

Wildlife and Countryside Link brings together voluntary organisations concerned with the conservation and protection of wildlife, countryside and the marine environment. Our members practise and advocate environmentally sensitive land management and food production and encourage respect for and enjoyment of natural landscapes and features, the historic environment and biodiversity. Taken together, our members have the support of over 8 million people in the UK and manage over 476,000 hectares of land.

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**Current policy areas**

- Farming and Rural Development, including Woodland
- Land Use Planning, including Minerals
- Wildlife & Trade, including Whales
- Biodiversity
- Marine Nature Conservation, including Bycatch
- Water Policy

# Wildlife and Countryside Link SPATIAL PLANNING GUIDANCE



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Wildlife and Countryside Link brings together 36 voluntary organisations concerned with the conservation, protection and enhancement of wildlife and the countryside. Our members practise and advocate environmentally sensitive land management and food production and encourage respect for and enjoyment of natural landscapes and features, the historic environment and biodiversity. Taken together, our members have the support of approximately 8.4 million people in the UK, and manage over 476,000 hectares of land.

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# FOREWORD

Planning has long been the unsung hero of environmental protection. Since its establishment in 1947, the UK planning system has helped shape the scale, location and type of development and to protect landscapes and wildlife from damaging change for the benefit of everyone's quality of life.

With the emphasis on spatial planning in the new system now emerging as a result of recent Government reforms, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to change fundamentally the way we plan for present needs and for the future. The revised *UK Sustainable Development Strategy* places a new emphasis on the importance of environmental limits: the capacity of the environment to accommodate different kinds of change. *Planning Policy Statement 1 Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1)* supports this and sets out how it should be applied to spatial planning. The challenge now for us all is to grasp the opportunity that spatial planning presents to help achieve genuinely sustainable development. We must find ways to plan and manage change that integrate and reconcile environmental imperatives with social and economic needs. If we fail, we risk resorting to a sterile and ultimately fruitless race to the bottom by endlessly trying to 'balance' objectives and trading off long-term assets for short-term gains.

This guide is designed to help all those who are now trying to put the new spatial planning approach into practice. It is aimed at officers and elected members in regional assemblies, county, unitary district and borough councils, whether in city, town or country. It is the work of an alliance of the UK's leading environmental groups, who together bring a wealth of experience of planning in practice.

We have tried to provide brief summaries of the key issues, challenges and opportunities under various subject headings. We have made extensive

use of checklists for regional and local planning wherever possible to make for quick, easy reference. Inevitably there are gaps, and for these we offer our apologies and invite suggestions to fill them.

The scale of the challenges we face today is daunting – perhaps above all the threat posed by climate change. Such times demand a different approach. We believe that, with commitment and a little imagination, the spatial approach to planning can help us address those challenges responsibly and effectively for everyone's benefit.



Henry Oliver  
**Chair, Wildlife and Countryside Link Land Use Planning Working Group**  
August 2006

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Wildlife and Countryside Link believes that sustainable development should be at the heart of the future development of our society. Sustainable development provides planning with its core purpose to enhance the quality of life of communities by promoting the highest quality forms of development in the most appropriate locations. Such development should seek to promote social equity over private gain, and advocate the wise use of limited natural resources to protect the interests of future generations. The system should promote localised and robust economies and value and protect the intrinsic importance of human heritage and biodiversity. These positive outcomes go hand in hand with a planning process which is democratic, open and fair. In practice this requires a system which appreciates the value of public participation and seeks to meet, and where possible exceed, the standards of the Government's document on public participation (*Community Involvement in Planning*, ODPM 2004).

The sustainable development concept should engender a careful reconsideration of traditional notions of planning decision-making and in particular the need to integrate rather than 'trade off' the objectives of economic development, environmental protection and social justice. Despite the rhetorical power of the notion of sustainable development reflected in current national and regional policy, strategic policy continues to promote short-term economic growth over all other considerations. This position, which is often based on unsustainable investment in road and aviation infrastructure, fails to appreciate not just the economic benefits of high quality environments but the increasing economic and social costs of environmental degradation. These costs are evident in terms of localised pollution problems on human populations and in the longer term the global consequences of, for

example, climate change.

