

Specification: Embedding sustainable development in the post SNR landscape

The attached document is the specification and invitation to tender for development work on how the East of England can best embed sustainable development (SD) principles in the transition to the new regional arrangements under the Sub-National Review (SNR). The aim of the project is to develop a consensus about how the region will ensure that SD principles are effectively embedded in (a) new governance structures for the East of England post-SNR and (b) the mechanisms put in place for developing and monitoring the new single regional strategy.

The work is being commissioned by Government Office for the East of England (GO-East) on behalf of Sustainability East and is funded by Defra via the Sustainable Development Transformation and Transition fund, the East of England Development Agency and Natural England. It is being overseen by a steering group of representatives from a range of key stakeholder bodies including Sustainability East, Government Office for the East of England (GO-East), East of England Development Agency (EEDA), Norwich City Council, Norfolk County Council and the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) (amongst others).

Other English regions will be taking forward similar projects as part of Defra's Sustainable Development Transformation and Transition funding programme.

This is an important - and challenging - study, and its findings are likely to be influential in helping to determine the future character of sustainable development policy and delivery in the East of England post SNR. Accordingly, the tender invites proposals from consultants who are very well informed view about regional governance coupled with a substantial understanding of sustainable development.

The closing date for applications is **17:30 on 6 October**. Potential tenderers who wish to discuss the study are invited to contact the Project Manager – Chrissie Pepper at chrissie.pepper@goeast.gsi.gov.uk / 01223 533481

Purpose of the assignment

The purpose of the assignment is to generate buy-in from key regional stakeholders to develop a consensus about how best to embed SD in the main components of SNR implementation.

The objectives for the project are to:

1. Put in place a mechanism to ensure that the new single regional strategy (SRS), and suite of indicators and targets used to monitor the SRS contribute to the achievement of SD and is underpinned by the SD principles set out in "*Securing the Future*", and are agreed as being pertinent to the East of England

2. Ensure that there is effective and independent expertise and capacity for challenge on SD within the region
3. Ensure that SD objectives are represented in the wider regional arrangements for Social Economic and Environmental partners (SEEPs)
4. Consider how the new local authority (LA) leaders' forums or equivalents can build their own capability on SD, in the context of their proposed role
5. Integrate SD into the Regional Funding Allocation process
6. Develop a model for embedding SD principles in local strategy and delivery of economic development reflecting LAs' enhanced devolved powers under SNR.

Local pilot initiative

A local pilot initiative is being set up to fulfil objective 6. This will run in parallel to this assignment and is being led by a client group comprising Norwich City Council, Norfolk County Council and Sustainability East (who are also represented on the main project steering group). The local pilot provides the opportunity to focus in detail on a key SNR proposal - to give local authorities a stronger role in delivering economic development. It is envisaged that the outputs of the initiative will be used to develop a best practice guide for local authorities and partners on embedding SD into local strategies, processes and targets post SNR. The findings of the pilot study will be integrated into the conclusions of this project (although the consultancy assignment for the local pilot is being tendered for separately, this does not preclude consultants from tendering for both projects).

Key stages

There are 3 key stages to the project:

1. To develop a model for effective embedding of SD principles, and representation for SEEPs, in new regional structures and strategies and for ensuring that there is independent and effective challenge on SD within the region
2. To refine that model in collaboration with EEDA, GO-East, local authorities, SEEPs and others, and seek consensus for it
3. To integrate the findings of the local pilot initiative to work with selected local authorities (upper and lower tier) to develop a model for embedding SD principles locally reflecting local authorities' enhanced devolved powers for economic development under SNR.

Key issues to be addressed in this study

There are 6 main areas of work:

1. Develop a policy position paper setting out proposals for embedding SD principles in new regional governance structures
2. Liaison with key regional partners in seeking consensus for proposals in the position paper
3. Assessment of the sustainable development implications of the Review of Regional Funding Allocation via ongoing involvement with GO-East, EEDA and EERA
4. A regional SD conference (Dec 08 / Jan 09) to present proposals to wider audience to stimulate debate and seek consensus

5. A published report outlining a way forward which will be used to influence key agencies and other regional and local stakeholders.
6. Feedback to central Government

Further detail is provided here:

1) Policy position paper

The policy position paper should set out proposals for:

- Embedding SD principles in (a) new regional governance structures for the East of England post-SNR, (b) in the mechanisms put in place for developing the new single regional strategy (SRS), and (c) in the framework of indicators and targets used to monitor the SRS (building on EERA's work on the Integrated Sustainability Framework and indicators)
- Effective representation for non-Governmental stakeholders (SEEPS) at regional level
- Ensuring there is effective and independent challenge on SD and expertise on SD within the region (the role currently played by Sustainability East). In particular, challenge and expertise which helps integrate social, economic and environmental priorities and embeds the principles of sustainable development, rather than a thematic stakeholder group which only focuses on one of these.
- Ensuring the new local authority (LA) leaders' forums or equivalents can build their own capability on SD, in the context of their proposed role

This work should build on the views of Sustainability East in its paper on taking forward the SNR within East of England (see Appendix A) as well as the discussions at the Regional Partnership Group (see EERA website). It should also draw on experience from other English regions.

2) Liaison with regional partners

This section of the assignment should build a consensus amongst key regional partners – EEDA, GO-East, EERA / Local Authority Leaders Forum (and others identified via a stakeholder mapping exercise, which should be agreed by the project steering group) for proposals in the position paper, which should subsequently be modified as necessary.

3) Regional Funding Allocation

Regions have been given until the end of February 2009 to submit their guidance to Government as part of a second Regional Funding Allocation (RFA). In the East of England the process for producing the advice has been agreed by the key partners. There will be four workstreams covering: housing and regeneration, transport, economic development and skills. The process will be coordinated by a GO-East/EEDA/EERA steering group which will meet monthly. The advice will be signed off by the Regional Partnership Group. It is expected that the group will consult on draft advice in Nov/Dec 2008 before final submission in February 2009. There are opportunities now to contribute to the workstreams, and there will be further opportunities to contribute both during and after the consultation phase. Further detail on the exercise is provided in Appendix C.

This section of the assignment should fully engage with the consultation process and the key partners to ensure that the response as a whole provides a balanced and integrated approach. In particular, it should examine whether there are mechanisms in place to ensure that all the elements of SD are embedded in each work stream of the RFA (i.e. that the process for prioritisation includes SD considerations so that the

end result the best SD option) and propose recommendations for improvement where necessary.

4) A regional conference

A high profile regional conference on SD and SNR will provide the opportunity to present the proposals to wider audience to stimulate debate and seek consensus as well as influence key regional players in the way they think about SNR implementation.

The conference should draw together all the work undertaken thus far including the local pilot initiative. It should field high-profile speakers from within the region as well externally, including, for example, a representative from another region to share experience and the Sustainable Development Commission.

Sustainability East will procure the services of a conference organiser to run the event. The contractor will be expected to work closely with the conference organiser in helping them to develop the programme, secure and brief speakers and pull together the outcomes as part of an interim report for the project.

5) Final report and recommendations

It is intended that the study will result in developing a regional consensus on how sustainable development should be embedded in the main components of SNR implementation in the East of England.

The report should:

- Identify clear and specific recommendations on how SD should be embedded anticipating post SNR arrangements
- Include actions at regional and local level to improve strategy development and delivery, flagging up where issues can only be resolved at national level.
- Integrate the findings of the local pilot initiative, including identifying lessons that might be of wider benefit to other local authorities in the region.
- Highlight where capacity issues are acting as a barrier and recommend actions to resolve these

Recommendations should reference the mechanisms that may be needed to enable change and should be targeted at particular decision-making processes.

6) Feedback to central Government

Produce a targeted briefing note to feed project outputs back to central government (via Defra). This should include key messages on any adaptations to the SNR model that command broad regional consensus as well as lessons learnt that could be applied and / or useful to other regions.

Defra propose to hold a national conference in spring / summer 2009 on embedding SD in SNR implementation. The contractor may be expected to participate in this event.

Project Outputs

The primary output of the assignment will be a report. In response to this invitation to tender, a prospective contractor should provide a clear list of outputs with milestones. We would expect this to include:

- telephone or face-to-face meetings with key stakeholders

- regular contact with the project steering group
- progress reports at each stage
- an interim report following the regional conference
- presentation and play-back of the project at a national conference in spring / summer 2009

Project timescale and cost

The project must be completed by March 2009. We wish to agree a fixed price for the work including expenses and VAT, and tenderers should indicate how they propose to charge for expenses. Tenders are invited in the region of £20,000 -25,000 inclusive of VAT.

