

EAG Data Sub-Group Work Programme and Progress

1) Introduction and Process

The broad remit for this group is to assess regional environmental data needs and availability and propose an improved set of environmental indicators.

We have also been tasked with developing a forward timetable of regional bodies' information needs, so a co-ordinated programme of information gathering and provision.

The approach we have agreed to our main task is as follows:

- 1) Define the IRS vision in environmental terms
- 2) Define ideal indicators that would allow us to measure progress against this vision
- 3) Compare the ideal with the reality of available information
- 4) Define a pragmatic set of indicators, using an agreed set of criteria
- 5) Define the parameters of a MORI-type poll to fill some of the gaps on QoL

So far, we have reached stage 1 and discussed our approach to the later stages. This paper sets out stage 1, as a draft. There are some gaps in content remaining and input to these and comment on all content would be welcome. This paper will then be finalized before the next meeting of the data sub-group.

The sub-group will tackle stages 2 and 3 at their next meeting in February 06 and move forwards rapidly from there.

2) Action Requested

Comments from the Environment Group would be welcomed on the general approach and more specifically on the content of the tables in section 3.

3) Stage 1: Environmental Definition of the IRS Vision

The purpose of defining this is to clarify and quantify what it is that the region is aiming for. Most regional strategy visions are directional, describing areas for improvement but without describing a desired end point – a true 'vision' of what the region will be like as a result. They could result in quite different outcomes, depending upon how changes are measured and how much weight is given to each aspect. In order to set good indicators that will tell us if we have achieved what we want, we need to know what minimum, desirable and excellent delivery would be, for each aspect of the vision.

The IRS vision is: 'The East Midlands will be recognised as a region with a high quality of life and sustainable communities, that thrives because of its vibrant economy, rich cultural and environmental diversity and the way it creatively addresses social inequalities, manages its resources and contributes to a safer, more inclusive society.'

The directional nature of the vision is carried through into the associated priorities e.g. priority 2 'Conserve and enhance the natural environment by tackling the biodiversity deficit and improving the environmental infrastructure'. The objectives are similarly directional e.g. 'To enhance and conserve the environmental quality of the region by increasing the environmental infrastructure.'

The policies that sit beneath these objectives, in the Environment Strategy, combine absolute targets (to protect the existing resource), with directional ones (to enhance / extend / improve) e.g. policy Env17: 'To continue to protect and improve the quality of the region's natural water resources for all uses'. The 'what this means for the environment' section, that describes the impact of each policy, is the closest thing to a defined vision for how the environment will be, that we currently have.

An attempt is made here to define and quantify what the IRS vision means for the environment by 2020, using existing objectives, policies, new information and the 'big messages' from the latest Environment Strategy Review. The relevant objectives and policies are appended as 'background', showing how they have been taken into account.

What the IRS Vision Means for the Environment

Headings are taken from the IRS vision itself. Under each heading, the IRS objectives are sub-divided and an attempt is made to describe these in a quantified way, as targets for 2020. These targets aim to set out simply what will have been achieved, not how or by whom. They are concerned only with what will be achieved for the environment, not with associated economic or social benefits. These descriptive targets will be used as a basis for discussion about the sort of indicators that would be needed in order to measure their achievement.

While Environment Strategy policies are taken into account, they are not assumed to provide the full picture of what the IRS vision will mean for the environment by 2020, as they will be subject to review before then and some have already been superseded, for example by work on Green and Environmental Infrastructure, which has been developed and incorporated into more recent regional strategies. A number of Environment Strategy policies are 'enabling policies' describing how an objective will be achieved.

1) High Quality of Life and Sustainable Communities

	Minimum	Desirable	Excellent
Environmental Infrastructure <i>including</i>	EI incorporated into all new development on	EI incorporated into all new development on	EI incorporated into all new development on

	an equal basis as social and economic infrastructure.	an equal basis as other infrastructure and EI measures incorporated into 30% of existing building.	an equal basis as other infrastructure and EI measures incorporated into 100% of existing building.
--	---	--	---

Green Infrastructure	GI providing high quality accessible green-space, improving on a 2007 baseline by at least 50%.	GI providing high quality green-space accessible to all, according to EN's ANGST criteria.	GI providing high quality green-space accessible to all, exceeding EN's ANGST criteria by at least 10%.
----------------------	---	--	---

