

RS2010

**REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR
ENGLAND'S NORTHWEST**

Principles and Issues Paper

Consultation Report – August 2009



Northwest Regional Strategy 2010

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report contains an assessment and summary of responses to the Northwest Regional Strategy Principles and Issues Paper consultation exercise. NWDA and 4NW - the Regional Leaders' Forum are pleased to report a significant level of interest in the first main consultation and stakeholder opportunity relating to the development of a Northwest Regional Strategy. The response to the twelve-week consultation on the RS2010 Principles and Issues Paper has been uniformly high-level, and we thank all those involved in developing and submitting views.

This Consultation Report summarises the approach to, engagement with, and responses made to questions within the RS2010 Principles and Issues Paper.

- This Executive Summary highlights the primary messages emerging overall.
- The consultation process has enabled the generation of a set of Outcomes and Values for the Northwest Regional Strategy, contained in Section 2.
- Section 3 sets out how we went about the consultation and who was engaged in the process.
- A digest of the responses organised by question are given in Section 4.

There is universal support for the endeavour to set out in a Regional Strategy a high-level framework direction and priorities for the Northwest of England. While none of the consultation responses challenged or disagreed with the concept of developing such a Regional Strategy, three of the respondents questioned the timing of preparation of this work in the context of the current recession – two of these responses were calling for a more rapid timetable.

“We look for RS2010 to set out a clear action programme to deliver the right conditions for business to thrive and for an improved quality of life for the region’s citizens“

We believe that the Consultation on the NW RS2010 Principles and Issues Paper has validated the majority of the contents of that paper as a basis for future strategy development for the Northwest. We have established a consensus around the overall objective for such a Northwest Regional Strategy, and enabled the region to engage in a well-informed and vibrant debate about underpinning assumptions, goals, challenges and assets characterising the Northwest. In very many aspects comments have greatly improved the understanding and refinement of the complex and interrelated issues set out in the Principles and Issues Paper.

Overall Objective

The question of the focus of the strategy raised a significant amount of interest. There is majority agreement that the objective of the Northwest Regional Strategy should be Sustainable Economic Growth. This recognises sustainable economic growth as being our best chance of securing the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, social cohesion and opportunity, and quality of life/well-being. Sustainable Economic Growth is also stated as the primary objective in the Government’s guidance on the aim of Regional Strategies: *“It is intended that the outcome of the strategy should be sustainable economic growth and that the strategy must contribute to sustainable development.”*¹

¹ “Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill – Policy Document on Regional Strategies” Communities & Local Government (CLG) / Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform (BERR), January 2009.

However, a sizeable group of respondents argued that sustainable development should be the focus of the strategy, with sustainable economic growth as one facet of this objective. Therefore to ensure that we accommodate this viewpoint we have utilised the feedback and consultation responses to propose the following statements, working to achieve Sustainable Economic Growth on the basis of:

- Explicit consideration of the UK's Principles of Sustainable Development.
- Understanding that any growth needs to be responsible (equitable) as well as sustainable.
- Achieving Sustainable Economic Growth through actions and policies being spatially aware and not exacerbating place differentials.
- Understanding that Sustainable Economic Growth needs to be within environmental limits as well as enhancing the environment and social welfare.

Strategic Issues

The Issues section of the Principles and Issues Paper was most uniformly accepted. The Paper was judged to have satisfactorily outlined the themes that the Regional Strategy will have to address, and respondents made a number of suggestions to supplement and clarify aspects of each issue and raise potential solutions.

Recession

Respondents felt that the Regional Strategy should clearly acknowledge and respond to the recession, arguing strongly that experience of recession entrenches issues suffered in parts of the region; risks losing productive capacity to the region; and affects public sector funding available to the region and its major programmes. It is clear that the Regional Strategy must position the region to come out of recession stronger. Over the medium to long term, however, more respondents felt that the impact of Climate Change is likely to be the fundamental change to our world view.

Complementarity

The Principles and Issues Paper set out a concept of strategy development for the Northwest that would require the identification and building of a “distinctive competitive offer” as the basis by which we may achieve sustainable economic growth. Respondents broadly welcomed this concept as an appropriate basis for strategy development. The attempt to work at a regional level to establish complementarity of offer was strongly received – i.e. including elements in this distinctive offer that supported different places, delivered on a number of different challenges, and worked towards achievement of several outcomes rather than a sole indicator. There was strong agreement that strategy needed to be Northwestern rather than a strategy that would fit any place:

“[Capitalise on] The NW's growing national and international reputation as a place where 'big things happen' (sport, culture, business events). The NW has a distinctive heritage but we undersell our current capabilities and potential. We have a strategic opportunity to create a nationally and globally distinctive 21st century identity, with a culture of edgy, adaptive creativity for 200 years in many fields of endeavour.”

Carbon Reductions and Climate Change

We report on a very significant appetite for a radical plan to reduce Carbon; mitigate and adapt to Climate Change; increase our level of Clean Energy generation; and take responsibility for our Use of Resources. Respondents called for the NW to continue to go for sustainable economic growth but to accelerate our decoupling of growth from environmental degradation including our carbon emissions and quantity of waste.

“England’s Northwest could pioneer sustainable living in all its forms: food production, energy production and conservation, retrofitting suburbs as places people want to live, life-long education and community development.”

Respondents strongly suggested that the Regional Strategy needs to make reference to quality as well as quantity of natural resources, and the importance of management of the natural and marine environment overall. It is clear that

“The extent and quality of the region’s natural resources will continue to be under considerable pressure especially in the light of a changing climate.”

Equality and Health

The Principles and Issues Consultation has also revealed that regional stakeholders would clearly like to see stronger treatment of People issues; recognising both that ‘trickle-down’ of economic benefit isn’t working and ensuring that the impact of issues such as poverty, ill-health, and demographic change is properly integrated into strategic thinking. Respondents have asked to ensure that health and wellbeing as a broad and fundamental concept lies at the core of the strategy’s aims, and that future strategy development addresses the critical driver of poverty and income inequity.

“The actions in the strategy should demonstrate how they will contribute to achieving a reduction in the income gap and ensure a living wage for the region’s population.”

“The Regional Strategy is an opportunity for all partners to contribute to the social determinants of ill health, the causes of the causes, as there is a shared responsibility for our society.”

“The feedback is that improving health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities should be a key ‘issue’ in its own right.”

“We feel that realising the regional health dividend should be a key issue, arising from reductions in health and social care/welfare system costs, improved workforce capacity and improved labour market productivity.”

“It is not only the poor who suffer from the effects of inequality, but the majority of the population.”

Growth Locations

The Principles and Issues Paper asked the region to consider several challenging issues around the spatial location of growth and the relationships between places, particularly between urban and rural economies and communities. There was majority acceptance of Issue 2 in the Paper: the assertion that our cities and towns will be the focus of economic growth. Respondents have asked to acknowledge too that adjacent areas must benefit from this growth to reduce economic, social and environmental inequalities, and that there should be more recognition of the role played by smaller towns and rural service centres. Taking the development of the Regional Strategy forward will be done in conjunction with sub-regions and the statutory city region process in Manchester.

“Harness the complementary growth of the Liverpool and Manchester City Regions.”

Connectivity

The most commented upon Issue was the importance of improved Connectivity, particularly with reference to delivering improvements in public transport; rail services; linkages between key places; enabling successful modal shift (reducing car usage); and enabling access to employment locations.

“the challenge must be to achieve low carbon solutions to these transport problems and to provide people of the region with efficient, integrated affordable sustainable transport.”

Places and Communities

There was much in the Principles and Issues Paper that respondents welcomed in terms of the focus on Places and Communities. While the Regional Strategy must remain most usefully and appropriately at the regional level, and not attempt to write 'a plan for each place' a number of respondents thought that it was important to maintain:

"a sense of place identity, local culture, environment and service provision"

And:

"if RS2010 is to ensure sustainable and equitable social, economic and environmental well-being, the role that different places can play in helping to achieve that goal must be given more consideration."

Business Focus

From a large number of respondents, achieving Sustainable Economic Growth requires a greater focus on the need to create jobs, maintain transition to a competitive knowledge economy, and achieve value.

"The paper is too quiet on how to deliver productivity growth and increase the competitiveness of the region. The primary issue for the Northwest appears to be low productivity, caused in large part by a low skills profile"

"Without business at the heart of a regional strategy, all the other issues mentioned, which are also themselves important, such as housing, protection of natural landscape, poor health outcomes, demographics, migration, deprivation etc will have no chance of improvement or sustainability without a vibrant industry base in the first instance. I have to re-iterate that business is the engine of the economy and without business, the rest will fall apart."

The further point is made that a determinant of Sustainable Economic Growth is the health-related capacity of the population to engage in paid employment, and this opportunity to link health investment to economic benefit is a particular area where the integrated, collaborative nature of a Regional Strategy could deliver additional value.

While the majority of respondents agreed that the Northwest is likely to be more integrated into global social and economic context, a number pointed out that it potentially conflicted with other future world views particularly in the context of increasing scarcity of natural resources. We will therefore need to test the robustness of strategic options against extreme scenarios. A number of respondents asked us to recognise the important and growing theory and practice of localism, for example in local food consumption, regional security of energy production, and greater *"strategic foresight in public procurement that means wealth remains in region"*.

