

February 2005



**Friends of
the Earth**

A Local Campaigners Guide to the New English Planning System

'The new planning system is complicated, but if you want to stop something 'bad' from happening or to promote something 'good', then this is the place to get involved.'
Anthony Rae, Calderdale Friends of the Earth

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Introduction

Why is it important to participate?

The new English planning system is confusing and you might be thinking why bother? But the planning system will shape your local community and have a major impact on your environment and your quality of life. It is absolutely vital that you engage in the system to ensure that local development is driven by community needs and to ensure that the 'goods' and 'bads' are spotted and dealt with accordingly.

The new planning system

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out a two tier planning structure:

- Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) replace Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) in setting out policies relating to the development and use of land for each English region.
- Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) will replace structure plans, Local Plans and Unitary Development Plans.

Most of the changes to the system relate to making plans and writing policies and not to decisions on planning applications. The flow chart on page 7 gives you a picture of how the new system fits together. It might look mind bogglingly complicated. Hopefully this guide will help to shed some light.

Regional Planning

- The Regional Assembly is the Regional Planning Body (RPB), and it must prepare and publish a statement of how it has involved people in the preparation of a draft RSS revision.
- The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) is tested at an Examination in Public. No person has the right to be heard. The event is invitation only.
- RSS has a statutory duty to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
- The RSS is drawn up for every English region except London, where the spatial development strategy is known as the London Plan. It cannot be site specific but contains broad policy statements of how much of what might go where. For example housing numbers and retail capacity.
- When preparing the draft revision, the RPB must also prepare, publish and submit a sustainability appraisal that includes a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). CPRE has a great guide on SEAs which can be found on their website or call us for a copy of it.

<http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/pub/pdfs/environment/environmental-assessment/strategic-environmental-assessment.pdf>

Local Planning

- Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) are developed by Local Planning Authorities (LPAs). These will replace local plans, unitary development plans and structure plans.
- County Councils and some Unitary Authorities must also prepare and maintain a minerals and waste development scheme.
- Local Development Documents must 'conform' to the RSS (or the London Plan). If the Regional Planning Body does not think the LDF is in general conformity with the RSS they can request a change to the document. This will be ultimately be decided by the Secretary of State. In policy terms therefore, it is vital that good policies are incorporated into the RSS and all the bad ones taken out, as these will be reflected into the LDF.

What are Local Development Frameworks?

Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) are the folder in which the Local Development Documents sit. The LDF is meant to be based on the objectives of the Local Community Strategy. Introduced under the Local Government Act in 2000, these strategies set out the long-term vision for your local area. The Framework is intended to be a more flexible plan and will comprise of two main parts:

- 1 Development Plan Documents: These documents contain, amongst others, Core Strategy, Area Action Plans and a proposals map.
- 2 Local Development Documents: These documents contain, amongst others, the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), the Local Development Scheme (LDS), and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD).

The SCI will set out how your Local Planning Authority intends to achieve continuous community involvement in preparing development documents in their area. It is very important that LDFs allow for full participation of local communities in the shaping of their future, be accountable and allow for a right of redress in land-use decisions. Three questions which should be asked of a local SCI are:

- Does it help people to know what is going on?
- Does it allow them to shape the decisions?
- Does it give them an opportunity to seek redress if the process lets them down?

See Friends of the Earth's Local Authority Guide of key principles on Statements of Community Involvement which can be found on our website or alternatively call us for a copy.

http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/guides/sci_local_authority_guide.pdf

The LDS is a kind of timetable. These schemes will set out what Local Development Documents will be prepared, the timetable and whether they are to be jointly prepared with other Authorities.

All Development Plan Documents will have to be subject to an independent Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

Public involvement

All Development Plan Documents are subject to a Public Inquiry, where everyone who has made written representations has the right to turn up and be heard. However, the Inspectors report will be legally binding. The Inquiry will determine if the development plan document is 'sound'. This essentially means 'have people been properly involved and is policy clear, concise and deliverable?'

Timetable

The Local Development Scheme document will lay out the detailed timetable for the preparation of the Local Development Framework. The LDF is reviewed annually and replaced every three years. It is up to the Local Planning Authority whether there is one Public Inquiry to examine every part, or individual Inquiries to examine each part. Friends of the Earth believes it should be a single inquiry. Find out what the timetable is from your local authority.

