



Partial Review of North West Regional Spatial Strategy

Project Plan and Statement of Public Participation

Version 2 – January 2009

North West Plan Partial Review
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The North West in Context

A region of stark contrasts and striking landscapes, the North West is home to 6.8 million people and the scene of economic growth and urban renaissance to rival any in Europe. From the outstanding natural beauty of the Lake District, England's premier National Park, to the bustling, modern contemporary European City Region conurbations of Manchester and Liverpool, European Capital of Culture in 2008; from its extensive coastline and popular resorts like Blackpool and Southport, to great historic towns and cities such as Carlisle, Lancaster, Preston and Chester; and with World Heritage Sites as wide ranging as Liverpool City Centre and Hadrian's Wall, and superb landscapes including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the region is as distinctive as it is diverse. The North West is a hub of learning, research and development. Its traditional manufacturing base may have declined, but the region still contains world-leading industries such as aerospace. An excellent transport network provides first-rate links within the North West and with other UK regions and, thanks to Manchester Airport and the historic port of Liverpool, gateways to the rest of the world to match any in the country.

Background

When work commenced on the Partial Review of Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) it was led by the former North West Regional Assembly (NWRA). With revised governance arrangements in place [in light of the Sub National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR)¹], the NWRA ceased to exist in July 2008. It has now been replaced by 4NW – the Regional Leaders Forum, who as Regional Planning Body are legally responsible for preparing and reviewing the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (RSS).

The current RSS for the North West, was published in September 2008. This followed a full review of RSS which commenced in July 2004 and included widespread consultation with interested parties². The Draft RSS was submitted to the Secretary of State in January 2006. An Examination in Public on the Draft RSS was held between November 2006 and January 2007. Subsequently, the Secretary of State's Proposed Modifications to Draft RSS were published for consultation in March 2008 and the final version of the RSS was issued in September 2008. Work on this Partial Review of RSS commenced in 2007 and overlapped with the later stages of this process.

At the time of the approval and submission of the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) in January 2009, the former North West Regional Assembly identified a number of policy topics which would need to be addressed in a future review of RSS. The RSS Examination in Public (EiP) Panel Report³ endorsed this approach.

In this context, the former North West Regional Assembly as Regional Planning Body, agreed on 16th November 2007, to undertake a Partial Review of RSS, covering a number of issues (see Partial Review Tasks, see page 10).

Within the context provided by the challenges of addressing climate change and sustainability, by the then recently published Housing Green Paper⁴ (and before the impacts of the economic downturn associated with the 'credit crunch' were apparent), the

¹ "Sub National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration", CLG / BERR, July 2007 see <http://www.communities.gov.uk/citiesandregions/thesubnationalreview/>

² See http://www.nwrpb.org.uk/whatwedo/issues/environment/?page_id=476.

³ North West Draft Regional Spatial Strategy: Examination in Public - Report of the Panel, March 2007 (http://www.gos.gov.uk/497468/docs/457370/2007_Panel_Report_Chapters.pdf)

⁴ "Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable - Housing Green Paper" CLG July 2007 – see <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/homesforfuture>

region originally identified as a priority, three key strategic spatial planning issues which needed addressing urgently in the Partial Review of Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).

These related to:

- ~ tackling issues around housing demand, supply and affordability (including the implications of Government decisions on the location of additional growth points and eco towns);
- ~ identifying the broad locations for regionally significant waste management facilities; and
- ~ identifying the broad location of renewable energy generation facilities.

In addition in the context of research recently completed, the Partial Review also sought to 'tidy up' a number of policy areas covering:

- ~ Gypsies & Travellers;
- ~ Travelling Showpeople; and
- ~ Update of Regional Parking Standards.

Subsequently the Sub National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR) has been published envisaging new governance arrangements for the regions, and the replacement of RSS and the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) with a single Regional Strategy – RS2010 (see panel on page 15).

The Partial Review is taking place within the current legislative process for RSS, but will also need to be adaptable to fit within the emerging procedures for the preparation of a single Regional Strategy (which will require primary legislation to take place⁵).

Consultation on a Draft Project Plan was the first stage in carrying out the Partial Review of RSS. This took place in February \ March 2008. The Project Plan was then revised and published in May 2008, to reflect the feedback from that exercise along with other consequential changes arising from the publication of the Secretary of State's Proposed Modifications to RSS in March 2008.⁶

The current version of the Project Plan represents a further revision to reflect: the revised scope and timetable of the Partial Review of RSS which were agreed in mid 2008 (see below);

- ~ relationship of work on preparation of Partial Review of RSS and the emerging Regional Strategy – RS2010;
- ~ revised governance arrangements of 4NW; and
- ~ refinement of the engagement process in light of experience on engagement to date on the Partial Review Project Plan and Options consultations (and experience from other regions RSS processes).

Revised Scope of Partial Review

Over the summer of 2008, there was an ongoing dialogue between 4NW and GONW / CLG about how we should progress the Partial Review of RSS in light of:

- ~ changing circumstances in the housing market;
- ~ a letter sent from the former Minister for Housing & Planning - Caroline Flint to all Regional Planning Bodies in July 2008;
- ~ the need to get a more complete evidence base on a number of issues including housing land availability and infrastructure capacity;

⁵ The primary legislation is the "Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Bill" – for latest information on the Bill's progress through the Houses of Parliament – see <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2008-09/localdemocracyeconomicdevelopmentandconstruction.html>

⁶ "North West of England Regional Spatial Strategy - the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy 'The North West Plan' Submitted By the North West Regional Assembly" GONW, March 2008 – see <http://gonw-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal>

- ~ feedback from stakeholders on the recent options consultation exercise in June 2008;
- ~ the policy position that is emerging in the publication of the final version of RSS;
- ~ work commencing in the North West on a Regional Strategy ahead of emerging legislation for a single Regional Strategy.

Within this context, after dialogue with GONW and NWDA, the 4NW - Regional Leaders Forum meeting on 15th September 2008 endorsed the change in the scope of the Partial Review of RSS, to focus on a limited number of discrete technical issues addressing strategic gaps in RSS policy. The Partial Review will now focus just on:

- ~ Gypsies & Travellers;
- ~ Travelling Showpeople; and
- ~ Regional Parking standards.

The challenge is to ensure that we deliver a Partial Review of RSS in a timely and effective way. However given the scale and urgency of the need to tackle the remaining priorities and also feed into the development of a single Regional Strategy, 4NW working with partners is keen to ensure a draft RSS is submitted to Government by mid 2009. It is then hoped that Government will efficiently progress the remaining stages of process, so that the final version of the strategy can be in place by end of 2010. In this respect working with partners in the region we will be using every opportunity in the future to simplify, speed things up and, most importantly, argue that Government needs to speed up its part of the process, while still ensuring that the process is inclusive, comprehensive and robust.

Like RSS, the Partial Review will cover the counties of Cumbria, Lancashire and Cheshire; the metropolitan districts in Greater Manchester and Merseyside; the unitary authorities of Blackburn-with-Darwen, Blackpool, Halton and Warrington. It covers the whole of the Lake District National Park but not those parts of the Yorkshire Dales and Peak District National Parks that fall within the North West Region. These are dealt with in the RSS's for Yorkshire and the Humber and the East Midlands, respectively, and these documents should be taken into account by the relevant planning and transport authorities in the North West.

How Will The Topics Dropped From The Partial Review of RSS Now Be Dealt With?

This does not mean that the work connected with housing, waste and renewable energy will cease. Instead 4NW and NWDA will continue to work with partners to develop the evidence base and incorporate it as appropriate into our joint work on developing the Regional Strategy – RS2010 (see panel on page 15) .

The Purpose of This Document

This document explains how the issues in the Partial Review will be addressed and how people and other interested parties can get involved.

The first stage of the Partial Review process involved the former North West Regional Assembly working with GONW and NWDA to identify the key issues for which revised or new policies might be needed. Following this, because there are a number of choices as to the nature and content of policies, an Options Report was published in June 2008, that showed the consequences of adopting different approaches. At this stage policies were not be fixed and everybody had a chance to say what they thought during a 4 week consultation period before detailed policies are developed. Since Summer 2008, work has focused on developing the draft policy wording within the context of a series of Interim

Draft Policy Frameworks, endorsed by the Regional Leaders Forum in October 2008. In January 2009, 4NW members approved a set of Interim Draft Policies as the basis for 6 weeks targeted online consultation with key stakeholders (supplemented by a series of sub regional workshops with Local Authorities and Gypsies & Travellers / Travelling Showpeople to discuss draft pitch provision figures). After this 4NW will revised the policies as appropriate in light of analysis of the feedback received prior to 4NW members being asked to approve in July 2009, the final version of the Draft RSS Policies for submission to the Secretary of State.

Subsequently while working on developing the policies, practical ways to make them happen will be thought about along with how they can be measured in the future: this way the success of the RSS revision can be tracked.

Overall there will be a number of chances for everyone to get involved and have their say (see the indicative timetable on page 13) and the section on the Involvement of Community and Partnership Working on page 17).

What This Means For You

The first thing we would like you to do is to read this document to make sure you understand what is going on, it is hoped that you will be happy with the processes and procedures being put in place. We are aware that the document uses many technical words, so we have set out a Jargon Buster (see page 23) to help with this task.

We have also included a Statement of Involvement of Community and Partnership Working (see page 17) which sets out how 4NW will make sure the process is carried out in an open and inclusive manner.

The process which guides the Partial Review of RSS is set out in Planning Policy Statement 11 (PPS 11): Regional Strategies⁷. Existing and emerging national policy advice will also be used throughout this Partial Review. We will also build upon the experiences we have gained through the previous work on preparing and reviewing earlier versions of RSS (and its predecessor Regional Planning Guidance).

Lots of documents mentioned in this Project Plan are on 4NW's Regional Planning Technical website⁸, if you want a paper copy, please contact us and where possible we will post one to you.