"Trend towards greater global integration likely, but should also acknowledge the emerging trend towards localism and the increasing attractiveness of local supply"

Strategic Focus

In terms of the practicalities of developing the Regional Strategy, there are a large number of calls for a 'useful' strategy:

"Avoid vague, homogenous, all-embracing, and complex."

"There needs to be an emphasis on high quality projects and assets which meet the requirements of environmental sustainability and carbon reductions whilst enhancing the region's overall standing as a place to live, work and invest. "

"Need short-, medium- and long-term objectives - what "low hanging fruit" is yet to be exploited in the short-term... thereafter what do we need to achieve in both the medium- and long-term."

Regional stakeholders have called for a strategy that explicitly recognises likely future public funding constraints and drives the NW more towards self-sufficiency and economic viability. The public sector may therefore need to be making difficult choices around investment priorities within RS2010, and private sector investment and the business environment will become even more important.

We report too on a number of calls for a stronger play into national and international agendas:

“Focus on where the NW is best placed to deliver national policy such as nuclear technology, aviation growth, core city growth, higher education, and key growth sectors for industry and technical manufacturing.”

“Important we see the RS in EU as well as national context”

“Identify the areas in which the region aims to influence nationally to assist in achieving the overall aims”

Conclusion

We believe that the Consultation on the NW RS2010 Principles and Issues Paper has provided a firm foundation for further detailed strategy development during 2009. In order to move forward and on the basis of this wide input we have designed a series of draft Outcomes and Values that we propose are adopted in developing the NW Regional Strategy from now on.

2. RS2010 VALUES AND OUTCOMES

SO WHAT WILL THE REGIONAL STRATEGY ULTIMATELY DELIVER?

The following section has been developed based on people's views of the ultimate goals, challenges and unique assets of the region. It sets out the values which the Regional Strategy will seek to embed and an initial view of the outcomes the region will aim for through the strategy. It will be developed and refined, as the Regional Strategy work progresses.

The Regional Strategy will ultimately aim **to improve the sustainable quality of life for the people of the region and to make it more equitable**. To do this it will deliver sustainable economic growth and contribute to long term sustainable development². It will be developed from the "bottom up" as well as the "top down", with genuine engagement, and will provide a framework for local, sub-regional and regional delivery.

Values

In developing and delivering interventions and actions the region will make decisions which take into account the need to:

1. Reduce poverty and inequality by improving social inclusion and the wellbeing of the Northwest
2. Value the diversity of the Northwest encouraging social mobility by realising the potential of all
3. Develop a sense of community and belonging
4. Value and recognise the importance and contribution of place
5. Appreciate that we operate in a global environment ensuring we are outward looking as well as supportive of local solutions and supply chains
6. Learn from the current recession and the evidence base about future sustainable growth opportunities
7. Build on the benefits of critical mass in related industries within our urban areas
8. Develop complementary growth across the region using all our assets
9. Consider the needs of both urban and rural areas
10. Develop the resilience and flexibility of the region to respond to a wide range of future events

² "Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill – Policy Document on Regional Strategies" Communities & Local Government (CLG) / Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform (BERR), January 2009 set outs two definitions as follows:

Sustainable economic growth is defined as economic growth that can be sustained and is within environmental limits, but also enhances the environment and social welfare, and avoids greater extremes in future economic cycles.

Sustainable development is the overall goal of UK, EU and UN policy. In the UK a set of shared principles have been agreed that are used to achieve our sustainable development purpose. These principles are: living within environmental limits; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; using sound science responsibly. Sustainable development guides all policy with the aim of integrating economic, environmental and social issues in a coherent way.

11. Be bold and have courage in prioritising interventions and taking hard decisions
12. Maximise the contribution of the private, public and third sectors to the region

Outcomes

Specific outcomes which the Regional Strategy will aim to achieve are:

1. Developing a low carbon economy, promoting the sustainable use of resources and minimising, and adapting to the impact of, climate change

Making the region attractive to the private sector...

2. Ensuring the Northwest has vibrant and attractive cities, towns and rural areas, capitalising on the region's rich cultural, heritage, sporting and university assets.
3. Increasing the levels of enterprise and trade and creating the right conditions for business growth and sustainability in the region. Capitalising on the region's strengths and assets in international trade, intellectual property, advanced manufacturing, bio-medical and digital/creative.
4. Increasing productivity, capitalising on the region's innovation, science and research assets and exploiting the Northwest's potential in the renewable and nuclear offer and worldwide opportunities from low carbon technologies.
5. Protecting, enhancing and developing the quality of the Northwest's outstanding environmental, natural and coastal landscape assets.

Putting people at the heart of the strategy...

6. Developing communities and places which are sustainable and safe, with less deprivation and disadvantage within the region.
7. Creating a world class skills base, improving education, attracting and retaining talent as well as tackling gaps in basic and graduate level skills.
8. Having a healthy population, with a reduction in health inequalities and capitalising on the economic opportunities from changing health issues
9. Improving the range and depth of quality employment opportunities for all. Linking areas of opportunity and need, significantly reducing low employment rates and improving the supply of labour to businesses.

Providing the right infrastructure for both businesses and people ...

10. Creating balanced housing markets across the North West that support economic growth, strengthen inclusion and ensure that everyone has access to appropriate, well-designed high quality, affordable housing in mixed, sustainable communities.
11. Delivering a high quality, reliable and efficient infrastructure, transport and digital networks to contribute to sustainable development and ensuring that the region is better connected, locally and internationally.
12. Ensuring high quality, efficient and responsive public services.

3. APPROACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Background

The new Regional Strategy, RS2010, will set out the region's long term economic, social, spatial and environmental priorities from 2010. It will be used at a local, sub regional, regional and national level to direct public investment and influence private sector investment. The Strategy builds on the learning gained in the process of developing the Regional Economic Strategy 2006, the Regional Spatial Strategy and Partial Review and the Regional Housing Strategy.

It is the joint responsibility of the NWDA and 4NW – the Regional Leaders Forum to develop the Regional Strategy with input from a wide range of public, private and third sector organisations and individuals across the entire region.

Principles and Issues Paper

On 3rd February 2009, NWDA and 4NW launched the public consultation on the RS2010 Principles and Issues paper which ran from February to April 2009. The aim of the Principles and Issues document was to stimulate wide ranging discussion within the region about the issues we face and the principles needed to underpin the strategy. The paper outlined some of the major underlying considerations for Regional Strategy, but was merely a starting point for debate, encouraging contributions and ideas from all areas so that this strategy is genuinely built on input from the region. The paper drew upon the evidence base to date, the national and regional policy context, and an independent assessment of the issues and challenges facing our region.

How the region was engaged

There was a high level of engagement and response across the region representing a wide range of organisations, stakeholders and members of the public. Key partners such as NWDA Board, the Regional Leaders Forum, the Regional Strategy Advisory Group and the Regional Skills and Employment Board were able to fully consult their respective constituencies. For the first time during any regional strategic consultation exercise, young people were engaged with the help of Youth Participation network, a consortium of six national children and young people agencies that enables involvement of young people in dialogue, decision making and influence across a wide range of settings.

During the consultation period four newsletters were sent out to 4000 contacts across the region. Prior to consultation, a presentation to introduce the potential scope and approach to the preparation of the NW Regional Strategy 2010 was taken to a range of internal and external stakeholder groups in the November 08 – January 09 period.

Website

Also, prior to January 09 the RS2010 website was developed with Regional Strategy branding and used as a location for information prior to and during the consultation period. An example of RS2010 website traffic during early 2009 is given below:

RS2010 Website traffic

RS2010 website stats (1.1.09 – 23.4.09)	Traffic Sources
6,924 Visits	63% traffic came from e-newsletters or direct
19,675 Page Views	14% from NWDA website
Popular Pages	8.6% from Intranet
Homepage - 21.2%	6.4% from 4NW website
Principles & Issues - 12.1%	6.2% from Google
About the RS - 6.7%	
Getting Involved - 6.4%	
Developing the RS - 5.3%	

Method of consultation

The Principles and Issues paper was available for formal consultation between February and April 2009 for a period of twelve weeks.

The region was encouraged to use the on-line Limehouse software system to submit their views wherever possible. Hard copies of the consultation paper were also available for organisations and members of the public to access and respond to inviting response by email or letter. A breakdown of how the information was captured is given below (NB some respondents replied both online and by letter).

Total on-line consultees	95
Total on-line comments received	837
Total of letters/emails received	119

Key Statistic: 188 separate responses were received.

Responses received ranged in length from a few sentences to over 20 pages and ranged in scope from a single issue to comprehensive critiques of the paper. All responses received have been read, considered and analysed; a summary of the issues raised by the consultation is given in this report.

