



Lord Peter Smith  
Chair of the 4NW  
Wigan Investment Centre  
Waterside Drive  
Wigan  
WN3 5BA

**Baroness Andrews OBE**  
*Parliamentary Under Secretary of State*

**Department for Communities and Local  
Government**

Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London SW1E 5DU

Tel: 020 7944 3083  
Fax: 020 7944 4538  
E-Mail: [baroness.andrews@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:baroness.andrews@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

[www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

*30 September 2008*

*Dear Peter .*

## **NORTH WEST REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY**

I am pleased to inform you that the Secretary of State has issued the North West Regional Spatial Strategy, "the North West Plan", which was submitted by the North West Regional Assembly in January 2006.

Please find enclosed the following documents:

- The North West Plan
- Report of Further Changes and Reasons
- Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment Report and Statement
- Habitat Regulations Appropriate Assessment Report

The Plan builds on the foundation of the draft Plan published by the North West Regional Assembly in 2006 and takes account of the two rounds of public consultation and independent Examination in Public. In total 1,836 representations were received from 149 people and organisations. Nearly half of these representations were expressions of support, whilst the remainder suggested further or alternative changes to the RSS. All of these representations have been considered, and also updates to the Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment required under the legislation which confirm that the revised Plan should help deliver sustainable development. Amendments and clarifications have been made to various parts of the Plan.

Publication of the North West RSS will facilitate the preparation of a Single Regional Strategy by potentially aligning more closely with the Regional Economic Strategy, and the removal of the "maximum" figures in draft RSS for housing requirements will help fulfil the Government's aspirations for housing as set out in the Housing Green Paper.

The most notable aspects of the final revisions to the Plan are that the main spatial framework for the region has been further amended to bring the prioritisation for growth and development broadly back into line with the recommendations of the Panel, targets for renewable energy and energy conservation have been better aligned with national policy, and regional housing provision has been clarified. There are no changes to regional housing figures proposed by the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to RSS. Policies

on housing density and casinos have been deleted. Housing density is already dealt with in national policy guidance by CLG, and the government has previously announced its intention to review the social impact of proposed casinos.

The Plan forms part of the statutory development plan, extended structure plan policies, "saved" UDP and Local Plan policies and Development Plan Documents as they are adopted. I am pleased that following the independent Panel recommendations on issues for review, GONW are discussing with 4NW the best way to progress these issues.

A copy of this letter is being sent to all of the region's local authorities, MPs, MEPs, and members of the Opposition Front Bench. Copies of RSS are available to purchase from TSO and copies of associated documents and relevant information are available from GONW and on the internet ([www.gonw.gov.uk](http://www.gonw.gov.uk)).

Yours sincerely  
Kay Andrews

**BARONESS ANDREWS**