

SOUTH WEST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

BUSINESS PLAN

2004-6

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Foreword by Malcolm Hanney, Chair of the Regional Assembly Board



In the years since the establishment of the South West Regional Assembly Secretariat we have notched up some considerable achievements. We endeavour to make the South West Region an even better place to live, work and visit. Some of these achievements have been individual achievements of the three member organisations supported by the Secretariat, but others have been as the result of joint working across two or sometimes all three of the regional organisations.

Many of our achievements have been around making the case for the South West. For example, we have lobbied hard for Government to take account of the need for affordable housing within the region, this is an issue which is important to all three organisations: the SWRA because of its role as the voice of the region and the importance it places on making the region a place where all the people have access to a decent home; the SWLGA for the same reasons but also, as for the SWPE, because local government is a major employer of workers who are instrumental in improving the well being of people in its region. It is vitally important to ensure that key workers have access to affordable housing.

We have also raised the issue of chronic under-funding of local government in the South West, which has been going on for too long. Last year the SWLGA led a cross-party group of Members to meet the Minister for Local Government and press our case.

The development of Regional strategies on waste, the environment, transport, sustainable development and equalities have all come about as a result of the increased regional working fostered by the Assembly and our key partners. Many of the policies have been developed as part of the Assembly's role as the Regional Planning Body. By dealing with issues at regional level we endeavour to add value and not duplicate existing work. At the same time we have used our unique role through the Scrutiny Programme of the South West Regional Development Agency to ensure its funding is spent in the best way possible for the region and have been pleased that the RDA has responded so positively. We have also worked closely with GOSW and the RDA in developing the Regional Emphasis Document highlighting regional priorities to feed into the Treasury's Spending Review. We hope as a result to see a better deal for the region on funding initiatives.

I am delighted to report that the services of the SWPE remain in demand across the region and we continue to offer a high level of professional advice in assisting local authorities with complex human resource issues. These issues have included representing authorities at Tribunals, helping to recruit senior employees with the vision and expertise to improve the services offered by Councils and working with authorities to introduce single status employment conditions for their workers. We have also worked through the learning and development service to build capacity within authorities and are constantly looking to improve the service.

The integrated Secretariat was created bringing together officer support for three regional organisations in order to achieve better integrated working and economies of scale. The Regional Assembly Board, which I chair, brings together members from all three of the organisations: the South West Assembly, the South West Local Government Association and the South West Provincial Employers. The Board is responsible for managing the resources of the Secretariat and ensuring that we achieve good value for money for all the public expenditure.

In the next period all the Members of the Regional Assembly Board want to consolidate and build on our achievements – to see through the important work we have begun and ensure we are delivering for all our members and all the people of the South West. The Business Plan sets out how we propose to achieve this aim within our limited resources.

I am grateful for the hard work and commitment of Members and partners in helping make regional working successful. I am 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.

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

Malcolm Hanney

Chapter 1

Introduction

This is the Regional Assembly Secretariat's second Business Plan. It sets out the key areas of work for the Regional Assembly over the next two years, with a particular emphasis on 2004-5.

The plan covers the three organisations supported by the Assembly Secretariat – the Assembly itself, the South West Local Government Association and the South West Provincial Employers. Bringing together support for the three organisations has enabled economies of scale to be achieved across the three member organisations, it has avoided duplication of activity and allowed the region to have a more powerful voice when the three organisations join a common cause.

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 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 Regional Assembly Board.

Chapter 2

Strategic context

The overarching vision of the Secretariat working through Members is to:

“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”

To achieve the vision there are seven objectives which set out what we aspire to achieve both over the next two years but also in the longer term.

1. Set the framework, implement policies, and scrutinise the work of key regional players to ensure achievement of a successful South West Region as identified through regional visioning and take appropriate action to promote the interests of the South West.
2. Engage with the region and develop the profile of the Member organisations' to ensure they are recognised within the region and outside as reflecting the needs and aspirations of the region and are endorsed as the leading voice on key regional issues.
3. Respond effectively to the development of central Government, European and International Policies on behalf of the region.
4. Discharge statutory responsibilities for Regional Planning efficiently and effectively and develop policies in a way which helps achieve regional priorities.
5. Provide high quality and accessible information on a range of relevant issues and, encourage the sharing of knowledge and experience across the South West.
6. Encourage improved performance and capacity of local authorities across the Region through the provision of high quality advice and support and promote the common interests of Local Government as a major regional employer.
7. 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.

Policy context:

As the regional voice of local authority and related employers in the region SWPE monitors all developments likely to affect the people providing services to the region. Important issues such as pay and the ongoing development of the workforce are continually reappraised to seek to ensure that local government has a highly motivated, appropriately rewarded and skilled team of employees. SWPE will examine draft legislative regulations, corporate performance assessment and government initiatives to ensure the region's views are taken into account and to plan how it can deliver support to authorities. Such support often consists of representing the region's views in important negotiations and developing training solutions to meet future skills needs, particularly aimed at raising the capacity of local government to deliver well managed key services.

The work of the Assembly sits within a wide legislative and policy framework. The main policy driver of the Assembly's work programme remains Chapter 2 of the Regional Government White Paper. Regional Assemblies will be required to:

1. Promote integrated regional working through the co-ordination of the work of the main regional agencies.
2. Prepare a new style Regional Spatial Strategy.
3. Scrutinise the work of the RDA.

The secretariat will continue to work towards greater co-ordination and collaboration between regional partners, better regional accountability and strengthened governance in the South West

Over the next two years, major reviews will be undertaken of key regional, national and European policies. There will be a need to ensure that these policy reviews are consistent and supportive of the short and longer term regional objectives and outcomes. The main reviews include:

- Regional Economic Strategy
- Regional Tourism Strategy
- The 2004 Spending Review
- The review of the EU Cohesion Policy;
- The implementation of the CAP Reform;

The secretariat worked with GOSW and SW RDA to produce the Regional Emphasis Document (RED) which set out the South West's priorities to be considered in the 2004 spending review. If this worthwhile exercise is to bear fruit we should see the South West's proposals having an effect on central government policies and programmes from 2006 – 2007, however the RED sets an important agreed framework for our work with regional partners over the next two years.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill, after some delays, is likely to complete its Parliamentary stages and receive Royal Assent in March 2004. It is expected that the reformed planning system will come into effect in June or July 2004. The Regional Assembly has recently decided, via a ballot of members, to allow non local authority Assembly members to vote on planning matters. This revision of the Assembly's constitution will allow the Assembly to be formally designated as the Regional Planning Body for the South West and oversee the production of a Regional Spatial Strategy for the region.

The status of regional planning will be enhanced in the reformed system. The Regional Planning Guidance RPG10 will become the region's RSS on commencement of the legislation. In future years structure plans will cease to be produced and the new Local Development Frameworks produced by District and Unitary authorities will have to be in general conformity with RSS. It is also expected that the Assembly as RPB will become a statutory consultee on significant planning applications.

The Government intends to conduct referendums in three Northern regions next year on the establishment of Elected Assemblies. As well as re-igniting interest in future regional institutional structures, the debate around the referendums will highlight the work of the current voluntary assemblies and will require us to explain our rationale in our indirectly elected form.

