

1 A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR THE SOUTH WEST



1.1 The South West Region Today

1.1.1 Geographically, the South West is the largest of the English regions. The north of Gloucestershire is as close to Scotland as it is to Lands End in Cornwall. The population is about five million, with the largest proportion of older people of any English region, and this is set to increase. The population is also more dispersed, with around 35% living in settlements of fewer than 10,000 people and a higher proportion of very small villages than any other region. Some parts of the region are very sparsely populated and accessibility varies. The larger urban areas, such as Bristol, Plymouth, Bournemouth and Swindon, are the most significant employment locations and this role is of increasing importance. Many of the region's smaller towns play an important role as key service centres and transport hubs serving rural hinterlands. The South West faces some real challenges now and in the future and many of these relate to, or are worsened by, its geography and characteristics.

1.1.2 It is an exciting time to be living in, working in or visiting the South West of England. The economy and population have been growing for at least the last 20 years. There is a wealth of attributes that support the high quality of life that attracts people to the region. The economy of the region is generally buoyant, attracting labour, although the jobs on offer are not always attractive to younger people, many of whom leave the region. The South West has successfully attracted investment from world class leaders, for example the Meteorological Office, and there are exciting developments in many areas, for example the Combined Universities' project in Cornwall, Bristol's 'science city' status, and projects that focus on regeneration and draw on local potential, such as the 'Living Coasts' facility at Torbay, and the Eden Project. The South West benefits from a number of vibrant cities and towns which contribute significantly to the region's economic performance, culture and distinctiveness. Investment over the last decade has transformed the core of many of the region's towns into more attractive retail and cultural centres, increasingly enjoyed by residents and visitors.





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1.1.3 The natural landscapes and historic environment are second to none. World Heritage Sites, National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty cover over a third of the region and the coastline, over 1,130 kilometres in length, is extensive and internationally renowned; for example the recently designated Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site. The beauty of the natural environment is complemented by a range of cultural and historic strengths exhibited in places such as Bath, Stonehenge, Newquay and Glastonbury. These factors are crucial to the attractiveness of the South West and help to explain why 26 million visitors a year choose to come here. There are real strengths within the South West's economy that build on these characteristics, for example aerospace, marine, creative industries, environmental technologies, tourism and the food and drink sectors. The high environmental qualities of the region should be seen not solely as a constraint upon development (although sound stewardship of this heritage is vital) but as a major contributor to quality of life and a direct or indirect source of employment for many people.

1.1.4 In character, the South West is usually seen as a maritime and largely rural region. More than three million people (62% of the population) live within 10 kilometres of the coastline and the coast continues to play a pivotal role in the region's economy. Most people live in or close to rural settings. Many live in smaller towns and villages, but increasingly use the region's cities and main towns for work and services. The rural areas of the South West are a major contributor to quality of life for all the region's residents and to the economic strength of the region. The more rural parts of the region have had mixed fortunes however, with some places badly affected by changes in the farming industry. Agriculture and the other land based industries who manage most of the region's countryside need to continue to adapt to challenges such as re-alignment of agricultural support. Although challenging problems persist, there are also real opportunities to develop integrated approaches to rural development and to celebrate and implement the fifty or more town and community plans already prepared at market town level.

1.2 Planning for the Future: The New RSS, Regional Planning Guidance 10 and Structure Plan Policies

1.2.1 Preparation of this planning strategy for the region does not start with a blank sheet of paper. The RSS will supersede Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) 10, which was prepared in the late 1990s, and looked ahead to 2016. The essence of the RPG 10 strategy is to direct most development to 11 Principal Urban Areas and a number of other strategic centres for growth while catering for a range of needs across the region, integrating transport and planning and protecting the environment. Appraisal of RPG 10 has shown that the thrust of the strategy was broadly correct, but that it needs refreshing to roll forward policies and proposals to 2026. In arriving at this Draft RSS, a number of options were tested through public discussion and various pieces of technical assessment. The outcome from that phase of preparation of the Draft RSS was to proceed with an evolution of the RPG 10 core strategy building in more sensitivity to the diversity of the region. The new strategy for the region is therefore more positive, more explicit and more prescriptive regarding matters that require a strategic approach. These often cross administrative boundaries where a clear steer in the RSS is necessary in the interests of good strategic planning.

1.2.2 Since RPG 10 was prepared, economic growth has been sustained and has exceeded that which was originally expected and planned for. The data and information used in preparing this Draft RSS suggests a demand for development which is substantially above the RPG 10 level. Some of the trends contributing to this revised growth scenario are outlined in more detail in Section 2. The RSS cannot, of itself, solve all the region's issues of growth, performance and development, and many drivers of change lie outside its control. Global markets, social change and lifestyle choices will all have an impact, sometimes completely unpredicted.

