

Report to Sustainability East

Embedding Sustainable Development in the Post SNR Landscape – Local Pilot Activity

August 2009



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND AIMS

Using funding from Defra's Sustainable Development Transformation and Transition programme, partners in the East of England, led by Sustainability East, have commissioned two pieces of work. The first of these is a regional study to develop consensus on how to ensure that sustainable development (SD) principles are effectively embedded in new governance structures for the East of England following the Sub National Review (SNR) and the mechanisms needed to integrate SD into the development and monitoring of the new Single Regional Strategy.

Linked to this regional study, Sustainability East has also commissioned a local pilot project to increase understanding and develop recommendations for how SD principles can be embedded into the development of local economic development strategies post SNR. URSUS Consulting Ltd has been commissioned by Sustainability East to work with partners in Greater Norwich in undertaking this local pilot project.

The local pilot has focused on the preparation of the Greater Norwich Economic Strategy (GNES) and drawn out lessons and recommendations applicable to other parts of the region.

This paper presents the findings of the local pilot and covers:

- The Strategic Context for the project.
- A summary of the work done in relation to the Greater Norwich Economic Strategy.
- Identification of lessons and recommendations applicable to other parts of the region.
- Consideration of how the project findings can be taken forward.

1.2 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Sustainability East identified the need for this local pilot project to identify good practice in integrating SD into local economic development strategies. The importance of embedding SD into local economic strategies stems from a number of factors, including the following.

- It is widely recognised that local delivery and the work of local authorities and partners is pivotal to making progress in the UK on sustainable development. By taking a sustainable development approach, individually and in partnership, they can play a leading role in exemplifying and delivering integrated environmental, social and economic improvements at the local level.
- The increasing importance of achieving sustainable development at the local level is being matched by increased expectations on local authorities and their partners for promoting SD, including for example, the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) (which came into effect in April 2009) and National Indicators associated with Local Area Agreements.
- There are important opportunities and challenges for embedding SD into local and sub-regional economic development, including promotion of SD through sector development, business support, transport, construction, resource efficiency, improvements to environmental assets and green infrastructure, social inclusion, community regeneration, skills and learning.
- The Sub-National Review (SNR) highlights the importance of economic development delivery at the most appropriate spatial level and identifies new and greater roles for local authorities and sub-regions in economic development, as well as potential for increased delegation of programmes and funding from RDAs.

- The SNR emphasises the importance of embedding sustainable development into economic development and defines *sustainable economic growth* 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”¹.
- The SNR also sets out new roles for upper tier local authorities in the preparation of *local economic assessments* which will feed into the development of the Regional Strategy and future delivery.
- At the regional level in the East of England, documents such as the Regional Economic Strategy, the draft Joint Implementation Plan for the RES and Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and the revised Integrated Sustainability Framework (January 2009) emphasise the need for integrating economic, social and environmental objectives to promote SD. It is clearly important that these regional commitments to SD are reflected at the local and sub-regional levels.

In the light of the SNR, regional partners such as EEDA, the Local Authority Leaders Board and GO-East are currently developing plans for local and sub-regional economic development roles. These emerging roles are referred to in the RES and Joint Implementation Plan (consultation draft) and also relate to work on Integrated Development Programmes (IDP), sub regional collaboration via Economic Improvement Boards (EIB) and Multi-Area Agreements (MAA), RDA delegations and Local Economic Assessments.

Further information on SNR, the RES and emerging plans in the region for local and sub-regional economic development is outlined in the *Boxes* below. These highlight needs and opportunities for embedding sustainable development into economic development activities at the local and sub-regional levels.

Sub National Review (SNR) Announcements

The Government’s SNR sought to ensure that:

- economic decisions are taken at the most appropriate spatial level;
- there is clarity of roles and objectives for sub-national bodies involved in economic development; and
- there is better integration of economic, social and environmental goals.

The SNR stressed the need for local authorities to play a stronger role in local economic development and regeneration.

Sustainable Economic Growth:

SNR defines *Sustainable economic growth* 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” (*Prosperous Places: Taking forward the Review of Sub National Economic Development and Regeneration* – CLG & BERR, March 2008).