The South West LGA is involved in the whole range of issues affecting local government and responding to the constantly changing policy environment. The current balance of funding review is of importance to the region as a whole; and the development of the new finance system has been an area of work in which the South West LGA has been very active. As a regional organisation the South West LGA concentrates its efforts on issues that have an impact on all or a significant number of its members. These include Local Government Finance, elections and voting, affordable housing and Refugees and Asylum. The development of Comprehensive Performance Assessment has been an area of changing policy in which the South West LGA, sometimes working with SWPE, has and is endeavouring to support authorities.

All policy and legislative changes will involve the Secretariat in a considerable amount of new and challenging work. In order to discharge all its functions effectively, the Secretariat needs to continue working in partnership with all local authorities; SEEP Partner organisations; regional agencies and other partner organisations.

Chapter 3

Secretariat values and 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 in areas where they are not currently working. Challenging current ways of working – in a positive way - when we can see room for improvement is part of that culture.

The Secretariat seeks to operate on an inclusive, needs orientated basis rather than a formal hierarchy, enabling it to respond quickly to organisational and policy changes.

- The Secretariat's key values are:

Accountability

High standing of financial regularity and propriety and the importance of auditing 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 integrated part of our activities and that the issues are addressed in the development of all our policies.

- The Assembly's key principles are:

Inclusivity

The vision of the secretariat is to improve the quality of life of all the people in the region. This is aimed at everybody in the South West regardless of whom they are and what they do.

Consultation

Following an extensive review the Secretariat has worked with Members to draw up best practice consultation procedures. These will 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. Consultation activity is not always as far reaching as it might be because of resource constraints.

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 in 2002 produced the first report 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 both promote and depend upon genuinely strong and inclusive partnership working throughout the region.

We have already demonstrated effective partnership working through for example: lobbying (via SW LGA) on local government finance; developing proposals for Equalities South West to represent equality interests in the region; preparing the first ever Regional Environment Strategy with environmental partners; and the establishment of the Regional Observatory as a common resource providing a regional intelligence hub for the South West.

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, development and 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 Assembly, for example capacity building for local authorities, e-government, raising awareness in central government of the affordable housing crisis in the region.

Another example of close partnership is the Secretariat's role in lobbying for an early Strategic Environmental Assessment of offshore energy resources. Twenty MPs and many local authorities and MEPs joined the Assembly in its lobby with Regen South West.

The South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) and Government Office for the South West (GOSW) are key partners with a variety of partnership roles. As mentioned in Section Two the secretariat worked with GOSW and the RDA to produce the Regional Emphasis document (RED), which set out the South West's priorities for the 2004 Spending Review. The Assembly Chairman also led a delegation with the RDA to meet the Minister on SWARMMS.

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

Chapter 4

Delivering the key Priorities

The Secretariat will support Assembly Members in seeking to deliver the key priorities set out in the Regional Government White Paper by:

- Identifying and promoting the region's needs, aspirations and priorities.
- Securing the agreement of the region to an Integrated Regional Strategy which sets out the key objectives and outcomes which the region will pursue both in the short as well as long term.
- Preparing and implementing a number of Regional Strategies to support the achievement of the key regional objectives and outcomes including:
 - Regional Spatial Strategy
 - Regional Waste Strategy
 - Regional Transport Strategy
 - Regional Environment Strategy
- Ensuring that other regional strategies contribute to the achievement of the region's key objectives and outcomes.
- Promoting the coordination of the implementation and delivery of the key regional strategies to ensure a more effective use of resource.
- Encouraging integrated working among the key regional agencies.
- Influencing the development and thrust of EU and national policy to more effectively reflect the needs and aspirations of the region.

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

- Facilitating local authorities to work together on regional and sub regional issues such as
 - Local Government Performance Improvement
 - Working with NASS on Asylum seekers and refugees
 - Implementing E-Government
 - Relationships with Local Government and other sectors
- Developing views and understanding of common issues and solutions for authorities in the region around e.g.
 - Local Government Finance and the balance of funding
 - How to meet the need for affordable housing in the region
- Facilitating discussions with member authorities to check that the identified priorities remain key to the regional agenda

The Secretariat will support South West Provincial Employers Members in seeking to deliver the priorities detailed in the recently 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, GOSW, ODPM, IDEA and other key stakeholders.

Important contributions will be:

- The adoption of a Regional Pay and Workforce Strategy

- The successful conclusion of annual pay talks in line with the objectives of the regions local authorities
- Engaging fully with the regions capacity building initiatives

Set out below are the priority areas of work for the Secretariat over the next two years. These are grouped into three themes:

1. Enhanced Capacity
2. Improved Regional Understanding and Strengthened Regional Accountability
3. Improved Information and Effective Advocacy for the South West

In many cases the work areas link and contribute to the achievement of several different objectives as set out in section six.

Key to shading:  Areas which receive an element of ODPM funding

Enhanced Capacity

Increase Member Capacity	
<p>The Secretariat will continue to strive to provide a high 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. Increased commitment and responsibility of members to be recognised through the introduction of some special responsibility allowances following an independent review. Particular support will be offered to the SEEPs to enable them to play a full part in the Assembly activity. Through the top-up system the Assembly Membership will continue to mirror the political proportionality of local government in the region. The SEEPs Membership, which was reviewed in 2004, will continue to represent a diverse range of sectors across the region. Support for SEEPs will be done within the context of the tripartite concordat agreed between the secretariat, SEEPs and their nominating bodies. Members will also be supported in promoting the needs of the region and raising awareness.</p>	
<p><i>Key outcomes 2004/05</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased member capacity through better engagement in all activities. In doing so ensure all Members are able to participate fully. 2. Work with members to deliver a programme of briefings and events in order to keep them apprised of policy. 3. Delivery of all Member papers at least 7 days before meetings to a high quality following discussions as appropriate with partner organisations to enable debate to occur and feed into regional decision making processes. This to be done via the website or in hard copy based on needs of Members. 4. Facilitate increased proactive engagement in Assembly business of the SEEPs by providing specific administrative support; financial 	<p><i>Key outcomes 2005/6</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continuous improvement in supporting member engagement in all activities including to continue working with members in providing effective briefings and events. 2. Delivery of high quality Members Papers at least 10 days before meetings to a high quality, using the website or in hard copy 3. Increase proactive activity by SEEPs by administrative and policy support to respond to needs identified by members in Autumn 2004 away day. Hold further awayday in 2005. Continue to support Chair and support engagement with national grouping.

<p>support for travel and subsistence. Annual awayday to be organised and facilitated in line with SEEP requirements to help development of their forward work priorities. Support engagement with other regions SEEPs.</p> <p>5. Support SEEPs in developing policy ideas to feed into the full Assembly by producing briefing documents on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demographics and an ageing population to feed into the development of the Integrated Regional Strategy in particular, • tourism to feed into the RDA Scrutiny process • and social inclusion to feed into all the Assembly's activity <p>6. Support and advise SEEP Chair if elected following AGM and ensure effective liaison across the full assembly.</p>	
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Employment Advice

SWPE has provided high quality professional advice for 30 years to local authorities. This core service to local authority officers and members will be subject to continuous improvement.

<p><i>Key outcomes 2004/05</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The provision of a daily telephone help line service responding to 80% of requests the same or next working day. 2. A best practice resource containing examples of local authority policies and procedures for dealing with the majority of HR issues will be developed. 3. Issue guidance as and when required on key topics emerging as a result of changes to employment legislation or case law. 4. Conduct surveys and publish findings on regional pay and benefits and absence levels. 	<p><i>Key outcomes 2005/6</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess the demand for the daily telephone help line service and consider whether response rate of 80% of requests the same or next working day remains appropriate and deliverable within current resources. 2. Issue guidance as and when required on key topics emerging as a result of changes to employment legislation or case law.
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Employment Support

Continue to provide support to authorities on complex HR issues and co-ordinate the regional response to developments.

