

Regional Sustainability Framework - Consultation Analysis

1. Context

- 1.1 As part of the review of the Integrated Regional Framework (IRF) the South East England Regional Assembly, with partners, has produced the Regional Sustainability Framework (RSF). The revised Sustainability Framework for the South East will guide action in the region by establishing the overarching framework within which all regional strategies and policies should be formulated and implemented. In doing this, the RSF is ensuring compatibility across regional strategies by ensuring consistency of vision and direction of policy and action.
- 1.2 To assist the preparation of the RSF, the Regional Assembly, with the support of the IRF working group, and on behalf of the Sustainable Futures Group (SFG) has completed a 12-week stakeholder consultation. The objective of the consultation was to raise awareness of the RSF and sustainable development and to seek the views of a wide range of stakeholders. This paper provides a summary of the results of the consultation.
- 1.3 To support the development of the RSF a high-level appraisal has also been developed which applies the Sustainability Appraisal process of testing the objectives against a sustainability framework, in the case the RSF's own objectives. This has had the benefit of highlighting conflicts between the objectives and identifying opportunities for improvement. Sub objectives were also included to inform the testing process. These ensure coverage of rural and equalities issues. To identify any gaps the RSF has also been tested against the five principles outlined in the UK Sustainable Development Strategy, Securing the Future (STF). This paper also details the findings of this high-level appraisal.

2. RSF Consultation

- 2.1 A consultation flyer and an email alert were sent out to a total of approx 1,400 stakeholders inviting them to complete an online or hardcopy questionnaire. These stakeholders included:
 - Assembly Members and their nominating bodies, Local Authorities, Local Strategic Partnerships, councillors, chief executives, relevant officers, town and parish councils.
 - Regional partners – e.g. SEEDA, Government Office for the South East, Environment Agency, RAISE, LSC and health partners.
 - Stakeholders - Organisations who have existing close relationship with the Assembly (e.g. Natural England, English Heritage, Strategic Rail Authority, and Highways Agency).
 - Other Interested Groups - for example the South East England Biodiversity Forum.

2.2 The following methods of engagement were used:

- A dedicated web page with an online questionnaire and hardcopies available on request.
- Two well attended (over 100 delegates) sub regional workshops in November. The debate focused on the priorities and what they might mean. A written transcript was produced following each day. Delegates were also encouraged to submit written comments on the priorities and other elements of the RSF.
- Other members of the SFG and IRF working group were encouraged to cascade the consultation through their own networks. For example GOSE ran workshops focussing on the questions set out in the consultation as part of 'Sustainable Development Week 2007'.
- A debate on the RSF took place at the full Regional Assembly meeting in July, the Regional Planning Committee in September and the Assembly Executive Committee in October.
- Members of the IRF working group attended regional stakeholders meetings including the South East England Biodiversity Forum and a Local Strategic Partnerships' event.
- Members of the Youth Parliament were also involved and arranged for the completion of a number of dedicated youth questionnaires.
- A press release which resulted in 18 articles in local and trade press.

2.3 Including responses to the online questionnaire, responses to the youth parliament and written feedback received through the workshops over 300 responses have been received.

2.4 Annex 1 provides a breakdown of those views expressed either online, or in hardcopy, through the consultation workshops or via the youth questionnaire.

2.5 Annex 2 details the recommendations from the high-level appraisal of the RSF.

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Annex I - Detailed Summary of Consultation Responses

I. Introduction

I.1 Consultation responses were received in the form of online responses to the questionnaire, written responses, the transcript to the workshops and responses to the youth questionnaire. Percentages are given from the total number of consultees who answered a given question. For those consultees who did not respond to the question, summary detail is provided in the relevant boxes.

Question 1 - Do you support the vision?

Questionnaire response	42% Strongly Agreed with the vision and 47% Tended to Agree
Comments and other written responses - key messages	<p>Key Messages regarding the vision include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add reference to strong economy • Shorten • Better language - less public sector • Make vision more prominent • Add built and historic environment or make just environment • Sustainable prosperity open to interpretation • Get rid of 'to come' and 'future generations' • Changes 'respects' to 'lives within' or 'protects and enhances' • Reference to quality of natural environment
Stakeholder workshops	N/A

Question 2 - Do you support the two overarching goals?

Questionnaire response	40% Strongly Agreed with the goals and 42% Tended to Agree
Comments and other written responses - key messages	<p>Support for the two goals with just a few suggestions for change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to explain relationship with the rest of the framework • Whether should be two or an extra goal (balancing SD) e.g. social justice • Two goals may hinder integration. • Agreement over ISEW but questions about what it is and how much the gap would have to reduced and by when
Stakeholder workshops	N/A

Question 3 - Do you support the priorities?

