

SOUTH WEST REGIONAL SECRETARIAT

BUSINESS PLAN 2006-9

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1. FOREWORD

Foreword by Jackie Longworth, Chair of the Regional Assembly Board, Ron Parker, Chair of the South West LGA and John Bees, Chair of the South West Provincial Employers

Welcome to the Business Plan of the South West Regional Secretariat.

All of the Secretariat work links to the activities of Local Authorities across the South West. The Secretariat can, therefore, play a pivotal role in bringing the Authorities together on issues they all face. In the last year we have facilitated discussions, debates and exchange of best practice on subjects as diverse as e-government, asylum seekers, local government finance, local public service agreements and efficiency. The South West is a diverse area, geographically, politically and culturally and getting agreement on the key issues involves a mix of debate, research, workshops, interviews and consultations.

The South West Regional Secretariat makes representations on behalf of the region, such as lobbying Government on the need to provide affordable homes and the potential impact of CrossRail, endeavours to work on a partnership basis with a variety of regional and local organisations.

The purpose of this business plan is to set out the future direction of the three regional organisations; South West Regional Assembly, South West Local Government Association and the South West Provincial Employers and the South West Regional Board, which brings together Members of the three regional organisations to manage staffing and resources, in the context of achieving the Secretariat's wider vision and aims.

The Plan details the work priorities and proposed activities for 2006–9 and how the Secretariat proposes to deliver, including critical performance indicators.

We are grateful for the hard work, commitment and support of our Members and partners in helping make regional working successful. We are also grateful to all the staff of the Secretariat for their hard work and dedication and to the officers from partner organisations across the region who continue to support our work.

We look forward to working with you to build on the real progress we have achieved.

Jackie Longworth

Ron Parker

John Bees

2. INTRODUCTION

This Business Plan of the South West Regional Secretariat draws together the work of three regional organisations, South West Regional Assembly, South West Local Government Association and South West Provincial Employers. It sets out the key areas of work for the three organisations over the next three years, with a particular emphasis on 2006-07.

In supporting the work of these organisations the Secretariat aims to maximise economics of scale whilst ensuring a high quality of service.

The South West Regional Assembly exists to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of all who live and work in the region. It reviews wide ranging strategies at the regional level within the context of *just CONNECT!*, the first regionally agreed Integrated Strategy, to provide an over-arching vision for the economic, social and environmental well being of the region. It also provides a Voice for the Region and develops the capacity for further action at the regional level. It is the Regional Planning Body and also has a remit to scrutinise the South West Regional Development Agency.

The South West Provincial Employers supports local authorities, police and fire authorities and many other related employers with all aspects of their employer role. In addition they constitute the employers side of regional consultative and negotiating body, the South West Provincial Council and they are the regional arm of the National Employers Organisation. SWPE constantly seeks to promote the interests of local authority and related employers at a regional and national level by formulating and contributing to employer strategies on issues such as pay and workforce development. The Learning and Development Service which is part of SWPE aims to support all our members and partners in developing a highly skilled and motivated workforce. The Tormarton Centre provides very specialist workforce development skills vital to the provision of regional services.

The South West Branch of the Local Government Association exists to represent and promote the regional interests of the population of the South West, and the local authorities that serve them. It also acts as a host for joint working by local authorities on a range of issues such as Refugees and Asylum Seekers, E-government and the overall improvement agenda.

Each organisation has separate member structures making key policy decisions but the staff and resources of the Secretariat are managed together by the South West Regional Board.

3. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The vision of the Secretariat working through Members is to:

“Improve the quality of life of all the people in the region and make it an even better place to live, work and visit”

We are committed to:

“Listening to the views of people in the region and working with partners in a way which is open and transparent and serves the needs of Members and through them the needs of the South West”

We have six overarching objectives in delivering our work:

- 1. Ensure a better awareness of the role of the three regional organisations (SWRA, SWPE, SWLGA) so that it is possible to act effectively as the leading voice on key regional issues, and influence and shape policy affecting the South West to ensure it positively responds to the region’s aims;**
- 2. Working in partnership develop and implement policies that reflect the region’s aspirations and are in line with the Integrated Regional Strategy and keep the work of key regional players under review to encourage them to collectively and consistently work towards the achievement of the region’s aims;**
- 3. Ensure the developing Regional Spatial Strategy supports delivery of the aims and objectives of the Integrated Regional Strategy and the statutory function is delivered efficiently and effectively;**
- 4. Encourage improved performance and capacity across the region through the provision of high quality advice and support, and the sharing of accessible information and knowledge on a range of relevant issues, between local authorities;**
- 5. Promote the common interests of Local Government as a major regional employer to ensure that Local Government and the regional organisations continue to provide the region with high quality employment opportunities and attract employees with the knowledge and skills necessary to provide first class services;**
- 6. Ensure that all the work carried out by the three member organisations is underpinned by the principles of equality of opportunity and sustainable development; is carried out in true partnership spirit openly and transparently and is delivered to a high professional standard by a workforce that is supported by good employment practice.**

4. SECRETARIAT VALUES & PRINCIPLES

The Secretariat seeks to be an organisation supporting Members that not only responds quickly and positively to the changing regional agenda but also is proactive in its approach. This means being an organisation where everyone's contribution is valued and where people are given the opportunity to develop.

- The Secretariat's key values are:

Accountability

High standing of financial regularity and propriety and the importance of accounting for the use of public money via Members is a core value of the Secretariat.

Transparency

All three organisations are committed to ensuring that decisions and actions are easily understood, clear and justifiable. Assembly meetings are held in public and papers and minutes available on the website. The Secretariat also produces a wide range of publications to explain the work of the three organisations and responds to enquiries as comprehensively and quickly as possible within resources available.

Equality & diversity

The Secretariat strives to ensure that it is an organisation where its staff and their individual contributions are valued, irrespective of age, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or status. We will continue to implement and review HR policies, introduce appropriate systems and ensure that effective equality monitoring takes place and is acted upon as appropriate.

This value permeates into the policy work of the three organisations and in all our work within the Region we will ensure that equality and diversity are an integral part of our activities and that the issues are addressed in the development of all our policies.

- The Secretariat's key principles are:

Inclusivity

The vision of the secretariat is to improve the quality of life of **all** the people in the region.

Consultation

The Secretariat strives to achieve best practice principles and procedure in all its consultation. These principles inform all Secretariat activity and engagement with partners to ensure that the three organisations continue to listen to and represent the views of the region. The procedures formalise the Secretariat's commitment to engage with hard to reach groups and

establish mechanisms for improved engagement. The procedures were tested and improved during the extensive region-wide consultation on the Regional Spatial Strategy development strategies in 2004 and 2005.