SNR documents provide guidance on issues that should be covered in Regional Strategies which will replace the RES and RSS - including carbon reduction and climate change issues, for example:

“It is expected that economic objectives, housing, climate change and renewable and low carbon energy would receive particular focus, commensurate with their key role in achieving sustainable economic growth which contributes to sustainable development” (p.9, *Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill, Policy Document on Regional Strategies*. CLG and BERR, January 2009).

¹ *Prosperous Places: Taking forward the Review of Sub National Economic Development and Regeneration* – CLG & BERR, March 2008.

Local Economic Assessments:

The new duty to prepare Local Economic Assessments (LEAs) relates to the increased role of local authorities in economic development and regeneration under SNR. “A local economic assessment should provide local authorities and their key economic partners with a clear understanding of local economic conditions at all spatial levels, from urban through to rural areas. It should map economic linkages and identify the key factors enabling and constraining sustainable economic development” (*Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill - Local Economic Assessments Policy Statement*, January 2009). Further guidance is expected imminently.

“The Government believes that there are a number of broad principles that should be applied to Local Economic Assessments to ensure that they have maximum impact. In particular, a local economic assessment should:

- “look at how economic, social and environmental trends will affect local conditions”.
- “Consider the impact of local economic development on the environment, and how the local economy will be affected by the transition to a low-carbon economy. Economic growth can have detrimental consequences on the local and global environment, which will need to be considered. The UK is committed to becoming a low carbon economy, and the transition towards this will provide new opportunities and challenges to local firms and change the skills needs in local labour markets”.

CLG expects Local Economic Assessments to identify the strengths, weaknesses and specialisms of local economies. They should identify spatial linkages, obstacles to sustainable growth and regeneration challenges.

Local Economic Assessments should form a significant element of the evidence base underpinning local and regional strategies and documents such as the Sustainable Community Strategy, Local Area Agreements (LAA), Multi-Area Agreements (MAA) and Local Development Frameworks.

LEA issues identified for the East of England include the following:

- Upper tier Local Authorities are expected to commence their preparation in April 2010, regardless of where the region is with the RSS review of Single Integrated Regional Strategy.
- LEAs should form part of the evidence base underpinning future regional strategy work such as the Single Regional Strategy and should be prepared in consultation with local business and/or economic partnership groups.
- Government guidance expects consistency in terms of the scope of LEAs and use of data and methodology in their preparation and in linking to regional strategy preparation.
- A number of sub-regional and local authorities are likely to have capacity issues in collating and analysing the necessary evidence on the wider economy (as opposed to demographic and labour market issues). Experience has shown that there is a better chance of economic assessments informing policy if they are carried out in-house. There is therefore likely to be a need to develop a package of measures or programme of activity to address capacity issues in development of LEAs.

CLG expects that GO-East will play the major role in *facilitating* LEAs and supporting the processes around it in much the same way that it does with Local Area Agreements (LAAs). Alongside Go-East, there is likely to be facilitation roles for EEDA, Improvement East (the region’s Improvement and Efficiency Partnership) and Insight East (the Regional Intelligence Centre).

RES coverage of sustainable development:

The Regional Economic Strategy for the East of England 2008–2031 - “Inventing our future Collective action for a sustainable economy” (Autumn 2008) already has SD at the heart of its vision, its underlying principles, goals, priorities, targets and monitoring indicators. For example:

- **The Vision:** By 2031, the East of England will be: internationally competitive with a global reputation for innovation and business growth; a region that harnesses and develops the talents and creativity of all; at the forefront of the low-carbon and resource-efficient economy. And known for: exceptional landscapes, vibrant places and quality of life; being a confident, outward-looking region with strong leadership and where communities actively shape their future.

- **Underlying principles:** “The regional economic strategy sets out targets and priorities to make the East of England an exemplar in sustainable economic growth. In so doing, it understands the complex effects of economic growth and reflects a responsibility to promote and enhance the environmental, economic and social well-being of everyone in the East of England, now and for future generations”.
- “The region needs to ensure that economic growth is environmentally sustainable – which means ensuring that natural resource needs of future generations are not compromised by current activities”
- **RES Monitoring Framework:** The RES monitoring framework reflects SD priorities and includes indicators covering: productivity, employment, skills, inequality, greenhouse gas emissions and water resources.

