

# *Our Environment: Our Future*



**SOUTH WEST**  
*Regional Assembly*



*The Regional Strategy for the  
South West Environment 2004 - 2014*

# Progress Report 2005





*Our Environment:*  
***Our Future***

*The Regional Strategy for the  
South West Environment 2004 - 2014*

*Progress  
Report  
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## Introduction

*Our Environment: Our Future*, the Regional Strategy for the South West Environment 2004-2014 was launched in July 2004. This was the first time that partners across the South West had come together to agree key issues for the region's environment, and priorities for action.

A year on from the launch of the Strategy, this first Progress Report assesses how the environment in the region is changing, and the response that partner organisations have made in delivering priority actions. The Progress Report is based on two elements: monitoring environmental

outcomes in relation to the targets and indicators set out in the Strategy; and monitoring delivery of the actions in the implementation plan.

The development and launch of the Strategy was led by the South West Regional Assembly (SWRA) with the South West Regional Environment Network (SWREN), working with a wide range of partners in the region who signed up to helping deliver the Strategy. We are grateful to these partner organisations for helping prepare this Progress Report.



## Progress towards environmental outcomes

This Progress Report highlights some of the changes in the environment since the Strategy was produced, based on the key issues for action identified in the Strategy's Executive Summary (page 9). This work is closely linked with the State of the Environment Report produced by the Environment Module of the South West Regional Observatory, which can be viewed at

[www.swenvo.org.uk](http://www.swenvo.org.uk). Not all of the indicators used can be reported on, as data is not available or is not collected annually. Some indicators are long term and are not likely to change in a year. The full set of indicators and targets, based on the proposed set identified in Chapter 8 of the Strategy, will be reported when the Strategy is reviewed in 2007. The selection of indicators will also be reviewed.






## Progress Indicators

Strategy Theme	2004	2005	Indicator
Climate Change			Greenhouse gas emissions
			Rising sea levels
			Loss of wildlife
			Changes to landscape & historic environment
			Lifestyle changes
Wiser Use of Natural Resources			Water quality
			Air quality
			Diffuse pollution
			Waste
			Mineral extraction
Food, Farming & Forestry			Farmland birds
			Sites of Special Scientific Interest
			Field Boundaries
			Woodland
			Farmer's markets
Tourism			Bathing water quality
			Visitor pressure
			Car use
			Local distinctiveness
			Access to open spaces
Spatial Planning & Development			Greenfield development
			Historic building resource
			Flooding
			Dark skies
			Local environment quality
Transport			Traffic growth
			Alternative fuels
			Local air quality
			Tranquil areas

The opposite table illustrates the key pressures affecting the region's environment.

The colours indicate the significance of the issue.

-  = pressures that are negative and are expected to continue;
-  = areas of uncertainty or potential problems;
-  = trends that are positive or expected to improve.



**The indicators demonstrate that there are still significant environmental challenges facing the region.**

One indicator indicates a worsening of the situation: *rising sea levels*. The region faces a growing risk of flooding from rivers and the sea due to the effects of sea level rise and climate change. Current risks are predicted to worsen over the period to 2080.

There are also areas where progress has been made, with three indicators moving from red to amber or amber to green. These are: *access to open space*, *Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)*, and *Greenfield development*. Improvements in *access to open space* have been achieved since the introduction of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. The impacts of agricultural and forestry practices on *SSSIs* are being tackled through a variety of measures including targeting of Environmental Stewardship. In relation to *Greenfield development*, monitoring for the Regional

Spatial Strategy has shown an increase in the proportion of new housing within the urban centres of the region, indicating that the policy of focusing development in urban areas is starting to have the desired impact.

In relation to *local environmental quality*, the region has fallen from 1st to 4th in the ENCAMs annual survey, due largely to problems with fast food and the night time economy. Overall local environmental quality still remains good in the South West, and the indicator is therefore still categorised as green. This will be an issue to watch in future though, particularly as it is important in policy terms to support delivery of regional priorities to achieve more vibrant urban areas where more people want to live.

For the remaining indicators, no change has been observed, or the issues are long term and are likely to take many years to address, or monitoring is not carried out on an annual basis.