If you have any comments on this document or about the Partial Review of the Regional Spatial Strategy please fill in the feedback form at

<http://www.northwestplanpartialreview.org.uk/> or contact us on 0800 389 4246 .

Alternatively you can write to:

North West Plan Partial Review
Planning, Transport & Housing Directorate
4NW
Wigan Investment Centre
Waterside Drive
WIGAN
WN3 5BA

⁷ See <http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/planningpolicyguidance/planningpolicystatements/planningpolicystatements/pps11>.

⁸ See http://www.nwrpb.org.uk/documents/?page_id=4&category_id=10

What is a Project Plan?

A Project Plan sets out for interested parties how the Partial Review process will be carried out and what topic areas will be considered. The contents of the Project Plan are dictated by national guidance set out in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 11: Regional Spatial Strategies.

The Project Plan deals with the following.

- The objectives of the Partial Review and why they were chosen; see RSS objectives, see page 9.
- Issues being considered and the timetable for preparing the Partial Review, including key milestones; see Partial Review Timetable, see page 12 and Partial Review Tasks, see page 10.
- Identification of relevant research and technical studies; see Technical Work and Research, see page 16.
- Staff resources needed to prepare the Partial Review; see Who is Responsible, see page 11.
- How the Partial Review is aligned with other Regional Strategies; see Alignment with Other Regional Strategies, see page 15.
- Involvement of interested parties; see the Involvement of Community and Partnership Working, see page 17.
- Risks to delivery of Project Plan, see page 17 and Appendix 1 (page 27).
- Relationship with work to prepare the Regional Strategy – RS2010, see page 15

Inevitably as the Partial Review progresses, elements of this Project Plan will become out of date. 4NW will prepare and publish revised versions of the Project Plan when substantive changes take place. In reflecting this approach, substantive changes to the scope and timetable of the Partial Review have now taken place since the original version of the Project Plan was prepared. This Project Plan is now a second revised version.

Lessons Learnt from Previous Work on Preparing Regional Strategies and the Regional Funding Allocation Process

In preparing the Project Plan, we have drawn upon government guidance; and opportunities for innovation, based on lessons learnt from previous North West Regional Assembly experience of preparing RSS [and its predecessor Regional Planning Guidance (RPG)], and best practice from elsewhere⁹. We have also drawn from the experience gained since 2006, on the region collectively agreeing, delivering and monitoring on the Regional Funding Advice (formerly called Regional Funding Allocation) for economic development, housing and transport priorities.

In addition we have listened to feedback and taken note of the lessons learnt on the effectiveness of the earlier stages of the Partial Review up to and including the options stage engagement and have revised the Project Plan accordingly.

⁹ "The Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West - Review of Additional Pitch Requirements For Gypsies and Travellers - Examination in Public - Report of the Panel" April 2008 concluded in para 3.44 " From our experience at the Examination we confirm this has an utmost priority and there is considerable scope for improving engagement in the remaining part of this RSS/LDF/DPD process and in future GTAA and RSS processes." See <http://www.gos.gov.uk/497666/docs/166217/622079/fullpanelreport>

In this respect we will be doing a number of things differently from previous cycles of RPG \ RSS preparation.

- ~ Focus will be on a smaller number of key policy issues.
- ~ Make more use of a shared evidence base to underpin and inform policy.
- ~ Closer working with the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) and other key stakeholders.
- ~ Earlier and more active involvement of 4NW – the Regional Leaders Forum (and its predecessor the North West Regional Assembly’s Executive Board) in key decision making, in order to provide regional leadership and sub regional ‘buy in’.
- ~ Refinement and further improvement to engagement approaches using specialist external consultancy expertise and support from CAG Consultants including use of a Freephone telephone number, newsletters and development of a workshop resource pack.
- ~ Establishing a small representative group of local authorities and other key stakeholders to work together with 4NW (and former Assembly) officers to develop the options and emerging policies. This group comprises senior level officers with appropriate technical and professional expertise and experience.
- ~ Establishing internal arrangements to ensure improved project management of the process.

Objectives of the Partial Review

This is only a Partial Review of selected elements of the RSS – not a full review.

The Partial Review will update specific policy areas in response to recommendations of the RSS Examination in Public Panel report and recent developments in Government policy. In doing so, it will take account of the context provided by existing RSS, Government policy and other regional strategies.

The overall strategy and vision of RSS has only been recently formulated. The final version of RSS was issued in September 2008. Therefore it is not felt necessary to reconsider the overall strategy and vision that RSS seeks to achieve. These are agreed and will remain the backbone of RSS, along with more detailed policies covering issues such as economic development, climate change, environmental and coastal issues.

The overall strategy and those elements of the RSS not included in the Partial Review are not subject to revision and will continue to be in place as a statutory part of the development plan system.

Partial Review Tasks

The Partial Review of RSS will lead to the further development of policies to support the underlying strategy. In late 2007, the former North West Regional Assembly and its Executive Board both agreed that the Partial Review should be tightly focused on a number of key policy issues which need revising relating to:

- ~ Revision of housing figures to 2032 and set out distribution by sub-regional housing market areas and districts;
- ~ Growth Points and Eco-towns;
- ~ Identifying broad locations for renewable energy generation; and
- ~ Identifying broad locations for regionally significant waste management facilities.

In addition in the context of research recently completed, the former North West Regional Assembly and its Executive Board also agreed to take the opportunity of the Partial Review to ‘tidy up’ a number of policy areas¹⁰ covering:

- ~ Gypsies & Travellers;
- ~ Travelling Showpeople; and
- ~ Update of Regional Parking Standards (Table 8.1 in RSS).

As indicated earlier, as a result of a number of factors, the scope of the Partial Review was revised in Summer 2008 to focus only on Gypsies & Travellers; Travelling Showpeople; and update of Regional Parking Standards. The other issues will now be picked up in the development of the Regional Strategy – RS2010 (see panel on page 15).

4NW intends to keep the scope of the Partial Review very tight. However it is recognised that in order to support this there may be consequential implications for other policy aspects of RSS, which may also need revision. It is expected that such additional areas of policy requiring revision will only become apparent as a consequence of either consultation on options, emerging policy detail or the Strategic Environmental Assessment outputs which require mitigation. 4NW will endeavour to keep these consequential issues to a minimum in line with the best practice advice. By being crystal clear about the scope of the Partial Review, and disciplined in the way that we approach the scope – hopefully we can avoid the temptation to throw in changes which do not need to be made and limit the Partial Review so far as possible to those changes which are essential. It is important to try to make the proposed changes as coherent as possible, but to take into account any implications which the proposed changes may have for the rest of the RSS.¹¹

Each work stream is being led by a 4NW officer who acts as a “policy lead”, (contact information can be found in the ‘Contact Us’ section, see page 26). Throughout the timetable, there will be a need to ensure that the Partial Review remains focused on these key issues.

¹⁰ Originally it was the intention that the Partial Review should also cover another issue – key service centres. The Draft RSS (submitted to Government in January 2006) identified Key Service Centres as part of the settlement hierarchy in the North West. This was based primarily on evidence developed by the three County Councils (Cheshire, Cumbria and Lancashire) as part of the preparation of their respective Structure Plans. Draft RSS did not include the identification of Key Service Centres in Greater Manchester or Merseyside. The North West Key Service Centres – Roles and Functions report completed for the Assembly in September 2006 provided useful evidence on the way that smaller places within the North West function and interact. The study’s focus on functional data was a new approach in the region, and was broadly welcomed. But it was recognised that it only showed how places are used, rather than what facilities were located in each place. The Examination in Public Report of the Panel recommended that further work should be urgently carried out on this issue to bring together the functional approach and the existing evidence base. However following publication of the Secretary of State’s Proposed Modifications to RSS, it was decided it was no longer prudent to continue to include this policy issue in the Partial Review.

¹¹ Paragraphs 3.34 to 3.35 & Appendix F of “Draft Further Alterations to the London Plan – EIP Panel Report” September 2007, see <http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/sds/eip-report07/panel-report-further-altis-eip.rtf>

Gypsies & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

The Government has made clear that it views this issue as an integral part of the wider housing agenda to tackle affordability and homelessness issues. The Housing Act 2004 coupled with Planning Circulars 01/2006 and 04/2007, put in place a framework for identifying and providing sites to meet the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community (which includes Travelling Showpeople). In light of this the Partial Review will set out separate figures for Gypsy & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople for each district, on the required provision (number of pitches / plots).

Update of Regional Parking Standards

An undertaking was given during the development of RPG13 to review regional parking standards. Based on research a new set of standards will be set out - intended to be a direct replacement for those in submitted draft of RSS. The issue of additional car parking at railway stations will also be addressed. The Partial Review will not cover the separate issue of Regional Park & Ride Facilities.

Who is Responsible?

The preparation of the Partial Review will make a considerable call on technical and political resources. A partnership approach will be essential for success, drawing on the resources of 4NW's own staff, together with those of NWDA, GONW, other government agencies, local authorities and other key stakeholders in 4NW.

The day to day management will be undertaken by 4NW staff as part of the organisation's Regional Planning Body (RPB) and Regional Housing Board responsibilities in accordance with the agreed Business Plan.

In addition specific aspects will require specialist expertise \ further work to be commissioned from partners or from consultants. 4NW's contribution to the research identified below will be funded from 4NW's budget in accordance with the agreed Business Plan.

In addition 4NW will seek to work with key stakeholders including the NWDA, Environment Agency, sub regional partners and local authorities, to develop and use a common evidence base. We intend to draw on the useful work that will be underway in parallel with the Partial Review of RSS, on other regional strategies, notably the Regional Housing Strategy and initial work on the Regional Strategy – RS2010 (see panel on page 15).