Questionnaire response	39% Strongly Agreed with the priorities and 39% Tended to Agree
Comments and other written responses - key messages	<p>Broad agreement with the priorities but a number of specific changes were proposed including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion over what the priorities mean and that they represent areas where the region is underperforming and action is urgently required. • Need to see rationale for choosing and policing arrangements. • Need to set out key challenges and how they can be delivered. • Need stronger more challenging targets. • Need to give examples of what success looks like. • What is the difference between carbon and ecological footprint. • Support for extra priorities including - 'To achieve and maintain a high quality environment in the South East. • Need for parity amongst priorities, could include extra economic or social priority e.g. regional diversity and access to service. • Merge resource use and carbon emissions as they are the same. • Behaviour change should be a priority. • Need to communicate sense of urgency.
Stakeholder workshops	<p>Broadly similar to the consultation questionnaire responses. Other key messages include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions regarding carbon footprint and how it would be measured, suggestion that emissions would be better measure. • Need a stronger emphasis on leadership • Behaviour change should be a priority. • 80-90% carbon reduction target by 2050 • Living Wage for the deprived. • Need economic priority • Fourth priority should focus on deprived. • The role of LAAs - must link into that process • The role of WFD • Must ensure that behavioural change does not have a negative influence on the deprived. • What is the role of Culture? • Needs to identify who should be doing what? <p>One table discussion put forward alternative priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be two priorities Quality of life and One Planet.

Youth Questionnaire	<p>177 young people aged between 10 and 18 were asked how they felt about the priorities and how they would change their behaviour. The responses included:</p> <p><u>Priority 1 - Resource Use</u></p> <p>84% felt concerned or very concerned that South East England uses a disproportionately large amount of the earth's resources. Whilst 83% of young people cited "reusing, recycling and reducing" as ways of reducing our resource use, less than 10% named renewable energy sources, such as wind or sun.</p> <p>58% considered a variety of awareness campaigns as the best way to encourage people to change their lifestyles; whilst almost 16% felt targeted tax rebates would be effective.</p> <p><u>Priority 2 - Climate Change Mitigation</u></p> <p>78% considered this priority important or very important. Most (almost 60%) felt they could contribute most by walking, cycling and using public transport more frequently. However, whilst over one third suggested they could be more vigilant by turning lights off and pulling plugs out of sockets only 1% suggested they would or could turn heating down.</p> <p><u>Priority 3 - Climate Change Adaptation</u></p> <p>64% considered this priority important or very important. All said they were aware of the potential impacts of climate change.</p> <p><u>Priority 4 - Ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity to benefit from and contribute to the region's sustainable prosperity</u></p> <p>59% felt this priority was important or very important. 35% considered volunteering as the most effective means of reducing poverty or making the region more inclusive, whilst 18% felt donations to charities was most important. 9% considered greater equality of opportunity as critical to change.</p>
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Question 4 - Do you think the RSF objectives, indicators and targets are robust and cover all of the sustainable development issues in the South East

Questionnaire response	57% Tended to Agree with the objectives 33% Tended to Disagree
Comments and other written responses - key messages	<p>A number of very specific comments regarding particular objectives targets and indicators. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 1 - Changes to indicators and objective e.g. add 'suitable to their needs' to the objective • Objective 2 - Add indicator on obesity • Indicator on anti social behaviour • Use Access to natural green space standard • Suggestion that Climate Change targets are reviewed in the light of new government targets • Specific issues with countryside indicators e.g. data gaps regarding countryside indicators • New indicator suggested for heritage assets • Suggestion that heritage included as a separate objective • Strong concern over the transport objective, could result in an increase in transport • Need for separate waste stream targets • Suggestions for changes to biodiversity indicators e.g. 18c target should read favourable conservation status • Consistency with draft South East England Health Strategy • Very specific recommendation for extra indicators on homelessness and health inequalities • Indicators on physical activity • Should be about levelling up the rather than narrowing the gap • South East economy should be compared with best performing global economies • Concerns over appropriate use of PDL
Stakeholder workshops	N/A

Question 5 - Do you agree with the recommendations of the CAG report?

Questionnaire response	68% Tended to Agree with the objectives targets and indicators and 16% Didn't know.
Comments and other written responses - key messages	<p>A number of responses which were broadly similar to those for question 4. Other key messages include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review indicators and targets to take account of those published in the draft South East England Health Strategy • Support for CAG proposals to reword objective 10 to include Smart growth • Support for recommendations from CAG around non car modes - Objective 7 • Feeling that economic objective actually differ and should remain • Support for view that flooding should remain separate to climate change adaptation objective • Support for splitting Climate Change objective into two parts • Support expressed for inclusion of new objective on consumption
Stakeholder workshops	N/A

Question 6 - For consistency do you think the RSF indicators should reflect those used at the National and/or Local Level?

Questionnaire response	71% National and Local 20% Other
Other written responses - key messages	<p>Strong support for national and local indicators, although generally felt that there needs to be flexibility to set regionally specific indicators.</p> <p>Also strong support for making the indicators consistent with those from the LAA</p>
Stakeholder workshops	General comments that needed to be linked to the LAA process

Question 7 - Is the purpose of the RSF clear?

Questionnaire response	27% Strongly agreed 52% Tended to agree
Other written responses - key messages	<p>A number of comments and suggestions were made regarding the structure, layout and communication of the RSF. Other key messages include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs further publicity to be rolled out across the region, particularly among decision makers. • Purpose should be in the introduction of Exec Summary, upfront. • What it is for needs to be stated in one sentence • Not clear who will monitor and police it • Contradictory goals • Links to LDFs needs stronger explanation • Would be helpful if the RSF set the scene for how the RSF can be delivered via which strategies, partnerships, businesses or communities and which should focus on what areas. • A quick guide might be useful, especially for those bits other than the SA guide • Relationship between vision, goals, priorities and objectives is confusing, needs structure
Stakeholder workshops	<p>Similar comments were made at the workshops. Other key messages include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could look more like a framework - the priorities, choices, clashes of policy and gaps and then feed into regional and sub regional strategies and plans • Need involvement of business • Can the framework say, when is it the role of business, when is it the role of community groups and when the role of policy

Question 8 - Is it clear who should use the RSF?

Questionnaire response	26% Strongly agreed 55% Tended to agree
Other written responses - key messages	The comments regarding who should use the RSF were broadly similar those about the purpose. Other comments include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Needs to engage business and VCS community?• Could set out what each user group should use it for• Not clear who targeted at• Needs to be linked to LAA indicator set and strategies and organizations that deliver it.
Stakeholder workshops	Similar general comments were made at the workshops: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need to involve emergency services in plans• Need much more on the role of business• Need strong communication of the RSF and the SFG

Question 9 - Case Studies

Generally it was felt that the RSF needed more case studies. 15 case studies were put forward through the consultation process.

Question 10 - General Comments

<p>Written responses - key messages</p>	<p>A number of general comments were made these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RSF needs to be more ambitious and stretching with a more long term perspective and not be an amalgamation of existing targets • Key challenges being flagged up • Needs outline of objectives and targets with timescales • Set the scene for how RSF can be delivered • How the RSF can be policed - SFG and working group • Add a glossary • RSF needs to be ambitious and stretching with a long term perspective. • Link document together better, and link to reporting requirements. • Needs equality Impact assessment of RSF • Reference MLA partners and cultural community that can change people's behaviour • Behaviour change should not worsen the situation of those most in need • Need to work out effects of migration • Clarify ISEW • Add reference to water framework directive • Should be statutory • Need reference to Ecological networks for Biodiversity to adapt to Climate Change • Needs reference to leadership, need to engage leaders • Needs reference to EU regulations, e.g. water framework directive • Needs to engage with businesses • Quality of environment and carbon emissions rather than footprint • Look at RSFs in other regions • Document should reflect the diversity of the region • Make reference to Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Plan
<p>Stakeholder workshops</p>	<p>Similar comments were made at the stakeholder workshop, other comment included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of infrastructure • The role of implementation • The role of local energy • Need leadership and governance • Not a KPI for councils so no incentive to change • The impact of population pressure • Reference to the region's diversity • The role of financial incentives

Annex 2 - Findings of the High Level Appraisal and Proposed Changes

Objective	Summary of Recommendation	Agreement with Recommendation (Y/N)	Agreed Final Outcome
<p>2 To improve the health and well-being of the population & reduce inequalities in health</p>	<p>It is recommended that the indicators and targets linked to this objective be reviewed to take account of the aims and objectives included in the five overarching themes of the Health Strategy. In particular, the health inequalities aim of raising the life expectancy of the most socially disadvantaged in the South East by 18 months should be included as a target and progress in reducing health inequalities included as an indicator.</p> <p>In order to address the national targets listed in Securing the Future it is recommended that the following indicator is added: The proportion of older people being supported to live in their own home and the proportion of those being supported to live intensively at home of the total of those being supported at home or in residential care.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Target and indicator added but need to keep under review as Regional Health Strategy not yet published</p> <p>National Indicator NI 139 added – The extent to which older people receive the support they need to live independently at home</p>
<p>3 To reduce poverty and social exclusion and close the gap between the most deprived areas in the South East and the rest of the region</p>	<p>Pensioners in relative low-income households before and after housing costs added as an indicator.</p>	<p>In principle, if data available</p>	<p>Data unavailable at this time.</p>