The contract will be awarded to the tenderer who offers the best balance of a high quality proposal and value for money.

Project management and reporting

The project will be managed by a steering group comprised of nominated officers from Sustainability East, EEDA, GO-East, EERA, Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council (amongst others). The project manager and point of contact for this project will be Chrissie Pepper of Sustainability East.

Name: Dr Chrissie Pepper (Project Coordinator, Sustainability East)

Tel: 01223 533481

E-mail: Chrissie.pepper@goeast.gsi.gov.uk

Tenders should be submitted to Chrissie Pepper by 17:30 on Monday 6 October 2008.

The successful contractor will be appointed the week commencing 13 October 2008. They will be expected to attend a project initiation meeting with the project steering group and the contractor undertaking the local pilot initiative on **22 October 2008, 13:30-15:30** at GO-East, Eastbrook, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge.

Tender submissions should include at least the following information:

- The nature of your organisation.
- The methodology proposed to undertake the study.
- The data needed to be gathered and how this will be done.
- The main challenges that are expected in undertaking the study.
- Your experience of undertaking similar work.
- A demonstration of your understanding of the specific issues relating to SD in the proposed SNR model
- The pricing structure you wish to adopt, including the day fee rate and the allocation of time to proposed activities.
- The amount of time that all nominated consultants will spend on the study, including senior staff and the designated lead person.
- A project timetable with key milestones identified.

- Statements about quality and risk (see below).
- Details or CVs of the staff who will undertake the study.
- Any other relevant details about your organisation.
- The name of the nominated person(s) in your organisation who would be responsible for the contract, and the immediate contact point with email address.
- The names and contact details of two referees at senior levels in organisations for whom the senior nominated staff have recently worked (they will be contacted for all short listed tenders).

Proposals should briefly describe both how tenderers propose to ensure the quality of their work, and also what risks (if any) they identify in undertaking the study and the action they propose to take to mitigate them.

Tenderers should be aware that the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform will at some point announce its response following consultation on "*Prosperous Places*", and that this may move the goalposts.

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Sustainability East policy paper - Implementation of "*Prosperous Places*" in the East of England

Appendix B – Information on the local pilot activity

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APPENDIX A – SUSTAINABILITY EAST POLICY PAPER - IMPLEMENTATION OF “PROSPEROUS PLACES” IN THE EAST OF ENGLAND

Summary

This paper sets out Sustainability East’s views on the implementation of “*Prosperous Places*” in the East of England. We see two issues as crucial:

- a. The new arrangements should reflect a firm commitment to pursue sustainable development, as defined in “*Securing the Future*”. The role of the new Single Regional Strategy should be to integrate economic, social (including health), and environmental (including resource protection) objectives, with the single aim of improving quality of life for the people of the region and the wider world now and in the future. This may involve restraining economic growth if and to the extent that it may not be compatible with environmental protection and social cohesion.
- b. Structured representation for non-party-political community stakeholders (“social, economic and environmental partners”, or SEEPs) at regional level, alongside central government and local authorities, is an essential element in the new arrangements if sustainable development is to be effectively delivered.

Background

1. On 17 July 2007 the Government published its “*Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration*” (“*Sub-National Review*” or SNR), as part of the 2007 Spending Review; and on 31 March 2008 this was followed by “*Prosperous Places*”, a consultation document on how the recommendations in the SNR should be taken forward. The key proposals are:

- a) to abolish Regional Assemblies, and give an enhanced role to Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), including preparing the new Integrated Regional Strategies;
- b) to require regions to develop new Single Integrated Regional Strategies (SRS), subsuming Regional Economic Strategies and Regional Spatial Strategies (also Sustainable Development Frameworks where they exist); a representative forum of LA leaders would “sign off” the draft strategy before approval by the Secretaries of State BERR and CLG;
- c) RDAs would become more strategic, delivering programmes via local authorities and sub-regional partnerships;
- d) to give LAs a stronger role in delivering economic development, including a new assessment duty;
- e) to provide a firmer basis for sub-regional collaboration.

Consultation closed on 20 June; this paper is written at a time when the Government is still considering the responses to consultation.

