to take as a starting point the environmental assessment components of the sustainability appraisals carried out when the regional strategies were being prepared. For those regions which had not completed an up-to-date strategy, use was also made of the more recent appraisals of the emerging strategy. The assessments followed the format set out in Annex I of the Directive, assessing impacts taking into account that local plans would set the framework for decisions on planning applications following the proposed revocation of the regional strategies and saved structure plan policies.

The approaches taken in the appraisals during preparation of the strategies differed to some extent between regions, and the assessments inevitably reflect this. However, as far as possible, a broad assessment was made of the component policies in the Regional Strategy, identifying their objectives and any particular issues from the sustainability appraisals, so as to identify the key environmental issues arising in assessing the likely effects of revocation. The assessment focused on those aspects of the Regional Strategy which might be expected to lead to significant environmental effects.

The Environment Agency agreed that the scope and level of detail proposed for the analysis of environmental effects of revocation of the regional strategies was appropriate. Natural England recognised that the SEA was unusual in that it applied to the revocation, rather than the creation of a plan, and that therefore many of the usual aspects of SEA did not apply. English Heritage focussed their comments on the implications for Heritage on the proposed revocation. Scottish Natural Heritage considered that the implications for strategic planning for green infrastructure and the interface with the marine environment should be considered.

In addition, since this is the first time an environmental assessment had been undertaken for the revocation (rather than the creation) of a plan, a draft of the previous environmental report was also sent to the statutory consultation bodies for their comments. Their comments on the previous draft reports are presented in summary in **Appendix F**, together with a response.

### 1.5.3 Public Consultation on the Initial Environmental Reports

As part of the assessment of the revocation of the regional strategies a public consultation on the environmental reports on the effects of revoking each of the eight regional strategies was undertaken. Consultation on the environmental reports was announced in both Houses of Parliament through a Written Ministerial Statement and copies were sent by email to the statutory consultation bodies, the equivalent organisations in the devolved administrations, all local planning authorities and organisations thought to have an interest in the process. Copies of the reports were also published on the DCLG website. The consultation ran from 20 October 2011 to 20 January 2012.

A total of 103 responses were received, of which half contained comments that were common to all the reports. The remaining responses made specific comments on the environmental reports for particular regions while 8 dealt specifically with the environmental report for the North East of England. The Woodland Trust provided individual responses for each of the eight regions as did the Scottish Government SEA Gateway (enclosing responses from Scottish Heritage, the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage). Responses were received from Northumberland County Council and a joint response was prepared by Durham County Council, Gateshead Council, Newcastle City Council, South Tyneside Council and Sunderland City Council. A summary of the consultation responses relevant to the North East of England Environmental Report is set out at **Appendix F**.

The main issues raised by respondents on the previous environmental reports, which were relevant to the North East of England, are grouped into 6 broad themes as follows:

- The Overall Approach to SEA;
- Assessment – likelihood of effects;
- Reliance on the NPPF;
- Policy Gap;
- Reliance on the duty to co-operate;
- Individual Topics (covering data availability, greenbelt, gypsies and travellers, housing supply, heritage, waste, biodiversity, renewable energy, transport, water, brownfield land, the coast, flooding and managed woodland).

A high level summary of the issues raised and the response to those is set out below. A more detailed summary of the responses is presented in **Appendix F**.

Table 1.1 Summary of Consultation Responses

Issue	Summary of Consultation Responses to the Previous Environmental Report	Response
The overall approach taken to SEA	The statutory consultees supported the broad approach to the analysis presented in the October 2011 environmental reports. Some respondents thought the analysis was undertaken too late in the plan making process and was not consistent with the requirements of the Directive.	Section 1 of the Environmental Report sets out how the report meets the requirements of the SEA Directive.  The impacts of revoking, retaining or partially revoking the North East of England Plan have been assessed in detail in the short, medium and long term against the 12 SEA topics.
Assessment	The statutory consultees drew attention to more up to date data that could be included in the environmental report, for instance in River Basin Management Plans. Other respondents asked for a revised non-technical summary, for baseline data to be updated, for a more extensive analysis of the potential effects taking into account the content of local plans, the reconsideration of the likelihood of effects and, where significant effects were identified, to set out mitigation measures and give more consideration to monitoring the impacts.	The Environmental Report updates the baseline evidence and provides a detailed analysis of the retention, partial revocation and revocation of the North East of England Plan in the short, medium and long term against all 12 SEA topics, taking into account the content of local plans. Mitigation measures are proposed where significant impacts are predicted. Arrangements for monitoring possible effects are set out and a non-technical summary is provided.
Reliance on the NPPF	A number of respondents thought that it was difficult to assess the impact of revocation of the regional strategies before the National Planning Policy Framework was finalised.	The Government published the National Planning Policy Framework in March 2012. The analysis presented in the Environmental Report takes account of the policies set out in the Framework.
Policy Gap	Several respondents thought that the revocation of the North East of England plan would leave a policy gap, particularly for the delivery of strategic policies.	The National Planning Policy Framework states that local planning authorities should set out the strategic priorities for the area in the Local Plan. This should include strategic policies to deliver homes and jobs and other development needed in the area, the provision of infrastructure, minerals and energy as well as the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.
Reliance on the Duty to Co-operate	Some respondents thought that it was unlikely that the duty to co-operate would be able to provide a framework robust enough to enable strategic planning across local government boundaries at a sufficiently large scale.	The Government has introduced a new duty to co-operate and supporting regulations are now in place. In addition the NPPF sets out the expectations for local planning authorities working across boundaries on strategic planning matters which form part of the test of soundness for local plans.
Individual Topics	Respondents raised a number of questions about individual topics. In particular, respondents thought that the impact of the revocation of the North East of England could impact on Green Belt, the provision of gypsy and traveller pitches, housing allocations, heritage, waste management, biodiversity, renewable energy, transport, water, brown field land, coast, flooding and managed woodland.	Individual policies for the planning of individual topics are described in the Environmental Report, drawing on the policies set out in the NPPF.

## 1.6 Structure of this Report

The assessment in this Environmental Report can be considered as standalone and has been intentionally written to provide sufficient information for consultees to consider whether the likely significant environmental effects have been identified of the plan to revoke the Regional Strategy (and reasonable alternatives) without recourse to the previous Environmental Report.

However, it does build on the earlier assessment that was published for consultation in October 2011 and in particular includes further work in response to consultees' comments. This includes additional work to revise and update the baseline and contextual information used in the assessment, a necessary strengthening of the evidence base used as well as providing greater detail in the assessment itself. The approach that has been undertaken is set out in **Section 3.1** with the resulting information presented in **Appendices C, D, E, G and H**.

**Table 1.2** sets out how the information requirements of Annex I of the SEA Directive are met in this Environmental Report. Reasonable alternatives are considered in Section 2 and the approach taken to the assessment is explained in Section 3. Section 4 summarises the likely significant effects of revoking the Regional Strategy along with reasonable alternatives, where identified, including any secondary, cumulative or synergistic effects in the short, medium and long term. Section 5 provides a summary of the key findings along with proposed monitoring measures.

**Table 1.2 SEA Directive Requirements and Where They Are Covered in the Environmental Report**

SEA Directive Requirements	Where Covered in the Environmental Report?
Preparation of an environmental report in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated. The information to be given is (Art. 5 and Annex I):	
a) An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.	Section 2 outlines the contents and main objectives of the plan. Section 3 presents a summary of the relationship with other relevant plans and programmes. Appendix E (the SEA topic information chapters) presents greater details of the other plans and programmes that are relevant to the plan.
b) The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.	Appendix E (the SEA topic information chapters) outlines the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.
c) The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.	Appendix E (the SEA topic information chapters) outlines the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.

**Table 1.2 (continued) SEA Directive Requirements and Where They Are Covered in the Environmental Report**

SEA Directive Requirements	Where Covered in the Environmental Report?
d) Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.	Appendix E (the SEA topic information chapters) outlines any existing environmental problems. Appendix G outlines the pressures on European designated conservation sites.
e) The environmental protection, objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental, considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.	Appendix E (the SEA topic information chapters) outlines the relevant environmental protection objectives.
f) The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. (Footnote: These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects).	Appendix D, Appendix E and Section 4 outline the likely significant effects of the plan on the SEA issues.
g) The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme.	Appendix D, Appendix E and Section 4 outline the mitigation measures to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of the plan.
h) An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information.	Section 2 outlines the reasons for selecting the alternatives. Section 3 contains a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties encountered.
i) A description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Art. 10.	Section 5 presents proposals for monitoring.
j) A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.	A non-technical summary is provided.



## 2. The Plan to Revoke the Regional Strategies

### 2.1 Overview

The Government announced in the Coalition Agreement its intention to “*rapidly abolish regional spatial strategies and return decision-making powers on housing and planning to local councils*”<sup>22</sup>. The objective was to make local plans, and where desired neighbourhood plans, the basis for local planning decisions. The Government’s proposal is to replace the eight regional strategies outside London with a more localist planning system, together with incentives such as the New Homes Bonus, to encourage local authorities and communities to realise their aspirations for housing and economic growth.

The Localism Act 2011 repealed Part 5 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, thereby removing the legal framework for the review of regional strategies or the adoption of new or revised regional strategies, and gave the Secretary of State powers to revoke in full or in part the existing strategies by order.

The Regional Strategy under consideration for revocation is the North East of England Plan published by the then Secretary of State in 2008 and the North East of England Regional Economic Strategy published by One North East.

The individual policies from the North East of England Plan are presented in **Appendix A** and the whole Plan can be viewed at:

<http://www.strategyintegrationne.co.uk/document.asp?id=887>

The vision, ambitions, priorities and implementation priorities from the North East of England Regional Economic Strategy are presented in **Appendix H** and can be viewed at:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20090302144023/onenortheast.co.uk/page/res.cfm>

This section sets out the key aspects of the plan to revoke the regional strategies, the implications for the North East of England region and the alternatives considered.

### 2.2 Key Aspects of the Plan to Revoke the Regional Strategies

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012. This followed extensive consultation during 2011 and replaces government planning policy and mineral policy guidance for England. It provides ‘*a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of*

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<sup>22</sup> HM Government (2010), The Coalition: our programme for government.



*their communities.*' Accordingly, local planning authorities and communities will continue to determine the quantum and location of development, albeit without the additional tier of regional direction. It does not contain waste planning policy, nationally significant infrastructure and Traveller policy, all of which are in separate policy documents but to be read in conjunction with the NPPF.

In the absence of the North East of England Plan, strategic and cross authority working will be delivered in the North East of England region through a variety of legislative and non-legislative means. This includes: the preparation of joint plans under the powers set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004; through the new duty to co-operate under the powers set out in section 110 of the Localism Act 2011; and through the establishment of non-legislative Local Enterprise Partnerships. This combination of measures aims to ensure that strategic planning operates effectively in the absence of the regional strategies. The sections below describe some of the partnership working that is already taking place across the North East of England region.

### 2.2.1 Partnership Working on Strategic Planning Issues

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides for two or more councils to prepare joint local plans either through joint working under section 28<sup>23</sup> or through the establishment of a joint committee under section 29.

The NPPF sets out the Government's policy on strategic planning priorities, including the priorities on which authorities should work jointly. It makes clear that local planning authorities should work collaboratively to ensure that strategic priorities across local boundaries are properly coordinated and clearly reflected in local plans, resulting in a final position where plans are in place to provide the infrastructure necessary to support current and projected future levels of development.

### 2.2.2 Duty to Co-operate

Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011 Act inserts a new section 33A into the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004: the duty to co-operate. The duty is a new requirement<sup>24</sup> on local authorities and other public bodies to work together constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis in relation to planning for strategic, cross-boundary matters in local and marine plans. Local plans should include strategic policies on certain issues in line with the paragraph 156; however, the list in paragraph 156 is

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<sup>23</sup> Where authorities work together under section 28 they have the option of establishing a joint committee under section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972. The authorities who are party to the joint committee must also comply with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 (S.I. 2000/853) as amended by the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations 2005 (S.I. 2000/714). This means that the joint committee cannot make decisions which are the responsibility of the Authority and not its executive, these must be taken by each constituent authority individually (they include decisions about the submission, adoption and withdrawal of local plans).

<sup>24</sup> Through Regulations made under Section 33A of the PCPA 2004, which came into force on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2012, the duty to co-operate is extended to bodies such as the Environment Agency and Natural England.

not exhaustive and it is for authorities to determine whether there are additional strategic priorities in their areas and what strategic policies should cover.

The Localism Act requires authorities to demonstrate to an independent inspector how they have met the duty when their plans are submitted for examination in public. There is no prescribed way to meet the duty to co-operate, but compliance could for example be demonstrated by plans or policies prepared as part of a joint committee, informal strategies such as joint infrastructure and investment plans, or a memorandum of understanding which is presented as evidence of an agreed position. Failure to demonstrate compliance may mean that authorities may not pass the examination process.

Over time, it is expected that the duty to co-operate will become an integral part of the preparation of sound local plans that are effective and deliverable in relation to strategic cross boundary matters. Ongoing engagement and joint working, for example in the form of strategic infrastructure assessments done in consultation with others, memorandums of understanding and statements of common ground should become much more common place in the evidence base demonstrating how co-operation is securing delivery of objectively assessed plan needs.

### 2.2.3 Local Development Orders (LDOs)

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 allows for the establishment of local development orders. These allow local authorities to extend permitted development rights for certain forms of development with regard to a relevant local development document. The establishment of an LDO potentially speeds up the planning process and provides greater certainty to developers. LDOs are being used extensively across enterprise zones as the main means by which to simplify the planning process. There are currently 6 LDOs in place in the Tees Valley LEP Area and one LDO in the North Eastern LEP Area. Where enterprise zones straddle more than one local authority area local planning authorities have been working in partnership to create a planning framework for the zone and to simplify planning.

### 2.2.4 Local Enterprise Partnerships

The Government has facilitated the establishment of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). These are business led locally-owned partnerships between local authorities and businesses providing strategic leadership in driving private sector growth and job creation in their area. There are 39 LEPs now in place covering the whole of the country. These are based around a locally determined economic geography which makes sense to the local business community. All are playing a central role in determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities to drive economic growth and the creation of local jobs. Local Strategic Partnerships are non-statutory and hold no statutory powers, but they are able to draw upon the powers held by their constituent public bodies.

LEPs and local planning authorities are able to work together to ensure economic activity and infrastructure delivery is coordinated across local authority boundaries. The duty to co-operate also

requires local authorities and other public bodies to have regard to the activities of LEPs when they are preparing strategic policies in their local and marine plans and undertaking related activities. This is intended to strengthen strategic planning on economic activity and infrastructure delivery.

The Government has allocated £730m of Growing Places Fund to all 39 LEPs. The Growing Places Fund will enable targeted investment in pieces of infrastructure which unlock viable schemes that are not able to proceed because capital constraints have reduced the flow of investment in the physical infrastructure which enables development (e.g. transport, utilities and flood defence). The fund should also be used to establish revolving funds.

Beyond these broad parameters LEPs are free to decide for themselves how their allocation is best invested and where.

## 2.2.5 Examples of Cross-Authority Working in the North East of England Region

### Local Enterprise Partnerships in the North East of England

There are two Local Enterprise Partnerships in the North East of England region. One is the North Eastern LEP which covers Northumberland, Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, Gateshead, South Tyneside, Sunderland and County Durham. The second is Tees Valley Unlimited which covers Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees.

These are described in more detail below.

#### *North East LEP (County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside, Sunderland)*

The North East Local Enterprise Partnership's aims are to:

- Ensure that the North East maximises its contribution to national economic growth and rebalancing the national economy;
- Ensure delivery of functions where they can be most effective;
- Recognise the distinctive economic circumstances and potential of the area; and build on and sustain the strong leadership and partnership working between the business and the public sector, underpinned by strong governance and democratic accountability to Local Authority Leaders and Elected Mayors working together.

The key objectives identified by the North East LEP are to:

- Supporting enterprise and private sector;
- Business growth building on key economic strengths;
- Improving skills and performance;

- Strengthening transport connectivity and infrastructure;
- Focusing on innovation, access to finance and image and tourism.

Specific actions identified by the LEP include the development of the NELEP Enterprise Zone which comprises 183 hectares over three main development areas. The objective of the Enterprise Zone is to support development in two specific low carbon sectors: Offshore Wind Marine and Renewables (River Tyne North Bank and Port of Blyth) and A19 Ultra Low Carbon Vehicles Corridor (Nissan Site).

### *Tees Valley LEP (Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland Stockton-on-Tees)*

In the Tees Valley, cooperation builds upon a long history of collaboration between authorities and with private partners. The vision of the LEP is to drive the transition to the high value low carbon economy; create a more diversified and inclusive economy and improve its competitive offer. The Tees Valley LEP has identified that it has strong support and commitment from all five of the Tees Valley local authorities which includes financial support of over £2m a year. Key priorities are:

- Developing a fast track planning process for major projects through clarifying the requirements of national agencies and statutory undertakers;
- Producing a plan identifying the electricity and water infrastructure needs of the North Tees/South Tees area;
- Reducing the energy costs to industries by recycling waste heat and steam to neighbouring premises;
- Bringing forward the Tees Valley Enterprise Zone, 457 hectares across eight sites focused on renewable energy, new technologies, biological feedstocks and the reduction of the carbon footprints of existing business;
- As a Centre for Offshore Renewable Engineering (CORE), to build on the Enterprise Zone offer to ensure that every business looking to invest in offshore wind is supported to do so. Initial focus on five strategic locations where, together with the local assets necessary to attract investment, local enterprise partnerships are prioritising development of the offshore wind sector;
- Secured £4.5 million from DfT's Local Sustainable Transport Fund in May 2012 to deliver package of measures to improve facilities and communications across the Tees Valley rail network.

## Other Examples of Partnership Working

### *Newcastle Gateshead Joint Core Strategy*

A partnership between Gateshead and Newcastle was initially established 10 years ago when the two Councils came together with an agreed common purpose of the economic regeneration of Gateshead and Newcastle. As a result of this Partnership, the Newcastle Gateshead Initiative (NGI) was created.

Gateshead and Newcastle City Council are working together to prepare a joint core strategy which is the strategic planning document for both Gateshead and Newcastle. The plan will set out a shared vision and guide the locations and quantum of development to be permitted, what land should be protected from development and how places should change by 2030.

### *Northumberland Lowlands and Coast Local Nature Partnership*

Northumberland Wildlife Trust and partners have received funding from Defra via Natural England to develop proposals for a new Local Nature Partnership (LNP) which covers the administrative areas of Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland (excluding the National Park and North Pennines AONB).

LNPs are a new initiative, announced in the Natural Environment White Paper 2011, tasked with leading on biodiversity, green infrastructure, land restoration and catchment management. They will bring together representatives from different sectors to make links between environmental action and wider economic and community priorities. They will also work alongside the existing LEPs to help grow a green and low carbon economy.

## 2.3 **Background and Description of the North East of England Regional Strategy to be Revoked**

### 2.3.1 **Legislative Background to Regional Strategies**

The Town and Country Planning Act 1947 required local planning authorities to draft local plans setting out policies for the development and use of land. Prior to the Town and Country Planning Act 1968, which introduced county structure plans to co-ordinate and guide local plans, the focus of strategic planning was mainly at the regional level. A number of regional plans were prepared from the 1940s onwards and there were initiatives to link land use planning and regional economic development.

In 1988 regional planning guidance was introduced to provide a strategic framework for county structure plans. Regional planning guidance was not statutory and therefore structure plans and local plans were not required to be in conformity with it.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced a two tier statutory spatial development plan system consisting of regional spatial strategies and local development frameworks. The counties retained statutory planning powers for minerals and waste plans, but county structure plans were abolished.

Initially, the regional spatial strategy (RSS) for each region consisted of existing regional planning guidance. These were then reviewed, leading in most cases to publication of updated strategies, though only parts of the West Midlands strategy were reviewed, and the review of the South West plan was never completed. In revising their RSS, regional planning bodies were required to have regard to the regional economic strategy (RES) for the region.

Regional economic strategies (RES) were introduced by the Regional Development Agencies Act 1998. Until 1 April 2010, each regional development agency (RDA) was required to formulate, and keep under review, a strategy in relation to its purposes, and have regard to the strategy in exercising its functions. The purpose of RDAs included furthering the economic development and the regeneration of its area, promoting business efficiency and investment and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development where it is relevant to its area to do so.

The Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 introduced regional strategies (RS). These came into existence on 1 April 2010 for the eight English regions outside London. The intent was that each RS would initially consist of the existing RSS and the RES for the region but for the responsible authority in each region to bring forward a revised RS. However no revised RS were adopted so each RS continues to consist of the existing RSS and the RES.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 was amended so that local development documents were required to be in general conformity with the Regional Strategy. For the purposes of the development plan however, the RS for a region consists of only the existing RSS and not the RES. This was originally intended to be for an interim period prior to adoption of a revised RS.

The Localism Act 2011 made significant changes to the 2009 Act repealing the requirement for there to be a RS in each region outside London and confirming that the RS for the purposes of the development plan includes only the existing RSS.

### 2.3.2 The Development of the North East of England Regional Spatial Strategy

Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) for the North East was adopted in 2002. The RPG became the statutory RSS in September 2004 when the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act came into force. In line with its responsibilities, the North East Assembly (NEA) produced a draft revision to the initial RSS called VIEW: Shaping the North East, which was issued for consultation in December 2004. The draft revision was submitted to Government by the NEA in June 2005 and, following public consultation an Examination in Public was held before an independent panel in 2006 to test the soundness of the draft RSS. The report of Panel was published in August 2006. This report recommended a number of changes to the submission draft.

A further two rounds of consultation took place in 2007 and 2008 with the Plan being finalised and adopted in July 2008.

Preparation of the Plan was informed by sustainability appraisal at both the submission draft and proposed changes stages, incorporating strategic environmental assessment. The Secretary of State's proposed changes were also assessed against the requirements of the European Habitats Directive. In response to representations on that assessment by the regional assembly, Natural England and others, the assessment was revisited and a number of additional changes were made to ensure the Plan was fully compliant with the Directive (Secretary of State's 'further proposed changes', October 2007). The chronology is set out in the box below.

<b>Document</b>	<b>Publication Date</b>
Regional Planning Guidance (RPG1)	2002
RPG1 becomes Statutory RSS for Region	2004
VIEW: Shaping the North East Consultation	December 2004
Submission draft regional spatial strategy revision	June 2005
Examination in Public	2006
Examination in Public panel report	August 2006
Consultation on changes to the submission draft	2007 and 2008
Final North East of England Plan published	July 2008

### 2.3.3 The Content of the North East of England Plan

The Plan covers the period from 2008 to 2021 but the overall vision, strategy and general policies are intended to guide development over a longer timescale. The Plan's single regional vision is that:

***“The North East will be a region where present and future generations have a high quality of life. It will be vibrant, self reliant, ambitious and outward looking region featuring a dynamic economy, a healthy environment, and a distinctive culture. Everyone will have the opportunity to realise their full potential.”***

The spatial strategy identified that the achievement of the vision would require a step change in activity and a renaissance throughout the region by:

- Delivering sustainable and inclusive economic prosperity and growth;
- Delivering sustainable communities;
- Conserving, enhancing and capitalising upon the Region's natural and built environment, heritage and culture; and
- Improving connectivity and accessibility within and beyond the Region.