The new spatial planning system offers an opportunity to enshrine a concept of sustainable development which can identify these long-term costs and seek to apply strategic policy which should avoid, mitigate and if all else fails, compensate for their impact.

Wildlife and Countryside Link believes all land use planning decisions must be based upon the following principles:

- Environmental justice: putting people at the heart of decision making, reducing social inequality by upholding environmental justice in the outcomes of decisions;
- Inter-generational equity: ensuring current development does not prevent future generations from meeting their own needs;
- Environmental limits: ensuring that resources are not irrevocably exhausted or the environment irreversibly damaged. This means, for example, supporting climate protection, protecting and enhancing biodiversity and landscape, reducing harmful emissions, and promoting the sustainable use of natural resources;
- Resource conservation: ensuring that planning decisions require the prudent and sustainable use of finite natural resources;
- Precautionary approach: the precautionary principle holds that where the environmental impacts of certain activities or developments are not known, the proposed development should not be carried out;
- Polluter pays: ensuring that the full environmental, social and economic costs of development are met by the developer;
- Proximity principle: seeking to resolve problems in the present and locally, rather than passing them on to other communities or future generations<sup>1</sup>.

# SPATIAL PLANNING

Regional spatial strategies (RSSs) and local development frameworks (LDFs) should have a spatial planning approach at their heart. This means regional and local planning authorities should look wider than simply deciding on the least damaging option for development and instead should be focused on approving development that does not destroy the environment and provides an environmental gain. This is in line with the Government's definition of sustainable development, which states environmental, social and economic concerns should be pursued simultaneously. Positive planning is central to the achievement of sustainable development and radical measures are needed to ensure that development is capable of adapting to climate change and does not harm the ability of the natural environment to adapt. RSSs and LDFs should not be restricted to narrow planning matters and should include factors such as improvement of biodiversity, landscape protection and recreation, renewable energy, recycling, protection of the environment, transport, health culture and social issues. This approach is supported by *Planning Policy Statement 11: Regional Spatial Strategies (PPS 11)*.

Wildlife and Countryside Link believes the following points should be considered at all levels of spatial planning:

- Does the plan/strategy cover all forms of land use in the area (including, for example, the impacts of agriculture and forestry on rural areas or the impacts of environmental degradation and air pollution in urban areas)?
- Is it clear how the plan/strategy links to other strategies and plans guiding development in the area?

# CLIMATE CHANGE

We now face the threat of drastic climate change. This could have a disastrous impact on ecosystems and landscapes.

The biodiversity of an area is linked directly to local climatic conditions. For example, changes in temperature and rainfall can alter the character of soils and the vegetation they support. Once welcoming habitats will become hostile environments and all species will have to adapt to these changes to survive. There are also implications for irreplaceable archaeological resources, for example through coastal erosion or drying out of wetlands. These processes are already occurring.

Habitat networks, buffer zones and wildlife corridors can facilitate the movement of species in their search for favourable habitats. Action plans are needed to identify, promote and protect these features. They should also stimulate action programmes that reinstate previously fragmented habitats.

In this context, Local Wildlife Sites, landscapes and habitats outside the statutorily designated site system can be just as important as those protected by UK and European law.

It is vital that RSSs and LDFs in taking a spatial approach clearly state how the area will adapt and deal with climate change. This is important for natural habitats but also for local communities. The onset of extreme weather events and other impacts associated with climate change must be addressed in LDDs and RSSs as well as at a national level.

The RSS should contain an overarching policy for the abatement of further impacts through CO<sub>2</sub> reduction policies. Spatial policy at regional and local level should also acknowledge the cross cutting impact of climate change, affecting specific areas such as housing, energy, transport, agriculture, forestry and waste. RSSs must make sure that LDFs prioritise action to reduce the threat of climate change in line with paragraph 13 (ii) of PPS 1 by ensuring that policies:

“ reduce energy use, reduce emissions (for example, by encouraging patterns of development which reduce the need to travel by private car, or reduce the impact of moving freight), promote the development of renewable energy resources, and take climate change impacts into account in the location and design of development ”

(PPS 1 section 13 (ii) ODPM 2005)

## Does the RSS/LDF:

- Have robust baseline data on greenhouse gases?
- Choose options directed by analysis of the potential impacts against baseline conditions?
- Contain clear policies to reduce emissions in line with reduction targets?
- Include policies for action to ensure the natural environment can adapt to climate change?
- Include a regional carbon reduction target?
- Promote low or zero emission development principles throughout?