The LDF Preparation process in England

Stages of the Process	What you can do.
Community Strategy	Ask your local authority how you can be involved in your local community strategy. Ask them about the Local Strategic Partnership which plays a key role in drawing up the community strategy. Local Government set up guide: http://community.foe.co.uk/resource/how_tos/cyw_28_new_local_govt.pdf
Your local council will draw up a Local Development Scheme	Get hold of a copy!
Public participation on key planning issues	Make sure you take up all the opportunities for participation and help to encourage others to do the same. Statement of Community involvement guide: http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/guides/sci_local_authority_guide.pdf
Publication of Issues Paper for consultation	Use the LDF Policy Guide on page 10 to help you respond
Full Draft Plan is placed on deposit	This is your opportunity to make formal representations to support or object to policy. You must do this in order to be heard at the Public Inquiry.
Plan Public Inquiry	This is your only right to be heard in person or make written representations.
Inspectors report	The inspector has the final say.
Plan adopted	You can seek redress by a legal challenge which is known as a Judicial Review.
Annual Monitoring report	Opportunity to begin lobbying for new policy and to point out success and failures that need to be addressed
Annual Review and beginning of 3 year replacement cycle.	Ask your local authority how you can be involved in the development of new policy.

It is important to remember that this is your chance to get rid of the bad policies and to promote the good ones. For example, 'bad policy' may include greenbelt housing, road infrastructure, greenfield retail development. 'Good policy' may include renewable energy development, greenhouse gas reduction targets etc.

The new planning system

Regional Communities Plan

The Government's vision for your region. It sets out strategic growth options. Find out more on the web (see box Regional websites).

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)

These will be legally binding development plans and Local Development Frameworks (see below) will have to be in "general conformity" with them. So if your Regional Spatial Strategy decides your bit of the region is to be designated as a Business Growth Zone you have a big problem. It will be difficult to argue back up the line from the local level once an RSS has been adopted. RSS will now also have sub-regional plans for areas such as housing and business.

It is vital you participate in your Regional Spatial Strategy. Visit your regional government website.

Local Community Strategies

Local Community Strategies were introduced under the Local Government Act 2000. These strategies set out a long-term vision for your area. They are important because Local Development Frameworks are meant to be based on the objectives of the Local Community Strategy. Other bodies such as Local Strategic Partnerships also have a big input to Local Community Strategies. Contact your local authority to find out more about these and how you can get involved.

Local Development Framework (LDF)

Instead of Local Plans, District Councils and Unitary Councils have a Local Development Framework. The Framework is intended to be a less formal, more flexible plan and will have two parts:

1 Development Plan documents

These documents contain, amongst others, Core Strategy, Area Action Plans and a proposals map.

2 Local Development documents

These documents contain, amongst others, the Statement of Community Involvement, the Local Development Scheme, and Supplementary Planning Documents.

Local Development Scheme

This will set out what Local Development Documents will be prepared, the timetable and whether they are to be jointly prepared with other Authorities.

Statement of Community Involvement

This will lay out how your local council will consult with the public in plan making and development control. Make sure your local SCI includes basic opportunities to participate, including the right to be heard at planning committees.

Proposals Map

This will plot major planning designations like green belt and major development sites. If you are already campaigning on housing, industrial development or nature conservation – or plan to do so – look at this map closely.

Core strategy

The policy will be brief and much less detailed than current local plans.

Area Action Plan (optional)

Pay attention to this to check proposals for out of town retail development, airport master plans, transport changes or areas of conservation.

Reviewing and replacing LDFs

The whole Local Development Framework must be revised annually and replaced every three years. So for practical purposes policy will always be under some form of review. Each part of the Local Development Framework can be prepared separately and you don't have to have a Statement of Community Involvement before you start the rest – yes, it doesn't make sense. Thanks to the work Friends of the Earth did last year on the Government's initial proposals you still have a right to object and be heard in Local Development Frameworks. But because of the new timescales you may find yourself trying to participate in an inquiry for each part of the Local Development Framework which will take place every three years, not every ten as is the case now.