The main aim of the Plan is to achieve and maintain a high quality of life for all, both now and in the future as part of a renaissance within the North East. The spatial strategy for all future development in the North East is based on the following principles:

- To promote an urban and rural renaissance;
- To contribute to the sustainable development of the region;
- To reflect a sequential approach to land allocations; and
- To include appropriate phasing and plan, monitor, manage mechanisms for planning and implementation of new development.

The Plan sets out the need to support the polycentric nature of the North East by concentrating the majority of new development in the Tyne & Wear and Tees Valley City-Regions. It identifies the need for 3,435 hectares of employment land (comprising 2,765 hectares of general employment land and 670 hectares for key employment locations). The Plan requires local planning authorities to provide 7,580 net additional dwellings per annum between 2004 and 2021.

The Plan contains:

- A 'core' Spatial Strategy with generic policies that provide a framework for sustainable development in the region, and that complement national planning policy statements;
- Policies on economic development, housing, culture, transport, environmental aspects, waste and minerals; and
- More location-specific policies on a number of sub-areas and key centres for change.

Also included is a framework for implementing, monitoring and reviewing the Plan. Further details of the individual policies are set out in **Appendix A**.

The Plan reflects the national policies on development at the time of its publication. It incorporated the regional transport strategy and also took account of the regional economic strategy produced by the regional development agency (ONE North East) and the Integrated Regional Framework, which provides a high level statement of the regional vision for achieving sustainable development.

#### 2.3.4 The Content of the North East of England Regional Economic Strategy

The primary focus of the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) is to set an ambitious vision for the economy to 2016 and priorities for action that contribute to that vision. It provides a vision for the North East of England economy to 2016. This includes the aspiration that the North East of England will close the economic gap with the rest of the country through improving levels of productivity, increasing levels of business start-ups, improving skill levels and increasing economic participation.



The RES also sets priorities for achieving sustainable, inclusive economic growth through a series of actions. These actions are:

- **Leadership:** a commitment to:
  - Work in partnership to improve leadership around sustainable development, including implementing the commitments and principles outlined in the Government's *Securing the Region's Futures Strategy*.
- **Business:** comprising:
  - Specialist business support for encouraging resource efficiency;
  - A strong focus on the development and deployment of low carbon technology and renewable energy within the 'Three Pillars' work;
  - A strong focus on the delivery of the Energy White Paper 2003.
- **People:** a strong focus on economic inclusion including activities to:
  - Improve access to employment;
  - Raise economic participation in deprived communities;
  - Promote equality and diversity.
- **Place:** a strong focus on delivering sustainable development best practice in regeneration and planning, including activities to:
  - Ensure the incorporation of sustainable development principles and best practice in the planning, management and design processes of regeneration schemes;
  - Concentrate on demand management and energy usage in transport schemes;
  - Promote, enhance and protect our natural, heritage and cultural assets.

It is intended to ensure that 'those responsible for economic decision-taking are working effectively together, with common goals and accepted priorities for regional development'. The RES was developed with regional partners and was subject to a formal consultation and SEA process.

### 2.3.5 The Relationship Between the North East of England Plan and the Regional Economic Strategy

There is a strong and complementary relationship between the North East of England Plan and the North East of England RES. The RSS identifies that there is a broad consensus amongst public and private sector organisations about the main challenges which the region faces. Whilst there are many strategies, the common and agreed upon theme is the need to reduce the economic and social disparities between the North East and other regions. Therefore, a single regional vision which is quoted

above has been applied to the RSS, RES and Integrated Regional Framework (IRF). The IRF was the framework for sustainable development in the North East. The IRF presented a shared regional vision which aimed to ensure that regional strategies shared a common purpose in working towards a sustainable future for the region.

The RSS, RES and IRF are also underpinned by a set of common values to guide decisions. These states that *“in everything we do we will integrate the principles of:*

- Nurturing the human, cultural and environmental assets of the region;
- Accelerating the renaissance of communities in urban and rural area;
- Recognising global responsibilities;
- Raising the aspirations and profile of the region; and
- Promoting leadership, good governance and corporate responsibility.

### 2.3.6 Structure Plans

In 2007 the Government wrote to local authorities under the transitional provisions of Schedule 8 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to advise them which policies from their existing structure plans would be saved after 27 September 2007. Policies were saved in the expectation that they would be replaced promptly by policies in the regional spatial strategy, or development plan documents for the relevant local authorities. Section 109(5) of the Localism Act provides for the revocation of saved structure plan policies.

One structure plan policy has been saved in the North East of England region, as listed in **Appendix B**. Policy S5 of the Northumberland County and National Park Joint Structure Plan (2005) was retained to maintain a satisfactory strategic planning framework for the preparation of local plans. It is proposed to retain this policy until the new Local Plan for Northumberland is adopted.

### 2.3.7 Local Plans

In relation to plan-making, development plan documents prepared by local authorities are required to be in general conformity with the Regional Strategy.

Regional spatial strategies<sup>25</sup> form part of the statutory development plan under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (PCPA) 2004, until such time as the regional strategies are revoked.

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<sup>25</sup> By virtue of section 82(2) of the Local Democracy, Economic Development Act 2009 as amended by the Localism Act references to Regional Strategy in relation to the component of the development plan are to the regional spatial strategy that subsisted for that region immediately before 1 April 2010.

Local Development Plan Documents developed in accordance with the PCPA 2004 include Core Strategies, Area Action Plans and Site Allocation Plans. Core Strategies set out the spatial planning vision, principles and key planning policies for an area. This portfolio of documents is known collectively as the Local Development Framework. At the time the North East of England Plan was adopted in 2008 there were 26 planning authorities (this includes the County Councils and Northumberland National Park) in the region. In 2009, Northumberland and Durham secured unitary status removing the two-tier system which previously existed within those counties. Existing county and district authorities were amalgamated into single authorities. As a result of these authorities securing unitary status the number of local planning authorities in the region has been reduced to 13. At the time the North East of England Plan was adopted, of the 23 district and unitary authorities, 6 had adopted development plan documents under the PCPA 2004. The remaining 17 local planning authorities in the North East of England, who were yet to adopt a development plan document under the PCPA 2004 had local plans and saved unitary development plan policies, developed under the earlier requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

On revocation of the Regional Strategy, the statutory development plan would comprise the saved Structure Plan Policy from the Northumberland County Council and Northumberland National Park Joint Structure Plan which it is proposed to save, any saved Local Plan policies and adopted development plan documents. The statutory development plan may in future include any adopted neighbourhood plans that are prepared under the powers provided by the Localism Act. Revocation does not affect the statutory duty on local authorities to keep under review the matters which may be expected to affect the development of their area or the planning of its development.

A list of local plans in the North East of England region and their **current composition** is included at **Appendix C**. There are a total of:

- 20 Local Plans (includes five core strategies, four UDP's and 11 Local Plans) adopted prior to 2008 (this includes plans adopted in the former districts within Northumberland and Durham prior to those authorities receiving unitary status);
- 7 local authorities with adopted core strategies also retain saved policies from their respective Local Plans;
- 4 Core Strategies adopted shortly before or after 2008, when the North East of England Plan was adopted (no core strategies were adopted in the former Districts of Northumberland and Durham after July 2008)<sup>26</sup>;
- Development Plan Documents (DPDs) have also been adopted by Middlesbrough and South Tyneside after 2008;
- 2 mineral plans (both adopted prior to 2004);

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<sup>26</sup> Local Plans adopted from around this time onwards will have been drafted either in parallel with preparation of the Regional Strategy or after the Regional Strategy was published, and so will be in general conformity with the Regional Strategy.

- 2 waste plans, only one of which was adopted after 2004;
- 7 Joint Waste and Mineral Plans/ UDPs of which 2 were adopted after July 2008.

Within this Environmental Report references to local plan analysis will identify the current administrative composition of the North East (the 13 local planning authorities referenced above). Of these 13, four local authorities having a core strategy in place which is in general conformity with the Regional Strategy and Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as they were adopted shortly before, or after, July 2008 when the RSS was adopted). For the purposes of this assessment, these four can be considered up to date. Where appropriate, specific reference is also made to the planning policies contained in the DPDs adopted by South Tyneside and Middlesbrough following the publication of the RSS.

## 2.4 Reasonable Alternatives to the Plan to Revoke the Regional Strategies

Regional strategies, which form part of the development plan, set targets such as housing numbers for local authorities. In some areas this proved highly controversial, generated thousands of objections and is not consistent with the principles of localism. This Government believes that democratically elected local authorities working with their local people are better placed to assess and plan for the needs of their community, and make planning decisions, rather than unelected regional bodies. The Government therefore proposes revoking the North East of England Regional Strategy.

Consideration of the reasonable alternatives to a proposed policy or plan is a fundamental aspect of policy and planning development. Providing clear, reasoned justification for selection of a preferred planning policy following assessment of the alternatives is a pre-requisite for the preferred direction to gain wider and long term support. Recording the reasons for the selection of the preferred option can also aid any subsequent review, particularly if the assumptions that underpin any alternatives change over time.

In order to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive and the relevant UK transposing regulations, the Government is also required to present specific information concerning reasonable alternatives. Article 5 (1) of the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC requires that “*an environmental report shall be prepared in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, **and reasonable alternatives** taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated*”. Information to be provided includes “*an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with*” (Annex I (h)).

The European Commission guidance on the SEA Directive discusses possible interpretations of handling ‘reasonable alternatives’ as required by Article 5(1). It states that “*The alternatives chosen should be realistic. Part of the reason for studying alternatives is to find ways of reducing or avoiding the significant adverse effects of the proposed plan or programme...*”.

On this basis, the starting point for identifying alternatives to the revocation of the North East of England Regional Strategy has been the powers of the Secretary of State in regard to the Regional Strategies. As stated, the Secretary of State has the power to revoke, partially revoke or fully revoke the Regional Strategies by Order.

The previous Environmental Report on the proposed revocation of the North East of England Regional Strategy, published for consultation in October 2011, suggested two alternatives – either to revoke the North East of England Plan entirely, or to retain it. Responses to the consultation suggested a number of other alternatives (see Appendix F) including partial revocation. These were:

- Reviewing the regional strategies;
- Revoking the regional strategies but saving key policies;
- The retention of the Regional Strategy system with regional groupings of local authorities responsible for drafting them and adoption by the Secretary of State;
- Maintaining the plans and revising certain policies in order to make the plans more acceptable, as well as the possibility of local authorities producing joint development plans to cover specific issues;
- Revoking certain chapters or parts of the strategies and introducing transitional arrangements.

A number of alternatives are therefore considered as follows:

- Retention:
  - Retention of the North East of England Regional Strategy but not updating it in the future; or
  - Retention of the North East of England Regional Strategy and updating and maintaining it in the future, this would be done either by the Secretary of State; or regional groupings of local authorities followed by adoption by the Secretary of State; or by groups of local authorities working together to produce joint development plans to cover specific issues; or
- Partial revocation of the North East of England Regional Strategy either by:
  - Revoking all the quantified and spatially specific policies (for instance where a quantum of development, land for development or amounts of minerals to be extracted or waste disposal is allocated to a particular location in the region) and retaining for a transitional period the non spatial policies, ambitions and priorities; or
  - Retaining for a transitional period all the spatially specific policies (for instance where a quantum of development, or land for development or amounts of minerals to be extracted or waste disposal is allocated to a particular location in the region) and revoking the non spatial policies, ambitions and priorities; or

- Retaining for a transitional period sub-regional policies and priorities and revoking the rest of the Regional Strategy; or
- Retaining for a transitional period policies, ambitions and/ or priorities, the revocation of which may lead to likely significant negative environmental effects; or
- **Revocation** of the entire North East of England Regional Strategy.

Each alternative is discussed below in regard to its reasonableness.

## 2.4.1 Retention

### Retention of the North East of England Regional Strategy But Not Updating it in the Future

This option would mean that the North East of England Regional Strategy was not revoked, that all the policies within the North East of England Regional Strategy would remain part of the development plan for the purposes of determining planning applications and that local plans would continue to need to be in general conformity with the Regional Strategy but that the strategy would not be updated in the future. It is assumed that the policies, ambitions and priorities would not be revoked when the existing lifetime of the Regional Strategy was reached.

Some policies in the North East of England Plan are potentially in conflict with the intent of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which sets the Government's planning policies for England and how these are to be applied e.g. policies 28 and 29 on housing allocations, policies 18 on employment land portfolio and 20 on key employment sites.

The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. The NPPF intends to ensure that the Local Plan is at the heart of the plan-led system and in preparing local plans local authorities should plan to meet objectively assessed needs for housing and other forms of development which should include collaboration with other bodies where appropriate. Since local plans are required to be in general conformity with the Regional Strategy, and planning decisions should be in accordance with the development plan, which includes the North East of England Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, this also adds potential conflict with the policies set out in the NPPF.

Since there is no statutory power available for the Secretary of State to update the North East of England Regional Strategy, over time the strategy would become increasingly out of date. Therefore it is expected that retention of the policies, ambitions and priorities in the North East of England Regional Strategy, without update, could gradually lead to a decline in the positive effects that the strategy aimed to deliver and potential conflicts with policies that local communities wish to pursue will increase. Nevertheless, since the retention of the North East of England Regional Strategy forms an alternative approach to strategic planning across the region **it is considered to be a reasonable alternative.**

## Retention, Maintenance and Updating of the North East of England Regional Strategy

This option would mean that the North East of England Regional Strategy was not revoked, that the North East of England Plan would remain part of the development plan for the purposes of determining planning applications that local plans would continue to need to be in general conformity with the Regional Strategy and that it would continue to be maintained and updated in the future. However, the Localism Act has removed the regional planning tier and revoked the power to update the existing regional strategies. This means that the Secretary of State does not have the statutory powers to maintain or update the North East of England Regional Strategy and therefore, **the amendment of the regional strategies by the Secretary of State is not considered to be a reasonable alternative because there is no power to do it.**

The 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act does provide for joint working by local authorities and county councils. In addition the Localism Act sets out the duty to co-operate, which requires local planning authorities to work together when preparing strategic cross boundary policies in their local and marine plans. This means that groups of local authorities can work together and formally adopt a statutory Local Plan covering their joint areas and, could choose to work together to adopt and maintain a plan over the region. Whilst there is substantial evidence of local authorities working already at the regional or sub-regional scale on specific issues of responsibility and mutual benefit (such as waste management), it seems highly unlikely that all local authorities within region, irrespective of background, circumstance and political composition would work in unison to update the North East of England Regional Strategy, particularly where such a position would place them in conflict with national government policy. **In consequence, this is not considered to be a reasonable alternative.**

### 2.4.2 Partial Revocation of the North East of England Regional Strategy

#### Revocation of all the Quantified and Spatially Specific Policies

This option would mean that all the spatially specific policies which allocate a quantum of development or land for development to a particular location and/ or local authority in the region (i.e. housing allocations; pitches for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people; mineral allocations; waste disposal) would be revoked, but that the non spatial policies would be retained. This would leave the policies in place which would set out a spatial vision for the region as well as policies that encourage particular types of development or seek to protect environmental resources and services as well as seeking wider sustainability objectives. These policies would not be updated in the future as the Secretary of State no longer has the statutory powers to do this. These policies would therefore be retained for a transitional period to allow local authorities in the region to have updated their plans. **This is considered to be a reasonable alternative.**

#### Revocation of All the Non Quantitative and Spatially Specific Policies

This option for partial revocation of the North East of England Regional Strategy would mean that all quantitative targets (such as the one for renewable energy) or the spatially specific policies which



allocate a quantum of development or land for development to a particular location and/or local authority in the region (i.e. housing allocations; employment (land and/ or jobs), mineral allocations and waste allocations) would be retained and the non-spatially specific policies, ambitions and priorities would be revoked (such as protection and enhancement of biodiversity, the historic environment, the quality of the built environment).

As set out above, the policies in the North East of England Regional Strategy that establish a quantum of development or land for development to a particular location and/or local authority in the North East of England region may result in some confusion with the intent of the National Planning Policy Framework which sets the Government's planning policies for England and how these are to be applied. Regard must be had to the NPPF in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and the NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions. The NPPF intends to ensure that the Local Plan is at the heart of the plan-led system and expects local authorities and communities to plan to meet objectively assessed needs for housing and other forms of development for their areas, working collaboratively with other bodies where appropriate. Since local plans need to be in general conformity with the North East of England Regional Strategy, and planning decisions need to be made in line with the RSS this could create confusion and potential conflict in the planning system.

Nevertheless, the retention of the quantified policies or the spatially specific policies which allocate a quantum of development or land for development to a particular location and/ or local authority in the region, provides an alternative approach to strategic planning, particularly where local plans are out of date, and do not contain up-date quantified policies such as for housing. These quantified policies could therefore be retained for a transitional period, to allow local authorities in the region to have updated their plans. **This is considered to be a reasonable alternative.**

### Revoking All Regional Policies, Ambitions and Priorities and Retaining All Sub-regional Policies, Ambitions and Priorities

This option for partial revocation would retain the sub-regional policies and revoke the rest of the plan. However, as for the option above which considered retention of policies that set out a quantum of development to be delivered in a broad location or within a local planning authority area, this is in conflict with the intent of the National Planning Policy Framework. Since regional strategies form part of the development plan, this creates confusion and potential conflict in the planning system. Furthermore, it is questionable whether the sub-regional policies would function correctly in the absence of the high level apportionment policies on housing etc. In addition, over time the regional plan policies are becoming increasingly out of date as the regional tier of planning has been removed and the regional plans are not being kept up to date. **This is not therefore considered to be a reasonable alternative.**

### Revoking All Policies, Ambitions and Priorities Except Those Where Revocation Would Lead to Significant Negative Environmental Effects

The NPPF sets out national planning policies which support and protect the environment (for example: Green Belt land, meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change and those



policies conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment, including policies to minimise impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity).

This option for partial revocation of the North East of England strategy would mean that individual policies, ambitions and/or priorities would be retained if revoking them may lead to likely significant negative environmental effects once mitigating measures have been taken account.

This reasonable alternative would lead to the retention of individual policies in the Regional Strategy which are not likely to be in conflict the National Planning Policy Framework, do not undermine the localist approach to plan making and decision making and, if removed, would result in a significant environmental impact taking account of mitigation. These policies could therefore be retained for a transitional period to allow local authorities in the region to have updated their plans. **This is considered to be a reasonable alternative.**

## 2.5 Summary

Following the application of the reasonableness test in compliance with Article 5(1) of the SEA Directive, the following have been taken forward for assessment within the SEA:

- **Revocation** of the entire North East of England Regional Strategy;
- **Retention** of the North East of England Regional Strategy but not updating it in the future;
- **Partial revocation of the North East of England Regional Strategy either by:**
  - Revoking all the quantified and spatially specific policies (for instance where a quantum of development, land for development or amounts of minerals to be extracted or waste disposal is allocated to a particular location in the region) and retaining for a transitional period the non spatial policies, ambitions and priorities; or
  - Retaining for a transitional period all the spatially specific policies where a quantum of development or land for development is allocated to a particular location in the region and revoking the non-spatial policies, ambitions and priorities; or
  - Retention for a transitional period policies, ambitions and/or priorities, the revocation of which may lead to likely significant negative environmental effects.

Each alternative has been assessed using the approach outlined in **Section 3**. The results of the assessment are presented in **Section 4**, with the detailed assessment contained in **Appendix D** and **E**.

## 3. SEA Methodology

### 3.1 Overview

This section sets out how the SEA has been carried out. This includes the steps in the SEA process, when it was undertaken and by whom (**Section 3.1**), the scope of the assessment and the topics considered (**Section 3.2**), the baseline and contextual information used (**Section 3.3**) and the approach taken to completing the assessment (**Section 3.4**). Technical difficulties encountered during the assessment are also summarised (**Section 3.5**).

The approach to this assessment builds on the methodology employed in the Environmental Report published in October 2011. The steps that have been undertaken to date and their relationship to the requirements of the SEA Directive are summarised in **Table 3.1**.

**Table 3.1 The SEA Process and Key Steps Undertaken During the Environmental Assessment of the Proposed Revocation of the Regional Strategies**

SEA Process	Key Steps in the Environmental Assessment of the Revocation of the Regional Strategies
<p><b>Article 3 (1)</b> requires that an environmental assessment shall be carried out for certain plans (as defined in Article 3 paragraphs 2-4) which are likely to have significant environmental effects.</p> <p>Member States are required to determine whether these plans are likely to have significant environmental effects either through case-by-case examination and/or by specifying types of plans in order to ensure that plans with likely significant effects on the environment are covered by the Directive (<b>Article 3(5)</b>).</p> <p>Member States must make their conclusions under Article 3(5), including the reasons for not requiring an environmental assessment, available to the public (<b>Article 3(7)</b>).</p>	<p>The Government announced its intention to carry out an environmental assessment of the revocation of the regional strategies in a Written Ministerial Statement on 5 April 2011. The requirements of Articles 3(5) and (7) did not therefore apply.</p>
<p><b>Article 5 (4)</b> requires that 'designated environmental authorities' for strategic environmental assessment are consulted when deciding the scope and level of detail which must be included in the environmental reports.</p> <p>The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 define these "Consultation Bodies" for plans that relate to England as the Countryside Agency and English Nature (now amalgamated to form Natural England), the Environment Agency and English Heritage.</p>	<p>The Consultation Bodies in England<sup>27</sup> were consulted on the scope and level of detail of the Environmental Reports on 6 May 2011, and were given 5 weeks as required by regulations to respond. The equivalent bodies in the Devolved Administrations were also consulted.</p> <p>Their comments were used as the basis for deciding the scope and level of detail of the material included in the Environmental Reports. Consideration was also given to more detailed textual comments provided by the consultation bodies.</p>

<sup>27</sup> The Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England.

**Table 3.1 (continued) The SEA Process and Key Steps Undertaken During the Environmental Assessment of the Proposed Revocation of the Regional Strategies**

SEA Process	Key Steps in the Environmental Assessment of the Revocation of the Regional Strategies
<p><b>Article 5 (1)</b> states that where an environmental assessment is required under Article 3(1), an Environmental Report shall be prepared in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan, are identified, described and evaluated.</p> <p>The Environmental Report shall include the information that may reasonably be required taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail of the plan, its stage in the decision making process and the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process to avoid duplication.</p>	<p>An Environmental Report was prepared for each region. Each considered the likely significant effects of revoking the Regional Strategy within the context of wider reforms to the planning system. This included the replacement of the national planning policy suite with the NPPF, decentralising planning powers to local authorities, and introducing a duty to co-operate to support local authorities in both delivering for their local communities and addressing strategic cross-boundary issues.</p>
<p><b>Article 6</b> requires that the draft plan and the Environmental Report shall be made available to the designated consultation bodies and to the public.</p>	<p>The completed Environmental Reports were sent to the Consultation Bodies in England and the equivalent bodies in the devolved administrations and simultaneously published for public consultation on 20 October 2011. The consultation period ended on 20 January 2012. As the Environmental Reports dealt with the effects of the revocation and not the adoption of plans, there were no draft plans to consult on.</p>
<p><b>Article 7</b> sets out provisions for consulting on draft plans which are likely to have a significant effect on the environment in another member State.</p>	<p>The Government did not consult any other Member State. The revocation of the regional strategies was not considered likely to have a significant effect on the environment of any other Member State, and no other Member States indicated otherwise.</p>
<p><b>Article 8</b> states that the Environmental Report prepared pursuant to Article 6 and the results of any trans boundary consultations entered into pursuant to Article 7 shall be taken into account during the preparation of the plan and before its adoption or submission to the legislative procedure.</p>	<p>A total of 103 comments were received in response to the first consultation. Annex F provides a summary of the responses that are relevant to the revocation of the Regional Strategy for the North East of England. Each response has been carefully considered and, as appropriate, informed this updated environmental assessment.</p>

As a result of considering the responses received, the changes made to the approach to this assessment have included:

- Providing additional contextual information for the assessment including the review of plans and programmes and updated baseline for each of the 12 SEA Directive Annex I(f) topics and presenting this in separate topic chapters;
- Providing additional information on the details of the plan to revoke the regional strategies and the reasonable alternatives to them, including reasons for the selection of some alternatives and the discontinuation of others;
- Providing additional information in the assessment of revocation and retention of each Regional Strategy policy explicitly against all 12 of the SEA Directive Annex I(f) topics;
- Identifying, characterising and assessing any likely significant effects of the plan and the reasonable alternatives, based on a common interpretation of what constitutes a significant effect for each topic and reflecting the possible timing effects;

- Providing additional information on likely cumulative, synergistic and secondary effects of the plan to revoke the regional strategies;
- Assessing the likely significant effects at a number of geographic levels (national, regional, sub-regional and local) depending on the content, intent and specificity of the individual policy;
- Providing further information that includes proposals to mitigate effects including more sub-regionally information on an understanding of the duty to co-operate;
- Providing further information that includes proposals to monitor any significant effects.