Events

A series of 62 events took place during the consultation period where NWDA and 4NW senior officers presented and facilitated debate. Five Formal Sub-Regional Events (where attendance ranged between 80 and 210), 37 Public Sector-led, 10 Private Sector and 10 Third Sector events took place. It must be noted that Voluntary and Business representatives were very frequently present at the Public Sector-led events; examples being the meetings of the NW Science Council; NW Tidal Energy Group; NW Enterprise Forum; NW International Business Forum; and others. A total of over 1200 individuals attended these events.

A comments/doodle board was available at several venues inviting people to add their comments to the question "In 20 years time I would like the Northwest to be a place that...." 54 individual comments were received via this method.

Consultation Process

Overall, there was a high degree of support for the strategic process and the consultation exercise was welcomed by respondents and praised for its open and inclusive nature. In comparison, negative comments about the process were few and mainly focused around the need for wider consultation with specific groups for example the unemployed, or utilising community empowerment structures. Although lessons have been learnt for future exercises, NWDA and 4NW would welcome suggestions for further/wider regional engagement.

Next steps

A draft high-level Regional Strategy 2010 and accompanying Implementation Framework will be prepared, agreed and be subject to a formal period of three months regional consultation towards early 2010. After this, the draft will be amended in the light of feedback. Further information can be found on www.nwregionalstrategy.com in the RS2010 Project Plan. The exact timings will be subject to legislative change.

4. DIGEST OF COMMENTS

Question A

Do you believe that things will have fundamentally changed as a result of this recession and that issues of climate change, low carbon economy, competing land use pressures and the nature of future growth are important to consider?

Recession entrenches issues already being suffered in parts of the region...

- *“most vulnerable people who are furthest away from the labour market will find it harder to find sustained employment”*
- *“recognise consequences from recession on equality and diversity, particularly on Black and Minority Ethnic populations, the disabled and women in part-time employment”*
- *“regeneration strategies based on attracting percentage of owner occupiers as proxy for mixed communities no longer viable. No certainty that housing market of last decade will ever return”*
- *“recognise that different economies perform differently according to their sectoral structure”*
- *“rural areas have more severe impact from recession”*
- *“a revised strategy for investing in older, historic buildings will be needed as attitudes to speculative buying change”*

...risks losing productive capacity to the region....

- *“changes in sectoral strengths likely to have long term results”*
- *“need stronger emphasis on drivers to pull us out of recession”*
- *“current recession will have long lasting effect on economy especially manufacturing and automotive sectors”*
- *“particularly concerned about impact of recession on major manufacturing industries and their supply chains”*
- *“redundancies mean skills are lost, downsizing and closures makes it difficult for young people to practice vocation. Fewer apprentices, Ageing demographic, recruitment freezes: no new blood going in”*
- *“recession highlights need to have a balance of sectors in the economy”*

... and affects public sector funding available to the region / major programmes.

- *“impact on government funded programmes such as Housing Market Renewal could have big implications.”*
- *“The financial position of the public sector is likely to have fundamentally changed as a result of the recession and the the imperative to safeguard and further develop the health and care system as community assets is likely therefore to become more important to the NW population.”*

Regional Strategy must position the region to come out of recession stronger...

- *“develop leadership in introduction of low carbon technologies”*
- *“with its potential for renewable energy generation, energy from waste, wind, tide, nuclear, bio-mass and clean coal, the North West can market itself to the world as the Low Carbon region”*
- *“need to harness private sector investment in sustainable schemes”*
- *“need for greater emphasis on manufacturing and high technology especially the environmental technology sector”*
- *“identification of skills requirements to support growth sectors and supply chains should be undertaken”*
- *“region’s industrial legacy and poor infrastructure continue to stunt economic growth”*
- *“when growth resolves the patterns seen before crash will reappear”*

- *“ageing population demanding greater healthcare provision therefore increased healthcare spend”*
- *“recession may cause emergence of different type of business with increased corporate social responsibility and social return on investment”*
- *“stick to the basic principles underlying current EU and UK competitiveness”*
- *“a more equitable and stable economic framework where strengths in manufacturing energy production, public services and R&D, creative and digital sectors provide the basis for a healthy financial and professional services sector”*
- *“as a location the NW is competing across the globe for foreign direct investment”*
- *“increase strategic foresight in public procurement that means wealth remains in region “*

Climate change is felt by the majority to be the fundamental change to our world view, affecting our resilience and adaptability...

- *“recession and climate change give rise to opportunity for comprehensive re-evaluation of approaches to economic growth”*
- *“recession is opportunity to re-evaluate mutual interdependencies between the economy and the environment”*
- *“issues of sustainability create new opportunities”*
- *“climate change adaptation and mitigation should be highest priority”*
- *“essential to consider issues of climate change, low carbon economy and competing land use pressures in developing sustainable economy, and not lose sight through short term focus on recession”*
- *“paper underestimates extent to which our lifestyles will change as result of low carbon economy”*
- *“need retraction of globalisation and increase in self sufficiency”*
- *“it is business and the general public that have the innovation and drive to effect necessary changes”*

...but this assertion is not shared by all.

- *“the most important issue is worklessness and how to deal with increased forecast of deprivation, ill health and social issues it brings.”*

Our strategic context is also altered by:

Competing demands on land use...

- *“land will need to be better managed to meet competing demands for food production, wildlife conservation and access to open spaces”*
- *“competing land use pressures are key consideration”*
- *“complex interrelationships between land use and biodiversity; management of some aspects of ecosystems may compromise others”*

... demographic change....

- *“population profile getting older, and increasingly diverse”*
- *“important not to lose sight of long term demographics“*

...and global forces.

- *“high level context for development of the RS is where globalisation and technological change will continue to shape the economy”*
- *“long term globalism v localism needs to be considered: local smaller scale production in order to shorten supply chain and reduce ‘carbon footprint’.”*
- *“need security of local supply of raw materials which are difficult to ship “*
- *“localism could spread growth and develop a more sustainable approach“*

Question B – Do you agree with the assumptions above? If not what alternative assumptions would you make? Are there any assumptions missing?

One of the most heavily commented on parts of the paper with a wide range of views expressed.

The majority of views agreed with the majority of assumptions...

- *“Assumptions are valid, particularly assumption one.”*
- *“Proposed assumptions seem reasonable; Assumptions 3, 4 and 5 are fundamental”*
- *“Welcome attempt to set out assumptions”*
- *“Welcome setting out the assumptions at the start, and the eight listed broadly encompass the major issues, although they should be open to ongoing challenge and evolution.”*
- *“Broadly agree with the assumptions particularly the importance of sustainable economic growth and reducing consumption.”*
- *“Overall agree with the assumptions in the paper.”*
- *“Agree in principle with the high level assumptions. Some are more likely to be relevant in the short term (eg assumptions about lower levels of migration) but difficult to predict what the world will be like in 20 years time.”*
- *“Most of the assumptions are robust, but they could apply with equal force everywhere and there is a need to give the assumptions a clear North West focus.”*

While the majority of respondents agreed that the Northwest is likely to be more integrated into global social and economic context, a number pointed out that we also need to recognise the important and growing theory and practice of localism, for example in local food consumption and local secure energy production ...

Mentioned by 10 respondents: e.g.

- *“trend towards greater global integration likely, but should also acknowledge the emerging trend towards localism and the increasing attractiveness of local supply”; and*
- *“agree that the North West is likely to become increasingly integrated into wider economies but do not agree that we need to ‘compete harder’. Increased co-operation between both regions and nations is the only sustainable way forward and can be done through the concept of complementarity, embracing and celebrating localism.”*

...the concept of increasing integration also worried respondents who felt it potentially conflicted with other assumptions particularly on the price and security of energy supplies...

- *That increasing global integration could conflict with achieving a low-carbon future and in the context of increasing scarcity of oil and gas e.g “there are also some contradictions in the assumptions which will need to be addressed eg global economic versus sustainability. How do the assumptions of Northwest businesses competing in a global market sit with reducing CO² and the impact of increasing scarcity of oil and gas?”*
- *Assumption 6 – potential conflict with carbon reduction assumption in assumption 3.*
- *That increasing integration also forms a tension with assumption 8 around the need to up-skill our existing population, “distinct danger that those currently disadvantaged will be even more so with international talent available”*

...and several respondents felt that we will need to think through whether the current recession is actually likely to reduce NW economic integration / global role over the lifetime of the strategy.

- Mentioned by 9 respondents: e.g. “should not assume that there will be increasing integration into the European and wider world economies. The recession will encourage localism and the future economic times are uncertain.”

There were comments supplementing the assertion that Cities/Large Towns will remain a major focus for living, economic activity, and growth...

- “Smaller towns and neighbourhoods have an important role in contributing to the delivery of economic growth.”
- “different places across the region will support the region’s growth in differing and complementary ways”
- “Need to ensure that the focus on cities and large towns results in a sustainable network of vibrant towns and cities which achieve sustainable and equitable social, economic and environmental well-being. The objective should be to establish a degree of self-containment within sustainable catchments in terms of jobs and facilities”

...respondents felt that this assumption in particular did not properly consider the needs and potential of rural areas...