## Progress towards priority actions

**This section of the report highlights progress towards delivery of priority actions identified in the Implementation Plan. This includes generic actions to the Strategy, and actions relating to the six key issues identified in the Strategy.**

There has been much activity and progress since the Strategy was launched. A record of progress against each action in the Implementation Plan is available on the

website at [www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/swra/ourwork/environment/index.shtml](http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/swra/ourwork/environment/index.shtml). Some highlights are given in the following sections, and details of a number of case studies mentioned are also available at the web address above. Hard copies of all these documents are available from the Assembly Secretariat on request (contact details on back cover).



## Delivering the Regional Environment Strategy

**The Strategy recognised that delivery would require collective action from a range of organisations. Some generic areas were identified where action is needed (for further information see section 6 of the Strategy):**

### *Conserve and enhance the South West's stock of environmental assets*

Good progress has been made in taking forward this action:

- Management Plans have been prepared for all AONBs and the South West Protected Landscapes Forum (SWPLF) is co-ordinating action to deliver the plans.
- The South West Regional Biodiversity Partnership (SWRBP) produced the Biodiversity Implementation Plan, and has established a number of sector working groups to take this forward.
- The South West Historic Environment Forum (SWHEF) produced a Historic Environment Strategy and is supporting work on its implementation.

### *Support and enhance partnership working*

- Partnership working is already well established in the South West, as evidenced by the Regional Environment Network, and a range of other partnership groups including those listed above.

- The creation of the new government agency *Natural England* will also provide opportunities for enhanced partnership working, and the three constituent organisations of English Nature (EN), Countryside Agency (CA), and Rural Development Service (RDS) have published a Joint Statement setting out how they will work more closely together until the new agency is established.
- The importance of partnership working in the region has been recognised and enhanced by support for a number of co-ordinator posts, specifically designed to promote improved joint working, for example the SWRBP and SWPLF are both supported by co-ordinators. Funding has also been made available for environmental co-ordinators to input to the Objective 1 and 2 programmes. These have been very successful in ensuring that environmental objectives are mainstreamed across all the programmes. However, funding for these posts is often short term, and will need to be kept under review to ensure that partnership working can continue to be supported.



### *Co-ordinate actions between regional and local partners to improve delivery*

- SWREN are investigating opportunities for improved links with local environmental partnerships, and has established a website to support communication and networking between organisations. ([www.swenvo.org.uk/SWREN/SWRENindex.asp](http://www.swenvo.org.uk/SWREN/SWRENindex.asp))
- Sustainability South West (SSW) is developing a local-regional forum which aims to improve communication between local/sub-regional delivery and strategic regional organisations. This would include environmental partnerships alongside a wider network of attendees.

### *Identify the resources needed to deliver agreed regional priorities*

An overview of funding is still to be progressed in the region. However, progress is being made in some areas, for example:

- European funding has been secured for an exciting international project, led by the South West, to identify opportunities for mainstreaming environmental objectives and priorities into regional funding

programmes. The South West Regional Development Agency (SW RDA) has set up a partnership to co-ordinate the region's input to the project, and a conference is planned for Spring 2006.

- SWREN are contributing to the regional group developing proposals to influence the future of EU Cohesion, which will be an important source of funding for regional environmental priorities in the future.
- There are proposals for setting up a 3 year 'sustainability fund' for each AONB (as currently exists for the 2 national parks in the region). This is a national fund but will be focused on local/regional delivery.

### *Integrate environmental objectives into regional strategies*

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive came into force in 2004, requiring assessment of all plans and programmes likely to have an impact on the environment. This requirement, alongside sustainability appraisal (SA), which assesses environmental, social and economic impacts, will help ensure that environmental objectives are integrated into



regional strategies. A number of sustainability appraisals have been carried out in the region, for example:

- SSW has completed sustainability appraisals on the Regional Housing Strategy, Regional Woodlands and Forestry Framework (RWFF) and the SW RDA's Corporate Plan.
- SWRA are carrying out a joint SEA and sustainability appraisal of the developing Regional Spatial Strategy, and are working with local authorities to help similar approaches to assessments of Local Development Frameworks.
- SWLGA have also secured e-government funding to provide a web based toolkit for SEA/SA, particularly providing access to baseline data.
- SW RDA are undertaking an SEA and SA of the Regional Economic Strategy review.