At various stages in the process, there will be a need to get formal member input to ensure regional and sub regional 'buy in'. This will take place within the content of changes to the regional governance structures which have taken place during 2008, in light of Government proposals published in July 2007 in the *Sub National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration*. From July 2008 the North West Regional Assembly was replaced by 4NW - the Regional Leaders Forum. This is based upon a revised version of the former North West Regional Assembly's Executive Board - comprising of local authority representatives from each of the five sub-regional areas (Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside) and representatives from the Social, Economic and Environmental Partners (SEEP's) plus a representative from the Lake District National Park Authority. 4NW – the Regional Leaders Forum operates as the Regional Housing Board and Regional Transport Board. This is supported by member level advisory groups: Regional Planning Group, Regional Housing Group and Regional Transport Group. Since July 2008, there has been an additional group dealing with economic development.

Therefore the former NWRA Executive Board and its successor 4NW – the Regional Leaders Forum will play a pivotal role in the Partial Review to ensure regional and sub regional 'buy in' to the process and the emerging policy. It is recognised that 4NW will need to provide regional leadership and make some potentially difficult and hard decisions at key stages in the Partial Review – if the challenges facing the region are to be addressed. Ideally contentious issues will be resolved at an early stage helping to avoid the need for a lengthy Examination in Public and minimise the issues which have to be addressed at the Secretary of State's Proposed Modifications to Draft RSS stage. To do this, officers will need to engage with members throughout the Partial Review timetable to get their input into policy development and their endorsement of the principles which underpin the policy.

In addition a supporting officer level RSS Steering Group has been set up. This comprises a small representative group of local authorities and other key stakeholders They will work together with 4NW officers to provide a broader reference / sounding board to strategically assist and guide the development and drafting of the RSS policy. This will comprise senior officers from local authorities, the Environment Agency, GONW, the NWDA, North West Environment Link, North West Business Leadership Team and North West Rural Affairs Forum.

Under current planning legislation, 4NW is responsible for managing the process until the Partial Review is sent to the Secretary of State. After this the Government led by the Government Office for the North West (GONW), takes over responsibility [working in partnership with the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) on the Examination in Public Stage]. This includes organising and programming the Examination in Public through to the final version of RSS being published.

Partial Review Timetable

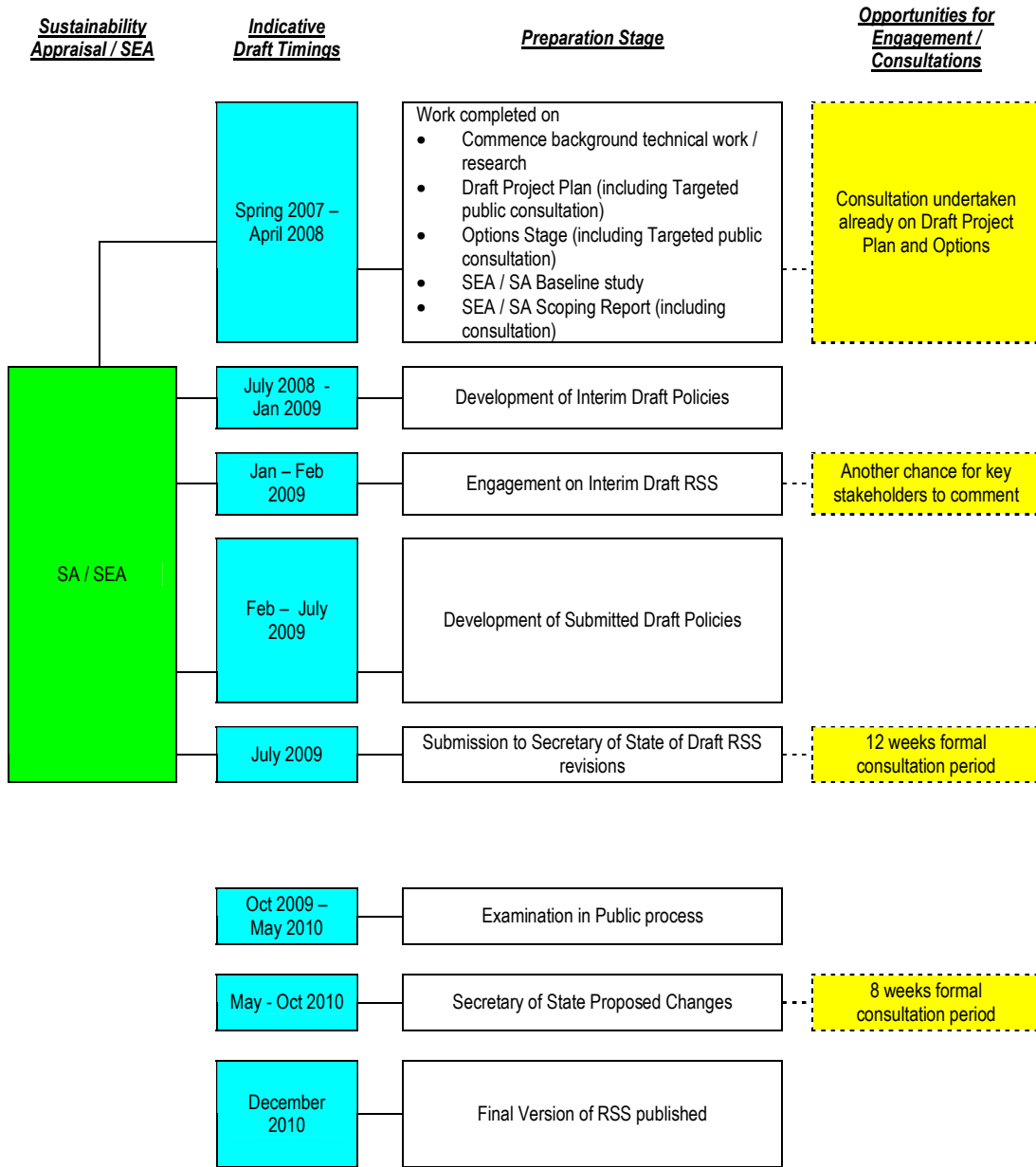
Compared to the earlier version of the Project Plan, the timetable for the Partial Review of RSS has been revised to reflect:

- ~ experience to date;
- ~ changes to the scope of the Partial Review of RSS; and
- ~ feedback from the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) and GONW.

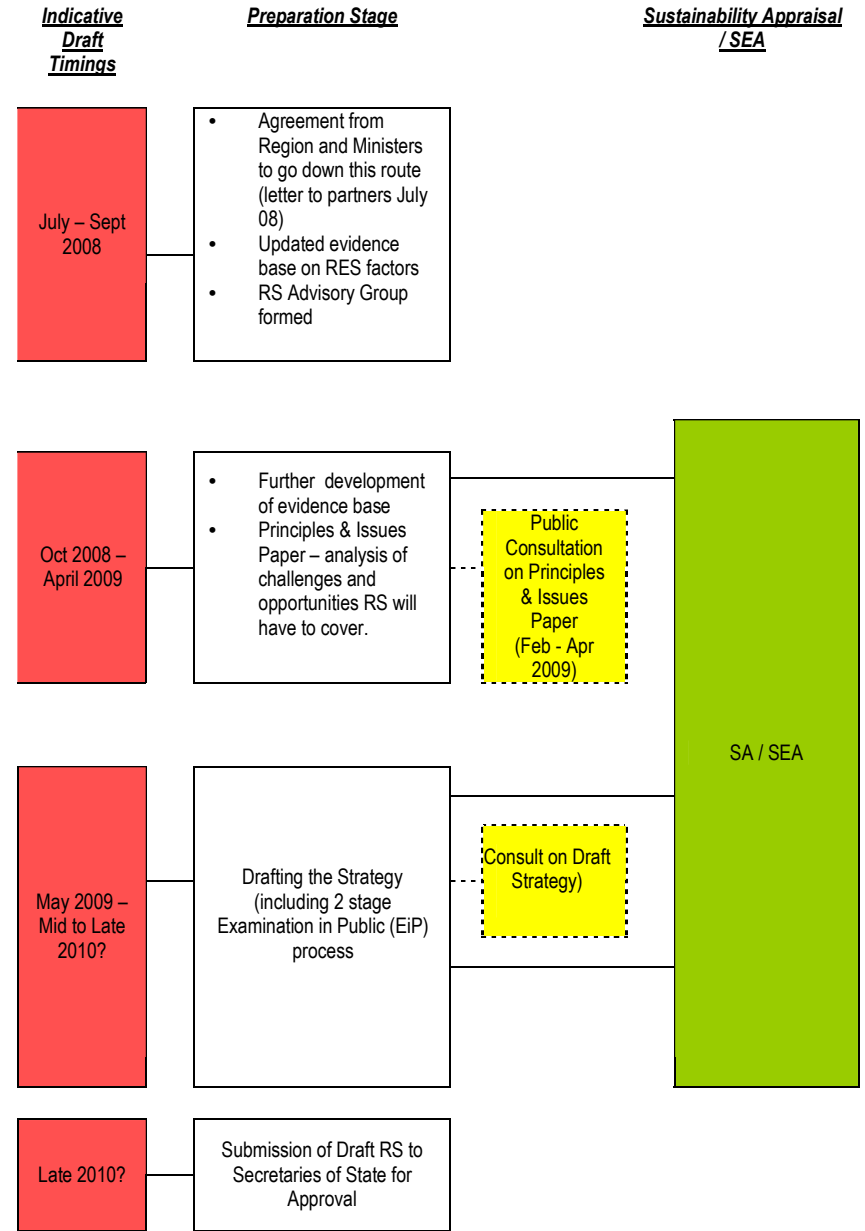
4NW recognises that this is a very tight and ambitious timetable, which will cause difficulties for some organisations in their ability to ensure timely involvement, given the lead times for their formal decision making processes. By publicising the key engagement periods and timescales, it is hoped that stakeholders will put in place appropriate decision making arrangements to maximise their involvement in the RSS Partial Review.