Increased roles of Local Authorities in delivering Sustainable Economic Development:

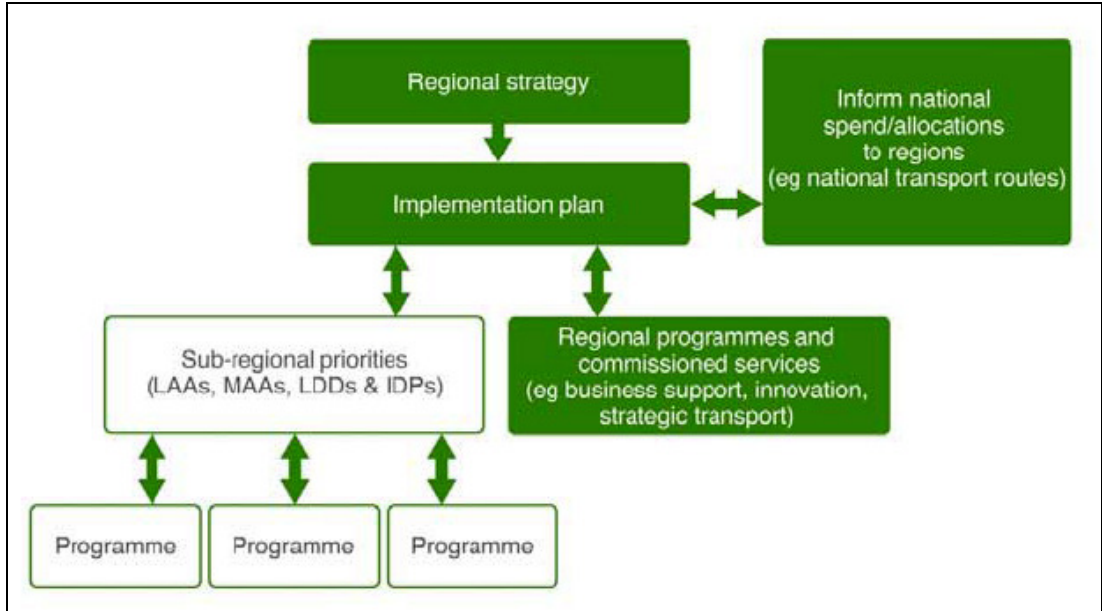
It is anticipated that Local Authorities and sub-regions will have more active roles in economic development, including in:

- the preparation and delivery of local and sub-regional economic development strategies;
- preparation of Local Economic Assessments (Upper Tier LAs from April 2010) to feed into the development of the Regional Strategy and local priorities and strategies;
- preparation of sub-regional Integrated Development Programmes (IDP);
- possible increased levels of delegation for EEDA programmes; and
- developing and delivering projects.

The Draft Joint Implementation Plan for the RES and RSS identifies the following sub-regions:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| • Bedford | • Heart of Essex |
| • Greater Cambridge | • London Arc West – Hertfordshire |
| • Greater Norwich | • London Arc East – Harlow / Stanstead corridor |
| • Greater Peterborough | • Luton and South Bedfordshire |
| • Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft | • North /West Norfolk and West Suffolk |
| • Haven Gateway | • Thames Gateway South Essex |

The Role of Sub-Regions



Source: Consultation Draft of Implementation Plan, April 2009

The RES (p.91) states that to deliver significant growth and change, each of the sub-regions requires:

- a bold and visionary strategy for the economic development of the area led by the local authorities, identifying and supporting a limited number of sectors and clusters of international and national significance, alongside outlining improvements in the general environment for businesses that serve local and regional markets

- effective partnerships that span administrative boundaries, tiers of government and the public and private sectors to deliver regional economic and regional spatial strategy ambitions
- recognition as major economic centres and labour markets, and therefore targeting of appropriate services and investment through Local Area Agreements or Multi Area Agreements
- Integrated Development Programmes and strong investment planning approaches that identify the phasing and financing of major physical infrastructure and growth
- a planning framework and system that provides clarity and confidence to the market, including masterplans or area action plans for areas of transformation.

The Draft Implementation Plan (p.124) identifies sub-regional priorities which have been drawn from current and emerging sub-regional plans and strategies, including sub-regional economic strategies, Integrated Development Programmes, LAAs, Local Development Frameworks, Local Transport Plans and Regional Funding Advice.