- Mentioned by 9 respondents: e.g. “need an assumption about rural land-use becoming increasingly important in delivering priorities and services like food and energy, leisure and recreation and ecosystem services such as climate change adaptation, flood and water management, biodiversity and habitats”; and “assumptions do not adequately reflect the need to strengthen infrastructure across all communities including rural areas”.
- “The assumption understates the role of rural areas in providing places for people to live and work. Lack of services drives people to live in cities/towns – investment in services in rural areas will reduce this need and the impact on ageing infrastructure.”

...although some welcomed the opportunity this assumption gave for a focus on housing and infrastructure.

- “provides opportunity for increasing the deployment of combined heat & power facilities, and other forms of decentralised energy generation”
- “rural areas are likely to come under increasing pressure for new development to provide for people migrating out of towns/cities”

Respondents agreed with assumptions about scarcity and price rises/instability of energy supplies and natural resources, adding comments around several areas including need to secure energy supply, nuclear power, and water resources...

- “Need an assumption around energy supply and security of supply which will become increasingly important over the next 10 – 15 years. Nuclear power and its future role in providing a secure, balanced energy supply will be vital.”
- “the particular urgency in relation to water resources should be noted, given that the Sustainability Appraisal notes the likelihood of shortages in some parts of the region as early as 2014.”

... and there was recognition of the need to consider both the quantity and quality of the region’s natural resources inclusive of concepts of protection and enhancement, particularly of biodiversity and landscape.

- *“need to make reference to quality as well as quantity of natural resources, importance of the management of the natural environment overall, and the marine environment.”*

Respondents recognised the increasing importance of ICT technology, but one or two also warned of risks of growth in a digital society...

- Mentioned by 8 respondents: e.g. *“this is one of the most fundamental drivers of productivity and international competitiveness across the whole of the industry base which will transform industry –its processes, technologies, business models, markets, products etc and will be a major facilitator of the recovery from the recession into a more resilient and sustainable economic base”*
- *“we agree that ICT technology will become increasingly important, but must not be at the expense of those who have neither the access nor the skills to make use of the internet, and need to make sure that rural areas are not made more remote, older people aren’t faced with a growing digital divide and workers are fully trained to realise the benefits of ICT.”*

Many respondents pointed out that the set of assumptions needed to be stronger in their reflection of income inequality, poor health outcomes, deprivation, and housing...

- *“Inequalities (in terms of income, wealth, transport, health, access to services, opportunity, etc) and community cohesion will continue to get worse unless more effective action is taken to narrow them.”*
- *“unless successfully addressed health inequalities in the North West will continue to grow and will undermine the capacity of many communities to prosper.”*
- *“All the assumptions made connect strongly in different ways to the broad determinants of health. We would wish to see this spelt out so that health and wellbeing as a fundamental issue becomes more visible. For example, no 6 on transport affects wellbeing in terms of access to work, experience of pollution and stress, and social isolation.”*
- *“need to add an assumption about the on-going impacts of high levels of deprivation” ... “and the need to continue delivering regeneration in the most deprived communities”*
- *“need to add an assumption about the high levels of poor quality housing” and “even with growth and new supply the future housing stock will be made up predominantly of the existing stock.”*

There were differing opinions on likelihood of declining inward migration...

- 6 respondents felt that overall the region might experience greater inward migration for example as a result of climate change or political instability in other parts of the world; 1 respondent pointed out that what may be the likely outturn for the region as a whole may be very different in particular places of high housing demand.

... and several calls for an additional assumption about the impact of the ageing population, household size changes, and falling birth rate.

- 5 respondents raised points including the expected pressure on health and social care services; the opportunity for older workers to contribute economically and social; and the need for facilities and space for recreation.
- *“need to add an assumption about increasing household numbers”*

Governance and implementation of the RS was suggested by respondents as an area for an additional assumption...

- *“public funding will be more constrained in the years ahead there is likely to be a greater focus on value for money and the return obtained from investment. This*

needs to be factored in to make sure RS2010 is realistic and that increased importance is attached to taking tough decisions. Constraints on consumer spending and private sector led investment is likely to be more restricted, therefore strategic planning will need to take account of market forces.”

- *“the public sector will increasingly become ‘an enabler’ and commissioner of services which will increasingly be provided by the third and private sectors.”*
- *“population will expect higher levels of service which will put demands on public purse”*

Question C – Do you agree that the focus of this strategy should be on sustainable economic growth and contribute to sustainable development?

This question raised a significant amount of interest, with the debate centring on the primacy or otherwise of sustainable economic growth. Overall, the majority of comments are supportive of the suggested approach, as outlined in the Government’s guidance on the aim of Regional Strategies...

- *“Agree with the approach, as it is in line with the Government’s national policy on regional strategies that highlights the intended outcome as sustainable economic growth. The Strategy should set out the vision and framework to raise prosperity levels in order to improve the quality of people’s lives whilst protecting and enhancing the environment.”*
- *“Agree with the focus, it is important to move to a production model where economic growth and environmental sustainability are not contradictory, and indeed are complementary.”*
- *“Strategy must ensure high value economic activity is retained for the benefit of the region.”*

There was a sizeable group arguing that sustainable development should be the focus of the strategy, with sustainable economic growth just one facet of an integrated approach...

- *“As it is an ‘integrated’ strategy sustainable economic development must be recognised as just one aspect of the bigger picture.”*
- *“To promote sustainable development, economic growth should be seen as a significant contributor together with social wellbeing and environmental priorities.”*
- *“Generally in agreement although the focus should be upon sustainable development since economic growth is an inherently integrated component of that concept.”*
- *“This difference in emphasis is very important. Quality of the economy, society and environment is more important than quantity.”*
- *“In general agreement but of the opinion that sustainability is far more important than growth.”*

What this means in practice is that...

The UK’s Principles of Sustainable Development need to be considered:

- *“The strategy should fully encompass all five principles of sustainable development (UK’s Principles of Sustainable Development). As a minimum, outlining a regional framework for all five principles of sustainable development not just sustainable economic growth”*
- *“The aims/goals (paragraph 5.2) of the Paper should be grouped into the UK’s Guiding Principles of Sustainable Development, and this should take the focus of the strategy.”*

Any growth needs to be responsible / equitable:

- *“Any growth needs to be responsible (equitable) as well as sustainable”*
- *“Increasing inequality between the highest and lowest paid in the region does not contribute to sustainable economic or environmental development, and this must change if we are to be successful.”*
- *“Need to concentrate on reducing or at least constraining poverty, as it will undermine all the other objectives and climate change will hit the poorest hardest.”*
- *“Sustainable development should be the focus, but taking its wider definition including social inclusion and sustainable communities”*

- *“If full inclusion is not achieved in the benefits set out, we will merely widen the gaps that already exist in society.”*
- *“Issues of a social nature have been significantly under-prioritised. Improved social wellbeing is not merely a side effect of economic activity but often a necessary pre-requisite.”*
- *“Sustainability should not be interpreted in too restrictive a manner. Sustainability needs to be seen in the wider UK context of preventing drift to Greater London and the South East which would pose much greater sustainability issues, not just on transport but in terms of the wider impact on public services, and the brain drain from the North of England.”*
- *“The creation of a more equal society founded on social inclusion and the celebration of diversity.”*

Achieving Sustainable Economic Growth needs to be spatial:

- *“Growth needs to be driven by a strong spatial element, playing to the strengths of areas”*
- *“Don’t lose the opportunity to reflect place shaping agenda while prioritising SEG”*
- *“Should secure sustainable development emphasising the distinctiveness of place and people.”*
- *“In order to deliver the sustainable and effective interventions designed to improve economic performance a deep understanding of communities is required.”*
- *“Generally agree with the focus. Although...recognise the desire for and importance of distinctive and high quality places in which to live. Place quality is of key importance and should be high in any list of priorities since it is fundamental to the ability of any place to attract talented people, and it is people that create and lead communities, economies, and institutions.”*
- *“Address areas of need both spatially and thematically. A low-carbon economy is not cheap.”*
- *“Overarching priority is to underpin the social sustainability of the region’s communities in both its urban and its rural areas.”*
- *“The value (in the widest sense) of the natural and historic environments needs to be better acknowledged, these are wide-ranging, including not only the obvious ones such as the economic benefits of a unique tourist resource, but also the increasingly understood wider therapeutic health benefits of access to open spaces and the wider countryside. “*

Sustainable Economic Growth needs to take account of environmental limits:

- *“Adopt the principle of no net loss of critical environmental capital”*
- *“Utilise a number of approaches in relation to the natural environment. For example the concept of Ecosystem Services and the ability to supply water and absorb waste water discharges without environmental harm should be central to ‘living within environmental limits’. A full understanding of biodiversity, landscape, the marine environment, sustainable land-use and the contribution that the ‘green infrastructure’ can make, should underpin strategic approaches to environmental enhancement.”*

There were many calls for more definition to key terms:

- *“Sustainable economic growth, sustainable development and sustainability need to be defined far more clearly”*
- *“We need an understanding of how the success of the Strategy will be measured.”*

A significant point was made about the integration of health and well-being into our thinking:

- *The focus on sustainable growth is vital; but the debate on what is sustainable must be radical. Recent EU research on industrialised countries sees health and prosperity as mutually reinforcing and ‘provide a higher return from investing a given*

amount in both compared with investing the same amount in one or the other' This requires a policy culture and environment which is capable of addressing this complexity. 'The evidence demonstrates that countries that are now high income owe a large part of their current economic wealth to past achievements in health.'