In addition it is recognised that work on the emerging Regional Strategy – RS2010 will take place at the same time (some early elements of this will be taking place in advance of the passing of the relevant legislation being passed by Parliament). To aid clarity the following diagram illustrates the indicative timescales for both processes.

Partial Review of RSS Indicative Timeline



Regional Strategy Indicative Timeline



Sustainability Appraisal, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Habitat Regulation Assessment and Rural Proofing

In undertaking the Partial Review of RSS, 4NW will take into account a series of appraisals, including a Sustainability Appraisal, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), a Habitat Regulation Assessment and Rural Proofing.

An important element of the Partial Review process is the **Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**.

The SA \ SEA is required by European and UK law. The aim of the SA \ SEA is to promote better quality of life through sustainable development and assess the likely impact of the strategy. To do this requires the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations into the Partial Review. It makes sure the National Sustainable Development Strategy and the Regional Sustainable Development Framework are incorporated from the beginning. The SA \ SEA's purpose is to influence the shape and direction of the Partial Review as it is developing. This includes avoiding the least sustainable options and choices, setting out mitigation measures where adverse impacts will be caused, and

Summary of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Process

Stage A: The production of an SA Scoping Report

This includes:

- setting the context and objectives of the sustainability framework, used to assess the Partial Review;
- gathering of baseline data at a regional level and describing the current and likely future state of the North West; and
- identifying the key sustainability issues and problems.

There is a minimum five week statutory consultation period with sustainability bodies. Following the consultation, a final SA \ SEA Scoping Report is prepared and agreed for use in the Partial Review process.

Stage B: Developing and refining options

This includes:

- to appraise the plan and modify the Options as they are developed;
- predicting the social, environmental and economic effects of the Options under consideration using the baseline information. This will be done via one to one discussions with 4NW officer policy leads together with structured appraisal workshops.

As each Option is refined a commentary on the key sustainability issues and problems arising has to be prepared. The focus is on recommendations on how each of the Options could be improved.

Stage C: Preparation of the SA \ SEA Report

Subsequently a detailed assessment of the detailed policies will be undertaken in the SA \ SEA Report. This will form an integral part of the Draft RSS revisions submitted to the Secretary of State. It must also clearly show that the SEA Directive requirements have been met.

Stage D: Consultation on the Revision and SA \ SEA Report, led by GONW

Following submission to the Secretary of State, subsequent stages of the SA \ SEA are carried out by GONW.

Stage E:

This is concerned with monitoring and responding to adverse effects which is the responsibility of 4NW.

proposing monitoring of the significant effects in implementing the RSS. Integral within this process will be an equality and diversity audit.

A framework for how the SA \ SEA will be undertaken will be published, as a first step, to ensure that all partners can see how the process will be undertaken.

Under a Directive of the European Union, 4NW is required to undertake a **Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA)**. The purpose of the HRA is to assess the impacts of the Partial Review against the conservation objectives of the European habitat sites within the North West and beyond, and to ascertain that the Partial Review does not adversely affect the integrity of any of these sites. The HRA for the Partial Review will build on the HRA which was undertaken as part of the full review of RSS.

Rural Proofing is the process by which strategies, plans and policies are evaluated for their impact on rural areas and those who live and work in the countryside, to ensure that rural needs and issues are not overlooked. It also assesses the different impacts that a strategy or policy might have in rural areas compared to elsewhere. The Rural Proofing will be undertaken as an integral part of the Sustainability Appraisal \ Strategic Environmental Assessment.

In addition the SA \ SEA will also take account of best practice and include an **Equality Impact Assessment** and a **Health Impact Assessment**.

Alignment with Other Regional Strategies

The North West RSS is one of a range of strategies and programmes that aim to shape the future of the North West and, as such, affect the life of people in the Region. The role of the RSS is to provide a long term spatial planning framework for these other strategies and programmes. It is essential that all these strategies and programmes, including the RSS, match each other and pull in the same direction. Otherwise resources may be wasted and the Region's ability to deliver sustainable development will be compromised.

Therefore, in revising the RSS, consideration needs to be given to other regional strategies and programmes. It is important that the

Proposal to develop a single Regional Strategy

In March 2008, the Government published a consultation on how it proposed to implement the *Sub National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration* (published in July 2007). These proposals are being brought forward via new legislation - the Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Bill. Among other things, the Government proposes to bring together the RSS and the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) into a single Regional Strategy for each of the English regions. In the North West, 4NW and the NWDA will be jointly responsible for developing the Regional Strategy, working closely with local authorities and other partners.



In this context, 4NW and the NWDA, have commenced work on the preparation of a new Regional Strategy under the brand RS2010 – for more details see the dedicated website <http://www.nwregionalstrategy.com/>.

However, until these proposals are implemented (which will require primary legislation), the responsibilities in respect of the RSS will stay with 4NW which will continue with bringing forward the Partial Review of RSS. 4NW will work closely with GONW, NWDA and others to ensure that any changes in responsibilities occur in a smooth and orderly way and continue to allow regional partners and communities a strong input into the Partial Review of RSS.

Partial Review, both shapes and is shaped by those strategies and programmes. Working in partnership is key to this, and details of how we propose to work with partners are set out below (see Involvement of Community and Partnership Working, see page 17).

Technical & Research Work

Once the issues were identified for the Partial Review, a series of technical studies were commissioned to help provide background analysis to assist their consideration and provide a robust evidence base. These studies were intended to supplement technical material already available. Set out below are some of the key evidence inputs into the Partial Review (the majority of which were commissioned by the former North West Regional Assembly). However this is not an exhaustive and definitive list. As the Partial Review progresses, other evidence will become available at national, regional, sub regional and local level.

In addition 4NW will produce, where appropriate, a series of background papers to inform the Partial Review, which set out the linkages between the different evidence bases and the preparation of the draft policies.

Gypsies & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

In July 2006, the North West Regional Assembly commissioned SHUSU from the University of Salford, to undertake a major research project into assessing Gypsy & Travellers accommodation and other service requirements & provision in the North West in the period up to 2016. This was complemented by more detailed sub regional studies in Cheshire & Lancashire which were commissioned concurrently in partnership with local authorities in both those areas. All three studies have involved peer interviews with members of the Gypsies & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople communities. These three studies were published in July 2007. During 2008, further sub regional studies were undertaken by sub regional partnerships covering Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Ribble Valley. All the studies can be accessed on the 4NW Regional Planning Technical website¹².

The overarching objective of all three studies was to inform the future reviews of Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), Regional Housing Strategy (RHS), Supporting People Strategies, Local Development Frameworks (LDF) and Local Housing Strategies across the North West. This research will inform planners and other officers working in a range of regional and local stakeholder organisations in the North West, about the current and future accommodation needs and demands of Gypsy and Travellers, and the need for the provision of other services to support Gypsy and Travellers.

The studies also made use of the findings of regional research commissioned by the Showman's Guild into the specific needs of the Travelling Showpeople community in the North West. In addition, further work has been undertaken involving a survey of Showman's Guild members on their travelling patterns and location preferences¹³.

¹² "North West Regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and Related Services Assessment" SHUSU, May 2007
"Cheshire Partnership Area Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and Related Services Assessment" SHUSU, May 2007
"Lancashire Sub-Regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and Related Services Assessment" SHUSU, May 2007
"Merseyside Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment" SHUSU, February 2008
"Ribble Valley Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment" SHUSU, March 2008
"Cumbria Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment" SHUSU, May 2008
"Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and Service Delivery Needs in Greater Manchester – 2007/8" arc⁴, 2008 - See http://www.nwrpb.org.uk/documents/?page_id=4&category_id=78

¹³ "The Accommodation Situation of Showmen in the Northwest" The Showmen's Guild, Lancashire Section, June 2007 and "The North West's Travelling Showpeople's Current Base Location, Preferred Base Locations and Operating Patterns" 4NW, 2008 – produced with assistance from The Showmen's Guild, Lancashire Section.

Update of Regional Parking Standards

During 2007, Mouchel Parkman (now Mouchel) carried out research for the former North West Regional Assembly to develop a new, updated set of standards supported by an evidence base. This was completed December 2007¹⁴.

Contextual Information on Environmental Capacity

In addition in developing the various policy themes, 4NW will take account of various pieces of ongoing work being undertaken by other stakeholders including the Environment Agency and NWDA, which provides contextual information on environmental capacity, flood risk assessment and infrastructure capacity.

Risk

A project as complex as the Partial Review of RSS, inevitably has risks associated with its delivery. Therefore a risk assessment matrix has been developed and is set out in Appendix 1 (see page 27).

Involvement of Community and Partnership Working

The aim of consultation and participation is to ensure that the preparation and drafting of the RSS will be informed by as many key stakeholders as possible, so that the final Submitted Draft RSS reflects the needs of the region, is technically robust, based on sound information, and has wide support. To effectively do so it will be necessary to ensure engagement is targeted to key stakeholders, maximising the use of stakeholder forums where appropriate

Some guiding principles underpin 4NW's approach to consultation and participation (see box). These principles will run through all consultation and

Participation and consultation principles

- Maximise the opportunity for as many stakeholders as possible to inform the preparation of the RSS, including those who would not normally have their voices heard;
- Focus our resources on the existing networks and forums that are in place at the regional and sub-regional level and particularly those with whom 4NW is already working, ensuring that the networking links of those regional and sub-regional groups are used to connect to the local level;
- Recognise the difference between sharing **information**, carrying out **consultation** and supporting **participation**;
- Provide good quality, accessible and relevant information throughout the preparation of the RSS;
- Provide identifiable opportunities for consultation at regular intervals in which clear questions are asked and after which consultees who respond are told how their responses have been taken into account and what are the next steps;
- Provide opportunities for meaningful and active participation in the drafting of RSS which are followed up so that participants are clear about the difference that their participation has made;
- Reflect the guidance in Planning Policy Statements 1 (PPS1) and 11 (PPS11) and in doing so seek to move towards more participatory planning at a regional level;
- Meet the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (SEA) with regards to consultation; and
- Manage the process of preparing the RSS and the implementation of this consultation and participation plan carefully so that we can meet the expectations of the stakeholders in the time period that we have been given by Government for preparing the draft RSS.