# BIODIVERSITY

*Working with the grain of nature: a biodiversity strategy for England*<sup>2</sup> sets out the Government's vision for conserving and enhancing biological diversity in England, together with a programme of work to achieve it. It explains that the government wants to see “planning policies and the planning decisions that recognise the need to conserve and enhance biodiversity”. Spatial planning should integrate all planning policies and programmes which have competing demands on wildlife. The challenge is to go beyond protecting valued landscapes, habitats and species and to enrich and extend them for future generations. The government commitment to conserve, enhance and restore is also now reflected in *Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (PPS9)*.

## Does the RSS:

- Establish a biodiversity ‘vision’ for the region, and identify and describe the current regional and sub-regional distribution of landscape types, BAP habitats and species, internationally, nationally and locally important sites for conservation?
- Act to protect and enhance the region’s natural character and biodiversity of its urban, rural and coastal/marine environments including those outside formally designated areas?
- Set targets for the maintenance and enhancement of key regional priority habitats and the recovery of key regional priority species?
- Contain policies to promote the development of ecologically functioning landscapes such as naturally functioning floodplains?
- Contribute to the objectives of the England Biodiversity Strategy?
- Include policies that afford a high level of protection to sites or species of international/ European, national, regional, sub-regional and local importance to wildlife and geological conservation in line with PPS1 (para. 17)?

## Does the LDF:

- Set out the biodiversity vision for the local planning authority area, refining and localising the

broader vision for safeguarding and enhancing biodiversity as set out in the RSS?

- Incorporate biodiversity objectives that reflect both national and local priorities, including those which have been agreed by local biodiversity partnerships, in all LDF policies and proposals?
- Set out the policies and proposals to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the area, at the landscape scale, reducing and repairing habitat fragmentation?
- Contain action area plans that demonstrate how sensitive and/or vulnerable landscapes and habitats are to be restored and enhanced?
- Contain a general policy stating that plan policies and planning decisions should be based upon the best possible surveys and information about the relevant biodiversity and geological resource?
- Show, in addition to statutorily protected sites, Local Sites of landscape, wildlife or geological importance, wildlife corridors and ancient woodland on the proposals map?
- Accord with Defra’s Guidance on Local Sites?
- Recognise the contributions that individual sites and areas make to conserving this resource within the wider landscape, over and above the approach to protection of sites in a strict designation hierarchy?
- Identify or summarise where there is significant biodiversity on Previously Developed Land, and set out how this interest will be retained or incorporated into developments?
- Include a presumption against development that would damage or destroy ancient woodland, wetlands, veteran trees, historic field boundaries, water bodies and any Local BAP priority habitats?
- Does the plan/strategy promote opportunities for enrichment or restoration of landscape and habitats through agri-environment schemes?
- Identify any areas or sites for the restoration or creation of new priority habitats which contribute to regional targets, and support this restoration or creation through appropriate policies?
- Encourage enhancement of biodiversity from large scale habitat re-creation to small-scale e.g. green roofs, brown roofs, nest boxes and ponds?

# ENERGY CONSCIOUS PLANNING

We cannot afford to consider energy as an unlimited natural resource. Our profligate use of non-renewable natural resources is unsustainable, while the threat posed by climate change dictates that another approach is desperately needed. While we cannot build ourselves out of the threat posed by climate change, we can act to reduce our contribution to it – and yet we risk approving energy intensive developments which reinforce these problems. While Building Regulations have a central role to play, many key decisions have already been made through the planning process, well before the Building Regulations are able to influence the detail of a new development. Such considerations include the total amount, density, orientation, broad design, and location of development.

If Government commitments to energy efficiency, greenhouse gas emissions reduction, and renewable energy generation are to be realised, the planning system needs to be geared around energy conscious planning. This requires us to set a planning framework which aims to reduce our ever-increasing rate of energy consumption by encouraging more energy efficient building, travel and lifestyles. Link firmly believes that energy conservation is a planning issue.

## Does the RSS:

- Include targets for renewable energy generation, energy conservation and efficiency across the region?
- Require mixed use and clustering of developments, and avoid low-density development?
- Include policies which require high standards of energy conservation and renewable energy generation in both new developments and modifications to existing developments?
- Include policies to maximise renewable energy generation, subject to environmental constraints such as countryside character and biodiversity?