2. Sustainability East responded to consultation on “*Prosperous Places*”; a copy of the response is at <http://www.sustainabilityeast.org.uk/pdf/Prosperous-Places-consultation-response-FINAL.pdf> . We made various recommendations for “sustainability-proofing” the new arrangements, including:

- a) an overriding statutory duty for Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) to promote SD,

- b) changes to the composition of RDA Boards to achieve a proper balance between economic, social, environmental and resource use objectives;
- c) effective involvement of community stakeholders in developing strategy at regional level and monitoring RDA performance
- d) ensuring that Integrated Regional Strategies are set firmly within a SD framework and required to make explicit links to SD principles and objectives,
- e) the continuing need for an independent SD champion role, currently played by Sustainability East, to promote SD and act as 'critical friend' to regional agencies and local authorities

3. This paper is designed to take forward discussion about how the proposals in “*Prosperous Places*” should be implemented within the East of England, on the assumption that the Government decides following consultation to proceed with them in broadly their present form. It is written by Sustainability East and reflects our views, but we hope it will be used constructively by others to work towards a regional consensus. We have seen the “East of England response” to “*Prosperous Places*”, submitted by the Regional Partnership Group (RPG, which brings together leading representatives of central and local government and some other key stakeholders in the region), and have sought to build on that, while dissenting from it on some issues.

4. The paper focuses on two key issues: (a) embedding SD principles in regional governance structures and strategies, in particular the SRS, and (b) ensuring effective representation for non-Governmental stakeholders (“social, economic and environmental partners”, or SEEPs) at regional level.

Embedding SD principles in regional governance structures and strategies

5. The Government is committed in “*Securing the Future*”, published in 2005, to five principles of SD – living within environmental limits, ensuring a strong, healthy and just society, achieving a sustainable economy, promoting good governance, and using sound science responsibly – and to four agreed priorities that flow from them – sustainable consumption and production, climate change and energy, natural resource protection and environmental enhancement, and sustainable communities. This commitment to SD implies giving broadly equal priority to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of quality of life (“well-being”), and pursuing those objectives in a balanced and integrated way.

6. Sustainability East along with many others has expressed concern that “*Prosperous Places*” departs from the principles of SD and gives undue priority to the economic dimension. In particular it does not acknowledge that further economic growth *may* conflict with respecting environmental limits and promoting social cohesion, and therefore should not be pursued in isolation without reference to its broader impact. Nor does it recognise that the over-riding current priority should be to help mitigate climate change and adapt to its effects. (See paragraph 10.) We see it as essential that the new governance, scrutiny and strategic planning arrangements – both the national framework laid down by central Government, and the way that the changes are implemented within the region – conform to the SD principles and objectives set out in “*Securing the Future*”. This paper focuses on what needs to be done within the East of England to ensure that the new arrangements effectively promote SD.

7. The RPG’s “East of England response” sets out a commitment in principle to use the Single Regional Strategy to pursue SD: “*The SRS should aim to improve quality of life through achieving sustainable regional development with increased rates of economic growth and delivery of positive social and environmental outcomes. The SRS should be driven by regionally specific priorities (including on*

health, crime, water resources and coastal issues, for example), while reflecting national and local priorities and ambitions.” The commitment to SD is welcome; but a more specific commitment to living within environmental limits is also required, along with a recognition that growth – still more so *increased* growth – may need to be restrained if it is in conflict with those limits. We see the role of the SRS as being to integrate and balance economic, social, environmental and resource protection objectives, with the single aim of improving quality of life for the people of the region and the wider world now and in the future.

8. The principle of a Single Regional Strategy drawing together previously disparate and sometimes conflicting strategies is wholly welcome. It is important to make strong linkages not only between the economic and spatial strategies, but also the range of other strategies – social, health, housing, cultural, environmental etc – that exist within the region.

9. Specifically, we would expect to see the SRS:

- set out a clear commitment to an integrated approach to SD, in which economic, social (including health) and environmental (including resource use) objectives are all seen as aspects of improving quality of life, and no one objective is permitted to dominate;
- set out what quality of life means in an East of England context, and how specific objectives will contribute to it; (the existing draft IRS – see paragraph 15 – provides a useful starting point);
- incorporate a suite of meaningful indicators, linked to the national SD indicators, by which the success of the strategy, and broader changes in quality of life in the region, can be measured;
- include effective appraisal tools for measuring the contribution of individual programmes and projects to the overall objectives of the strategy;
- commit to a consensual approach, whereby EEDA, GO-East, other public bodies and local authorities work in collaboration with non-governmental stakeholders, businesses and the people of the region.