Integrated Development Programmes (IDP). IDPs are holistic investment plans for delivering sustainable growth and regeneration. They are sub-regional delivery plans which identify all projects requiring public sector investment, identifying the level and sources of the resources required, timescales, the relationships between projects and the key delivery partners. They will be used to ensure that the allocation of resources by the partners reflects the strategic priorities of the sub-region.

A number of local authorities have developed IDPs with EEDA (eg. Greater Norwich, Peterborough, Luton South Bedfordshire, Thames Gateway, Haven Gateway/Ipswich and Colchester). The IDPs incorporate capital investments from EEDA and other public sector bodies which will be delivered via local authorities and/or Local Delivery Vehicles (LDVs).

It is anticipated that the delivery of sub-regional economic strategies will be taken forward through IDPs, and will provide the strategic context for identified economic investment priorities. In line with the SD commitments contained in the RES, it will clearly be important to effectively embed SD into the Integrated Development Programmes.

Sub Regional Collaboration – Economic Improvement Boards. Legislation will be introduced to allow for the creation of statutory sub regional authorities for economic development, known as ‘Economic Improvement Boards’ (EIBs). The Government’s expectation is that these Boards will evolve out of existing sub-regional partnerships. They will be allowed the flexibility to propose their own specific functions within a broad remit of improving the overall economic conditions in their area through further integration, particularly on issues such as transport, skills provision and community regeneration.

Each EIB will need to:

- Conduct an initial review of economic development across its sub region;
- Define their role, establish that any proposed functions, do not duplicate those best delivered by bodies operating at different spatial levels;
- Produce their own performance framework ensuring alignment with existing local and regional targets;

Opportunities

- The format and evidence base underpinning the IDP will enable greater progress in those sub regions which have gone through this process.
- Given the current work in the Thames Gateway on IDP and the essential requirement for upper tier collaboration, this sub regional would appear to be the idea pilot for this new area based approach.

RDA Delegation to local and sub-regional partners - Earlier SNR documents referred to the possibility for delegation from RDAs to Local Authorities, however, from more recent SNR announcements (eg. January 2009) it is uncertain whether this will occur. Ahead of the final outcomes of SNR, EEDA is already progressing greater delegation of EEDA programmes to local authorities - for example, the sub-regional Economic Participation programme (Investing in Communities) is now being fully delegated to local authorities and integrated within LAA frameworks.

2 THE GREATER NORWICH ECONOMIC STRATEGY

2.1 THE STRATEGY

Greater Norwich comprises the three districts of Norwich City, Broadland and South Norfolk. From November 2008 to April 2009, the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) - made up of the three district councils, Norfolk County Council and Shaping Norfolk's Future together with EEDA - developed the Greater Norwich Economic Strategy (GNES).

The purpose of the GNES is to define priorities for economic development in Greater Norwich for the five years from 2009 until 2014. The objectives and priorities set out in the GNES are intended to drive forward the area's economy and ensure that it is well placed to accommodate significant population and housing growth anticipated over the next five years and be in a strong position to succeed when the global economy starts to improve.

The strategy has been developed in the context of the Regional Economic Strategy (which includes priorities for the sub-region) and other strategic documents such as the Joint Core Strategy, the Local Transport Plan, the Climate Change Strategy for Norfolk, Norwich City Council's Environmental Strategy 2008-10 and the Green Infrastructure Strategy for Greater Norwich. The GNES draws on the 2003 to 2008 economic strategy for Norwich and has been developed to encompass the whole of the Greater Norwich area.

The GNES identifies the economic context for future development activity across Greater Norwich, and sets four objectives:

- *Enterprise* – to strengthen the area's economy, maximise diverse employment opportunities and ensure that businesses can flourish
- *People and Skills* – to improve the skills of the labour force to ensure that it matches the needs of existing and potential employers, and local people benefit from job growth
- *Infrastructure for business* – to ensure that the area has the necessary infrastructure and quality of environment to attract and retain investment and support business growth
- *Profile and investment* – to raise the profile of Greater Norwich as a high quality place to live, work and visit

Under each objective, the GNES identifies several priorities for action. An Action Plan to deliver these priorities is currently under development.

2.2 INTEGRATING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INTO THE GNES

Greater Norwich partners volunteered to act as a pilot for the East of England to explore how sustainable development issues can best be embedded in Local Economic Strategies.