## Does the LDF:

- Make it clear in policies that energy consumption will be a material consideration in planning decisions?
- Include policies which encourage developments to minimise energy consumption through the size, pattern, density, layout, siting, orientation and design of new development?
- Employ strategies for re-use, rather than renewal, of existing built infrastructure and building stock, upgrading to maximise use of embedded locally produced energy and limit the adverse environmental impacts of demolition and new build?
- Include policies which encourage embedded renewable energy generation and small scale community renewable schemes, subject to environmental constraints such as countryside character and biodiversity?
- Set clear criteria for protecting the countryside from inappropriate developments, relating to scale, design and site-sensitivity and the potential for cumulative damage?
- Encourage a wide range of renewable technologies?
- Include a presumption in favour of undergrounding transmission lines?



Courtesy of CPRE



# HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

The term 'historic environment' applies to much more than old buildings (important though they are). Local authorities should adopt an inclusive approach when producing historic environment policies to ensure that archaeological resources and ancient habitats and landscapes are protected. Wider historic landscape character should be protected along with key individual features such as ancient trees. Historic landscape characterisation is a key tool in spatial planning at the regional and local scale to identify and protect important ancient and historic landscapes.

LDFs and RSSs should encourage the restoration and re-creation of historic landscapes and landscape features. These provide valuable wildlife habitats. Restoration can include restoring re-planted ancient woodland, historic parklands and wood pasture, and reinstating traditional management of landscapes.

## Does the RSS:

- Include policies requiring protection and encouraging restoration of ancient landscapes and landscape features?
- Require that LDF policies are informed by historic landscape characterisation?
- Require LDFs to identify and protect historic environment assets such as nationally and locally designated sites, registered historic parks and gardens, ancient woodland, wood pasture, veteran trees, and ancient hedgerows on the proposals map?

## Does the LDF:

- Include policies for the protection and care of archaeological sites and monuments and their settings? This should include an explicit presumption in favour of their in situ preservation where they are nationally, regionally or locally important – whether or not they are scheduled monuments.
- Identify and protect nationally, regionally and locally important historic environment assets, including nationally and locally designated sites, registered historic parks and gardens, ancient woodland, wood pasture, veteran trees, and ancient hedgerows on the proposals map?
- Have policies which protect historic landscape and archaeological sites through the control of development, alterations and inappropriate changes of use?
- Have strategies for conserving and enhancing historic environment assets?
- Secure the retention of distinctive local features e.g. green spaces, natural and designed landscapes, inland waterways, and green corridors?
- Secure the protection of trees, ancient woodland (land that has been continuously-wooded for at least 400 years) and individual ancient and veteran trees?
- Include policies encouraging the restoration of ancient landscapes and landscape features?

# MINERALS

The future supply of minerals in England must be sustainable and avoid irreversible damage to the environment. To achieve this it is essential to plan to source our minerals supplies in ways that recognise the importance of protecting wildlife, landscape, the historic environment and the interests of both recreational users and local communities. This should highlight demand management above all.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 does not make new provision for minerals planning, and consequently county councils, unitary authorities and National Park Authorities retain their function as Mineral Planning Authorities (MPAs). Nonetheless, Regional Planning Bodies will continue to apportion regional guidelines for extraction to mineral planning authority areas<sup>3</sup>. It is therefore paramount that communication between Regional, Minerals and Local Planning Bodies is frequent and that policies and strategies are integrated and complementary.

## Does the RSS:

- Take full account of the wider environmental footprint of development plans in terms of minerals extraction, transport and disposal when assessing options for the amount, type and location of development?
- Use assessment of 'environmental capacity' to determine the extent of minerals extraction that would be sustainable in any given area, within any given time?
- Guide developers to reserves where the impacts of quarrying would be least detrimental to the countryside and marine environments?
- Set demanding targets for the use of recycled, secondary and alternative materials?
- Recognise the requirement for small scale supply of traditional stone and roofing materials for conservation and restoration purposes?

- Take into account the impact of sourcing materials from outside a plan area e.g. from marine deposits, and therefore avoid simply exporting the environmental costs of minerals extraction to other landscapes and ecosystems?
- Consider the cumulative impact of existing and possible future quarrying operations?