Regional websites

West Midlands	South West
www.go-wm.gov.uk	www.go-sw.gov.uk
Yorkshire and the Humber	East Midlands
www.go-yh.gov.uk	www.go-em.gov.uk
North West	Eastern
www.go-nw.gov.uk	www.go-east.gov.uk
North East	London
www.go-ne.gov.uk	www.go-london.gov.uk/
South East	
www.go-se.gov.uk	



Friends of the Earth

How you can get involved

Regionally

1. Find out what the status of your RSS is by contacting your regional government office, by going to your regional government website or contacting your Regional Campaigns Coordinator. Friends of the Earth offices in the English regions have made extensive representations to their regional strategies.
2. Get hold of a copy and see what impact it might have for your local area by looking at the key diagrams.
3. Read the Friends of the Earth 'Regional Spatial Strategy: Policy Guide' guide at www.foe.co.uk/resource/local/planning/resource/index.html

Locally

1. Ask the council how it is preparing the Community Strategy and how you can be involved. Your local council needs to know your interest at the earliest possible stage.
2. Get hold of a draft new Local Development Scheme (LDS) from your local council and share it with your group. This will give you the timetable and the scope of the plan.
3. Find out where your council is at in writing its Statement of Community Involvement and ask them to include the major principles as set out in the Friends of the Earth Local Authority Guide on SCI's.
4. Look closely at the Area Action Plan to see what your local authority has identified as being 'areas of change' e.g. your airport.

Friends of the Earth is able to provide online advice via the planning website, but unfortunately is unable to provide individual Local Development Framework advice.

Top tips on submitting responses to your local planning authority (LPA):

1. Intelligence

In order to mount the best planning case you need to make sure you know about the LDF process early. You can find out by:

- Checking the council web site (if they have one)
- Look at the Government's planning portal website www.planningportal.gov.uk
- Looking out for site notices (libraries and community centres)
- Checking the local press
- Talking to local councillors
- Writing to your Council to say that you are interested in knowing more about the new LDF. Request that you are kept informed of everything to do with the LDF preparation.

2. Making Good Relationships

- It pays to be on good terms with your local authority planners.
- Always try to meet planning officers face to face to make them aware of your concerns. They will also be able to explain local policies to you.
- It is also worth building links with other community based organisations
- Make sure that you have a good clear message for the media and public about the impacts that LDF proposal will have - The local media love planning battles but you do not always want to be portrayed as being negative.
- Remember that this battle could be a long one so keep some good stories up your sleeve to keep the media interested.

3. Get them on their weakest points

- It is important to concentrate your fire in complex planning cases. Rather than trying to say something about everything in your draft LDF, you need to work out the key areas of concern and make them into powerful arguments.

Policy Guide

What key elements should LDFs contain?

1. Sustainable development

Sustainable development should be at the heart of the future development of our society. It provides planning with its core purpose to enhance the quality of life of communities by promoting the highest quality forms of development in the most appropriate locations without compromising environmental limits. Such development should seek to promote social equity over private gain and the wise use of limited natural resources to protect the interests of future generations.

Friends of the Earth therefore suggests the following overarching policy statement be included in LDFs:

It shall be the principal objective of the LDF to ensure sustainable patterns of development which improve the quality of life of all people, while respecting environmental limits and the ability of future generations to enjoy a similar quality of life. In order to uphold this objective, all land use decisions must enshrine the principles of:

- **environmental justice:** putting people at the heart of decision making, reducing social inequality by upholding environmental justice in the outcomes of decisions;
- **inter-generational equity:** ensuring current development does not prevent future generations from meeting their own needs;
- **environmental limits:** ensuring that resources are not irrevocably exhausted or the environment irreversibly damaged. This means, for example, supporting climate protection by reducing harmful emissions, protecting and enhancing biodiversity and promoting the sustainable use of natural resources;
- **resource conservation:** ensuring that planning decisions assist in the prudent and sustainable use of finite natural resources;
- **the precautionary approach:** the precautionary principle holds that where the environmental impacts of certain activities or developments are not known, the proposed development should not be carried out, or extreme caution should be exercised in its undertaking;
- **the polluter pays:** ensuring that those who produce damaging pollution meet the full environmental, social and economic costs;
- **the proximity principle:** seeking to resolve problems in the present and locally, rather than passing them on to other communities or future generations.