Within the Sustainability East pilot project, the process of assisting partners in Greater Norwich to integrate SD into the GNES has involved close working with the GNES authors team, scoping of key SD opportunities and challenges for the GNES, providing comments and recommendations on iterations of the GNES draft and consultations with local stakeholders and external SD experts. Specific tasks included:

- Attendance at GNES consultation events – November 2008.
- A workshop on SD issues for the GNES for the Economic Officers Group – December 2008.
- Scoping of key SD issues for the GNES, identifying SD opportunities and potential conflicts, drawing on other documents such as the sustainability appraisal of the Joint Core Strategy, other Greater Norwich strategies and the East of England Integrated Sustainability Framework (ISF) – December 2008.
- Detailed written comments and recommendations on four iterations of the GNES draft - from early January to late February 2009.
- Contributions on SD issues for the State of Norwich evidence base (which has become the Greater Norwich Economic Assessment) – January and February 2009.
- Consultation on the draft GNES with external SD experts and local SD stakeholders – February 2009.
- A ‘light touch’ sustainability assessment of the Final Draft GNES – March (draft) and April (final) 2009.

2.3 EFFECT OF THE PILOT PROJECT ON THE GNES

The finalised GNES for 2009-2014 and the accompanying evidence base is available on the GNDP website -www.gndp.org.uk.

The pilot project has made a significant contribution to the inclusion of sustainable development in the GNES and in particular it has helped to:

- **Provide a broader understanding of sustainable development in the GNES** (for example, wider than just references to climate change) and, in line with the SNR, emphasises the need to achieve *sustainable economic development* rather than just economic development per se.
- **Strengthen the coverage of SD issues in the GNES** such as:
 - economic opportunity for all, particularly for people living in the most deprived areas;
 - the need for sustainable, integrated transport to reduce carbon emissions;
 - resource efficiency support to businesses;
 - opportunities for the environmental industries sector;
 - development of skills for the low carbon economy;
 - sustainable construction standards – for commercial premises, new houses and for the use of recycled products and incorporation of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems in infrastructure development;
 - opportunities for incorporating renewables in energy infrastructure for business premises;
 - the importance of environmental assets and green infrastructure in attracting people and investment to the area, as well as for climate change adaptation;
 - equality and diversity issues; and
 - engagement of local communities in economic and environmental regeneration.
- **Ensure the inclusion of existing local SD priorities in the GNES**, such as the aspiration for Norwich to become an exemplar low carbon city.
- **Improve SD coverage in the evidence base** – broadening coverage of environmental and social issues with relevance to sustainable economic growth in the Greater Norwich Economic Assessment document which accompanies the GNES.

- **Integrate sustainable development issues in governance and monitoring** arrangements for GNES delivery.

The pilot also demonstrated the usefulness of the regional Integrated Sustainability Framework (ISF) in informing sustainability appraisal of local strategies and the scope for building on the SD evidence base collected for other purposes such as local Joint Core Strategies / Local Development Frameworks.

The pilot also highlighted a number of challenges in the process of producing a local economic strategy and defining what it should cover. These include:

- Designing a process which is timely but iterative with SD embedded at the consultation, evidence collection, drafting and assessment stages.
- Defining the extent to which the GNES - as one of the earliest 'local economic strategies' following the SNR - should cover specific SD issues or whether it is more appropriate for these to be dealt with in other local strategies. For example, prompting discussions about the coverage of issues such as sustainable construction, sustainable procurement, sustainable transport and green infrastructure.
- Ensuring that potential negative SD impacts where environmental limits are likely to be exceeded - such as impacts of road and air transport on carbon emissions – are offset with measures likely to have a positive impact in reducing impacts or extending environmental limits (eg sustainable transport measures).
- The process also highlighted the limited data currently available on regional, sub-regional and local environmental limits and the difficulty of quantifying likely sustainable development impacts on the basis of generic descriptions of interventions.
- Identifying specific actions that will make a significant difference in implementing the GNES' strategic commitments to SD within the five year timeframe of the strategy.
- Reflecting sustainable development issues (such as carbon emission reduction and sustainable construction) in the performance indicators to be used in monitoring GNES implementation.