10. The recognition that helping to mitigate climate change and adapt to its effects should be the overriding current priority was the single most important outcome and contribution to the Regional Spatial Strategy arising from the extensive and rigorous Examination in Public of that strategy. The Government has accepted, for example in responding to the Stern Review of the economics of climate change, that human-induced global warming is the most serious threat to quality of life on the planet. Making the East of England’s contribution to mitigating the threat, and at the same time doing all we can to equip the region to adapt to unavoidable climate change, should be clearly identified as our highest current priorities.

11. Our reservations about treating economic growth as an objective in isolation do not reflect hostility to growth as such: we recognise the opportunities that growth can offer to enhance quality of life by lifting people out of poverty and improving both public services such as education, health and transport, and individual health and well-being. However – reflecting its origins as a review of economic development and regeneration – “*Prosperous Places*” does not acknowledge that there are tensions between pursuing economic growth (and concomitant population and housing growth), and other objectives – environmental protection, resource conservation, social cohesion and public health – that are equally important to well-being, and that trade-offs may need to be made between those objectives. By contrast “*Securing the Future*” recognised those potential conflicts, and proposed a

framework of SD principles and objectives within which to try to reconcile them. That approach needs to be carried forward in the SRS.

12. RPG's "East of England response" also refers to the balance between national, regional and local objectives: "*The SRS should translate national Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets to the regional level, capture local priorities identified in Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and show how it contributes to delivery of these.*" Although the lack of machinery for democratic accountability at regional level (which we regret) limits the scope for regional institutions and strategies to diverge from central Government policy, the SRS should be able to go beyond "translating" national PSAs, and to adapt those policies to the needs and aspirations of the people of the region (expressed in part, though not comprehensively, through LAAs).

13. One starting point for the new SRS will be the most recent Regional Spatial Strategy, published in May, and Regional Economic Strategy, due to be published shortly. Both the RES and the draft RES are firmly set in a SD context. This needs to be carried forward in the SRS; but it is also crucial that a new *integrated* strategy should focus not primarily on land use planning and transport (as does the RSS) or on economic development (as does the RES), but should take a broader holistic approach to the sustainable development of the region and the wellbeing of its people.

14. "*Prosperous Places*" by contrast appears to propose a narrow approach: "*The strategies should be succinct documents setting out the region's vision for how and where sustainable economic growth would be delivered, focusing on the relationships between the regional economy and the key drivers of growth (competition, enterprise, innovation, skills, investment and employment), the environment and regeneration.*" (para. 4.5) This makes the SRS appear to be little more than the RES under a new name. In this regard the reference in the RPG's "East of England response" (see paragraph 7) to broader issues such as health, crime and water is welcome but does not go far enough.

15. We would endorse the broader approach taken in the East of England Regional Assembly's consultation draft Integrated Regional Strategy for the East of England, published in September 2007 (which in turn built on an earlier Sustainable Development Framework initially produced by Sustainability East) – even though we had many detailed criticisms of the draft. That took as its starting point a vision for SD in the region, made clear links to "*Securing the Future*", and emphasised the need to balance economic, social (including public health and crime), environmental and resource use objectives, thus setting economic development in its proper context. During the transitional period before new regional institutions are established, we would be keen to work with EERA, EEDA, GO-East and other stakeholders to develop the existing draft IRS, which – with the RSS, RES and other regional strategies as its daughter documents – is capable of being developed into a Single Integrated Regional Strategy that meets the Government's requirement, while having SD as its core and reflecting the needs and aspirations of the region's people.

Effective representation for non-Governmental stakeholders at regional level

16. "*Prosperous Places*" proposes to abolish Regional Assemblies, which bring together local authority representatives and regional "community stakeholders" (also known as "social, economic and environmental partners", or SEEPs), which *inter alia* are currently responsible for preparing Regional Spatial Strategies and for exercising scrutiny over RDAs. RAs' responsibility for RSSs would be transferred to RDAs (as part of the SRS), and their scrutiny role to a mix of new Local Authority Leaders' Forums and Parliamentary Regional Select Committees.

