

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of East of England Implementation Plan

The East of England Plan, the regional spatial strategy (RSS) and Inventing our Future, the regional economic strategy (RES) set out a long-term vision for the region's economic and housing growth. The strategies are owned by the region and can only be delivered through the collaborative work of political, business and community leaders and institutions. This East of England Implementation Plan sets out how the region is working together to deliver the vision and priorities set out in these two strategies.

The East of England is the first region to undertake implementation planning jointly for the RES and the RSS. The publication of these two regional strategies within months of each other and the move towards a Single Regional Strategy under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act made a compelling case for developing a joint implementation plan. This approach has been achievable due to the unique degree of alignment between the targets of the two strategies.

The main objectives of this plan are to:

- enable a greater co-ordination of delivery and alignment of major investment decisions across organisations to deliver the long-term vision and objectives of the RES and the RSS
- assist in the process of future prioritisation by setting out robust and compelling evidence to underpin cases for support in the region
- create a common framework which partners and stakeholders are invited to use to align business and investment plans
- provide a platform for the development of the proposed Single Regional Strategy that will combine the region's spatial and economic strategies.

As this Implementation Plan is delivered, the region will need to adapt to a reduction of public resources. This brings into focus the importance of aligning what is available against agreed priorities, and to bring forward new and innovative means of maximising resources.

Much work is already taking place at a regional and sub-regional level to support delivery of the vision of the RES and RSS, and this Implementation Plan does not attempt to cover the full breadth of such activities. The focus is on those developments that bring added value in the area of collaborative working either at a regional or sub-regional level.

This Implementation Plan is the product of a highly collaborative process involving a range of partners from across the region. Partners have been integral in developing the programmes contained in this plan and a draft plan was subject to a formal written consultation. The East of England Development Agency (EEDA), the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) and the Government Office for the East of England (GO-East), have led on its development with support and endorsement from a range of regional and sub-regional partners. These partners include the Association of Universities for the East of England (AUUE), the Arts Council East, English Heritage, the Environment Agency, the East of England Skills and Competitiveness Partnership (EESCP), the Highways Agency, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Natural England, the East of England Strategic Health Authority, and business representative groups such as the East of England Business Group.

This Implementation Plan has been subjected to, and informed by, an independent appraisal process that combined strategic environmental assessment, sustainability appraisal, equality impact assessment, urban and rural proofing and an assessment of health impacts (ISA), together with a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA).

Notwithstanding these appraisals, this Implementation Plan does not create new policy or make amendments to existing policy. The statements contained within this document form agreed next steps in the process of implementing the RES and the RSS and do not supersede the relevant policies that are regional and expressed locally. For the avoidance of doubt, the contents of this Implementation Plan are not designed to be used in determining planning and other related applications for new development.

1.2 Context

Sub-national review

Publication of this plan comes at a time when there are many planned changes in the organisational landscape of the region. Future structures, roles and responsibilities are still being defined in the light of the proposals under the Sub-National Review (SNR) and other national developments, and these may change further following a general election in 2010.

The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act supports the creation of new governance arrangements for the region from April 2010. The Regional Strategy Board will be the mechanism by which the responsible regional authority (EEDA and the newly created Local Authority Leaders' Board acting together), will conclude the review of the RSS and, in time, prepare a new long-term strategic framework called the Single Regional Strategy.

Under the Act, the RSS and the RES will become the Single Regional Strategy from April 2010. The Regional Strategy Board with representation from EEDA, local authorities and regional partners, will take responsibility for leading and monitoring delivery of this joint Implementation Plan.

More information on the delivery and governance structures for this Implementation Plan is set out in Section 12.

Legislative and policy developments

The focus of this Implementation Plan is on delivery of the existing RES and the RSS. However, there are a number of other policies and legislative developments that are influencing how the RES and the RSS are being delivered, and which have therefore been important factors in developing this Implementation Plan.