<p><i>Key outcomes 2004/05</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Successfully promote the adoption of single status employment by assisting those authorities who experience difficulties. 2. Provide a value for money service assisting with the recruitment of senior staff including 	<p><i>Key outcomes 2005/6</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to support the adoption of single status employment by assisting authorities who experience difficulties. 2. Continue Assisting with the recruitment of senior staff including the provision
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<p>the provision of a range of psychometric services</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Assist with complex HR issues such as representation at Tribunals and other Hearings. 4. Respond to consultation on pensions and modernisation of terms and conditions as and when required. 5. Formulate strategies for dealing with pay and other negotiations in response to claims and to promote the achievement of agreed employer objectives. 	<p>of a range of psychometric services and complex HR issues.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Formulate strategies for dealing with pay and other negotiations in response to claims and to promote the achievement of agreed employer objectives.
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Learning and Development

The Learning and Development service will continue to keep its activity under review to ensure it is meeting the changing needs of local authorities and members across the region and helping build regional capacity. We will explore the possibility of seeking recognition through a formal accreditation programme such as the Business Excellence Model.

<p><i>Key outcomes 2004/05</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve marketing by development of the website as an effective tool and as a source of information for our customers including enabling e booking. Develop database to support effective marketing and delivery of information in support of the new look Directory. 2. Review the training provision, including undertaking appropriate research to ensure that customer needs are identified and expectations exceeded. 3. Explore possibility of accreditation of service; and if deemed appropriate pursue to formalise recognition of high quality of service. 	<p><i>Key outcomes 2005/06</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue developing effective marketing tools and monitor impacts and cost effectiveness of mechanisms. 2. Develop a refined programme of training which meets members and officers needs and enhances capacity within the region.
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Local Government

The Secretariat has a key role in helping local government engage in the regional debate, develop solutions and deliver strategy and services. We provide support at all these levels from co-ordinating regional groupings through providing training for staff and elected members. The Secretariat also provides a focus for authorities in the region in communicating with each other and government and in working on shared agendas. One of the key areas of work is with local authorities in developing responses to Central Government on Local government Finance where the region continues to be under funded and where there may be proposals for change in funding local government in the future.

<p><i>Key outcomes 2004/5</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maximise authorities access to improvement support and help increase the ability of local authorities to deliver 	<p><i>Key outcomes 2005/6</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maximise authorities access to improvement support and increase the ability of local
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<p>2. Develop improved delivery relationships with other networks and sectors</p> <p>3. Maximise the contribution to the local government improvement agenda by seeking to identify linkages between the various improvement strategies such as capacity building and the pay and workforce strategy.</p> <p>4. Work with partner authorities and organisations such as the ODPM, GOSW, IDEA and EO to maximise the regional benefit of all initiatives, including capacity building programme, and facilitate regional improvement events.</p> <p>5. Addressing the Local Government Finance under funding and ensure that any changes to the system help address the situation rather than compounding the problem.</p>	<p>authorities to deliver through accessing programmes effectively working with partner organisations.</p> <p>2. Facilitate regional improvement events as required.</p> <p>3. Work with local authority finance officers to continue activity in support of addressing the under funding issue.</p>
<p>E Government</p> <p>Assisting local authorities in the region to meet the target of 100% of services available on-line by 2005; developing good practice and maximising opportunities for joint working. <i>(awaiting formal confirmation of additional funding and its use)</i></p>	
<p><i>Key outcomes 2004/5</i></p> <p>1. Establish Regional Network, and hold launch conference. The network to support and assist authorities to joint work on solutions and develop and share best practice.</p> <p>2. Deliver regional partnership project.</p>	<p><i>Key outcomes 2005/6</i></p> <p>1. Further Develop regional working to assist authorities improving standard and efficiency of services delivered</p> <p>2. Monitoring effectiveness of regional project and strategy</p>
<p>Asylum Seekers</p> <p>Responding to the Home Office review of regional arrangements, developing South West regional arrangements and strategy. Provide regional framework for authorities and partners contracting with NASS.</p>	
<p><i>Key outcomes 2004/5</i></p> <p>1. Implement new regional arrangements and deliver a regional enabling network to help maximise regions input to work of NASS. Website to be launched in support.</p> <p>2. Produce a SW Strategy for Asylum Seekers</p> <p>3. Help authorities manage end to interim arrangements, (ILR scheme)</p>	<p><i>Key outcomes 2005/6</i></p> <p>1. Monitor Strategy</p> <p>2. Develop exit plan for potential end of enabling grant</p>
<p>Equality & Diversity</p> <p>Continue to support the development of a single equalities body which will ensure effective representation at regional level and ensure that SEEP equality representatives are reflective of the views of the coordinated approach to be delivered by ESW. ESW to be established in an inclusive way and led by the equalities sector with support from regional organisations. Support to be decreased as body takes on full remit identified for it to deliver.</p>	

<i>Key outcomes 2004/5</i>	<i>Key outcomes 2005/6</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide Secretariat support on behalf of both the Assembly and SWLGA to the interim Board of Equality South West and assist in the development of the Business Plan to ensure it meets the needs of the region. 2. Support Assembly and SWLGA representatives of the Board 3. Support the region through the work of SWPE, SWLGA and the Assembly in ensuring an understanding of equalities and diversity issues 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support Equality South West in developing its role within the Region including its acceptance and recognition as the nominating body for the equality sector. 2. To equality proof all Assemblies policies

Improved Regional Understanding and Strengthened Accountability

Integrated Regional Strategy	
<p>The Assembly will complete the work it has been carrying out with partners over the last two years on the development of an Integrated Regional Strategy for the South West. This will set out the key objectives and outcomes which the region will look to pursue in the short and longer terms.</p> <p>The IRS, once in place, will provide the region with a firm grounding from which to influence the future spending plans of both Government and key delivery agencies in the region, to ensure that funding is consistently targeted towards delivering agreed outcomes for the South West. The IRS will also be an important basis from which to collectively work together on the development of future policy affecting the region at both national and regional level.</p> <p>Work on the development and implementation of the IRS is being steered by the Regional Forum established by the Assembly. This grouping is made up of Chief Executives from the South West's key regional agencies, including the GOSW regional director, and a selection of chief executives representing county and unitary authorities in the region. The effective and on-going engagement of this group is fundamental to taking forward the IRS and to better integrated regional working across agencies, not only in relation to strategy preparation and review but, critically, to delivery.</p> <p>The IRS is an important stage in the development of the Regional Spatial Strategy. The RSS will need to provide the spatial articulation of key regional priorities across a range of policy areas. The RSS review process will consider those aspects of the IRS that have clear spatial manifestations, which it can have a role in addressing. The IRS will also be the basis from which to test different spatial options.</p>	
<i>Key outcomes 2004/5</i>	<i>Key outcomes 2005/6</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In partnership with the RDA hold a series of futures workshops as a basis for identifying scenarios of the future of the region and to help deliver regional commitment to the outcomes. This will include considering the impact of issues such as demographics and 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a framework and systems for monitoring the delivery of the IRS in conjunction with regional agencies and consistent with monitoring regimes developed for existing strategies.