1.2.3 The RSS will look forward to 2026 and is designed to manage the change and development the South West will need if it is to rise to the challenge of a growing population and play its role in national and regional prosperity. It is a new kind of strategy – spatial and functional in approach – responding to the Government's challenge to build sustainable communities. "Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they can function".¹

1.2.4 The RSS influences the future planning of the region in a number of ways:

- As part of the development plan system it provides guidance on the location and scale of development for interpretation in Local Development Frameworks (LDFs)
- It guides investment in transport and provides a framework for the preparation of Local Transport Plans (LTPs)
- It provides a spatial context for the plans, programmes and investment of other agencies and organisations in the South West

1.2.5 There is a clear distinction in the text in this Draft RSS between the numbered bold statements in shaded boxes which provide the policy proposals of the Draft RSS and the supporting text which provides justification and some explanation of the policy position proposed; other bold statements are included to emphasise points and state clearly the principles and priorities which guide the Draft RSS.

¹ *Planning and Policy Statement (PPS) 1: Delivering Sustainable Development, paragraph 30.*

1.2.6 When the RSS is finally published, countywide Structure Plans will be superseded, and their policies replaced by the RSS. Until that time, Structure Plan Policies are 'saved' (Policies can be 'saved' for a period of three years from commencement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, or adoption of the Plan, whichever is later).

- In Cornwall, the Cornwall Structure Plan (adopted September 2004) policies are saved until September 2007
- In Devon, the Devon Structure Plan (adopted October 2004) policies are saved until October 2007
- In Swindon and Wiltshire, subject to any legal challenges received, the Structure Plan will be adopted in April 2006 and will be saved until April 2009, or until superseded by the published RSS, whichever is sooner
- Structure Plan Policies for the following areas are saved until September 2007:
 - In the former Avon area, the Joint Replacement Structure Plan (adopted September 2002) policies
 - In Dorset, the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan (adopted October 2000) policies
 - In Somerset, the Somerset and Exmoor Joint Structure Plan (adopted April 2000) policies
 - In Gloucestershire, the Gloucestershire Structure Plan Second Review (adopted November 1999) policies

1.2.7 Given the RSS timetable, it is likely that the RSS will be published in its final form during 2008. To avoid a policy 'void' between the time when the three year period for saved policies ends, and when the final RSS is published, the Regional Planning Body (RPB) will, in accordance with paragraph 2.57 of Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 11, discuss with Structure Plan Authorities during the formal consultation period, which policies from their Structure Plans should be saved after the three year period expires and before the RSS is finalised. The case will then be made to the Secretary of State to make a direction to this effect.

1.2.8 The development of this Draft RSS has been informed at every stage by inputs from the Strategic Sustainability Assessment (SSA) process which combines the requirements of a Sustainability Appraisal under PPS11, and a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) under the 'European SEA Directive'². The Assessment has been carried out by independent consultants to help improve the overall sustainability of this Draft RSS. In their opinion, the Draft RSS and policies should help to deliver a more sustainable approach to future development in the South West. Policies have been strengthened in order to help address the issues of climate change, which poses a serious challenge to the South West. The RSS has a major role to play in terms of helping to achieve development which emits less CO₂. Paragraph 1.7.2 indicates clearly the limitations of the Draft RSS in this respect, and the need for national and international action and changes in individual behaviour to help achieve the region's sustainability ambitions.

1.3 What Sort of Region Do We Want To Be?

1.3.1 The regional future this Strategy is working towards can be summed up as one where:

- **All communities enjoy the benefits of further development and where housing needs are satisfied**
- **The economy continues to prosper**
- **Rural parts of the region fulfil their economic potential with vibrant market towns at their core**
- **Bristol becomes a major European city**
- **Plymouth continues its renaissance and becomes the economic hub of the far South West**
- **Swindon, Exeter, Cheltenham/Gloucester, Bournemouth/Poole, Weston-super-Mare and Taunton develop as important focal points for economic growth**
- **Regeneration of the Cornwall towns, Forest of Dean and Torbay and other priority areas continues to have effect**
- **Growth is supported by necessary infrastructure in step with development**

² Directive 2001/42/EC, on the assessment of certain plans and programmes on the environment.

1.4 Major Challenges the Region Faces

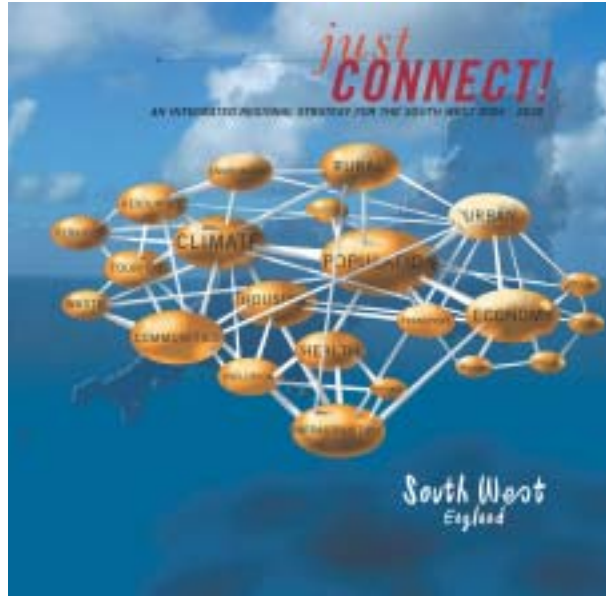
1.4.1 The momentum of change in the South West looks set to continue. Unless it is planned for in a constructive and creative manner, with sustainable development at the heart of the strategy, growth has the potential to erode the very quality of life that makes the region distinctive. There has been much debate in the region about the direction of travel the South West should take. At the heart of this Strategy is the desire to create a region that is more sustainable than it has been, with better balanced and more sustainable communities within it.