## Does the LDF/Minerals Development Framework (MDF):

- Favour a strategy that will minimise demand for primary minerals extraction?
- Include strong policies to secure the recycling of construction and demolition waste and ensure design specifications make greater use of recycled, secondary and alternative materials, for example through the use of conditions?
- Use environmental capacity to inform selection sites for minerals extraction?
- Ensure that, whatever the primary end use of the site, when working has ceased the site provides valuable habitat for wildlife? In particular, opportunities should be taken to contribute to the achievement of specific targets set out in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, by creating new priority habitats or by retaining features that are likely to be used by BAP species.



Photo courtesy of the National Trust

<sup>3</sup> Apportionments are set out in 'National and Regional Guidelines for Aggregates Provision in England, 2001-2016', ODPM, 2003.

# TRANSPORT

Government policy on transport (PPG13) has three main objectives: to reduce the need to travel (especially by car), to promote more sustainable transport choices, and to improve accessibility to services by public transport, walking and cycling. Decisions on land use set the framework for transport decisions and should be guided by the principle of 'spatial efficiency'.

Spatial efficiency aims to enable development and transport infrastructure to function in ways which maximise the benefits from the use of land, while minimising movement and the resulting significant external costs. This requires a new approach. Rather than developing outputs (like miles of new road, or number of people within walking distance of an hourly bus service) spatial efficiency is geared around delivering sustainable outcomes.

## Does the RSS/Regional Transport Strategy (RTS):

- Contain strong policies to avoid the physical separation of activities and improve accessibility (rather than mobility) in order to reduce the need to travel and increase spatial efficiency?
- Include proposals for introducing demand management measures within the region with timetables for implementation and committed resources in order to deliver this?
- Ensure all transport policies are consistent with the sustainable development principles?
- Fully recognise the potential of measures to promote walking, cycling and public transport (promoted through Local Transport Plans) in tackling strategic problems of congestion or social exclusion being examined by the RSS?

LDFs have an important role to play in promoting spatial efficiency since local planning authorities will be in a better position to identify a community's accessibility needs. The abolition of county structure plans places a greater responsibility on local planning authorities to embrace these issues and ensure the county local transport plan is consistent with spatial planning objectives.

## Does the LDF:

- Contain strong policies to avoid the physical separation of activities and improve accessibility (rather than mobility) in order to reduce the need to travel and deliver a spatially efficient pattern of development?
- Actively support car free developments and car-pooling schemes?
- Encourage the flexible and innovative use of land in urban areas (for example through simultaneous uses of land) to improve spatial efficiency?
- Include policies to improve the spatial efficiency of specific areas through targeted small-scale transport investment and management measures?

# WATER CONSCIOUS PLANNING

Water is a limited natural resource upon which all life depends. Natural wetland systems, including rivers, streams, ponds and marshes, deliver a wide range of social, economic and environmental benefits, such as clean water, flood defence, drought resistance, biodiversity, recreation and tourism. Past land use and management mean that we can no longer take these benefits for granted and the function of many of our groundwaters and wetland systems has been damaged or destroyed. Yet we need healthy wetlands more than ever before to help mitigate the impacts of climate change.

The government is committed to the wise use of water and wetlands, notably through the European Water Framework Directive. In addition, minimising the increased risk of flooding due, at least in part, to climate change is being addressed through the Defra policy on 'Making Space for Water'. The planning process has a major role to play in the long-term protection of the water environment and the improvement of the quality of all waters – ground and surface – and associated wetlands.

## Does the RSS:

- Set out a sustainable, integrated, strategic, positive 'vision' for the water environment?
- Address the key issues of water quantity, quality and the maintenance and restoration of functional natural wetlands?
- Take adequate account of current flooding risk and the potential increased risk predicted by climate change?
- Set out groundwater protection zones where special measures will be needed to protect ground sourced public supply?
- Advise local planning authorities to consult with the Environment Agency and other key organisations concerned with the water environment?