Sustainability

The Secretariat is committed to promoting the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of people living and working in the South West. The Assembly has endorsed the *Regional Sustainable Development Framework* (which sets out objectives and principles for promoting a sustainable future in the South West), and produces regular reports of progress in the region towards sustainable development. The Assembly seeks to promote sustainable development in its own work and works with partners on key sustainability issues affecting the region, for example on climate change.

Partnership

The Secretariat cannot deliver across a wide and challenging agenda alone: partnership working is therefore crucial to our success. Delivery of this Business Plan will promote and depend upon strong and inclusive partnership working throughout the region. The Assembly and SWLGA are signatories to a regional compact with South west Forum aimed at improving partnership working and public and voluntary community sector relationships with the region.

We have already demonstrated effective partnership working through for example: lobbying (via SW LGA) on local government finance; assisting the creation of Equalities South West to represent equality interests in the region; producing the first ever Regional Environment Strategy with environmental partners; the Regional Waste Strategy and the Integrated Regional Strategy, *just CONNECT!* with a wide range of regional stakeholders. Some of the activities outlined in this Business Plan will be delivered by Members with the support of the Secretariat, working with partners at the regional level. For example, delivery of the Integrated Regional Strategy and Regional Spatial Strategy will depend upon close partnership working with organisations covering the full range of issues affecting a successful region. Other activities in the Business Plan will be delivered by sub-regional and local partners, supported by the Secretariat, for example capacity building for local authorities, e-government and raising awareness in central government of the affordable housing crisis in the region.

The South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) and Government Office for the South West (GOSW) are key partners with a variety of partnership roles. The secretariat has worked closely with GOSW and the RDA to produce the Integrated Regional Strategy, *just CONNECT!* and will continue this partnership role to develop the delivery plan, *now CONNECTING!*

The Secretariat is grateful for the support of Officers from the many local authority and regional organisations who have been closely involved in the many Officer Groups or other discussion forums supporting our work.

POLICY CONTEXT: KEY SHORT TERM ISSUES AND CHALLENGES AND LONGER TERM DIRECTION

(i) South West Regional Assembly

Next year

The Secretariat will continue to support **Assembly Members** in their objective to be the voice of the Region and we do this by encouraging regional policy making and delivery that is connected, informed and effective.

2006/07 will see us consolidating our Regional Planning Body role, and merging these function with the Regional Housing Body. With the submission of the Regional Spatial Strategy due on 31st March 2006 the year ahead will be focuses on refining and developing our evidence with partners across the region in preparation for the EIP. The continuously changing policy context will present particular challenges in ensuring the RSS remains fit-for-purpose. We will also be spending time and effort across the region in briefing members and partners on the content and implications of the draft RSS. The merger with the regional housing body will give us an excellent opportunity to further improve joined up working across the region in the context of *just CONNECT!* We will continue to promote more joined up working through the IRS, including review of the RSDF, and taking forward the recommendations of the Sustainable Development Commission on the Assembly's role in promoting sustainable development.

In delivering our new statutory responsibilities, we will keep the RSS under review, ensure that Local Development Frameworks conform to the Strategy and comment on planning applications of strategic importance to the South West, which might influence the delivery of the strategy.

We will continue to work with key regional and local partners to influence the Government and European agenda; a key input will be to the 2007 Spending review and inputs to the national frameworks for European Cohesion and Rural Development Regulations.

The Scrutiny work of the Assembly is currently being independently reviewed to ensure it remains fit for purpose, it will be particularly important to ensure that in relation to the work of the Regional Development Agency it sits properly alongside the new IPA process . Following the review, discussions will be held with the RDA to agree a revised protocol as the current one is due to run out after the completion of the current Sustainable Energy review. The Assembly will also work with the RDA to develop the idea of wider regional debates and reviews.

In Governance terms the Assembly will continue to keep its structures and procedures under review, and continue to improve member engagement and partnership working. The outcome of the review of membership will be implemented in 2006 which aims to ensure in particular that the streamlined Executive draws together members from across the region in an effective and representative way. The number of SEEP members will be increased to ensure that they constitute 30% of the membership; and that membership will be reviewed in an open and transparent way to ensure l groups across the region can express views.

Longer Term Direction

The vision for the Assembly will remain to:

“Improve the quality of life of all the people in the region and make it an even better place to live, work and visit”

Over the longer term, the Assembly’s role will increasingly see a shift of focus from policy/strategy development towards implementation, working closely with partners and delivery organisations. In delivering this agenda the Assembly will continue to be a Member led organisation, and members will therefore agree the direction of the Assembly work reflecting their views on current priorities and issues of concern to the Assembly but taking account, of course of the direction of work set by the ODPM and funded by government grant. Member engagement will continue to be of key importance, and members will be increasingly involved in communicating to the region about the work of the assembly; listening to the regions concerns and lobbying central government and, as appropriate, lobbying in Europe and internationally.

As the framework for this delivery the Assembly will continue to work, with partners to achieve the aims of the Integrated Regional Strategy. These aims are not mutually exclusive, but will need to all be pursued as part of achieving the Vision set out above.

just
CONNECT!

- To harness the benefits of population growth and manage the implications of population change
- To enhance our distinctive environments and the quality and diversity of our cultural life
- To enhance our economic prosperity and quality of employment opportunity
- To address deprivation and disadvantage to reduce significant intra-regional inequalities
- To make sure that people are treated fairly and can participate fully in society.

The Secretariat will support **South West Local Government Association** Members in delivering its priorities by:

- Developing understanding of common issues and solutions for authorities in the region, for example:
 - Local government finance
 - Meeting the need for affordable housing in the region.
- Acting as a focal point for both members and officers, initiating debates and sharing information.
- Facilitating joint working between local authorities on regional and sub-regional issues such as:
 - Performance improvement and capacity building
 - Modernising services and implementing e-government
 - Asylum seekers and refugees.
- Building relationships with central Government and other bodies, to put the case for the South West's local authorities.

The Secretariat will support **South West Provincial Employers** Members in seeking to deliver the priorities detailed in the published ODPM and EO Pay and Workforce Strategy and ensure relevant linkages to the overall HR improvement agenda. We will aim to do this by working in partnership with authorities, Employers Organisation, LGA, GOSW, ODPM, IDEA and other key stakeholders.

The Secretariat will continue to support Members in their dealings with Trade Unions at all levels and will work to ensure that they are able to influence the implementation of all elements of the 2004-7 NJC pay settlement.

Important contributions will be:

- **The adoption of a Regional Pay and Workforce Strategy.**
- **Assisting authorities to reach local agreements on the implementation of the 2004-7 pay settlement.**
- **Engaging fully with the region's capacity building initiative.**
- **Working with partners to identify and secure funding support for initiatives designed to improve Council's abilities to deliver their people strategies.**

6. KEY PRIORITIES

Taking into account the vision, aims and objectives of the organisation, the Business Plan priority have been developed around four key themes as covered in the following tables:

1. Effective Communications, Engagement and Advocacy
2. Connected, Informed and Effective Policy Making and Delivery
3. Enhanced Capacity across the South West
4. Better public service and performance

Explanation of tables used in this section.