<p>an ageing population.</p> <p>2. Facilitate Assembly debate and approval of the IRS following consultation and workshop discussions and publish.</p> <p>3. Consult partners and prepare an IRS delivery plan which will include the establishment of mechanisms to review regional and national strategies and action plans in the context of the IRS.</p>	<p>2. Assess the effectiveness of the mechanisms established to promote and secure more integrated regional working.</p> <p>3. Prepare first monitoring report on the IRS, including an assessment of the extent to which there is a better co-ordination of regional strategies and actions.</p>
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Wider Scrutiny

The South West Regional Assembly has worked in partnership with SW RDA to develop the approach to scrutiny in 2004–05 and 2005-06. Both Assembly and RDA appreciate the need to demonstrate the benefits of the scrutiny process as a means of highlighting key regional objectives and assessing the collective effort in meeting those objectives. For this reason, the new scrutiny programme will be based on the regional priorities set out in the Regional Economic Strategy. Over time as the RES starts to reflect the IRS this will ensure clear shared regional objectives.

The publication of ERN research findings into the various forms of RDA Scrutiny across all English regions proved particularly timely. It is expected that the move to the RES as the basis for scrutiny will better reflect the reality of the work of SW RDA and help assess the contribution of all agencies in making a reality of the region's strategic objectives. Both the Assembly and RDA are also keen to develop a process that further encourages the participation of a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, including hard to reach groups, general public and media. This will enable the benefits of the scrutiny approach to have a wider impact across the region's activities and help to ensure that public funding is invested to meet agreed regional priorities - and so have a sustainable effect within the region. This, in turn, will encourage the delivery of better value for money. The new approach to scrutiny has been summarised in a new Scrutiny Protocol agreed by South West Regional Assembly and RDA.

The impact of the new scrutiny programme will be reviewed in 2005 / 06 and the Assembly and RDA will consider further developing the approach to scrutiny within the context of the Integrated Regional Strategy. The Scrutiny programme has been developed to ensure that we consider key regional priorities but we have also been alert to national policy developments and departmental priorities so that they can be delivered to better effect.

In taking the scrutiny programme forward, we will build on previous recommendations. For example, the forthcoming scrutiny exercise will assess the impact of broadband – particularly in addressing the needs of rural communities. As with the original work on the Rural Economy this will have shared objective with DEFRA's PSA target to improve the accessibility of services for rural people.

<p><i>Key outcomes 2004/5</i></p> <p>1. Implement the new approach to scrutiny of the SW RDA and set in hand the agreed scrutiny programme . The next scrutiny topic will be to <i>“Examine the effectiveness of the work being undertaken to improve the region’s Strategic Communications</i></p>	<p><i>Key outcomes 2005/6</i></p> <p>1. Widen the context of the scrutiny of the SW RDA to embrace the objectives and outcomes set out in the IRS</p> <p>2. Debate with members and discuss with the RDA the continuation of the</p>
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<p><i>Infrastructure.</i>”The second scrutiny in the agreed programme will be to assess the effectiveness of the support growth in the tourism sector more. This should be timely in relation to the work of South West Tourism.</p> <p>2. Regularly review recommendations by the Assembly's Scrutiny Panel - both to assess SW RDA's response to recommendations and to evaluate the impact of the scrutiny process. This will be done by considering SW RDA's written response to Panel recommendations and by inviting Agency staff to periodically attend Panel meetings to consider progress against recommendations.</p>	<p>scrutiny programme and implement the agreed outcomes.</p> <p>3. Conduct a Strategic review of scrutiny and review the Scrutiny Protocol with SW RDA.</p>
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Regional Planning

As the designated Regional Planning Body for the South West, the Assembly will undertake to implement the revised planning system currently being considered by Parliament. On enactment of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act the Regional Assembly's constitution will change to reflect the inclusion of SEEP's in decision making and the Assembly will become statutorily responsible for reviewing the Regional Spatial Strategy. As part of that responsibility the Assembly will also need to ensure the conformity of Local Development Frameworks with the Regional Spatial Strategy.

The revised Regional Spatial Strategy will be prepared in the context of the regional objectives and outcomes set out in the IRS and will be transformational reflecting the needs of the South West with core principles evolved from RPG10.

In monitoring and reviewing RPG10 and developing RSS, the Regional Assembly will be working closely with a number of key regional stakeholders including the RDA and the strategic local authorities. The latter will be making a significant resource input to the process in terms of officer time to advise the RPB on the implementation and review process and in leading key pieces of work, particularly the sub regional studies and policy development in areas where strategic policy deficits will arise and in the case of County authorities conformity checking of District LDFs. The Assembly intends, through partnership arrangements with these authorities, to commit significant funds to this work. The Assembly also intends to engage with a range of regional stakeholders, including hard to reach groups, during key stages of the process.

The Regional Spatial Strategy will encompass and draw together the outputs of funds used in other key work areas; notably Regional Transport, Waste, Housing and Environment Strategies. All the Strategies must be reflected in the RSS, while Regional Intelligence covers RSS information needs and monitoring.

<p><i>Key outcomes 2004/5</i></p> <p>1. Produce pre-submission draft RSS by end 2004 / 05 based on formal consultation on the main Spatial Strategy choices for the region in delivering regional priorities emerging from the IRS.</p> <p>2. Reviews of key sections of RPG10, with assistance from partner organisations</p>	<p><i>Key outcomes 2005/6</i></p> <p>1. Consult Regional Stakeholders pre-submission draft RSS</p> <p>2. Submit draft RSS mid 2005</p> <p>3. Prepare for Examination in Public in</p>
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<p>including the RDA who will lead on the Economy section.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Technical assessments of population, housing and economy. 4. Support work in 6 'city' regions and other sub regional work in order to produce draft sub regional strategy report and policies for inclusion in RSS/LDF's 5. Complete Strategic Sustainability Assessment of RSS using Land Use Consultants advice. 6. Publish third Annual Monitoring Report of the current RPG for the South West and undertake review with local authorities to ensure the right and useful information is being obtained and the burden on local authorities is minimised. 7. Undertake technical studies on a range of issues including population, household growth, labour force change, economic and employment demand scenarios for statistical sub areas. 8. Establish conformity checking processes working with County authorities in 2 tier areas. 	<p>early 2006</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Deliver AMR 4 by end December 2005 5. Develop conformity checking of LDFs with emerging RSS.
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Transport

As the Regional Planning Body the Regional Assembly has a responsibility to prepare a Regional Transport Strategy as part of the review and development of the RSS. This will be an integrated part of the RSS underpinning of the delivery of the key priorities identified in the Integrated Regional Strategy but will need to set out in a separate publication the detailed implementation programme. It also has responsibilities to consider the proposals to implement the RTS, including the conclusions on Multi-modal studies, other Transport Studies, Plans for specific transport modes and Local Transport Plans. The Assembly's work on transport has greatly benefited from support provided by GOSW and local transport authorities. Transport issues are of great public concern in the region and decision on priorities for investment are particularly difficult in a climate of insufficient resources for investment. It is therefore particularly important the Assembly promotes an open discussion and identifies priority investment which meets the best interests of the region in creating a strong South West both economically and socially with due regard for environmental impacts. The development of the Regional Transport work will play an important role in supporting the delivery of the Sustainable Communities agenda and the work of the Regional Housing Strategy. The early developments of the Transport Strategy will support authorities in developing Local Transport Plans.

