

## The Regional Policy Framework

---

### 1. The Regional Policy Framework

#### CONTENTS

SECTION D1 Cross-Cutting Policies

SECTION D2 Economy

SECTION D3 Housing

SECTION D4 Communications and Transport

SECTION D5 Sustainable Natural Resource Management

SECTION D6 Countryside and Landscape Management

SECTION D7 Management of the Built Environment

SECTION D8 Town Centres

SECTION D9 Social, Cultural and Health Dimensions

SECTION D10 Tourism and Related Sports and Recreation

- I.1 This section of the Plan is structured into two sections. The first part consists of those policies that cover themes that apply to all aspects of the Plan, within the framework of the overall vision and core strategy. They can therefore be described as ‘cross-cutting’.
- I.2 The second section sets out the policies for specific topic areas. In both cases, the policies will also be supported by statements on indicators and implementation.

#### Cross-Cutting Policies

- I.3 The cross-cutting policies all relate to the analysis, debate and evolution of the Plan parameters in the context of the Integrated Regional Framework. They are divided into two parts:  
 Part A – Cross-cutting Issue Policies  
 Part B – Cross-cutting Spatial Policies

#### Part A – Cross-Cutting Issue Policies

##### Sustainable Development

- I.4 As emphasised in Section B, the principles of sustainable development, as reflected in the Integrated Regional Framework, underpin the Plan. Although the

achievement of overall sustainable development across the region, in an absolute sense, will not be achieved in the Plan period, it is essential that we achieve substantial progress in that direction. A cross-cutting policy (CCI) has therefore been incorporated in the Plan to emphasise the importance of the IRF. There is always a danger with such high level policies that they will be observed in principle but not in practice. A clear obligation is therefore placed on all public authorities to demonstrate their commitment through specific and identifiable actions.

#### **POLICY CC1:**

#### **ACTIVE MANAGEMENT**

~~In order to fulfil the Plan strategy and vision, local planning authorities and other agencies should adopt positive and creative approaches to land and resource management, so as to conserve resources, increase efficiency and raise standards.~~

#### **POLICY CC1**

#### **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**The principal objective of the Plan shall be to achieve and to maintain sustainable development in the region. The Strategy and policies of the Plan promote measures that contribute to:**

- **Achieving a sustainable economy;**
- **Promoting good governance;**
- **Using sound science responsibly;**
- **Living within environmental limits; and**
- **Ensuring a strong, health and just society.**

**All public authorities shall ensure that their actions contribute to meeting the objectives set out in the Integrated Regional Framework (IRF)**

### **Climate Change**

- 1.5 In recent years, the evidence that significant climate change is occurring on a global scale has become increasingly compelling. These changes will particularly affect England, and research suggests that the South East could be more affected by these changes than other regions. The precise impacts of climate change are not yet clear, although there will be some opportunities as well as problems. It is however already evident that climate change will particularly affect many facets of development and land use. Some of the impacts could be beneficial and create opportunities. Other impacts are likely to be negative and of considerable concern. The Plan is therefore put forward in this context, and on the basis that challenging measures for mitigation and adaptation relating to climate change will increasingly need to be identified and acted upon over the Plan period. Further research is being undertaken by the Assembly on this topic and it will continue to develop understanding and identify good practice through membership of

groups such as the ESPACE and Climate Change partnerships. In order to clarify and prioritise actions and identify mechanisms to achieve mitigation and adaptation to forecast climate change impacts, as set out in Policy CC2, the Assembly is developing and will maintain a specific implementation plan. An inventory of greenhouse gas emissions will be developed in association with the South East Climate Change Partnership and government in order to monitor progress toward achieving the targets within Policy CC2.

## **POLICY CC2:** **CLIMATE CHANGE**

~~The strategy and policies of the Plan will have regard to the opportunities and threats posed by climate change and seek to support an implementation programme of mitigation and adaption. As knowledge of climate change issues and the scope for effective action improves, the policies and programmes of the Plan will be periodically reviewed to ensure compatibility is sustained. will promote measures to mitigate and adapt to the forecast effects of climate change and should be implemented through application of local planning policy and other mechanisms. Behavioral change will be essential in implementing this policy and the measures identified.~~

Mitigation, through reducing greenhouse gas emissions, will primarily be addressed through greater resource efficiency including:

1. improving energy efficiency performance of new and existing buildings and influencing behavior of occupants;
2. reducing the need to travel and ensuring good accessibility to public and other sustainable modes of transport;
3. promoting land use that acts as carbon sinks;
4. encouraging development and use of renewable energy;
5. reducing the amount of biodegradable waste landfilled.