3 LESSONS FOR OTHER PARTS OF THE REGION

3.1 HOW IS THE EXPERIENCE OF THE GNES RELEVANT TO OTHER PARTS OF THE REGION?

As noted above, following the SNR it is anticipated that Local Authorities and sub-regions will have more active roles in economic development, including:

- preparation and delivery of local and sub-regional economic development strategies;
- preparation of Local Economic Assessments (from April 2010) to feed into the development of the Regional Strategy and local priorities and strategies;
- preparation of Integrated Development Programmes (IDP);
- possible increased levels of delegation for EEDA programmes; and
- more active roles in developing and delivering economic development projects.

Drawing on the pilot project's experiences with the GNES, the following section identifies key lessons and recommendations on embedding SD into local/sub-regional economic strategies, Local Economic Assessments, project development and delivery for other parts of the East of England.

3.2 LESSONS FOR ELSEWHERE

3.2.1 *The Process of Preparing Local / Sub-Regional Economic Development Strategies*

To ensure that SD is firmly embedded in the development of local and sub-regional economic development strategies, the following points are recommended:

- **Defining Sustainable Economic Development** – In line with SNR definitions, local and sub-regional economic development strategies should aim to promote 'sustainable economic development' – ie. "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". This definition highlights the need to integrate social, economic and environmental issues and capitalise on opportunities for promoting the 10 SD priorities identified in the region's Integrated Sustainability Framework (ISF). As also identified by the Sustainability East regional study, where environmental limits are likely to be exceeded, there is a need for the strategy to be broad enough to incorporate off-setting actions (or mechanisms for ensuring that these are delivered through other strategies or initiatives).
- **Senior Level Leadership on the importance of embedding SD** – Senior Local Authority personnel leading the development and approval of the strategies should make very clear statements from the outset on the importance of embedding SD into local and sub-regional economic development strategies and projects for delivery. This will be very important in setting the tone and establishing the vision for the strategy. A strong lead from regional partners such as EEDA and GO-East on the importance of embedding SD is also important.
- **Planning the Strategy Development Process** – When agreeing the process for strategy development, it is essential that it includes effective steps for integrating SD, notably:
 - Ensuring that the strategy author's team contains SD expertise.
 - Incorporating SD issues in the evidence base which should be used to inform the Strategy from an early stage.

- Including SD issues and priorities in materials and discussions at consultation events to identify priorities for the strategy to address.
- Engaging effectively with stakeholders across the breadth of SD issues from the early visioning stages, through to the consultation draft stages and subsequent implementation and monitoring.
- Agreeing on sustainability appraisal processes for the strategy, which should be undertaken on an iterative basis in parallel with strategy drafting, but allowing sufficient time for sustainability appraisal comments to be explored and reflected in the drafts.

These issues are addressed in more detail below:

- **SD expertise in the Authors team** – The Strategy authors team should contain strong SD knowledge. Additional sources of expertise on specific topics for the authors to draw upon should also be identified (eg. knowledge of environmental limits) from statutory and voluntary and community sector organisations. Early training and workshops for the author’s team to raise awareness of local / sub-regional / regional SD priorities and opportunities should be provided, potentially involving Sustainability East / the regional SD champion body.
- **Vision and Consultation** – Consideration of SD should be included from the outset in visioning, idea generation and consultations to identify priorities and goals for the strategy. Early consultation should include discussions with local stakeholders representing SD issues, for example, relevant LSP groups and bodies such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, NHS etc.
- **Embedding SD in the evidence base** – It is important that the evidence base (including the Local Economic Assessments) genuinely informs priorities identified in the strategy, rather than the evidence base being shaped *ex post* to justify priorities already identified for the strategy. The evidence base should include a description of economic conditions, as well as social and environmental circumstances where interrelationships exist with economic issues.

The evidence base should also identify key **environmental limits** (eg. carbon emissions, flood risk, environmental quality, biodiversity, water resources and quality, waste and recycling issues) reflecting local, sub-regional and regional issues. Partners such as the Environment Agency and English Nature should be involved in defining local environmental limits. This should provide the basis for scenario modelling for key issues – such as carbon emissions – where necessary so that different policy options can be tested.

- **Sustainability Appraisal** – Although not necessarily requiring sustainability appraisal which is compliant with the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA), the strategy should be subject to sustainability appraisal carried out in parallel with strategy development. The appraisal should be informed by stakeholders and reflect local SD priorities as well as priorities identified in the region’s Integrated Sustainability Framework (ISF). Sustainable development commentaries should accompany the draft and final versions of the strategy and should include an explanation from the author’s team of how the process has been iterative and how the strategy reflects issues raised by the sustainability appraisal.