<p><i>Key outcomes 2004/5</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare a response to the Department of Transport on the preferred option for completing the plans for the second strategic route (London-Exeter-Penzance) following regional consultation on the Highways Agency study of the A303/A358 options. 	<p><i>Key outcomes 2005/6</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A revised Regional Transport Strategy prepared as part of the draft RSS including a Regional Freight Strategy and a revised Implementation Framework. 2. Assess the conformity of Local
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<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Publish a revised Regional Transport Strategy, (RTS) consistent with RPG10 to provide a more detailed context for the preparation of Local Transport Plans due for submission in 2005. 3. As part of the review of the Regional Spatial Strategy, review and roll forward the Regional Transport Strategy. 1. Consider the implications of transport studies for the implementation of the RTS and the achievement of regional objectives and outcomes set out in the IRS. 2. Prepare a response to the study of the transport network from Bristol/Bath to the South Coast. 3. Produce a report following research into the nature and extent of rural accessibility problems in the South West in the context of the FRESA in conjunction with Regional Partners. 7. Support the development of transport strategies for sub regions (city regions) consistent with spatial planning proposals proposed by local partnerships. 8. Publish a Regional Freight Map to co-ordinate the work of local quality partnerships and ensure consistency of approach across the region. Develop the map with Freight Industry representatives for use by drivers. Possible collaboration with the Ordnance Survey. 	<p>Transport Plans with the revised RTS.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Contribute to and respond to the outcome of transport studies such as the Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study. 4. Contribute to the preparation of the SRA's Regional Planning Assessment.
<p>Waste</p> <p>As the Regional Planning Body the Regional Assembly has the responsibility to prepare a strategy for the management of waste as part of the revised RSS and to provide a framework for waste management by the local waste collection and disposal authorities to ensure the South West moves towards sustainable waste management and plays a full part in helping deliver the national Waste Strategy. The Assembly will seek to agree regional targets for the management of waste for incorporation in the RSS.</p>	
<p><i>2004/5 Outcomes</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revise the draft Regional Waste Strategy (RWS) in light of consultation events across the region and seek approval of Regional Assembly in July 2004; publish the Regional Waste Strategy. Support delivery of the Strategy. 	<p><i>2005/6 Outcomes</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Subject to the outcome of the feasibility study undertaken an awareness campaign on the minimisation of waste within the region and help increase regional understanding of the issues.

<p>2. Consultation with ODPM and DEFRA on resources for implementation of the Regional Waste Strategy. Through the SWLGA make representations to Government on the need for additional resources to enable local authorities to move towards the goals of the Waste Management Strategy.</p> <p>3. The Assembly will consider in light of consultation responses how best to support the raising of awareness through a feasibility study to see if a region-wide campaign promoting the need for waste minimisation and providing information about techniques for dealing with waste will help support effective delivery.</p> <p>4. Based on the Regional Waste Strategy develop locational guidance policies in RSS</p>	<p>2. Publish targets for the management of waste as part of the draft RSS following consultation.</p>
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Energy

In partnership with the GOSW and the SW RDA the Regional Assembly has a significant role in developing a regional response to the Government's energy policies and especially those relating to renewable energy. The Assembly will also continue to support the work of Regen SW.

Key outcomes 2004/5

1. The content of regional energy policy to be scoped with partners and regional response to Energy White Paper to be agreed with partners
2. Agree sub-regional targets for renewable energy production through the REVISION 2010 project.
3. Establish locational guidance criteria for renewable energy generation as part of the review of the RSS.
4. Identify criteria for the location of on-shore and off-shore renewable energy generation facilities for inclusion in the RSS. Lobbying for the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the possibility for accessing off shore energy.

Key outcomes 2005/6

1. Publish with regional partners a Strategy / Statement on Regional Energy.
2. Appraise the responses to the consultation on draft regional energy policies (as part of the consultation on the draft RSS) and finalise regional energy policies for inclusion in the draft RSS.

Regional Sustainable Development Framework

The Assembly will work with Sustainability South West and regional partners to take forward the RSDF. This will include producing a progress report on the RSDF for 2002-5 building on the first progress report and the indicators on which it reported. Undertake a review of the RSDF itself, in the light of the review of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy, analysis of RSDFs carried out for ERN, and the development of regional policy and understanding. The Assembly will continue to work with partners to establish a regional framework for strategic sustainability assessment, consistent with the requirements of the Strategic Environmental

Assessment Directive, and to demonstrate good practice in applying this to development of the RSS.

Key outcomes 2004/5

1. Continue to support the work of Sustainability South West both financial and with the input of member and staff time.
2. Agree RSDF monitoring and review process with SSW and partners and establish Framework. Start process of research and consultation for review of RSDF and progress report 2002-5.
3. Establish a regional framework with SSW and partners for strategic sustainability assessment, consistent with the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. Carry out a detailed Strategic Sustainability Assessment of RSS spatial options.
4. Work with partners on projects to take forward RSDF including research into climate change implications for RSS.

Key outcomes 2005/6

1. Produce and launch RSDF progress report 2002-5
2. Work with SSW and key partners to produce a revised RSDF that reflects policy development and the work in support of the Integrated Regional Strategy

Housing

Contribute to the development of the Sustainable Communities Plan and the work of the Regional Housing Body through representatives of both the Assembly and SWLGA on the three parts of the South West Body. Ensure that the Regional Housing Strategy and the RSS are consistent and supportive and support the delivery of the Regions key priorities as identified through the Integrated Regional Strategy. Ensure that the RSS work builds on the trends and issues relating to the Growth agenda as identified and explained in the IRS and reflects the need to provide appropriate housing within the region that supports both the Urban renaissance agenda and the need to ensure vibrant rural communities. Continue working to get recognition that the South West affordable housing crisis is as bad as that in the South East with support from the funding received through subscriptions. Ensure that the RSS recognises the sustainable community's agenda and link work around the RSS and RHS timetable.

<p><i>Key outcomes 2004/5</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased awareness of the impacts of affordable housing crisis through research and partnership working. Lobbying for recognition and support for dealing with problem. 2. Undertake technical work on the allocation of housing numbers at District level and hold discussion with key stakeholders. 3. Establish a Sub-regional approach to housing matters building on housing market analysis which is consistent with RSS approach. Develop a methodology for integration of monitoring of Housing Strategy with RSS and IRS to ensure the minimisation of burdens on authorities providing information and to ensure consistent information. 4. Housing Strategy to be debated and agreed by Regional Assembly and SWLGA. 5. Work with partners to increase capacity of region to deliver the Housing Strategy, (e.g. joint training with National Housing Federations). 	<p><i>Key outcomes 2005/6</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Impact of affordable housing issues integrated into IRS. 2. Development of sub-regional strategic delivery of Housing Strategy. 3. Monitoring process integrated into review and revision of Housing Strategy.
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Regional Environment Strategy

The Assembly will work with key regional partners to ensure the implementation of the Regional Environment Strategy, feeding this into development of the IRS and RSS and other policy development. Working with partners, the Assembly will establish a monitoring process to report on progress identified in a detailed action plan towards the Strategy and delivery of the priority actions; including production of a regular monitoring report.