1.4.2 Analysis of the issues and factors likely to influence change³, and the desire to move forward sustainably, have led the main regional agencies and organisations to respond constructively to the challenge by endorsing the Integrated Regional Strategy (IRS) *'Just Connect!'*. This overarching document contains five headline aims and a series of 'crunch' objectives which regional partners have agreed will be the focus for regional policy and delivery. The RSS will be a key delivery mechanism for *'Just Connect!'*; consequently, throughout this document the links between the Draft RSS and the region's aims are identified so that the contribution of the Draft RSS to the region's agreed agenda can be identified. *'Just Connect!'* endorses the vision for the region set out in the Regional Sustainable Development Framework⁴.

"the South West must remain a region with a beautiful and diverse environment. By working together and applying the principles of sustainability we can achieve lasting economic prosperity and social justice whilst protecting the environment. This approach will secure a higher quality of life now and for future generations."

1.4.3 Alongside other plans and programmes in the region, the RSS will play its part in delivering this vision. The Draft RSS is the spatial expression of the region's policies – and has a particular role in responding to the following 'key challenges' of *'Just Connect!'*:

"the region is growing and we anticipate an extra half a million people in the region by 2016."



The Draft RSS plans positively for population growth by seeking to maximise the benefits of growth to the South West. The Spatial Strategy and development policies in Section 3 and the sub-regional policies in Section 4 set out the framework for managing growth and change in the most sustainable way and policies for delivering sustainable communities in the South West are included in Section 6. Population growth will inevitably contribute to the increased diversity of people in the South West, and plans and policies should give due regard to the elimination of all forms of discrimination, the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different age, race, gender, ability, belief and sexuality.

"climate change is a serious global issue already affecting the South West."

This Draft RSS recognises climate change as a cross-cutting issue that requires measures to both adapt to and mitigate the effects of change by tackling the dispersal of development, promoting sustainable use of resources (and sustainable construction as the norm) and identifying areas and infrastructure vulnerable to change. It also seeks to respond positively to opportunities which might arise as the region's climate and environment change.

³ *'Trends and Challenges for the South West – Key Issues for the Future of the Region' November 2003 (South West Regional Assembly)*

⁴ *'A Sustainable Future for the South West' 2001 (South West Regional Assembly and Sustainability South West)*

“we have a significant problem with housing affordability resulting from high demand and relatively low wages.”

The Draft RSS, in combination with the Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) determines the broad location and rates of new housing development throughout the region. The issue of affordable housing is dealt with in Section 6.

“we have high employment rates but relatively low productivity; we also have marked contrasts within the region and the widest variations in overall economic performance of any English region.”

The Draft RSS through its development policies seeks to ensure that opportunities for realising the economic potential of the region are not missed, in the face of competitive pressures from elsewhere in the UK and overseas. The Draft RSS, in aligning with the Regional Economic Strategy (RES), determines the whereabouts of new development, regeneration and infrastructure as a means to encourage economic development and targets regeneration to address these disparities. In this Draft RSS, priorities in Section 9 will guide investment to places of greatest need.

“we have a dispersed population, which is a challenge for the effective delivery of services.”

The Draft RSS seeks to use development to support all communities in the region recognising that encouraging some of the larger settlements to grow will assist service provision by achieving economies of scale and maximising accessibility. The Spatial Strategy in Sections 3 and 4 sets out the approach to service provision and accessibility.

“we are losing our young people and university graduates, partly because of the relatively poor career prospects in management and high value added sectors.”

The Draft RSS, in aligning with the RES, recognises the contribution of development to providing much needed well-paid employment opportunities in places right across the South West. Providing development that will support the further expansion of knowledge-based employment in the region’s urban centres will be particularly important. Policies in Sections 4 and 8 set out positive proposals to support economic development.

“we are producing waste at a rate disproportionate to our population.”

The Draft RSS contains a framework for local waste and mineral planning policies in Section 7, building on the Regional Waste Strategy.

“the environment is under pressure exemplified by loss of and damage to natural and historic assets, increasing demands for natural resources and poor local environmental quality.”

The environment is the region’s prime asset, it is a ‘driver’ of economic activity and a major component of the quality of life of residents including those living in cities and towns. The region’s cultural facilities, services and experiences also add to the cohesion and sustainability of communities. Section 7 contains policies for cultural and environmental enhancement and protection, wise use of natural resources, drawing on the Regional Environment Strategy, Regional Waste Strategy and Regional Cultural Strategy.