17. *“Prosperous Places”* is however largely silent about what will take the place of community stakeholders’ involvement in regional governance and scrutiny via RAs, saying only (paras 3.22-3) *“The new arrangements for the regional strategy place a premium on effective stakeholder engagement and management, on which the RDAs will lead. We look to each RDA to devise working arrangements which best suit the needs of their region, so that they are most effective in drawing upon the expertise of stakeholders for sound decision-making and outcomes*”

18. Stakeholders have a major contribution to make to regional governance, strategy development and scrutiny. Neither the Local Authority Leaders’ Forum nor the Regional Select Committee will effectively represent strands of opinion other than the local and the party political. Local authority leaders naturally represent the particular interests of their areas; and Regional Select Committees will be liable to view regional issues from a national party political stance, especially in the light of the recommendation from the Select Committee on Modernisation of the House of Commons (3rd Report, 2 July 2008) that their composition should reflect the overall party balance in the House rather than that among MPs from the region.

19. Stakeholders make no claim to be democratically representative. However, businesses, professional bodies, trade unions, universities, NDPBs and executive agencies, and voluntary bodies including environmental and social pressure groups, all represent major constituencies and strands of opinion, and possess valuable expertise relevant to regional governance in general and SD in particular. (Some, especially NDPBs, also have an important role in delivery.)

20. In the “East of England response” the Regional Partnership Group states that: *EEDA is proposing to establish a group of business, social, health and environmental stakeholders to enable them to contribute to the process of developing the SRS. The following principles will apply:*

stakeholder groups and EEDA should agree the mechanisms for joint working;
stakeholder representation should assist development of a single regional strategy which helps achieve sustainable development;
the stakeholder groups should be partners in the process of developing the SRS.....

Other regional partners, including the Environment Agency, Natural England, the Strategic Health Authority and Sustainability East, could also bring particular thematic expertise to bear. EEDA is also willing to discuss how the scrutiny process can involve key stakeholders, while bilateral relationships with individual stakeholder groups may also be important.

21. This is welcome so far as it goes. However, it is also important that a regional stakeholder group (a) should be free to determine its own membership, and (b) should have dedicated resources so it can commission work needed to perform its scrutiny role effectively.

22. We note that in one region, the North-West, it is proposed to invite selected stakeholders into membership of the LA Leaders’ Forum, thus recreating something like the existing Regional Assembly. This is worth considering, though it would be necessary to ensure that the stakeholder representatives were elected by and representative of a wider stakeholder group rather than merely invited by the RDA and the Forum, and could not readily be sidelined if they challenged the consensus of the central government agencies and LAs.

23. We are keen to work with EEDA, RPG and the prospective East of England LA Leaders' Forum to help develop lasting arrangements that recognise that stakeholders have a right to have their views taken into account in debate on the region's future. We see this as important to ensure that all strands of opinion and expertise can contribute to developing the region's strategy; but especially from the perspective of promoting SD, where the involvement of NDPBs and voluntary bodies from the environmental, social and other sectors (e.g. health) will help to balance the primarily economic remit of EEDA and the (legitimately) parochial perspective of LAs.

24. Meanwhile we see the role currently performed by Sustainability East as still necessary. Sustainability East is an independent body whose remit is to promote SD by bringing together people with relevant experience and expertise from across the region and across disciplines to explore issues, challenge current practice, raise awareness, change perceptions, and act as "critical friend" to regional bodies in the integration of economic, environmental and social policies. Sustainability appraisal – and providing tools for others to carry it out – is an important part of our work. Sustainability East is not a representative stakeholder forum, either in its membership or the range of issues it addresses, and does not seek that role. If satisfactory arrangements were in place, first for embedding the principles of SD in new regional governance structures, strategy development and scrutiny mechanisms, and second for reflecting all strands of regional opinion and expertise through an effective and empowered stakeholder forum, Sustainability East might have worked itself out of a job. The proposals in "*Prosperous Places*", as elaborated within the region by RPG, do not yet give cause for confidence that those conditions will be met.

Conclusion

25. This paper has been written to provoke discussion in the region at large, and as a basis for engaging Sustainability East and other stakeholders with EEDA and RPG as they develop their plans for implementing "*Prosperous Places*" in the East of England. We welcome views from all sources.

Sustainability East
September 2008

APPENDIX B EMBEDDING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE POST SNR LANDSCAPE – LOCAL PILOT ACTIVITY

The local pilot initiative forms part of the project 'Embedding sustainable development (SD) in the post SNR landscape in the East of England'. The local pilot will provide a model for embedding SD principles in local strategy and delivery of economic development reflecting local authorities enhanced devolved powers under SNR.