## Does the LDF:

- Avoid development in areas that already experience or are predicted to experience shortfalls in water supply through over abstraction, drought and climate change?
- Avoid development or impose special measures to prevent groundwater pollution from development sited within groundwater catchments?
- Include a requirement for the provision of Sustainable Drainage Schemes and water efficiency in all new development?
- Include a requirement to avoid, or where this is not possible, to minimise pollution from both point and diffuse sources?
- Ensure that waterside developments improve rather than compromise compliance with the Water Framework Directive?
- Apply the sequential approach to development within the flood plain – constraining development according to the level of risk – and protect areas that may be needed in future for managed retreat or fluvial flooding?
- Ensure that where development or re-development takes place in flood risk areas that such development is conditioned to maximise flood resistance and resilience features?
- Identify areas and include positive policies for the creation of biodiversity rich wetlands and the restoration of natural wetland function? For example, creation of wet woodlands and the removal of field drains upstream of settlements prone to flooding.
- Commit to ensuring that all development involving non-mains drainage for foul water is subject to an assessment of environmental consequences under Circular 03/99?

# STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

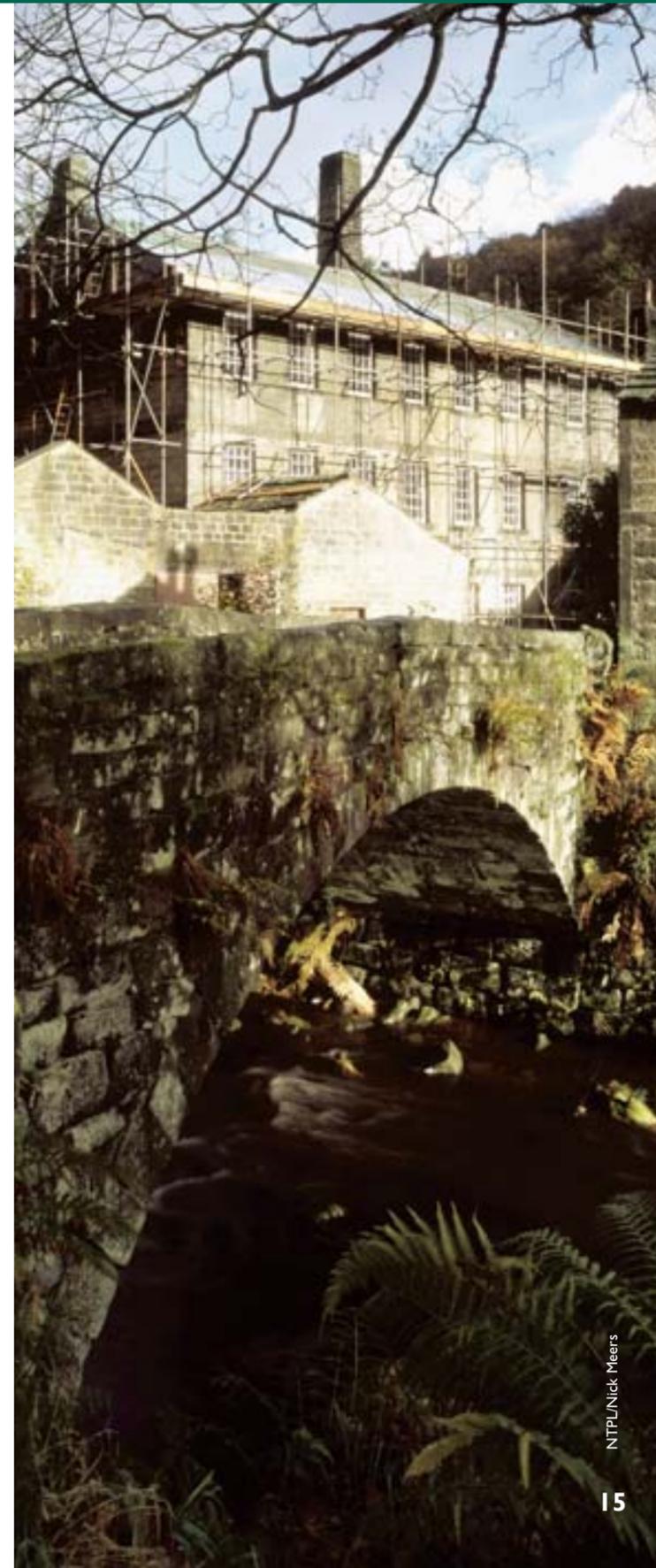
Spatial plans at regional and local levels will have many competing demands placed upon them. In order to ensure that the potential environmental effects of these plans are properly considered before decisions are made, they should be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The government has provided guidance to planning bodies on the requirements for SEA<sup>4</sup>.