In addition, an important step forward was taken in developing the programme of work for the environment driver in the Regional Economic Strategy, with the SW RDA Board

agreeing the Agency's Environment Driver Implementation Plan.

#### *Raise awareness, education, skills and training*

There has been less progress in relation to this action, although this is something that SWREN have been aware of and are investigating. Some activity has taken place, for example English Heritage (EH) are working with the Rural Development Service to deliver historic environment training to those involved in new agri-environment scheme.

#### *Improve our evidence base through research and information sharing*

The region is fortunate in having a well established Environment module as part of the Regional Observatory. Funded by the Environment Agency (EA), this provides a co-ordinated source of data and intelligence about the region's environment, including production of the State of the Environment Report. The website is being developed ([www.swenvo.org.uk](http://www.swenvo.org.uk)) and can now accept news and events items from any relevant organisation, helping to improve information sharing across the region.



## *Six Key Issues for the South West*

*Analysis of the key environmental assets in the region, and the pressures on these assets led to the identification in the Strategy of six key issues for the environment of the South West. Each issue is considered in the following pages, with progress towards priority actions.*

### Climate Change

Climate change is a serious global issue and is happening now. It presents a major environmental challenge for the South West, and brings opportunities and threats for the economy and our quality of life. The Strategy set the regional objective *“to minimise greenhouse gas emissions and respond to the risks, challenges and opportunities presented by climate change”*. To deliver this objective, three priorities for action were identified:

#### *Integrate climate change into regional strategy and policy development*

The creation of the South West Climate Change Impacts Partnership (SWCCIP) provided an important focus and impetus for regional work on climate change. Climate change implications are highlighted in regional strategies, including the South West Renewable Energy Strategy, Sustainable Food and Farming Strategy, Integrated Regional Strategy, South West Tourism Strategy, and Regional Woodlands and Forestry Framework.



### *Reduce the causes of climate change*

- Nationally, the Energy White Paper identifies the opportunity to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by developing a low carbon economy in the UK. In the South West, Government Office South West (GOSW), SWRA and SW RDA are working with partners to develop a sustainable energy strategy.
- Further guidance on renewable energy is being developed for the Regional Spatial Strategy. This will include sub-regional targets to 2010 developed as part of the Revision 2010 project, informed by landscape sensitivity assessments. Work is also underway on developing a regional renewable energy target to 2020.

- The Countryside Agency is preparing a briefing note on renewable energy for South West region stakeholders to advise on landscape setting. English Heritage has undertaken Historic Landscape Characterisation to inform landscape sensitivity assessments on a county basis across the region.

### *Adapt to climate change*

A number of partners in the region are supporting the establishment of a Programme Management Unit for SWCCIP to provide a central hub for expertise on climate change adaptation in the region. Funding is being provided by SW RDA, SWRA, GOSW, EA and South West Water and a full time Co-ordinator has been appointed to take forward the work of the Partnership.

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## Wiser Use of Natural Resources

The South West has a wealth of natural resources, and in general we are fortunate in experiencing very high quality in these resources. The Strategy set a regional objective *“To ensure that our natural resources are used sustainably, with minimum environmental damage and waste generation, so as to reduce pollution and protect the quality of the region’s environment”*. To deliver this objective, four priorities for action were identified:

### *Promote a strategic approach to management of the region’s natural resources*

Progress has been made towards improved management of a number of the region’s natural resources, including:

- A study carried out for SWRA into the use of secondary and recycled aggregates to reduce the demand for extraction of primary aggregates.
- Integration of regional environment objectives into the Regional Woodlands and Forestry Framework.
- A joint EA/RDS project for resource protection objectives of Environmental Stewardship and the promotion of soil management as an element within the cross-compliance requirements of the Single Payment Scheme.