2. The sequential approach

A key way of implementing the principles for sustainable development set out above is to adopt a sequential approach to development. The sequential test should be the primary criteria for the evaluation of developments in all policy areas in order to effectively uphold the principles of sustainable development.

Friends of the Earth suggests the following policy be included in LDFs:

In order to achieve sustainable development and travel patterns and to protect and conserve areas of recognised environmental and amenity importance, LDFs should adopt the following sequential approach towards the identification of locations for development:

- the re-use of previously developed land and buildings (brownfield sites) within urban areas;
- on other previously developed land well connected to public transport links;
- new locations within urban areas subject to the need to protect and conserve areas of recognised environmental and amenity interests;
- on other sites and locations which are well located to achieving sustainable development and reducing the need to travel.

To ensure that the sustainable development objectives are met and that consequently the most sustainable mix of locations within, adjoining and outside of urban areas is selected within any development plan area, the following criteria should be applied systematically in establishing the suitability of individual sites:

- The accessibility of development sites by non-car modes, and the potential to improve such accessibility.
- The capacity of existing infrastructure, including public transport, utilities and social infrastructure (such as schools and hospitals) to absorb further development.
- Physical constraints on the development of land, including for example, the level of contamination, stability and flood risk.
- The impact that the development of sites will have on the area's environmental carrying capacity and in particular their implications for resource conservation, natural resources and biodiversity.
- The impact that the development of sites will have on the area's cultural resources. Local authorities should recognise the contribution of heritage features to the social and economic regeneration of an area. There should be a presumption against development which would damage sites of heritage value.
- The impact of the development on general pollution levels. Local authorities should recognise the existing problems of poor air, water and soil quality in many areas and acknowledge the potential negative cumulative impact of further development on these areas. Where significant doubt arises as to the precise impact of polluting aspects of development on human health, local authorities should apply the precautionary principle.
- The suitability of sites for mixed use development and the contribution that development might make to the social, economic and environmental fabric of local communities.

3. Employment Land

The allocation of any new sites for employment should follow the sequential approach as set out above to ensure that brownfield sites are given priority over the development of greenfield sites and that strong emphasis is placed on the reuse and adaptation of existing buildings.

Friends of the Earth therefore recommends the following policy:

Provision should be made for employment sites where these can help to diversify the local economy and lead to the development of indigenous businesses. Local authorities should employ phasing mechanisms for the release of such sites to ensure that priority is given to sites on previously developed land. In identifying suitable sites, local authorities should have regard to:

- the sequential test, which places an emphasis on the reuse of developed land as well as a site's accessibility by public transport;
- their contribution to areas in need of regeneration and other areas of high unemployment, where it is likely that investment will be required to make the sites attractive to investors;
- local landscape and environmental factors.

4. Retail Development

The sequential approach that is already defined in government planning guidance, which favours town centre development over out-of-town retail development, is a vital component of a sustainable retail strategy. However we also believe that large format stores located on the edge of town centres can equally damage the vitality of town centres. It is also essential that a threshold to restrict the development of large scale retail outlets that would otherwise damage existing retail centres is adopted.

Friends of the Earth therefore recommends that in addition to the sequential approach, the following policy be incorporated into the LDF:

In future, all development plans should incorporate clear policies and proposals for retail development, including a cap of at most 3,000 m² of net retail floor space in retail outlets. In some local authority areas it will be necessary to set the cap at a lower level, for example; in areas where the aim is to protect existing, or encourage new provision of, a diverse range of shops and services; in areas where a large proportion of the retail floorspace is already provided in large format stores; in local centres or smaller town centres where a large format store would not be appropriate in scale or catchment to that centre.

There will be a presumption against the approval of developments above the threshold except in the following exceptional circumstances:

- where the applicant can satisfy all the safe guards contained within PPG 6/Draft PPS 6 and specifically the sequential approach and the requirement to demonstrate 'need';
- where the development would have no detrimental impact on the vitality and diversity of existing retail centres. Applicants will be expected to submit a detailed Economic Impact Assessment of both the quantitative and qualitative impacts of the proposed development;

- where the applicant can satisfy the principles of sustainable development set out in key element 1.