Respondents to this question also suggested other goals (see also question D)

- *"Improve food security (adequate regional stockpiles) and a greatly increased local contribution to the food requirements of the region's population "*
- *"To achieve an ecological footprint of less than 1.0"*
- *"Prison population at/or below the EU average"*
- *"A low level of economic inequality"*

Question D – In the delivery of this, do you agree with the elements outlined above? Are there missing elements? How would you prioritise them?

Broad agreement to this section, with significant comment around prioritisation and further suggestions for addition.

- *“Individually the elements are all worthy aspirations.”*
- *“Elements reasonably comprehensive but not spatially distinctive for the NW”*
- *“GVA and wealth creation important but equally important is sustainable and equitable social, economic and environmental well-being”*
- *“Elements are comprehensive but difficult to prioritise due to their inter-related nature”*
- *“Good general wish list but could be applied to any area of Europe. For these goals to have any meaning they must be placed in a context and made identifiably Northwest England”*

A number of respondents commented on the inter-dependence or possibility of grouping many of the suggested potential goals...

- *“Recommend a balanced scorecard approach, with economic, environmental and social elements grouped and given equal weighting, alongside a fourth block that would prioritise and monitor the region’s performance towards a genuinely low-carbon economy.”*
- Suggests grouping elements together under economic, social and environmental banners and applying equal weight to each group
- Skills & Talent and Connectivity may be more helpfully defined as cross-cutting issues which support the other themes

Several respondents commented that this section needed to be more clearly linked to the goals of places...

- *“the aims/goals do not include sufficient recognition of the desire for and importance of distinctive and high quality places in which to live.”*
- *“Reference is lacking to the complementary role that different places play within the region in helping to achieve these goals “*
- *“Investing in distinctive areas and distinctiveness of place, building pride in the ‘sense of place’ “*

Respondents contributed more clarity about definitions and the form of words used particularly on environmental objectives...

- *“Reduce vulnerability and develop resilience to climate change, both in the natural environment and among all sectors of the community – industry, farming, residential, commercial, tourism etc - to a range of possible impacts including flooding, heat waves, extreme weather events and sea level rise. Protect carbon stores such as peatlands”.*
- Improve image of NW as a place to live, work, study, visit and invest, through conservation-led regeneration, addressing dereliction of land and buildings, and focusing on environmental, heritage and cultural asset. Aspiration – be seen to set high standards.
- Sustainable & prudent management of land and natural resources and that this is properly planned for public benefit – this is not really covered in no. 6 or 11 but will be vital to prevent default and ad hoc reactions to pressure on land. Needs to be a greater awareness of the links between, eg, landscape, biodiversity, soil, food production, water management, carbon management, recreation etc in the face of increasing and competing pressures on land use. In this context the role of agriculture in the landscape is fundamental to the future of the NW, but that role is changing and needs to be managed through that change.

- *“To engage, raise awareness, inform, motivate and inspire the people and businesses of the NW to effect a cultural and social change in attitudes and behaviour towards resource demand/usage and the value of our natural environment.”*

There were a range of specific other additions to Goals proposed:

- **Transport:** *“A robust land-use strategy is required to ensure a strong relationship between places and key services, and in turn reduce pressure on the transport network through a reduced need to travel particularly by car. Therefore there needs to be reference to transport & accessibility implications of land use policy as a challenge. There needs to be a focus of development in sustainable development locations (cities/large towns first) supported by traffic demand management.”*
- **Health:** *“We suggest posing this as ‘health and wellbeing’ in order to include mental health and other less tangible social determinants beyond simple absence of ill health.”*
- **Business Environment:** *“A place where internationally recognised and competitive businesses can locate and where their needs are met particularly those in sectors where the region has comparative advantage”*
- **Food:** *“the North West to be self sufficient in terms of food / or even a net exporter”*
- **Energy:** *“Securing long term energy security and low carbon energy production”*
- **Visitor Economy:** *“a more imaginative and more sustainable tourism offer.”*
- **Place:** *“creating vibrant, sustainable places for people to live, work and play”*
- **Services:** *“Good, equitable, accessibility to local services and facilities”*
- **Climate change resilience:** *“A region resilient and well-adapted to climate change”*
- **Health and Well-Being:** *“Health issues need to be better reflected”*
- **Inequality:** *“Need a stronger emphasis on raising aspiration and reducing inequalities”; “Need to ensure equality for all in the elements”*
- **Built heritage assets:** *“specifically address the historic environment”*
- **Built Environment:** *“Need a commitment to good quality design including energy efficiency”*
- **Social cohesion:** *“creating active and involved citizens and communities”*
- **Waste:** *“the North West deals with the waste it produces and achieves this in the most environmentally acceptable ways it can”*

Question E – How do you believe these aims / goals should be measured?

While a few felt that the ultimate aims/goals would be difficult to measure, the large majority of respondents agreed with the concept of measuring and assessing achievement of the strategy. Some warned that care should be taken to avoid the introduction of any new monitoring/reporting burdens or duplication.

The majority agreed with the approach of combining Gross Value Added with a set of more effective social, environmental, equality, business and place – oriented measurements:

- *“Agree that GVA is an important indicator to measure economic performance and levels of wealth creation. Also agree that the strategy must not only be about generating economic success but about achieving sustainable and equitable social economic and environmental well-being. “*
- *“Welcome the 13 broad definitions/indicators identified. The focus of these will help to ensure measurement is wider than that of hard outputs and outcomes associated with GVA measurement as they will capture harder to quantify soft outputs/outcomes.”*
- *“The aims and goals should not be measured purely in economic terms but also in terms of contribution to quality of life.”*
- *“Need to incorporate overarching sustainability indicators which could include an index of carbon emissions against GVA to measure progress towards a low carbon economy”*
- *“GVA alone is a poor proxy and an inadequate measure of the region’s ambitions. Other, more rounded measures have been developed, for example, the Index of Sustainable Economic Wellbeing, and recommend that this be used as a starting point for establishing a more sophisticated and meaningful approach.”*
- *“A measure of wealth and asset inequalities (across Socio-Economic Group, gender, geography, and ethnic background) within the North West would be an appropriate focus, and would consequentially contribute to the Environmental and Social aims outlined. “*
- *“Work with businesses to find a way to measure the ‘human capital’ within their business, where CPD and training is seen as investment and could be reflected on a balance sheet”*

Respondents felt the Regional Strategy should have a set of headline measures against outcomes

- *“Outcomes rather than specific goals be targeted - these should have achievable milestones within ambitious and achievable timescales”*
- *“There should be greater emphasis on defined outcomes e.g. reductions in inequality rather than specific targets “*
- *“Support the idea of a framework of principles for investment decisions”*

Many respondents made the point that existing targets and indicators must be utilised where suitable:

- *“Suggest that this could be achieved through the use of existing data sets and indicators such as the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, PSA targets, and Public Health indicators. “*
- *“Suggest using the Index of Sustainable Economic Wellbeing and the Environmental Quality Index tool as a way to measure quality of life”*
- *“Work for the EU Lisbon Agenda sets out some possible benchmarks - For example as a minimum the RS2010 should adopt the current key targets such as for R&D (3% of GDP) and employment (70% of EU working age population in employment, 60% for women, and 50% for older workers)”*

Certain outcome measures were highlighted as important several times, including:

- *“Include outcome measures for health and wellbeing and health inequalities (drawn from National Health Inequalities Review), and targets for reducing health inequalities. “*
- *“Keen to extend measure of health and wellbeing beyond mortality and morbidity.”*
- *“Measurement of positive outcomes should be included rather than measures of place through deprivation.”*
- *“Measures that demonstrate joined up working and quality of life. “*
- *“Measures that assess whether the Strategy has resulted in increased or decreased inequalities“*

A significant number of data indicators were suggested; listed in Appendix 1. We suggest these all go forward to an annual data indicators report compiled by the NW Regional Intelligence Unit.

Section 6: The role of the Northwest – what makes the region unique?

Question F: Do you agree that these elements adequately summarise the Northwest's unique offer in a world economy? Are there any current or future potential elements missing?

Question G: Do you disagree with any of these statements?

Question H: Do you believe these elements will still be unique about the Northwest in 20 years time?

The majority of respondents agreed with the concept of establishing a set of strengths and assets which together make up the Northwest's sense of place and contribution.

Many respondents reacted negatively to the use of the word unique, stating that individual elements were certainly special to the Northwest, and very often not found combined in other places, but that 'unique' was too rigorous.

There was a feeling that this set of assets was in the main correct.

- *“Yes: need more dynamic and stronger terms to present region.”*

Many comments focused on additional specifics to be highlighted:

Most prominent of these was tourism and the visitor economy...