3.2.2 **Local Economic Strategy Content**

The GNES pilot has highlighted a number of lessons about the content of sub-regional strategies elsewhere in the East of England as follows:

- **“How far should an ‘economic development’ strategy go on SD issues?”** – Both the RES and SNR emphasise the need for integrating economic, social and environmental objectives and achieving *sustainable economic growth* (rather than just *economic growth* per se). There are clearly strong linkages between economic development, environment and social issues and to focus on one in isolation could mean missed opportunities for promoting broader sustainable development benefits. Issues such as carbon reduction, growth of low carbon industries, sustainable transport, sustainable construction, resource efficiency in businesses, economic inclusion, health, skills, social inclusion and green infrastructure are all essential ingredients for sustainable economic growth and should be well reflected in local and sub-regional economic development strategies and delivery plans.

Although some SD issues are typically dealt with in detail in other local strategic documents such as Local Development Frameworks, Local Transport Action Plans, Climate Change Strategies, Special Planning Guidance (Sustainable Construction standards) and local Environmental Strategies, this does not imply that economic strategies do not need to cover or at least cross-reference these issues. To promote sustainable economic development, economic development strategies should contain clear objectives and priorities for integrating these issues with economic development activities. For example, when referring to new sites and premises, strategies should make strong statements on the need to ensure that developments represent best practice in sustainable construction and promote sustainable transport and accessibility for all.

- **Current economic crisis.** The economic crisis should be seen as an opportunity for developing new approaches to achieving sustainable economic development, and not as a reason to concentrate on economic growth without consideration of interrelated social and environmental opportunities and impacts.
- **Alternative Options and Scenarios** - Strategies should examine the benefits and impacts of different approaches to economic growth, including on issues such as carbon emissions, resource limits and an area’s resilience to future economic crises.
- **Translating Strategy into Actions** – Sustainable development needs to be fully reflected in actions identified in the local / sub-regional strategies. It is not sufficient just to include well-meaning SD statements in an introductory section of the strategy – instead there should be clear actions and responsibilities for implementing the SD commitments.
- **Performance Monitoring and Indicators** should reflect the SNR definition of ‘sustainable economic growth’ and the commitment to SD in the Regional Economic Strategy. SD should be at the heart of the framework and indicators established for monitoring strategy implementation. The indicators should relate to SD priorities identified in the strategy (eg. carbon emission reduction, addressing deprivation, raising skills and learning, resource efficiency support to businesses, sustainable construction and sustainable transport) and could draw on existing local indicators such as information on carbon emissions used for LAA National Indicators (eg. NI 186 on per capita CO2 emissions in the local authority area).
- **Governance for Strategy Delivery** - Sustainable development should be represented in the governance structures for the delivery of the strategy, including the officer and stakeholder groups involved. There should be clear accountability, roles and reporting for ensuring that delivery of the strategy promotes sustainable development.

- **Embedding SD into project development and appraisal** – When developing projects to deliver the local economic strategies, it will be essential for Local Authorities and partners to integrate SD into the project development process from the initial project outline to the full application and appraisal stage, and project evaluation.

3.3 TAKING FORWARD THE PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

In taking forward the findings and recommendations from the local pilot project, it is recommended that:

- EEDA, Sustainability East, GO-East, the Local Authority Leaders Board and RIEP should bring together sub-regional partnership to discuss the local pilot project findings, share good practice on embedding SD into sub-regional economic strategies and delivery, and agree a way forward for integrating SD into future sub-regional economic development activities.
- Regional partners should ensure that any formats agreed for Local Economic Assessments in the region effectively incorporate sustainable development.
- Training and awareness raising on integrating SD into local / sub-regional economic strategies and related documents should be provided to Local Authority and sub-regional leaders and Economic Strategy authoring teams.
- EEDA and GO-East should work with the sub-regions to ensure that SD is effectively embedded into sub-regional Integrated Development Programmes (IDPs).
- EEDA, Sustainability East and sub-regional partners should ensure that any economic development project development and appraisal systems used at the local and sub-regional levels have SD firmly embedded in them.
- Sustainability East or the region's future SD champion body should work with partners in reviewing progress made across the region in integrating SD into local / sub-regional economic development strategies and delivery.