National Framework for Regional and Local Economic Development

Published in December 2009, the National Framework sets out how the government expects local authorities, regional development agencies (RDAs) and other public sector agencies to collaborate, align resources and help shape the conditions for economic growth and job creation to drive recovery. The National Framework outlines the roles for local, regional and national partners across key economic policy areas and the need for places to focus on their particular strengths. In addition it emphasises the importance of cross-regional collaboration on economic investment, and the need for a more co-ordinated approach across key government departments to support local, city and regional delivery.

The RES and the RSS are consistent with the key economic policy approaches set out in the framework. In particular the RES sets out the need for a collaborative approach with partners in the Greater South East to realise our potential in global markets, and focusses on those sub-sectors and technology areas where the East of England has existing or emerging comparative advantage. The Implementation Plan contains programmes that take this agenda forward, not just in terms of strategic investments in innovation, but in aligning other policy areas such as skills and infrastructure to drive recovery and growth.

New Industry New Jobs

In April 2009, the government published 'New Industry, New Jobs: Building Britain's Future'. This advocated a strategic approach to industrial policy to prepare for the economic upturn and beyond, and to support investment to build the manufacturing and services for the UK's future. Alongside, 'horizontal' policies to improve the 'total business environment', the document set out a number of key 'vertical' interventions focussed on high-value areas of global growth and/or rapid and fundamental technological change. These areas included four sectors – digital industries/information and communications technologies (ICT), advanced manufacturing, health and life sciences and low carbon. A number of programmes in this Implementation Plan, particularly in the Enterprise, Business Support and Innovation and Skills and Employability themes are designed to support both the horizontal and vertical elements of the policy.

National Skills Strategy

The National Skills Strategy – 'Skills for Growth' – was published in November 2009. The White Paper strengthened the Government's commitment to a demand-led system in which businesses are given the power to shape the provision of training. RDAs have been given a key role, particularly in terms of leading the preparation of regional skills strategies as part of the Single Regional Strategy and annual investment plans, which will articulate the region's economic and social requirements with respect to skills and the types of qualifications and training that should be funded and delivered in the region in relation to economic need. The activities needed to deliver the National Skills Strategy at a regional level are reflected in the Skills and Employability theme.

Other national policies

A number of other new developments in national policy have, and will continue to have, an impact on delivery of this plan. These policies, which are referenced within the appropriate theme, include Delivering a Sustainable Transport System, Digital Britain and the UK Low Carbon Transition Plan.

As this Implementation Plan is taken forward, there will be new policies and agendas published. While this Implementation Plan is about implementation of agreed policy, it will be updated to take account of new policies that are aligned to the RES and RSS objectives and affect how the two strategies' objectives are delivered. This Implementation Plan will continue to require periodic updates to reflect changes to partners' business plans and strategies and to reflect the new governance arrangements for the Single Regional Strategy. It is anticipated that updates of this plan will form the basis of a new implementation plan to support the Single Regional Strategy as it is developed.

Impacts of the economic downturn

While the strategic objectives of the RES and RSS are long-term, the scale and nature of the delivery challenges are conditioned by economic circumstances. The actions within this Implementation Plan are designed to respond to the current economic downturn and position the region for the upturn.

Many businesses in the East of England are experiencing lower demand for goods and services, unemployment is rising and business and consumer confidence is failing. Housing market activity has fallen sharply as a result of reduced mortgage lending, lack of finance for developers and weak consumer confidence. As a result, the construction of new homes has declined rapidly.

The current situation also makes it more difficult to augment public investment with private or European match funding (such as the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) monies). Some public sector budgets, such as EEDA's single programme budget, have been reduced by central government to fund initiatives to respond to the downturn. A number of public-sector projects have been delayed, often where government funding has been for infrastructure or social housing costs to leverage in private sector development.