Process	Input	Output	Outcome	Delivery
The activity undertaken	Resources contributing to and available for use. E.g. 2006/07 - £x	The product which arises, with reference to performance indicators.	The impact and change on the ground	By whom and by when E.g. September 2006 - Regional Scrutiny Board Where activity is ongoing, this is not spelt out.

6.1 Effective Communications, Engagement and Advocacy

6.1.1 Communications

Process	Input	Output	Outcome	Delivery Ongoing
<p>Through an integrated approach to communications, public relations and marketing, work with Members (Assembly, South West Provincial Employers, SWLGA) to improve communications at a regional and local level but also nationally through partnership working with a number of bodies, such as the English Regions Network, Local Government Regional Forum and the National Association of Regional Employers.</p> <p>2006-7</p>	<p>2006-7 £644,647</p>	<p>News releases, letters to press, media briefings. Impact assessment carried out with Members and partner organisations to assess the value of newsletters and evaluation of areas of communication where improvement can be made.</p>	<p>Better and wider engagement throughout the region.</p> <p>Clearer understanding of communications needs.</p>	<p>Summer 2006</p> <p>All Members</p>
		<p>Greater use of technology to improve communications. Phone and video conferencing to be utilised to enhance communications and engagement whilst reducing need to travel.</p> <p>Intranet, on-line consultation, on-line booking for events and other web-based services introduced following bedding-in of new web site facility.</p>	<p>Better and wider engagement throughout the region.</p> <p>Increasing cost effective and sustainable communications through the use of technology.</p>	<p>Summer 2006</p>
		<p>Marketing material for employment and training services to be targeted more effectively. Created through working with member organisations and participants to identify their needs.</p>	<p>Learning and Development marketing to be carried out more effectively.</p> <p>Increased knowledge of the needs of key partners.</p>	<p>SWPE</p>
		<p>Effective communications. Particular outputs to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation and presenting at conferences and other events to champion the SW agenda in line with Member requirements - Plain English leaflets produced on work areas including a leaflet on Understanding the RSS following adoption - SWLGA/SWPE reception held every 2 years during national LGA conference at Bournemouth. 	<p>The role of Voice of the Region more clearly articulated and understood more widely locally, regionally and nationally</p> <p>Promote the work of the SW LGA and SWPE including the interests of Local Government as a major employer.</p>	<p>All Member organisations</p>

		Consult with partners on research into customer perception and needs.	Better understanding of the needs of customers and therefore delivery to meet their needs where possible and appropriate	Summer 2006
		Adopting a proactive approach to strengthening links with local authority press offices and key regional organisations and to media relations including establishing and maintaining relationships with key journalist	Better promotion of the needs of the region so strengthening the voice of the South West	

Performance Indicators

- **Publications produced to agreed deadlines: Assembly Members bulletin within 2 working days of full meetings; SW LGA bulletin, SWPE Associates newsletter and SWRA full length newsletter to regular timetable.**
- **All publications to be available electronically; all paper publications to be on recycled paper and where feasible on at least 80% post consumer waste recycled paper.**
- **Achieve media coverage on 50 out of 365 days, and increase the balance of positive news stories year on year.**
- **Marketing spend on training and development to be reduced per £ of income due to more focused, electronic based communications.**

6.1.2 Engagement and Advocacy

Process	Input	Output	Outcome	Delivery Ongoing
<p>Partnership working will continue to be at the heart of all the regional organisations activity. The strategic importance of improving democratic engagement and participation in regional work is recognised</p> <p>The Secretariat provides support to and engages with organisations and local communities in the South West including local authorities, organisations in the social, economic and environment arena with particular endeavour to include hard to reach groups.</p>	<p>2006-7 £304,381</p>	<p>Working with hard to reach groups, such as the youth parliament and other people to ensure engagement on regional issues.</p> <p>Support the Youth representative on the Regional Assembly.</p> <p>Hold an event with the Youth Parliament on Regional Assembly Policy.</p>	<p>Better understanding and public awareness of the issues.</p> <p>Wider engagement and greater accountability of the Secretariat.</p>	<p>October 2006</p> <p>Secretariat</p>
		<p>Develop and build lobby to ensure the region receives a fair share of national and European resources so that local authorities and other public bodies receive more resources.</p>	<p>Input to consultation on National Joint Strategy for Rural Development Regulations</p>	<p>June 2006</p> <p>Assembly and LGA Teams together with partner organisations.</p>
		<p>Continue to work in support of the regional organisations in raising awareness of regional needs and making the case on specific issues and policy areas. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -ensure that the needs of the South West for more affordable housing are recognised - waste implementation funding - Support the Regional Local Forum focussing on strategic policy issues. 	<p>Recognition of the needs of the South West at national level.</p> <p>The best possible deal for the South West region from national and European policies and funding.</p> <p>Consulted as a matter of course by Government on regional issues.</p> <p>Waste funding matches requirements of Regional Waste Strategy targets.</p> <p>Improved understanding of and contribution to regional policy at local authority level.</p>	<p>Assembly</p> <p>SWLGA</p>
		<p>Working with the South West Cohesion Steering Group and Support Group, help</p>	<p>A regional framework for use in determining regional priorities for use</p>	<p>2006/07</p>

		finalise the regional framework for funding post 2006.	of European funds.	
		Monitor the development of key European policies and lobby as appropriate through the South West UK Brussels Office; co-ordinating a regional response with the Executive Committee.	Increased coherence and regional accountability on European policy.	
		Review the priorities of the Brussels office with regional partners following European policy and legislative changes post 2006/7.	Increased coherence and regional accountability on European policy. The best possible deal for the South West region from the review of the Rural Development Regulations.	March 2007

Performance Indicators

- **Improved level of responses to the Secretariat's, for example on scrutiny reviews, in particular increased participation of hard to reach groups.**
- **All formal consultation to be undertaken in accordance with our good practice principles, allowing at least a twelve week response period.**
- **Website is fully 'customer friendly'; up to date and meets all necessary standards by 2006.**
- **Proportion of national government funding for the South West increased.**