- The EA is developing an Environmental Management System for farms, based on farming activities rather than legislation.
- The SW RDA has set up a Steering Group for the Regional Fisheries Strategic Action Plan, following a Fisheries conference in January 2005.
- As a result of Environment Agency and English Nature input into the AMP4<sup>1</sup> process we will see a significant number of environmental improvements in the South West.

### *Promote sustainable use of natural resources*

- The region has a well-established Energy and Environmental Management Group (EEMG) network with over 800 members including most public sector bodies.
- EH promotes the re-use of old buildings as a key element in conserving energy and natural resources. This avoids the cost of extraction of new materials and the energy used in demolition and new construction.
- New initiatives are being progressed, including the SW RDA’s new responsibility for co-ordinating Business Resource Efficiency and Waste (BREW) programme in the South West.

<sup>1</sup> The Asset Management Planning round four (AMP4) is the process by which the Office of Water Services (Ofwat) determines the programme of Water Company improvements that are to be funded in the period 2005 - 2010.



- The SW RDA also identified the need to increase take up of environmental management systems within businesses in the region's eight key economic sectors as action within the Agency's Environment Driver Implementation Plan, and initial work is being taken forward in Food and Drink, Tourism and Environmental technology sectors.
- The EA is leading a project called EnVision, helping SMEs to improve their environmental performance and hence their business competitiveness.

### *Reduce pollution to air, water and land*

A key issue for the South West is diffuse pollution, particularly from agricultural sources. Defra have awarded ADAS a national contract for a 3 year project to raise awareness among landowners and managers as to how to reduce diffuse pollution; the EA are working closely with ADAS on this. The project was launched on 17th March 2005.



### *Minimise waste*

- The Regional Waste Strategy – *From Rubbish to Resource* was published by SWRA and EA in October 2004, setting the framework for sustainable management of waste in the region to 2020.
- An exciting new initiative, SSW's Pioneers of Packaging Project, sponsored by SWRA, SWLGA and EA is raising awareness of resource efficiency (including waste minimisation) issues in the region. It is designed to stimulate businesses to adopt a sustainable approach to packaging and includes raising consumer awareness and demand.

### *Deliver integrated coastal zone management*

- English Nature has set up the 'Finding Sanctuary' project in partnership with South West Food and Drink, working towards the development of a network of marine protected areas in the South West.
- English Heritage is also undertaking work on coastal and marine issues to inform Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plans, and a Marine Spatial Planner post has been established.

## Food, Farming and Forestry

The food, farming, forestry and fisheries sectors are some of the most important, in environmental terms, in the South West. They underpin the natural, built and historic environment which attracts both tourism and investment, is at the core of our quality of life, and which sets the South West aside from other regions in the UK. The Strategy set a regional objective *“To enhance the ability of the food, farming and forestry sectors to provide the environmental and social benefits that people in the region need and expect, and help to secure a viable future for them”*. To deliver this objective, three priorities for action were identified:

### *Encourage outstanding environmental management in the region’s farming and forestry businesses*

Significant progress has been made this year with the implementation of the Sustainable Food and Farming Strategy:

- The environment was established as one of five priority themes in the regional Delivery Plan, and Regional Environmental Priorities have been agreed. An Environment Working Group has been established to take these forward, and in particular is working up proposals to promote the environmental economy.
- Another key milestone was the launch of the Environmental Stewardship scheme by RDS in March 2005, central to the biggest change in farming policy for a generation and a key component of delivering an enhanced environment. Environmental Stewardship (ES) provides the most significant resources for delivering environmental objectives for biodiversity, landscapes, the historic environment and natural resource protection. RDS and partner organisations are conducting a publicity and promotional strategy, designed to reach large numbers of farmers and landowners to promote the opportunities offered by ES.
- The Rural Enterprise Gateway has been set up to provide signposted access to business advice, particularly to rural land-based businesses. This will include access to funds for group facilitation and training, which will include environmental skills and training. More details at [www.sw-gateway.com](http://www.sw-gateway.com).



*Develop an integrated approach to rural land use to support better delivery of environmental objectives*

A more integrated approach to rural land use is being promoted through the Regional Rural Delivery Framework, and is beginning to develop within the region. For example, Character Areas were used to develop the targeting statements for Environmental Stewardship. Natural units were also used as the basis for a brand network 'Cotswolds Choice' which is now being developed as a national pilot.