In addition, and in respect of carbon dioxide emissions, regional and local authorities, agencies and others shall include policies and proposals in their plans, strategies and investment programmes to help reduce the region's carbon dioxide emissions by at least 20% below 1990 levels by 2010 and by at least 25% below 1990 levels by 2015. A target for 2026 will be developed and incorporated in the first review of the Plan."

Adaption to risks and opportunities will be achieved through:

1. guiding strategic development to locations offering greater protection from impacts such as flooding, erosion, storms, water shortages and subsidence;
2. ensuring new and existing building stock are more resilient to climate change impacts;
3. incorporating sustainable drainage measures and high standards of

- water efficiency in new and existing building stock;
4. increasing flood storage capacity and developing sustainable new water resources;
  5. ensuring that opportunities and options for sustainable flood management and migration of habitats and species are not foreclosed.

## Resource Use

- I.6 The Plan places a considerable emphasis on increasing the efficiency of resource use, especially natural resources such as water, energy and minerals. Consumption per head needs to stabilise and begin to reduce over the Plan period. New development needs to adopt increasingly rigorous standards to reflect a movement towards sustainable construction, using more recycled materials, producing less waste and consuming less water and energy per unit. But the focus must not be simply on new development. Existing development must also heed and follow the same themes, taking particular advantage of opportunities afforded by renewal or upgrading of property and equipment.
- I.7 Adaptations of lifestyle and business practices will also need to accompany these development changes. Attitudes towards consumption of energy and the production of waste, for example, are probably more important drivers of change than physical development. Over the Plan period, we will need a gradual but sustained 'step change' in public and business attitudes and behaviour.

## POLICY CC3: RESOURCE USE

~~Over the Plan period, per capita use of natural resources will stabilize and begin to reduce, supported by increased efficiency of resource use in new development, the adaption of existing development, the extensive use of sustainable construction techniques and corresponding changes in public attitude and behaviour. Relevant authorities will achieve a stabilization of consumption of resources and aim for a reduction in absolute levels of consumption in the long term, with an aim to stabilize the South East ecological footprint by 2010. In particular, authorities should require Eco-Homes 'very good' as a minimum standard for all new housing and adoption of BREEAM 'very good' standards in all new commercial developments. In order to reflect the Plan's emphasis on more suitable sustainable resource use the Regional Assembly will promote measures that seek to stabilise the South East's ecological footprint by 2026 2016, and to reduce the ecological footprint during the second half of the Plan period. Implementation will require a sustained new programme of action incorporating:~~

- ~~• Increased efficiency of resource use in new development~~
- ~~• The adaptation of existing development to reduce its use of energy.~~

### water and other resources

- Complementary legislation and fiscal measures by Government
- Changes in behaviour by organizations by individuals.

## **Sustainable Construction**

- 1.8 Sustainable construction can be defined as creating or renewing buildings so that they reduce or avoid adverse impacts on the built and natural environment, in terms of the buildings themselves, their immediate surroundings and the broader regional and global setting. Sustainable construction therefore encompasses the following principles:
- Constructing development to reduce non-renewable resource consumption including building materials;
  - ensuring development through its construction and use reduces the use of energy and water;
  - eliminating or minimizing the use of toxins and the production of waste associated with the construction and use of development.
- 1.9 Sustainable construction implies that minimum standards, such as those set by current Building Regulations, are exceeded in order to deliver the step-change we need in energy and water efficiency, reduction in waste generation and increased recycling. The use of sustainably produced and local products can also reduce the impact of our consumption of resources. Best practice standards such as the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) are well established and should be used throughout the region.

### Policy CC4

## SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION

The construction of all new buildings, and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, will be expected to adopt and incorporate sustainable construction standards and techniques. This will include:

1. high standards of energy and water efficiency that exceed current standards required by the Building Regulations and reflect best practice;
2. designing to increase the use of natural lighting, heat and ventilation, and the provision of a proportion of energy demand from renewable sources;
3. reduction and increased recycling of construction and demolition waste and procurement of low-impact materials;
4. designing for flexible use and adaptation to reflect changing lifestyles and needs and the principle of 'whole life costing'.