6.2 Connected, Informed and Effective Policy Making and Delivery

6.2.1 Policy Integration and Development

Process	Input	Output	Outcome	Delivery Ongoing
<p><i>just CONNECT!</i>, the Integrated Regional Strategy will be used as the basis for ensuring policy development, review of existing strategies, action and funding are targeted towards delivering the shared and agreed outcomes for the South West.</p> <p>This work will be underpinned by a good evidence base, derived through internal resources and through the work of the Regional Observatory.</p>	<p>2006-7 £385,582</p>	Now Connecting – the delivery plan for the Integrated Regional Strategy – finalised and published.	Partners and stakeholders clear about their respective roles in delivering the regions agreed aims.	<p>June 2006</p> <p>Regional Futures Group together with key regional agencies.</p>
		Work on the delivery plan used to agree a set of regional commitments to progress projects profiling integrated working in the South West	Actions aimed at working cross-sectorally at regional level undertaken	Regional Futures Group together with key regional agencies.
		Regional strategies developed within the context of the IRS and their contribution to it clearly identified, e.g. the revised Regional Economic Strategy and the revised Regional Cultural Strategy.	A consistent set of regional strategies steering the South West in the same direction produced.	Regional Futures Group together with key regional agencies.
		Support the work of key partnerships progressing work on the region's key challenges, e.g. Climate Change Impacts Partnership, Equality South West, Sustainability South West and Culture South West.	Regional partnerships working together with the Regional Assembly to ensure integrated policy development.	
		Promotion of sustainability principles, update of Regional Sustainable Development Framework into a toolkit to comprise a component of the IRS delivery plan and a Sustainable Development Action plan in response to the SDC's review.	Region develops mechanisms and tools for delivering sustainability and integration.	<p>June 2006</p> <p>Regional Futures Group and Sustainability SW.</p>
		Annual progress report for Regional Environment Strategy	Continued delivery of the Environment Strategy and	<p>Summer 2006/ 2007/2008</p>

			engagement of partners.	RSPTG and Partners
		Promote waste minimisation/ recycling to assist implementation of Regional Waste Strategy by supporting the activities of Remade South West / Remade Kernow.	Increase awareness of and achievement of waste minimisation, recycling and renewable energy.	RSPTG and Assembly/SWLGA
		Promote renewable energy provision to meet targets for 2010, working with Regen SW. Subject to DTI responses of Biomass Task Force and the energy review, take forward appropriate actions. Develop regional support mechanism for local authorities to implement building integrated renewables policy.	RSS policy delivered and renewable energy targets being achieved	RSPTG
	2007-8	Regional Waste and Environment Strategies reviewed. Regional Energy Strategy developed.	Regional Waste and Environment Strategies meeting the needs of the region within an integrated regional context.	2007 -08
		Review of the effectiveness of the IRS in supporting strategy integration undertaken including an assessment of the ongoing appropriateness of the aims and objectives and extent to which it is being used explored.	Understanding of extent to which the IRS is an effective integration tool. An updated set of aims and objectives for the South West produced.	2007/2008 Regional Futures Group
		Relationship between the Integrated Regional Strategy and Regional Sustainable Development Framework clarified and simplified.	The region delivers jointly agreed crunch objectives in most sustainable way.	January to March 2008 Regional Futures Group with Sustainability South West

	2008-9	Produce annual progress report for Regional Environment Strategy	Continued delivery of the Environment Strategy and engagement of partners.	July 2008 RSPTG and Assembly Team
Linking policy and funding. The approach taken to ensuring strategy alignment in the South West will also drive the Assembly's input to consultation on spending in the region through the Comprehensive Spending Review and the Regional Funding Allocation Process.	2006-7 2007-8 2008-9	Input/follow up to the region's advice on Regional Funding Allocations leading up to the Comprehensive Spending Review. Respond to future discussion/consultation on devolved decision making and spending, particularly CSR 07.	Government spending in the region supporting agreed aims and objectives.	Assembly Executive Committee with key regional partners.
Taking an integrated approach to delivery. The Regional Assembly will continue to work together with the Government Office and the RDA to take forward "The Way Ahead" – the South West's submission to the Sustainable Communities Plan.	2006/7 2007/8 2008/9	Report on the work of the Way Advisory group published identifying innovative ways of delivering the South West's submission to the Sustainable Communities Plan.	Region advances its thinking on how to deliver growth effectively. Regional summit on delivery held in April 2006.	April – June 2006 Assembly, GOSW and SW RDA.
Performance Assessment:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of agencies actively promoting and working to deliver the region's aims; 				

- **Number of strategies actively developed within the context of the IRS;**
- **Agreed regional advice to Government on spending priorities;**

6.2.2 Regional Spatial Strategy

Process	Input	Output	Outcome	Delivery Ongoing
Develop and keep under review the Regional Spatial Strategy (which includes the Regional Transport Strategy) for the South West.	2006-7 £329,844	Post submission of the RSS arrange for wide circulation of consultation document on behalf of GOSW, responses be used to inform the development of evidence for the EIP.	Successful consultation facilitated for GOSW.	April - June 2006
	2007-08			
	2008-09	<p>Research to fill gaps in evidence base</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission further research to fill in evidence base, using consultants where necessary. Establish a panel of consultants to enable multiple projects to be run with minimum bureaucracy • Working with 9 Joint Study Area (JSA) Steering Groups and Strategic Planning Authorities to add to robustness of sub regional studies • Work with LA and other partners at officer level to assess technical implications of consultation outcome and panel choice of issues 	Additional research undertaken and evidence gathered to ensure the Assembly, on behalf of the region, is able to make a robust case to the EIP.	<p>April to December 2006</p> <p>RSPTG, Local Authorities and contractors</p>
		Evidence base to be drawn together in a clear and coherent way, with statements and submissions prepared as appropriate for the EIP and Assembly Panel representatives fully prepared.	Robust and evidence based statements to support the RSS at EIP.	October 2006 to February 2007
	Attend and organise, where necessary, briefing events for stakeholders and partners to explain and provide clarification on issues within the RSS.	Increased public awareness of strategic planning following the consultation and Public Examination. RSS policies widely understood.	<p>April - June 2006</p> <p>RSPTG and secretariat</p>	

		SSA of changes for RSS proposed through EIP process based on RSDF.	SSA completed for any post Draft RSS submissions, JSA work and pre EIP modifications.	
		Consider panel report and recommend response Receive EIP report and prepare for RSS adoption.	Report Panel to full assembly with proposed changes.	Late 2007 March – August 2008
		On-going assessment of RSS in light of changing policy and monitoring information.	Recommendations for actions in the implementation Plan.	Ongoing RSPTG
		Finalise regional freight map	Robust and evidence based freight policies	April to June 2006 RSPTG
		Refine methodology to prioritise transport investment and develop ways of building capacity and finding innovative funding routes to help deliver key transport schemes in the region	Key transport schemes delivered which underpin delivery of the RSS	Ongoing Assembly in partnership with Regional Agencies

Performance Indicators

- **Submitted RSS proves to be robust through EIP process**
- **RSS published and distributed to stakeholders as required in PPS11**
- **Briefing events organised and held on RSS.**