*Provide healthy, profitable food and drink and an enhanced environment*

The region has benefited from the establishment of South West Food and Drink, whose work has included promoting local produce through supermarkets and encouraging increased regional sourcing ([www.southwestfoodanddrink.com](http://www.southwestfoodanddrink.com)). A Public Sector Food Procurement Strategy Group has been established to drive action on public procurement and a workshop held for public sector procurers. The Countyside Agency has also developed a local procurement learning network on behalf of Defra/GOSW.



## Tourism and Leisure

The South West has long been established as the leading region for tourism, based on a quality environment which is regionally distinct. Tourism is a key part of the regional economy, and it is estimated that 78% of all holiday trips to the South West are motivated by our special environments. The Strategy set a regional objective *“To promote a tourism and leisure industry that conserves and enhances the environment and recognizes the region’s distinctiveness”*. To deliver this objective, three priorities for action were identified:

### *Better understand the impacts of tourism and leisure on the environment and communities*

SSW’s Future Footprints initiative provides a basis for reducing the impacts and maximising the benefits of tourism for the region. SSW and South West Tourism (SWT) have also developed a checklist for tourism managers to understand the issues better ([www.futurefootprints.org.uk](http://www.futurefootprints.org.uk)).

### *Enhance the resource*

- Joint work is planned by the EN/CA/RDS confederation on special projects to deliver greater landscape, nature conservation and recreation benefits for the South West Coast Path and Cotswold Way national trails.
- Work is also underway to promote the links between the environment and healthy living, including establishment of 17 Walking the Way to Health projects in the region supported by CA; the 'Active Woods' campaign 2005 run by the Forestry Commission (FC); and the signing of a Health Concordat between FC, CA, EN, Sport England, and the Association of National Park Authorities.
- Particular attention has been paid to improving access to the countryside, for example development of a new Stonehenge interpretation and learning strategy, and a major Sport Lottery Grant to enhance provision at Haldon Woods in Exeter. An online project bank of good practice is being developed by the SWPLF, and a workshop on improving access is planned for Autumn 2005 ([www.southwestlandscapes.org.uk](http://www.southwestlandscapes.org.uk)).



*Reduce the impact of tourism on the environment*

The Future Footprints pack provides advice for the tourism industry on supporting sustainable tourism and reducing the impact of tourism on the environment. SWT is committed to rolling out a regional sustainable accreditation scheme over the next year in conjunction with Future Footprints, commencing with regional sustainable tourism principles and charter for the industry to engage with and take ownership of the vision: *to be a leading sustainable tourism destination.*



## Spatial Planning and Development

One of the major challenges facing the region is how to accommodate pressures for development and growth. The growing number of people living and working in the region is partly based on the high quality environment and high quality of life in the South West. The Strategy sets a regional objective *“To promote the wise use of land and a safe and healthy environment for local communities, through the provision of well designed, resource efficient developments, contributing to sustainable development through environmental enhancement and ensuring that the South West remains a region of diverse and distinctive heritage, wildlife and landscapes”*. To deliver this objective, three priorities for action were identified:

### *Planning for people*

- SWRA and EN commissioned a study on opportunities for green infrastructure as a key element in delivering a high quality of life for communities, creating locally distinctive and

quality built environments. This is being used to advise development of policy in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).

- SWRBP has developed Nature Map identifying strategic areas for biodiversity enhancement, which can help inform spatial planning ([www.swenvo.org.uk/nature\\_map/nature\\_map.asp](http://www.swenvo.org.uk/nature_map/nature_map.asp)).
- Much has been highlighted in previous sections about rural environments, but often urban environments can seem to be marginalised. SWRA, SWREN and EA are planning a seminar for Autumn 2005 to look at the environment in urban areas. EH, SWPLF and NT are also working to promote heritage led regeneration in run-down urban areas.

### *Positive planning for the environment*

- SWRA is working with environmental partners to develop the environmental policies for the



RSS, and also in undertaking the SEA/sustainability appraisal of the Strategy to test its environmental implications.