¹⁴ See http://www.nwrpb.org.uk/documents/?page_id=4&category_id=205

participation carried out during the RSS process. They show that while 4NW is planning to meet national guidelines on consultation and participation, it is also striving to make the process even more open and inclusive. In addition 4NW has sought to embrace the Government's initiative to roll out e-planning using Information Communications and Technology (ICT).

Partnership Working

Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1),¹⁵ sets out the Government's key principles and objectives for delivering sustainable development within the planning system. It highlights the importance of community involvement in the development plan process. Moreover, PPS1 refers to the Government's overall approach to community involvement, which is set out in *Community Involvement in Planning: The Government's Objectives* (ODPM 2004)¹⁶.

In accordance with legislation, 4NW will consult with the 'Specific Consultation Bodies'¹⁷ which are, in the opinion of 4NW, likely to be affected by the development of the RSS. They include:

- Local Planning Authorities, both those within and adjoining the region;
- County Councils, both those within and adjoining the region;
- Parish & Town Councils, within and adjoining the region – individually and via the County Associations;
- Regional Planning Bodies for the adjoining regions;
- Natural England;
- English Heritage;
- Environment Agency;
- DfT;
- Highways Agency;
- Regional Development Agencies, both within and adjoining the region;
- Regional Strategic Health Authorities;
- Utilities suppliers – telecoms, water, sewerage, electricity, gas.

In addition, 4NW will consult the 'general consultation bodies' which are considered to be to be appropriate. Annex D of PPS11, sets out a list of such bodies, including: community groups, and environmental, social and economic organisations. 4NW will endeavour to engage with hard to reach groups, ensuring that the development of the RSS is an open and inclusive process. Engaging with hard to reach groups, including racial, ethnic or national groups, disabled persons, religious groups and the business and voluntary sectors, is one of the key targets outlined by the government for any consultation and participation process¹⁸.

In addition special arrangements will be put in place to ensure appropriate methods are used to engage with representatives of both the Gypsy & Traveller community and the Travelling Showpeople community.

Partnership working is seen as an ongoing process, and although it is important to highlight the need for it during the RSS Partial Review, 4NW has been working closely with the key stakeholders since prior to the launch of the RSS process, and will continue to do so throughout the development of RSS.

¹⁵ See <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/147393>

¹⁶ See <http://www.communities.gov.uk/archived/publications/planningandbuilding/communityinvolvement>

¹⁷ Regulation 2 & 11 of Statutory Instrument No.2203; Town and Country Planning, England: The Town and Country Planning (Regional Planning) (England) Regulations 2004

¹⁸ See paragraph 1.2 in *Community Involvement in Planning: The Government's Objectives* (ODPM 2004) and paragraph 30 of Annex D of PPS11

Political Decision Making Arrangements

At various stages in the process, there will be a need to get formal member input. This will take place within the current 4NW governance structures (for more details, see Who is Responsible section, page 11).

In March 2008, the Government published a consultation on how it proposed to implement the Sub National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration (published in July 2007). These proposals are being brought forward via new legislation - the Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Bill. In light of Government proposals the regional governance structure in the North West has changed. In July 2008, the North West Regional Assembly was replaced by 4NW - the Regional Leaders Forum.

The Government also proposes to bring together the RSS and the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) into a single Regional Strategy for each of the English regions. In the North West, 4NW and the NWDA will be jointly responsible for developing the Regional Strategy, working closely with local authorities and other partners. In this context, 4NW and the NWDA, have commenced work on the preparation of a new Regional Strategy under the brand RS2010. However, until these single Regional Strategy proposals are implemented (which will require primary legislation – see above), the responsibilities in respect of the RSS will stay with 4NW, which will continue with bringing forward the Partial Review of RSS. 4NW will work closely with GONW, NWDA and others to ensure that any changes in responsibilities occur in a smooth and orderly way and continue to allow regional partners and communities a strong input into the Partial Review of RSS.

In Cheshire, a review of local government has taken place, which will see the two tier system of seven local authorities (County plus six Districts), replaced by two Unitary authorities – Cheshire East and Cheshire West & Chester. This is due to become effective from 1st April 2009. RSS will be prepared on the basis of this new local authority geography. Over the transitional period until then, 4NW officers will continue to work closely with those from existing Cheshire Local Authorities and the two “Shadow” Unitary Authorities to ensure consistency and continuity of input and engagement.

Engagement Methodologies

We will endeavour to conduct the RSS process in an open and inclusive manner, which encourages feedback through comments and suggestions, and promotes active participation in the drafting of the strategy, as outlined in the consultation and participation principles. To assist in this process, 4NW have employed specialist consultant expertise and support from CAG Consultants.

4NW will largely engage with the region’s key stakeholders using a combination of an innovative on-line web based consultation and complementary workshops. Although there is a perception that an online consultation is biased against those without a computer or those who cannot use a computer, 4NW feels this is the most effective way of collecting and collating responses. Special arrangements will be put in place for those who do not have access to the Internet to receive and make responses via paper copies. Please contact us for further details.

In addition special arrangements will be put in place to ensure appropriate methods are used to engage with representatives of both the Gypsy & Traveller community and the Travelling Showpeople community.

Planning Aid - <http://www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk/>

Planning Aid provides free, independent and professional town planning advice and support to community groups and individuals who cannot afford to pay planning consultant fees. Planning Aid also works with communities to help them understand and play a role in the planning process. Planning Aid is not part of central or local government, but is an independent source of advice and information. It complements the work of the Assembly, but is wholly independent of the Assembly.

North West Planning Aid works with people and communities to help them influence changes to their local areas. This support includes helping people to:

- ~ Understand and use the planning system
- ~ Participate in preparing plans
- ~ Prepare their own plans for the future of their community
- ~ Comment on planning applications
- ~ Apply for planning permission or appeal against refusal of permission
- ~ Represent themselves at public inquiries \ Examinations in Public.

With Planning Aid's help, community groups will be in a better position to positively influence the areas in which they live.

Planning Aid has a helpline staffed by a qualified Planner is available three days a week for people needing planning advice in the North West. Initial advice will be given to all callers but those who can afford to pay or who will benefit financially from their planning application will be referred on to a planning consultant. A list of Planning Consultants can be found on the RTPi website at: www.rtpiconsultants.co.uk. If you are eligible for further help, they will then pass your case over to one of Planning Aid's national network of volunteers who will work with you.

To find out if you are eligible for Planning Aid assistance, please contact the North West Planning Aid Planning Advice Helpline: 0870 850 9804. (9am to 5pm - Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, answerphone available at other times). Email: nwcw@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk.

Given the controversial nature of the topic and the diverse communities involved, it is important to engage a wide range of stakeholders on the emerging policy for the Gypsy & Traveller community and the Travelling Showpeople community. However there are many diverse and sometimes extreme views, myths and misconceptions surrounding the Gypsy & Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities. To assist in this, 4NW has produced a short 13 minute film DVD which can be played in a DVD player on or a computer (using Windows Media Players software)¹⁹. Hopefully the film can play an important part in raising awareness of these key issues in a positive, engaging and educational way. The film will help to improve awareness of both the lifestyle/ culture and issues connected with Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople communities, demonstrate that tensions between the travelling and the settled community can be resolved, and explain the RSS consultation process.

Website - <http://www.northwestplanpartialreview.org.uk/>

The online consultation will be run by consultants on behalf of 4NW. A dedicated Partial Review website has been set up to handle all the consultation right through the development process, which is accessible from 4NW's own website²⁰. As well as hosting the consultation questionnaires, the website will be a key tool in providing information on the development of the RSS process. Stakeholders will be able to register at the beginning of the process and then download and submit information at the appropriate times throughout the development of the RSS. Once registered, stakeholders will also be able to

¹⁹ The film can be watched on line at http://www.nwrpb.org.uk/whatwedo/issues/environment/?page_id=417

²⁰ <http://www.4nw.org.uk/>

opt into a feedback process, through which they will receive newsletters and reminders at key stages in the process. Use of the website should ensure speedy collation and dissemination of the full text of all responses made. The full text of responses from all elements of the consultation will be available on the web site. In light of comments received on the Draft Project Plan consultation, the facility to respond via the website has been refined to address technical concerns raised including allowing responses to be inputted in more than one sitting in the future.

Although the process will be open to anyone to take part, we will focus upon and encourage the participation of a range of individuals and organisations with a specific interest in the topics being covered. They will be invited by letter to register to participate in the ongoing web based consultation exercise, and will receive regular newsletters and updates throughout the process. In addition 4NW's regional planning technical website²¹ will be used to provide background information, links to the Partial Review website and updates on current progress with the preparation of RSS.

Workshops

During the development process of the RSS a number of workshops and stakeholder events will take place. Workshops are an effective way to encourage active engagement, enabling 4NW to bring together a number of stakeholders from varying technical backgrounds, fostering a more holistic and overarching discussion and comments to complement the written representations. Workshops will also enable 4NW to consult hard to reach groups and provide opportunities for mediation. The facilitation of all workshops and events will be organised, facilitated and conducted by specialist consultants in conjunction with 4NW. This will ensure that all participants are given an equal opportunity to participate.

To ensure that the workshops are accessible and inclusive we will ensure that a range of venues and locations are used across the region (accessible by public transport where practical) and encourage stakeholders who register to inform us of any special needs.

In addition 4NW will be working with CAG Consultants to develop a workshop pack to allow individual organisations to run their own workshops, using a common set of presentational materials, to ensure that focussed feedback can be received from such events.