Aim

The aim of the local pilot study is to provide a deeper understanding of the mechanisms and structures required to embed SD principles into local strategy development and delivery of economic development anticipating post SNR arrangements.

By providing a better understanding of how to integrate social, economic and environmental objectives in strategy development and delivery, it should enable partners to take a more strategic approach to mainstreaming sustainable development locally. The focus is therefore to develop a "bottom-up" picture of delivering local sustainability anticipating post SNR arrangements, showing where there is conflict at regional and local levels and recommending where policy or structural change would make a positive difference. This will be achieved by focussing on the development and delivery of the Greater Norwich Economic Strategy (GNES).

Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

- Promote understanding of SD amongst GNES partners and facilitate a broader dialogue between stakeholders recognising that the GNES covers a number of LAs with differing needs and priorities
- Shape how the partners could work together more effectively in the future
- Explore how SD can be embedded in development and delivery of the GNES
- Take the first steps towards an action plan for implementing sustainable development as part of the GNES
- Look at the relevant LAA indicators and consider the impact of GNES on broader SD targets
- Explore how regional strategies are interpreted at the local level in terms of sustainable development (the 'golden thread' of strategy development), and identify barriers and solutions
- Develop clear messages for all tiers on the implications of SNR from an SD perspective

It is envisaged that the outputs of the local pilot will be used to develop a best practice guide for local authorities and partners on embedding SD into strategies, processes and targets post SNR. The findings will be shared at a regional conference in winter 2008/9.

Activities

To help achieve our objectives, the following activities will be undertaken:

- 1) A light-touch sustainability appraisal framework to assess how far the proposed GNES and its evidence base meet sustainable development objectives. The primary

aim is to learn lessons about how sustainable development objectives, targets and actions can be addressed in an economic strategy. Since we cannot necessarily assume that GNES will be able to take on board comments raised through a sustainability appraisal, this work should be less about a scrutiny of the GNES and more about the learning experience to inform work going forward on GNES and other similar strategies.

2) Seek feedback from selected experts on the contribution of the GNES to sustainable development and explore potential delivery mechanisms. Experts should include those from the EU, sustainable development and academia.

3) Bring together key regional and local representatives to explore the achievement of regional targets via local strategy delivery whilst ensuring sustainable development.

4) Bring together key partners in change to develop a long term perspective on future sustainable economic growth, including:

- developing an understanding of the drivers of change
- creating appropriate scenarios for enterprise in 2050 to illustrate the likely results of predicted social, economic and environmental trends and of possible future policy directions
- assessing strategic implications
- exploring how partners could work together more effectively in the future.

5) A published report outlining clear and specific actions at regional and local level regarding how strategy development and delivery could be improved

Project management

The local pilot study is being commissioned by Government Office for the East of England (GO-East) on behalf of Sustainability East and will be managed by a small client group comprising Norwich City Council, Norfolk County Council and Sustainability East (who are also represented on the main project steering group).

The group will meet regularly to advise on the direction and implementation of the project and monitor progress and ensure adherence to the project objectives.

The Sustainability East Project Coordinator will provide project management support. A suitably qualified consultant will be appointed to undertake the project activities.

The project is currently out to tender (deadline for applications 6 October). See <http://www.sustainabilityeast.org.uk/tenders.php> for more information and to read the project specification.

The project must be completed by February 2009.

APPENDIX C – BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE REGIONAL FUNDING ADVICE EXERCISE

The Regional Funding Advice exercise is part of the Government's long-term commitment to strengthen a dialogue with regional partners to drive forward sustainable economic development. It provides indicative regional funding allocations for transport, housing and regeneration, and economic development, and offers regions the opportunity to provide advice to Government on regional investment priorities.

The RFA is a crucial opportunity for the East of England to enhance its input into Government policy and public spending decisions, whilst promoting regional priorities nationally, and increasing the Government's understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by the region. It is also an important component of the wider conversation between the Government, the business community, local authorities, the voluntary sector and individuals on how the region's economic needs are changing and how to address these in the most efficient and effective way in the short to medium term.

The advice needs to be:

- **effective** to ensure it has the desired impact on the decisions on the public spending in the region and address key infrastructure needs
- **prioritised** and evidenced, to ensure the spend is allocated to address key regional economic, environmental and social challenges, whilst also reflecting the wider national priorities
- **integrated** to demonstrate not only linkages across the themes and how these together help drive regional economic performance and growth, but also show a clear fit with existing regional strategies (RES, RSS, Joint Implementation Plan) and pan-regional initiatives
- **accepted** and owned by the key regional and sub-regional partners, to secure agreement on key priorities and joined up delivery at the most appropriate spatial level.

The final RFA document will need to combine together into a coherent story the advice on investment priorities for transport, housing and regeneration, economic development and skills developed by the regional and sub-regional partners, bringing out linkages across the themes.

Background

The first regional funding allocations exercise was conducted in 2005, following the Government's publication of indicative funding allocations for transport, housing and economic development for the 2004 Comprehensive Spending Review years and sought regions' advice on their priorities. Its key aims were to improve regional priority setting, enhance regional partnership capacity and develop the regional evidence base.

The exercise was considered a success as it improved a central-regional dialogue, prompted a more focussed discussion around priorities between regional and sub-regional agencies and strengthened alignment between regional economic and spatial strategies.

The second round of the RFA, announced in July 2008 builds on this success and takes it further, by expanding the scope with the inclusion of regeneration activity under the housing stream, factoring in skills needs consideration in enhancing the region's economic performance, and taking forward the proposals of the Sub-national Review (SNR).

The overall co-ordination of the RFA process is the responsibility of the Government Office for the East of England (Go-East), working with EEDA, EERA and other key regional agencies, such as the Highways Agency, English Partnerships, Housing Corporation and others.

The Regional Partnership Group (RPG) will oversee the development of the RFA and will sign it off prior to presenting to the Government.

Process of Developing the RFA

Work has commenced on the four work-streams, with individual working groups set up to develop advice for each of the themes, engaging relevant partners and identifying interdependencies with other work-streams and the East of England Implementation Plan currently being developed. The implementation plan will reflect the wider aims of the region and provide the longer term context alongside the RFA process to demonstrate a stronger integrated approach to investment planning.

APPENDIX D BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE JOINT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The region's spatial strategy (RSS), known as the East of England Plan, was finalised and published by Government in May 2008. The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) is expected to be adopted in Spring 2008. In the light of this, and reflecting the Government's aspiration for a Single Regional Strategy through the Sub National Review, the regional partners EEDA, EERA and Go-East see an excellent opportunity to further align the two strategies and facilitate joint working through the development of a Joint Implementation Plan.

EEDA, EERA and Go-East have worked together on early scoping work for taking forward a joint RES/RSS Implementation Plan. This takes into account the work that has been completed to date on implementation planning, the RES consultation report and the views of key stakeholders and the latest development through SNR.

The Joint Implementation Plan (JIP) will define a prioritised, phased and resourced programme to deliver the two leading regional strategies and aligned local objectives. It will:

- Improve the coherence and effectiveness of RES and RSS delivery
- Provide a pathfinder approach in moving towards the Government's proposed Single Regional Strategy, by setting out a framework with a stronger emphasis on delivery planning
- Provide the basis for a robust, prioritised response to the forthcoming, expanded Regional Funding Allocation exercise, drawing upon and integrating individual theme prioritisation exercises

The plan will:

1. Define a prioritised, phased and resourced programme to deliver the growth objectives of the premier regional strategies and aligned local objectives.
2. Identify a set of investment priorities to ensure sustained public investment and the flexibility to negotiate and align future investment choices.
3. Improve the way we work together at sub-regional and regional level on investment planning, prioritisation and delivery.

The actions and priorities comprising the plan will need to be consistent with the sustainability frameworks used to appraise the RES and RSS. The partners therefore require a process of appraisal/proofing for the JIP that builds on and adds value to the detailed work already undertaken for the ISA of the RES, as well as the SA/SEA and Habitats Directive assessments accompanying the RSS.

Sustainable development

The partners are keen to ensure that the JIP reflects the high standards of sustainability developed in the process of drafting both the RES and RSS. Accordingly, an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal of the East of England Implementation Plan is being undertaken. This constitutes a structured approach to assess how the potential performance of the East of England Implementation Plan may contribute towards achieving sustainable development and includes:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
- Sustainability Appraisal
- Appropriate Assessment
- Equality Impact Assessment
- Rural and Urban Proofing