- *Lake District won best holiday destination in the UK at British Travel Awards 08 it is the only complete National Park in NW and candidate for World Heritage Site status.*
- *Tourism offer both urban and rural; Art and Culture; Sport (Grand National; Golf); World Heritage Sites; International facilities at Manchester Airport and Port of Liverpool*

Similarly the industrial, cultural, innovation heritage of the Northwest ...

- *“Greater emphasis on region's diverse natural cultural and heritage”*
- *“Industrial Heritage- no other area has same heritage and same firsts as NW”*
- *“Historic environment important asset”*
- *“Built environment and architecture in terms of strong industrial heritage”*
- *“Music, art, fashion, capital of culture, WHS, heritage, film, broadcasting”*
- *“Regions innate connection with strong global successful companies and brands should also be reflected.”*
- *“A need to highlight enterprise and enterprise culture... as a long term strategy and it should cover education, communities and the workforce.”*

And a sense that the list omitted some more economic, resources, and sectoral strengths ...

- *“Current skilled workforce not emphasised enough”*
- *“Greater focus on exploiting higher education base as unique selling point and in relation to driving innovation and business competitiveness”*
- *“The capacity of the region's Health and Wellbeing industries to drive future enterprise, innovation, investment, R&D, skills development, employment, energy use, land use, transport generation, equality and diversity, basic skills, and local procurement are missed. This requires a paradigm shift in understanding of the social, environmental and economic value of the regions largest 'cluster' - wellbeing.”*
- *“Misses out farming assets”*
- *“NW major maritime player in a unique position”*

- *“Media city UK- BBC move north.”*
- *“Sport makes a unique contribution and hugely important to regions image and profile; home to international brands and strong sporting infrastructure. Future potential to develop region as a major (national and international) hub for sporting broadcasting.”*
- *“Expertise in specific sectors eg. Biomedical makes region unique”*
- *“Renewables- tidal one of highest potential capabilities in EU”*
- *“Stronger focus on NWs people”*
- *“Welcoming place to live work and invest”*
- *“Concentration of academia, science, culture and health”*
- *“The significant social and economic contribution that the region’s diverse communities offer.”*
- *“Elements focus on historical strengths should ensure focus on future strengths that will make the region unique.”*
- *“There is a unique concentration of academia, science, culture and health”*

Question I – Do you agree with the challenges outlined above for the Northwest over the coming 20 years? Are there any missing?

The consultation responses reveal significant support for the comprehensiveness and descriptions of the region’s challenges outlined in Section 7:

- *“Identified challenges are persistent and well documented but vary across the region.”*
- *“Broadly agree with the challenges”*
- *“Agree with all the challenges outlined”*
- *“Agree with the 15 challenges.”*
- *“Many of the challenges also represent opportunities”*
- *“Note the exacerbating influence of the recession on many of the challenges”*

Many respondents made additional points regarding ill-health, highlighting this as a key challenge facing the North West...

- *“health inequalities are the major problem we face not just health problems in general”*
- *“health inequalities are one of the largest challenges to overcome.”*
- *“mental health is becoming an increasingly bigger issue”*

...and reinforced the identified challenge of demographic change:

- *“the consequences of an ageing population will be a further challenge”*

Several respondents pointed out that flooding should not be seen as being sole impact associated with climate change....

- *“seems to suggest that flooding is the most serious climate change issue, although increased temperatures will have impacts in other ways on the landscape ecosystems and biodiversity.”*
- *“Risks to markets and sectors of global climate change should be widened to cover increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather and hotter, drier summers impact upon urban and rural environments”*

Respondents felt that aspects of the housing agenda were under-represented:

- *“it will be important to ensure that good quality houses are available to meet the needs of highly skilled individuals”*
- *“Retrofitting existing housing stock should be a huge priority for the region”*

Other specific challenges were referenced:

- **Early Educational Attainment:** *“skills development starts with early years education and this should be the focus of intervention. Trying to build skills later on is significantly harder when the capacity to learn has not been built early on.”*
- **Low Carbon Transport:** *“the challenge must be to achieve low carbon solutions to these transport problems and to provide people of the region with efficient, integrated affordable sustainable transport”*
- **Minimising Waste:** *“challenge is in terms of reducing consumption in the region to stop waste production in the first instance”*
- **Rural areas:** *“Greater consideration of rural challenges should be made including lack of affordable housing; infrastructure inadequacies, poor ICT capacity and speed; high cost and lack of provision of public transport; deteriorating levels of service provision”*
- **Food Security:** *“Food security is a key challenge that is missing from Section 7”*
- **Crime:** *“There is no mention of crime and the fear of crime”*
- **Fuel Poverty:** *“that the NW has the largest number of households living in fuel poverty in England”*

- **Enterprise Culture:** *“A need to highlight enterprise and enterprise culture, ... as a long term strategy and it should cover education, communities and the workforce.”*

Question J: Do you agree that the list of major issues for the region to address via the Regional Strategy are correct and will lead to sustainable and equitable economic, social and environmental wellbeing? Are there any issues you would remove? Are there any issues missing from your perspective? How would you prioritise these issues?

Question K : Do you agree with the assertions made in these issues? Have you got any specific comments on the issues raised or the inter-relationships between them?

The predominant response to this section was that it satisfactorily outlined the themes that the Regional Strategy will have to address.

Most commented area was Connectivity, particularly with reference to specific proposals:

- *“Need to emphasise the importance of developing faster public transport links between Liverpool and Manchester to enhance the agglomeration benefits between the two cities that this would provide”*
- *“Make dramatic changes to transport and planning policies to favour walking, cycling and public transport over the private car. “*
- *“First class integrated public transport system with rail at its core”*
- *“Inland waterways widen travel choices, providing cycling, walking, water-based public transport and green routes; connecting the conurbations with market towns and rural areas, and can carry digital cabling to enhance connectivity.”*
- *“The North West Regional Strategy needs to take into account accessibility issues across the wider travel to work areas which span the borders in order to maximise opportunities for investment, skills development, job opportunities and tourism.”*

... and with reference to Digital Connectivity

- *“Digital Connectivity is not given high enough profile and should be an issue in its own right”*

Comment was received on Issue 2: Urban Growth, with majority acceptance of the concept of cities and towns driving growth, with the caveat that adjacent areas must benefit from this growth to reduce economic, social and environmental inequalities, and that there should be a corresponding recognition of the role played by small towns / villages as service centres.

- *“Harness the complementary growth of the Liverpool and Manchester City Regions with both cities being recognised as of equal importance to the NW. “*
- *“In particular, welcome a focus on opportunities afforded through the Manchester-Warrington-Liverpool economic corridor.”*
- *“The paper strongly focuses on city regions and does not sufficiently accommodate new governance models such as Multi Area Agreements (MAAs).”*

Inter-relationships between issues matter, in particular the universal nature of Climate Change...

- *“Much of Places and Communities is inherently linked to Urban Growth which covers more diverse locations than the two major city regions and in turn will serve to safeguard Natural Environment and Rural Areas.”*
- *“Link health and the environment movement and low carbon/resource efficiency”*
- *“Health and Worklessness cannot be seen in isolation from other issues particularly skills nor can they be decoupled from Place.”*
- *“There could be some more creative analysis of possible future win-win data exposition for policy making. For instance a ‘modal shift’ from car transport to cycling and walking, although requiring a new prioritisation from the Regional Transport*

Strategy for 'Cycling and Walking Infrastructure' would have a potentially significant impact on transport, sustainability, health and energy strategy. Making visible such economic impact data would allow discussions of 'collaborative advantage' and provide a platform for a truly future orientated RS."

- *"Focus should be more on Green Infrastructure in terms of its role in adaptation to climate change"*

Strengthening of some areas was proposed, in particular:

Rural

- *"Need to rural proof all policies"*
- *"Rural and natural environment should not be lumped together: there is natural environment in urban areas and rural areas are more than just the natural environment"*
- *"Value of high quality natural environment to urban residents and impact on image and perceptions of the region."*

Places

- *"There is no mention of smaller urban areas in issue 2 on urban growth."*
- *"Lack of reference to visitor economy & coastal areas"*
- *"Understanding different roles and relationships will be essential in ensuring sustainable complementary growth rather than competitive."*
- *"Recognise how the natural and built environment acts as a driver for economic growth."*

People

- *"Further consideration of social and demographic trends"*
- *"Ageing population as a major concern – should cut across all issues"*
- *"Need to invest more in women"*
- *"Need to understand / emphasise role of voluntary and community services"*
- *"Informal adult learning provision must be recognised for the contribution it makes"*
- *"Increased consideration required of children, young people and pre 19 education given their critical contribution to the workforce and society in the future"*
- *"Particular focus on high-level skills and basic skills."*
- *"Need to tackle low aspirations and attainment amongst young people."*
- *"Older people should be valued as a resource and the view that older people are a burden challenged. "*
- *"Reference the leadership and new business model offered by the social enterprise sector. Social enterprises can inform and influence mainstream commercial businesses by helping them do business in new markets and new ways."*
- *"The Principles and Issues Paper does indicate that "people must be at the heart of our Regional Strategy....." but does not bring out the importance of stimulating each individual's enterprising capabilities and the need for this to be a lifelong journey from school to adulthood."*
- *"We feel that realising the regional health dividend should be a key issue/priority for the region: improving population health and eradicating inequalities in health have the capacity to generate a (minimum) £2bn dividend, arising from reductions in health and social care/welfare system costs, improved workforce capacity and improved labour market productivity."*
- *"Children's issues would benefit from a separate analysis"*
- *"Explicit mention of jobs and health gains created through new low carbon/green economic activity"*

This response reinforces these points:

“People in the NW are the only resource to make any strategy happen, so the IRS must explicitly put investment in the population at its core. Health is not a by-product of prosperity. The strategy must address the reduction of health inequalities and use better measures of health status than life expectancy. Issues of housing, transport and the built environment are key to this. There should be a stronger focus on children’s health and wellbeing (this involves parents too), building health and wellbeing by investing in young people and in education. Industries for the future that are life enhancing and have a positive impact on health and wellbeing and on health and social care must be included. Social and cultural aspirations need to change and this is linked to health and wellbeing in terms of the confidence of the population.”

