

Communiqué from the South East Sustainable Futures Group

A vision for the South East

The Regional Sustainability Framework for the South East was launched by the region's Sustainable Futures Group on 2 June 2008. The Framework sets out a vision that should touch the lives of everyone who lives, works, plays or invests in the region, now and in the future:

'A socially and economically strong, healthy and just South East that respects the limits of the global environment'

Priorities for action

Achieving this vision of a sustainable South East requires action to strengthen our economy, social fabric and environment. The Regional Sustainability Framework identifies four priorities for action in the region:

- Achieving sustainable levels of resource use
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with the region
- Ensuring that the South East is prepared for the inevitable impacts of climate change
- Ensuring that the most deprived people also have an equal opportunity to benefit from and contribute to a better quality of life.

These are four issues on which the South East is currently under-performing and which – if not addressed – could prevent the region from achieving the vision.

Building on the region's strengths

The Sustainable Futures Group brings together experts from the public, private and voluntary sectors in the South East. The group has set an enduring, long-term vision that transcends political or other changes; it is a vision for the people of the South East. The group examined the region's strengths and weaknesses and the impact of existing strategies to develop this vision and the priorities for action. Focusing on this vision and the priority actions will help build on the South East's strengths and reduce its weaknesses. This framework will influence all strategies in the region – now and in the future.

The four priority actions will be kept closely under review to enable the region to adapt to changes and reduce regional weaknesses. Challenges such as the 2008 credit crunch and the flooding in 2007 show we cannot afford to be complacent about the region's global competitiveness, which underpins our prosperity. Everyone has a role in making sure the South East is resilient to economic and environmental shocks and the impact such shocks may have, especially on the most vulnerable. The Sustainable Futures Group will undertake continued analysis of such impacts to identify any necessary changes to their approach.

What the Framework means to you

Achieving this vision will require concerted action by everyone. No one sector or group can do it alone. The region needs all organisations – whether public or private, voluntary or community – to play their part and focus on the priorities needed to deliver the vision. The framework will help you do that, whether you are a decision-maker, policy developer or a delivery body. It should help show how benefits can be achieved for economy, environment and social justice at the same time - through well-designed policies and delivery. For example, reducing resource use and tackling climate change can achieve greater security of energy supply and help those suffering from fuel poverty as prices continue to rise. For regional leaders, the framework can help win support from others, and for policy-makers it can help ensure policies contribute to achieving the region's vision.

The framework is not just about vision, priorities and assessing progress at a strategic level. Its sustainability appraisal guide is an essential practical tool for reviewing plans and strategies to ensure that policies and actions help deliver a healthy economy, environment and society. The Sustainable Futures Group urges you to use the framework and to open a dialogue about how we can work together successfully to achieve the vision by tackling the region's weaknesses and building on its strengths.



"Organisations need to think seriously about how they can take action and change the way they work to ensure that everyone in the South East can benefit from a 'triple dividend' – gains in quality of life, a richer and healthier environment and a stronger economy."

Ian Christie

Chairman Sustainable Futures Group, South East

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