6.2.3 RSS Implementation and monitoring

Process	Input	Output	Outcome	Delivery Ongoing
<p>RSS Implementation Plan further developed. Work with key stakeholders in delivery and update with regard to developing implementation mechanisms, clarification and identification of delivery tools and funding opportunities. The Annual Monitoring Report will be used to pull together monitoring data from across policy areas to inform the Implementation Plan.</p>	<p>2006/07 £495,694</p>	<p>Revised Implementation Plan submitted to ODPM with Annual Monitoring Report.</p>	<p>RSS and other regional strategies delivered.</p>	<p>February 2007; 2008; 2009</p> <p>RSPTG</p>
<p>Fulfil role as statutory consultee in planning process responding to consultation on planning applications and LDF documents.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Assess the general conformity of Local Development Documents with the RSS in accordance with statutory responsibilities as regional Planning Body and statutory consultee and appear at public examinations as required.</p>	<p>Increased consistency between Local Development Frameworks and the Regional Spatial Strategy and implementation of RSS through local delivery.</p>	<p>Response to consultation within statutory time limits.</p>
		<p>Provide comments on Strategic Planning Applications and pre-application proposals for development in accordance with statutory responsibilities as Regional Planning Body statutory consultee.</p>	<p>Strategic local planning decisions conforming with the RSS (desired outcome).</p>	
		<p>Provide statements in response to “called-in” strategic planning applications and represent the Regional Planning Body at Public Inquiries in accordance with statutory responsibilities as required.</p>	<p>Significant local planning decisions conforming with RSS (desired outcome).</p>	
		<p>Assess consistency of Local Transport Plans against the RSS objectives.</p>	<p>Improved consistency between LTPs and RSS thereby ensuring improved transport systems across the region</p>	<p>Member General Conformity Panel delegated to Chief</p>

				Executive as appropriate
		Promote waste minimisation/recycling to assist implementation of Regional Waste Strategy by supporting the activities of Remade South West / Remade Kernow.	Increase awareness of and achievement of waste minimisation, recycling and renewable energy.	RSPTG
		Promote renewable energy provision to meet RPG 10 targets for 2010, working with Regen SW. Subject to DTI responses of Biomass Task Force and the energy review, take forward appropriate actions. Develop regional support mechanism for local authorities to implement building integrated renewables policy.	RSS policy delivered and renewable energy targets being achieved	RSPTG
Annual Monitoring Report produced.	Ongoing	Annual Monitoring Report AMR produced which over time becomes an Integrated Monitoring Report based on inputs from local authorities and other partners via the local authority network. The report should also encapsulate monitoring information for progress on the range of strategies including the Regional Housing, Waste and Environment Strategy. GIS and mapping system to be improved.	Better understanding of the impacts of policies and more effective and active implementation enabled. Improved quality and data consistency and more effective mapping which links with other organisations systems.	February 2007; 2008; 2009 RSPTG

Performance Indicators

- **Comprehensive Annual Monitoring Report delivered and disseminated in February each year, integrated approach to regional monitoring will have been adopted (by 2008/09).**
- **RSS Implementation Plan reviewed and submitted annually to ODPM with AMR in February (and published).**
- **Regional Planning Body role on checking conformity in response to District, County and Unitary authorities' requests to be delivered within statutory timescales.**

100% of strategic planning applications responded to relating to the schedule adopted within statutory periods.

6.2.4 Regional Scrutiny

Process	Input	Output	Outcome	Delivery Ongoing
<p>The Assembly has worked in partnership with SW RDA to develop the approach to scrutiny so it facilitates constructive regional debate and encourages wide participation and as a result is beneficial in meeting the needs of the region.</p> <p>In taking the scrutiny programme forward, we will continue to improve the way in which the Assembly strengthens the accountability of SW RDA to the region.</p> <p>The impact of the scrutiny review programme will have been reviewed in 2005 / 06 and the Assembly and RDA will, in 2006, consider further developing the approach to scrutiny within the context of Just Connect building on the review findings that reach a conclusion in 2006. [As a result there may be significant changes to the content of this section of the Plan]</p>	<p>2006-7 £61,106</p>	Complete Sustainable Energy scrutiny.	Sustainable Energy Scrutiny increases knowledge in the region and enables more effective and integrated evidence based policy making	Summer 2006 Scrutiny Panel
		Complete at least two scrutiny review exercises that assess the extent to which agreed regional objectives are met and provide clear recommendations for action.	Increased regional coherence in the two issues tackled by the scrutiny programme.	Scrutiny Panel
		A debate held with members and the SWRDA to take forward the agreed outcomes of the Scrutiny Programme to date.	Positive change within the RDA, particularly with regard to the issues assessed during the scrutiny reviews.	Scrutiny Panel
		A revised scrutiny programme and protocol agreed between the SWRA and the SW Regional Development Agency to shape activity in future years.	Effective and appropriate mechanisms for undertaking scrutiny in the South West agreed reflecting upon successes of previous years. Complementary role of scrutiny to the NAO Independent Performance Assessments of RDA's agreed.	Summer 2006 Regional Assembly and SW RDA GOSW
		Establish principle of broadening the Regional Assembly's Scrutiny role by seeking the involvement of the wider government agency agenda.	Increased accountability of regional agencies in the region. Increased regional policy coordination and delivery across regional organisations.	Scrutiny Panel, Assembly and GOSW

Performance Indicators

- **Two scrutiny reviews delivered each year;**
- **Outcomes from the scrutiny reviews will be published in reports with clear recommendations;**
- **Reports and recommendations will be reviewed with SW RDA, Members and stakeholders and outcomes made publicly available.**

6.2.5 Housing

Process	Input	Output	Outcome	Delivery
<p>Establish and develop the Regional Housing Body function within the South West Regional Assembly (the Regional Planning Body).</p> <p>(This section assumes the merger of the Regional Planning Body and Regional Housing Body will take place from September 2006 with housing activity to be closely managed alongside regional planning work.)</p>	<p>2006-7 £62,236</p>	<p>Manage the smooth merger of the Regional Housing and Planning Bodies ensuring the member group structure and representation on the Body is effective and fit for purpose for both SWLGA and SWRA and staff are in place.</p>	<p>Merger fully effective, with systems and structures in place.</p>	<p>Merger in September 2006</p>
		<p>Continuously improve South West Housing Body website</p>	<p>Better awareness and understanding of the work of the Regional Housing Body, plus improved communication.</p>	
		<p>Review of the membership and effectiveness of the Regional Housing Forum</p>	<p>Improved effectiveness of partnership working, which continues to be at the heart of the Regional Housing Body</p>	<p>2007-08</p>
		<p>Development of an action / delivery plan for implementation of Regional Housing Strategy 2005-16 in context of Spatial Strategy</p>	<p>Strengthened regional ownership and delivery of RHS. Delivery plan drafted with partners. Implementation of objectives overseen by Regional Housing Body.</p>	<p>2006-07 SWRA/Regional Housing Body partners</p>
		<p>Regional Housing Strategy reviewed in support of IRS Framework, RSS and housing distribution.</p>	<p>Housing provision delivered effectively within strategic context. More houses built in right places, greater proportion affordable, and in most sustainable way</p>	<p>2007-09 and ongoing SWRA/Regional Housing Body</p>
		<p>Housing and planning streamlined. Develop and refine a shared monitoring system for RHS and RSS.</p>	<p>Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) implemented and monitored in a way that is consistent with the emerging RSS under the overarching framework of the Integrated Regional Strategy.</p>	<p>2007-09</p>
<p>Performance Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Body successfully merged into Assembly structure. • Implementation of RHS expressed as a Delivery Plan drafted in 2005-06 / 2006-07. • South West Housing Body website improved. 				