“we often find it difficult to get around, because the distances between places are large; the infrastructure is often inadequate, and traffic congestion has increased.”

The Draft RSS seeks to ensure that, wherever development takes place in the region, services are planned in step with development. The Draft RSS contains a Regional Transport Strategy in Section 5 which provides a framework for new investment to bring about a ‘step change’ in public transport alongside stronger demand management measures for car use in the region’s cities and towns.

“in stark contrast to the perceived high quality of life offered by the South West, we have significant and persistent pockets of deprivation and inequality.”

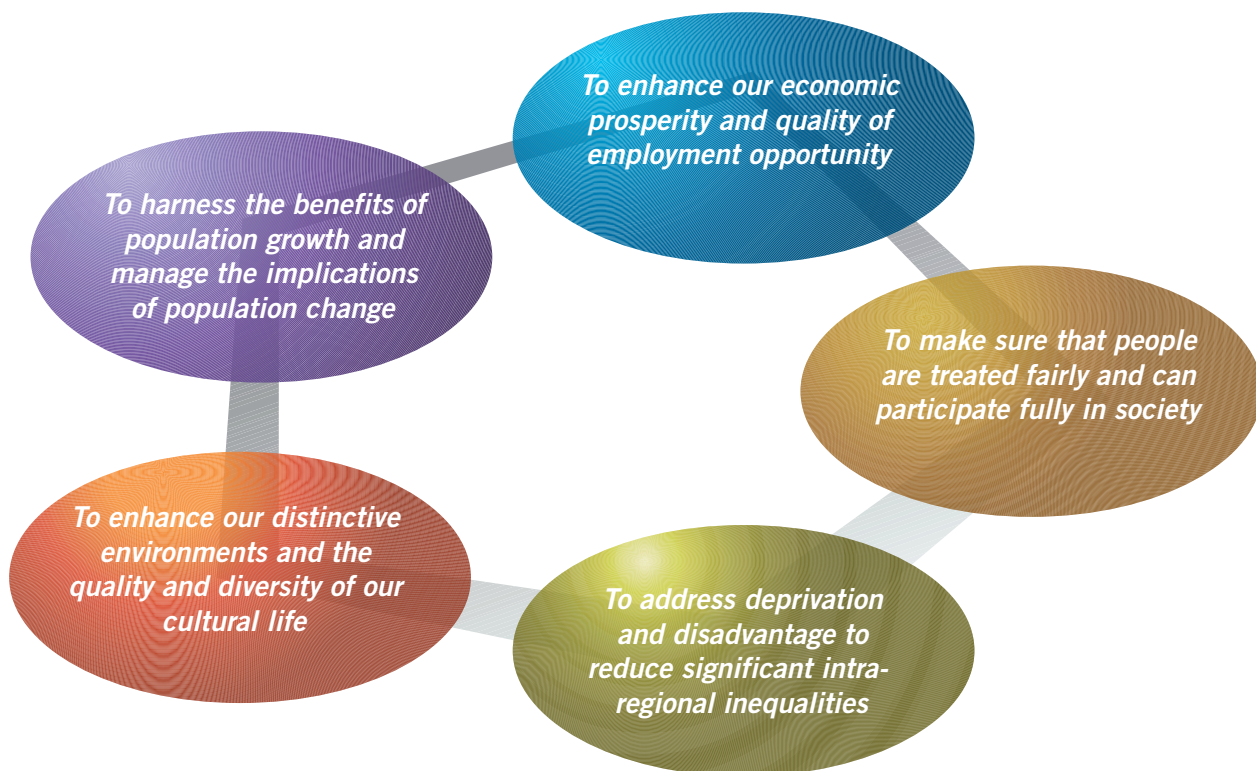
The overall development strategy of the Draft RSS is designed to ensure that development can play its full part in tackling inequality. The Draft RSS, in Sections 9 and 10, includes priorities and policies for action to address deprivation and inequality and ensure the needs of particular parts of the community are being met.

1.4.4 Many of the region's challenges set out in *'Just Connect!'* apply to all parts of the region, but there are also real differences in the ways in which they manifest themselves in different parts of the region. The aims and objectives identified in *'Just Connect!'* relate well to the priorities in *'Securing the Future'*⁵. These priorities, and their particular expression in the South West, are explored below and have helped shape the Draft Spatial Strategy presented in Section 3. The Draft RSS will be judged in terms of whether these challenges are being dealt with effectively and whether the South West is perceived to be a better place to live and work in over the next 20 years.

1.5 Linkages Between IRS Aims and the RSS

1.5.1 One of the most important aspects of the development of policy for the region has been the adoption of the IRS *'Just Connect!'* in 2004. The aims of *'Just Connect!'* provide a clear lead for spatial and development policy and there are strong linkages with different aspects of the Draft RSS:

- Aim 1 To harness the benefits of population growth and manage the implications of population change**
RSS reference Section 3, Section 4 and Section 6
- Aim 2 To enhance our distinctive environments and the quality of our cultural life**
RSS reference Section 3, Section 4 and Section 7
- Aim 3 To enhance our economic prosperity and quality of employment opportunity**
RSS reference Section 4 and Section 8
- Aim 4 To address deprivation and disadvantage to reduce significant intra-regional inequalities**
RSS reference Section 4 and Section 9
- Aim 5 To make sure that people are treated fairly and can participate fully in society**
RSS reference Section 4 and Section 10



⁵ The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy (2005).

