



Office of the
Deputy Prime Minister

Creating sustainable communities

A Regional Sustainability Checklist for Developments

Helping improve the sustainability
of new and refurbished
developments in your region



Why have a Checklist?

The built environment plays a key role in sustainability. Our homes and communities have a wide range of impacts on sustainability, affecting the economic, social and environmental well-being of both the local and wider area. A development not only has significant direct environmental impacts in terms of generating carbon emissions and waste and using natural resources such as water and aggregates, but the way homes and communities are developed also determines our lifestyle decisions and our overall impact on the local and global environment. However, identifying all of these impacts can be a real headache, let alone understanding how your development measures up.

With assistance from construction and planning specialists and funding from the government, BRE has developed the *National Sustainability Checklist for Developments* to meet this need. BRE is the UK's leading centre of expertise on buildings, construction, energy, environment, fire and risk. The Checklist sets out a range of questions addressing key sustainability issues, and provides technically sound markers for "good" and "best" practice. Answers are scored and cumulative scores weighted to provide an overall indication of the sustainability of the development.

WWF, the global conservation organisation, is working with BRE as part of its One Million Sustainable Homes campaign, which aims to bring sustainable homes from the fringes to the mainstream across the UK. WWF has obtained funding from ODPM to produce a tailored Checklist for each region, based upon the tried and tested methodology of the national Checklist.



How will the Checklist work in this region?

Each region has its own unique assets, key issues and priorities. The Regional Checklist will incorporate regional planning, sustainable development and other key policies and targets into one comprehensive tool. Reference will be made to sources of further regional and national information. Key local and regional stakeholders will be invited to form an advisory group to ensure that relevant issues are taken into account.

The region-specific Checklist will have the advantage of following a similar methodology across all regions. By incorporating the requirements of regional planning policy, it can be used within the statutory land-use planning process. The regional Checklist can be further adjusted locally to reflect local development documents and supplementary planning guidance.

Who is it for?

The *Regional Sustainability Checklist for Developments* can be used by a range of groups to meet their needs.

- Funders and clients can choose to specify particular levels of performance for impacts of significance to them.
- Developers and architects can see what is required for good and best practice, while having the freedom to design as they see fit to achieve the required standard.
- Local authorities can tailor the Checklist to ensure that their key issues are reflected.
- Development Control officers can request an appraisal based on the Checklist as supporting documentation for a planning application.
- Independent appraisals can be carried out using the Checklist as a template.
- Regions and local authorities can choose at what size of development the Checklist should apply.



Who's using it already?

A *Regional Sustainability Checklist for Developments* has been piloted in the South East region in partnership with SEEDA.



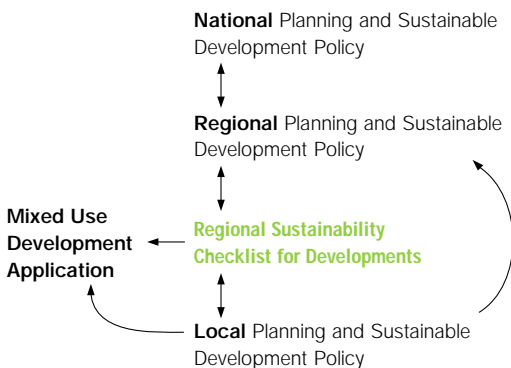
© Peggy Allcott / WWF-UK

It is being used by:

- English Partnerships, as part of the evaluation of the sustainability performance of master plans;
- private developers, in pre-planning as part of negotiations with local authorities;
- landowners, to evaluate the sustainability of proposed master plans and Enquiry By Design processes;
- local authorities, to evaluate sustainable development policies;
- universities and other public-sector bodies, for post-occupancy evaluation of built assets;
- private developers for the development of sustainability strategies for private-sector companies.

How does it fit with other policies?

The Checklist uses regional planning and sustainable development policy and integrates this into a straightforward tool for developers and planners. The Checklist can be further refined locally to reflect Development Plan Documents and sustainability policy.



Who's involved in the project?

This project forms part of WWF's One Million Sustainable Homes Campaign and is being funded by ODPM and WWF.

The mission of WWF is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by:

- conserving the world's biological diversity
- ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
- reducing pollution and wasteful consumption

For further information about the One Million Sustainable Homes Campaign please visit:

wwf.org.uk/sustainablehomes

For more information about the Regional Sustainability Checklist for Developments please contact:

Lynne Ceeney at BRE, ceeneyl@bre.co.uk, or
Jo Wheeler at WWF, jwheeler@wwf.org.uk.

'We welcome the government's support to develop the BRE Sustainability Checklist for all Regional Development Agencies.'

Sustainable Buildings Task Group,
Better Buildings, Better Lives, May 2004

'We want to see a sustainable community development code or benchmarks established. Such a code should make use of tools such as those developed by the Building Research Establishment and SEEDA Sustainability Checklist for Development that place our country at the forefront of international standards.'

The Egan Review, *Skills for Sustainable Communities*,
April 2004