<p><i>Key outcomes 2004/5</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Launch the Regional Environment Strategy. 2. Working with partners establish monitoring process for the Regional Environment Strategy and support the delivery of the action plan. 3. Integrate environmental objectives and priorities into the IRS, RTS and subsequently the RSS. 	<p><i>Key outcomes 2005/6</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Publish an update report on progress on the delivery of the Regional Environment Strategy, working with Regional Environment Network 2. Link the monitoring of the Regional Environment Strategy with Annual Monitoring Report.
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Regional Intelligence

The Regional Assembly has actively supported the regional partnership to establish the development of the Regional Observatory for the South West. The Assembly sits on the Management Board of the Core Unit which draws together the modules work, it also acts as employer. The Assembly also runs the Planning Module which underpins the production of the Annual Monitoring Report. It will be discussing with the Observatory how best to deliver this work in future. The Assembly will also

actively participate in the review of the Observatory being led by SWRDA. Through its role in co-ordinating a response to key regional policy issues, the Assembly seeks to ensure that the region develops a shared understanding of the issues facing the region and to ensure that strategy and policy development is backed by appropriate evidence. This work will take place in partnership and with support of the Observatory. (Some of the areas developing regional intelligence are highlighted under other themes.)

<i>Key Outcomes 2004/5</i>	<i>Key Outcomes 2005/6</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An agreed work programme for the Regional Observatory which supports the preparation of strategy reviews and policy developments so that policy making is more robustly evidence based. 2. Develop the Regional Planning Module and commission the Regional Observatory to coordinate the production of the third Annual Monitoring Report. 3. Provide ongoing Management support pending the outcome of the Observatory Review. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An agreed, revised, rationalised and consistent system for monitoring the wide range of regional strategies and policies.

Improved Information and Effective Advocacy

<p style="text-align: center;">Communications and Engagement</p> <p>Continue to improve communications between the three regional organisations and members; key partners and the wider public as appropriate. Ensure that consultation takes place in line with good practice principles adopted by the Assembly and that these are kept under review and amended as lessons are learnt and best practice is developed particularly in terms of consulting with hard to reach groups. Ensure in all communications that political impartiality is maintained in line with Members' requirements.</p>	
<i>Key Outcomes 2004/5</i>	<i>Key Outcomes 2005/6</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proactive discussions to take place with Members and key partners to help inform the development of the communications and consultation infrastructure. 2. Ensuring that the specific problems facing authorities in the South West are recognised in national Government and elsewhere in particular: 3. Develop newsletters to keep Members and partners up to date with developments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full Assembly newsletter to be issued three times a year within 2 weeks of the assembly meeting; member 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build on the development of the communications Strategy in 2004 – improve newsletters quality and coverage. 2. Continue to provide lobbying support drawing in key regional partners when appropriate on issues identified by member organisations. 3. Review impact and readership of newsletters to establish whether there are more effective methods. 4. Provide clear information on a range of areas as agreed by Members in a way which maximises appropriate engagement.

<p>Updates to be issued at least every six weeks in between the main newsletter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Electronic SWLGA bulletin to continue being produced quarterly reporting on regional developments, sharing information and best practice. IdeA, GOSW, ODPM to continue being asked to contribute. Copies to be sent to all Chief Executives and a range of other local authority contacts including members if requested ▪ SWPE to produce employment bulletins informing authorities of relevant HR issues and training events at least quarterly. <p>4. Profile range of leaflets to be revised as necessary setting out details of the work of the three organisations helping to raise awareness and increase understanding of the three regional organisations. The annual report and business plan to be issued to key partners to increase understanding of wide area of responsibilities covered by the three bodies.</p> <p>5. The SEEP leaflet to be used to raise awareness of the role of this group of members in the work of the Assembly. SEEPs to consider whether a refined leaflet should be produced to target wider audiences.</p> <p>6. Information material to be produced in support of the agreed activities of the three organisations as appropriate.</p> <p>7. Website to be substantially improved taking account of comments received as a result of the questionnaire issued in January 2004. A Content Management System to be introduced following the earlier copying and design work carried out in 2003-04. The CMS will enable the effective sorting of data so that users can search and find the right information easily and more facilities can be provided for users. It will also be possible to develop as required private discussion areas for members; on line questionnaires for consultation purposes. Once established the CMS will enable savings to be made in investment of secretariat staff time in managing the</p>	<p>5. Explore option of further research to track impact of activity.</p> <p>6. Develop CMS to ensure continuous improvement in electronic communications.</p> <p>7. Consider probability of further research on public perceptions.</p> <p>8. Continue to work as part of the regional groupings: English Regions Network; Local Government Forum and National Association of Regional Employers to ensure the role of the regional organisations and the position of the South West are understood.</p>
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<p>website.</p> <p>8. Research will be carried out in partnership with the RDA to build an understanding of public and stakeholder perceptions which will allow future benchmarking. This will, to some extent, build on the Assembly opinion poll carried out in 2003.</p> <p>9. Continue to work as part of the regional groupings: English Regions Network; Local Government Forum and National Association of Regional Employers to ensure the role of the regional organisations and the position of the South West are understood.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Europe</p> <p>The Secretariat currently has very small resources focused on the European agenda. We will work with regional partners including the South West Brussels Office to ensure the South West maximises its opportunities within the European Union. A small subscription will be paid to ensure the Assembly receives support and briefing from the Brussels office on the agenda identified. A particular focus is on ensuring consistency between regional and European Strategies and policies.</p>	
<p><i>Key outcomes 2004/5</i></p> <p>1. South West Regional Assembly will work with SW RDA, GOSW, Local Authorities and other regional partners to ensure that the needs of the South West are met in the developing European policy framework. In particular, the Assembly will work with these partners to contribute constructively to the EU-wide discussions on the future of Cohesion Policy, including offering views and comments on the more detailed proposals that will underpin future programmes, as they emerge from the European Commission and the UK Government. The Assembly will also contribute to broader national debates on Cohesion Policy in the English Regions Network</p> <p>2. Participate in the Regional European Partnership, which is being developed to provide a more coherent response from regional agencies and local authorities to European Policy issues and developments.</p> <p>3. Assessment of the impact of the implementation of CAP reform for the rural economy and communities and for land management and the environment.</p>	<p><i>Key outcomes 2005/6</i></p> <p>1. Working with SW RDA, GOSW and other partners, continue to contribute to the post-2006 Cohesion Policy framework to ensure that it recognises and supports the reduction of regional disparities – both intra-regional and inter-regional. In particular, the Assembly will press for continued support for regeneration in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly through retention of Objective 1 status and transitional funding for the current Objective 2 areas in the South West. The Assembly will also work with other partners to encourage a regime, which provides regeneration benefits for other parts of the South West.</p>

Chapter 5

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 2004 / 2005

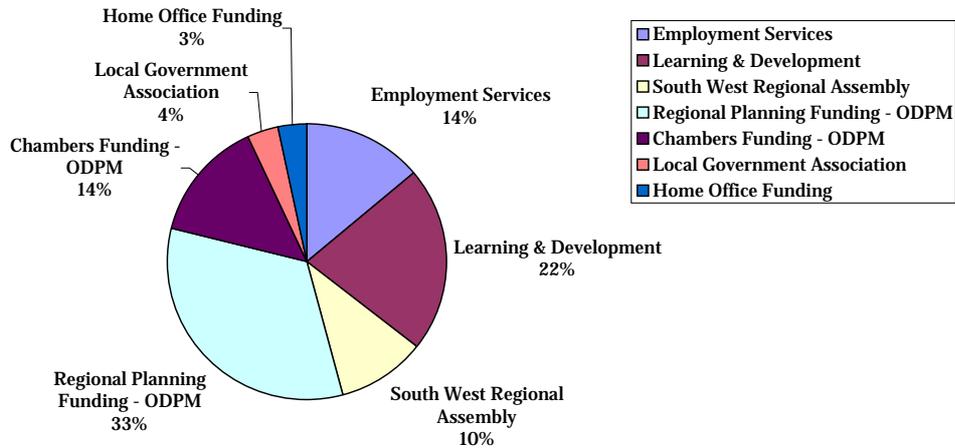
The Member organisations receive financial support from a range of sources:

- Local authorities continue to provide support for all three organisations. For 2004/05 the total subscription level has risen by 5% in recognition of the increased benefits being delivered. Non financial support is also offered by authorities through officer support and access to facilities at no cost.
- ODPM has been providing funding through the Chambers fund in support of the *Strengthening Regional Accountability* agenda since 2001. This funding has enabled the Assembly to develop its activities although it has remained static since first introduced. Working as part of the English Regions Network the Assembly has been flagging up the increased activity of the Assembly in supporting the development of the Region with additional resources the capacity for development of in depth engagement and consultation, further embedding of sustainability in the region's thinking and other key areas will be able to be pursued more effectively.
- The ODPM also provides funding in support of the Regional Planning function through a core level of funding plus an element of Planning Development Grant, which is agreed on an annual basis. As activity in this area has continued to increase the amount available has seen an increase.
- The ODPM has recently indicated provisionally that the SWLGA bid on behalf of the regions Local Authorities in support of E-Government has been successful. Detailed proposals are being worked up with authorities.
- The Home Office is providing funding for the SWLGA in support of the activity in support of the regional asylum seekers agenda.
- 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.

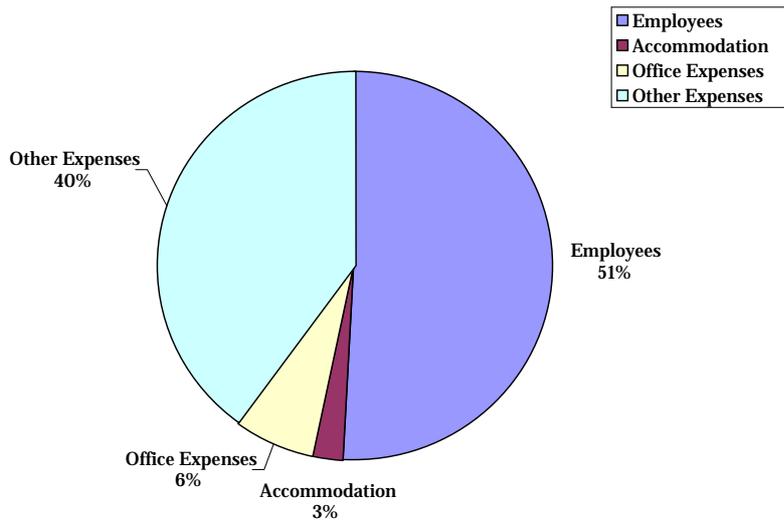
Income 2005 / 2006

The level of income for 2005 / 2006 has not been finalised at this stage although indications from ODPM are that funding for the Chambers Fund and the main Regional Planning Grant is likely to be at the same level as 2004 / 2005. PDG will depend on performance and workload. The proposed level of local authority contribution will be discussed at the Regional Assembly Board meeting in the autumn of 2004.

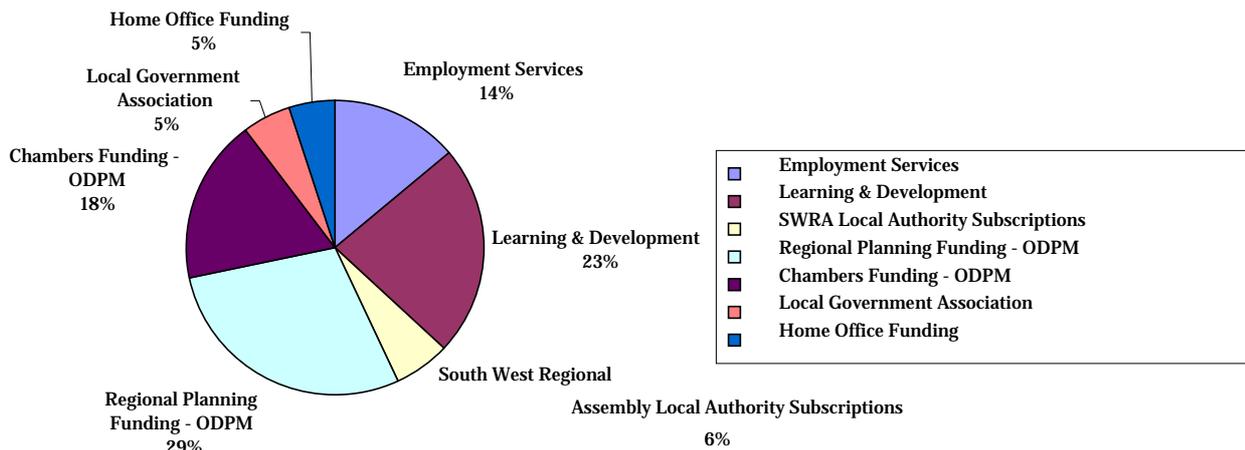
Areas of Income 2004/05



Expenditure Breakdown for 2004/05



Staff Resources for 2004/05



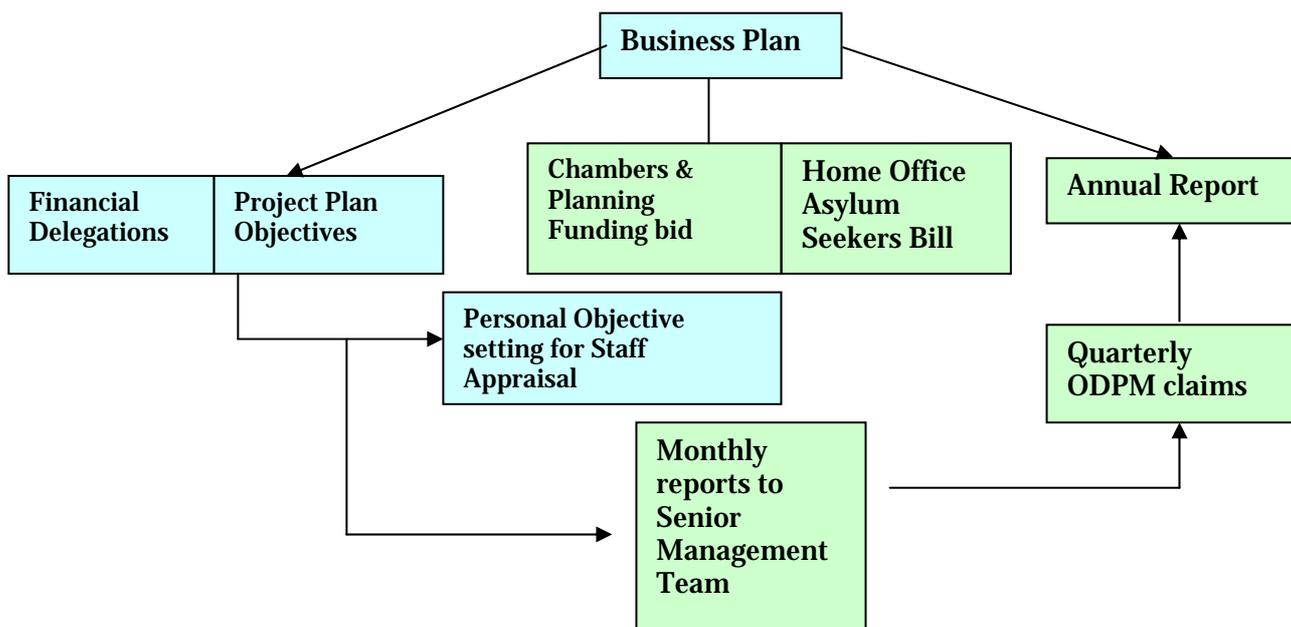
Chapter 6 Monitoring and evaluation

The Secretariat's monitoring and evaluation system has to be sufficiently flexible to accommodate the three regional organisations.