6.3 Enhanced Capacity across the South West

6.3.1 Member Capacity

Process	Input	Output	Outcome	Delivery Ongoing
<p>Provide an increasingly effective, efficient, economic and quality service to Members of all three organisations. With the provision of high quality and appropriately impartial advice and timely paperwork they will ensure Members are able to have well informed debates.</p> <p>2006-7</p>	<p>2006-7 £386,147</p>	<p>Support for Members provided in the form of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) An annual Member Pack setting out key information to all Members; (ii) Member briefing events, plus a specific event for SEEP Members; (iii) Member systems such as the Register of interests and the Top Up system. (iv) Members meetings set up well in advance. (v) Members provided with briefing to enable them to participate fully in 'outside' bodies e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English Regions Network • Local Government Regional Forum • National Association Regional Employers 	<p>Members feel well supported in all organisational process activities e.g. provision of papers to be evaluated formally in 2006/7</p> <p>Members to be well informed</p>	Secretariat
		<p>Deliver high quality, concise meeting papers seven days in advance of meetings improving to ten days in advance in 2007/08</p>	<p>The work of the Assembly is open and transparent through the publication of meeting papers on the website and regular schedule of meetings held in public.</p>	Secretariat
		<p>Deliver high quality briefings and support Members representing the regional organisations at meetings of external/outside bodies.</p>	<p>Members feel well supported in fulfilling their role as representative of the regional organisation.</p>	Executive Committee and Secretariat
		<p>In support of the Assembly organise an annual Away Day for the SEEP Members to discuss current "hot" topics and consider future priorities. Some organisational support for the political</p>	<p>Better engagement of Members in the work of the Assembly.</p>	Secretariat

		groups of the Assembly e.g. organising an annual meeting within limits agreed by Leaders.		
		Further develop the website and organisational database to ensure it is user friendly and operational for all Members, including a section dedicated to Members.	Productivity is increased and administrative costs lowered through better able the increased use of new systems such as the organisational database	September 2006
		Carry out a comprehensive evaluation of Member views on the service provision from the secretariat and review accordingly.	Increased knowledge of the needs of Members and the performance of the secretariat, giving a base to review policies and procedures.	March 2007
		Support the transition of the Assembly Chairmanship to the Liberal Democrats in July 2006 and to Labour in 2008 (subject to the provisions of the constitution).	Clear communications and smooth transition to ensure uninterrupted work activity	July 2006 July 2008

Performance Indicators

- **All papers available for public meetings on the website within 7 days of meeting and delivered to members within an agreed timescale.**
- **Three Member and stakeholder Briefing Events held on work of regional organisations each year.**
- **Increased satisfaction amongst Members with Secretariat services.**

6.3.2 Local Government Capacity

Process	Input	Output	Outcome	Delivery Ongoing
<p>Encourage and promote partnership between local authorities and other organisations and agencies in the region on policy issues which require a regional approach, whilst supporting sharing of information and best practice between local authorities to improve performance and capacity.</p> <p>Implement national policies towards asylum-seekers and refugees and adapt them appropriately to the South West region; represent the SW region in national asylum forum debates and working with other stakeholders share information and best practice</p>	2006-7	SWLGA and SWPE developed as contact and coordination points for all Local Authorities in the South West	<p>Local authorities helped to improve the standard and efficiency of services delivered.</p> <p>Improved communication links between Local Authorities.</p> <p>A higher profile for the SWLGA</p>	SWPE SWLGA Executive
		Liaison with the national LGA to share and link into national policies and developments	Higher profile of SWLGA within the national LGA and development of joint working arrangements	SWLGA
		Support for SW Local Authorities to improve their Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) following re-categorisation	Adjustment to re-categorisation of the CPA and improvement in the South West's CPA results	SWLGA and SWPE
		Active and widespread participation in the SW Improvement Partnership (SWIP)	<p>Clearly articulated capacity building applications addressing fairly the priorities of South West local authorities.</p> <p>Enhanced capacity within Local Authorities.</p>	SWIP Board Secretariat
		Development of the regional e-government partnership to meet the Government's efficiency agenda	<p>Agreed efficiencies achieved</p> <p>E-government embedded in working processes</p>	SW e-government group;
		Work towards a programme of secondment learning for human resources (HR) staff.	Increased employment expertise in local authorities and enhanced capacity within local authorities on training and development.	Secretariat
		Develop learning events which complement the advisory service and respond to the needs of local authority members and officers.	Provision of a comprehensive suite of learning and development training packages.	SWPE Management Committee.

		Ensure all relevant training packages receive national accreditation. Review the new Consumer and Trading Standards training provision.	Increased capacity and expertise within local authorities.	
		Support all authorities with high level consultancy assistance to negotiate difficult employment issues.	Deliver consultancy support to authorities	Secretariat
		Provide a regular HR conference which provides relevant and up to date information on key issues and encourage attendance from all authorities.	Deliver an annual HR conference	Annually January 2007
		Ensure that JE demands from across the regions authorities are met effectively as far as is possible within resources.	Deliver consultancy support to authorities undertaking pay and grading reviews.	
		Develop skills in delivering equal pay audits and efforts to tackle occupational segregation	Assist authorities in developing local solutions to tackling the audit.	Secretariat
		Develop a model to identify needs which support local workforce plans and contributes to the South West Framework for Employment and Skills.	Support the regional networks and work in partnership with IDEa to achieve this.	March 2007
		Development of the SW Customer Service Managers Network	Improved customer service within local authorities	SW LGA and SW e-government group
		Support for the South West Overview and Scrutiny Network	Improved skills associated with Overview and Scrutiny within local authorities	SW LGA and SWPE
		Evaluate and review all Learning and Development events and qualifications in order to continually enhance the service to local authorities.	Enhanced capacity in local authorities.	SWPE
		Launch Web based directory of Learning and Development products. Launch web based best practice employment services policies and procedures.	Better and wider engagement throughout the region.	March 2007 SWPE

