



Abolition of Regional Strategies

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Robert Neill): The coalition Government are committed to enabling the abolition of regional strategies through the Localism Bill, in order to return decision-making powers in housing and planning to local authorities and the communities they serve.

I wish to inform the House that the Government have decided to carry out an environmental assessment of the revocation of the regional strategies.

I make it clear that the Government are undertaking this assessment on a voluntary basis. We consider that it would be useful to assess whether there are any significant environmental effects of revoking each regional strategy.

We intend to compile an environmental report for each region and to consult on it in line with the process laid down in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Local authorities and others should find this helpful in identifying issues relevant to their areas and policies or initiatives in the regional strategies which are no longer in effect, and it should also help them decide how to proceed with preparing or reviewing their own plans.

This process of environmental assessment will be carried out during the passage of the Bill through Parliament. Subject to Royal Assent, the revocation of each individual regional strategy will be commenced after the assessment process has been completed.