All three organisations share a three stage process outlined underneath. However, the detail of Stage 2 varies according to the funding and legal requirements of each organisation.

- Stage 1** Secretariat's Annual Business Plan approved by the Regional Assembly Board (covering all three organisations) element
- 1a ODPM and Home Office elements for approval by Departments
1b Relates to ODPM after consultation with SWRDA and GOSW.
- Stage 2** The **Regional Assembly** reporting cycle is based on ODPM guidance. Quarterly progress reports are submitted to ODPM and GOSW at the end of June / September / December and March. These progress reports are accompanied by forecasts of activity for the next quarter expanding on the Business Plan.
- SWPE; Assembly and SWLGA**, report activity to the SWPE Management Committee; Assembly Executive Committee and Full Assembly and LGA Executive and Branch on a regular basis.
- Stage 3** Annual Report and Accounts discussed and agreed by the Assembly, South West Provincial Employers, SW LGA Branch. Copies distributed to key partners and published on website.

The Secretariat's specific reporting cycle is illustrated below:



The Secretariat seeks to ensure that there is a clear “golden thread” linking the Business Plan, Project Plans and individual objectives. The objectives used in the organisational appraisal system therefore “fall out” of the Business Plan and team project plans.

In addition the Secretariat carries out regular Monitoring of work areas. For example:

Regional Planning Guidance

The Secretariat produces, with the support of local authorities, an Annual Monitoring Report on Regional Planning Guidance (RPG10). This aims to present evidence on what actions have been taken to implement RPG10 or what outputs have been achieved, and to comment on what action should be taken as a result.

Evaluation of Input on RDA Activity

The Scrutiny Programme is regularly evaluated. Recommendations by the Assembly's Scrutiny Panel are reviewed at regular intervals - both to assess SW RDA's response to recommendations and to evaluate the impact of the scrutiny process. SW RDA provides a written response to Panel recommendations and RDA staff periodically attend Panel meetings to consider progress against recommendations. The Scrutiny process as a whole is subject to biennial review. Recently published English Regions Network research findings on Assembly scrutiny practices in all English regions informed the last review. This resulted in the redrafting of the Scrutiny Protocol and a new programme of scrutiny reviews (styled as Strategic Reviews) with SW RDA.

At full Assembly meetings the work of the RDA is discussed and regional perspectives given in relation to a quarterly report.

Learning and Development Service

Learning and Development activities are evaluated at the end of each event and the outcomes fed into consideration of future programmes.

Performance Monitoring

This year we will investigate a range of quality assurance marks and systems in order to assess their suitability in helping the organisation raise performance – both internally and externally but particularly in respect of the training delivery.

Outcomes and milestones

The key outcomes for all work areas are outlined in Chapter Four. Detailed milestones are developed as part of the more detailed project planning.

Project Planning

A range of staff have received training on project planning and investment was made in Microsoft Project in 2003/04. Staff will be trained in 2004/05 to use this tool.

Chapter 7

Better Corporate Performance

The Secretariat will continue to strive to be an employer of choice within the Region and a model of good practice for others. Our staff policies and systems are open and transparent and will continue to be developed and reviewed in partnership with our Staff Consultative Forum. Following a pilot exercise, in 2003 we introduced a staff appraisal system. All current staff have been trained and we include appraisal training in the induction programme for all new staff. In 2004/5 we will undertake a full review of the system and the effectiveness of the staff training to ensure that Corporate performance has been enhanced.

The Secretariat's aim is to work in an open and straightforward way, constantly seeking to achieve the most effective ways of working. There are a number of organizational processes, which have been established to help achieve that aim. Every team concentrates on getting results – both externally and internally. The Secretariat's business objectives feed into team and individual objectives so that everyone is aware of the business priorities and what needs to be done to achieve them. We are striving to ensure that there is a clear “golden thread” linking the Business Plan; Project Plans and individual objectives. This reporting cycle is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

The Secretariat seeks to be an organization that not only responds quickly and positively to the changing regional agenda but also is proactive in its approach. This means being an organization where everyone's contribution is valued and where people are given the opportunity to develop in areas where they are not currently working. Challenging current ways of working – in a positive way - when we can see room for improvement is part of that culture. This includes:

- Lean working practices, where unnecessary procedures are identified and either dropped completely or replaced with more streamlined procedures.
- Short and sharp documents and papers with essential analysis and facts and leaving out unnecessary detail.

In order to ensure that the secretariat is efficient and effective it has introduced a Project Management Approach to its work (as referred to in Chapter 6). Each area of work has a plan and an agreed manager and sponsor. The secretariat Senior Management Team acts as a Project Board reviewing delivery and resource allocation. This means that work can be prioritised, potential blockages removed and risks assessed and managed. Further work on this will be developed over the next year as the process becomes established.

Identification of our customers and their needs underpins the whole Secretariat work programme. The ability to identify and respond, often rapidly, to changing demands within the South West, by effectively supporting and meeting the needs of the population is essential.

Inherent in all of our activities we seek to exceed the needs and expectations of our customers by continually improving the quality of all the services we offer. To do this we plan to review and evaluate all internal Management Information Systems to ensure that we connect with our customers, developing mutually beneficial relationships and

partnerships and sharing information. To understand what our customers want we are aware that we must listen to what they have to say and plan to, for example, establish various networks and undertake consultations, to facilitate this process. We plan to train Assembly staff in Customer Services. We plan to introduce an effective and efficient Quality Assurance system in order that we may regularly review our policies and practices to ensure that Customer focus is fundamental in all of the Assembly's activities.

The Learning and Development Team seeks to improve the skills, knowledge and understanding of individuals, enabling them to demonstrate improved performance and competence in the workplace. Customers will be supported by promoting and delivering affordable, good value learning and development solutions, whilst ensuring that our organisation remains viable and committed to developing innovative learning opportunities.

We have built on relationships with key journalists in the region, and begun to establish constructive dialogue about our work for the South West. A number of substantial articles have been written, and a greater understanding of our work is beginning to be developed. During 2004-05, we will build on this by working more proactively to get the Assembly's message across.

The Secretariat will aim to engage Members, their home organisations and stakeholders across the region in debates about all the key issues affecting the South West. This will be a proactive effort: we will seek greater involvement from Members in producing relevant, interesting articles for their local 'patch'; we will seek ways of supporting Members in sharing information or consulting with their home organisations; we will arrange meetings with Authorities and stakeholders across the region to enhance understanding of our activities with our key contacts, and establish effective channels for communication. Members, officers and Secretariat staff will all be involved in these activities.

We will continue to strive to achieve a high level of sustainability in managing our organisation by maintaining our commitment to Ambassador status under the Future Foundations Initiative.