Housing

- *“The ongoing need to continue the regeneration of the HMR Pathfinders as referred to in the recently published Regional Housing Strategy”*
- *“Reference the significant amount of older housing stock that is in poor condition. Improvements to the existing housing stock will help to reduce the region’s carbon footprint and contribution to health improvements.”*
- *“RS2010 to enable delivery of the housing Growth Points.”*
- *“RS2010 to enable delivery of new homes, both affordable and aspirational, and a wide mix in-between.”*
- *“Prioritise resources to complete regeneration and housing investment programmes.”*
- *“Use planning system to create a health dividend from developments.”*

Resource Use

- *“Issue 1 should also refer to the role of hydro schemes tidal and undersea currents and biomass”*
- *“Need to influence national and international decisions related to the nuclear industry. “*

Public Sector Role

- *“Help the region and its city regions maximise economic growth, social justice and environmental sustainability in a way which meets the key challenges of the early 21st century. “*
- *“Would like to see social enterprise positioned at the heart of the sustainable development agenda through both policy and practice. Social enterprises deliver value-led procurement methods which increase social, economic and environmental value in local authority areas; constructively contribute to increasing skills, access to opportunity, and addressing worklessness.”*
- *“Address barriers to integrated, collaborative working and delivery.”*
- *“Public sector procurement could be a major tool for integrated actions supporting the regional offer. “*

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

List of indicators suggested in response to section 5 of the Principles and Issues Paper: Ultimate Aims / Goals.

- Wage Rates
- Economic Activity Rates
- Economic impact/value of visitor spend
- Business profitability and productivity
- Quality of life indicators
- Visitor satisfaction
- Quality Environmental accreditation
- CO2 emission reductions
- annual levels of inward investment
- annual levels of inward migration
- annual levels of outward migration
- annual levels of student retention
- house prices
- the increase in local communities living standards in the poorest part of the region
- retention of companies and jobs in the region
- GVA/Productivity
- Carbon reduction
- % of low carbon technology
- Market energy generation
- Conventional and alternative percentages of inward investment
- Export employment rates
- Health indicators
- Education attainment
- Retention of young people in the region
- Human Development Index
- Gini coefficient
- Ecological footprint
- Embodied carbon/mean food miles in a representative food basket
- Crime levels/incarceration levels
- Adult functional literacy rates
- Mortality rates
- Economic activity rates
- Population change
- Value and volume of housing developments completed
- effective communications between partners and interested parties
- LAAs and MAAS have already adopted targets from the National Indicator Set it would be sensible to take account of these and consider what should be measured at what spatial level.
- The Index of Sustainable Economic Wellbeing and the Environmental Quality Index tool.
- Sustainable development can be measured through achievement of a specific level within the Code for Sustainable Homes or the Zero Carbon Homes requirements to be implemented in 2016.
- The Happy Planet Index – www.happyplanetindex.org.
- The majority of businesses in rural areas are micro small or medium size businesses so other indicators which could be used include the Happiness at Work Index-

www.arboraglobal.com/documents/happiness%20at%20Work%20Index%202007.pdf

- Woodland Trust's 'Woodland Access Standards' be included as an indicator in the new strategy to help measure the benefits of green infrastructure and of woodland in particular.
- There should be greater emphasis on defined outcomes e.g. reductions in education inequality rather than specific targets.
- The future of the EU Lisbon Agenda post 2010 is being discussed and discussions concerning targets and how they can be measured. It would be useful to follow this debate to see if similar targets can be used in the region to assist in also benchmarking progress against the EU average. For example as a minimum the RS2010 should adopt the current key targets such as for R&D (3% of GDP) and employment (70% of EU working age population in employment 60% for women and 50% for older workers).
- Investment levels should also be measured as this can often be difficult to capture including public as well as private investment levels
- Believe that goals need to be broken down into specific and identifiable issues. So for example Goal 1 is to improve health. This is best measured and monitored by identifying the specific issues of poor health within the region (eg smoking levels in locations a b c; levels of heart disease in locations d e f etc) and measuring improvements there rather than trying to create any universal indicators.
- The goals/aims can be best measured by recording the amount of in-migration and out-migration into and out of the region on a daily basis for work purposes. They can also be measured by analysing the population growth/decline over time via the census.
- The Regional Strategy should include some degree of area specific measurement. In this way the approach is very much one of value added not overall comparative performance.
- Progress towards meeting good ecological status as required by the Water Framework Directive.
- Active & Involved Citizens and Communities should be measured using two LAA indicators in the national indicator set these are: - NI6 Participation in regular volunteering and NI7 Creating an Environment for a Thriving Third Sector. In addition recommend that the size of the third sector or the social enterprise sector could be used as a proxy measure of social capital.
- The indicators developed for monitoring the implementation of the Regional Spatial Strategy and the Regional Economic Strategy will be a starting point. There will also be advantages in ensuring linkage between regional sub-regional (e.g. MAAs) and local indicators (e.g. local economic assessments and LAAs). There are three areas where Government will set clear expectations: economic outcomes: to show progress towards Regional Economic Performance Public Service Agreement; housing outcomes: to test housing supply figures derived from National Housing and Planning Advice Unit recommendations; climate change: how the Strategy contributes towards delivering the UK's climate change target. It will be for the region to ensure that the range of indicators reflects the ambitions around economic social and environmental outcomes. It may be useful to draw on complementary indicators such as the Regional Index of Sustainable Wellbeing.
- Recommend amalgamation of measures gathered by existing bodies reporting on economic measures, health measures, quality of life measures and educational measures that together identify results for productivity investment employment / unemployment spend in the area, educational achievement inward investment including visitor economy (business and tourism health issues /

improvements and the success (or otherwise) of access to services via including the public transport system.

- An index of carbon emissions against GVA to measure progress towards a low carbon economy.
- There are already accepted indicators for many of the areas mentioned e.g. targets on carbon emissions biodiversity indicators and national programmes such as Eco-Schools, Green Flag Quality Coast Award which could be used as indicators. Contribution to international targets for example the Natura 2000 network might also form a basis for measuring performance. The NWCF is working with European partners to develop a new European sustainability indicator for coastal areas.
- GVA does not reflect an accurate measure of success by not recognising the significant input of those working in part-time and flexible ways and increasingly with a diverse and ageing population flexible approaches to employment enterprise learning and development and retirement will be critical.
- ENCAMS (Keep Britain Tidy) have developed and undertaken the national survey for government on Local Environmental Quality which can be used to measure aim 12. . ENCAMS (Keep Britain Tidy) manage many quality systems and programmes nationally and regionally would be keen to discuss to integrate into the measurement of aims 10 11 and 12. These include Eco Schools, Green Flag, Blue Flag and Quality Coast Awards.
- Life expectancy
- NVQ attainment
- VAT registered businesses
- Using existing measures does not always have the desired outcomes for example measuring skills purely in terms of NVQs excludes much valuable activity which does not fit within the NVQ structure.
- Gross Value Added (or other appropriate measure of value)
- Economic activity rates (i.e. numbers employed rather than unemployed!)
- Population growth and structure / change at local and regional levels.
- Investment values in business and other regional developments
- Skills / Qualifications achieved
- Property / rental values
- Value of goods /services exported
- Value and volume of housing developments started and completed.
- Measure and report CO₂, local air pollutants; but also need to reflect the outcomes that are built into LAAs and MAAs
- Sustainable Growth needs to think about relationship / global economy will be measured by social impacts, not just GVA. Community Cohesion
- Health and Well-being - Quality of Life
- Reduction in Child Poverty/Worklessness/Reducing dependency - Independent lives
- Measuring social return on investment (SROI). Conventional financial returns do not capture the social and environmental benefits of projects and programmes. As new methods of investment are developed from outcome-related grants to social investment and venture philanthropy, where the risks and rewards of investment are new and uncharted, new ways to capture the returns are needed - and hence enable these new forms of investment to develop. Things to consider when measuring aims/goals are:
 - Sustainability and community
 - Economics in generating money - must be sustainable
 - Social well-being-Social impact – paramount
 - Family life – paramount
 - Quality of life
 - Work-life balance