## Infrastructure and Implementation

- 1.10 As the vision and core strategy make clear, the timely provision of infrastructure is a fundamental tenet of the Plan. This will require improved delivery arrangements compared with the past, the creative assembly of public and private resources and a sustained effort. While much can be achieved through regional and local action, the support and encouragement of central Government will also be crucial and essential. Under the new legislation, the Plan also needs to include an Implementation Plan, and this will be an important framework to foster, and indeed require, effective delivery by all agencies.
- 1.11 The Assembly, the County Councils and the Government Office have undertaken a considerable amount of research to improve understanding of the issues and needs. As a result of this work and careful consideration of the conclusions, the Assembly has adopted a package of proposals which it believes could substantially improve infrastructure delivery and restore confidence. These proposals include a suggested Concordat with Government to provide a basis for constructive joint working<sup>1</sup>. The Assembly is sending these proposals to Government to accompany the first stage submission of the Plan and expects to incorporate them, with any necessary revisions, in the final submission to Government in March 2006.

### **POLICY CC54:**

#### **INFRASTRUCTURE AND IMPLEMENTATION**

The scale and pace of ~~land release for new~~ development will be dependent on there being sufficient capacity in existing infrastructure to meet the area's current needs and ~~will be related to~~ the provision of new ~~transport and other~~ infrastructure to meet the needs of new development. The funding for this infrastructure will require substantial contributions from central Government. In addition, partnerships between central Government, local government and the private sector have the capacity to lever in additional funding. The new/improved infrastructure required should be provided in step with development and in some cases will need to precede it. The final policies to be included in the Plan will set out the mechanisms for phasing and managing land release to match the provision of infrastructure.

#### To help achieve this:

- the Assembly expects all the relevant infrastructure agencies and providers to align their investment programmes to help deliver the proposals in the Plan;
- Local Development Documents should identify the necessary additional infrastructure and services required to serve the area and

---

<sup>1</sup> Infrastructure- A Way Forward, May 2005

- the development they propose together with the means, broad cast and timing of their provision related to the timing of development.
- Development shall not proceed until the relevant planning authorities are satisfied that the necessary infrastructure required to serve the development is available or will be provided in time.
  - Contributions from development will also be required to help deliver the necessary infrastructure. To provide clarity for landowners and prospective developers, Local Authorities should include policies and prepare clear guidance in their Local Development Documents, in conjunction with other key agencies, on the role of development contributions towards infrastructure.

The Assembly therefore proposes to Government the need for a package of initiatives designed to improve infrastructure delivery and create greater confidence and assurance. This package is underpinned by a proposed Concordat between Government and the Assembly.

In order to further secure effective delivery of the Plan, and particularly the timely delivery of the necessary supporting infrastructure, an Implementation Plan will be prepared, monitored and reviewed, which will set out the requirements and obligations for public and private sector bodies at the national, regional and local levels.

## Use of Public Land

- 1.12 In the context of this emphasis on effective implementation and infrastructure provision, coupled with better resource use, it makes sense to look for opportunities to facilitate delivery through sympathetic land ownership and potential funding. The South East region has a substantial portfolio of Government land particularly land held by the defence and to a lesser extent, health sectors. The region's geography and history means that the scale and distribution of defence land and property is of particular significance. Reviews of health sector lands have been undertaken and strategic land releases are under way, with land transfers to English Partnerships.
- 1.13 The Ministry of Defence has also embarked on a fundamental, long-term review of its operational requirements and landholdings. It is already evident that this review will lead to the release of significant land and property holdings across the region. Some of the sites are of little or no potential relevance for development, because of their location and character. Others however offer considerable potential, and the scale of likely release over the Plan period makes the issue of strategic importance. Where such sites have potential their public land ownership could assist both implementation and the forward-funding of necessary infrastructure, in order to achieve high standards of development. It is important that the overall release of land is conducted and managed effectively,

working with the Assembly and local authorities, so that long-term management arrangements are put in hand for both the non-development and development sites.