The presumption against approval will also apply to any change of use or extension which would result in the total net retail sales space of an outlet contravening the floor space threshold. No existing out-of-centre developments should be redefined as town centres.

Promoting diversity and vitality in existing retail centres

The LDF should play a positive role in promoting vibrant, diversified and localised retail development in an area. Retail planning policy should therefore reinforce investment in urban renewal by supporting the continuing role of town and district centres. This should include the effective use of master planning, action plans and supplementary planning guidance on issues such as urban design. In assessing the need for additional retail floorspace in or adjacent to existing centres local authorities should not simply consider the quantitative need for floorspace but should also assess the format in which the additional floorspace will most likely contribute to the vibrancy and diversity of existing retail centres.

Promoting retail diversity and vitality in new developments

Growth areas provide an opportunity to put the principles of sustainable development into practice and to demonstrate the benefits of a pro-active approach to encouraging vibrant district and local centres. We recommend the following policy:

In any significant new area of housing development, provision should be made for local retail outlets which:

- avoid an overall increase in travel;
- provide access to essential shopping facilities for those without access to a car;
- encourage vibrant and diverse neighbourhood/district retail centres.

Retail policy and support for the rural economy and local communities

Planning policy has a key role to play in delivering on the Government's policies on sustainable rural economies. It should be supportive of local facilities in small to medium towns and villages which provide an effective and valuable service to the local community, particularly the elderly, disabled and those with no access to a car or those who are poorly served by public transport.

Friends of the Earth recommends the following statement:

Local authorities should develop policies which provide a presumption in favour of retail developments which make a primary contribution to sustaining local food producers, and providing accessible retail facilities to local communities, including specific guidance in Supplementary Planning Guidance.

5. Climate Change

The impacts of climate change are a present and increasing threat to the normal operation of our society. The LDF has an important [crucial] role to play in promoting policy that will avoid climate change by promoting sustainable development as well as containing strategies for adapting to the effects of climate change, but this work will be so much more effective if the RSS has previously set strong regional targets (reflecting the government's own climate change targets) to be implemented via a regional Action Plan.

Friends of the Earth therefore recommends the following policy statement:

Local Development Frameworks must contain strategies for (1) the prevention of further increases in greenhouse gas emissions and (2) adapting to the effects of climate change. In order to achieve this, all new developments must adopt at the very least 'low carbon' and ideally 'zero carbon' standards in order to reflect the government's targets to reduce the UK's carbon dioxide emissions by 20% from a 1990 baseline by the year 2010.

Future supply of and demand of water

Climate change is adding significantly to the uncertainties of future supply of and demand for water. Areas that are already experiencing water constraints on development are likely to find problems exacerbated. We therefore recommend the following policy statement:

LDFs should contain policies that give strategic consideration to the limits which water management places on development.

Transport

Transport accounts for more than one-quarter of all CO² emissions in the UK, plus other greenhouse gases such as nitrous oxide, methane and hydrofluoro-carbons. Transport CO² emissions have almost doubled in the last 20 years. We recommend the policy set out in key element 8.

6. Renewable Energy

Planning has an important role to play by helping us to move from a highly centralised, fossil fuel and nuclear based energy system towards a more distributed and sustainable renewable energy system. The key policy dilemma for LDFs is to balance the imperative for the development of renewable energy technologies with respect for important statutory designations relating to biodiversity, built heritage and landscape quality. In striking this balance, it is vital to provide detailed guidance for LDFs.

International Designated Sites

Stringent policy tests should apply to renewable energy developments which affect international designations. Friends of the Earth believes that an even greater emphasis should be given to the absolute protection of such sites, so that development will only be permitted where it can be shown that there will be no appreciable damage to the designated area.

National Designations

Friends of the Earth supports the stringent protection of national designations from any inappropriate form of development. However, where it can be shown that small-scale renewable development will not damage the intrinsic value of designations such as National Parks, they should be encouraged. Likewise, small-scale renewables should be considered in conservation areas and on listed buildings where it can be shown that no damage to the intrinsic value of the building would result.

Buffer zones and Local Designations

Local designations are a vital aspect of planning policy, allowing local communities to express their aspirations for environmental protection and enhancement. Such designations should remain a material consideration in the determination of all forms of development, including renewable energy. Friends of the Earth does not believe however that buffer zones on local designations should be used to unreasonably refuse renewable energy projects which have clear environmental benefits.