It is government policy that SEA requirements should be met through Sustainability Appraisal (SA). Link believes this appraisal should be robust, aim to avoid environmental damage and promote measures which will enhance the environment and involve the wider public throughout the process. It is vital that measures are taken to ensure environmental concerns are not sidelined in the pursuit of short-term economic benefits. This is also necessary in order to meet the legal requirements of the SEA Directive.

## The SA must address the following:

- **Public involvement:** the involvement of environmental non-government organisations (NGOs) and the wider public is a fundamental aspect of SEA. This should follow the principles of good public participation (which include early involvement, interaction, inclusiveness, an open process and effective feedback to participants). Participation should be actively encouraged early on in the SA process when the issues and alternatives are being identified for study.
- **Alternatives:** a major benefit of SA is the ability to identify potentially damaging environmental effects of an option early on, and to develop alternative approaches to avoid that impact. The SA should show how the plan can be improved to prevent and reduce environmental damage. Only after this approach has been exhausted should the focus turn to mitigating environmental damage. Different scenarios for future rates of development in a given area should be considered and assessed against environmental limits, rather than just alternative sites. Managing demand for natural resources should take precedence over increased quarrying, energy generation or water use. These 'higher order' alternative options should be prominent in the SA reported justification. Justification should be given if options that are more environmentally beneficial than the preferred option have been rejected.
- **Issues to be covered:** the SA process should not lead to the same issue being assessed several times, however, it is important that all significant issues are assessed. SA of a Development Plan Document should test development proposals against environmental capacity, and not simply be required to accept proposals handed down by the RSS. SA of RSS will need to consider the environmental implications of increased water abstraction, rather than relying on a future SA of Environment Agency plans for water abstraction.
- **Cumulative effects:** the natural and historic environment can suffer 'a death by a thousand cuts': lots of incremental changes can erode its character, and fragment habitats and landscapes. SAs undertaken for spatial plans should consider these cumulative effects early on and recommend how they can be avoided.
- **Predicting impacts:** the SA report should consider the effect of a plan on biodiversity, population, human health, flora, fauna, soil, water, air, climate, material assets, cultural heritage, landscape, and the interaction between these. This should be done using baseline quantitative and qualitative data to determine the magnitude of any effect.

- **Evaluation:** SA involves predicting impacts, as well as evaluating them. The evaluation process should be objective and based on transparent criteria, agreed in advance. Recommendations for improving the impacts of the plan should be identified as a key output of the assessment process.
- **Quality control:** the introduction of the SEA Directive means that the SA process should become a prominent part of plan formulation. The SA report will be assessed as part of the test of the 'soundness' of the plan. It is in planning authorities' own interest to ensure the SA is comprehensive, objective, and of sufficient quality, since it will form the basis for decisions made by elected representatives. The quality of the SA should be independently evaluated<sup>5</sup>. No plan should be adopted if there is evidence that the SA report is of insufficient quality.
- **Decision-making:** the SEA Directive aims to provide a high level of environmental protection, and the SA report (and comments received following public consultation) must be taken into account in reaching decisions. Planning bodies should explicitly show how they have responded to the assessment and peoples' comments. Changes resulting from the SA should be outlined and explained.
- **Monitoring:** to comply with the SEA Directive, the appraisal will need to identify environmental effects arising from the implementation of the plan which should be monitored. These should be spelt out in the SEA report and in the adopted plan. Plans should identify trigger points to determine when remedial action is required, along with an indication of what action will be taken.



# MONITORING

If we are to achieve sustainable development it is imperative that planning authorities carefully observe and record the effectiveness of their strategies, land-use proposals and action programmes. Planning authority investment in monitoring countryside character and biodiversity changes needs to be made on a scale that matches the challenge facing us.

## Does the RSS:

- Include a clear understanding of the current state of the environment and how current trends are predicted to affect it in the future?
- Promote properly resourced common processes and standards<sup>6</sup> for locally collected data that will be consolidated at the regional level?
- Include appropriate biodiversity indicators<sup>7</sup> for the region and support the allocation of sufficient resources to allow annual monitoring of performance in meeting biodiversity targets?