Media

4NW plans to use a variety of media, including regional and local press and planning journals to publicise work on the RSS, particularly during formal consultation periods. To compliment these formal routes and to increase our reach into community level organisations we will also work towards using a variety of more community based media including local authority newspapers and local Council of Voluntary Service newsletters.

Providing Feedback

As defined in 4NW's consultation and participation principles, 4NW is committed to providing feedback on how comments will be considered, including formal reports on consultations. At each stage, the formal reports will be summarised in a more informal newsletter that includes the key points on the development of the RSS. These newsletters will be available electronically and in paper formats.

²¹ See http://www.nwrpb.org.uk/?page_id=20

These reports, and other information, will be available on the Partial Review website or via 4NW directly, for each of the major stages of consultation during the development of the RSS. Paper copies of reports and newsletters will also be available in local libraries and stakeholders who have registered on the partial review website will receive electronic newsletters directly.

Stakeholder meetings, seminars and events

4NW will make use of additional meetings with the key stakeholders in the North West to help develop the RSS. These will include those arranged and organised by 4NW, as well as those organised by third parties who have an interest in the RSS process.

As part of ensuring specific groups have the opportunity to comment consultants will work with the communities to develop a peer interviewing programme. Through which trained community members will use the consultation questionnaires with other community members to ensure their views are captured.

Sustainability Appraisal

As well as focusing on consultation and participation, 4NW will also take account of the feedback made on sustainability issues surrounding the RSS via a sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment. 4NW will commission independent consultants to carry out the appraisal as an integrated part of the RSS process, with feedback given at every stage of the development.

Free phone line – tel. 0800 389 4246

A dedicated free phone number will be available to stakeholders throughout the partial review. The phone line can be used to seek out information, request copies of forms, reports and other paper information. If stakeholder cannot access any of the other more detailed consultation methods the free phone line can also be used to input comments.

Opportunities for Consultation

There will be a number of opportunities to submit representation during the development of the RSS, as seen in the table below and outlined in the following sections.

Awareness raising, preparation of information, issues consultation and discussions with identified groups, forums and partnerships	Ongoing
Project and other Reference Groups set up, technical work commissioned and undertaken	Spring 2007 – April 2008
Drafting of options for key elements of RSS	January - May 2008
Consultation on options for key strategic elements of RSS	June 2008
Drafting of RSS	July 2008 – March 2009
Informal targeted consultation on interim draft RSS policies	January - March 2009
Formal consultation on Draft RSS (following submission of the Draft to Government)	July – October 2009
Examination in Public	March 2010
Formal consultation on proposed changes arising from the Panel Report	Summer 2010

The formal consultation on Submitted Draft RSS will comply with all legislative requirements and guidance. The Draft RSS will be placed in a number of official deposit locations. In order to ensure wider awareness and access to the key documents, they will be made available electronically via the 4NW website. In addition 4NW will give consideration to making paper copies available of the submitted Draft RSS in a wider number of “non-deposit” locations, where appropriate.

What does that Technical Jargon Mean?

4NW – the Regional Leaders Forum	<p>Successor organisation to North Regional Assembly after July 2008. The Regional Leaders Forum is the Regional Planning Body and has responsibility for managing the preparation the Partial Review of RSS until submission to the Secretary of State in 2009.</p> <p>Working in partnership with the NWDA, 4NW is jointly responsible for preparing the Regional Strategy – RS2010.</p>
CLG – Department for Communities & Local Government	Central Government department responsible for planning, including RSS's.
Development Plan	Statutory planning documents for the development and use of land and buildings in an area, consisting of the RSS and the policies and proposals prepared by local planning authorities, see <i>Local Development Framework</i> .
Draft Project Plan	The Draft Project Plan set out how the former North West Regional Assembly proposed to conduct the Partial Review of the North West RSS, see <i>Project Plan</i> .
EiP – Examination in Public	Planning regulations require an Examination in Public following the submission of the Draft RSS to the Secretary of State. The purpose of an EiP is to provide an opportunity for public discussion and testing of the Draft RSS policies before a panel of inspectors appointed by the Secretary of State.
GONW – Government Office for the North West	<p>Based in Liverpool and Manchester, the Government body representing a range of central Government departments and responsible for delivering government policy in the Region. It aims to help people understand how government policy affects them and informs Ministers on the Region's needs.</p> <p>It is responsible for project managing the later stages of the Partial Review after the submission of the Draft RSS to the Secretary of State.</p>
HRA – Habitat Regulation Assessment	Formal process of assessing the impacts of the Partial Review of the RSS Revision against the conservation objectives of the European habitat sites within the North West and beyond, and to ascertain that the Partial Review does not adversely affect the integrity of any of these sites.
Local Development Framework	Planning documents prepared by local planning authorities which have to be in general conformity with the North West RSS.
Mitigate	To make sure the possible negative impacts of development are reduced.
North West Regional Assembly (NWRA)	Predecessor of 4NW – the Regional Leaders Forum. Until July 2008 it was responsible for developing and co-ordinating a

	<p>strategic vision for the Region. It was made up of 80 members drawn from all local authorities across the Region along with business and other sector representatives. It was also the Regional Planning Body.</p> <p>In light of Government proposals published in July 2007 in the Sub National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration, from July 2008, the Assembly was replaced by 4NW - the Regional Leaders Forum who have taken over the role of Regional Planning Body and responsibility for managing the preparation the Partial Review of RSS until submission to the Secretary of State in 2009.</p>
North West RSS	RSS for the North West prepared by the former North West Regional Assembly and published by the Secretary of State in September 2008.
NWDA – Northwest Regional Development Agency	<p>The Regional Development Agency for the North West. NWDA's role is to lead the sustainable economic development of the Region, working alongside a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector partners. NWDA is responsible for preparing the North West Regional Economic Strategy (RES).</p> <p>Working in partnership with 4NW, the NWDA is jointly responsible for preparing the Regional Strategy – RS2010.</p>
Options	Different choices about possible new or revised RSS policies that are proposed to guide development across the North West. The Options are for public consultation and, the comments and suggestions received by stakeholders will inform the development of the detailed policies in the Draft RSS submitted to the Secretary of State .
Partial Review of RSS	The process of preparing revised or new policies in the North West RSS to develop and improve the strategy.
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004	Law which sets out the legal framework for the statutory planning system, including RSS's. This Act updates elements of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
PPS11 – Planning Policy Statement 11	Issued by central Government, this document provides policy and guidance for developing, implementing, monitoring and revising RSS's. It also contains advice on the arrangements for revising RSS's, including public consultation.
Project Plan	The Project Plan describes to stakeholders and the public how the Partial Review of RSS will be carried out and what topics will be considered. It guides the Partial Review process and the development of revised or new policies in the RSS.
RES - Regional Economic Strategy	Document prepared by Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) that sets out what the Region needs to do to improve its economic performance.
RHS – Regional Housing Strategy	Strategy providing a framework for housing investment in the Region and aims to reinforce the principles of Urban and Rural Regeneration as set out in the RSS.
RPB – Regional Planning Body	4NW is the Regional Planning Body for the North West and is responsible for revising, implementing and monitoring RSS.
RPG – Regional Planning Guidance	A forerunner to the Regional Spatial Strategy <i>see below</i> .
RSS – Regional Spatial Strategy	A statutory planning framework to show how the Region should develop over the next 20 years or so. Among other things, it

	identifies the scale and distribution of new housing, indicates areas for regeneration and specifies priorities for the environment, transport, infrastructure, economic development, agriculture, minerals and waste management.
Regional Strategy – RS2010	<p>In March 2008, the Government published a consultation on how it proposed to implement the <i>Sub National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration (published in July 2007)</i>. These proposals are being brought forward via new legislation - the Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Bill. Among other things, the Government proposes to bring together the RSS and the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) into a single Regional Strategy for each of the English regions. In the North West, 4NW and the NWDA will be jointly responsible for developing the Regional Strategy, working closely with local authorities and other partners.</p> <p>In this context, 4NW and the NWDA, have commenced work on the preparation of a new Regional Strategy under the brand RS2010 – for more details see the dedicated website http://www.nwregionalstrategy.com/.</p>
Rural Proofing	The process by which strategies, plans and policies are evaluated for their impact on those who live and work in the countryside, to ensure that rural needs are not overlooked. It also assesses the different impacts that a strategy or policy might have in rural areas compared to elsewhere.
SA – Sustainability Appraisal	A formal assessment to consider the social, environmental and economic impacts of the Partial Review of RSS. The SA is carried out in a way so that it also incorporates a Strategic Environmental Assessment, assessing the potential impact of the Partial Review of RSS on the environment.
SEA – Strategic Environmental Assessment	The process of assessing plans, programmes and strategies for their environmental impact.
Secretary of State	The Government Minister responsible for all policies relating to Town and Country Planning, including the publications of the Regional Spatial Strategy. Currently this is the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.
Spatial Planning	Spatial Planning brings together, and integrates, policies on land use with other guidance designed to influence the nature of places and how they function.
Stakeholders	Organisations and representative bodies who have an involvement or interest in the development of the Region, including the Regional Spatial Strategy.
Sustainable Development	This is about meeting the needs of the current generation without compromising the needs of future generations. Aims to find a balance between social, economic and environmental objectives.