This SEA of the plan to revoke the North East of England Regional Strategy was undertaken in 2012 by AMEC on behalf of DCLG.

## 3.2 Scope of the Assessment

The scope of this assessment reflects the potential environmental effects of revoking the regional strategies. **Section 3.2.1** sets out the core topics required for consideration by the SEA Directive and their interpretation for the purposes of the assessment. **Section 3.2.2** sets out the geographic scope of the SEA.

### 3.2.1 Environmental Categories Included in the Scope of the Assessment

The range of potential environmental effects under consideration has been informed primarily by the SEA Directive and Regulations, using published government guidance<sup>28</sup>. Annex I of the SEA Directive and Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulation requires that the assessment includes information on the “*likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as: biodiversity; population; human health; fauna; flora; soil; water; air; climatic factors; material assets; cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage; landscape; and the inter-relationship between the issues referred to*”. These environmental categories have been used throughout this report.

In the absence of detailed guidance on their content, a number of these environmental categories (e.g. population, human health and material assets) can be subject to varying interpretation. Within this report:

- ‘Population’ includes information on demographics and generic social and socio-economic issues including accessibility issues;
- ‘Human health’ includes information on mortality, illness and indices of perceived well-being;
- ‘Material assets’ includes information waste management and minerals.

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<sup>28</sup> Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005). A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive.

Land use is not explicitly identified in the list of 12 SEA topics; however, for the purposes of this assessment and in particular given that these are assessments of strategies whose primary objectives include the determination of the location of development, it is included under the topic of soil. The soil topic has also been expanded to include consideration of geology.

**Table 3.2** shows how the categories in this report reflect those in the SEA Regulations.

**Table 3.2 Categories of Effects Considered by the SEA of the Plan to Revoke the Regional Strategies**

Categories in the SEA Regulations	Categories Used in the SEA of the Revocation of Regional Strategies
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	Biodiversity and Nature Conservation (which includes flora and fauna, and the functioning of ecosystems)
Population	Population (including socio-economic effects and accessibility)
Human Health	Human Health
Soil	Soil and Geology (including land use, important geological sites, and the contamination of soils)
Water	Water Quality and Resources (including inland surface freshwater and groundwater resources, and inland surface freshwater, groundwater, estuarine, coastal and marine water quality)
Air	Air Quality
Climatic factors	Climate Change (including greenhouse gas emissions, predicted effects of climate change such as flooding and the ability to adapt)
Material assets	Material Assets (including waste management and minerals)
Cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage	Cultural Heritage (including architectural and archaeological heritage)
Landscape	Landscape and Townscape

### 3.2.2 Geographic Scope of the Assessment

The SEA considers the effects revocation, partial revocation or retention of the regional strategies. In so doing, it examines the effects of each alternative for each policy contained in each Regional Strategy. Consideration of these effects therefore occurs at a number of geographic levels, dependent on the content, intent and specificity of the individual policy. This is at one (or more) of the following levels:

- **The national level** – the cumulative assessment includes consideration of the effects of the plan to revoke all eight regional strategies across England. This draws together the effects of the individual regional assessments and provides a view at the broader geographic scale;
- **The regional level** – the assessment includes the consideration of the effects of the plan to revoke individual Regional Strategy policies that apply at a regional level e.g. policies that encourage an integrated approach to conserving and enhancing the landscape, natural environment and historic environment;

- **The sub-regional level** – the assessment includes consideration of the effects of the plan to revoke individual Regional Strategy policies that apply to an identified sub-region or area e.g. policies that seek to promote economic regeneration of a sub-region, recognised as having a specific identity or character;
- **The local level** – the assessment includes consideration of the effects of the plan to revoke Regional Strategy policies that will have a specific effect at a local planning authority level, or will affect a specific designated area.

The range of effects considered by the assessment therefore span from the national to the local. To ensure comprehensive geographic coverage of the potential effects, contextual information has been collated at the appropriate levels; one at national level (England) and the other at the regional level that includes reference to specific local information and sites where relevant and appropriate to do so.

Notwithstanding this, the SEA is strategic, and does not assess the detailed local or site specific issues in the same degree of detail that would typically be required for an SEA of a Local Plan document (in line with the Article 4(3) and 5(2) of the SEA Directive).

### 3.2.3 Short, Medium and Long-Term Timescales

When considering the timing of potential effects of the plan to revoke the Regional Strategies, the commentary classifies effects as 'short,' 'medium' or 'long term.' This reflects an intention to capture the differences that could arise from the plan to revoke regional strategies due to timing. For example, if the plan leads to the revocation of a specific policy that does not have an immediate equivalent (such as suitable piece of legislation or an alternate national policy) to effect ongoing delivery of the policy intent, there could be transitory effects until an alternative mechanism (such as additional policy guidance) was identified and implemented. It is also consistent with the direction contained in Annex II (2) of the SEA Directive where the characteristic of the effects should have regard to 'the probability, **duration**, frequency and reversibility of the effects'.

Annex 1, paragraph 214 of the NPPF identifies a 12 month implementation period in which 'decision-takers may continue to give full weight to relevant policies adopted since 2004 even if there is a limited degree of conflict with this Framework.' The period began when the NPPF was published in March 2012 and will end in March 2013.

Given the time to prepare, consult and update a Local Plan, it is assumed that all local planning authorities in England will have adopted a Local Plan within 5 years of the NPPF being published. This is a pragmatic judgement (informed by the progress of local planning authorities to produce Core Strategies in compliance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) and has been made solely for the purposes of this assessment.

Finally, for the purposes of this assessment, the overall duration of the Regional Strategy to be revoked provides a defined limit to the duration of the assessment (i.e. approximately out to 2021).

Using this as the basis, 'short term' is defined as the remaining time in the transition period (9 months or 0.75 years), 'medium term' as more than 0.75 and no more than 5 years and 'long term' as over 5 years to the end of the Regional Strategy lifetime.

It should be noted that in practice when applying the definitions of the different terms within the assessment, the boundaries between terms are more flexible than a strict reading of the definitions implies. There are for example, instances where effects in the short term extend for a limited period into the medium term. Where this occurs, it is recorded in the assessment commentary although it will still be only assessed as short term in the assessment matrix itself (see **Section 3.4** for an explanation of the approach to the assessment).

### 3.3 Context and Baseline

#### 3.3.1 Review of Plans and Programmes

The SEA Regulation requires a review of the plan to revoke the regional strategies "*relationship with other relevant plans and programmes*". One of the first steps in undertaking the SEA is to identify and review other relevant plans, programmes, policies and strategies (herein after referred to as 'plans and programmes') that could have an effect on the plan to revoke regional strategies. These may be plans and programmes at an international/European, national, regional or sub-regional level, as relevant to the scope of the revocation plan. The summary within each topic section in **Appendix E** identifies the relationships between the revocation plan and these other documents; i.e. how the plan could be affected by the other plans' and programmes' aims, objectives and/or targets, or how it could contribute to the achievement of any environmental and sustainability objectives and targets set out in these plans and programmes.

The review of plans and programmes also helped complete the environmental baseline and help determine the key issues. The review also provided the policy context for the assessment.

#### 3.3.2 Collecting Baseline Evidence

An essential part of the SEA process is to identify the current state of the environment and its likely evolution under a 'business as usual' scenario. Only with sufficient knowledge of the existing baseline conditions can the likely significant effects of the revocation plan be identified and assessed. The SEA also requires that the actual effects of implementing the revocation plan on baseline conditions are monitored.

All the environmental topics listed in the SEA Directive and Regulations have been found to be relevant for the revocation plan (see **Table 3.2**). These were consulted upon at the scoping stage and have been amended to reflect the views of the statutory consultees.



A primary source of information has been the published sustainability appraisals, completed to accompany the consultation on the draft regional strategies to provide information regarding the likely evolution of the current state of the environment without the implementation of the revocation plan. However, it is recognised that such information reflects data collected a number of years past and as such has been supplemented with more recent information from a variety of sources, including (amongst others) Defra, DECC, the Environment Agency, English Heritage, Natural England and the Office of National Statistics.

### 3.3.3 Presenting the Context and Baseline Information

**Appendix E** sets out the collated contextual and baseline information, on a topic-by-topic basis, for each of the 10 assessment topics (see **Table 3.2**), structured as follows:

- **introduction** - provides an overview and definition of the topic;
- **summary of national and regional plans and programmes** - provides an overview of the policy context in which the revocation plan sits;
- **relevant aspects of the current state of the environment at a national and regional level** - provides an overview of the baseline and the key topic specific baseline factors which will need to be considered as part of the assessment;
- **the likely evolution of these baseline conditions without the implementation of the revocation plan** - provides an overview of how the baseline is likely to change in the absence of the revocation plan, an understanding of this is key to understanding the effects of the revocation plan on the topic area;
- **the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;**
- **current problems in areas of particular environmental importance** (such as those designated under the Wild Birds and Habitats Directives);
- **guidance as to how the significance of potential effects has been determined;**
- **the assessment of likely significant effects arising from the revocation plan** - including information on the potential nature and scale of effects, proposed mitigation measures (where appropriate) and measures for enhancement, assumptions and uncertainties and additional information that may be required;
- **proposed mitigation measures** – including an expansion of those measures identified including more detailed commentary on, for example, the duty to co-operate;
- **proposed measures to monitor** the effects of the revocation plan.



## 3.4 Approach to Assessing the Effects

### 3.4.1 Prediction and Evaluation of Effects

In line with the SEA Directive and taking into account ODPM (now DCLG) *Practical Guide to the SEA Directive*<sup>29</sup>, the assessment process seeks to *predict the significant environmental effects of the plan or programme*. This is done by identifying the likely changes to the baseline conditions as a result of the implementing the proposed plan (or reasonable alternative). These changes are described (where possible) in terms of their geographic scale, the timescale over which they could occur, whether the effects would be temporary or permanent, positive or negative, likely or unlikely, frequent or rare. Where numerical information has not been available, the assessment has been based on professional judgement and with reference to relevant legislation, regulations and policy.

To reflect the specific nature of the plan to revoke the regional strategies, the assessment has been completed in two stages:

- **A high level (or screening) assessment** of the effects of the proposals for each Regional Strategy policy against all SEA topics to identify those where there could be a likely significant effect (using definitions as outlined in **Table 3.4**); and
- **A detailed assessment of the likely significant effects** (both positive and negative) identified through the high level assessment process of each Regional Strategy policy, presented under each SEA topic.

The high level assessment is presented in **Appendix D** in an assessment matrix (see **Table 3.3**) and the detailed assessment is presented in **Appendix E** at the end of each topic chapter and summarised in **Section 4**, and **5** of this report.

The high level assessments record the following in the associated commentary:

- the identification and description of the potential effects;
- when the effect(s) could occur, and how long they could last (e.g. short, medium or long term);
- the assumptions and uncertainties that underpin the assessment (and any information needed to address uncertainties);
- potential avoidance or mitigation measures for any likely significant negative effects; and
- possible enhancement measures where positive effects are identified.

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<sup>29</sup> ODPM (2005) *A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive*. Available online at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/practicalguidesea>

**Table 3.3 High Level Assessment Matrix**

Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil and Geology			Water Quality and Resources			Air Quality			Climatic Change			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape and Townscape			Commentary			
	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L				
Retention																															Likely Significant Effects of Retention ..... Mitigation Measures ..... Assumptions .... Uncertainty .... Etc
Revocation																															Etc

<b>Score Key:</b>	<b>++</b> Significant Positive effect	<b>+</b> Minor positive effect	<b>0</b> No overall effect	<b>-</b> Minor negative effect	<b>--</b> Significant negative effect	<b>?</b> Score uncertain
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*NB: where more than one symbol is presented in a box it indicates that the SEA has found more than one score for the category. Where the scores are both positive and negative, the boxes are deliberately not coloured. Where a box is coloured but also contains a ?, this indicates uncertainty over whether the effect could be a minor or significant effect although a professional judgement is expressed. A conclusion of uncertainty arises where there is insufficient evidence for expert judgement to conclude an effect.*

S – short term (less than 0.75 year), M – medium term (between 0.75 and 5 years) and L – long term (>5 years)

### 3.4.2 Determining Significance

Topic-specific definitions have been developed for what constitutes a significant effect, a minor effect or a neutral effect for each of the 10 environmental issues; these can be found in the relevant topic chapters in **Appendix E**. **Table 3.4** shows an example of these definitions along with the symbols used to record the effects within the assessment.

Table 3.4 Illustrative Guidance for the Assessment of Significance for Biodiversity and Nature Conservation

Effect	Description	Illustrative Guidance
++	Significant positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative would have a significant and sustained positive impact on European or national designated sites and/or protected species. (e.g. fully supports all conservation objectives on site, long term increase in population of designated species);</li> <li>Alternative would have a strong positive effect on local biodiversity (e.g. through removal of all existing disturbance/pollutant emissions, or creation of new habitats leading to long term improvement to ecosystem structure and function);</li> <li>Alternative will create new areas of wildlife interest with improved public access in areas where there is a high demand for access to these sites.</li> </ul>
+	Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative would have a minor positive effect on European or national designated sites and/or protected species (e.g. supports one of the conservation objectives on site, short term increase in population of designated species);</li> <li>Alternative may have a positive net effect on local biodiversity (e.g. through reduction in disturbance/pollutant emissions, or some habitat creation leading to temporary improvement to ecosystem structure and function);</li> <li>Alternative will enhance existing public access to areas of wildlife interest in areas where there is some demand for these sites.</li> </ul>
0	No (neutral effects)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative would not have any effects on European or national designated sites and/or any species (including both designated and non-designated species);</li> <li>Alternative would not affect public right of way or access to areas of wildlife interest.</li> </ul>
-	Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative would have minor short-term (direct or indirect) negative effects on non-designated conservation sites and species (e.g. through a minor increase in disturbance/pollutant emissions, or some loss of habitat leading to temporary loss of ecosystem structure and function);</li> <li>Alternative will decrease public access to areas of wildlife interest in areas where there is some demand for these sites.</li> </ul>
--	Significant negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative would have a major negative and sustained effect on European or national designated sites and/or protected species (e.g. prevents reaching all conservation objectives on site, long term decrease in populations of designated species). These impacts could not reasonably be compensated for;</li> <li>Alternative would have strong negative effects on local biodiversity (e.g. through an minor increase in disturbance/ pollutant emissions, or considerable loss of habitat leading to long term loss of ecosystem structure and function).</li> </ul>
?	Uncertain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From the level of information available the impact that the Alternative would have on this objective is uncertain.</li> </ul>

### 3.4.3 Specific Issues Considered when Assessing the Effects of the Plan to Revoke the Regional Strategies

When considering the effects of retention of a Regional Strategy policy, we have used the prediction of effects contained in the relevant sustainability appraisal (for this report for the North East of England Plan) completed to accompany the consultation on the draft Regional Strategy). Using this information does have limitations (in that the effects identified use an evidence base of varying age, are presented in differing forms and assess effects over differing timeframes) and where these occur, additional information has been identified to supplement the assessment; however, the principle remains consistent with the requirements of Article 5(3) of the SEA Directive, '*relevant information available on*

*environmental effects of the plans and programmes and obtained at other levels of decision making ... may be used.*

When assessing the effects of revocation, the following has been considered:

- **Whether the purpose, intent or specific target could be delivered by other existing legislation or government policy?** Where the answer to this question is yes, the relevant legislation, policy or guidance has been identified, along with any relevant regionally specific evidence to substantiate the conclusion. In many instances, particularly for policies of a pervasive and non-spatially specific nature, the specific paragraphs of the NPPF have been referenced in the individual policy assessments to provide a substantial alternative source of planning policy relevant to the Local Plan. For a number of Regional Strategy policies it has also been considered relevant to reference the duty to co-operate. Where this is the case, specific local examples of current cooperation are also cited where available. Revocation of the Regional Strategy and the reliance on the NPPF creates a situation where there will be a delay, as some authorities will need to review and update their Local Plan to reflect NPPF policies and the needs of their local communities. In these instances where there is a lack of an up to date Local Plan, the uncertainty over policy, including the quantum and preferred location of development, is likely to affect whether developers submit planning applications for new development. As a result, it is AMEC's view that there will be a lessening in the short and medium term on development activity and the resulting effects occurring; although it is noted that the application of the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development and its policies to boost the supply of housing will help where plans or policies are absent, silent or out of date;
- **If the purpose, intent or specific target of the Regional Strategy policy is not likely to be sustained beyond revocation, the effects have been identified, described and assessed.** Where such policy changes are determined, the effects identified, described and assessed will also be proportionate to the scope of the policy considered. For example, where the Regional Strategy policy applies uniformly across the region e.g. priorities to increase more sustainable modes of transport for passengers and freight, the promotion of agri-environment schemes or the provision of regional renewable targets, such effects will be described at the regional level. However, there are Regional Strategy policies that do have a direct and explicit consequence for local authorities such as housing, infrastructure projects, pitches for gypsies and travellers, and mineral and waste. In these instances, we have also considered the implications and effects on individual local plans.

### Considering Effects on Local Plans

Where we have identified that revocation of a Regional Strategy policy will have an effect on the environment and that this will have a consequence for Local Plan policies and/or local areas, we have examined these effects in more detail. We have compared the policies in the North East of England Plan on housing allocations, allocations of pitches for gypsies, travellers and showpeople, employment (both jobs and employment land), renewable energy, land won aggregates and rock, waste apportionment and policies on the city-regions and any site specific policies with the equivalent policies in Local Plan and/or core strategies in the region. This analysis is set out in **Appendix C** and has then been reflected, where relevant in the assessment of individual Plan policies (**Appendix D**).

It is also noted that the plans adopted after July 2006 are also highly likely to have been subject to SEA, given that the SEA regulation came into effect in July 2004 with a two year transitional arrangement. Where SEA has been undertaken of local plans and the information is in the public domain, the assessments (usually presented as a combined Sustainability Appraisal and SEA) have been reviewed when relevant to provide additional information and evidence within the assessment presented in **Appendix D**. The SEA process also provides an assurance that at the point of adoption of the Local Plan that the likely significant effects of the Local Plan policies have also been identified, characterised and assessed.

### Considering the Effects of the Regional Economic Strategy

The vision, targets, priorities, implementation priorities and growth areas of the former Regional Economic Strategy (RES) have been presented in **Appendix H**. The vision, targets, priorities, implementation priorities have been mapped onto the policies of the former Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the North East of England. The mapping demonstrates that the RES and RSS are inextricably linked and in many instances the policies in the RSS are the same as the commitments in the RES. Where this occurs and in order to avoid duplication of assessment, the mapping demonstrates how the effects of both have been considered in detail **Appendix D**.

#### 3.4.4 Secondary, Cumulative and Synergistic Effects Assessment<sup>30</sup>

SEA also requires that secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects of the options are assessed. These terms are explained in **Table 3.5**.

**Table 3.5 Definitions of Secondary, Cumulative and Synergistic Effects**

Type of Effect	Definition*
Secondary (or indirect)	Effects that do not occur as a direct result of the plan to revoke the Regional Strategy, but occur at distance from the direct impacts or as a result of a complex pathway. Examples of a secondary effect of the plan to revoke could include the materials (and embedded carbon) used in any development or infrastructure project identified.
Cumulative	Effects that occur where the revocation or retention of several individual Regional Strategy policies which each may have an insignificant effect, combine to have a significant effect. Examples of a cumulative effect of the plan to revoke Regional Strategy could include the potential effects on a European designated site, where a habitat or species is vulnerable and the cumulative effects of disturbance arising from uncoordinated development occurring simultaneously in adjacent local authorities causes a significant impact. Cumulative effects could also occur across a region or across more than one region.
Synergistic	Effects that interact to produce a new total effect that could be greater than the sum of the individual effects.

\*Adapted from SEA guidance, ODPM (2005).

<sup>30</sup> This includes consideration of the effects in the short, medium and long terms; permanent and temporary and positive and negative effects.

For the assessment of secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects to be effective, they should be considered as part of each assessment, rather than to being seen as a separate assessment. For the purposes of brevity, these effects which tend to be grouped together are captured subsequently under the heading of cumulative effects.

### 3.4.5 Assumptions Used in the Assessment

The assumptions that have been used in the assessment are as follows:

- **The effects and findings of the relevant Sustainability Appraisal are valid over the lifetime of the relevant Regional Strategy; however, that there may be some variation in the short term.** For example, all regional strategies contain housing allocations, quantified on an annual basis and over the lifetime of the plan at the region and local authority level. It is evident that since adoption of the regional strategies, actual housing completions per annum are below the levels expected in each strategy. In consequence, when considering the quantum of growth in the short term, based on the actual figures to date, retention may lead to a lessening of some effects identified in the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal (both benefits of increased housing provision and any negative effects arising from land take and loss of any natural resources); however, we have assumed that over the lifetime of the Regional Strategy that the housing policy will still be delivered and that the medium and long term effects would remain unchanged by the short term deviation. It is appreciated that whilst this appears to be reasonable assumption, it could be affected by the health of the economy or market changes. However, determining alternative credible views on the likely future outcome of regional strategies and their expectations for new development risks adding an extra layer of subjectivity to a process that is already relying heavily on judgements about future impacts in an uncertain world;
- **For revocation, the assessments anticipate that local plans will be put in place consistent with the principles and policies set out in the NPPF.** This includes the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the expectation that “to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system” and that “the planning system should play an active role in guiding development to sustainable solutions”. These expectations are reflected in the assessment of effects at the local level. However, it will take time for local plans to be put in place which may result in some uncertainties over the effects of revocation in the short and medium terms. The application of the NPPFs presumption in favour of sustainable development and its policies to boost the supply of housing will help where plans or policies are absent, silent or out of date;
- **For the purposes of providing a consistent interpretation of short, medium and long term, the definitions, as set out in section 3.2.3, have been applied.** The definitions of short, medium and long term reflected the assumption that for the purposes of the assessment, revocation was considered to occur concurrent with when the assessment was undertaken. This minimised the need to speculate over when exactly the regional strategies could be revoked, was compatible with the Government’s policy to rapidly abolish the Regional Strategies subject to the outcome of the consultation process, enabled the assessment to optimise the use of baseline information as evidence to inform the assessment of effects and enabled the assessment to consider the effects during any

transitional period. The approach was also consistent with current SEA guidance and practice;

- **It is assumed that local authorities will continue to work together on cross boundary strategic issues.** This will be supported by the new duty to co-operate in relation to the planning of sustainable development. The duty will ensure that local authorities and other public bodies are involved in a continual process of constructive and active engagement which will maximise effective working on development planning in relation to strategic planning issues that cross administrative boundaries.