1.5.2 The Spatial Strategy and policies which follow in this Draft RSS will help deliver the aims of the IRS through positively planning for, and managing, growth and development in the region to improve the quality of life for all, and to create and maintain sustainable communities throughout the region.

1.6 Sustainability Principles and Policies to Guide the Spatial Strategy

1.6.1 The remainder of this Section contains four high level Sustainable Development Policies which set the broad sustainability context for the Draft RSS. What follows in Section 3 onwards is the regional and sub-regional expression of these four policies in spatial policy and development terms. Policies SD1 to SD4 will have to be interpreted also at local level, and the Draft RSS Implementation Plan includes the commitment to develop a decision making framework, which will give further clarity on how these sustainability policies can be applied in practice by Local Development Documents (LDDs) and other local policies.

A 'One Planet Economy': Sustainable Consumption and Production

1.6.2 There is a tension which the Draft RSS must help resolve, between further population and economic growth and the imperative to reduce resource consumption and, most importantly, the decoupling of growth and CO₂ emissions. Consumption of natural resources or 'ecological footprint' has a global impact. Growing demands for built development, infrastructure, food, fresh water, natural materials and energy, seriously risk the erosion of environmental quality and the life systems on which we all depend. **The South West's ecological footprint is unsustainable as it stands. If everyone on the planet consumed such a quantity of natural resources and energy as an average South West resident, three planets would be needed to support life on Earth. Consequently, a shift is needed towards 'one planet', lower consumption, with lifestyles which are more resource efficient. This should include a move towards locally produced, replaceable natural resources, more efficient usage of energy, better waste re-use/recycling, and more efficient use of scarce natural resources such as minerals.**

One of the main ways of delivering this will be through adopting best practice in sustainable construction as standard in new developments (see paragraph 3.7.5) and in refurbishments as the opportunities arise. A central challenge for the Draft RSS is to promote the sustainable approach to consumption and production advocated by the UK *'Sustainable Development Strategy – how to achieve more with less'* so that the ecological footprint of the region is stabilised and then reduced. This is a real challenge given the likely scale of growth in the region and requires strong leadership and innovative solutions.

1.6.3 The region is rich in natural resources, with some nationally important mineral reserves and – as yet – relatively untapped potential for renewable energy. Minerals are a finite resource, and an essential raw material for many regional businesses and development industries. Their use does, however, have environmental and social impacts. Given the environmental quality of the South West, one of the prime concerns is that opportunities for substitution of extracted minerals by recyclates and secondary aggregates are maximised. paragraph 7.3.29 gives more details on promoting recyclates and secondary aggregates. Extraction of minerals also creates opportunities for biodiversity, geo-diversity and amenity gains through appropriate restoration and aftercare.

1.6.4 Energy consumption is a significant contributor to the region's eco-footprint. Minimising the level of demand for energy through improving energy efficiency is a major challenge as is the development of more renewable energy sources in the region. Renewable energy is an exciting economic opportunity identified in the RES and the Draft RSS provides targets and policy guidance to increase its supply. Currently, only about 3% of the region's electricity requirements are generated from renewable sources, compared to a national target of 20% by 2020. The use of energy is a significant contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and to the region's impact in terms of climate change (also see Policy SD2). By producing more of the energy we use within the region, and from renewable sources, the 'carbon footprint' can be reduced as well as providing economic benefits through creating jobs. Producing energy from a range of renewable resources will also contribute to resilience of supply. See Section 7.3 for policies relating to renewable energy.

1.6.5 Critical to achieving a more sustainable region, is the continuation of the South West's relative economic prosperity. As recognised by the RES, "prosperity is measured by well-being as well as economic wealth", and better jobs, investment in human and physical capital, and high levels of innovation all have a part to play in delivering rewarding employment, stronger and more vibrant communities, a better environment and more efficient use of resources. A successful economy relies on increasing investment and the circulation of expenditure within the region supported by effective communication links, effective use of assets and by effective lobbying and influencing at a national and international level to get the 'best deal' for the region. The role of the RES in setting out a prospectus for future economic development is very important and it is crucial that the Draft RSS and RES offer complementary approaches to development. The Draft RSS, in providing the spatial context for the RES, determines the location of new development, regeneration and infrastructure as a means of encouraging economic development and targeting regeneration to reduce disparities.

The RES vision for the region underpins the aspiration to achieve economic progress that is sustainable and can be secured within environmental limits.

"The South West of England will have an economy where the aspirations and skills of our people combine with the quality of our physical environment to provide a high quality of life and sustainable prosperity for everyone."