	2006-7 and on-Going	<p>Production of a Regional Asylum Strategy to deliver national policies and to help the integration of asylum-seekers and refugees in the region</p> <p>Liaison with NASS and other regional stakeholders to link into national policies and developments</p> <p>Establishment of an asylum e-newsletter for stakeholders</p>	<p>Endorsement of the Strategy document by the Asylum Consortium</p> <p>Implementation of agreed policies</p> <p>An accurate profile of asylum-seekers and refugees in the region</p> <p>Improved communication between regional stakeholders on asylum issues</p>	<p>June 2006</p> <p>SW LGA and Asylum Consortium</p>
	2007 - 9	<p>Build on the development of the SWLGA as the key contact and co-ordination point for LAs</p> <p>Ensuring active participation in SWIP in the e-government partnership and the Customer Services Network and support for the SW Overview and Scrutiny Network.</p> <p>Continue the liaison with the national LGA</p>	<p>Improved standards and achievement of efficiencies</p> <p>Raised profile of SWLGA nationally and regionally</p>	
		<p>Further development and embed the e-asylum newsletter as a key regional communication tool</p>	<p>Improve the regional stakeholders understanding of national asylum policies towards asylum-seekers and refugees and raise the profile of the issue with LAs</p>	
		<p>Develop learning events which complement the advisory service and respond to the needs of local authority members and officers.</p>	<p>Provision of a comprehensive suite of learning and development training packages.</p>	<p>SWPE</p>

Performance Indicators

- **Increased sharing of good practice between local authorities**
- **Increased capacity of HR teams to contribute to the strategic objectives of local authorities**

- **Increased development of workforce capacity in line with ODPM/Employment Organisations' ay and Workforce Strategy**
 - **Improved efficiencies amongst local authorities with the development of e-government policy**
 - **Increased liaison and improved communication links between stakeholders in the asylum-seekers and refugee Sector**
- Positive feedback about the Regional Asylum Strategy and asylum e-newsletter**

6.4 Better Public Service and Performance

Process	Input	Output	Outcome	Delivery Ongoing
<p>Continue to strive to be an employer of choice within the region and a model of good practice for others.</p> <p>High standards of public service will be maintained and we will strive to maximise efficiency, effectiveness and economy.</p>	<p>2006-7 £727,332</p>	Take forward those on-going outcomes identified in previous years to provide high quality corporate performance.	Secretariat a model of best practice	Secretariat
		Maintain support for public duty work and charitable work consider the use of employee volunteering through Community Service schemes.	Providing financial support to the local community.	Secretariat staff on a voluntary basis
		Work towards a financial outturn within 1% of budget and quarterly profiles within 5% of prediction.	Better financial information provided to the Board.	Secretariat
		Evaluate the changes made to the performance management review through staff feedback and/or the Staff Consultative Forum and ensure ongoing review of staff training and development systems particularly evaluation procedures to ensure continuing development and improvement.	Flexible and multi skilled staff able to meet changing needs of organisation.	Secretariat
		Review and improve the Secretariat's internal sustainability performance and to ensure best endeavours are carried out to comply with the greener events guide.	More sustainable use of resources	
		Carry out an assessment of whether the organisation can still be accommodated acceptability in current buildings, consider new ways of using accommodation effectively and, if necessary develop business case for new accommodation.	Safe and effective working environment	2006/07
		<p>Policies and procedures to be consistent with the Human Rights Act.</p> <p>Review and monitor equality policies on the Equality Standard.</p>	Secretariat a model of best practice on equalities.	Secretariat

		Principles of Freedom of Information Act followed within resource constraints in line with agreed statement by the Board	Information provided in response to reasonable requests within agreed timescales	Secretariat
		Investigate and implement, if appropriate an in-house financial package, incorporating accountancy, PAYE, tax, invoicing etc to be administered by the Secretariat.	Effective, efficient and economic Secretariat service delivery.	March 2008 Secretariat
	2008-9	IIP re accreditation for all parts of the organisation (in Dennett House and Tormarton).		2008

Performance Indicators

- **All staff appraisals to be properly completed by May of each year.**
- **Skills Audit completed and average of at least 3 days development per member of staff.**
- **Budget delivered each year within +/-5%.**
- **100% of Members to have completed register of interest within 28 days of appointment.**
- **Sickness levels to remain below public sector average**

7. RESOURCES

The Secretariat continues to seek value for money in using public money. Economies of scale continue to be realised as a result of the shared regional secretariat, which allows resources to be used in a flexible way to meet peaks and troughs in workloads. Work is continuously reviewed to ensure resources are being effectively focussed.

Income 2006/07

The Member organisations receive financial support from a range of sources:

- Local authorities continue to provide support for all three organisations through an annual subscription, predicting to produce £508,394 during 2006/07. In addition, non financial support is also offered by authorities through officer support and access to facilities at no cost.
- ODPM continues to fund key areas of Assembly activity building on the ‘Strengthening Regional Accountability’ funding introduced in 2001 to enable, in particular effective scrutiny of the RDA and funding for the Assembly’s role as Statutory Regional Planning Body through a core level of funding plus an element of Planning Development Grant, which is agreed on an annual basis. Indicative funding shows an increase in ODPM funding to £2,227,000.
- The Home Office continues to provide funding for the SWLGA in support of the activity in support of the regional asylum seekers agenda. Current predictions indicate £90,000 for 2005/06.
- Income from the Secretariat’s activities in support of the region’s local authorities continued to be generated through the provision of employment support and learning and development events. This “self generated” income continues to provide a vital underpinning for the SWPE role enabling investment in the development of new and innovative methods of helping build capacity within Member organisations.

Income 2007/08

The level of income for 2007 - 2009 has not been finalised at this stage.

Annex 1

ASSEMBLY ACHIEVEMENTS

Since the establishment of the South West Regional Assembly in 2000 and the attraction of funding from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2001 the Assembly has had some major achievements in delivering the overall vision to:

improve the quality of life of all the people in the region and make it an even better place to live, work and visit.

Headline achievements particularly relating to 2005/06 are summarised below; the published Annual Report for the work of the Secretariat in previous years encapsulated wider achievements.