Contact Us

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Planning, Transport & Housing Directorate
4NW
Wigan Investment Centre
Waterside Drive
WIGAN
WN3 5BA

Website: <http://www.northwestplanpartialreview.org.uk/>

Director of Planning, Transport & Housing - Michael Gallagher

Overall the Partial Review will be project managed by Michael Gallagher, Director of Planning, Transport & Housing and Duncan McCorquodale, Regional Spatial Planning Manager

Each stream is being led by a 4NW officer who acts as a “policy lead”

<i>Gypsies & Travellers Travelling Showpeople</i>
Michael Gallagher Tel: 01942 737 921 Email: michael.gallagher@nwra.gov.uk

<i>Update of Regional Car Parking Standards</i>
Dave Colbert \ Alec Curley Tel: 01942 776 721 \ 01942 776 939 Email: david.colbert@nwra.gov.uk alec.curley@nwra.gov.uk

<i>Sustainability Appraisal \ Strategic Environmental Assessment</i>
Debra Holroyd Tel: 01942 737 917 Email: debra.holroyd@nwra.gov.uk

Appendix 1 - Partial Review of RSS – Risk Matrix

Within the context of the Draft Project Plan for the Partial Review of RSS, 4NW is committed to ensuring delivery of the Partial Review within the agreed timescales. Work on the Partial Review of RSS will also act as a key input into the development of a future single Regional Strategy.

In doing so it is important to ensure there is proper engagement particularly with local authority politicians and officers, especially at sub regional level.

Inevitably there are risks associated with the delivery of the Partial Review. In response 4NW have undertaken the following risk assessment matrix with proposed mitigation measures.

Identified Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation measures
Inability to secure strong regional political leadership	HIGH	LOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 4NW officers will continue to ensure that the ‘Regional Leaders Forum’ members are fully engaged with Partial Review building upon work to date with the former NWRA Executive Board. b. Members will be kept informed of progress via update reports to every meeting of Regional Leaders Forum. c. Meeting schedule will be established to support key milestones in Partial Review timetable. d. Members will be asked to make policy inputs and decisions at key stages in Partial Review. e. This will build upon the formal mechanisms that have already taken place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ The resolution by the Full meeting of the former North West Regional Assembly to commence the Partial Review of Regional Spatial Strategy on 16 November 2007. ~ An early round of consultation on the draft Project Plan for the Partial Review with members of the former North West Regional Assembly’s Executive Board, Regional Planning Group, Regional Transport Group and Regional Housing Group that was undertaken in late January 2008. ~ A further round of consultation on the draft Project Plan with all Members of the former North West Regional Assembly and stakeholders across local authorities, and organisations and individuals across the range of economic, social and environmental interests undertaken from mid February to the end of March 2008. ~ A further report to the former North West Regional Assembly Executive Board on 14 March 2008 that set out key points of involvement for the Board in shaping the options and draft

Identified Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation measures
			<p>policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ A further report to the former North West Regional Assembly Executive Board on 30 May 2008 agreed a series of Options Papers, after they had been considered by the former North West Regional Assembly’s Regional Planning Group, Regional Transport Group and Regional Housing Group meetings on 15 May 2008. ~ The Regional Leaders Forum on 15 September 2008 agreed the revised scope for the Partial Review. ~ A further report to the Regional Leaders Forum on 24 October 2008 agreed a series of Interim Draft Policy Frameworks as the basis for the development of policy after they had been considered by the Regional Planning Group, Regional Transport Group and Regional Housing Group meetings on 30 September 2008. ~ The Regional Leaders Forum on 16 January 2009 approved a set of interim Drfat Policies for targeted consultation with key stakeholders in January to March 2009.
Inability to secure wider political engagement at a regional level	HIGH	LOW	<p>a. 4NW will continue to make full use of existing member involvement via meetings of Regional Housing Group, Regional Planning Group and Regional Transport Group. These meetings will be scheduled to support the Partial Review timetable and will provide advice to officers and members of ‘Regional Leaders Forum’.</p>
Inability to secure sub regional engagement by Local Authority members & officers	HIGH	MEDIUM	<p>a. Working in partnership with CAG Consultants we will ensure that stakeholders are kept informed of progress and are able to engage with Partial Review via dedicated website, dedicated email address, Freephone telephone, e-newsletter updates, articles in local authority press, leaflets and newsletters in other outlets.</p> <p>b. Continue to ensure Chief Executive’s & Sub Regional Policy Managers Group are kept informed of Partial Review progress via regular scheduled meetings of group and email updates.</p> <p>c. Local Authority officers have direct involvement in shaping the Partial Review in the following ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Membership of the Partial Review Steering Group includes senior local authority representatives from all of the sub-regions as well as GONW, NWDA, Environment Agency, NWBLT, NW Environment Link and NW Rural Affairs Forum. ▪ The regular meetings of Chief Executive’s and Sub Regional Policy Managers Group convened by 4NW to inform policy development across all issues including RSS.

Identified Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation measures
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consultation on all aspects of the Partial Review is circulated to key contacts in each local authority (principally economic development, housing, planning and transport). ▪ All of the research commissioned by the former Assembly and 4NW that will inform the Partial Review also draws upon sub-regional input either directly through steering group membership of a particular piece of research, and/or through involvement in supplying information for aspects of the research. 4NW also draws upon outputs from research being undertaken by local authorities across a range of issues. <p>d. In addition close contact is maintained with local authority planning team leaders /chief officers through attendance at the various sub-regional officer meetings that are held across the region (which incidentally are also attended by colleagues from the local planning team at GONW):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater Manchester: monthly meeting of Local Development Framework lead officers; • Cheshire: monthly meetings of Chief Planning Officers; • Merseyside: regular meetings of Local Development Framework lead officers; • Cumbria: Quarterly meetings of Local Development Framework lead officers; and • Lancashire: Quarterly meetings of Local Development Framework lead officers. <p>e. With the revisions to the timetable now envisaging short periods for engagement on options and interim draft policies it is recognised that will not fit in with local authority constitutional decision making processes. Therefore arrangement will be put in place to allow officer responses to be submitted initially with confirmation at a later date of formal local authority member decisions.</p>
<p>Inability to secure engagement in Sustainability Appraisal process</p>	<p>HIGH</p>	<p>LOW</p>	<p>An essential element of the Partial Review is the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) which will incorporate health, equalities and rural proofing assessments, and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) – being undertaken by consultants Scott Wilson. A key feature of this includes wider engagement.</p> <p>a. A statutory five week consultation on the scoping report for the Sustainability Appraisal (required under the terms of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations) commenced in April. The consultation will involve the following bodies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Statutory Consultees: Natural England, Environment Agency, English Heritage ~ Non Statutory Consultees: The SA/HRA Steering Group , The NWRA Executive Board, Regional Planning Group, Regional Housing Group, Regional Transport Group, the Partial Review Steering Group, Regional Transport Advisory Group (RTAG), Regional Technical Advisory Body (RTAB), Local Authority Strategic Policy Planners, Sub-Regional Policy Managers, NW Sustainable Development Group, and Neighbouring Regional Planning Bodies.

Identified Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation measures
			<p>b. SA \ HRA steering group (including representatives from Natural England, English Heritage, Environment Agency, GONW and NWDA) has been established to oversee this process.</p> <p>c. Separate SA \ HRA appraisal group will be established drawing from representatives of economic, environmental and social stakeholders who will engage in the appraisal of emerging options and policy.</p>
<p>Inability to secure engagement with the wider community including Gypsies & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople communities</p>	<p>MEDIUM</p>	<p>MEDIUM</p>	<p>The audience for the Partial Review will be diverse – ranging from: Gypsies and Travellers; Travelling Showpeople; planning, housing, transport practitioners; elected members, key stakeholders, implementation agencies and all those interested in the future of the North West.</p> <p>a. Working in partnership with CAG Consultants we will ensure that stakeholders are kept informed of progress and are able to engage with Partial Review via dedicated website, dedicated email address, Freephone telephone, workshops, e-newsletter updates, articles in local authority press, leaflets and newsletters in other outlets.</p> <p>b. A particular challenge will be to thoroughly engage with the Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople communities and to encourage their active participation in the Partial Review. This will require the use of specialist engagement techniques which are being developed and delivered by CAG Consultants on behalf of 4NW.</p> <p>c. To help raise awareness on Gypsy & Traveller and Travelling Showpeople issues the Assembly has produced a 13 minutes DVD entitled “Somewhere to Live” which is available on the 4NW website and has been widely distributed around the region.</p>
<p>Ensuring Partial Review is tightly focused on a number of key policy issues which need revising</p>	<p>HIGH</p>	<p>MEDIUM</p>	<p>The project plans clearly identifies scope of issues to be covered by Partial Review and where applicable specifies the appropriate policies as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Update of Regional Parking Standards (Table 8.1 as set out in Secretary of State’s Proposed Changes to Draft RSS). ~ Gypsies & Travellers ~ Travelling Showpeople. <p>4NW intends to keep the scope of the Partial Review very tight. However it is recognised that there may be consequential implications for other policy aspects of RSS, which may also need revision. It is expected that such additional areas of policy requiring revision will only become apparent as a consequence of either consultation on options, emerging policy detail or the Strategic Environmental Assessment outputs which require mitigation. 4NW will endeavour to keep these consequential issues to a minimum in line with the best practice advice. By being crystal clear about the scope of the Partial</p>

