

**1**                    ***BRIEFING PAPER ON THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF THE  
DRAFT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE SOUTH EAST PLAN***

**1.1**                    ***INTRODUCTION***

This Briefing Paper summarises the views of the Sustainability Appraisal team on the Draft Implementation Plan to be discussed by the RPC. It supplements the SA report that has already been produced and takes account of the latest amendments to the Implementation Plan.

**1.2**                    ***SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS***

The Draft Implementation Plan to be discussed by the RPC makes significant attempts to address the key sustainability issues highlighted by the SA of the Draft South East Plan. The approach and actions it presents are well integrated and seek to address and influence key issues and delivery bodies in a way that will make the Plan more sustainable. Key areas of concern such as transport, climate change, waste, water and biodiversity are all addressed with concrete proposals being put forward as to how current negative trends could be addressed.

The Implementation Plan has taken account of the need for behavioural change and this has been integrated into its approach and actions in a coherent way. Many actions recommended by regional stakeholders at the recent regional workshop on behavioural change are reflected in the Plan.

The Plan also implicitly recognises the need to be proactive in influencing delivery partners at all levels to embrace behavioural change as a key determinant of successful growth for the region. It does not seek to conceal the scale of the action and changes required.

The Assembly along with other partners in the region is continuing to carry out wide-ranging research to supplement and update the evidence base for the South East Plan. This is extremely important. Much of this work is directly relevant to the overall sustainability of the Plan.

From the perspective of sustainable development it is important that the Implementation Plan has moved beyond a 'business as usual' approach to delivery and is seeking to align strategic planning across a wide range of sectors, funding priorities and delivery mechanisms with regional priorities. This is a significant shift.

The Implementation Plan also has a consistent message on the issue of management and the importance of managing both new and existing infrastructure and other assets in more effective and efficient ways that reduce wastage of funds and material resources.

### 1.3 *DELIVERY ACTIONS*

A number of additions have been made to the Draft Implementation Plan to be discussed by the RPC which are of direct relevance to sustainability.

Many of these additions are a direct result of the outcomes from the recent regional workshop on behavioural change. Key additions are indicated below:

- D2 – Economy

The identification of the need for Government action on low carbon is an important addition to the Implementation Plan.

The identification of actions to promote the reduction of materials consumption and the economic opportunities associated with resource efficiency is also very important.

- D4 – Communications and Transport

The recognition of the need for increased revenues and new incentives for non-car modes of transport and to support behavioural change is important. Similarly, the need for Local Transport Plans to emphasis measures that reduce the environmental impacts of transport is also an important addition.

- D5 – Sustainable Natural Resource Management

The actions targeting water metering (including existing housing stock), creation of targets for household water efficiency and the creation of a Water Savings Trust are all significant additions to the Implementation Plan.

Actions encouraging the procurement of low CO2 emission vehicles by public bodies are also positive.

The Plan also now explicitly recognises the need for LDDs to reflect the outcomes of Strategic Flood Risk Assessments in their policy frameworks.

- D5 – Energy Efficiency and renewable Energy

The actions relating to micro-generation for new and existing homes, council tax rebates as a mechanism for encouraging improved energy efficiency and Environmental Direct targeting energy conservation awareness and education and the actions relating to ‘smart metering’ are all significant additions to the Implementation Plan.

It is also important that the Plan recognises the economic opportunities arising from energy conservation and energy efficiency.

- D6 – Waste Management

Additional actions aimed at regular reviews of waste management regulations and incentives for industry, local authorities and consumers are important as is the addition of an action on education and awareness as a support to behavioural change.

- D11 – Social, Cultural and health Dimensions

The addition of a Public Health dimension to LDFs and tackling social exclusion is a significant addition.

#### 1.4

#### *AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN*

In the view of the SA, the actions relating to D7 (Countryside and Landscape Management), D8 (Management of the Built and historic Environment) and D10 (Tourism and Related Sports and Recreation) would benefit from a further review with key delivery agencies. At present the actions in these areas seem very much to reflect the status quo.

In addition, it is the view of the SA that health issues might be more broadly reflected across a number of policy areas where health benefits could be achieved. Clearer links on this issue could also be made to the Regional Economic Strategy and its priorities concerning economic participation rates, socio-economic deprivation and the social determinants of health.

As the Implementation Plan develops we would also expect to see actions being added as a result of the Assembly’s ongoing programme of research and key activities such as the Appropriate Assessment of the Draft South East Plan and the Implementation Plan.