## Does the LDF:

- Outline the aims, mechanisms and resources for collation and dissemination of up to date records, for example through support of Local Records Centres?
- Identify suitable evidence based and quantifiable indicators for monitoring biodiversity, landscape and heritage losses and gains?
- Put in place effective monitoring procedures for protected species?
- Integrate consumption of natural resources e.g. water, minerals, and energy into the monitoring regime?

All of these points should be included in annual monitoring reports.

# FURTHER INFORMATION

## Government Documents

*The Planning Response to Climate Change. Advice on Better Practice*, CAG Consultants, on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Sept 2004.

[http://odpm.gov.uk/pub/498/ThePlanningResponsetoClimateChangeAdviceonBetterPracticePDF1234Kb\\_id1144498.pdf](http://odpm.gov.uk/pub/498/ThePlanningResponsetoClimateChangeAdviceonBetterPracticePDF1234Kb_id1144498.pdf)

*Securing the Future – delivering the UK's sustainable development strategy*, HM Government, March 2005

[http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/pdf/strategy/SecFut\\_complete.pdf](http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/pdf/strategy/SecFut_complete.pdf)

*Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development*, ODPM 2005,

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1143808>

*Environmental Quality in Spatial Planning*, David Tyldesley and Associates on behalf of The Countryside Agency, English Heritage, English Nature and Environment Agency, June 2005

[www.englishnature.org.uk/pubs/publication/PDF/SpatialPlanning.pdf](http://www.englishnature.org.uk/pubs/publication/PDF/SpatialPlanning.pdf)

*Supplementary files to Environmental Quality in Spatial Planning*, David Tyldesley and Associates on behalf of The Countryside Agency, English Heritage, English Nature and Environment Agency, June 2005

[www.english-nature.org.uk/pubs/publication/PDF/SpatialPlanningSuppFiles.pdf](http://www.english-nature.org.uk/pubs/publication/PDF/SpatialPlanningSuppFiles.pdf)

## Link Members' Documents

*Planning Policy Statement 1: Creating Sustainable Communities – A Summary*, Friends of the Earth, March 2005

[http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/pps1\\_a\\_summary.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/pps1_a_summary.pdf)

*WWF One Million Sustainable Homes reports* [www.wwf.org.uk/sustainablehomes/reports.asp](http://www.wwf.org.uk/sustainablehomes/reports.asp)

For more information on Spatial Efficiency, see CPRE's report *Back Together Again 2004* – available free from [www.cpre.org.uk/resources/pub/pdfs/transport/tranport-policy/back-together-again.pdf](http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/pub/pdfs/transport/tranport-policy/back-together-again.pdf), or £5 from CPRE Publications (tel. 020 7981 2800).

For a range of advice and information on spatial planning, visit CPRE's Planning Help web site: [www.planninghelp.org.uk](http://www.planninghelp.org.uk)

The Wildlife Trusts are an important source of further information for planners. The following link takes you to a page of Local Trust contact details: [www.wildlifetrusts.org/index.php?section=localtrusts](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/index.php?section=localtrusts)

The Woodland Trust provides an online version of English Nature's ancient woodland inventory at [www.woodsunderthreat.info](http://www.woodsunderthreat.info) See the campaigner's guide on the same site for more information about the importance of ancient woodland.

For information on spatial planning to put biodiversity on a sustainable footing in the face of climate change see the Woodland Trust's document *Space for Nature* ([www.woodland-trust.org.uk/publications/publicationsmore/space.pdf](http://www.woodland-trust.org.uk/publications/publicationsmore/space.pdf))

## Other Organisations' Documents

*Biodiversity by Design* TCPA, September 2004 [www.tcpa.org.uk/downloads/TCPA\\_biodiversity\\_guide\\_lowres.pdf](http://www.tcpa.org.uk/downloads/TCPA_biodiversity_guide_lowres.pdf)

## Bioregional

This site gives more information on Bioregional's Z-squared initiative [http://www.bioregional.com/programme\\_projects/opl\\_prog/zsquared/bz\\_zsquared.htm](http://www.bioregional.com/programme_projects/opl_prog/zsquared/bz_zsquared.htm)