It should be noted that the effects of the recent Government housing and planning package changes have not been considered in detail in this assessment as policy detail is still being developed; however it may prove that the increased emphasis on growth and development given by these proposals addresses some of the effects on the short and medium term arising from the uncertainties in those nine authorities which now comprise the region without local plans in general conformity with the Regional Strategy. As stated in paragraph 2.3.7, four local authorities are identified as having a core strategy in place which is in general conformity with the Regional Strategy and Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as they were adopted shortly before, or after, July 2008 when the RSS was adopted). For the purposes of this assessment, these four can be considered up to date. Where appropriate, specific reference is made to the composition and content of DPD's adopted by South Tyneside and Middlesbrough following the publication of the RSS.

## 3.5 Technical Difficulties

### 3.5.1 Assessing the Effects of Revocation is a New Requirement

Until the European Court judgement<sup>31</sup> in March 2012, the legal understanding was that SEA was only applied to the preparation and modification of relevant plans and programmes. The ruling now extends the application to the revocation of land use plans. Whilst there is guidance and relatively well established processes available to assess the effects of a plan's preparations, there is no equivalent for revocation and no established practice on how to undertake such an assessment. Necessarily then, this assessment is part of a body of emerging practice and is the first such that is in compliance with the SEA Directive requirements in the UK.

The method adopted to assess the likely environmental effects of revoking the regional strategies has therefore had to take account of this lack of established practice. The approach taken builds on the previous voluntary approach contained in the earlier assessment of the plan to revoke the regional strategies published in October 2011 as well as the comments received from consultees.

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<sup>31</sup> The judgement in Case C-567/10 *Inter-Environnement Bruxelles ASBL v Région de Bruxelles-Capitale*.



### 3.5.2 Ensuring Consistency

The assessment of effects, in particular of retention of the Regional Strategy has used information from the relevant sustainability appraisal of each Regional Strategy. Whilst each sustainability appraisal has been completed in a manner consistent with government guidance, they are different in approach, format and assessment of effects which has created difficulties in ensuring that the assessment of the plan to revoke regional strategies is consistent across all eight regions. For example, some appraisals have assessed the effects of each proposed policy (South East Plan, North East of England Plan) whilst others present the assessment findings thematically (the North East). Furthermore, the SEA topics considered vary in depth and detail, and their assessment (through differing assessment frameworks comprising of assessment objectives which number from 14 to 25) is also marked different. Lastly, the sustainability appraisals were completed iteratively at different times between mid 2004 and mid 2009 and so used differing baselines to provide context for the respective assessments.

The Sustainability Appraisal of the North East of England Plan was undertaken iteratively reflecting the stages in the Plan's development (Draft Regional Spatial Strategy, Proposed Changes and Final Revisions). To support this assessment we have used information from the sustainability appraisal of the Final Revisions.

### 3.5.3 Uncertainty and Future Effects

The assessments inevitably reflect the fact that until adopted local plans are in place there must be some uncertainty as to their likely effects, notwithstanding the expectation that they will be drawn up to be consistent with national policy and subject to rigorous environmental assessment through sustainability appraisal. The environmental effects of revoking the regional strategies will clearly be dependent, to a greater or lesser extent depending on the impact under consideration, on future decisions by local authorities, individually and collectively. The uncertainty arising from local decisions has been reflected as appropriate in the assessment of the individual policies in **Appendix D** and in the consideration in the topic chapters contained in **Appendix E**.





## 4. Assessment of Effects of Revoking the North East of England Regional Strategy and the Reasonable Alternatives

### 4.1 Overview

This section presents the results of the assessment which has been carried out with sub-sections dealing with the effects of revocation, retention and partial revocation. The assessment has been carried out using the methodology described in **Section 3**.

This chapter draws in particular on detailed evidence in **Appendices D** and **E**. **Appendix D** presents the details of the assessment on a policy by policy basis and **Appendix E** presents detailed comments on each SEA topic including comments on significant effects where these have been identified.

### 4.2 Effects of Revoking the North East of England Regional Strategy

**Table 4.1** summarises the effects of revoking the North East of England Regional Strategy against the 12 SEA topics. As noted in section 3.4.3, the Regional Economic Strategy commitments have been mapped onto the RSS policies (**Appendix H**). Due to the intentional overlap between them, the RSS policies include those of the RES and in order to avoid duplication, the assessment summarised in Table 4.1 has focussed on the North East of England Plan policies.

The following key has been used in completing the assessment.

Score Key:	<b>++</b> Significant Positive effect	<b>+</b> Minor positive effect	<b>0</b> No overall effect	<b>-</b> Minor negative effect	<b>--</b> Significant negative effect	<b>?</b> Score uncertain
<p><i>NB: where more than one symbol is presented in a box it indicates that the SEA has found more than one score for the category. Where the scores are both positive and negative, the boxes are deliberately not coloured. Where a box is coloured but also contains a ?, this indicates uncertainty over whether the effect could be a minor or significant effect although a professional judgement is expressed. A conclusion of uncertainty arises where there is insufficient evidence for expert judgement to conclude an effect.</i></p> <p><i>The reasons for the assessment are presented in Appendix D for each policy.</i></p>						
<p><i>S – short term (less than 0.75 year), M – medium term (between 0.75 and 5 years) and L – long term (&gt;5 years)</i></p>						

Table 4.1 Summary of the Effects of Revoking the North East of England Regional Strategy (with reference to the North East of England Plan policies)

RS Policy No.	RS Policy Title	Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil			Water			Air			Climatic Factors			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape		
			S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L
RS Policy 1	North East Renaissance	Revocation	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
RS Policy 2	Sustainable Development	Revocation	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
RS Policy 3	Climate Change	Revocation	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
RS Policy 4	The Sequential Approach to Development	Revocation	?	?	?	0	0	0	?	?	?	0	0	0	?	?	?	?	?	?	0	0	0	+	+	+	?	?	?
RS Policy 5	Phasing & Plan, Monitor and Manage	Revocation	+	+	+	+	+	+	?	?	?	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
RS Policy 6	Locational Strategy	Revocation	0	+	+	?	+	+	?	?	?	0	0	0	-	-	?	-	?	?	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	?	?

Table 4.1 (continued) Summary of the Effects of Revoking the North East of England Regional Strategy (with reference to the North East of England Plan policies)

RS Policy No.	RS Policy Title	Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil			Water			Air			Climatic Factors			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape								
			S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L						
RS Policy 7	Connectivity and Accessibility	Revocation	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?			
RS Policy 8	Protecting and Enhancing the Environment	Revocation	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
RS Policy 9	Tyne and Wear City-Region	Revocation	+	+	+	?	?	+	?	?	?	0	0	0	?	?	?	?	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	?	+	+	?	+	+	?			
RS Policy 10	Tees Valley City-Region	Revocation	+	+	+	+	+	+	?	?	?	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+			
RS Policy 11	Rural Areas	Revocation	+	+	+	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	?	?			
RS Policies 12	Sustainable Economic Development	Revocation	?	+	+	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	+	?	?	+	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	+	+			
RS Policy 13	Brownfield Mixed-Use Locations	Revocation	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?			

Table 4.1 (continued) Summary of the Effects of Revoking the North East of England Regional Strategy (with reference to the North East of England Plan policies)

RS Policy No.	RS Policy Title	Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil			Water			Air			Climatic Factors			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape		
			S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L
RS Policy 14	Supporting Further and Higher Education	Revocation	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RS Policy 15	Information and Communications Technology Networks	Revocation	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
RS Policy 16	Culture and Tourism	Revocation	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	0	0	0	+	+	+	?	?	?	
RS Policy 17	Casino Development	Revocation	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	0	0	0	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	
RS Policy 18	Employment Land Portfolio	Revocation	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	?	?	+	+	+	
RS Policy 19	Office Development Outside of City and Town Centres	Revocation	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	?	?	?	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	?	?	?	+	+	+

Table 4.1 (continued) Summary of the Effects of Revoking the North East of England Regional Strategy (with reference to the North East of England Plan policies)

RS Policy No.	RS Policy Title	Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil			Water			Air			Climatic Factors			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape		
			S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L
RS Policy 20	Key Employment Locations	Revocation	?	?	?	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
RS Policy 21	Airports	Revocation	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	--	--	--	--	--	--	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	-
RS Policy 22	Ports	Revocation	0	0	0	+	+	+	?	?	?	0	0	0	?	?	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?
RS Policy 23	Chemical & Steel Industries	Revocation	-	-	-	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
RS Policy 24	Delivering Sustainable Communities	Revocation	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
RS Policy 25	Urban and Rural Centres	Revocation	0	0	0	0	?	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0
RS Policy 26	MetroCentre	Revocation	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	-	-	?	-	-	0	0	0	?	?	?	?	?	?
RS Policy 27	Out-of-Centre Leisure Developments	Revocation	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	?	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?

Table 4.1 (continued) Summary of the Effects of Revoking the North East of England Regional Strategy (with reference to the North East of England Plan policies)

RS Policy No.	RS Policy Title	Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil			Water			Air			Climatic Factors			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape		
			S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L
RS Policy 28	Gross and Net Dwelling Provision	Revocation	?	?	-	?	?	+	?	?	--	?	?	-	?	?	-	?	?	-	?	?	-	?	?	-	?	?	-
RS Policy 29	Delivering and Managing Housing Supply	Revocation	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?	0	0	0	-	-	-	?	?	?	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?
RS Policy 30	Improving Inclusivity and Affordability	Revocation	?	?	?	?	?	+	?	?	?	0	0	0	?	?	+	?	?	+	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?
RS Policy 31	Landscape Character	Revocation	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	++	+	+	+	+
RS Policy 32	Historic Environment	Revocation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	++	+	+	+	+
RS Policy 33	Biodiversity & Geodiversity	Revocation	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+
RS Policy 34	The Aquatic & Marine Environment	Revocation	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+

Table 4.1 (continued) Summary of the Effects of Revoking the North East of England Regional Strategy (with reference to the North East of England Plan policies)

RS Policy No.	RS Policy Title	Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil			Water			Air			Climatic Factors			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape					
			S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L			
RS Policy 35	Flood Risk	Revocation	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RS Policy 36	Trees, Woodland and Forests	Revocation	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
RS Policy 37	Air Quality	Revocation	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RS Policy 38	Sustainable Construction	Revocation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RS Policy 39	Renewable Energy Generation	Revocation	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	?	?	?	+	+	+	+	+	+
RS Policy 40	Planning for Renewables	Revocation	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
RS Policy 41	Onshore Wind Energy Development	Revocation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	?	?



Table 4.1 (continued) Summary of the Effects of Revoking the North East of England Regional Strategy (with reference to the North East of England Plan policies)

RS Policy No.	RS Policy Title	Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil			Water			Air			Climatic Factors			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape		
			S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L
RS Policy 42	Overall Minerals Strategy	Revocation	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	+
RS Policy 43	Aggregates Minerals Provision	Revocation	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	+
RS Policy 44	Opencast Coal	Revocation	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	-
RS Policy 45	Sustainable Waste Management	Revocation	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+
RS Policy 46	Waste Management Provision	Revocation	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+
RS Policy 47	Hazardous Waste	Revocation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0
RS Policy 48	International Gateways	Revocation	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
RS Policy 49	Regional Transport Corridors	Revocation	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	?	?	?

Table 4.1 (continued) Summary of the Effects of Revoking the North East of England Regional Strategy (with reference to the North East of England Plan policies)

RS Policy No.	RS Policy Title	Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil			Water			Air			Climatic Factors			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape					
			S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L			
RS Policy 50	Regional Public Transport Provision	Revocation	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RS Policy 51	Strategic Public Transport Hubs	Revocation	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RS Policy 52	Strategic Framework for Demand Management	Revocation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RS Policy 53	Demand Management Measures	Revocation	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RS Policy 54	Parking and Travel Plans	Revocation	0	0	0	?	?	?	?	?	?	0	0	0	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
RS Policy 55	Accessibility within and between the City-Regions	Revocation	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 4.1 (continued) Summary of the Effects of Revoking the North East of England Regional Strategy (with reference to the North East of England Plan policies)

RS Policy No.	RS Policy Title	Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil			Water			Air			Climatic Factors			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape						
			S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L				
RS Policy 56	Accessibility in Rural Areas	Revocation	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RS Policy 57	Sustainable Freight Distribution	Revocation	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?	

#### 4.2.1 Likely Significant Effects

Revocation of the North East of England Plan will lead to a range of effects across the different SEA topics and over short, medium and long terms as identified in **Appendices D and E**.

A summary of the likely significant effects of revocation on the North East of England Plan theme areas are presented below. Where relevant, reference is also made to the Regional Economic Strategy; however, given the duplication of policies and commitments between the two documents, it was considered appropriate to present the findings of the assessment using the broader range of policy issues presented in the North East of England Plan. In addition to the 4 theme areas, the development principles and city-region policies have been identified separately.

These effects are for the absolute effects that will occur if the Regional Strategy were to be revoked (i.e. they are not presented as the marginal difference between retaining and revoking the Regional Strategy).

#### Development Principles and Locational Strategy

Policies 1-11 (excluding 9 and 10 which are considered separately under the city-regions) set out the development principles and locational strategy for the region. The set of policies addresses a range of issues including the need for a North East Renaissance, promoting sustainable development, addressing climate change, providing the location strategy for development and introducing key sub-regional policies of the Tyne and Wear and Tees Valley City-Regions. The development principles contained within the RSS form a core element of the RES, which identifies the need for business to act as the key driver for growth, increasing prosperity through supporting enterprise and up-skilling of the workforce and conserving, enhancing and capitalising on the Region's diverse natural and built environment.

The assessment has revealed that revocation of the North East of England Plan would maintain the positive effects identified as a result of the North East of England Plan across many of the SEA topics but with those positive effects being significant in relation to biodiversity/flora/fauna, population/health, climatic factors and cultural heritage and in the short, medium and long terms. This reflects in part that local planning authorities have a statutory duty under Section 39(3) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to work towards the aim of achieving sustainable development and high quality design. Paragraph 6 of the NPPF identifies that it is the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It makes specific reference to the five "guiding principles" of sustainable development set out in the UK Sustainable Development Strategy Securing the future. These are: living within the planet's environmental limits; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using sound science responsibly. The policies in paragraphs 18 to 219, taken as a whole, constitute the Government's view of what sustainable development in England means in practice for the planning system. Paragraph 7 recognises the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, and the NPPF contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraphs 11 to 16).

The NPPF provides a framework of guidance and policy that encourages balanced consideration against all three dimensions of sustainability that is also reflected in parts 2.1-2.3 of the North East of England Plan policy 2 *Sustainable Development*.

- **Environmental Objectives.** Part 2.1 of the policy identifies a series of objectives which include ensuring good air quality, protecting and enhancing biodiversity, preventing development in the floodplain and to protect and enhance cultural heritage. It is considered that the NPPF addresses these objectives;
- **Social Objectives.** Part 2.2 identifies nine objectives which aim to tackle social and economic impacts of deprivation. It is considered that these objectives are adequately addressed through the NPPF and Localism Act 2011; and
- **Economic Objectives.** Part 2.3 lists three objectives. It is considered that the Government's approach to building a strong, competitive economy addresses these objectives.

Each of the elements contributing to the creation of sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities are reflected in the NPPF, particularly in the core planning principles set out in paragraph 12, but also in more detail in specific policies.

These policies along with the duty to co-operate, NPPF policies relating to planning strategically across local boundaries (paragraphs 156 and 178-181) and Local Economic Partnerships will mean that local authorities should continue to support businesses with mutually consistent approaches, and deliver the most sustainable and effective development for their area.

The NPPF sets out a range of closely related principles, governing sustainable development which will supersede the guidance contained within the RSS. Since the NPPF represents the most recent statement of policy on sustainable development it is considered unlikely that the removal of policy 2 would have any significant effect.

The revocation of policies which focus development on key centres and towns e.g. Policies 4 (The Sequential Approach to Development) and 6 (Locational Strategy) may lead to some uncertainty of effects in the short and medium term. In the absence of the Regional Strategy, local planning authorities will refer to the NPPF policy as a material consideration. Relevant sections of the NPPF include:

- Paragraph 20 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century;
- Paragraph 21 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth and to identify priority areas for economic regeneration, infrastructure provision and environmental enhancement. Paragraph 23 states that planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period. Local planning authorities should:

- recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality;
- define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic changes;
- define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based on a clear definition of primary and secondary frontages in designated centres, and set policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations;
- promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which reflect the individuality of town centres.

There is more uncertainty about whether these benefits will be realised in the short to medium term for those local authorities that need to establish Local Plan policies for housing and economic development that reflect the objectively assessed and up to date needs of their local communities. This issue may be relevant for up to 9 North East local planning authorities who adopted local plans before 2008 (the date of the adoption of the North East of England Plan). In particular, this is more likely to be true for authorities within the Tyne and Wear City-Region where none of the main Unitary Authorities have an adopted Core Strategy following the publication of the RSS, although it is recognised that South Tyneside has a series of DPD's adopted since 2008. Within the Tees Valley region, Darlington, Middlesbrough and Stockton-on-Tees all have up to date core strategies which more closely reflect the policy aims of the RSS. However the application of the NPPFs presumption in favour of sustainable development and its policies to boost the supply of housing will help where local plans or policies are absent, silent or out of date.

As up to date local plans are adopted and as local authorities implement the duty to co-operate where settlement expansion is supported across local authority boundaries (where appropriate) the positive effects will be felt in the medium to longer term.

Policy 7 *Connectivity and Accessibility* identifies the need to improve the movement to and within the region. The NPPF recognises the important role that transport plays in facilitating sustainable development and in contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives. It encourages solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion. Local authorities are encouraged to work with neighbouring authorities and transport providers to develop strategies for the provision of viable infrastructure to support sustainable developments. Managing patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling is one of the core planning principles identified in the NPPF. Transport networks transcend local authority boundaries and thus effective networks will require local authorities to work together to achieve sustainable approaches – the duty to co-operate provides the mechanism for this to happen. The Highways Agency will continue to have responsibility for the motorways and trunk roads with the Unitary Authorities responsible for local transport in liaison with local authorities and LEPs as appropriate.

The NPPF requires local authorities to plan for sustainable transport, combined with the duty to co-operate this will facilitate work to promote public transport and ensure a close and mutually consistent

relationship between spatial and local transport plans, to deliver appropriate sustainable transport needs and have a positive effect on air and climatic factors through reduced emissions from car-based transport due to the emphasis on sustainable transport modes but depending on the ability to change travel behaviour and the demand for transport.

*Policy 9 Protecting and Enhancing the Environment* identifies the need to protect and enhance the region's built and natural environment. The NPPF places great emphasis on the environment. Contributing to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment and reducing pollution is one of the core planning principles in the NPPF together with conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. Revocation of the plan will not remove the need for local authorities to comply with NPPF policies and statutory duties in relation to environmental legislation. The legal requirements for local planning authorities to ensure that internationally and nationally designated sites are given the strongest level of protection and that development does not have adverse effects on the integrity of sites of European or international importance for nature conservation would be unchanged by revocation.

#### *Tyne and Wear City-Region (Policy 9)*

Policy 9 aims to support the polycentric development and redevelopment of the Tyne and Wear City-Region. There is no formal boundary to the city-region however the RSS identified that it included the following districts:

- Former Northumberland County Council districts of; Blyth Valley, Castle Morpeth and Wansbeck;
- Former Durham County Council districts of Derwentside, Durham City, Easington and Chester Le Street;
- Gateshead;
- Newcastle upon Tyne;
- North Tyneside;
- South Tyneside; and
- Sunderland.

The policy identifies the need to support the regeneration of both the main urban areas and rural towns and key centres, protect Durham City, maintain the Green Belt, enhance economic prosperity, support the development of sustainable communities, improve connectivity both to and within the city-region. Revocation of the plan will not remove the need for housing and economic development in the city-region and one of the core planning principles identified in the NPPF is that planning should drive and support sustainable development through positive growth. Neither does it remove the need for local authorities to co-operate in the preparation of their local plans, although it does give them the freedom to decide the most appropriate priorities for their local area.

In the absence of the North East of England Regional Strategy there will need to be continued multi-local authority working to carry forward the strategy. The duty to co-operate requires local authorities and other public bodies to work together constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis in relation to planning for strategic, cross-boundary matters in local and marine plans. The NPPF does list (at paragraph 156) the strategic priorities that local planning authorities should in particular cover when preparing the strategic policies in their plans; however, it is for authorities to determine what comprises a strategic matter for their plan. The Localism Act requires authorities to demonstrate to an independent inspector how they have met the duty when their plans are submitted for examination in public. There is no prescribed way to meet the duty to co-operate, but compliance could for example be proved by plans or policies prepared as part of a joint committee, informal strategies such as joint infrastructure and investment plans, or a memorandum of understanding which is presented as evidence of an agreed position. Failure to demonstrate compliance will mean that authorities may not pass the examination process.

Although the regional development agency (One North East) has been abolished many of its functions have been transferred to successor bodies. These have included inward investment activities (now led by PA Consulting, industry partner for UK Trade and Industry) and management of the European Regional Development Fund (now managed by the Department for Communities and Local Government). The North East Local Enterprise Partnership has as its core objective the need to maximise its contribution to national economic growth and rebalancing the national economy. Specific actions include the development of the NELEP Enterprise Zone on the north bank of the River Tyne which includes the former Swan Hunters Shipbuilding Yard, Neptune Yard and the Port of Tyne. A further Enterprise Zone has been identified in Sunderland adjacent to the A19. Both sites cover an area of 117 hectares with a sector focus on Local Carbon and with an aim to create 1000 jobs by 2015. As with any policy promoting growth and development, there will be adverse effects on material assets resulting from the use of building materials. Given the proposed scale of growth there are potential negative effects from exacerbating existing problems associated with commuting to and from the key centres within the City-Region with the result adverse impacts on air quality. This is an issue in the Tyne and Wear City-Region where there are seven AQMA's including Central Newcastle, Gateshead and Blyth.

The scale of development in the sub-region would be unlikely to change in the absence of the North East of England Plan. This would provide the same significant benefits for the population. However, there will be some increased uncertainty in the short-medium term given that only South Tyneside has adopted a site allocation Development Plan Document (DPD) following the publication of the RSS. All other plans will require, to some extent an update, to ensure that they meet the needs of their local communities. For these authorities, the short and medium term impact is more difficult to determine as the effects of the revocation of policy 9 will be dependent upon the manner in which the respective local planning authorities apply the requirements of the NPPF to their local context.

Depending on the location of the development, given the change in policy in the NPPF on the priority to be given to the use of previously developed land, there could be less concentrated forms of development in urban centres and, where available, more greenfield development. The extent to which this would



provide the same benefits to biodiversity, landscape and soil will depend on the eventual location, scale and nature of development. Adverse effects arising from any proposed development will be subject to the mitigation measures set out in the NPPF and the provisions in an authority's own Local Plan along with statutory duties on environmental protection and policies in the NPPF should provide environmental protection in relation to development.