Visual Effects

Where appropriate, landscape impact assessments should be a key way of understanding the potential impacts of renewable energy. Local authorities should seek to avoid such impacts where they unacceptably degrade the intrinsic value of statutory designations. Where avoidance is not possible, comprehensive mitigation should be applied.

Key Objectives for Renewable Energy Policies in LDFs

Promote energy efficiency criteria for homes and businesses (this has links to tackling fuel poverty, and it creates jobs and reduces costs as well as protecting the environment – so it is 'win-win-win').

All new industrial, warehousing, live/work units outside conservation areas and above a threshold of 1000 m² will be expected to incorporate renewable energy production equipment to provide at least 10% of predicted energy requirements.

There should be a regional minimum target for generation of electricity from renewables as part of the national target of 10% by 2010. This target should ideally be based on regional consumption of electricity. Breakdowns of this target by sub-region or by technology should be indicative.

Supplementary Planning Guidance should establish criteria for various types of renewable energy technologies. In general, this should protect biodiversity and landscapes. There should be a presumption in favour of development, subject to complying with this guidance. (Technologies include offshore wind, onshore wind, wave, tidal, hydro, energy crops, biowaste, geothermal, photovoltaic.) Criteria for local small scale generation should be less strict.

7. Housing

New housing policy should be based on the principles of:

- **Social Equity:** Access to good housing is a basic human right (By delivering social housing needs through greater public sector investment).
- **Sustainable Development:** Communities which maximise quality of life and minimise resource use by operating within the environmental limits of the locality.
- **Demand Management:** The redistribution of housing demand from areas of high to low demand.
- **Urban Capacity:** By a greater sensitivity of social and environmental capacity of existing communities to accommodate new housing and of the housing needs of those communities.
- **Design Innovation:** By promoting innovation in housing design, construction and layout.
- **Participative Processes:** A planning system which places the views of local people at the heart of the planning system.

Housing Land Provision

Friends of the Earth strongly supports the use of a sequential approach to the provision of housing land with an aim of increasing the percentage of housing development which takes place on previously developed land and the conversion of redundant buildings. Alongside this, we strongly support the use of phasing mechanisms to ensure that land allocated for development is proactively brought forward at a rate which encourages the reuse of urban land.

Friends of the Earth recommends the following housing policy:

Local authorities should include policies in their Development Plans which will lead to an increase in the level of housing development on previously developed land so that the target of 75% can be reached over the plan period. These policies should include:

- the use of phasing mechanisms;
- the reallocation of sites for housing which are currently specified for other uses;
- requirements for higher densities of urban housing developments.

Housing Density

Friends of the Earth is particularly concerned to emphasise the need for increased densities to be encouraged and recommends that minimum acceptable density levels are included as a guide in the LDF.

Friends of the Earth would also recommend a more proactive policy stance in regard to the reuse of vacant properties and the promotion of 'homes above shops' as part of a comprehensive package to revitalise urban areas.

Low Impact Housing

LDF policy should encourage new developments in housing design which combine elements of traditional building techniques with innovation in sustainable building materials, energy conservation and water and refuse recycling. The Building Research Establishment for example has developed a measure of resource efficiency known as the 'Eco Home' standard.

Friends of the Earth strongly recommends that the LDF should support the achievement of the Eco Homes 'excellent' standard for all new homes built over the plan period.

Affordable housing

Housing equity is a vital part of the sustainable development of an area. There is the need not just to increase the supply of affordable housing, but to ensure a range of size, types and tenures of housing to be provided so as to ensure a greater level of equity in housing provision than that which currently exists. The LDF should make a clear commitment to ensure that approximately 30% of all new homes are affordable. Such targets may need to be exceeded in some areas depending on local circumstances.

8. Transport

Rising traffic levels are causing major environmental, economic and social problems throughout the country. Friends of the Earth believes that the only way to tackle all the problems caused by the way we currently travel is to reduce the volume of traffic on our roads.