- The need to encourage a 'community spirit' which, due in part to successive policies and legislation, has waned or been lost entirely. The Government recognises this important ingredient as a driver, as demonstrated in various White Papers (Strong and Prosperous; Communities in Control)
- Greenhouse gas emissions – crucial measure, tied to national targets & five year carbon budgets
- Need to build on the existing Index of Sustainable Economic Wellbeing as a good first step towards developing a more rounded indicator of wellbeing. NW performs much better under a holistic system of measurement than on GVA alone. GVA is not a good proxy for human wellbeing.
- Current RSS policy / target: “no net loss of resources” should be retained
- Ecosystem services – need to develop the evidence base. Explicitly recognise environmental capacity (ie the capacity of environment to deliver benefits, goods & services) and how it changes over time. Any change to the environment will change its capacity to deliver these and other benefits, in either direction (damage or enhancement).
- The extent to which scores (for policies, programmes, projects, etc) are improved over time using the NW Integrated Appraisal Toolkit and Sustainability Checklist for Developments would be a good indicator of progress towards sustainability.
- The Environmental Quality Index Tool and the Public Benefit Recording System link environmental, social and economic inequalities to give a more rounded picture.
- World Health Organisation indicators could be adopted / adapted
- Access to the natural environment (Natural England have an “Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard ”and the Woodland Trust have a complementary “Access to Woodland Standard”
- Customer satisfaction – ie do people like living in the NW?
- Number of empty properties – to encourage re-use rather than new build;
- On measuring biodiversity - need to extend beyond measures which relate to single sites e.g. in addition to Favourable Conservation Status of SPAs/SACs or condition of SSSIs need to include measures that assess biodiversity in the wider countryside and in urban areas. These may include Biodiversity Action Plan targets and indicators for woodland, farmland and wetland birds which provide an indication of the state of our environment. Wildlife and Countryside Link’s assessments of progress towards halting biodiversity loss by 2010 are helpful.
- Existing air/water quality targets etc; Water Framework Directive, Good Ecological Status of the region’s water bodies
- Change in landscape character, eg as defined in the regional landscape character framework, or through Natural England’s “Tracking Change in Landscape Character” methodology. NE’s recent work on the High Fells character area adaptation study may also be transferable.
 - Heritage - there are several indicators that could be used, eg Assets At Risk, jobs in the heritage sector, contribution to GVA. See the Economic Impact of Heritage report.
 - A measure of wealth and asset inequalities (across Socio-Economic Group, gender, geography, and ethnic background) within the North West would be an appropriate focus, and would consequentially contribute to the Environmental and Social aims outlined.
 - Data around crime should be assessed.
 - Projections on supply, need and demand from the regional needs assessment model for supported housing developed by RSGHSG & NWSPSG should be used.
 - An in-built longitudinal study running alongside it, looking at people and their progress through life (7 Up example), standard surveys over the long term,– as well as a basket of harder measures.

- Measure issues like pride in place, happiness, hope and the ability to create a 'hope-o-meter' that would consistently give a benchmark for these factors.
- A measure for vibrancy. Here an indicator could be business survival rates in these areas together with a measure to reflect inward and outward migration particularly among the younger age groups.
- Communities and places: . Number of active parish (community lead) plans - these bring communities together and help them take ownership of their community locality; . Thriving 3rd sector -Increased volunteering, active scouts, guides, Wi, etc; Reduction in crime; Reduction in teenage pregnancies; Improved alcohol abuse.
- Ecosystem services ecosystems assessment -various re natural resources
- Adaptation to climate opportunity/sensitivity to be developed through change mapping for on-shore wind energy and other renewable
- Regional vulnerability and climate change impact assessments
- Assessment of regional capacity for renewable/low carbon energy based on environmental limits
- Mapping regional carbon stores (woodlands, peatlands, coastal etc) and potential for maintaining carbon stores as well as sequestration.
- Landscape Character
- Landscape Character Assessment –landscape capacity and assessment
- Biodiversity
- Habs Regs Assessment-ensuring avoidance of adverse effects on European sites
- SSSI condition
- Regional biodiversity targets and their delivery plan
- Biodiversity Opportunities Map
- Green infrastructure Via GI strategies
- Develop sub-regional GI frameworks for all sub-application of Cumbria
- High Fells methodology to other Character Areas across the region
- Mapping regional carbon stores: Scoping study underway
- Regional Landscape Character Framework
- National & European sites
- Iterative HRA reports for RSS and in future RS2010
- SSSI condition monitoring
- LAA 197(management of local sites) monitoring (in future extent of new and/or enhanced GI created and manage within identified priority target areas)
- Economic value of the natural environment
- Health and enjoyment of the natural environment
- Marine
- Sustainable land use & transport
- Regions
- See Natural Economy North West (NENW) published info
- WHI schemes / adoption of ANGST/ other similar green space measures (green flag awards, accreditation schemes, quality standards etc) / quantity and quality of non-motorised access provision)
- Regional contribution to ecologically coherent, well managed Irish Sea & UK Marine Protected Area network
- Incorporation of measures to protect and recover marine environment and its wildlife incorporated into Marine Spatial Plans
- Capacity studies
- Take up of agrienvironmental schemes (within sub-regions) implementing GI Plans
- Contingent valuation techniques
- Initiatives and numbers of people benefitting from health related activity in the natural environment.

- Regional Access Mapping work
- Implementation of Rights Of Way Improvement Plans
- Marine Natura designation programme in NW completed
- New Marine Conservation Zones designated to complete MPA network
- Effective marine management in place to protect and recover marine ecosystem and ecosystem services
- MPA network well understood and supported by stakeholders and public Areas of land devoted to sustainable uses eg bio energy
- Brown field land re-use
- Green field land take resulting from new development
- Carbon emissions from transport
- HLS targeting system, with its regional sets of priority target areas and themes

In the context of energy and climate change issues other indicators should be developed:

- Carbon intensity of the economy - tonnes CO₂/GVA; tonnes CO₂/capita
- Total regional CO₂ emissions
- Total energy consumption MWh (by energy type)
- Total installed electricity generation MW (by fuel and proportion from CHP)
- Total electricity generation MWh (by primary fuel source)
- Carbon intensity of electricity generation tonnes CO₂/MWh

Appendix 2

List of additional pieces of evidence or references supplied for the Regional Strategy Evidence Base.

- <http://greendealmanchester.wordpress.com/>
- <http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file27442.pdf>
- http://www.nwriu.co.uk/aboutus/documents/Long_Term_Forecast_REPORT.pdf .
- Tyldesley, D. 2009
- Natural England Commissioned Report, Number 004.
- Michael Parkinson's Credit Crunch and Regeneration' report (2009)
- NW Regional Forestry Framework.
- www.5050vision.com
- Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management.
- North West Climate Change Action Plan
- 2006 Stern Review of the Economics of Climate Change
- Deloitte's 2008 Assessment of the Economic Impact of EU and UK climate change legislation
- Regional Framework for Housing Support and Regional Needs Assessment Model
- Affordable Rural Housing Commission in 2006.
- <http://greendealmanchester.files.wordpress.com/2009/04/ngdmanchesterdiscussionpaper-v41.pdf> 2.7
- DEFRA Waste Strategy 2007 - Box 1.2, p.20
- Renewable Energy Strategy to be published in June 2009
- Cumbria Strategic Partnership Cumbria Community Strategy (2008-2028),
- Centre for Cities Outlook 2009
- Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan 2001-2016
- Northwest Environmental Technologies & Services Cluster Development Strategy (2008 – 2011).
- Sustainable Development Commission's new report, "Prosperity Without Growth? The transition to a sustainable economy" (<http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/pages/redefining-prosperity.html>)
- David Kynaston's recent study entitled Austerity Britain 1945-1951
- CLG Policy Document on Regional Strategies (January 2009)
- Mercer Worldwide Quality of Life Survey. For 2007
- www.forumforthefuture.org
- <http://www.defra.gov.uk/sustainable/government/what/principles.htm>
- Commission for Rural Communities "State of the Countryside Report - 2008".
- <http://www.happyplanetindex.org/>
- <http://www.arboraglobal.com/documents/Happiness%20at%20Work%20Index%202007.pdf>
- England Biodiversity Strategy.
- 'Building Britain's Future - New Industry, New Jobs'; BERR
- PPS9 – 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation'
- Local Transport Act 2008.
- <http://www.prweb.com/releases/cellphone/reception/prweb2250894.htm>
- HM Treasury (2006) "Long Term Opportunities and Challenges to the UK" HM Treasury, London
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation "Poverty, inequality and policy since 1997" [Feb 2009]
- <http://www.skillsforlogistics.org/en/index/standards/foundation-degree/>
- <http://www.zerocarbonbritain.com/>
- Strategy for Tourism in England's Northwest, 2003-2010
- Cumbria Sub-Regional Action Plan, 2009-12
- Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan Document
- 'The Learning Revolution' (DIUS 2009)



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4NW is the Regional Leaders Board for England's Northwest

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