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NEW VISION TO DELIVER NORTH EAST RENAISSANCE

Plans for a sustainable social and economic renaissance in the North East were set out today by Communities Minister Baroness Andrews.

A new vision to deliver jobs, homes and infrastructure to the region up to 2021 was unveiled in the North East of England Plan, the revised Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).

Publication of the final plan follows comprehensive public consultation and independent examination process.

The Plan sets out to deliver 128,900 new homes (7,600 a year) by 2021 to meet housing needs. With people living longer and more and more choosing to live alone households are projected to grow in the region by at least 6,647 a year up to 2021.

The Plan focuses on accelerating economic development within the Tyne and Wear and Tees Valley City-Regions as well as creating a vibrant rural economy. Gross Value Added growth is expected to accelerate averaging 2.8% per annum (over 04-21). Areas including the Tyne River Corridor, the River Wear Corridor, Durham City, South East Northumberland, the Durham and Rural Coalfield areas and East Cleveland have been identified as key development areas.

The Plan supports recently announced goals to create up to 73,000 new jobs in the North East by 2016 as set out in the Regional Economic Strategy. 3,400 hectares of land is identified for new business. Land for growth has been specifically reserved at Key Employment Locations: Newcastle Great Park; Newburn Riverside, Baltic Business Quarter, West Hartford, Cramlington, NorthEast Technology Park,

Sedgefield; Wynyard, Stockton/Hartlepool; Heighington Lane West, Newton Aycliffe; Faverdale, Darlington.

In addition to mainstream infrastructure funding the Government is making millions more available through the Community Infrastructure Fund and Housing and Planning Delivery Grants, which will incentivise councils to increase housing supply sustainably. The Second Round of New Growth Point areas to be announced shortly will include the North of England for the first time.

Communities Minister Baroness Andrews said:

“This plan is about realising the full potential of the North East through major social and economic renaissance. We want to deliver a high quality of life for present and future generations by addressing housing shortages, strengthening the economy, modernising transport networks, protecting the environment and tackling climate change.

“Beyond the short term squeeze of the credit crunch the population is ageing, more people are choosing to live alone and new households are growing faster than new homes. If more homes are not built now older people will have fewer choices, and the housing ladder will get even further out of reach leaving the next generation with nowhere to live.

“This North East Plan sets out a vision for reducing the social and economic gap between the North East and other regions while building upon its distinctive strengths and assets.”

The Plan also addresses major transport, waste and environmental issues in the North East.

A modern transport system that supports the economy and improves accessibility to and within the region is a priority. Spending on the region’s transport network has risen by 30% in the last five years from £481million to £623million. The Plan promotes better public transport, improved parking and tackles congestion problems.

Major capital investment will be available for schemes that can deliver on time and on budget.

The plan also puts tackling climate change high on the agenda to support national targets to reduce CO2 by 60% by 2050. It sets an interim 10% renewable energy target until councils are able to bring forward their own challenging targets for new developments.

Summary of key points in the plan:

- Higher housing growth to deliver 128,900 new homes by 2021 (7,600 a year) to address housing shortages and affordability issues in the region.
- An accelerated GVA growth averaging 2.8% per annum (over 04-21). Increased population with more people taking advantage of local jobs, services and better quality housing.
- Priority Areas for development, regeneration and conservation - the Tyne River Corridor, the River Wear Corridor, Durham City, urban areas of the Tees Valley, South East Northumberland, the Durham and Rural Coalfield areas, East Cleveland and other Regeneration Towns and Rural Service Centres.
- 3400 hectares of land to boost local jobs in Key Employment locations at NewcastleGreat Park; Newburn Riverside, Newcastle; Baltic Business Quarter; West Hartford, Cramlington; NorthEast Technology Park, Sedgefield; Wynyard in Stockton/Hartlepool; Heighington Lane West, Newton Aycliffe; Faverdale, Darlington.
- Support development in rural communities including improved public transport and the delivery of affordable housing.
- A sustainable Regional Transport Strategy for improving public transport, rail links, parking policies and tackling congestion. Including A1/East Coast Main

Line; A19/Durham Coast rail line; A66/Tees Valley rail line; A69/Tyne Valley rail line.