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			<p>Review, and disciplined in the way that we approach the scope – hopefully we can avoid the temptation to throw in changes which do not need to be made and limit the Partial Review so far as possible to those changes which are essential. It is important to try to make the proposed changes as coherent as possible, but to take into account any implications which the proposed changes may have for the rest of the RSS</p>
<p>Inability to achieving consensus on policy prior to submission of Draft RSS</p>	<p>MEDIUM</p>	<p>MEDIUM</p>	<p>It may well not be possible to achieve full consensus on all issues.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. It will be important for stakeholders to acknowledge this and recognise that there are a number of opportunities to input into the preparation of RSS and influence its final content including the Examination in Public process. b. In order to ensure the efficient preparation of the RSS, we will maximise the opportunities to make effective use of focused engagement via existing key stakeholder groupings and sub regional partnerships in a variety of appropriate ways. c. In some cases it may not be possible to achieve consensus with an individual organisation. Rather that hold up the Partial Review process, it may be appropriate to “agree to disagree” on aspects of policy detail and to ensure that these issues are best addressed in the formal consultation and Examination in public process (an approach successfully applied in previous RPG \ RSS Reviews).
<p>Inability to ensuring delivery of Partial Review leading to slippage in the project timetable prior to submission of Draft RSS</p>	<p>HIGH</p>	<p>LOW</p>	<p>The key risk to delivery is slippage in the project timetable. The agreed timetable is very tight and it is noted that in some quarters there are concerns that it may be too short. Inevitably events will occur, which mean there will need to be some degree of flexibility and revision to the timetable and project plan to reflect changing situations during the process. However significant slippage in the timetable is not tenable, given the Governments desire for the delivery of the Partial Review by 2010, and the knock on effects on Local Development Framework timetables.</p> <p>Progress against the work programme set out in this draft project plan will be subject to 4NW Chief Executive and Director level review on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>By focusing on a limited number of issues and using external consultancy expertise to support and project manage the engagement process including the use of e-governance techniques, should ensure that the stages up to the submission of the draft RSS are managed by 4NW in accordance with the timetable set out. To support this, as identified earlier, we will use the Regional Leaders Forum to provide the necessary regional leadership.</p>

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			<p>The timetable for the Partial Review has been developed in light of the guidance in PPS11 and legislative requirements. In doing so, 4NW have sought to ensure the timetable is robust, pragmatic and deliverable taking account of best practice, advice from stakeholders, GONW and the Planning Inspectorate. To ensure delivery a number of measures will be put in place.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continued use of detailed project management techniques and software by 4NW officers to manage the work both internally and externally. Clear and early communication will for a key part of this. b. 4NW Chief Executive, Phil Robinson, will take a more “hands on” approach in overseeing the management of the Partial Review Process through chairing regular internal officer project management meetings. c. Establish a joint 4NW \ NWDA \ GONW steering group to oversee the Partial Review and its integration with emerging work on the Regional Strategy – RS2010. d. Continue the on-going engagement with members, LA officers and other key stakeholders on the various iterative stages in options and policy development [drawing on best practice experience from previous RSS and RES reviews. e. Ensure effective use of regional / sub regional technical and strategic expertise found within membership of Partial Review Steering Group who will provide key policy direction / advice and technical / writing expertise inputs. f. Officers of the former North West Regional Assembly drafted the initial ideas for policy options that were circulated to the RSS Steering Group, and meetings of the Regional Planning, Regional Housing and Regional Transport groups in mid May 2008. The options were then refined on the basis of comments received back from the steering group and members. The revised options were then be considered by the former North West Regional Assembly’s Executive Board at the end of May 2008. This was followed by a full round of consultation \ engagement in June 2008, which included a number of workshops around the region. The workshops will provide an opportunity for a range of stakeholders, including elected members, to further shape the options that will ultimately influence the policies. A further round of engagement on interim draft policies is taking place in January- March 2009, prior to submission in July 2009.
Non alignment with national policy and	HIGH	LOW	<p>The North West RSS is one of a range of strategies and programmes that aim to shape the future of the North West and, as such, affect the life of people in the Region. The role of the RSS is to provide a long term spatial planning framework for these other strategies and programmes. It is essential that all</p>

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other regional strategies			<p>these strategies and programmes, including the RSS, match each other and pull in the same direction. Otherwise resources may be wasted and the Region’s ability to deliver sustainable development will be compromised. Therefore, in revising the RSS, consideration needs to be given to other national and regional strategies and programmes. It is important that the Partial Review both shapes and is shaped by those strategies and programmes - working in partnership is key to this.</p> <p>As a starting point the Partial Review of RSS does not seek to duplicate national policy whilst also respecting the appropriateness for some aspects of policy detail to be addressed at a sub regional or local level and not through RSS.</p>
Slippage in the project timetable after submission of Draft RSS	HIGH	MEDIUM	<p>4NW is only responsible for project managing part of the process up until the submission of Draft RSS. It is, hoped that Government can then efficiently progress the remaining stages of process, so that the final version of the strategy can be in place by end of 2010.</p> <p>Working with partners we will try to ensure engagement and “buy in” to emerging policies prior to submission, so minimising the volume of formal objections after submission which need to be resolved via the Examination in Public and GONW managed stages. GONW and the Planning Inspectorate must ensure adequate staff and other resources are put in place to facilitate this. To help achieve this we will seek the early and ongoing involvement of both the Planning Inspectorate and GONW in the process, so that there is continuity throughout the timetable.</p> <p>The timetable for the post submission stages of the process are based on guidance in PPS11. However the volume and complexity of the formal responses made during these stages are currently unknown and potentially could cause slippage in the process. GONW and the Planning Inspectorate will need to ensure that sufficient resource capacity, procedures and support facilities including ICT resources are put in place to deal with such situations.</p>
Lack of agreement on a shared evidence base	MEDIUM	LOW \ MEDIUM	<p>The timetable for the Partial Review of RSS is founded on the need for RSS to be based on solid evidence and to be prepared with effective input from key stakeholders. The timetable proposed will enable a better product to be delivered and is more likely to engender more widespread support for the draft RSS. The RSS is based on an inclusive and consensus building preparation process. Time invested upfront on getting a better and shared evidence base alongside engagement with stakeholders, should reduce disputes later and will help to achieve better alignment with other regional</p>

Identified Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation measures
			<p>strategies. However there is a need to maintain separation between the preparation of the evidence base and the development of policy. Policy considerations and disputes about minor details should not be allowed to delay the publication of research, although it is of course vital to ensure that the evidence base is robust. 4NW officers will need to manage stakeholder expectations and engagement to ensure research is delivered on time as planned. There is also the danger that other stakeholders may not agree with the evidence base being used by 4NW and may commission / use an alternative evidence base to underpin their input into the RSS process and their own strategy development at a sub regional or local level, which then may not conform with RSS or other regional strategies.</p>
<p>Problems of soundness of the evidence base</p>	<p>MEDIUM</p>	<p>LOW \ MEDIUM</p>	<p>The timetable for the Partial Review of RSS is founded on the need for RSS to be based on solid evidence and to be prepared with effective input from key stakeholders. The timetable proposed will enable a better product to be delivered and is more likely to engender more widespread support for the draft RSS. The RSS is based on an inclusive and consensus building preparation process. Time invested upfront on getting a better and shared evidence base alongside engagement with stakeholders, should reduce disputes later and will help to achieve better alignment with other regional strategies. Challenges may occur to the robustness and soundness of the evidence base during the Partial Review process. Inevitably new evidence will be published throughout this timescale. In preparing the policies, 4NW will endeavour to take on board the latest robust evidence to inform policy development.</p> <p>There is also the danger that other stakeholders may not agree with the evidence base being used by 4NW and may commission / use an alternative evidence base to underpin their input into the RSS process and their own strategy development at a sub regional or local level, which then may not conform with RSS or other regional strategies.</p> <p>If gaps are identified in the evidence base, where practical, the assembly will seek to address these gaps, working with national, regional, sub regional and local partners. If required this could include commissioning additional research.</p>
<p>Impact of proposal to develop a Single</p>	<p>MEDIUM</p>	<p>LOW</p>	<p>In March 2008, the Government published a consultation on how it proposed to implement the <i>Sub National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration (published in July 2007)</i>. These proposals are being brought forward via new legislation - the Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Bill. Among other things, the Government proposes to bring together the</p>

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Regional Strategy			<p>RSS and the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) into a single Regional Strategy for each of the English regions. In the North West, 4NW and the NWDA will be jointly responsible for developing the Regional Strategy, working closely with local authorities and other partners.</p> <p>In this context, 4NW and the NWDA, have commenced work on the preparation of a new Regional Strategy under the brand RS2010 – for more details see the dedicated website http://www.nwregionalstrategy.com/.</p> <p>However, until these proposals are implemented (which will require primary legislation), the responsibilities in respect of the RSS will stay with 4NW which will continue with bringing forward the Partial Review of RSS. 4NW will work closely with GONW, Northwest Regional Development Agency (the RDA for the North West) and others to ensure that any changes in arrangements occur in a smooth and orderly way and continue to allow regional partners and communities a strong input into the Partial Review of RSS.</p> <p>The Bill proposes that any work undertaken on the review of a RSS prior to the commencement of the legislation can be incorporated into the Regional Strategy preparation.</p>
Potential loss in capacity and capability of Assembly staff to deliver Partial Review due to staff losses	HIGH	MEDIUM \ HIGH	<p>A risk that the Partial Review faces is the loss of professional staff expertise \ resource as 4NW staff may decide to leave the organisation during the process.</p> <p>If there is a loss of professional expertise and resource within 4NW, it will be important for other key stakeholders for example sub regions and GONW to provide additional resources to make up any shortfall in capacity, for example by establishing joint working arrangements, considering use of secondments of staff etc.</p> <p>In addition if required 4NW would use existing budget resources to “buy in” specialist consultancy expertise.</p>
Local Government Reorganisation in Cheshire	HIGH	MEDIUM	<p>The Government have announced a reorganisation of Local Government in Cheshire to create two unitary authorities by 1st April 2009, which would replace a current 2 tier system of local authorities. Inevitably there will be some uncertainty during the next 12 months which may impact on the ability for Cheshire local authorities to fully participate in the process.</p>

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			<p>During this period 4NW will maintain ongoing dialogue with officers and members in Cheshire in both the current and “shadow” authorities to ensure sub regional engagement from Cheshire.</p>
<p>Inability to comply with legal requirements</p>	<p>HIGH</p>	<p>LOW</p>	<p>In preparing the project plan, agreeing a revised timetable for and undertaking the Partial Review, 4NW staff will ensure that all relevant legislative requirements are met especially those relating to Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, SEA Directive and Habitats Directive.</p> <p>As a consequence, this may mean that elements of the Project Plan and the ways in which the Partial Review is undertaken will need to be changed and revised in order to ensure legal compliance.</p>