

The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy Cm 6467 [Link to document? - click here](#)

Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

by Command of Her Majesty

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Planning – with sustainable development at its heart

The planning system is key to achieving sustainable development. The Government's new planning policy statement 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (PPS 1) sets out our vision for planning in England and the key policies which will underpin it. PPS1 makes clear that sustainable development is at the heart of the planning system. It sets the framework for reflecting the duty in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 for regional and local plans to be prepared with a view to contributing to sustainable development.

Other planning policies, set out in the Government's Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance notes, complement PPS1 in delivering sustainable development:

- Planning policies for housing ensure that brownfield land is developed first for new housing, and that new housing is built at higher densities than previously, reducing the need for development on greenfield sites.
- Other national policies ensure that new developments are located in areas such as town centres which are accessible by means of walking, cycling and public transport thereby reducing reliance on the private car.
- Policies for the natural and historic environment ensure the conservation and reuse of buildings and the protection of wildlife resources, and
- Policies for rural areas ensure that there are strict controls on development in the open countryside and that our finest countryside and landscapes are protected for the benefit of everyone.

The Government will also revise its policy on "planning obligations" in Spring 2005, to make it clearer how developers can be required through the planning system to take certain actions in order to ensure development is acceptable and in line with sustainable communities policies. For example, the revised policy will set out how planning obligations may be used to require a developer to provide a contribution towards affordable housing or to compensate for loss of habitat or damage to the environment.

Sustainable development is built into every stage of the planning process. Regional plans, called Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS), are drawn up by Regional Assemblies (the regional planning body). The RSS, incorporating a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), provides a spatial framework to inform the preparation of Local Development Documents (LDDs). These documents form the portfolio which collectively delivers the spatial planning strategy for a local planning authority's area. The RSS also informs the preparation of Local Transport Plans (LTPs), and regional and sub-regional strategies and programmes that have a bearing on the use of land.

The RSS should articulate a vision for the region for a 15-20 year period and show how this will contribute to achieving sustainable development objectives. Both RSSs and LDDs should be developed in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, with appropriate community involvement at all stages.

RSSs should contain spatial policies for:

- the scale and distribution of provision for new housing
- priorities for the environment, such as countryside and biodiversity protection, and
- transport, infrastructure, economic development, agriculture, minerals extraction and waste treatment and disposal.

As an integral part of reviewing and updating the RSS and LDDs, planning authorities are required to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA). Following consultation in 2004, the Government will publish final guidance for these appraisals in 2005. In advance of this guidance, the Government will issue interim advice on the key SA topics raised during and since the consultation. Good practice examples of SAs will be published on the ODPM website.

SAs will comply fully with the European Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment.