

INFORMATION NOTE 12
IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Regional Assembly

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SOUTH WEST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

INFORMATION NOTE 12

Implementation and Monitoring

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this note is to provide a brief overview of, and explain the approach taken to, the implementation and monitoring of the draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The note provides a summary of:
- The current state of the region;
 - The main issues;
 - The processes through which the approach has been developed;
 - How the draft RSS addresses implementation and monitoring;
 - The evidence behind development of the implementation plan.
- 1.2 This note does not cover specific implementation and delivery issues for individual SSCTs.

2. State of the Region

- 2.1 The arrangements for monitoring the RSS are a development of the processes developed for monitoring RPG10. Since 2002, an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) has been produced looking at progress in the implementation of RPG10. This has been based on good practice guidance issued periodically by the DCLG and its predecessors and is focussed on a standard set of monitoring indicators. These differentiate between “context” indicators, which measure changes in the external environment that need to have a policy response (unemployment rates are an example), “process” or activity indicators that measure a policy response (e.g. housing units allocated locally in development plans) and “outcome” indicators that measure the policy consequences (e.g. changes in families recorded as statutorily homeless).
- 2.2 The AMR addresses the possible consequences of the direction of change recorded by the indicators and compares this with the regional strategy’s intended outcomes. Conclusions are then drawn into an initial set of policy implications and broad actions. Eventually, this information base develops into a starting point for eventual review of the strategy.
- 2.3 In terms of implementation, there is currently no single delivery framework or action plan which pulls together a strategic overview of what is required in order to deliver development in the region. Historically, there has been little strategic guidance for implementation and delivery beyond Structure Plan content. RPG10 did not have an implementation plan and it was up to local and strategic authorities as the key delivery bodies to ensure that development takes place in the places identified through the development plan system working with other agencies and organisations and the private sector.

- 2.4 However, there have been and continue to be a number of strategic action / delivery plans produced by various regional organisations focusing on delivering regional strategies such as the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) Delivery Plan produced by the Regional Development Agency. There are also numerous programmes, initiatives and mechanisms aimed at delivering strategic growth such as The Way Ahead (the region's response to the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan), the New Growth Points programme and those proposed in the Regional Funding Allocation (RFA) advice submitted to Government including initiatives to improve the capacity to deliver. Others are documented in the submitted Implementation Plan.
- 2.5 The draft RSS implementation plan responds to Government guidance on the need for a delivery plan to ensure that strategic development is delivered in the right places at the right time in line with the RSS and also to ensure that the wider RSS policies are implemented. It also seeks to paint a picture of what mechanisms are required to deliver the proposed levels of development and what key infrastructure could be needed to deliver.

3. Monitoring and Implementation Issues

- 3.1 Key issues facing monitoring and implementation in the South West are likely to be common with other regions to an extent and the Implementation Plan documents the key problems facing effective delivery in section 1.3. However, they can be summarised as follows:

Co-ordination

- The need for better co-ordination of coherent and timely delivery between key delivery agencies and organisations – the RSS Implementation Plan provides an opportunity for key strategic requirements for the delivery of major development to be stated up-front and for key “show stoppers” to be identified and provides a platform for more effective cross-boundary spatial planning.
- The need for better alignment of regional strategies under the region's overarching strategy, the Integrated Regional Strategy: *Just Connect!* and with the RSS – the RSS Implementation Plan provides an opportunity to reflect the spatial needs of other strategies.
- The Implementation Plan gives the opportunity to provide longer-term certainty and advanced notice of major infrastructure requirements to allow business plans and financial programmes to be set.

Funding and Investment

- The need for major investment and smarter use of funds to deliver.
- The identification of investment priorities established through the draft RSS and RFA process.
- A package of funding sources and investment will be needed to ensure major development happens – the Implementation Plan can be used to identify from which funding streams investment is coming to enable development.

Overcoming Barriers

- Maintenance of a robust evidence base by local and strategic authorities to justify requirements to support sustainable communities.