### *Tees Valley City-Region (Policy 10)*

The Tees Valley City-Region is defined within the RSS as the area which looks primarily to the Tees Valley Conurbation and Main Settlements for access to jobs and services. As with the Tyne and Wear City-Region there is no defined boundary, however it is considered to include the following:

- Darlington;
- Hartlepool;
- Middlesbrough;
- Redcar and Cleveland;
- Sedgefield;
- Stockton-on-Tees.

The Tees Valley City-Region has a population of 875,000 people, almost half of whom live within the Teeside Conurbation of Stockton, Middlesbrough and Redcar. The emphasis of the Tees Valley policy is to support the polycentric development and redevelopment of the sub-region. The policy identifies key regeneration areas, supporting the chemical and steel industries, supporting key employment locations and the development of sustainable communities. The policy also identifies the need to enhance connectivity too and within the City-Region, protecting strategic gaps (in the absence of Green Belt) and supporting the protection and enhancement of the environment. In a similar vein to the assessment for the Tyne and Wear City-Region it has been assumed that in the absence of the North East of England Plan there will need to be continued multi-local authority working to carry forward the strategy.

The scale of development in the sub-region would be unlikely to change in the absence of the North East of England Plan. This is considered to be particularly the case within the Tees Valley where there the Core Strategies of Darlington, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees are broadly in accordance with the RSS. Regeneration across Tees Valley will remain supported through the LEP, Tees Valley Unlimited which identified in its 15 year statement of ambition an aim to drive the transition to a high value, low carbon economy and to create a more diversified and inclusive economy. Tees Valley also has an Enterprise Zone which is made up of 12 individual sites with a total area of 423.8 hectares. The LEP has identified the need to drive economic growth across the sub-region through attracting advanced manufacturing and engineering, chemical, renewable energy and digital companies.

Depending on the location of the development, given the change in policy in the NPPF on the priority to be given to the use of previously developed land, it is AMEC's view that there could be less concentrated forms of development in urban centres and, where available, more greenfield development. The extent to which this would provide the same benefits to biodiversity, landscape and soil will depend on the eventual location, scale and nature of development. Adverse effects arising from any proposed development will be subject to the mitigation measures set out in the NPPF and the provisions in an authority's own Local Plan along with statutory duties on environmental protection.

As with any policy promoting growth and development, there will be negative effects on material assets resulting from the use of building materials. Given the proposed scale of growth there are potential adverse impacts from exacerbating existing problems associated with commuting to and from the key centres within the City-Region with the result adverse impacts on air quality. The focus on employment opportunities through the regeneration of the City-Region and supporting key industries such as the Chemical and Steel works as well as Teesport is likely to have positive effects on population through the employment opportunities, both direct and indirect that it supports.

It is possible that removing the requirement to direct most strategically significant growth to the region's major urban areas and removing the target for the use of previously developed land could lead to less development within the major urban areas, and result in less development of brownfield land. This could lead to more development of unconstrained countryside.

**The assessment has not identified any areas where revocation of those policies which make up the Core Spatial Strategy would have any negative effects – either minor or significant.** However, the revocation of the City-Region policies does introduce a level of uncertainty over whether the intent of the policies will be implemented in the absence of the RSS. This uncertainty applies primarily to the Tyne and Wear City-Region rather than the Tees Valley area where there is a greater coverage of up to date Plans which closely match the approach contained within the RSS.

## Delivering an Urban and Rural Renaissance

### *Theme 3A: Delivering Economic Prosperity and Growth Economic Development*

Policies 12-23 set out the North East of England Plan policies for economic development. The policies aim to ensure that the North East of England contributes fully to national, regional and local prosperity and to improve the quality of life of all who live and work in the Region.

One of the core planning principles identified in the NPPF is that planning should drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, businesses, industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. The NPPF states that '*local authorities should plan proactively to meet development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century*'.

In consequence, with the revocation of the North East of England Plan, the strong emphasis on supporting economic development and the benefits accruing would continue under the NPPF. The key

principles of the NPPF will be cascaded through local plans and through implementing the duty to co-operate where cross boundary approaches are required.

The assessment has identified that with the continuity of approach as indicated above, the positive effects on population and health through improved job opportunities and other socio economic benefits would continue to be experienced. This Local Plan analysis has identified that only 4 local plans were adopted during or following the publication of the RSS in July 2008 (this excludes those DPD's adopted post 2008). As such, following the revocation of the RSS there is likely to be uncertainty in those nine local authorities that do not have a plan that was either in general conformity with the Regional Strategy. For those nine authorities, following revocation, there is likely to be a temporary period whilst they update their plans, and in the interim make planning decisions based on policies that may not be fully reflective of current local needs. In consequence, the amount of development anticipated in this period may be lower than if the Regional Strategy were in place. This will mean that the negative effects associated with development (on biodiversity, water, air, material assets etc) will be lessened as would the beneficial effects (on population). The application of the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development and its policies to boost the supply of housing will help where plans or policies are absent, silent or out of date.

Policy 14 identifies the need to support further and higher education, particularly with reference to taking advantage of cluster activities. Paragraph 21 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should plan positively for the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries. The need to utilise and capitalise upon the Region's Universities is identified as a key issue within the RES which identifies the key role centres of higher and further education will play in diversifying the north east economy and promoting the up-skilling of the workforce.

Policy 18 identifies the general and key employment land allocations for the region. The NPPF seeks to ensure plans remain flexible and capable of responding effectively to market signals and other factors which determine how land should be used. This provides a flexibility not found in the Regional Strategy. This notwithstanding, it is not clear that revoking policy 18 would lead authorities to implement different policies than those in the Regional Strategy, though the NPPF provides the flexibility to do so. Such decisions could only be based on an assessment of need when the plan is being formulated or reviewed. The effects of revoking these policies are therefore unclear.

Policy 20 identifies the key employment locations within the region. An analysis of adopted and emerging development plan documents indicates that all of the sites identified in the RSS will come forward albeit in a number of instances not to the same extent as originally envisaged.

The current policy status of the identified sites is summarised below:

- Newcastle Great Park - 80 hectares of land was allocated for the Northern Development Area (Policy ED1.1) in the adopted UDP (1998) comprising offices, high technology and R&D. Policy ED1.2 which identified the nature of development on the site was not subsequently saved. It is noted that SAGE has developed its headquarters at this site.

Within the emerging Core Strategy, the site (Great Park) is identified as a employment location but is not one of the identified Key Employment Sites;

- Newburn Riverside, Newcastle - This site (Newburn Haugh) is allocated for business and general industry uses in the adopted Newcastle UDP (1997). The site is identified as a Key Employment Site in the emerging Newcastle Gateshead Core Strategy;
- Baltic Business Quarter - Baltic Business Quarter are likely to come forward as Accelerated Development Zones under the City Deal award;
- West Hatford, Cramlington – The 55ha identified in the RSS is replicated in Policy SS1 of the Blyth Valley Core Strategy;
- North East Technology Park, Sedgefield - The site is allocated within the former district of Sedgefield Core Strategy which identifies the future potential for expansion and allocates 67 hectares;
- Wynyard, Stockton/Hartlepool – The Stockton-on-Tees Core Strategy allocates 70 ha at this site (policy CS4). The Hartlepool Core Strategy Policy EC1 identifies the site but makes no specific reference to the area to be developed;
- Faverdale, Darlington and Heighington Lane, West Newton Aycliffe – The Darlington Core Strategy allocates 50 ha at this site (Policy CS5) for business and logistics. The policy also identifies a further 125 ha at the key employment sites of Faverdale and Heighington Lane.

Following revocation and with the continued emphasis on supporting economic development under the NPPF, economic development, wherever it occurs, is likely to have negative effects on a number of SEA topic areas including air and material assets. Such effects can however be mitigated through the adoption of NPPF policy such as the provision of Transport Statements (paragraph 32) which recommends identifying opportunities for sustainable transport modes and paragraph 36 which states the need for developments which generate a significant amount of movement should be required to provide a travel plan.

As with any pro-development policy in the region there would be adverse effects on material assets, however, these are likely to be no different from the effects arising from an equivalent amount of development located elsewhere (e.g. water and construction materials demand would be unchanged overall).

The NPPF provides high level policy support for the identification of sites to meet the local authority economic vision for an area. The Framework also encourages the regular review of strategic site allocation, and re-allocation where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the allocated employment use.

Whilst authorities will need to carry out careful assessment of need when determining which sites should be protected for employment use, and will take into account evidence underpinning the Regional Strategy, there can be no certainty that they will come to the same conclusions.

Policy 21 of the RSS identifies the need to support the sustainable expansion of the Region's airports. Future development at and related to Durham Tees Valley and Newcastle International Airport will continue to be driven by evolving national aviation policy/ strategy which is still as set out in the 2003 Aviation White Paper (until it is replaced). Providing for further growth in air travel is incompatible with the need to address climate change. Reductions in impacts from shifting journeys to airports from car to public transport are trivial compared to the impacts of the flying itself. Consequently this policy will have negative impact on air and potentially a significant negative impact on climate change and increasing air travel will increase exposure to noise and pollution.

Policy 22 of the RSS identifies the need to support the growth of the region's ports. The Government's National Policy Statement for Ports (January 2012) outlines the Government's policy for ports. In summary the Government seeks to:

- Encourage sustainable port development to cater for long-term forecast growth in volumes of imports and exports by sea with a competitive and efficient port industry capable of meeting the needs of importers and exporters cost effectively and in a timely manner, thus contributing to long-term economic growth and prosperity;
- Allow judgments about when and where new developments might be proposed to be made on the basis of commercial factors by the port industry or port developers operating within a free market environment; and
- Ensure all proposed developments satisfy the relevant legal, environmental and social constraints and objectives, including those in the relevant European Directives and corresponding national regulations.

It is not considered that the revocation of this policy would generate any environmental affects different to those appraised for the retention of the policy.

Policy 23 (Chemical and Steel Industries) identifies the need to safeguard 740 hectares of land for chemical and steel industry. The Local Plan analysis identifies that the allocation requirement of 740 hectares has been included within the adopted Core Strategies of Hartlepool, Stockton-on-Tees and Cleveland. Revocation of this policy will therefore not have any effect in lessening land available for future development. **As noted above in relation to the revocation of the economic policies, the effects are considered to be broadly similar to retention.**

### Theme 3B: Delivering Sustainable Communities

Policies 24-30 set out the North East of England Plan's policies for developing sustainable communities. The key objectives of the polices are to concentrate the majority of the region's development within the defined urban areas; utilise brownfield land wherever possible, minimising the need to travel and promoting mixed-use developments, linking development to (green) infrastructure and education, health and other facilities, minimising the use of natural resources and identifying means to promote social cohesion. The policies also identify the distribution of housing across the region and provide the target for developing on previously developed land.

Policy 26 of the RSS seeks to control the potential for future expansion at the MetroCentre. Revocation of the RSS would result in the need to appraise development proposals against the adopted Gateshead UDP which through Policy RCL8 provides a less constrained framework for future development. Revocation of policy 26 may have positive effects associated with increasing employment opportunities but may have adverse impacts upon air quality and traffic congestion on the A1. In addition, expansion at the MetroCentre may undermine the retail role of Newcastle and Sunderland and to a lesser extent undermine the viability of Gateshead Town Centre which is subject to a significant regeneration at Trinity Square. The NPPF identifies that local planning authorities should apply a sequential text to planning applications for main town centre uses (includes leisure developments). Paragraph 25 identifies that when assessing applications for main centre uses outside of town centres which are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan, local planning authorities should require an impact assessment if the development is over a specified floorspace threshold (default is 2,500 sq m). As such any future expansion of the MetroCentre which meet the definition of main town centre uses would have to be subject to an impact assessment.

Policy 28 identifies the distribution of Gross and Net Dwelling Provision required to meeting the region's target of 128,000 (net) new dwellings up to 2021. Revocation of the Regional Strategy will not remove the need for more houses within the region. Indeed it is Government policy to boost significantly the supply of housing, for example through initiatives such as the Community Infrastructure Levy, New Homes Bonus and the local retention of business rates which are intended to encourage a more positive attitude to growth and allow communities to share the benefits and mitigate the negative effects of growth.

An analysis of local plans identifies that the following Core Strategies and DPDs were adopted following the publication of the RSS:

- Darlington Core Strategy (May 2011), provides targets for average net additions to the dwelling stock from 2011-2026;
- South Tyneside Site Allocations DPD (April 2012) – the DPD indicates that the allocations together with those within adopted AAPs are considered to be within the PPS3 +/- 10-20% range of reasonable deviation from the RSS and Core Strategy target trajectories;
- Stockton-on-Tees Core Strategy (March 2010) - Core Strategy Policy CS7 aims to meet the Borough's housing needs consistent with the RSS requirement to 2024 of 11,140 new dwellings;
- Northumberland National Park Authority Core Strategy (March 2009) – No specific targets for new housing development were included within the Core Strategy.

For those nine authorities without an adopted or up-to-date plan, the RSS provided clarity on the quantum of development required; however, following revocation, there is likely to be a temporary (short to medium term) period whilst those local authorities establish Local Plan policies for housing development that reflect the objectively assessed and up to date needs of their respect local communities. The amount of development anticipated in this period is likely to be lower than if the RSS

were in place due the uncertainty created during this period till up to date policies are established. This will mean that the negative effects associated with development (on biodiversity, water, air, material assets etc) will be lessened as would the beneficial effects (on population).

Ultimately, the environmental effects will depend on the housing delivered across the region, their location and other factors such as their design. Much of the NPPF seeks to mitigate as far as possible adverse effects on the environment. Overall, therefore the effects of revocation are uncertain, but are likely to be similar to retaining the Regional Strategy.

Policy 29 identifies the sub-regional targets for development of previously developed land to 2008 and provides a north east target to 2016. If revocation leads to increased development on greenfield land away from existing settlements, this could have negative impacts on the countryside (i.e. soil and landscape); and on air quality and greenhouse gas emissions (if there is a greater need to travel). Depending on the biodiversity value of any countryside lost, including any role it played, or might play, in contributing to a network or corridor for wildlife there could be either positive or negative effects. For example, agricultural land can host lower biodiversity interest than suburban gardens given the wider range of different habitats provided.

The removal of density targets could result in lower level density development necessitating more land to meet locally defined housing targets. This could have an adverse impact on biodiversity, soil and landscape/townscape.

There could be some potential benefits for biodiversity if revocation of Policy 29 resulted in less development on those areas of brownfield land with high biodiversity value and to human health where there were lower housing densities and more opportunities for green space within urban areas.

Policy 30 relates to improving inclusivity and affordability. In addition the policy identifies the need for local authorities to make provision of sites for gypsies and travellers. A summary of the Gypsy and Traveller Pitch requirements at a local authority level is provided in the text accompanying the policy within the RSS, however these targets are not incorporated within Policy 30. Paragraph 47 of the NPPF seeks to boost significantly the supply of housing and states that local planning authorities should use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full objectively assessed needs for affordable housing. This is expected to have the same significant benefits to the population and human health as retention of the policy, although there could be fewer benefits to the population in the short term in those local authorities without an up to date plan.

The new national policy for gypsies and travellers, and travelling showpeople<sup>32</sup> should provide the required provision for these groups. It asks local authorities to use a “robust evidence base” to assess needs for the purposes of planning and managing development of traveller sites, and to set targets for traveller sites based on their needs assessment. The policy asks local authorities to bring forward a five-year supply of land for traveller sites in their plans to meet the targets they have set and to update it

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<sup>32</sup> DCLG (March 2012) Planning Policy for Traveller Sites.



annually. The policy also asks local authorities to look into the longer term and also to identify a supply of specific developable sites or broad locations for years six to ten and, where possible, for years 11-15. It is considered that given the lack of targets contained with Policy 30, the implementation of the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites will lead to clarity on provision of suitable sites, once authorities have adopted up to date Local Plan policies. Once adopted, these will be appropriate to local needs and will assist in resolving any current uncertainties associated with the lack of pitches designated within existing local plans for gypsy, travellers and travelling showpeople.

***In the short to medium term following revocation, the impact on housing development will be uncertain in those local authorities that do not have a plan that was either in conformity with the North East of England Plan or which post-dates it.*** An analysis of local plans identifies that there are four core strategies (and one site allocations DPD) which have been adopted during or following the publication of the RSS. For the nine authorities without an up-to-date adopted plan, the North East of England Plan provided clarity on the quantum of development required; however, following revocation, there is likely to be a temporary (short to medium term) period whilst those local authorities establish Local Plan policies for housing development that reflect the objectively assessed and up to date needs of their respect local communities. In AMEC's view, the amount of development anticipated in this short period is likely to be lower than if the Regional Strategy were in place. This will mean that the negative effects associated with development (on biodiversity, water, air, material assets etc) will be lessened as would the beneficial effects (on population). The loss of brownfield targets has the potential for adverse effects if it increased the amount of development on greenfield land outside existing settlement boundaries. This could have negative impacts on the countryside (i.e. soil and landscape), on air quality and greenhouse gas emissions (if there is a greater need to travel).

### Theme 3C: Conserving, Enhancing and Capitalising Upon the Region's Diverse Nature and Built Environment, Heritage and Culture

Policies 31-47 of the RSS address the theme of natural and built environment, heritage, cultural, minerals and waste.

Policy 31 sets out the North East of England Plan policy for landscape character. The first part of the policy effectively sets out the statutory requirements to afford the highest level of protection to nationally designated landscapes. Paragraph 115 of the NPPF maintains the policy basis for the legislation. There are specific policies restricting development in National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coasts, which would remain if the RSS was revoked.

The NPPF also maintains the policy previously contained in PPS7 that local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected landscape areas will be judged (paragraph 113), while landscape character assessments should be prepared where appropriate (paragraph 170).

The NPPF requires landscape character assessments to be prepared where appropriate (paragraph 170). Moreover, the UK is a signatory to the European Landscape Convention 2000, which



introduced a Europe-wide concept centring on the quality of landscape protection, management and planning and covering the entire territory, not just outstanding landscapes. Local planning authorities can have regard to the NPPF and Convention when pursuing locally focused approaches to landscape conservation. Furthermore, if the policy were revoked, local planning authorities would still need to have regard to the strong policy in the NPPF on conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment, and also its policy on requiring good design – which includes ensuring that development responds to local character and history.

Various paragraphs within the NPPF identify the need for high quality design. Whilst the concept of Town Design Statements, Village Design Statements and Countryside Design Summaries are not explicitly identified within the NPPF, reference is made to the need for LPA to take into account the desirability of development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. The NPPF also states that there is a need for local design review arrangements to provide assessment and support to ensure high standards of design.

The protection of the historic environment is addressed through Policy 32 whilst Policy 33 outlines the strategy for biodiversity and geodiversity. The NPPF places great emphasis on the environment. Contributing to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment and reducing pollution is one of the core planning principles in the NPPF together with conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

The assessment has shown that under revocation and with the application of the NPPF, benefits will be maintained across virtually all of the SEA topic areas with many of the effects being significant. This will lead to significant positive benefits.

It is assumed that local authorities will work together making use of the duty to co-operate and mechanisms such as the Local Nature Partnerships to optimise the benefits to biodiversity and that Biodiversity Action Plan partnerships continue to operate.

The legal requirements for local planning authorities to ensure that internationally and nationally designated sites are given the strongest level of protection and that development does not have adverse effects on the integrity of sites of European or international importance for nature conservation would be unchanged by revocation.

Biodiversity and geodiversity is addressed in Policy 33. The NPPF makes clear that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural environment, including by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible. The Framework underlines that pursuing sustainable development means moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains for nature. This means that local planning policies should promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations linked to national and local targets, and identify suitable indicators for monitoring biodiversity in the plan. In particular NPPF section 11 on conserving and enhancing the natural environment, and paragraphs 109 to 119 are particularly

relevant. The NPPF policies relating to green infrastructure and planning for climate change to mitigate the effects on biodiversity (paragraph 99 of the NPPF) are also relevant.

Paragraph 118 of the NPPF also makes clear that planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss.

Policies 34 and 35 address issues around water, dealing with the aquatic and marine environment and flood risk respectively. The European Water Framework Directive introduces a more integrated system of water management based on river basin districts, with a view to reducing water pollution, reducing the effects of floods and droughts, and ensuring that most inland and coastal waters attain 'good ecological status' by 2015. The River Basin Management Plans will identify the standards in the North East. The Water Framework Directive requires 'no deterioration' from current water status and local authorities will need to take this into account in their water cycle strategies.

For authorities with coastlines who are yet to develop up to date local plans, reference will be needed to the Marine Policy Statement (MPS), and Shoreline Management Plans. The MPS provides the framework for taking decisions affecting the marine environment. There are two Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) in the North East Region, *The Northumberland to North Tyneside SMP* which affects Northumberland and North Tyneside Council and *River Tyne to Flamborough Head SMP* which extends across from South Tyneside, Sunderland, Durham, Hartlepool and Redcar & Cleveland in the North East as well as Scarborough and East Riding of Yorkshire within the Yorkshire and Humber Region. Shoreline Management Plans will inform the evidence base for planning in coastal areas (NPPF paragraph 168). The prediction of future impacts should include the longer term nature and inherent uncertainty of coastal processes (including coastal landslip), and take account of climate change.

The NPPF requires that local planning authorities should apply Integrated Coastal Zone Management across local authority and land/sea boundaries. They should reduce risk from coastal change by avoiding inappropriate development in vulnerable areas or adding to the impacts of physical changes to the coast.

Water companies (including Northumbrian Water) are already considering future supply and demand in terms of planning water consumption for the region in their approved and emerging plans. Northumbrian Water, in their Water Resources Management Plan (2010-2035) have identified that any 'supply demand balance' issues can be addressed through a combination of reducing demand and increasing supply. As such, no deficit is forecast in either of Northumbrian Water's two Water Resource Zones (Kielder and Berwick WRZ).

This level of forecasting and the duty to co-operate on policies relating to planning strategically across local boundaries (paragraphs 156 and 178-181) will mean that local authorities should continue to plan for and address water infrastructure implications of development through policies in their local plans, reflecting local circumstances and priorities and to actively engage with interested parties. Water

companies will have an opportunity to work with local authorities on water infrastructure implications as part of Local Plan preparation.

There are also significant positive effects arising in relation to flood risk due to the very positive approach to flood risk encouraged in the NPPF. For example the NPPF seeks to ensure that inappropriate development is avoided in areas at risk of flooding, but where development is necessary that it is safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere. To this end, local plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development to avoid where possible flood risk to people and property. Aside from water compatible development and, exceptionally, essential infrastructure, development should not be permitted in the functional floodplain.

RSS Policy 36 identifies the employment, recreational, biodiversity and landscape benefits which can be delivered through trees, woodlands and forests. The NPPF includes a strong policy that requires local planning authorities to plan positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of green infrastructure. The creation and enhancement of green infrastructure is likely to include a woodland component where local planning authorities and their communities consider this appropriate.

It is expected that local authorities will continue to meet their obligations on air quality in accordance with Paragraph 124 of the NPPF which states that planning policies should sustain compliance with and contribute towards EU limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas is consistent with the local air quality action plan.