During the first half of 2005 many regions will be revising their Regional Transport Strategies (RTS - as part of their RSS), and districts / counties their Local Transport Plans 2006-10. The contents of LDFs will be very significantly determined by what is included in these plans – e.g supported road schemes will have to be included in LDFs – **and you are advised to seek to influence the contents of RTSs and LTPs now.**

LDFs should include transport policies on the following topics:

- Demand management (to restrain the level of traffic in 2015 to below the level for 2001)
- Charging (making use of the powers provided by the Transport Act 2000)
- Land use, climate change and transport integration
- Hierarchy of transport users
- Soft Measures and road safety
- Airports (including surface access schemes)
- Road-building (to be regarded as the option of last resort)
- Rail schemes
- Buses (seeking to increase bus patronage by at least 10% by 2010)
- Cycling (to meet the targets of the national cycling strategy)
- Walking

Hierarchy of transport use

Establishing a hierarchy of transport use should be integrated into Local Transport Plans and Local Development Frameworks.

Friends of the Earth recommends the following policy:

Local Transport Plans should consider and provide for the needs of different modes of transport in accordance with the following hierarchy of transport users:

1. pedestrians
2. the mobility-impaired
3. cyclists
4. public transport users
5. powered two-wheelers
6. commercial users
7. shoppers and visitors by car
8. car commuters

Land use, climate change and transport integration

The major impacts of transport policies on land use and climate change require that the connection between them is controlled by a policy. We recommend the following policy:

In order to mitigate the climate change consequences of transport activity and proposals, local and regional authorities, central government agencies (in relation to regional decision-making) and transport operators should:

- implement policies which will reduce existing and forecast growth in climate change emissions from existing transport activity by the less sustainable modes (road and air); and
- undertake and then act on climate change impact appraisals of significant new transport proposals and programmes.

Local authorities should minimise the resource demands of transport by:

- integrating land use and transport so as to reduce the need and demand for travel;
- restricting the development of person trip generating uses to locations with good quality public transport; and
- by restraining inappropriate development alongside motorways and at motorway junctions.

Roads

Road-building does not provide a medium or long-term solution to traffic problems. The government has accepted that we cannot build our way out of congestion, for example in the 1998 White Paper 'A New Deal for Transport'.

Friends of the Earth recommends the following policy statement:

Road-building will be regarded as the option of last resort as a solution to transport problems. Support will not be given to any road-building proposal unless it can be demonstrated that all other possible options, including non-road-building options and making more efficient use of existing infrastructure, have been fully considered and it has been concluded that these do not provide an adequate solution. An Economic Impact Report will be required for all proposed road schemes. The LDF will not commit to supporting any specific infrastructure project where this support might prejudice the outcome of a full Environmental Impact Assessment.

Walking

Walking is a healthy and sustainable mode of transport that should have a key role for short journeys. A quarter of all journeys are under a mile long and thus are walkable by most people.

Friends of the Earth recommends the following policy:

Local Transport Plans and LDFs should recognise the potential for significant modal shift to walking for short journeys and should aim by 2010 to increase substantially the share of journeys under one mile long made on foot. This will be achieved by:

- providing direct, well-maintained and well-lit walking routes, including to and from schools;
- providing quality footways in towns and cities and Quiet Lanes in rural areas;
- slowing down traffic through the use of 20mph zones and Home Zones.

Cycling

Cycling is seen as a minority mode of transport in the UK, but 43% of all journeys are under 2 miles long and over 60% under 5 miles long (National Travel Survey, 2002), and therefore cyclable by most people.

Friends of the Earth therefore recommends the following policy:

Local Transport Plans and LDFs should recognise the potential for significant modal shift to cycling for short journeys and should aim as a minimum to quadruple the share of journeys made by bike by 2012, in line with the targets of the National Cycling Strategy. This should be achieved by providing a network of cycle-friendly streets and cycle routes in urban and rural areas.

Look in the RSS Policy Brief document for other model policies (section 8). They will need to be adapted to suit the situation in your local area. If a proposal (e.g for a road scheme) is included in a draft LDF which is not supported by the regional strategy then you will be able to oppose its inclusion more securely.