- Major transport studies on congestion levels for the A1 through County Durham and the A19/A66/A174 in Tees Valley. A second round of Regional Funding Allocation for further projects is expected to be announced later this year.
- Tackle climate change policy as set out in the Energy White Paper to make significant progress on cutting carbon dioxide emissions significantly by 2020, and achieve a 60% cut by 2050.
- Interim 10% target to secure energy from renewable and low carbon sources for new major developments until local authorities set own ambitious targets. Potential areas have been identified for onshore wind energy development; following further consultation.
- Waste management strategy including targets to increase household waste recycling and composting to 46% by 2016.
- Protection from damaging development for environment and historic buildings including World Heritage Sites Hadrian's Wall and Durham Cathedral and Castle to promote tourism.
- Protection for the Green Belt to safeguard the countryside from encroachment around Tyne and Wear and Durham City. A policy to prevent settlements from merging in Tees Valley.

One NorthEast's Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy), Pat Ritchie, said:

"We welcome the Government's adoption of the Regional Spatial Strategy. One NorthEast has worked closely with the North East Assembly and Government to ensure it is closely aligned with the Regional Economic Strategy; taken together,

these strategies provide a solid foundation for the preparation of the new, integrated Regional Strategy over the next few years.”

Alex Watson, chair, North East Assembly, added:

“The RSS released today is the culmination of strong partnership working in the region. We are delighted that the Government has endorsed our shared vision for the North East to improve the quality of life for the people who live here. We look forward to working more closely with One NorthEast to ensure that this planning framework provides the best possible outcome for the region as we begin to develop the new single regional strategy.”

Notes to Editor

1. The plan is part of an ongoing process of Government reforms and delivery that is strengthening regional regeneration, growth and accountability. Under proposals set out in the Sub-National Review as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review, the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) would be replaced by a new Single Regional Strategy for the region covering jobs, homes, transport and investment. These plans will continue to require transparent and open consultation with councils, local communities, businesses and environmental groups.
2. Under the Single Regional Strategy elected local leaders will have more say over housing and planning, giving them a stronger role in developing and signing off regional strategies, and better scrutiny of the Regional Planning Body through local leader forums.
3. The North East of England Plan announced today was formally published by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in a Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament. The plan is the revised Regional Spatial Strategy and covers the Durham, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and Tees Valley sub-regions.
4. The Plan incorporates the Regional Transport Strategy to ensure the integration of land use and transport planning and has been informed by sustainability appraisals and a habitats regulations assessment to ensure that it meets the requirements of the European Habitats and Strategic Environmental Assessment Directives.
5. Existing Regional Planning Guidance for the North East (RPG1) became the statutory RSS in 2004 when the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act came into force. The North East of England Plan replaces RPG1 and is based on the

submission draft version of the RSS which was prepared by the North East Assembly in 2005. The original proposals have since been amended through the Secretary of States Proposed Changes (2007) and Further Proposed Changes (2008), and were also subject to an independent Examination in Public in 2006.

6. The next steps are for the region's local authorities and delivery bodies to implement the policies of the North East of England Plan through preparation by the Assembly of an Implementation Plan and through Local Development Frameworks, other strategies and the determination of planning applications.
7. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 strengthened the role and importance of regional planning, introducing Regional Spatial Strategies as the top tier of the statutory Development Plan in all regions of England, except London, where the London Plan provides a similar role. The Act sets an objective for RSS's to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
8. Copies of the North East Plan and supporting documents are available for public inspection in local planning authorities and branch libraries throughout the region. They can also be viewed and downloaded from the website of Government Office for the North East (www.go-ne.gov.uk) and the North East Assembly (www.northeastassembly.gov.uk). Hard copies can be purchased from The Stationery Office (TSO), which can be contacted through it's website (www.tsoshop.co.uk), by email (book.orders@tso.co.uk) or by telephone (0870 600 5522).
9. Revised projections of households in the English regions to 2026 can be found at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/707319>

Media Enquiries: 020 7944 3288 Out of hours: 020 7944 5945

Email: press.office@communities.gsi.gov.uk

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