

Integrated Regional Framework for the North East Consultation

This consultation document has been developed in discussion with a number of regional partners, but it is now essential that we receive your input to ensure that we achieve a robust and valued IRF for the North East. We hope that the changes we propose will strengthen the IRF and enhance its role as a key influencing document in the North East as future regional policy is developed.

1.	<p>Please enter your name</p> <p>KAREN ANDERSON</p>
2.	<p>Please enter your email address to be kept informed of IRF developments (your details will not be used for any other purposes).</p> <p>karen.anderson@bridgingng.org.uk</p>
3.	<p>Please select the appropriate box to describe who you are representing.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A private individual</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An organisation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other:</p>
4.	<p>If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please enter its name.</p> <p>BRIDGING NEWCASTLEGATESHEAD</p>
5.	<p>Do you think the consultation document contains the 'essential ingredients' set out in Securing the Regions' Futures?</p> <p>Housing is not given sufficient emphasis in terms of its potential contribution to, and impact on, a sustainable future. This is exemplified by the Regional Housing Strategy not featuring in the main diagram setting out what comprises the North East IRF.</p>
6.	<p>Do you think the consultation document adequately reflects the critical issues for the North East?</p> <p>The overarching priority for a successful North East in the future is a better performing economy, more high level job opportunities and improved skills amongst the current population and the IRF reflects this.</p> <p>We also agree that up to 2011 will be a period of transition, for the economy, the spatial strategy and housing renewal and growth.</p> <p>The timing of the consultation has unfortunately started before the release of the Housing Green Paper - it will need to be updated to reflect this key consultation</p>

document. As an essential part of the Sustainable Communities Plan and the recent Housing Green Paper, housing activity needs to feature in relevant sections as it contributes to/complements several elements of the IRF and sustainable development as well as the sustainable communities objective.

As well as renewal, there is likely to be growth, with New Growth Point bid expressions of interest being submitted on 31 October 2007; how this can be delivered sustainably will need to feature in any revisions to the IRF.

The potential for eco-towns and how this 'fits' with sustainable development also needs to be made clear. In a region where 100,000 people already commute into NewcastleGateshead each day for work, how sustainable is a suburban/semi-rural new settlement?

7. Do you think the proposed objectives are the right ones for the North East?

The objectives reflect important issues for the North East but the order should be revised so related 'themes', for example 1 and 4; 7 and 9, follow each other.

8. Do you think the proposed indicators are the right ones to measure progress against the objectives?

In general we agree with the indicators for the objectives. We particularly support:

- The potential area of action to enhance the evidence on flood risk and its implications for new development
- Reviewing the Regional Renewable Energy Strategy; a lot more can be done around renewable energy in new development and refurbishment
- Work to identify opportunities to attract more graduates and skilled people to the region
- The proposed actions to improve our understanding of sustainable communities.

In terms of additional area indicators, for action and/or specifics within existing ones:

- Under potential areas for action to create sustainable employment, poor housing and homelessness need to be identified as barriers preventing people gaining employment.
- Monitoring the number of housing completions over Code for Sustainable Homes level 3 (and in time carbon neutral) should be considered. Working towards level 6 and carbon neutrality in new development should also feature as a potential area for future action.
- Create and maintain sustainable communities (objective 8). The 'unfit' indicator is out of date - PSA 7 looks at vulnerable households living in non-decent homes; this

indicator or all non-decent homes could be used. Proportions of stock vacant and/or long term vacant dwellings should also be considered as empty homes don't make for sustainable communities.

Community engagement and cohesion is completely absent from objective 8 in terms of areas for action. This is a central element of the recent Sustainable Development Commission report 'Building houses or creating communities?'. BNG were one of the organisations assessed by the Commission and the report acknowledges our good practice with regards to community engagement and cohesion in particular. With ambitions for regional economic and population growth, sustainable development will need to be informed by significant and effective community engagement - to sustain existing communities and help new people to integrate with those already living in an area.

9. Do you think that 'headline' indicators should be identified? And if so, which indicator should form the 'headline'?

This would be useful - perhaps picking the most important/all encompassing one from each objective.

10. What targets do you think should be associated with the objectives and indicators?

Indicators and targets should generally be consistent with those in the relevant strategies - new indicators and targets should only be created as a last resort.

For sustainable communities, our area of expertise, there are already targets set around vacancies, non-decent homes and crime.

11. Do you think the actions and delivery mechanisms identified against each objective are the right ones and are there any additional actions or delivery mechanisms that you would like to suggest?

See response to 8 above

12. Do you think the proposed Appraisal Matrix adequately reflects the proposed objectives and indicators?

The Matrix is a useful tool that is easy to follow and relate to strategy development, implementation and monitoring.

13. Do you have any comments on the sustainability appraisal of the draft IRF?

No



14. Please enter any other comments you may have.

The IRF is a useful document that helps readers to understand how sustainable development can be embedded in our strategies, policies and processes.

It does however need to be updated to reflect recent government documents like the Housing Green Paper.

Once you have completed this form, please email it to enquire@sustaine.com or post it to:

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