More guidance on Aviation is outlined in the Airport Master Plans briefing sheet, which can be found at: http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/airport_master_plans.pdf

9. Natural Resources

Friends of the Earth is deeply concerned that the intrinsic value of the natural environment is often crudely traded off against short term economic objectives. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan's objective is to conserve, safeguard and where possible enhance:

- The quality and range of wildlife habitats and ecosystems.
- The over populations and natural ranges of native species.
- Internationally important and threatened species, habitats and ecosystems
- Species, habitats and natural and managed ecosystems characteristic of local areas.
- Biodiversity of natural and semi-natural habitats where they have been diminished over recent decades.

These objectives can be realised through close co-operation and partnership between local communities and the private and voluntary sectors. They should be at the heart of land-use planning activities.

Friends of the Earth therefore recommends the following policy statement:

Habitats and species of importance for nature conservation should be identified in local biodiversity action plans and protected species surveys, and given the appropriate level of protection. There will be a presumption against any development which will damage sites of national, regional and local nature conservation value. Actions to protect and enhance the region's character and natural diversity of the countryside and urban areas should be supported by appropriate levels of resources and by giving guidance on the conservation, enhancement or regeneration through all policy instruments available, including development plans.

Management of habitat and landscapes should:

- Maintain and enhance their ecological and landscape value.
- Optimise access for education and recreation.
- Protect them from detrimental visitor impact and insensitive change in exploitation.

Glossary

Climate Change	There are serious concerns about the global climate changing due to greenhouse gases causing global warming. Serious effects of climate change may include a dramatic rise in sea levels, more flooding, or an increase in droughts.
CPRE	Campaign to Protect Rural England.
Cultural Resources	Cultural resources are part of every community and may incorporate or rely on the surrounding landscape. These cultural resources are important and should be considered in planning proposals for development and land use change.
Environmental Impact Assessment	This is an assessment carried out to determine quantitative and qualitative impacts of development on an area.
Inspector's Report	The final policy document outlining development plans for an area.
Judicial Review	In the planning context this would be a legal challenge to the Inspector's Report.
Local Development Document (LDD)	These replace local plans and help to build up a local framework for development.
Local Development Framework (LDF)	The collection of local development documents.
Local Development Scheme (LDS)	The overall plan for the local area incorporating all the local development plans and a timetable for their implementation.
Local Community Strategy	Long term vision for the local area.
Local Strategic Partnership	Draws up Local Community Strategy.
Local Planning Authorities (LPA)	Usually the local council, who have responsibility for development in the region.
Local Transport Plans	Local authority strategic transport plan, reviewed every 5 years and subject to annual assessment.
Minerals and Waste Development Scheme	Every council should have a scheme to plan the ways in which they will dispose of waste, if there is a development planned for an area the scheme needs to take this into account.
National Cycling Strategy	A plan to increase the use of bicycles in the UK as an alternative form of transport to cars.
Regional Planning Body (RPB)	A body for each region (e.g. the North West), which puts in place general plans for development in the region.
Regional Planning Guidance (RPG)	Phased out under the new planning act. Provides information on the plans made by the RPB on land-use and transport development in the region.

Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS)	Sets out policies relating to the development and use of land for each English region. Local Development Frameworks should conform to these. The public has a right to some input into their region's RSS.
Renewable Energy	Renewable energy is energy which is not finite and therefore does not run out in the same way as fossil fuels, examples include, wind, tidal and solar power.
Renewable Energy Policy	Each region should have a policy to determine the ways in which they are going to contribute to the development of renewable energy resources.
Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	The Statement sets out the Council's draft strategy for involving the community in planning.
Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA)	Requires environmental effects of development to be taken into account at the planning stages of changes in land-use, transportation, waste and water management and energy.
Supplementary Planning Guidance	Builds upon local plans and gives more detailed advice on certain issues, such as specific land use changes or plans for shop fronts in an area.
Sustainable Development	All development should be sustainable; this does not just infer that it should be able to self maintain itself, but that it should not cause detriment elsewhere or have long term negative effects on society or the environment.
Sustainable Retail Strategy	A strategy intended to make retail sustainable, taking into consideration issues such as the delivery of products for sale and the distance they have travelled.
The London Plan	London's RSS, or regional development plan.
UK Biodiversity Action Plan / Local Biodiversity Action Plan	Implemented by the government, this is a planned approach with clear targets, to promote biodiversity.