As a live process, the resource requirements in the Implementation Plan will be under continual review through the corporate planning processes of the delivery partners identified. The Implementation Plan takes forward the development of new funding mechanisms, like a Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF) and Local Asset Backed Vehicles, to stretch the value of up-front public sector investment by clawing back private sector contributions, including from the development sector, at a later date. The RIF work is also looking at the longer-term potential for attracting up-front private sector investment in transport.

1.3 Our approach

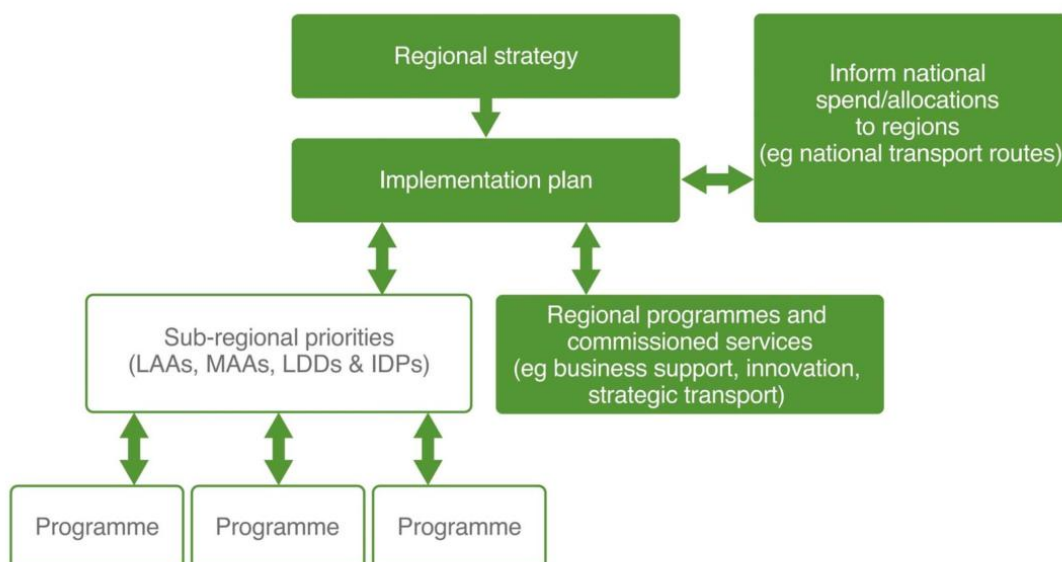
This Implementation Plan is the first of its kind and has therefore necessitated an innovative approach to its development. Working with a range of partners, the response has been through two key stages set out below, which is also reflected in the structure of the document.

Stage 1: This Implementation Plan brings together the objectives and policies of the two regional strategies, demonstrates the scale of their shared ambition and, importantly, evaluates the scale of current activity and performance against these. This has allowed us to understand what current and planned activity will deliver and the scale of the challenge still facing us.

Stage 2: Based on a full understanding of our ambitions and current progress towards them, a targeted set of programmes of activity and spatial priorities has been developed. These programmes address the gap between the ambitions of the two strategies and current delivery. They build on existing activity and an understanding of where new interventions are needed and respond directly to the challenges that the East of England is facing, including an understanding of the impacts of recession on the achievement of long-term targets.

Figure 1 illustrates the structured approach to the Implementation Plan and how the identification of a set of targeted regional programmes and spatial priorities will enable us to deliver our stated aims.

Figure 1: Relationship between regional and sub-regional interventions



Section 1 Introduction gives an overview of the purpose of the Implementation Plan, the policy context in which it operates, together with an assessment of the impact of the economic downturn in which it operates.

Section 2 Our ambitions sets out the vision and headline targets of the RES and RSS, and gives an indication of our progress against these objectives. The Implementation Plan is published alongside a portfolio of supporting documentation that includes further information on how we are performing against the targets in the RES and the RSS. The supporting documentation also includes an ISA statement, HRA report and other evidence-base documents that have informed the development of this Implementation Plan.