1.6.6 Successful economic performance could significantly boost growth in the region, with benefits in terms of prosperity, job choice and investment. However, if not managed properly the effects of growth could result in degradation of the environment, more congestion and pollution and exacerbation of economic trends that reinforce intra-regional disparities and disadvantage. Without a planned approach, recognising the importance of the 'environment driver', proposals for sustainable and thriving rural communities and an urban renaissance will not be achieved. Both the RES and Section 8 give more details on the importance of building a sustainable, low carbon, successful economy within environmental limits.

1.6.7 The need to stabilise and then reduce the region's ecological footprint in the light of continued economic growth and lifestyle choices requires active promotion of efficient use of resources by business and individuals, adopting a low carbon approach. Regional action alone is unlikely to be sufficient and will require a step change in the attitude of individuals to the environmental impacts of their consumption choices in terms of the goods and services purchased and the consequences of unlimited, relatively cheap travel. Unless these issues are also tackled nationally and internationally, the proposals of both the RES and this Draft RSS to manage growth successfully and sustainably will be more difficult to achieve.

1.6.8 For these reasons, whilst the sustainability policies are aspirational in nature, initially signalling the direction that the region wishes to move in, monitoring will allow the effectiveness of these policies to be measured. This will need to be accompanied by additional work by regional partners to examine further the exact nature and extent of environmental limits in the South West in order that these are better understood.



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SD1 The Ecological Footprint

The region's Ecological Footprint will be stabilised and then reduced by:

- Ensuring that development respects environmental limits
- Requiring the wise use of natural resources and reducing the consumption of key resources such as energy, water and minerals
- Building a sustainable, low carbon and low resource consuming economy which can be secured within environmental limits to bring prosperity and well-being to all parts of the region
- Requiring sustainable construction and design as the norm in all future development and when opportunities arise, improving the region's existing building stock in line with current best practice
- Minimising the need to travel by better alignment of jobs, homes and services, reducing the reliance on the private car by improved public transport and effective planning of future development, and a strong demand management regime applied in the region's main centres in particular
- Requiring a shift towards the more sustainable modes of transport
- Meeting national and regional targets relating to renewable energy, resource consumption/extraction and waste production/recycling

Local authorities, regional agencies and others will include policies and proposals in their strategies, plans and programmes to assess how all new developments, regeneration areas and major refurbishments contribute to stabilising and reducing the region's ecological footprint

Confronting the Greatest Threat: Climate Change

1.6.9 Climate change, principally due to the emission of greenhouse gases from human activity, is already affecting life in the South West. The region's average air temperature has increased by about 1°C since the 1960s, and the sea level is continuing to rise. Latest estimates using the UK Climate Impacts Programme scenarios (UKCIP02) suggest that net sea level rise in the South West could be between 20 and 80 cm by the 2080s, depending on the future rate of greenhouse gas emissions. This could potentially have major impacts for the region's coastline, low lying areas, infrastructure and major coastal towns and cities, and there will be further effects in future years as climate change accelerates. The long-term effects are therefore an important consideration for the RSS and any future development.

- Regionally, transport is responsible for 28% of CO₂ emissions (based on recent research by DEFRA which allocated indirect emissions to the region), with road transport dominating that total. Consequently, transport is one priority area where the RSS can have an effect by addressing the need to travel, particularly by car which is a significant challenge given the geography of the region, its rural nature which increases reliance on the car, and the growth in economic activity and population
- A further 33% of the region's emissions come from homes, with 36% resulting from industry and commerce. Policies therefore need to be directed at ensuring that all new developments release very low levels of CO₂ and existing buildings and infrastructure are upgraded as opportunities arise. The RES highlights the need to move to a low carbon economy

1.6.10 The region has a role to play in reducing its CO₂ emissions in line with national targets and recent DEFRA research, based on 2003 data, demonstrates that the region's climate change responsibilities are greater than previously thought. The Government wishes to see a 20% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2010, and a 60% reduction by 2050, which equates roughly to a required cut in CO₂ emissions of around 30% over the RSS period.

1.6.11 Recent studies suggest that even deeper and faster cuts are needed to avoid a significant risk of unstoppable and catastrophic climate change. Additional research commissioned in support of the Draft RSS and the SSA process has demonstrated the extent to which the Draft RSS alone can contribute towards achieving necessary reductions in CO₂ emissions. Using best available estimates, this suggests that the following will be needed to make significant inroads into reducing the South West's CO₂ emissions:

- Sustainable construction, including a proposed requirement in Development Policy G that all major new development should be carbon neutral, and to ensure energy efficiency of existing building stock is improved, should contribute a 10.3% reduction in emissions
- Concentrating growth in Strategically Significant Cities and Towns (SSCTs) should contribute a further 2.2% reduction
- The effect of the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), through improved public transport and demand management, bringing regional car use down to the existing level of the 'best' performing quartile, regional CO₂ emissions should be reduced by a further 15%

Achieving these measures through the policies in this Draft RSS will reduce CO₂ emissions by about 28% by 2026, which is very near the levels required.

1.6.12 In addition to reducing the region's greenhouse gas emissions, there is a need to consider how the region's communities should adapt to unavoidable climate change given the delayed effect of emissions reduction strategies and current estimates of future climate change and effects. In some cases measures need to be provided to reduce the effects, particularly of flooding and risk to some critical transport infrastructure.

1.6.13 Climate change also brings opportunities that the region needs to capitalise on. New business opportunities may arise for the leisure and tourism industry. With the development of the environmental technology sector, the South West also has the opportunity to become a leader in developing climate change solutions. Warmer temperatures and longer growing seasons could also lead to increased productivity and present opportunities to grow new crops.

SD2 Climate Change

The region's contribution to climate change will be reduced by:

- **Reducing greenhouse gas emissions at least in line with current national targets, ie by 30% by 2026 (compared to 1990 levels)**
- **Following the principles outlined in SD1**

The region will adapt to the anticipated changes in climate by

- **Managing the impact of future climate change on the environment, economy and society**
- **Identifying the most vulnerable communities and ecosystems given current understanding of future climate change and provide measures to mitigate against these effects**
- **Avoiding the need for development in flood risk areas and incorporating measures in design and construction to reduce the effects of flooding**
- **Recognising and putting in place policies and measures to develop and exploit those opportunities that climate change will bring**
- **Requiring 'future proofing' of development activity for its susceptibility to climate change**
- **Improving the resilience and reliability of existing infrastructure to cope with changes in climate and in the light of future demand. It will be a priority for the places identified in Section 3 to determine potential future climate change impacts and plan ways in which key services and infrastructure needs to adapt**

All Local Authorities in their LDDs will need to demonstrate how they intend to contribute towards the required 60% cut in CO₂ emissions by 2050 and how they intend to identify and respond to the potential impacts of climate change in their area.



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A Future Without Regrets: Protecting Our Natural Resources and Enhancing the Environment

1.6.14 The region has significant non-renewable resources that call for good stewardship for future generations. Clean air, water and land, as well as nationally significant reserves of minerals, are important features of the region as discussed in Section 7. The rate at which finite resources are used can change the environment irretrievably, and if not managed properly result in waste and contamination that the environment must accommodate, with knock-on effects for human health. The use of land for development can lead to loss of wildlife habitats, historic assets, increased flood risk and loss of urban green space. Poor design can also have a negative impact on local character and distinctiveness, eroding a sense of place. Reductions in tranquillity and increased light pollution are other effects which are apparent in the South West. If care is not taken, the result will be harm to the special environments and landscapes for which the South West is valued by its people and internationally.

1.6.15 The region's landscape, countryside, historic environment and coast have qualities that define the character of the South West, and which are fundamental to its appeal as a tourist destination. Tourism, although critical to the economy in some parts of the region, can have significant impacts through increased demand for resources, increased production of waste and pressure on sensitive environments. Effects can be mitigated through careful management, increased awareness and education in order to change behaviour (see Section 8.5). Agriculture and the other land-based industries, which manage most of the region's countryside, need to continue to adapt to challenges such as the re-alignment of agricultural support. The Draft RSS provides a broad strategic view of how the countryside should develop and change in future as well as a basis for local policy and decisions that support land-based industries and the roles played by small towns and villages (see especially Development Policy C and Section 7).

SD3 The Environment and Natural Resources

The region's environment and natural resources will be protected and enhanced by:

- Ensuring that development respects landscape and ecological thresholds of settlements
- Reducing the environmental impact of the economy, transport and development
- Positively planning to enhance natural environments through development, taking a holistic approach based on landscape or ecosystem scale planning
- Planning and design of development to reduce pollution and contamination and to maintain tranquillity
- Positive planning and design to set development within and to enhance local character (including setting development within the landscape of the historic environment), and bringing historic buildings back into viable economic use and supporting regeneration
- Contributing to regional biodiversity targets through the restoration, creation, improvement and management of habitats



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From Local to Global: Creating Sustainable Communities in a More Sustainable Region

1.6.16 *'Securing the Future'* states that sustainable communities should be:

- Active, inclusive and safe – fair, tolerant and cohesive with a strong local culture and other shared community activities
- Well run – with effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership
- Environmentally sensitive – providing places for people to live that are considerate of the environment
- Well designed and built – featuring a quality built and natural environment
- Well connected – with good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services
- Thriving – with a flourishing and diverse local economy
- Well served – with public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to people's needs and accessible to all
- Fair for everyone – including those in other communities, now and in the future



1.6.17 The delivery of sustainable communities therefore requires the integrated regional approach set out in *'Just Connect!'* – with the RSS influencing major issues surrounding the management of development, transport, living environments and quality of life, and ultimately influencing the lifestyle choices of the region's residents.