2) Rich Environmental Diversity

	Minimum	Desirable	Excellent
Landscape	Landscape character assessments in place, being implemented and significant progress towards targets	Targets in landscape character assessments being met	Targets in landscape character assessments being exceeded
Natural environment	Regional biodiversity targets achieved	Regional targets all met and exceeded by an average of at least 10%. Average site size and connectivity increased by at least 5%.	All regional targets exceeded by at least 10% with average site size and connectivity increased by at least 10% and 3 new large area projects.
Cultural environment	Improve average resident assessment of local and regional environmental quality by 10%	Improve average resident assessment of regional environmental quality by 20% and by at least 10% in every district	Improve average resident assessment of regional environmental quality by 40% and by at least 20% in every district
Historic Environment and Archaeological assets	Historic landscape character assessments in place, being implemented and significant progress towards targets	Targets in historic landscape character assessments being met	Targets in historic landscape character assessments being exceeded

3) Prudent Resource Management

	Minimum	Desirable	Excellent
Energy consumption	Energy consumption reduced by 35%. CO2 reduction of 40%	Energy consumption reduced by 50%. CO2 reduction of 60%	Energy consumption reduced by 65%. CO2 reduction of 70%
Renewable energy production	20% of energy from renewable sources	30% of energy from renewable sources	40% of energy from renewable sources
Waste production	Waste production reduced by 40%	Waste production reduced by 50%	Waste production reduced by 60%
Water use	Keep water use within the region's average environmental capacity, taking account of climatic projections for reduced rainfall.	Reduce water use to less than 80% of the region's average environmental capacity, taking account of climatic projections for reduced rainfall.	Reduce water use to less than 50% of the region's average environmental capacity, taking account of climatic projections for reduced rainfall.
Water quality	Natural water resources protected and quality improved by 20%	Natural water resources protected and quality improved by 30%	Natural water resources protected and quality improved by 40%
Air quality	Achieve national air quality standards in all areas across the region	Achieve national air quality standards in all areas across the region and improve upon them on average across the region	Improve upon national air quality standards in all areas across the region
Soil quality	Maintain soil quality	Improve soil quality by at least 10% on average across the region, against a defined baseline	Improve soil quality by at least 10% in every district across the region, against a defined baseline

**Background: IRS Objectives with Associated Environmental Policies and
'What this means for the environment' sections from the Environment
Strategy**

Policy	What this means for the environment	How is This Included?
IRS Environmental Objective 6: To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of the natural, cultural and built environment and archaeological assets of the region		
Policy Env1: To manage the historic environment so that the resource is conserved for the benefit of present and future generations	Increased understanding of the historic environment as a resource, providing high quality information about the historic environment and the skills necessary to conserve it.	Line in section 2
Policy Env2: To ensure that all important elements that underpin the concept of local distinctiveness are conserved and managed.	More local people will be involved in planning for, and managing change in their local environment around the region. There will be more general awareness and celebration of the positive aspects of local distinctiveness. Opportunities for the implementation of high quality design and conservation led regeneration will help boost economic development, attract inward investment and boost tourism.	Covered within sections 1 and 2
Policy Env4: To ensure that all East Midlands people have sustainable access to a diverse, well managed environment of which they can be proud	A more healthy regional population, with increased numbers of individuals involved in health initiatives with an environmental / outdoor component, which should, over time, contribute to an overall reduction in health care costs for the region.	Covered within sections 1 and 2
Policy Env12: To achieve an agricultural system which is economically viable whilst protecting and enhancing the environment	Conservation of landscape and biodiversity in the context of a viable agricultural economy, with wide range of diversified activities, including conservation, organic farming and tourism opportunities	Covered within section 2, biodiversity and landscape
Policy Env14: To optimise the environmental benefits of built development.	Benefits of a high quality environment include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The promotion of local pride and sense of identity 	Covered within section 1