	Objective	Summary of Recommendation	Agreement with Recommendation (Y/N)	Agreed Final Outcome
4	To raise educational achievement levels across the region and develop the opportunities for everyone to acquire the skills needed to find and remain in work	Proportion of young people not in education, employment or training added as an indicator.	Yes	Used Participation of 17 year-olds in education or training which is included in the National Indicator Framework (NI 91)
7	To improve accessibility to all services and facilities including the countryside and historic environment	It is recommended that an indicator to take account of non car accessibility of key services is added. It was also recommended that access to historic environment was removed as covered elsewhere.	Yes/No	Indicator added - Amount of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of: a GP; a hospital; a primary school; a secondary school; areas of employment; and a major retail centre(s). Access to countryside and historic environment retained following discussion at IRF working group meeting (September).

	Objective	Summary of Recommendation	Agreement with Recommendation (Y/N)	Agreed Final Outcome
8	To encourage increased engagement in cultural activity across all sections of the community in the South East	Reword the objective to clarify that it includes sporting and heritage activities. It is also suggested that the objective should include an element of promoting sustainable tourism. It could for example read: "To encourage increased engagement in cultural activity, including sports and heritage activity, across all sections of the community, and promote sustainable tourism".	Yes	Objective updated to include 'and promote sustainable tourism' Footnote added to the RSF defining culture.
10	To sustain economic growth and competitiveness across the region	The objective should be reworded to encompass the concept of "smart growth" as outlined in the RES and address sub-regional disparities. It could say: "To increase levels of sustainable prosperity by raising levels of enterprise, productivity and economic activity throughout the region including in deprived and rural areas"	Yes	Objective reworded: 'To sustain economic growth and competitiveness across the region by focussing on the principles of smart growth: raising levels of enterprise, productivity and economic activity'
11	To stimulate economic revival in deprived areas	It is suggested that this objective be included under objective 10.	No	Objective to remain unchanged. It was felt that they have a different meaning and should remain distinct.
13	To develop and maintain a skilled workforce to support long-term competitiveness of the region	It is recommended that this objective be amalgamated with objective 9 to form a new objective. It could be worded along the lines of appraisal objective 9: "To ensure high and stable levels of employment and a skilled workforce so everyone can benefit from the economic growth of the region".	No	Objective to remain unchanged. It was felt that they have a different meaning and should remain distinct.

	Objective	Summary of Recommendation	Agreement with Recommendation (Y/N)	Agreed Final Outcome
14	To improve efficiency in land use through the re-use of previously developed land and existing buildings, including re-use of materials from buildings, and encourage urban renaissance	The objective be reworded to include the appropriate reuse of existing land and buildings and remove the focus on reusing materials from buildings which is covered adequately in other objectives.	Debatable	Objective to be reworded with the appropriate re-use of previously developed land and buildings but reference to reuse of materials retained as is felt that COD waste such a significant issue that should be retained.
15	To reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting detriment to public well being, the economy and the environment	That flood risk is included within a new climate change adaptation objective	N	Flood risk not only about climate change adaptation Objective to remain unchanged.
17	To address the causes of climate change through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and ensure that the South East is prepared for its impacts	Recommendation is to split the climate change objective into adaptation and mitigation. The wording for the two objectives could be: "Address and mitigate the causes of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions through reduced use and greater resource efficiency and provision of renewable energy." & "Ensure that the South East is prepared for flooding, extreme weather events and other changes that will occur as a result of climate change." It is recommended that an additional indicator be considered for the mitigation objective: "proportion of land use which acts as a carbon sink".	Debatable	Objective divided into two separate mitigation and adaptation objectives.

	Objective	Summary of Recommendation	Agreement with Recommendation (Y/N)	Agreed Final Outcome
21	To increase the level of resource efficiency within the region	The issues of resource efficiency and sustainable production are covered by other objectives and particularly by the proposed rewording of objective 10, and the new climate change mitigation objective. It is therefore recommended that this objective be removed.	To some extent	Delete and replace with recommended objective on sustainable consumption. "To reduce the global social and environmental impact of consumption of resources by using sustainably and ethically produced, local or low impact products."
24	To increase energy efficiency, and the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources in the region	They are key elements of climate change mitigation. It is recommended that this objective be included within a new climate change mitigation objective (see objective 17 above).	N	Energy security and diversity of supply mean that this issue, although related, should remain distinct from Climate Change. Reword to include energy efficiency, security and diversity of supply and the proportion of energy generated from renewables.