- Improving the transition between evidence gathering through the monitoring process and eventual “feed” through to policy decisions and action.
- Use of innovative approaches to ensure that funds are available for a major development as a whole such as pooling section 106 obligations or establishing equalisation agreements across development sites.
- The need for effective master-planning for urban extensions.
- Early engagement and partnership working between key delivery agencies at the start of the process or ‘frontloading’.
- The need to build capacity within local authorities to ensure that major development can be brought forward including the use of Local Delivery Teams as proposed in the region’s RFA and The Way Ahead submissions.
- The need to identify and fill skills gaps, particularly in the public sector.
- Development of innovative funding solutions such as the Regional Infrastructure Fund, a concept being developed by the RDA, SWRA and Government Office for the South West (GOSW) to ‘pump-prime’ or forward fund key infrastructure. The concept has been promoted in the RFA, The Way Ahead and Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 submissions to the Government with a joint South West / South East prospectus being submitted to Department for Communities and Local Government, Treasury and Department for Transport at the end of 2006.
- The need to disseminate good practice examples of delivery of successful major sustainable development.
- The provision of policy guidance for local authorities on the implementation of specific draft RSS policies – for example the delivery of sustainable communities.
- The need to explore appropriate Member and officer structures for the delivery of development and implementation of the draft RSS.

Evidence Base and Monitoring

- The need to assess gaps in data and match existing indicators as far as possible to enable new policies to be monitored.
- Reliance on local and strategic authorities to collect consistent data.
- The requirement for local authorities to submit data to the Regional Planning Body (RPB) is not statutory.
- The need to select data sources which are updated with sufficient regularity to identify policy issues.
- The need to provide a reliable technical solution to collecting data from local authorities.

4. Process

- 4.1 The South West Regional Assembly’s approach to monitoring is based on the principle of co-operative working with partner organisations throughout the South West. A region-wide Strategic Information Providers Group (SIP) agrees the monitoring approach and content. The Group works closely with Regional Assembly officers and the SW Regional Observatory team to design and implement an Internet based data entry system to allow local authorities to enter data on-line direct from their offices. SIP Group members provided further co-ordination and support at the local level through the organisation of seven local SIP groups.

- 4.2 The collection of monitoring data from local authorities has previously been carried out by way of an online questionnaire. Future arrangements are likely to utilise an interoperable database such as iGather, which has been developed as a result of a South West project to make the collection and sharing of data (initially relating to Sustainability Assessment) easier and more effective.
- 4.3 An interface document is required between the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) and the Implementation Plan in order to translate trends into policy responses. As part of the developing RSS monitoring process, a summary of key trends and necessary policy actions will be produced to link the AMR closely to the Implementation Plan.
- 4.4 The development of the Implementation Plan was based on guidance given in PPS11 and the interpretation of that advice. Other regions' draft Implementation Plans were also examined to help determine the content and coverage. Drafts of the plan were circulated to colleagues in-house and in other agencies including the GOSW.
- 4.5 The drafting of the Implementation Plan commenced during the latter stages of development of the draft RSS in 2005 given the need for the Plan to reflect the draft RSS and take into account section 4(4) advice from the strategic authorities and JSAs with regard to the sub-regional spatial strategies in particular.
- 4.6 The Assembly's Member Regional Spatial Planning and Transport Group (RSPTG) had the task of overseeing the development of the draft RSS and the Group considered drafts of the Implementation Plan during its development including an outline of its structure ahead of full drafting.
- 4.7 The Assembly's Planning Officers' Group (POG) is comprised of strategic and local authority planning officers from around the region and representatives from key regional agencies and organisations and met regularly during development of the draft RSS. The draft Implementation Plan was shared with this group.

5. Implementation and Monitoring in the Draft RSS

- 5.1 The existing monitoring system is being developed to address the need for greater effectiveness in gathering, accessing and assessing the policy implications of evidence. The early stages of this development are being piloted through changes in the existing RPG10 AMR processes and will be further developed in 2007. This will result in a monitoring system that is fit for purpose in producing first the transitional AMR for RPG10 and RSS at the end of 2007, and the first full RSS AMR after the formal publication of the RSS in 2008.
- 5.2 The need for an Implementation Plan is clearly stated in PPS11 and is a logical requirement for any strategy which seeks to deliver change. The development of the Implementation Plan was rooted in interpretation of the advice in PPS11 and through consultation and analysis outlined above. The

Plan uses the evidence behind the policies helps to develop “how” and “by whom” policies will be delivered.