- Sustainable construction is being promoted through the RSS and Regional Housing Strategy, through reference to Future Foundations, the regional charter for sustainable construction, and the code for sustainable buildings. SW RDA, EA and others are funding a Future Foundations post to support role out of the charter within the region ([www.futurefoundations.co.uk](http://www.futurefoundations.co.uk)).

#### *Integrate environment into planning*

- A number of tool-kits have been developed to help integrate environmental objectives into planning, such as Landscape Character Assessment and Historic Landscape Character. These have been promoted within the region, although as yet there is not complete regional coverage.

- At the local level, work has been undertaken to conserve and enhance local distinctiveness through support for parish plans and village design statements. The CA published results of regional consultation on lessons learnt from parish planning in 'Community Action Planning: Building on Success in the South West'.
- A particular issue for the region is flood risk management. The Environment Agency published an online map of flood risk updated every three months, which enables homeowners and businesses in the floodplain to see whether their area is at risk. Environment Agency and English Nature have also identified over 80 potential sites for managed realignment on the South West coast. These will be progressed through the forthcoming revisions of the Shoreline Management Plans.



## Transport

The integration of transport and environmental objectives for the region is probably one of the most challenging issues facing the region. The Strategy set the regional objective “*To minimise the environmental impact of the travel and transport necessary to support the social and economic needs of the region*”. To deliver this objective, three priorities for action were identified:

### *Minimise the impact of transport on the environment*

- GOSW and SWRA are working with Government, transport authorities and transport providers to provide a balanced approach in regional and local transport planning. In particular, demand management is being promoted and expressions of interest have been received from all 15 local transport authorities for the government’s Transport

Innovation Fund – which requires local authorities to put forward demand management measures as part of an integrated package.

- Analysis of local authority Annual Progress Reports shows that progress on workplace travel plans is patchy with little real evidence of impact on modal shift. Progress on school travel plans is a bit better, assisted by recent DfT/DfES funding for a number of additional school travel plan co-ordinators. However, the effect of the government’s policy to allow the ‘right of parental choice’ for which school children attend, means that in practice children’s travel patterns are more dispersed.
- Guidance has been issued by central government on the use of SEA as a tool to help integrate environmental objectives into plans,



and GOSW is providing advice and comments on relevant sections of Local Transport Plans (LTPs) and on draft SEA documents. However, key questions still remain over the development of transport infrastructure and its impact on the environment.

*Provide safe, integrated transport systems, accessible to all*

- Transport cannot be separated from spatial planning, and decisions over how to accommodate growth and development in the region will obviously have significant implications for, and be informed by, decisions on transport. Accessibility planning is being used to integrate planning and transport decisions and to provide a better link between transport provision and people's travel choices. Local authorities are developing accessibility strategies within their LTP.



- Significant progress has been made in promoting regional exemplars of improving accessibility to the natural and historic environment. This includes a national website for heritage landscapes ([www.countryside.gov.uk/heritagelandscapes](http://www.countryside.gov.uk/heritagelandscapes)) and EN, EH and CA have issued a joint publication on heritage management plan guidelines.

*Provide alternatives to fossil fuelled transport*

Some progress has been made in investigating alternatives to fossil fuelled transport, with the establishment of a regional biofuels forum. The aim of the forum is to support and develop activity on biofuels in the region in a coherent way, linking suppliers and users through regional networking and creating a more integrated and cohesive market structure.

## Conclusion

**This first Progress Report for *Our Environment: Our Future* highlights that the region continues to benefit from a high quality environment, but still has a series of significant challenges to address to ensure that environmental assets are maintained and enhanced for the future. A number of key areas have been identified where joint working is essential to tackle these challenges:**

