

APPENDIX A

Briefing Note regarding Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy

The Secretary of State's (SoS) response to the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) represents the latest, and an advanced, stage in the production of a new regional plan for the North West. The period for comments in relation to changes proposed by the SoS ran until 23 May.

A quick summary of the main points is as follows:

- 1) Table 7.1 (Settlement Hierarchy) has been deleted but Widnes and Runcorn are included within Policy RDF1 under the third tier priority for growth.
- 2) The policy for Regionally Significant Employment Sites (RSES) is criteria based and, in our case, now refers to locations within the urban areas of the Liverpool City Region rather than the previous "Merseyside (including Ellesmere Port and Halton)". Daresbury would therefore need to be justified as a RSES against the criteria of the policy.
- 3) Employment land figures for the Merseyside and Halton sub regional have been clarified at a requirement for 476 ha of additional land over the period 2005-2021. Inter-Modal Freight Terminals (e.g. Ditton/ 3MG) do not form part of this figure.
- 4) Inter-Modal Freight Terminals are now considered under a separate policy RT8. 3MG is listed within the policy as Widnes (with access to the West Coast Main Line (Liverpool Branch)). However, it should be noted that this policy is also criteria based and proposals at 3MG would need to accord with these.
- 5) None of Halton's retail centres are named within the retail hierarchy policy.
- 6) Halton's requirement to deliver 9,000 dwellings net of clearance over the period 2003-2021 has been confirmed. This equates to an annual average figure of 500 dwellings pa. This annual average requirement will continue for a limited period beyond 2021.
- 7) The new previously developed land (pdl) target for residential development for Halton with St Helens has been confirmed to be at least 65%.
- 8) Table 10.2 (Transport Investment Priorities) which included reference to the Mersey Gateway Bridge and Silver Jubilee Bridge has been deleted. Schemes are now to be listed as part of a separate Implementation Plan (IP). An updated version of the IP has still to be produced.
- 9) Halton has been grouped with the Merseyside authorities in relation to waste matters. This is in line with the decision by the Council to work with the Merseyside Authorities on a Joint Waste DPD, as opposed to Warrington Borough Council.

In view of the fact that several aspects of RSS are considered to be deficient a separate Partial Review is in the process of being undertaken and will cover matters of housing policy, Housing Market Areas, regional car parking standards, waste policies (specifically regionally significant waste management facilities), broad locations for renewable energy and accommodation for travelling showpeople, gypsies and travellers.