Effective Communications, Engagement and Advocacy



- Members, stakeholders and associates have been regularly updated through the use of timely bulletins, newsletters and other publications, all available electronically or, if in hard copy, on recycled paper:
- Preparation of a statement on Freedom of Information giving the Secretariat's commitment to working in an appropriately open and transparent way;
- Up-to-date information given through the Frequently Asked Questions section published on the website;
- Development of the Customer Relations Management system, an electronic means of recording customer contact to streamline future communications with individuals and groups



- The RSS Strategy Document was sent to key stakeholders with consultation events being held during the Summer and Winter of 2005.
- The proportion of national government funding for the South West has increased
- Agreement of report on tourism in South West following strategic review of policy
- Submitted written evidence to the Affordable Rural Housing Commission then welcomed the Commission's inquiry to the region, which gave a further opportunity to present verbal evidence.
- M5 reclassified as a national route following strong lobbying from the region.
- Supported the Sustainability South West 'Pioneers of Packaging' Awards.
- Worked with regional partners and MPs to successfully lobby for changes to allow Wavehub project to proceed.
- Roll out of advice on RPB role on general conformity advice and more and better communication with Local authorities on planning applications and LDF documents.
- Appointed e-government manager for the region, and successfully obtained £300k funding for an innovative capital project to assist local authorities in meeting their sustainability appraisal obligations
- Many events held to assist local authorities in the roll-out of the national e-government agenda

- Inaugurated and supported a South West Scrutiny Network in conjunction with local authorities as a means of professional support for local authority Officers.
- Brought together Local Authorities, stakeholders and key regional bodies to demonstrate proactive and unanimous support for London's successful bid for the 2012 Olympics.

Connected, Informed & Effective Policy Making and Delivery

- Regional agencies have actively promoted and worked to deliver the region's key strategies which are underpinned by the Integrated Regional Strategy
- The Sustainable Development Framework has been increasingly used by regional partners to test policies
- A draft spatial strategy was produced in the Autumn 2005 which linked growth provision and sub-regional proposals with a Transport Strategy and identified key transport improvements
- A comprehensive Annual Monitoring Report was delivered and disseminated in February 2006
- A scrutiny review of tourism was completed in the Spring 2005 which gave clear recommendations
- Working with partners developed renewable energy targets for region – first region to have targets for renewable heat.
- Regular liaising with other agencies re. statutory consultee and general conformity role.
- RSS key stages completed in accordance to project plan including two rounds of consultation with stakeholders
- Conformity process set in place and comments made on development documents and strategic applications within guidelines
- Annual monitoring report completed and delivered to ODPM by February 2005 deadline.

Enhanced Capacity across the South West

- All papers have been made available on the website within 7 days of public meetings and delivered to members within agreed timescales
- Nearly 20 stakeholder briefing events on the work of the South West Regional Assembly have been held
- Policy Member comments have been received on the secretariat services; concerns remain around the effectiveness of the website and timely papers

Better Public Service and Performance

- All staff appraisals were properly completed by May 2005
- Staff have attended an average of at least 3 days of staff learning and development
- The budget was delivered within 1% of the budget
- The sickness levels of staff remained significantly below the public sector average for 2005
- The majority of Members completed their register of interest within 28 days of appointment

Annex 2

RISK ASSESSMENT

The Assembly faces a number of risks which affect many of its operations and these are listed below as external and internal risks.

EXTERNAL

- Adverse impacts

As a publicly funded body the Assembly is vulnerable to changes in Government policy and legislation. Uncertainty in relation to Government policy on regions, city regions and local government could distract attention from delivery of the Plan priorities and could damage perceptions of the Assembly thereby leading to the need for considerable effort being put into countering misinformation; a reduction in confidence and difficulties recruiting and retaining high quality staff or influencing partners. The impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review could present particular challenges, leading to an inability to deliver the Business Plan agreed with partners.

The Assembly is also affected by European and international policy development. New European legislation and policy development has the capacity to significantly alter the policy context for the Assembly's work, (for example, any change in trans-European spatial planning will impact on the RSS).

Regional relationships with stakeholders are also important. One of the Assembly's key functions is the scrutiny of the RDA. In the absence of a formal statutory basis this relies on a productive and professional relationship with the RDA which would be at risk from a change in the RDA business priorities or deterioration in the professional relationship. Key personnel changes in partner organisations (for example GOSW or the Environment Agency) could also have a major impact.

The Integrated Regional Strategy has been accepted by all key partners as setting the overall objectives and aims for the region; should this acceptance be undermined anyway then its effectiveness as a tool for ensuring integration at regional level will be lost and along with it the ability to deliver *Now Connecting*.

There are also specific risks around the RSS post submission in some cases, particularly connected with some JSA's. There will be a need for further work to develop and refine the evidence base in cooperation. For the Assembly, the greatest risk is that the draft RSS does not stand scrutiny at the EIP, and the Assembly's preferred approach is altered as a result.

- Possible contingency/mitigation measures

Close liaison with Government is important, both to explain the work and commitments of the Assembly and to understand national policy development and legislative proposals. This could be helped by work with other regions through the English Regions Network. Changes in Government agency structures will require close liaison with the emerging organisation as changes are implemented to ensure that regional priorities are maintained.

A clear communications policy helps improve public understanding of the wide ranging work of the Assembly mitigating any difficulties created over single issues. A broad spectrum of activity and funding sources spreads the risks more widely and

increases information networks. Regular investment in professional relationships, for example joint events, ensures a regular flow of information to increase understanding and awareness. Nurturing a broad range of professional relationships mitigates any changes in key personnel in partner organisations.

The management of the specific RSS risks will be done through close working with local authorities and with support from GOSW and ODPM.

INTERNAL

- Adverse impacts

As a small organisation the Assembly is vulnerable to staff changes and life events such as ill health or maternity leave. There are a number of key posts which are particularly vulnerable due to the specialised nature of the work. Virtually every area of the business plan is impacted on by ICT service delivery. Unless we plan and budget to ensure ICT can grow to meet the challenges and increasingly robust security systems put in place, we will fall short of delivering the plan. The office accommodation is also, as widely acknowledged, very cramped and this can make effective working very difficult and affect staff morale.

The Assembly is also vulnerable to Membership changes. These could be through local authority elections, events such as retirement or re-location or career changes for the SEEPs. This could affect productivity because of the need to support new members through a learning process, or a change in the skill base.

RSS internal risks include difficulties with staff workloads and availability, lack of consensus amongst Members, timing issues for key decisions, pressure on financial resources and political concerns delaying decisions.

- Possible contingency/mitigation measures

On-going training of associated staff in the specialised activities is important, not only to minimise risks but also to increase staff skills and flexibility. The Assembly also actively encourages the sharing of information through secondments and training schemes. Secondments also give more flexibility in the staff structure.

Provision for ICT must be included at an early stage of all business activity planning. Ensure sufficient funding is made available to allow ICT to have the necessary growth to meet business needs and to assist with remote working to reduce the pressure on the accommodation.

The new system of Deputy Chairs will help cope with changes in Membership. This is being strengthened with better information provision for Members, (such as the Assembly bulletin) and briefing sessions, as part of the Assembly commitment to investment in support for Members.