Policy	What this means for the environment	How is This Included?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area regeneration and revitalisation of the environment • Attraction of inward investment • Social benefits and the promotion of health 	
IRS Environmental Objective 7: To enhance and conserve the environmental quality of the region by increasing the environmental infrastructure		
Policy Env13: To protect and appropriately manage all ancient and semi-natural woodland and increase the extent of multi-purpose forests and woods that deliver environmental, as well as social and economic benefits	Increased area of broadleaved woodland, appropriately landscaped, and providing access opportunities	Covered within sections 1 and 2, biodiversity and landscape
Policy Env15: To optimise the use of brownfield sites of all kinds, whilst recognising and suitably protecting them as environmental assets	Important sites for biodiversity (including SSSIs) protected and use of available brownfield sites optimised for the benefit of all	Covered within section 1
Policy Env17: To continue to protect and improve the quality of the region's natural water resources for all uses	Water use levels supported by sustainable supplies, reduced environmental impact and the responsible use of the region's water resources	Line in section 3
Policy Env19: To protect rivers and their floodplains as a natural resource and to increase floodplain capacity wherever possible	Reconnection of rivers with their floodplains providing opportunities for wetland creation, farm diversification and use of SUDs to provide local water management solutions to reduce the flood risk to people and the built environment	Covered with section 2, biodiversity and landscape and section 3, water and soil.
Policy Env20: To ensure the conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic coastal assets by working with natural processes wherever possible	Managed realignment of the coast will help recreate salt marshes and inter-tidal flats to provide natural coastal defences, minimising the flood risk to people and property and enhancing the region's biodiversity	Covered within section 2, biodiversity, landscape and historic.
Policy Env21: To conserve and dramatically enhance	A network of high quality wildlife habitats distributed throughout	Line in section 2

Policy	What this means for the environment	How is This Included?
biodiversity according to regional priorities	the region, accessible for people to enjoy. Open access to environmental information that allows decision-makers to make wise choices about the environment and to achieve sustainable development with regard to biodiversity. People in the East Midlands can experience and appreciate biodiversity and take part in its conservation and enhancement	
Policy Env22: To enhance the character and quality of the region's landscape by protecting the best and enhancing the rest	Attractive landscapes attract visitors and inward investment, increased awareness of the value of the landscape in terms of its contribution to tourism, recreation and biodiversity.	Line in section 2
IRS Environmental Objective 8: To manage prudently the natural resources of the region including water, air quality, soils and minerals		
Policy Env7: To reduce the region's contribution to the emissions of air pollutants	We will see a significant move toward the achievement of the National Air Quality standards in all areas across the region, lower emissions levels of greenhouse gases across the region and that the effects of air quality are effectively and consistently taken into account in all regional strategy preparation and grant making activities	Line in section 3
Policy Env9: To conserve, enhance and manage our natural heritage of geology, landforms and natural processes so that the best is safeguarded and available as a scientific and educational resource for the region	Increased awareness and understanding of the value of the region's geological resources, their value in sustaining healthy local communities and reduced conflicts between the needs of conservation and those of resource utilisation	Covered with section 1 and section 2
Policy Env10: To value the soil as a resource and protect the most important and vulnerable types	Improved understanding of the structures and management needs of the regions soils, leading to the conservation of the resource and the maintenance of its quality	Line in section 3
Policy Env11: Seek to	Increased contribution of	Covered in section 2,

Policy	What this means for the environment	How is This Included?
capitalise on opportunities to create new environmental assets through mineral working	mineral and aggregates restoration projects towards BAP targets in the region.	landscape and biodiversity
Policy Env18: To continue to protect and improve surface, bathing and groundwater quality	Continued protection and improvement of surface, bathing and groundwater quality	Line in section 3
IRS Environmental Objective 10: To involve people, through changes to lifestyle and at work, in preventing and minimising adverse local, regional and global impacts		
Policy Env 3: To equip people with the skills and knowledge so that they value the environment and can contribute to its enhancement	We will have more people educated about the environment, more environmentally aware school children and workers and an overall reduced environmental impact.	Covered within sections 1 and 2
Policy Env5: To encourage the use of environmentally friendly methods of travel	We will have an efficient integrated accessible public transport system serving and connecting all parts of the region. An increased number of people walking to school or work. We will have an increased proportion of locally sourced goods, especially food and drink.	Covered within section 3, energy and air quality
Policy Env6: To minimise greenhouse gas emissions and protect the environment when adapting to the challenges and taking up the opportunities which climate change will bring	Lower levels of emissions of greenhouse gases, more energy in the region generated by processes that do not cause greenhouse gas emissions and regional companies taking a lead in taking up new business opportunities for developing technologies climate change may require.	Line in section 3 and covered within section 2
Policy Env16: To promote and support sustainable waste management practices and minimise the impact of waste on the environment	Greater community ownership and awareness of waste issues, reduction of waste going to landfill and financially viable markets for recyclates	Line in section 3