- ***Waste*** – significant progress is being made, particularly with the agreement of a strategic approach through the Regional Waste Strategy, and much activity at a local level. However, the amount of waste being produced in the South West is still increasing, and the provision of facilities for dealing with this waste is becoming critical in some parts of the region.
- ***Water quality*** – the issue of diffuse pollution, particularly from agricultural sources, is one of the most significant issues for the region, affecting our natural environment, and also with economic implications for the tourism industry and bathing water quality. Overall, water quality remains high and the region still exceeds standards. However, the Water Framework Directive will bring new monitoring requirements, including standards for the natural environment. The issues for the region arising from this Directive will be identified in a River Basin Management Plan to be published in 2008.
- ***Climate change*** – will remain an important issue for the region, both in terms of mitigating the region's contribution to climate change, and adapting to the changes that are already happening, for example in relation to flood risk. This is a clear issue which no one agency or organisation can tackle alone, and where joint working is essential.
- ***Local environmental quality*** – the fall in the South West's position in relation to other regions is an area for concern, particularly with the focus on our urban centres to accommodate the bulk of future growth in the region. Joint working on local environmental quality is vital to support delivery of regional priorities to achieve more vibrant urban areas where more people want to live.



- *Visitor pressure* – the growth in tourism will be important for the region’s future economic performance, however this also brings with it increasing pressure on the environment. A combined effort is important to harness the economic opportunities whilst protecting the environmental assets which attract visitors to the region.
- *Coast* – the region’s rich and varied coastline is one of its key assets and distinctive features. National policy is evolving in this area, particularly with the Marine Bill which the South West needs to influence and could take a leadership role on delivery in order to maximise the opportunities these assets provide.
- *Skills and learning* – provides significant opportunities to help deliver many of the priorities in the Strategy and issues identified above. Joint working, particularly with the higher education sector, needs to build on the initiatives already underway to help improve our understanding, raise awareness and help tackle some of the long term challenges facing the region.

This first Progress Report has identified many areas where the region can rightly be proud of its performance and celebrate success. It also highlights where future activity needs to focus, and in particular where joint working could bring added value. The next steps are for delivery organisations and regional partners to investigate how they can help tackle the issues identified, both through their own work, and through collaborative working. In particular, this will require further engagement with customers and local delivery partners, to investigate what mechanisms we have within the region to respond to these issues, and where collective lobbying nationally and in Europe may be required.

A second Progress Report will be produced in 2006. A full review of the Strategy, examining the environmental outcomes and priorities for action, will take place in 2007.



## Glossary

<b>AONB</b> = Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	<b>RSDF</b> = Regional Sustainable Development Framework
<b>BAP</b> = Biodiversity Action Plan	<b>RSS</b> = Regional Spatial Strategy
<b>BREW</b> = Business Resource Efficiency and Waste	<b>RTS</b> = Regional Transport Strategy
<b>CA</b> = Countryside Agency	<b>RWFF</b> = Regional Woodlands and Forestry Framework
<b>Defra</b> = Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	<b>SA</b> = Sustainability Appraisal
<b>DfT</b> = Department for Transport	<b>SEA</b> = Strategic Environmental Assessment
<b>DfES</b> = Department for Education and Skills	<b>SSSI</b> = Site of Special Scientific Interest
<b>EA</b> = Environment Agency	<b>SWRBP</b> = South West Regional Biodiversity Partnership
<b>EH</b> = English Heritage	<b>SWCCIP</b> = South West Climate Change Impacts Partnership
<b>EEMG</b> = Energy and Environmental Management Group	<b>SWHEF</b> = South West Historic Environment Forum
<b>EN</b> = English Nature	<b>SWLGA</b> = South West Local Government Association
<b>ENCAMS</b> = Environmental Campaigns	<b>SWPLF</b> = South West Protected Landscapes Forum
<b>ES</b> = Environmental Stewardship	<b>SWRA</b> = South West Regional Assembly
<b>FC</b> = Forestry Commission	<b>SW RDA</b> = South West Regional Development Agency
<b>GOSW</b> = Government Office for the South West	<b>SWREN</b> = South West Regional Environment Network
<b>LDFs</b> = Local Development Frameworks	<b>SSW</b> = Sustainability South West
<b>LTPs</b> = Local Transport Plans	<b>SWT</b> = South West Tourism
<b>NT</b> = National Trust	
<b>RDS</b> = Rural Development Service	
<b>RegenSW</b> = Renewable energy agency for the South West of England	



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**ENVIRONMENT AGENCY**



**ENGLISH HERITAGE**

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