



## **The developing South East Strategy: SEFS Position on likely key issues\***

### **Sustainable development**

- Sustainability should underpin all spatial planning. SEFS supports the Government's five Sustainable Development Principles –
  - living within environmental limits
  - achieving a sustainable economy
  - ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
  - using sound science responsibly
  - promoting good governance
- There should be no trade offs between planning for economic, environmental and social benefits –developments should not breach environmental limits.
- SEFS will contribute to, and promote, the development of environmental limits for the region including biodiversity, air quality, water resources and water quality.
- The 25 Regional Sustainability Framework (RSF) objectives should inform all planning and development.
- Environmental sustainability includes -
  - sustainable levels of resource use
  - conserving the historic heritage and natural environment of the South East
  - reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with the region
  - reducing the region's ecological footprint

### **Spatial strategy**

SEFS supports policies which reduce the need to travel by unsustainable modes by –

- focussing housing, services, employment opportunities and commercial development in the same location
- ensuring that such developments are easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport
- protecting the integrity of the green belt as a buffer against urban sprawl

### **Climate change**

Climate change should be recognised as the single biggest threat to people, the economy and the natural environment in the South East.

Regional policies and implementation strategies –

- should acknowledge the urgent need to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions as a means of mitigating climate change
- should address the need to adapt to climate change impacts and the ability of the natural environment to assist with adaptation
- should include CO<sub>2</sub> emission reduction targets (based on consumption as well as production), which should be regularly monitored and reviewed
- should use carbon footprint in assessing policy and programmes

## **Green infrastructure**

SEFS supports –

- the provision, planning and management of green infrastructure and agrees with the broad list of multifunctional objectives set down in the South East Plan
- the list of Green Infrastructure assets in the current South East Plan
- the inclusion of green infrastructure projects whenever funding for regional infrastructure is considered
- policies which acknowledge what Green Infrastructure can deliver in terms of ecosystem services

## **Housing**

SEFS supports policies which aim to ensure -

- sustainable design, construction and location
- that new homes achieve Sustainable Buildings Code level 4, and refurbishments achieve EcoHomes XB standard
- the use of local, reclaimed, renewable and recycled materials in construction
- the inclusion of a target for a minimum density of at least 40 dwellings per hectare indicating the range of densities that might be appropriate in different locations
- that construction to proposed housing levels will not breach environmental limits
- that the option of renovation is considered before demolition and replacement
- a sequential approach to land allocation with redundant buildings and brownfield sites being considered before construction on greenfield sites

but that -

- previously developed land with significant actual or potential wildlife interest or community value, should not be developed
- the approach to construction on greenfield sites should be taken on a case-by-case basis with potential exceptions in villages (whether or not in the greenbelt) to help them reach a sustainable size in respect of employment, schools, shops, and public transport

## **Transport**

SEFS supports many of the existing transport policies in the South East Plan, in particular those policies which –

- aim to achieve a rebalancing of the transport system in favour of sustainable modes
- foster and promote an improved and integrated network of public transport services
- encourage development that is located and designed to reduce average journey length.
- include measures to minimise negative environmental impacts of transport and where possible to enhance the environment and communities through such interventions
- support and develop the role of regional spokes by developing a complementary and integrated network of rail and express bus/coach services
- reduce the environmental impact of surface access to airports increasing modal share in favour of public transport and sustainable modes
- include a rural dimension to transport and traffic management policies, including looking for opportunities to improve provision for cyclists and pedestrians between towns and their nearest villages
- prioritise demand management
- aim to ensure that the transport system plays its proper role in tackling climate change

SEFS has, however, serious concerns over the number of prioritised road building and widening schemes, the delivery of which would not only tend to work against policies to rebalance the transport system in favour of sustainable modes, but would add to the difficulties in achieving reductions in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in line with the Climate Change Act requirements.

SEFS is opposed to airport expansion and any policies which are likely to lead to an increase in flights to and from the region.

## **Natural resources and wildlife**

SEFS supports policies which –

- protect and enhance wildlife species and habitats and increases their resilience to climate change impacts
- safeguard existing biodiversity assets, halting and reversing biodiversity loss in protected areas, the wider environment and surrounding seas
- restore degraded habitats in key areas of opportunity
- promote appropriate ecological networks
- prevent further fragmentation of the region's key habitats (such as heathlands, chalk grasslands and ancient woodland) and create links and corridors to restore ecological function, population viability and help species and habitats to respond to both micro- and macro shifts in their climate space
- recognise the importance of non-statutory and locally designated sites
- avoid development in areas where it would cause damage to existing habitats and landscapes (especially, but not exclusively, statutorily designated ones)
- promote flood management that delivers an integrated approach to planning and land management across whole floodplains and catchments
- avoid development in flood plains where this might increase flood risk elsewhere and/or threaten important or potential wildlife sites

## **Water**

Increasing demand for water may lead to shortages in supply for homes and businesses and could damage biodiversity.

SEFS advocates –

- a reduction in per capita water consumption by at least 20% by 2016, encouraging more efficient use in homes, buildings and businesses; buildings to meet Eco Homes XB 'excellent' and the Code for Sustainable Homes 'Level 4' standards
- the promotion of 'grey water' use; Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS); and 'water neutral' developments (especially in the region's main growth areas)
- the rolling out of universal water metering by 2016 (with suitable protection to vulnerable customers)
- a pricing system to reduce waste and reward wise use
- the promotion of a range of behavioural change actions to achieve a more efficient use of water
- the use of water footprint in assessing policy and programmes

## **Waste**

SEFS believes that we should aim to eliminate the concept of waste and supports policies which –

- reduce waste generation
- eliminate waste flows to landfill and for incineration
- promote zero food waste
- encourage the reuse of construction and demolition materials
- facilitate re-use, repair, composting and recycling
- promote energy recovery through small scale heat and power plants and composting technologies such as anaerobic digestion

## **Countryside and landscape management**

SEFS supports policies which -

- give priority to protecting the region's AONBs and National Parks
- aim to protect and enhance the diversity and local distinctiveness of the region's landscapes

- recognise the benefits which the countryside and outstanding landscapes provide, environmentally, economically and socially
- promote people's access to the countryside by sustainable transport modes and the development and management of appropriate green infrastructure
- promote the management and enhancement of the wider countryside for landscape and biodiversity through the delivery of targeted grant schemes

### **Town centres & urban renaissance**

SEFS supports policies which -

- promote access to town centres by sustainable transport modes
- recognise the damaging effect on town centre vitality of out of town retail outlets
- promote safe, secure and attractive town centres

### **Food**

SEFS advocates policies which –

- highlight the benefits of an organic, seasonal, low-impact diet comprising less meat and dairy products
- ensure that producers are rewarded for quality food that meets safety and animal welfare criteria, whilst protecting and enhancing the environment
- help consumers understand not just where, but how, food is produced
- support food production that boosts the local economy and promotes local distinctiveness
- avoid energy intensive food production and distribution
- promote a zero waste disposal system
- promote fair trade principles

### **Behavioural Change**

SEFS advocates -

- policies which aim to promote behavioural change as a means of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and our ecological footprint
- a regional policy which recognises the need for an overall regional strategy and leadership to promote behavioural change

Peter England  
26 February 2010

*\*The purpose of this document is to ensure consistency of approach for those participating in public fora on behalf of SEFS. It was approved by SEFS P&EC in May 2010 but remains open to approved updating.*