It is considered that local authorities will retain and develop policy support for a shift to a low carbon economy and promote the use of decentralised energy from renewable sources in accordance with paragraph 96 of the NPPF. Through Policy 38 of the RSS there was provision to secure more renewable energy, and energy efficiency, an interim (i.e. applicable only until local plans are in place) regional target for 10% of a new development's energy to be secured from local renewable and low-carbon energy (a 'Merton Rule' style policy) and policies to shape places so as to secure reduced energy needs and therefore reduced emissions. A total of 11 development plans in the North East were identified as having a similar policy to that contained within the RSS with regard to securing a percentage of development energy needs from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources (of the 11 authorities, Alnwick, Blyth Valley, Tynedale and Wansbeck now form part of Northumberland).

Policy 39 seeks to achieve 10% of the region's energy consumption from renewable sources by 2010, rising to 20% by 2020. This would contribute to the national target in the Climate change programme, and to meeting European obligations by 2020. There would be strong benefits to climatic factors as well as biodiversity through mitigating of climate change.

Renewable energy sources include photovoltaic energy, solar-powered and geothermal water heating, wind, energy crops and biomass (such as wood from existing woodlands, sawmill co-products, and

organic waste products that might otherwise be destined for landfill) and energy from agricultural, plant and animal, domestic and industrial waste. It includes energy generated as a product of anaerobic digestion and energy gained on site and/or from a decentralised supply, including power from combined heat and power (but excluding renewable heat). It has been concluded that the delivery of renewable energy technology which will help to mitigate climate change with positive impacts across the environmental topics. Given the NPPF's policy for LPAs to support the move towards a low carbon economy (paragraph 94) and increase the supply of renewable energy (paragraphs 97-99), there is still national planning support for investment and supply if the policy is revoked.

It is noted from DECC 2011 Statistics that the North East had failed to meet its 2010 target for 454MW of renewable energy with 312.7 MWe of installed capacity being achieved. However, there is a further 1047MW of consented capacity awaiting construction and a further 186MW in the planning system. If the consented capacity were to be implemented, the North East would exceed its 20% target of 897MW by 2020. Therefore, the revocation of this policy is likely to have no effect upon meeting the regional targets as identified to the period 2020.

Policies 42, 43 and 44 address Minerals and Opencast Coal. The NPPF sets out a policy framework to support a sufficient supply of materials to provide for the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that the country needs.

The assessment has identified negative effects for soil, air, climatic factors and in the case of opencast coal, landscape. However it is recognised that there are population benefits associated with the provision of materials required to support economic development. Furthermore, the long term restoration strategies applied following the cessation of mineral extraction can provide biodiversity, population/health and landscape benefits e.g. Herrington Country Park in Sunderland which was reclaimed by the City Council and RJB Mining in 1999.

Policies 45, 46 and 47 address waste issues, in particular sustainable waste management, waste management provision and hazardous waste. These in part reflect national policy and legislation including seeking to drive the management of waste up the waste hierarchy and de-coupling waste from economic growth.

The NPPF does not have specific waste policies as national waste planning policy is to be published as part of the National Waste Management Plan for England – until this is published the Waste Planning Policy Statement will remain in place. However there are many policies in the NPPF which are relevant to the preparation of waste plans and decisions which should therefore be taken into account.

The assessment has identified a number of significant positive effects in relation to material assets due to the national policy approaches in the PPS10 which seeks to reduce the amount of waste being produced.

***The effects associated with the revocation of these policies are likely to be the same for revocation as they are for retention.***

### Theme 3D: Improving Connectivity and Accessibility Within and Beyond the Region

The final theme within the North East of England Plan addresses the need to improve connectivity to and within the region. Policies 49 to 57 inclusive identify the need to improve regional transport corridors, enhance public transport hubs, introduction of demand management measures, parking and travel plans, accessibility within the city-regions and rural areas.

The NPPF recognises the important role that transport plays in facilitating sustainable development and in contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives. It encourages solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion. Local authorities are encouraged to work with neighbouring authorities and transport providers to develop strategies for the provision of viable infrastructure to support sustainable developments. Managing patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling is one of the core planning principles identified in the NPPF.

The assessment has shown that revocation will maintain the significant positive effects for population and health, air and climatic factors due to improved air quality and reduced potential for greenhouse gas emissions due to the emphasis on sustainable transport modes. This assessment reflects the positive approach to sustainable transport under the NPPF outlined on the previous paragraph which will be reflected in local plans and decisions by local authorities. Transport networks transcend local authority boundaries and thus effective networks will require local authorities to work together to achieve sustainable approaches – the duty to co-operate provides the mechanism for this to happen.

Other effects through revocation will be largely neutral or uncertain due to the uncertainty over location of particular elements of transport infrastructure. Many of the effects will depend on the ability to change travel behaviour and the demand for transport. There will also be minor negative effects on material assets due to the use of raw materials for the construction and maintenance of transport infrastructure.

***The effects associated with the revocation of these policies are likely to be the same for revocation as they are for retention.***

#### 4.2.2 Other Effects

The effects of the revocation of the RSS have been presented in **Appendix D** and summarised above in relation to the issues identified in the EU Directive (Annex I). Where other potential effects have been identified these are referred to in **Appendix D**.

#### 4.2.3 Proposed Mitigation Measures

A number of mitigation measures have been identified in the detailed assessment in **Appendix D**.

Mitigation of the effects will be diverse and may need to be specific sub-regionally. For example, in planning for water provision as part of new development, there may be greater reliance on Water

Resource Management Plans and co-operation between interested parties. Similarly, for issues such as biodiversity, continued co-operation and resources could be required to achieve similar commitments to that intended under the North East of England Plan.

### 4.3 Effects of Retention of the North East of England Plan

Retention of the North East of England Plan will lead to a range of effects across the different SEA topics and is identified in **Appendices D** and **E**. A summary of the likely significant effects of revocation on the 6 North East of England Plan Policy areas are presented in **Table 4.2** and commented on below.

**Table 4.2** summarises the effects of retaining the North East of England Plan against the 12 SEA topics. As noted in section 4.2, the Regional Economic Strategy commitments have been mapped onto the RSS policies (**Appendix H**). Due to the intentional overlap between them, the RSS policies include those of the RES and in order to avoid duplication, the assessment summarised in **Table 4.2** has focussed on the North East of England Plan policies. Please note that within this alternative, retention is defined as the retention of all the policies within the North East of England Plan and all the commitments in the RES but without their future update. Local authorities would be expected to refer to the NPPF and to place greater weight on the NPPF, as the Plan aged, as without update it would gradually lose relevance to the changing circumstances of local communities.

The following key has been used in completing the assessment.

Score Key:	++ Significant Positive effect	+ Minor positive effect	0 No overall effect	- Minor negative effect	-- Significant negative effect	? Score uncertain
<p><i>NB: where more than one symbol is presented in a box it indicates that the SEA has found more than one score for the category. Where the scores are both positive and negative, the boxes are deliberately not coloured. Where a box is coloured but also contains a ?, this indicates uncertainty over whether the effect could be a minor or significant effect. A conclusion of uncertainty arises where there is insufficient evidence for expert judgement to conclude an effect.</i></p> <p><i>The reasons for the assessment are presented in Appendix D for each policy.</i></p>						
<p>S – short term (less than 0.75 year), M – medium term (between 0.75 and 5 years) and L – long term (&gt;5 years)</p>						

Table 4.2 Summary of the Effects of Retention of the North East of England Regional Strategy (with reference to the North East of England Plan policies)

RS Policy No.	RS Policy Title	Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil			Water			Air			Climatic Factors			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape		
			S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L
RS Policy 1	North East Renaissance	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
RS Policy 2	Sustainable Development	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
RS Policy 3	Climate Change	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
RS Policy 4	The Sequential Approach to Development	Retention	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	
RS Policy 5	Phasing & Plan, Monitor and Manage	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		
RS Policy 6	Locational Strategy	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	0	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+		
RS Policy 7	Connectivity and Accessibility	Retention	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?		

Table 4.2 (continued) Summary of the Effects of Retention of the North East of England Regional Strategy (with reference to the North East of England Plan policies)

RS Policy No.	RS Policy Title	Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil			Water			Air			Climatic Factors			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape		
			S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L
RS Policy 8	Protecting and Enhancing the Environment	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
RS Policy 9	Tyne and Wear City-Region	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	-	-	?	?	?	?	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
RS Policy 10	Tees Valley City-Region	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	?	?	+	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
RS Policy 11	Rural Areas	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	?	?	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?
RS Policy 12	Sustainable Economic Development	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
RS Policy 13	Brownfield Mixed-Use Locations	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
RS Policy 14	Supporting Further and Higher Education	Retention	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



Table 4.2 (continued) Summary of the Effects of Retention of the North East of England Regional Strategy (with reference to the North East of England Plan policies)

RS Policy No.	RS Policy Title	Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil			Water			Air			Climatic Factors			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape		
			S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L
RS Policy 15	Information and Communications Technology Networks	Retention	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RS Policy 16	Culture and Tourism	Retention	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	0	0	0	+	+	+	?	?	?
RS Policy 17	Casino Development	Retention	?	?	?	?	?	?	+	+	+	0	0	0	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
RS Policy 18	Employment Land Portfolio	Retention	+	+	?	+	+	+	+	+	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
RS Policy 19	Office Development Outside of City and Town Centres	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	?	?	?	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	?	?	?	+	+	+
RS Policy 20	Key Employment Locations	Retention	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
RS Policy 21	Airports	Retention	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	-
RS Policy 22	Ports	Retention	0	0	0	+	+	+	?	?	?	0	0	0	?	?	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?

Table 4.2 (continued) Summary of the Effects of Retention of the North East of England Regional Strategy (with reference to the North East of England Plan policies)

RS Policy No.	RS Policy Title	Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil			Water			Air			Climatic Factors			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape		
			S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L
RS Policy 23	Chemical & Steel Industries	Retention	-	-	-	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	
RS Policy 24	Delivering Sustainable Communities	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
RS Policy 25	Urban and Rural Centres	Retention	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0
RS Policy 26	MetroCentre	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RS Policy 27	Out-of-Centre Leisure Developments	Retention	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	?	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	
RS Policy 28	Gross and Net Dwelling Provision	Retention	-	-	-	+	+	+	--	--	--	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
RS Policy 29	Delivering and Managing Housing Supply	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	?	?	?	?	?	?	-	-	-	0	0	0	+	+	+
RS Policy 30	Improving Inclusivity and Affordability	Retention	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	

Table 4.2 (continued) Summary of the Effects of Retention of the North East of England Regional Strategy (with reference to the North East of England Plan policies)

RS Policy No.	RS Policy Title	Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil			Water			Air			Climatic Factors			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape		
			S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L
RS Policy 31	Landscape Character	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
			+	+	+																		+	+	+	+	+	+	+
RS Policy 32	Historic Environment	Retention	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
																							+	+	+	+	+	+	+
RS Policy 33	Biodiversity & Geodiversity	Retention	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+
			+	+	+				+	+	+	+	+	+													+	+	+
RS Policy 34	The Aquatic & Marine Environment	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+
			+	+	+							+	+	+				+	+	+							+	+	+
RS Policy 35	Flood Risk	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RS Policy 36	Trees, Woodland and Forests	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
			+	+	+																								

Table 4.2 (continued) Summary of the Effects of Retention of the North East of England Regional Strategy (with reference to the North East of England Plan policies)

RS Policy No.	RS Policy Title	Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil			Water			Air			Climatic Factors			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape					
			S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L			
RS Policy 37	Air Quality	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RS Policy 38	Sustainable Construction	Retention	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+
RS Policy 39	Renewable Energy Generation	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
RS Policy 40	Planning for Renewables	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
RS Policy 41	Onshore Wind Energy Development	Retention	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	?	?
RS Policy 42	Overall Minerals Strategy	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	+

Table 4.2 (continued) Summary of the Effects of Retention of the North East of England Regional Strategy (with reference to the North East of England Plan policies)

RS Policy No.	RS Policy Title	Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil			Water			Air			Climatic Factors			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape		
			S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L			
RS Policy 43	Aggregates Minerals Provision	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	+	
RS Policy 44	Opencast Coal	Retention	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	-	
RS Policy 45	Sustainable Waste Management	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	
RS Policy 46	Waste Management Provision	Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	
RS Policy 47	Hazardous Waste	Retention	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
RS Policy 48	International Gateways	Retention	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	
RS Policy 49	Regional Transport Corridors	Retention	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?	

Table 4.2 (continued) Summary of the Effects of Retention of the North East of England Regional Strategy (with reference to the North East of England Plan policies)

RS Policy No.	RS Policy Title	Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil			Water			Air			Climatic Factors			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape		
			S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L			
RS Policy 50	Regional Public Transport Provision	Retention	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RS Policy 51	Strategic Public Transport Hubs	Retention	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RS Policy 52	Strategic Framework for Demand Management	Retention	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RS Policy 53	Demand Management Measures	Retention	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RS Policy 54	Parking and Travel Plans	Retention	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	

Table 4.2 (continued) Summary of the Effects of Retention of the North East of England Regional Strategy (with reference to the North East of England Plan policies)

RS Policy No.	RS Policy Title	Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil			Water			Air			Climatic Factors			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape						
			S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L				
RS Policy 55	Accessibility within and between the City-Regions	Retention	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RS Policy 56	Accessibility in Rural Areas	Retention	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RS Policy 57	Sustainable Freight Distribution	Retention	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

### 4.3.1 Likely Significant Effects

#### Development Principles and Locational Strategy

Policies 1-11 (excluding 9 and 10 which are considered separately) set out the development principles and locational strategy for the region. The effects of retaining these policies will be largely the same as under revocation with positive effects across many of the SEA topics but with those positive effects being significant in relation to biodiversity/flora/fauna, population/health and climatic factors in the short, medium and long terms.

The theme of urban renaissance is a core element of the RES, which identifies the need for business to act as the key driver for growth, increasing prosperity through supporting enterprise and up-skilling of the workforce and conserving, enhancing and capitalising on the region's diverse natural and built environment.

The uncertainty of effects identified under revocation in the short term would not apply to retention. In particular the uncertainty with the ability to implement the two City-Region policies would not apply. With continuity of policy the positive effects of development identified would be experienced in the short term as the amount of development is likely to be higher than under revocation due to the greater clarity over the scale of development needed as set out in the RSS.

The assessment has not identified any areas where retention of those policies which make up the Core Spatial Strategy would have any negative effects – either minor or significant.

#### Tyne and Wear City-Region (Policy 9)

The significant positive effects of retention on population and positive effects on biodiversity, cultural heritage and landscape are similar to revocation. Differences arise in that there is greater certainty regarding the assessment and in the short to medium term positive effects are likely to be more pronounced as there will be no delay in implementation. The assessment has not identified any areas where retention of the Tyne and Wear City-Region policy would have a significant negative effect.

#### Tees Valley City-Region (Policy 10)

The significant positive effects of retention on population and positive effects on biodiversity, cultural heritage and landscape are similar to revocation. The differences between retention and revocation are less pronounced than they are for the Tyne and Wear City-Region. This is since there is a greater coverage of up to date development plans within the Tees Valley city-region. The assessment has not identified any areas where retention of the Tees Valley City-Region policy would have a significant negative effect.



## Delivering an Urban and Rural Renaissance

### *Theme 3A: Delivering Economic Prosperity and Growth*

The uncertainty of effects identified under revocation in the short term would not apply to retention. With continuity of planning policy under retention, the positive effects of development identified would be experienced in the short term as the amount of development is likely to be higher than under revocation due to the greater clarity over the scale and location of development needed as set out in the North East of England Plan.

Given the uncertainties over the precise location of future employment areas and specific development sites that will be identified and brought forward through local plans, the assessment of retention has identified uncertain or neutral effects across many of the SEA topics. However, economic development, wherever it occurs, is likely to have negative effects on a number of SEA topic areas including biodiversity/flora/fauna, soil, water, air, climatic factors and material assets.

**No significant differences have been identified between the effects identified for retention and revocation of policies under this theme.**

### *Theme 3B: Delivering Sustainable Communities*

By setting out the overarching direction within which local plans should be developed, retention of the Regional Strategy would have significant benefits in the short to medium term. It provides more certainty to the nine local authorities who have pre-2008 plans over the scale of housing and employment development to be delivered. As with revocation, negative effects on the environment will occur in the short-long term due to the quantum of housing development. Statutory duties on environmental protection and other RSS and NPPF policies should mitigate negative effects to a degree and provide environmental protection in relation to development. The Government's planning policy for traveller sites is to be read alongside the NPPF and provides the policy framework for these sites.

For these reasons the effects of retention in the short term are likely to be more pronounced – being either more positive or more negative.

**No significant differences have been identified between the effects identified for retention and revocation of policies under this theme.**

### *Theme 3C: Conserving, Enhancing and Capitalising upon the Regions Diverse Nature and Built Environment, Heritage and Culture*

The assessment has shown that retaining the North East of England Plan supported by the NPPF there will be benefits across virtually all of the SEA topic areas with many of the effects being significant.

The legal requirement for local planning authorities to ensure that internationally and nationally designated sites are given the strongest level of protection and that development does not have adverse

effects on the integrity of sites of European or international importance for nature conservation would be unchanged by retention.

The North East of England Plan's waste policies respect the European and national policy context and, in seeking to achieve the required shift towards more sustainable waste management, build on principles set out in the Waste Strategy for England and PPS10.

Continuing to drive waste up the waste hierarchy and eliminating the landfilling of untreated municipal and commercial waste by 2021 would have positive effects on water, air, climatic factors and material assets.

Ensuring timely provision of appropriate waste facilities will have significant benefits on human health while reducing the amount of waste imported into the region should reduce traffic levels and have benefits for air quality. The reduction in the amount of waste disposed of to landfill will reduce the risk of water contamination and emission of greenhouse gases (i.e. methane). However, modern waste management practice seeks to prevent this.

Viewing waste as a resource will have significant benefits to material assets for example by replacing primary aggregate with recycled construction waste and making effective use of recovered energy.

This policy requires minerals planning authorities to plan for a specific amount of aggregate minerals from environmentally acceptable sources. Avoiding harm to designated sites and delivering high quality restoration of all minerals workings will also have a beneficial environmental effect on the biodiversity, landscape and soils topics. The use of aggregate and rock in development will provide significant benefits to the population. However, in those locations where minerals are extracted and transported, there are likely to be negative impacts on many of the SEA topics although the scale and significance of impacts will depend on local circumstances and the ability to introduce effective mitigation measures at a local level.

**No significant differences have been identified between the effects identified for retention and revocation of policies under this theme.**

### Theme 3D: Improving Connectivity and Accessibility Within and Beyond the Region

The assessment has shown that retention will lead to significant positive effects for population and health, air and climatic factors due to improved air quality and reduced potential for greenhouse gas emissions due to the emphasis on sustainable transport modes. This assessment reflects the positive approach to sustainable transport in the North East of England Plan and under the NPPF. Transport networks transcend local authority boundaries and thus effective networks will require local authorities to work together to achieve sustainable approaches. The duty to co-operate will support the ongoing implementation of the North East of England Plan under retention.

Other environmental effects will be largely neutral or uncertain due to the uncertainty over location of particular elements of transport infrastructure. Many of the effects will depend on the ability to change

travel behaviour and the demand for transport. There will also be minor negative effects on material assets due to the use of raw materials for the construction and maintenance of transport infrastructure.

**No significant differences have been identified between the effects identified for retention and revocation of policies under this theme.**

#### 4.3.2 Other Effects

The effects of the retaining the RSS have been presented in **Appendix D** and summarised above in relation to the issues identified in the EU Directive (Annex I). Where other potential effects have been identified these are referred to in **Appendix D**.

### 4.4 Effects of the Partial Revocation of the North East of England Plan

The reasonable alternatives to revocation that have been assessed are:

- Revoking all the quantified and spatially specific policies (for instance where a quantum of development, land for development or amounts of minerals to be extracted or waste disposal is allocated to a particular location in the region) and retaining for a transitional period the non spatial policies; or
- Retaining for a transitional period all the quantified and spatially specific policies where a quantum of development or land for development is allocated to a particular location in the region and revoking the non spatial policies, ambitions and priorities; or
- Retaining for a transitional period policies, the revocation of which may lead to likely significant negative environmental effects.

#### 4.4.1 Revoking all the Quantified and Spatially Specific Policies

**Table 4.3** summarises the effects of revoking only those policies that are quantified or spatially specific.

Table 4.3 Summary of the Effects of Revoking all the Quantified and Spatially Specific Policies

RS Policy No.	RS Policy Title	Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil			Water			Air			Climatic Factors			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape		
			S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L
RS Policy 9	Tyne and Wear City-Region	Partial Revocation	+	+	+	?	?	++	?	?	?	0	0	0	?	?	?	?	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	?	+	+	?
RS Policy 10	Tees Valley City-Region	Partial Revocation	+	+	+	++	++	++	?	?	?	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
RS Policy 11	Rural Areas	Partial Revocation	+	+	+	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?	
RS Policy 13	Brownfield Mixed-Use Locations	Partial Revocation	?	?	?	+	+	++	?	?	?	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?
RS Policy 14	Supporting Further and Higher Education	Partial Revocation	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RS Policy 18	Employment Land Portfolio	Partial Revocation	?	?	?	++	++	++	?	?	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	+	+

Table 4.3 (continued) Summary of the Effects of Revoking all the Quantified and Spatially Specific Policies

RS Policy No.	RS Policy Title	Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil			Water			Air			Climatic Factors			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape		
			S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L
RS Policy 20	Key Employment Locations	Partial Revocation	?	?	?	++	++	++	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	
RS Policy 21	Airports	Partial Revocation	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	-	
RS Policy 22	Ports	Partial Revocation	0	0	0	+	+	+	?	?	?	0	0	0	?	?	?	-	-	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?	
RS Policy 23	Chemical & Steel Industries	Partial Revocation	-	-	-	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	
RS Policy 25	Urban and Rural Centres	Partial Revocation	0	0	0	0	?	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	
RS Policy 26	MetroCentre	Partial Revocation	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	?	?	-	-	?	-	-	0	0	0	?	?	?	?	?	?	

Table 4.3 (continued) Summary of the Effects of Revoking all the Quantified and Spatially Specific Policies

RS Policy No.	RS Policy Title	Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil			Water			Air			Climatic Factors			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape			
			S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	
RS Policy 28	Gross and Net Dwelling Provision	Partial Revocation	?	?	-	?	?	++	?	?	--	?	?	-	?	?	-	?	?	-	?	?	-	?	?	-	?	?	-	
RS Policy 29	Delivering and Managing Housing Supply	Partial Revocation	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?	0	0	0	-	-	-	?	?	?	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?	
RS Policy 30	Improving Inclusivity and Affordability	Partial Revocation	?	?	?	?	?	++	?	?	?	0	0	0	?	?	+	?	?	+	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?	
RS Policy 32	Historic Environment	Partial Revocation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	
RS Policy 39	Renewable Energy Generation	Partial Revocation	+	+	++	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	++	++	++	?	?	?	+	+	+	+	+	+	
RS Policy 41	Onshore Wind Energy Development	Partial Revocation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	++	++	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	?	?

Table 4.3 (continued) Summary of the Effects of Revoking all the Quantified and Spatially Specific Policies

RS Policy No.	RS Policy Title	Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil			Water			Air			Climatic Factors			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape		
			S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L
RS Policy 43	Aggregates Minerals Provision	Partial Revocation	+	+	+	++	++	++	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	+	
RS Policy 48	International Gateways	Partial Revocation	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	
RS Policy 49	Regional Transport Corridors	Partial Revocation	?	?	?	++	++	++	?	?	?	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?	
RS Policy 55	Accessibility within and between the City-Regions	Partial Revocation	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
RS Policy 57	Sustainable Freight Distribution	Partial Revocation	?	?	?	++	++	++	?	?	?	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?	

## Likely Significant Effects

Revoking quantitative and spatial specific policies would remove those policies which identify targets for a quantum of employment or residential development as well as those policies which make specific reference to cities, towns, settlements and individual sites within the Region. The RSS contains 57 policies of which 23 are identified as having a spatial or quantified element to them. A review of the quantitative and spatial specific policies identifies potentially significant negative effects arising for Policies 21 (Airports) and 28 (Gross and Net Dwelling Provision). There are also significant positive effects for population and health on policies 10 (Tees Valley City-Region), 20 (Key Employment Locations), 28 (Gross and Net Dwelling Provision), 30 (Improving Inclusivity and Affordability), 43 (Aggregates Minerals Provision), 49 (Regional Transport Corridors) and 57 (Sustainable Freight Distribution). For these policies the effects of revocation are broadly the same as they are for retention. In the short term there is the potential for uncertainty where the revocation of these policies results in a policy gap where no up to date plan is available. In the medium to long term the effects are considered to be the same for both retention and revocation.

One of the key planning principles set out in the NPPF is to proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. This includes minimising negative impacts and providing net gains to the community where possible. Local authorities are expected to work collaboratively with neighbouring authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships to determine the regeneration needs of their areas. The duty to co-operate is expected to play a key role in this and Local Enterprise Partnerships can also play a key role in assisting local authorities to deliver. This is likely to provide the significant benefits to the community reflected in the 'population topic'.

Statutory duties on environmental protection and other policies in the RSS and NPPF should provide environmental protection in relation to development. Specific reference to protection of undesignated cultural heritage and landscape assets increases the significant positive effects of partial-retention in terms of effects on water, cultural heritage and landscape.

## Proposed Mitigation Measures

A number of mitigation measures have been identified in the detailed assessment in **Appendix D**.

Retaining just the quantitative and spatially specific policies and revoking the rest of the Regional Strategy would remove the measures which were included in the Regional Strategy to mitigate the adverse effects of the proposed development. However, as with revocation of the whole Regional Strategy, measures to protect the environment are provided through the NPPF, other national policy and legislation. For example, under the Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC), there is a legally-binding target to ensure 15% of energy comes from renewable sources by 2020 in the UK. Similarly, the Environment Act 1995 requires all local authorities in the UK to review and assess air quality in their area. Where standards are being exceeded there is a requirement to designate Air Quality Management



Area(s) and the local authority is required to develop and action plan aimed at reducing levels of the pollutant.

#### 4.4.2 Retaining all the Quantified and Spatially Specific Policies

**Table 4.4** summarises the effects of retaining only those policies that are quantified or spatially specific.

Score Key:	<b>++</b> Significant Positive effect	<b>+</b> Minor positive effect	<b>0</b> No overall effect	<b>-</b> Minor negative effect	<b>--</b> Significant negative effect	<b>?</b> Score uncertain
<p><i>NB: where more than one symbol is presented in a box it indicates that the SEA has found more than one score for the category. Where the scores are both positive and negative, the boxes are deliberately not coloured. Where a box is coloured but also contains a ?, this indicates uncertainty over whether the effect could be a minor or significant effect. A conclusion of uncertainty arises where there is insufficient evidence for expert judgement to conclude an effect. The reasons for the assessment are presented in Appendix D for each policy.</i></p>						
<p><i>S – short term (less than 0.75 year), M – medium term (between 0.75 and 5 years) and L – long term (&gt;5 years)</i></p>						

Table 4.4 Summary of the Effects of Retaining all the Quantified and Spatially Specific Policies

RS Policy No.	RS Policy Title	Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil			Water			Air			Climatic Factors			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape		
			S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L
RS Policy 9	Tyne and Wear City-Region	Partial Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	-	-	?	?	?	?	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
RS Policy 10	Tees Valley City-Region	Partial Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	?	?	+	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
RS Policy 11	Rural Areas	Partial Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	?	?	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?
RS Policy 13	Brownfield Mixed-Use Locations	Partial Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
RS Policy 14	Supporting Further and Higher Education	Partial Retention	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RS Policy 18	Employment Land Portfolio	Partial Retention	+	+	?	+	+	+	+	+	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	?	?	+	+	+
RS Policy 20	Key Employment Locations	Partial Retention	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
RS Policy 21	Airports	Partial Retention	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	-

Table 4.4 (continued) Summary of the Effects of Retaining all the Quantified and Spatially Specific Policies

RS Policy No.	RS Policy Title	Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil			Water			Air			Climatic Factors			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape					
			S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L			
RS Policy 22	Ports	Partial Retention	0	0	0	+	+	+	?	?	?	0	0	0	?	?	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
RS Policy 23	Chemical & Steel Industries	Partial Retention	-	-	-	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
RS Policy 25	Urban and Rural Centres	Partial Retention	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0
RS Policy 26	MetroCentre	Partial Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RS Policy 28	Gross and Net Dwelling Provision	Partial Retention	-	-	-	+	+	+	--	--	--	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
RS Policy 29	Delivering and Managing Housing Supply	Partial Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	?	?	?	?	?	?	-	-	-	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+
RS Policy 30	Improving Inclusivity and Affordability	Partial Retention	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
RS Policy 32	Historic Environment	Partial Retention	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

Table 4.4 (continued) Summary of the Effects of Retaining all the Quantified and Spatially Specific Policies

RS Policy No.	RS Policy Title	Alternative	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna			Population and Human Health			Soil			Water			Air			Climatic Factors			Material Assets			Cultural Heritage			Landscape			
			S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	S	M	L	
RS Policy 39	Renewable Energy Generation	Partial Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		
RS Policy 41	Onshore Wind Energy Development	Partial Retention	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	?	?
RS Policy 43	Aggregates Minerals Provision	Partial Retention	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	+	
RS Policy 48	International Gateways	Partial Retention	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	
RS Policy 49	Regional Transport Corridors	Partial Retention	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?	
RS Policy 55	Accessibility within and between the City-Regions	Partial Retention	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
RS Policy 57	Sustainable Freight Distribution	Partial Retention	?	?	?	+	+	+	?	?	?	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	?	?	?	?	?	

## Likely Significant Effects

The retention of the policies for a transitional period which set the quantum for development or which are spatially specific where identified to have potential significant negative environmental effects on soil, air and climatic factors. These policies are 21 (Airports) and 28 (Gross and Net Dwelling Provision). Significant positive effects on population and health topics were identified for policies 9 (Tyne and Wear City-Region), 10 (Tees Valley City-Region), 13 (Brownfield Mixed Use Locations), 18 (Employment Allocations), 20 (Key Employment Locations), 28 (Gross and Net Dwelling Provision), 30 (Improving Inclusivity and Affordability), 43 (Aggregates Minerals Provisions), 49 (Regional Transport Corridors) and 57 (Sustainable Freight Distribution). The positive assessments were made primarily on the basis of the RSS and RES seeking to provide increased employment opportunities, diversifying the employment base of the region, increasing housing supply and choice and promoting sustainable transport links.

Retaining the policy containing the renewable energy targets will have a significant long term positive effect in terms of air and climate factors by providing a framework within which local authorities should consent significant additional renewable energy capacity in their district. This is especially relevant given that the target within the RSS exceeds the national target.

Retention of Policy 26 will assist in controlling development at the MetroCentre and maintaining the role of Newcastle City Centre as the regional retail hub. Although it is acknowledged that the impacts associated with the retention or revocation of this policy were not appraised as significant given the policy support afforded through Paragraph 26 of the NPPF.

The retention of these policies may result in some confusion with the intent of the NPPF and how they are to be applied. The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. The NPPF intends to ensure that the Local Plan is at the heart of the plan-led system and promotes local authorities and communities to plan to meet objectively assessed needs for housing and other forms of development for their areas which should include collaboration with other bodies where appropriate. Since local plans need to be in general conformity with the Regional Strategy, and planning decisions need to be made in line with it, the retention of these policies could create confusion and potential conflict in the planning system. The retention of these policies would therefore be for a transitional period until Local Plans were revised and updated.

### 4.4.3 Proposed Mitigation Measures

Retaining just the quantitative and spatially specific policies and revoking the rest of the Regional Strategy would remove the measures which were included in the Regional Strategy to mitigate the adverse effects of the proposed development. However, as with revocation of the whole Regional Strategy, a number of mitigation measures have been identified in the detailed assessment in **Appendix D**.

#### 4.4.4 Retention of Policies, the Revocation of Which May Lead to Likely Significant Negative Environmental Effects

The assessment has found that there are no policies in the North East Plan where the act of revocation could potentially cause a significant negative effect whilst retaining the same policy will maintain an environmental benefit.

#### 4.5 Secondary, Cumulative and Synergistic Effects

In determining the significance of effects of a plan or programme, the SEA Directive requires that consideration is given to (amongst others) secondary, cumulative, synergistic effects on the environment. As a consequence, the potential for the plan for the revocation of the North East of England Plan to have secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects on the region and in conjunction with other regional plans has been considered as part of each assessment and a summary of those effects identified is presented in **Table 4.5** against each of the SEA topics. Where relevant, these effects are identified as being short, medium, long term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative as required by the SEA Directive. This assessment is relative to the legislative and policy framework that remains in place once the regional strategies are revoked.

Table 4.5 Cumulative Effects of the Plan to Revoke the North East of England Plan

Assessment Topic	Score	Summary
Biodiversity and Nature Conservation (which includes flora and fauna, and the functioning of ecosystems)	+	<p>Significant parts of the region's countryside are protected by national and international laws. National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) cover 30 per cent of region and Sites of Special Scientific interest (SSSIs) cover about 13 per cent of the land area of the region. The protected areas are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);</li> <li>• 254 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs);</li> <li>• 19 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) – listed in <b>Appendix G</b>;</li> <li>• 8 Special Protection Areas (SPA) – listed in <b>Appendix G</b>;</li> <li>• 16 National Nature Reserves (NNR – the region's most vulnerable wildlife-rich landscapes);</li> <li>• 122 Local Natural Reserves (LNR);</li> <li>• Two National Parks (Northumberland, which comprises 13% 113,000 hectares of the region, and part of the North York Moors).</li> </ul> <p>The main concentrations of designated wildlife habitats and geological features are found in the North Pennines, Northumberland National Park and the Northumberland, Teesmouth, Cleveland and Durham Coasts.</p> <p>Key indicators for biodiversity are the number and extent of protected areas and their condition. In particular, the Natural Environment White Paper states that 90% of priority wildlife habitats should be in recovering or favourable condition by 2020.</p> <p>This biodiversity resource could be adversely impacted by direct or secondary effects from housing development, particularly in relation to development on greenfield land, and transport infrastructure as detailed in Appendix E, Biodiversity. The North East of England Regional Strategy includes a number of policies that provided protection and enhancement of biodiversity and nature conservation features.</p> <p>Revocation could increase the number of additional homes delivered or alter the pattern of development in this or adjacent regions and thus the magnitude of the environmental impact, for example, increasing pressure on greenfield land. Revocation of the North East of England Regional Strategy does not affect the legal requirement set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) that a local planning authority must assess the implications of any plan or project likely to have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site in accordance with the Habitats Directive. The Directive prohibits the adoption of any such plan or project unless it must be adopted for imperative reasons of overriding public interest and there are no alternative solutions. For example, given the continued application of the legal and policy protection given to European and Ramsar sites and to SSSIs and further application of agri-environment schemes it is expected that revocation of the Regional Strategy would not change the positive direction of travel.</p> <p>Achievement of legally binding targets for water and air quality will also be significant contributory factors in improving the quality of areas important for wildlife, while enhanced provisions on aspects such as the delivery and protection of green infrastructure will play an important role in increasing the overall area with significant biodiversity value. Statutory and policy protection for AONBs and National Parks will continue to protect the biodiversity value with these areas, at least in so far as the planning system is concerned.</p> <p>Paragraph 114 of the NPPF provides for a policy on the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of green infrastructure. In addition, the introduction of Local Nature Partnerships announced in the Natural Environment White Paper which will complement existing local partnerships which deal with matters such as provision of green infrastructure will improve the chances of implementation. In the long term, revocation is likely to have a positive cumulative effect on biodiversity due to the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure across the region.</p> <p>There will, however, be some development anticipated on greenfield sites, and where this occurs this will lead to some local loss of biodiversity (either directly through land take or indirectly through effects associated with disruption and disturbance of habitats adjacent to the developed sites arising from construction, traffic and recreational activity). The local effects will, however, depend on decisions taken by local authorities in consultation with their communities, and by businesses and other partners, on the future scale, nature and location of housing and other development in order to meet identified need.</p>

Table 4.5 (continued) Cumulative Effects of the Plan to Revoke the North East of England Plan

Assessment Topic	Score	Summary
Population (including socio-economic effects and accessibility)	++	<p>The North East of England Plan contains a variety of policies concerning economic development, from employment land provision to housing targets. There is a range of significant direct and secondary positive benefits anticipated to accrue to communities from the provision of employment and housing land, improvements in local facilities and enhancement from local environmental quality. Revocation is unlikely to affect this long-term.</p> <p>One of the key planning principles set out in the NPPF is to proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. However, this should be in accordance with other policies in the NPPF which seek to minimise environmental effects. This includes minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains where possible (paragraph 109), having access to high quality public transport facilities (paragraph 35) and aiming for a balance of land uses within their area so that people can be encouraged to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities (paragraph 37).</p> <p>Local authorities are expected to work collaboratively with neighbouring authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships to determine the regeneration needs of their areas. The duty to co-operate is expected to play a key role in this and Local Enterprise Partnerships can also play a key role in assisting local authorities to deliver. This is likely to provide similar significant benefits as retention of the Regional Strategy.</p>
Human Health	+	<p>National health related policies/strategies and programmes are primarily related to improving the health of populations and reducing health disparities. The disparities referred to are primarily geographic, ethnic and economic. The North East of England Plan established the two city-region policies to address specific sub-regional issues associated with regeneration and peripherality which would have indirect health benefits through creating local employment opportunities, improving housing quality, improving local environmental quality, and seeking to afford greater access to green infrastructure.</p> <p>Revocation will still enable positive benefits to be delivered as local authorities are required to work collaboratively with neighbouring authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships to determine the socio-economic needs of their area. Similarly, revocation will not remove the need for more houses within the region. Indeed it is Government policy to boost significantly the supply of affordable housing through initiatives such as the Community Infrastructure Levy and New Homes Bonus and the local retention of business rates is intended to encourage a more positive attitude to growth and allow communities to share the benefits and mitigate the negative effects of growth. New homes are to be in locations accessible by sustainable means of transport, walking and cycling in particularly are healthy activities and the NPPF is complementary to national initiatives such as the cycle to work scheme.</p>
Soil and Geology (including land use, important geological sites, and the contamination of soils)	?	<p>The main adverse impacts on soil are a result of development and land cover. In particular the North East RSS contained a regional target for 75% of development to be on previously developed land.</p> <p>Revocation could increase the number of additional homes delivered or alter the pattern of development in this or adjacent regions and thus the magnitude of the environmental impact, for example, increasing pressure on greenfield land. Revocation could in theory have a cumulative affect if the alternatives lessened existing levels of protection. However, revocation is not considered to affect the policy intent as it will be delivered by other policy and legislation. Local planning authorities will still be able to rely on the strong policies at paragraphs 110-111 of the NPPF which steer development towards land with least environmental value and support effective use of previously developed land provided it is not of high environmental value. There is also the target in the Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) that by 2030 all of England's soils will be managed sustainably and degradation threats tackled successfully along with further research, there remains the potential for this to be addressed in the long term.</p>



Table 4.5 (continued) Cumulative Effects of the Plan to Revoke the North East of England Plan

Assessment Topic	Score	Summary
Water Quality and Resources (including as inland surface freshwater and groundwater resources, and inland surface freshwater, groundwater, estuarine, coastal and marine water quality)	?	<p>The main adverse impacts on water are a result of development increasing pressures on water resources and increasing the amount of wastewater to be disposed of. In light of the level of development it proposed the North East of England Plan included a specific policy on the aquatic and marine environment. A number of policies that provided protection of water resources in the region.</p> <p>Revocation could increase the number of additional homes delivered within the region or alter the pattern of development in this or adjacent regions and thus the magnitude of the environmental impact. However, revocation is not considered to affect the policy intent as it will be delivered by other policy and legislation by a range of organisations therefore the cumulative effect is considered to be neutral.</p> <p>Negative effects will be avoided by the fact that abstraction from the aquifer will be governed by the River Basin Management Plan, Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies (CAMS) and groundwater abstraction licences to manage any over-abstraction. The Environment Agency will continue to work with OFWAT, the water companies and other partners including the local authorities through River Basin Management Planning and CAMS to ensure the timely provision of the appropriate additional infrastructure for water supply to cater for the levels of development in the area in line with their water resource plans required under the Water Resources Management Plan Regulations.</p>
Air Quality	?	<p>The main concern in relation to air quality is the level of growth of transport linked to the anticipated level of growth in homes and employment, as well as development of the regions ports and the region's airports. In light of the level of development it proposed the North East of England Plan included a number of policies that sought to address transport growth and to achieve more sustainable transport modes such as increased use of public transport, walking and cycling.</p> <p>A key issue for the Tyne and Wear City-Region relates to there being two air quality zones covering central Newcastle and Central Gateshead.</p> <p>However, much still depended on a number of factors including whether the population change its behaviour, pricing policy on public transport, technological advances in engine efficiency and emission standards etc.</p> <p>Revocation could increase the number of additional homes delivered or alter the pattern of development in this or adjacent regions and thus the magnitude of the environmental impact by increasing the amount of traffic generated. However, revocation is not considered to affect the policy intent as it will be delivered by other policy and legislation therefore the cumulative effect of revocation on air quality is considered to be neutral.</p> <p>Negative effects on current levels of air quality will be avoided by the legal requirement to achieve the air quality standards set by European Directives, underpinned by national and locally derived solutions (for example, the Action Plans for Air Quality Management Areas) and this is reflected in paragraph 124 of the NPPF which states that planning policies should sustain compliance with and contribute towards EU limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas.</p>

Table 4.5 (continued) Cumulative Effects of the Plan to Revoke the North East of England Plan

Assessment Topic	Score	Summary
Climate Change (including greenhouse gas emissions, predicted effects of climate change and the ability to adapt)	+	<p>There are two key aspects to climate change considered in this assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first is the extent to which the region contributes to global emissions of greenhouse gases. Growth of housing, transport movement, waste generation and energy use are areas where increases in carbon dioxide emissions could be seen. In light of the level of development it proposed the North East of England Plan included a number of policies that sought to address transport growth and to achieve more sustainable transport modes and renewable energy targets which would help to reduce the region's contribution;</li> <li>• The second is the extent to which planning policy facilitates adaptation and mitigation of the impacts of climate change and the Regional Strategy included a number of policies relating to avoidance of development in the floodplain, creation of Green Infrastructure, maximising energy efficiency as well as adaptation strategies.</li> </ul> <p>Revocation could increase the number of additional homes delivered or alter the pattern of development in this or adjacent regions and thus the magnitude of the environmental impact by increasing the amount of traffic generated. However, revocation is not considered to affect the policy intent (to move towards a low carbon economy) as it will be delivered by other policy and legislation therefore the cumulative effect of revocation on climate change is considered to be neutral.</p> <p>One of the 12 core principles of planning set out in paragraph 17 of the NPPF is to support the transition to a low carbon future, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable resources, for example, renewable energy development. Similarly, paragraph 94 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change in line with the provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008. The NPPF seeks to support the move to a low carbon future, by stating that local planning authorities should plan for new development in locations and ways which reduce greenhouse gas emissions; actively support energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings; and when setting any local requirement for a building's sustainability, do so in a way consistent with the Government's zero carbon buildings policy and adopt nationally described standards. Specifically, local planning authorities are expected to identify opportunities where development can draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supplies. From October 2012, the Green Deal will also improve the energy efficiency of the existing housing stock and supporting the drive to lower carbon emissions from households. There is a legally-binding target to ensure 15% of energy comes from renewable sources by 2020 and the UK Renewable Energy Roadmap (July 2011) sets out the path to meet it.</p> <p>Following revocation of regional strategies, local authorities will be expected to continue to work together across administrative boundaries and with the Environment Agency to plan development that properly minimises the effects of climate change, particularly from flooding and coastal change. For flooding matters, local authorities already have a duty to co-operate under the Floods and Water Management Act 2010. This contains provisions that cover regional working and co-operation such as the establishment of Regional Flood and Coastal Committees and the bringing together of lead local flood authorities (unitary and county councils), who will have a duty to co-operate, to develop local strategies for managing local flood risk. In addition, the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 imposes a duty on the Environment Agency and lead local flood authorities to determine whether a significant flood risk exists in an area and if so to prepare flood hazard maps, flood risk maps and flood risk management plans. Shoreline Management Plans should continue to inform the evidence base for planning in coastal areas (paragraph 168). The prediction of future impacts should include the longer term nature and inherent uncertainty of coastal processes (including coastal landslip), and take account of climate change.</p>

Table 4.5 (continued) Cumulative Effects of the Plan to Revoke the North East of England Plan

Assessment Topic	Score	Summary
Waste Management and Minerals	-	<p>The main adverse impacts on material assets are a result of development increasing demand for minerals resources and increasing the amount of waste generated. In light of the level of development it proposed the North East of England Plan included a number of policies that allowed for minerals and waste planning in the region.</p> <p>Revocation could increase the number of additional homes delivered or alter the pattern of development in this or adjacent regions and thus the magnitude of the environmental impact, for example, increasing demand for construction material. Revocation could in theory have a cumulative affect if the alternatives lessened existing levels of protection. However, revocation is not considered to affect the policy intent as it will be delivered by other policy and legislation. The minerals and waste planning authorities are expected to continue to take forward their minerals and waste plans (i) to make provision for minerals - under paragraph 145 of the NPPF – by preparing a local aggregate assessment based on average sales taking account of secondary, recycled and marine sources and (ii) provide land for waste management facilities, to support the sustainable management of waste in line with national and European requirements. Since no waste planning authority is likely to be totally self-sufficient in waste management, the duty to co-operate will ensure that the authorities work together to ensure the environmentally sound management of waste. The duty to co-operate and input from the Aggregate Working Parties will also ensure that a steady and adequate supply of minerals are provided in a sustainable manner.</p> <p>It is still likely that demanded for minerals resources and the amount of waste generated will increase by virtue of the level of development therefore cumulative effects are likely to be negative (as would have been the case with retention).</p>
Cultural Heritage (including architectural and archaeological heritage)	+	<p>Revocation could increase the number of additional homes or alter the pattern of development in this or adjacent regions and thus the magnitude of the environmental impact, for example, increasing pressure for development in Durham or Hexham for example. Revocation could in theory have a cumulative affect if the alternatives lessened existing levels of protection. However, the NPPF together with legislation on cultural heritage provide a strong framework to maintain the current high level for protecting the existing heritage resource. For example, given the continued application of the legal and policy protection given to Scheduled Monuments, registered parks and gardens and listed buildings it is expected that revocation of the Regional Strategy would not change the positive direction of travel.</p> <p>Paragraphs 126 - 141 of the NPPF set out strong national policy on conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It states that local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.</p> <p>In planning for the historic environment, local authorities should continue to draw on available information, including data from partners, to address cross boundary issues; they should also continue to liaise with English Heritage to identify and evaluate areas, sites and buildings of local cultural and historic importance.</p>
Landscape and Townscape	+	<p>Revocation could increase the number of additional homes delivered or alter the pattern of development in this or adjacent regions and thus the magnitude of the environmental impact, for example, increasing pressure for development in or adjacent to the National Parks and AONB which are wholly or partially within the region.</p> <p>Following revocation, national legislation will help protect nationally designated landscapes from pressures associated with development. Furthermore paragraph 115 of the NPPF states: <i>Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.</i> Therefore the Northumberland National Parks, the two AONBs in the region and the expanse of Heritage Coast will remain protected following revocation.</p> <p>The NPPF also maintains the policy previously contained in PPS7 that local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected landscape areas will be judged (paragraph 113) while landscape character assessments should be prepared where appropriate (paragraph 170). Furthermore, Paragraph 114 of the NPPF provides for a policy on the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of green infrastructure. In addition, the introduction of Local Nature Partnerships announced in the Natural Environment White Paper which will complement existing local partnerships which deal with matters such as provision of green infrastructure will improve the chances of implementation.</p>
Score Key:	Significant Positive ++ Positive + No significant effects 0 Negative - Significant negative -- Uncertain?	