1.6.18 The life experience of communities in the region can vary greatly, and many of the issues they face cannot be addressed just by the RSS or the planning system. The overall Strategy of this Draft RSS is designed to ensure that development can play a full part in tackling some of these issues, for example in inequality in access to jobs and services and the impact of the housing market on the ability of local people to secure decent, affordable housing are fundamental concerns of the Spatial Strategy. The Strategy recognises that many South West residents will continue to live in a dispersed pattern of small towns and villages and the difficulties of securing a sustainable future for these rural settlements is recognised with measures to enable these communities to continue thriving. If, in future, a greater proportion of South West residents are to live in more urban environments then the nature and quality of future development in creating places where people positively choose to live becomes very important. The South West Sustainability Checklist for Developments, as detailed in paragraph 3.7.7, will have an important role to play in terms of helping to design more sustainable communities. Alongside this, the quality of public services such as education, health and cultural services, all need to be carefully planned in conjunction with proposals for development (see Section 6).

SD4 Sustainable Communities

Growth and development will be planned for and managed positively to create and maintain Sustainable Communities throughout the region by:

- **Realising the economic prosperity of the South West and reducing disparity**
- **Setting a clear vision and strategy to meet the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, based on the role and function of cities, towns and villages and their local character and distinctiveness**
- **Linking the provision of homes, jobs and services based on role and function so that cities, towns and villages and groups of places have the potential to become more self contained and the need to travel is reduced**
- **Promoting a step change in public transport, taking steps to manage demand for travel, and promoting public transport 'hubs' and access to them**
- **Encouraging business activity and particularly small businesses and their contribution to the region's prosperity, including through promoting regional sourcing**
- **Making adequate and affordable housing available for all residents, including the provision of a range and mixture of different housing types to accommodate the requirements of local communities**
- **Making the best use of existing infrastructure and ensuring that supporting infrastructure is delivered in step with development**
- **Investing in and upgrading cultural facilities, including their marketing and management**
- **Creating healthy, safe and secure places to live, for example by following Lifetime Homes and Secure by Design principles**
- **Providing homes which are adaptable to the changing needs of individuals and provide an opportunity for live/work space**
- **Delivering a step change in the quality of urban living**
- **Providing networks of accessible green space for people to enjoy**
- **Supporting social and economic progress by enhancing education, skills development and training**

1.7 Achieving the Region's Sustainability Ambitions

1.7.1 Policies SD1 to SD4 provide the overall context for the Draft RSS, aiming to make future development and lifestyle choices in the region more sustainable. The Strategy that follows in Section 3 onwards provides a sustainable way to accommodate the potential growth and change in the region, and achieve the 'best fit' against the range of sustainability objectives as tested through the SSA. Local Authorities will need to undertake more detailed assessments as they develop their LDDs, in the context of these principles and the Strategy and Policies that follow.

1.7.2 The SSA recognises that there is much to commend in sustainability terms in this Draft RSS. The accompanying SSA report gives more detail of the process and findings, but the following policies are considered to be particular sustainability strengths of the Draft RSS. It should, of course, be noted that this is only a summary, and that the Draft RSS needs to be read in its entirety to deliver maximum sustainability benefits:

- Sustainability Policies SD1 to SD4
- Focus on directing the majority of development to SSCTs (Sections 3 and 4)
- Emphasis on high quality of development (Section 3)
- Recognition of the diversity of the region in terms of character and functions (throughout)
- Alignment of jobs, homes and services (throughout)
- Transport measures, including demand management and making public transport, walking and cycling more attractive (Section 5 and throughout)
- Dealing with housing need and affordability (Section 6)
- Emphasis on reducing deprivation and inequalities (Sections 8, 9 and 10)
- Minimising waste and improving energy efficiency (Sections 3 and 7)
- Improving access to health, education and cultural facilities (Section 6)

1.7.3 Concerns raised in the SSA relate mainly to the potential increase in travel in the region, reflecting the region's strong economic and population growth. This Draft RSS makes the best achievable attempt to deliver a more sustainable South West, but there are many things outside the sphere of influence of the RSS, and over which it has no control. The following will have a profound effect on consumption of resources, waste generation and emissions from the region.

Individual Behaviour within the context of national and international markets. How people choose to use their available funds, on consumption of food, goods and services, on accommodation and on travel, will be critical. Such decisions may be influenced by local awareness raising initiatives but are more likely to be influenced by scarcity and price, and by national policy changes.

Technological Development driven by scarcity of oil and other resources may provide solutions to carbon based resource use in production and transport.

Investment in waste reuse and recycling facilities will be needed to achieve the region's Waste Strategy, and significant investment in public transport facilities and services (the carrot as well as the stick of demand management) will be needed across the region if significant modal shift from the car is to happen.

National Policy undoubtedly has a major influence over the ability of the region to achieve a smaller ecological footprint and significantly reduce CO₂ emissions. National Energy Policy will have a major effect over the course of the Draft RSS. Availability of investment funds will be a key determinant. If new construction in the region is to be to the highest standards of energy efficiency, change will be necessary, for example in Building Regulations, to give a level playing field across the country. Also, the SSA has commented upon the effects of increased air travel on regional emissions, but in the context of the current National Airport Policy, growth of the region's airports is being provided for in this Draft RSS.