The portfolio of evidence-base documentation is available online alongside the Implementation Plan.

Section 3 Themes and cross-cutting issues introduces the seven themes that are used to structure the delivery programmes of this Implementation Plan. These programmes, which have been developed with partners, set out the short to medium term actions that have been identified as critical to delivering the ambitions of the RES and the RSS. Figure 2 illustrates the 29 programmes of the Implementation Plan.

The thematic programmes support a number of cross-cutting issues that are important to the delivery of sustainable communities, such as health, climate change and equality and diversity.

Sections 4 to 10 cover the programmes in detail under the seven themes.

Figure 2: The programmes of the East of England Implementation Plan

Programme name		Page no
Housing		
1	Ensuring the supply of market and affordable homes	27
2	Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of existing homes	31
3	Increasing the supply of affordable homes in rural areas	33
4	Skills and support for delivering and managing sustainable communities	35
Transport		
5	Managing transport in growing and congested urban areas	45
6	Improving performance of inter-urban transport corridors	49
7	Improving journeys to international gateways and freight destinations	53
8	Ensuring transport contributes to performance of small market towns, rural and coastal areas	57
Utilities		
9	Developing low carbon energy sectors to facilitate sustainable economic growth	65
10	Delivering required water and waste water infrastructure	69
11	Moving to better water efficiency	72
12	Upgrading regional broadband speed and access	75
13	Providing required regional waste infrastructure	77
Enterprise, innovation and business support		
14	Key business support products and services	86

Programme name		Page no
Housing		
15	Business finance	91
16	International and inter-regional trade, investment and collaboration	94
17	Strategic investments in innovation	98
18	ICT and the workplace	101
Skills and employability		
19	Leadership and high-level skills	111
20	Skills for business	116
21	Integrated employability offer	120
Culture, creativity and the visitor economy		
22	Supporting creative and cultural industries	132
23	Creative places and communities	135
24	Growing and sustaining the tourism visitor economy	137
25	The London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games	140
GI, landscape, heritage, flood and erosion risk management and the coast		
26	Flood and erosion risk management	150
27	Integrated coastal management	153
28	The natural and historic environment	155
29	Delivering green infrastructure	158

Sub-regional delivery is critical to delivery of the Implementation Plan and is reflected in **Places – our sub-regional priorities (Section 11)**. While the focus is on regional level interventions, both the RES and the RSS include sub-regional objectives and policies. Achieving these is fundamental to the delivery of the wider targets of the RES and the RSS. In the context of the Sub-National Review and the greater emphasis on sub-regional delivery, the identification of implementation priorities for sub-regions is an important step.

This Implementation Plan is not seeking to replicate the content of sub-regional delivery plans. Rather, the aim here is to identify those sub-regional interventions of a scale that makes them significant to the delivery of regional strategy targets and objectives. This approach of working with sub-regional partners to identify priorities and schemes that have a major impact on regional targets helps to increase the coherence of between regional strategy and sub-regional delivery.

More information on delivery at both regional and sub-regional level is set out in **Delivery and Monitoring (Section 12)**. This section sets out the principles of effective leadership, regional and sub-regional delivery arrangements, regional intelligence priorities and monitoring mechanisms.

The breadth of the Implementation Plan and its focus on the most critical regional interventions, means that it is not possible to detail all the projects and deliverables being undertaken across the region either at a sub-regional or a regional level. Corporate and business plans of individual organisations will set out more precisely the deliverables referred to in this document. EEDA, for example, will be using the Implementation Plan to guide its own corporate planning processes.

In some cases, it is appropriate to develop a more detailed thematic business plan on a particular aspect of this plan, particularly where the interventions are likely to be delivered jointly by different partners. An example of this is in the climate change action plan, which is published alongside this document. The action plan uses the programmes of the Implementation Plan as its framework for delivery, but gives more detail on the specific projects, outputs, resources and milestones relevant to that area. Other thematic delivery plans will be developed where necessary.