The plan to revoke the regional strategies is however national in scope as well as applying to the eight regions. In consequence the wider implications and effects of the plan have also been considered.

A key principle of regional planning was to seek to provide consistency and efficiency in the provision of housing, employment and associated infrastructure, along with the protection and enhancement of environmental resources. Notwithstanding counter arguments as to the effectiveness with which a Regional Strategy might be implemented, their revocation raises issues as to the cumulative impacts and unintended consequences of their replacement through a localised approach.

In respect of setting local housing targets, over the medium and longer term, reliance on locally-generated housing figures could yield an increasing difference between authority areas within regions. Tensions may arise, where the duty to co-operate and housing market assessments require an agreed strategy to accommodate growth that is not viewed as equitable by the co-operating authorities. This could create disparities which are difficult to reconcile without significant interventions. However, under revocation there is also the opportunity for adjacent authorities in previously different regions to explore joint working which may help address some of the potential issues that could arise.

If an effect of abolition is regional differences then environmental effects could be exacerbated in some areas. For particular regions, this could be critical for resources such as water which, whilst addressed through mechanisms such as Water Resource Management Plans and the Environment Agency River Basin Management Plans, could be affected by absence of the strategic overview of regional planning which would seek to balance regional environmental capacity and the need for growth.

For the protection and enhancement of environmental resources more generally, the cumulative effects of the absence of regional policy frameworks and associated resources is harder to determine over the longer term. Whether regional strategies specifically relating to biodiversity and landscape resources, for example, can adequately realise their potential in the absence of a unifying policy framework is uncertain. Here, the cumulative impacts could be associated with increasingly lost opportunities to plan strategically for these interests.

The provision of renewable energy has been an issue which regional planning arguably seemed to be particularly fitted to help guide. Development of strategic renewable energy-generating capacity, whilst to some extent modified through co-operation, could over the longer term lead to sub-optimal provision as localised interests perhaps come to the fore, and issues over the equity of provision and national interests are increasingly difficult to reconcile. As with the enhancement of natural resources, this could present a lost opportunity, only recognised over the longer term.

## 4.6 In Summary

The assessment of the revocation of the North East of England Plan has shown that there will be significant positive effects, although these will be largely similar to those if the Plan were retained.

For many policies, it is difficult to identify specific differentiation between the effects of retention and revocation, given the strategic nature of the Regional Strategy policies and the degree to which they already devolved responsibility to local authorities. The provisions of the NPPF means that a basic framework for the delivery of sustainable development is in place which is compatible with the principles employed in the Regional Strategy. Local plans can therefore readily deliver the aspirations and proposals of the Regional Strategy, using additional mechanisms such as the duty to co-operate.

Where it occurs, differentiation is most clear in respect of housing allocations where the negative effects of top-down allocations could be tempered by more detailed understanding of environmental capacity issues and possibly more diverse and locally-specific spatial distributions of development (e.g. less reliance on urban extensions). However, revocation does score more uncertainly in the short to medium term. In the case of revocation, it is AMEC's view that there is some uncertainty about whether the benefits will be realised in the short to medium term for those local authorities that need to establish Local Plan policies for housing development that reflect the objectively assessed and up to date needs of their respective local communities. This issue may be relevant for up to nine North East local planning authorities who adopted local plans before 2008 (the date of the adoption of the North East of England Plan). The application of the NPPFs presumption in favour of sustainable development and its policies to boost the supply of housing will help where local plans or policies are absent, silent or out of date.

Where it is a policy that provides a strategic direction and whose requirements extend beyond the boundaries of a single authority, such as strategic employment sites, there is also likely to be a difference in the short to medium term between retention and revocation. Retention is likely to have significantly positive effects on the population topic and negative effects on biodiversity, air, water and material assets, in part because of the clarity and certainty provided. However, revocation will score uncertainly in the short to medium term until authorities define, agree and implement the duty to co-operate.

Many of the benefits of retention relate to spatial planning issues that cross local authority boundaries (e.g. green infrastructure) and require direction and co-operation from a number of stakeholders including local authorities to be realised. Therefore, in the case of revocation there is more uncertainty about benefits coming forward in the short to medium term due to the transition period for those authorities who need to establish the arrangements under the "duty to co-operate" to deliver such strategic policies and then reflect them in their adopted local plans. This may occur where plans are out of date.

A number of issues are arguably more efficiently and effectively addressed across wider areas than local authority boundaries, in particular strategic employment sites, major infrastructure provision, biodiversity planning, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and renewable energy. Whilst the duty to co-operate in principle and practice could well address a wide range of strategic issues, it is AMEC's opinion that there is uncertainty as to how this might work in the short to medium term, both by topic and geographically. For example, securing agreement on housing and employment levels and distribution could be easier (although not universally so) at sub-regional scale than might strategic infrastructure provision on the same or wider scale. Some issues such as renewable energy, biodiversity

enhancement or landscape conservation, which typically benefit from being planned at a wider geographical scale, could be ignored or their potential not realised.

More widely, and over the longer term, inter- and intra-regional differences could be magnified as a result of the sum of local decisions which reflect strongly varying circumstances such as housing demand.

Mitigation of the effects of revocation is likely to be diverse and perhaps sub-regionally specific. For example, in planning for water provision as part of new development, there is likely to be greater reliance on Water Resource Management Plans and co-operation between interested parties.



## 5. Conclusions and Key Findings

### 5.1 What are the Environmental Effects of Revocation of the North East of England Plan?

The assessment has identified that the revocation of the North East of England Plan will be likely to result in a range of environmental effects across all of the topics identified in the SEA Directive.

The overall vision of the North East of England Plan is to realise the economic potential of the region and to provide a high quality of life for its people. This includes meeting their housing needs by developing sustainable inclusive communities whilst at the same time reducing its impact on the environment through savings in energy and water use and by strengthening the stock of regional environmental assets. The policies in the North East of England Plan are designed to achieve this vision.

With the revocation of the North East of England Plan, local authorities and others will need to prepare and implement their local plans and other planning policy documents and to take planning decisions having due regard to the NPPF. The assessment of the revocation of the plan has shown that there will be significant positive effects, although these will be largely similar to those if the plan were retained. This reflects the fact that in some areas, such as provision for local employment and housing needs whilst protecting and enhancing environmental capital, the intent will be continued through other government policy, notably the NPPF. In some areas of policy the NPPF strengthens previous Regional Strategy commitments.

The revocation of the North East of England Regional Strategy removes a number of quantitative based policies such as housing where specific dwelling allocations are made to individual local authorities. In the absence of this regional context it will be the responsibility of local authorities to work together under the duty to co-operate to best meet the needs of their areas in the most appropriate way having regard to the NPPF and where appropriate other policy and legislation (for example, the Government's planning policy for traveller sites published in March 2012). The duty to co-operate will require new ways of working for local authorities and this may lead to some delay in putting in place local plans and other planning policy or in establishing what the development needs are of their area having regard to the needs of others areas as well. An example being a housing market area which is likely to include a number of local authorities. The net effect of this may be a slowing down of development in the short and medium term as the new approaches are implemented - this in turn may lead to a reduction in the positive and negative environmental effects over this period. The application of the NPPFs presumption in favour of sustainable development and its policies to boost the supply of housing will help where plans or policies are absent, silent or out of date.

The assessment has also considered the reasonable alternative of retaining the North East of England Plan. This has resulted in the identification of similar environmental effects to revocation although there are important differences in short term effects as indicated above and potentially longer term as well.



The assessment has also considered the reasonable alternative of retaining the North East of England Regional Strategy. This has resulted in the identification of similar environmental effects to revocation although there are important differences in short term effects as indicated above and potentially longer term as well. Other reasonable alternatives assessed were partial revocation of the North East of England Regional Strategy either by:

- Revoking all the quantified and spatially specific policies and retaining for a transitional period the non spatial policies, ambitions and priorities; or
- Retaining for a transitional period all the spatially specific policies where a quantum of development or land for development is allocated to a particular location in the region and revoking the non spatial policies, ambitions and priorities; or
- Retaining for a transitional period policies, ambitions and/or priorities, the revocation of which may lead to likely significant negative environmental effects.

These also resulted in the identification of similar environmental effects to full revocation although there are some important differences in the short and medium term as indicated above.

## 5.2 Proposals for Monitoring

It is a requirement of the SEA Directive to establish how the significant effects of revoking the Regional Strategy will be monitored. Article 10(2) of the SEA Directive specifically states that, where appropriate, existing monitoring arrangements may be used to assess the success of the appropriate plan in achieving its objectives. It does not require that targets be developed for the SEA itself.

DCLG's Business Plan<sup>33</sup> under section 5 'Put Communities in charge of planning' includes specific monitoring actions for the department regarding the Local Plan making progress by authorities and on compliance with the duty to co-operate. The results of this monitoring will provide clarity over the extent of any delay in adoption of revised local plans. When reviewing the effects of the final decision on revocation, it is proposed that DCLG will make periodic reference to the following metrics and sources of information contained in **Table 5.1**. The proposed indicators reflect those identified in the course of the gathering the evidence for this assessment, namely the review of plans, strategies and programmes and collation of baseline information. They are proposed in part to minimise any additional burdens associated with collection and analysis of monitoring data.

Any resulting analysis of long term trends in the indicators will be used to consider whether any further mitigation or intervention is needed for the two categories identified in the SEA Directive, namely:

- The significant effects identified in the assessment that may give rise to irreversible damage, where appropriate, relevant mitigating measures can be taken; and

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<sup>33</sup> DCLG May 2012, Business Plan 2012-2015.

- Uncertain effects where monitoring would enable preventative or mitigating measures to be undertaken.

Based on the findings of this assessment, the effects that should therefore be monitored include:

The effects that should be monitored therefore include:

- Significant effects on air quality and climate change (Policy 21 - Airports);
- Significant effects on soil/ geology (Policy 28 – Gross and Net Dwelling Provision).

Monitoring measures have also been proposed where there have been uncertain effects identified and these include:

- Uncertain effects on biodiversity (Policy 4, 7, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 20, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 48, 49 and 57);
- Uncertain effects on population and human health (Policy 6, 9, 17, 28, 29, 30 and 54);
- Uncertain effects on soil (Policy 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 48, 49, 54, and 57);
- Uncertain effects on water (Policy 7, 11, 12, 16, 19, 23, 26, 27, 28 and 48);
- Uncertain effects on air (Policy 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28, 30, 48 and 54);
- Uncertain effects on climatic factors (Policy 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 23, 26, 28, 29, 30 and 48);
- Uncertain effects on materials assets (Policy 7, 11, 17, 23, 26, 27, 28, 39, 48 and 54);
- Uncertain effects on cultural heritage (Policy 7, 9, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 48, 49, 54 and 57);
- Uncertain effects on landscape (Policy 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 41, 48, 49, 54 and 57).

Taking this into account, of the 12 topics considered in this SEA, it is proposed that monitoring should focus on the following, as set out in **Table 5.1**.

Table 5.1 Potential Environmental Monitoring Measures

SEA Topics	Monitoring Measure	Source(s) of Information
<b>Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna</b>	Annual (where information allows) trends in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Condition reports for designated sites;</li> <li>• Threatened habitats and species. Populations of countryside birds;</li> <li>• Surface water biological indicators.</li> </ul>	<p>Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) report under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive (completed every 6 years) on the conservation status of protected habitats.</p> <p>JNCC  <a href="http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-4241">http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-4241</a>  <a href="http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4239">http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4239</a>  <a href="http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4238">http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4238</a>  <a href="http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4235">http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4235</a>  <a href="http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/Special/sssi/report.cfm?category=R,RF">http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/Special/sssi/report.cfm?category=R,RF</a>  <a href="https://restats.decc.gov.uk/cms/historicregionalstatistics">https://restats.decc.gov.uk/cms/historicregionalstatistics</a></p> <p>Department of Food, Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra)  <a href="http://www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/environment/inland-water/">http://www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/environment/inland-water/</a></p> <p>The Environment Agency (EA) is responsible for monitoring water quality under the Water Framework Directive.</p>
<b>Population</b>	Annual (where information allows) trends in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment Information;</li> <li>• Population;</li> <li>• Housing and additional net dwellings.</li> </ul>	<p>Office of National Statistics (ONS) reports, specifically Regional Trends and Regional Gross Value Added.</p> <p>Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) statistics: Annual net additional dwellings, Housebuilding: permanent dwellings completed by tenure and region.</p>
<b>Human Health</b>	Annual (where information allows) trends in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Statistics – Long term illness, etc;</li> <li>• Crime;</li> <li>• Deprivation;</li> <li>• Access to and quality of the local environment.</li> </ul>	<p>ONS on health.</p> <p>Home Office, Crime Survey for England and Wales.</p> <p>DCLG statistics: Indices of Deprivation.</p> <p>ONS (proposed measures of wellbeing).</p>
<b>Soil and Geology</b>	Annual (where information allows) trends in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land use.</li> </ul>	DCLG statistics.
<b>Water</b>	Annual (where information allows) trends in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of catchments with good ecological status;</li> <li>• Water resource availability;</li> <li>• Per capita water consumption.</li> </ul>	<p>EA &amp; Defra  <a href="http://www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/environment/inland-water/">http://www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/environment/inland-water/</a></p> <p>Northumbrian Water.</p> <p>Northumbrian Water.</p>
<b>Air</b>	Annual (where information allows) trends in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of AQMAs;</li> <li>• Number of AQMAs were exceedances occurred.</li> </ul>	<p>Defra.</p> <p>Defra.</p>

Table 5.1 (continued) Potential Environmental Monitoring Measures

SEA Topics	Monitoring Measure	Source(s) of Information
<b>Climatic Factors</b>	Annual (where information allows) trends in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emission of greenhouse gases;</li> <li>Number of properties at risk of flooding.</li> </ul>	Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) Statistical Release: Local and regional CO2 emissions. EA.
<b>Material Assets</b>	Annual (where information allows) trends in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volume of construction waste and proportions recycled;</li> <li>Volume of hazardous waste;</li> <li>Volume of controlled wastes and proportions recycled;</li> <li>Volume of minerals extracted.</li> </ul>	EA. EA. EA. North East of England Mineral Planning Authorities.
<b>Cultural Heritage, Including Architectural and Archaeological Heritage</b>	Annual (where information allows) trends in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of heritage assets of different types that are at risk.</li> </ul>	English Heritage 'Heritage at risk report'.
<b>Landscape and Townscape</b>	Annual (where information allows) trends in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change in AONBs (area, threats and quality);</li> <li>Changes in Conservation Areas;</li> <li>Percentage who are very or fairly satisfied with local area;</li> <li>Trend in number of vacant dwellings.</li> </ul>	National Association of AONBs. English Heritage (if 2003 survey repeated). ONS (proposed measures of wellbeing). DCLG. <a href="http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/xls/1815794.xls">http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/xls/1815794.xls</a>

### 5.3 Quality Assurance

The Government's Guidance on SEA contains a quality assurance checklist to help ensure that the requirements of the SEA Directive are met. Those relevant to this stage have been highlighted below.

Table 5.2 Quality Assurance

Objectives and Context	
The plan's purpose and objectives are made clear.	Presented in <b>Section 2</b> .
Environmental issues, including international and EC objectives, are considered in developing objectives and targets.	International and European objectives and targets are identified in <b>Appendix E</b> .
SEA objectives are clearly set out and linked to indicators and targets where appropriate.	<b>Section 3.1</b> presents the SEA Topics and Table 5.1 links these to indicators.
Links to other related plans, programmes and policies are identified and explained.	<b>Appendix E</b> identifies relevant plans, programmes and policies.
Scoping	
The environmental consultation bodies are consulted in appropriate ways and at appropriate times on the content and scope of the Scoping Report.	The Consultation Bodies in England <sup>34</sup> were consulted on the scope and level of detail of the environmental reports on 6 May 2011, and were given 5 weeks as required by regulations to respond. The equivalent bodies in the Devolved Administrations were also consulted.  Their comments were used as the basis for deciding the scope and level of detail of the material included in the environmental reports. Consideration was also given to more detailed textual comments provided by the consultation bodies.  <b>Section 1.5.2</b> presents information on scoping consultation.
The SEA focuses on significant issues.	<b>Section 3.2</b> sets out the scope of the assessment. These issues reflect the views of the scoping consultees as detailed in <b>Section 1.5.2</b> . The significant issues are identified in Appendix E for each of the 12 SEA topics.
Technical, procedural and other difficulties encountered are discussed; assumptions and uncertainties are made explicit.	Section 3.5 identifies the technical difficulties encountered in completing this report.
Reasons are given for eliminating issues from further consideration.	No issues were eliminated from further consideration.
Alternatives	
Realistic alternatives are considered for key issues, and the reasons for choosing them are documented.	Alternatives were identified in <b>Section 2.4</b> .
Alternatives include 'do minimum' and/or 'business as usual' scenarios wherever relevant.	Alternatives were identified in <b>Section 2.4</b> .
The environmental effects (both adverse and beneficial) of each alternative are identified and compared.	Refer to <b>Section 4, 5</b> and <b>Appendix D and E</b> .
Inconsistencies between the alternatives and other relevant plans, programmes or policies are identified and explained.	Refer to <b>Section 2.4</b> .
Reasons are given for selection or elimination of alternatives.	These are presented in <b>Sections 2.4</b> and <b>5</b> .

<sup>34</sup> The Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England.

Table 5.2 (continued) Quality Assurance

<b>Baseline Information</b>	
Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and their likely evolution without the plan are described.	Refer to <b>Appendix E</b> where baseline information is provided for each SEA topic considered.
Characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected are described, including areas wider than the physical boundary of the plan area where it is likely to be affected by the plan where practical.	Refer to <b>Appendix C, D and E</b> .
Difficulties such as deficiencies in information or methods are explained.	These are stated throughout the report where appropriate.
<b>Prediction and Evaluation of Significant Environmental Effects</b>	
Effects identified include the types listed in the Directive (biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage and landscape) as relevant; other likely environmental effects are also covered as appropriate.	These are set out in <b>Appendix D and E</b> and summarised in <b>Section 4 and 5</b> .
Both positive and negative effects are considered, and the duration of effects (short, medium, or long term) is addressed.	These are set out in <b>Appendix D and E</b> and summarised in <b>Section 4 and 5</b> .
Likely secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects are identified where practicable.	These are set out in <b>Appendix D and E</b> and summarised in <b>Section 4</b> .
Inter-relationships between effects are considered where practicable.	These are set out in <b>Appendix D and E</b> and summarised in <b>Section 4 and 5</b> .
The prediction and evaluation of effects makes use of relevant accepted standards, regulations and thresholds.	Refer to individual topic chapters in <b>Appendix E</b> and <b>Section 3.4.2</b> .
Methods used to evaluate the effects are described.	These are described in <b>Section 3.4</b> .
<b>Mitigation Measures</b>	
Measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the plan or programme are indicated.	These are set out in <b>Appendix D and E</b> and summarised in <b>Section 4 and 5</b> .
Issues to be taken into account in project consents are identified.	If relevant, these are set out in <b>Appendix D and E</b> and summarised in <b>Section 4 and 5</b> .
<b>Environmental Report</b>	
Is clear and concise in its layout and presentation.	The layout of the Environmental Report is set out in <b>Section 1.6</b> . The structure was subject to early consultation and review as part of scoping.
Uses simple, clear language and avoids or explains technical terms.	The Environmental Report has been written in plain English as far as the technical nature of the report allows.
Uses maps and other illustrations where appropriate.	Figures and tables have been used throughout the SEA Report and in <b>Appendix E</b> where appropriate.
Explains the methodology used.	This is presented in <b>Section 3</b> .
Explains who was consulted and what methods of consultation were used.	This is covered in <b>Section 1.5</b>

Table 5.2 (continued) Quality Assurance

Environmental Report	
Identifies sources of information, including expert judgement and matters of opinion.	References to information sources are provided throughout the report and <b>Appendix E</b> where appropriate.
Contains a non-technical summary covering the overall approach to the SEA, the objectives of the plan, the main options considered, and any changes to the plan resulting from the SEA.	An <b>NTS</b> is provided as a standalone document.
Consultation	
The SEA is consulted on as an integral part of the plan-making process.	The completed previous Environmental Reports were sent to the Consultation Bodies in England and the equivalent bodies in the devolved administrations and simultaneously published for public consultation on 20 October 2011. The consultation period ended on 20 January 2012. As the Environmental Reports dealt with the effects of the revocation and not the adoption of plans, there were no draft plans to consult on.  This Environmental Report will be published for consultation in summer 2012.
Consultation Bodies and the public likely to be affected by, or having an interest in, the plan or programme are consulted in ways and at times which give them an early and effective opportunity within appropriate timeframes to express their opinions on the draft plan and Environmental Report.	The completed Environmental Reports were sent to the Consultation Bodies in England and the equivalent bodies in the devolved administrations and simultaneously published for public consultation on 20 October 2011.  This Environmental Report will be published for consultation in summer 2012.
Decision-making and Information on the Decision	
The Environmental Report and the opinions of those consulted are taken into account in finalising and adopting the plan or programme.	This will be included in the Post Adoption Statement (to be issued following consultation).
An explanation is given of how they have been taken into account.	This will be included in the Post Adoption Statement (to be issued following consultation).
Reasons are given for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of other reasonable alternatives considered.	This will be included in the Post Adoption Statement (to be issued following consultation).
Monitoring Measures	
Measures proposed for monitoring are clear, practicable and linked to the indicators and objectives used in the SEA.	These are presented in <b>Section 5.2</b> .
Monitoring is used, where appropriate, during implementation of the plan or programme to make good deficiencies in baseline information in the SEA.	Details of this are provided in <b>Section 5.2</b> .
Monitoring enables unforeseen adverse effects to be identified at an early stage (these effects may include predictions which prove to be incorrect).	Details of this are provided in <b>Section 5.2</b> .
Proposals are made for action in response to significant adverse effects.	This will be set out in the Post Adoption Statement (to be published following consultation).

## 5.4 **Next Steps**

This Environmental Report will be presented for consultation Thursday 10 January 2013. Feedback received from consultees in relation to the SEA will be documented and considered in reviewing the proposals to revoke the regional strategies. A Post Adoption Statement will summarise how the SEA and the consultation responses have been taken into account and how environmental considerations have been integrated into the final decisions regarding the proposals to revoke the regional strategies.



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