- 5.3 Section 3.8 of the draft RSS deals with Implementation, summarising the need for and role of the Plan and the importance of joint working across functional areas to ensure that the spatial strategy is delivered. Section 3.8.1 refers directly back to the separate Implementation Plan and AMR and 3.8.2 focuses on joint working culminating in Development Policy J which requires local authorities to work together with key stakeholders to ensure effective planning for development across administrative boundaries.
- 5.4 The Implementation Plan itself states up-front that the Plan is a starting point and will continue to be shaped and informed by the continuing process through to publication of the final RSS and dialogue with key stakeholders including an improving understanding of what major infrastructure will be required at the Areas of Search. The Plan is set out in three sections.
- 5.5 The first section provides context and deals with the role and review of the Plan, identifying roles of key delivery agencies and organisations, types of funding used for delivery and mechanisms available. Key implementation issues for the region are identified (as summarised in paragraph 3.1 of this note). It also restates the region’s major priorities for investment over the longer term of the strategy.
- 5.6 The second section provides a framework for implementation and sets out for each policy and key bold statement in the draft RSS, a summary / key action of the policy, desirable / measurable outcomes, lead organisation/s for implementation, other key partners in delivery, appropriate delivery mechanism and timescales for delivery / targets. The decision to cover these aspects for all policies was based on guidance in PPS11 (chapter 3) and from analysis of other Implementation Plans at regional and sub-regional levels. For development at the Strategically Significant Cities and Towns (SSCTs) the position is further informed through identification of the appropriate delivery strategy(ies), key infrastructure required (where known) and key funding required (to be confirmed). A section measuring performance from monitoring data is identified for each section of the draft RSS although not completed due to the stage at which development of indicators for the RSS was at the time of submission (as explained above) and because it would be inappropriate to report on progress against a strategy which is “unadopted”.
- 5.7 The third section appendices provide supporting detail for the Plan. Appendix 1 identifies those Area Action Plans in the region which the RPB considers as priority in order to deliver at the SSCTs, particularly important to support Development Policy A, F and J and the sub-regional (SR) policies. The list will also be an important reference point for the RPB’s conformity role. Appendix 2 is a forward work programme for the implementation of the RSS and statement of the continuing work required to take the implementation plan further forward. Appendix 3 reproduces the region’s agreed priorities for transport investment from the RFA submission made in January 2006.

6. Further work

- 6.1 The Strategic Sustainability Assessment (SSA) is being used as a basis for developing significant effects indicators for monitoring the impact of the RSS. The SSA puts forward recommendations for selecting indicators to measure the difference between the predicted and actual effects of RSS policies. These indicators will be related to each of the headline objectives of the SSA.
- 6.2 The emerging RSS monitoring processes take full account of guidance laid out in *'Regional Spatial Strategy Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide'* (ODPM, 2005), which outlines suggested methods for selecting and analysing indicators. This approach is objectives-led and focuses on the link between monitoring and implementation.
- 6.3 The forward work programme of the Implementation Plan recognises that the Plan needs to evolve and respond to change. It is also clear that the published Plan only reflects how far it could be progressed in the time available ahead of submission. Since publication, work has continued to develop the Plan in terms of its structure and content and the various components and mechanisms which need to be in place to deliver. The following list is a summary of progress:
- Further thinking is suggesting that the Implementation Plan should focus on development policies rather than wider issue policies and that an annual review of the Plan is too frequent. Tying the Plan to a 3 year cycle matching funding streams and programmes would be more appropriate.
 - The Assembly and RDA have put together a proposal to form an Employment Land, Sites and Premises Group to ensure implementation of the employment policies in the RSS and RES (see information note 9).
 - The Assembly has continued to engage with key service infrastructure providers to ascertain the likelihood of any “showstoppers” resulting from the draft RSS proposals;
 - The Assembly has continued to engage with strategic and local authorities about delivery;
 - The Assembly has continued, through its involvement in The Way Ahead initiative, to work with SWRDA, GOSW and authorities representing the region’s “Key Areas” on development of the Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF), including reference in the region’s submission to the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 and submission in December 2006 of a joint South West / South East Prospectus to HMT, DCLG and DfT providing details of how such a fund could work;
 - The Assembly continues to work with regional partners researching how best to deliver sustainable communities, with the aim of providing guidance (a decision making framework) for local authorities. This includes work commissioned to explore the delivery of carbon neutral development *“Supporting and Delivering Carbon Neutrality in the South West”*. The Assembly and SWRDA are also progressing work which will examine what is

required to develop sustainable communities and successful urban extensions.

- The RDA and local authorities have recently confirmed the formation of a Local Delivery Team for the Cranbrook development East of Exeter. The Assembly is represented on the Steering Group.

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