**POLICY CC65:  
USE OF PUBLIC LAND**

~~In order to identify potential development and land management opportunities, Government departments and public landowners should undertake strategic reviews of their land holdings, especially the Ministry of Defence, should identify land and property for disposal and development/re-development. They should agree an overall disposal disposal and implementation and management strategy at the regional level with the Regional Assembly and other partners for sites of regional significance, covering both development and nondevelopment sitesland sites, paying particular attention to the potential to increase the land available for affordable housing and the generation of cross subsidy to deliver it. This regional co-ordination should be supported by the development of local disposal arrangements working with the relevant local authority and other parties. Local authorities should facilitate and support such arrangements through positive provision in Local Development Documents. This strategy should be implemented at the local level, and local authorities should facilitate appropriate proposals through provision in the Local Development Framework. The funding for this infrastructure will require substantial contributions from central Government. In addition, partnerships between central Government, local government and the private sector have the capacity to lever in additional funding. The new/improved infrastructure required should be provided in step with development and in some cases will need to precede it. The final policies to be included in the Plan will set out the mechanisms for phasing and managing land release to match the provision of infrastructure. In order to secure effective delivery of the Plan, and particularly the timely delivery of the necessary supporting infrastructure, an Implementation Plan will be prepared, monitored and reviewed, which will set out the requirements and obligations for public and private sector bodies at the national, regional and local levels.~~

**Part B – Cross-Cutting Spatial Policies**

**Inter-regional Connectivity**

- I.14 The South East region is large and diverse, but it also cannot be viewed in isolation. In some parts of the region the relationship, in both spatial planning and other terms, to the adjoining areas of neighbouring regions is crucial and it is likely to evolve and grow in significance over the period of the Plan.
- I.15 The foremost inter-relationship is with London. The economic, travel and housing connections between the two regions are of fundamental importance to

the South East. London creates demands on the South East for services such as water and waste facilities, as well as housing. London in turn provides substantial economic opportunities and wealth creation for this region, notably in central London. Business and other relationships between the two regions are dynamic and already showing elements of change, with journey to work routes growing more complex and, in areas such as the Western Corridor, increasingly multidirectional. Research into potential changes in these patterns has been undertaken.

I.16 The research comprises 3 major components:

- i) A joint study of commuting patterns with London and the East of England regions.<sup>2</sup>
- ii) A joint study of evolving business patterns across the wider South East for the European Union. It incorporates a comparative assessment of the major North European city regions.<sup>3</sup>
- iii) A study for the Assembly of current and potential economic relationship between the London and South East regions.<sup>4</sup>

I.17 Further details of the results of this research are available on our website and in the Plan. They naturally vary in their detailed implications and recommendations. But what is striking is the degree of common ground. They confirm that much of the South East is part of a unique world-class city region, operating on a different scale to any other such region in northern Europe. They confirm that inter-dependency is growing parts of the region, and that indeed areas such as West Kent are particularly dependent on their relationship with London. Equally significantly, the relationship in the west of the region shows much more mutual dependence rather than London domination, and a broad commuting balance. Indeed some parts of the west are showing increasing economic independence and diversity, creating a relatively high degree of polycentricity. This developing and diverse pattern is fostered by the Plan, in the context of close and strengthening working relations with London.

I.18 The relationship with other regions is less powerful, but will be of growing significance in respect of the two major Growth Areas that straddle the regional boundary – Thames Gateway and Milton Keynes/South Midlands. These Growth Areas need to be planned and developed in a co-ordinated and integrated manner, and to varying degrees mechanisms have been established. They involve

---

<sup>2</sup> Cambridge Econometrics, WSP and LSE (2005) 'Commuter Flows in London and the Wider South East 2001 to 2016/21'

<sup>3</sup> Sir Peter Hall (2005) 'Trends and messages from POLYNET'

<sup>4</sup> Centre for Economics and Business Research (2005) 'Symbiosis or sibling rivalry? The future links between London and the South East'

London and East of England regions in respect of the Thames Gateway, and East of England and East Midlands regions for Milton Keynes/South Midlands. Joint arrangements to monitor progress and undertake common research have therefore been established.

- I.19 Links with the Swindon area of the South West are likely to grow in the Plan period, but the relationship with the Bournemouth area seems of less significance. Research for this Plan has indicated that existing links with the West Midlands and Nord-Pas de Calais regions are less significant than was originally envisaged. They nevertheless need to be taken into account, especially as they may grow in significance over the Plan period. Appropriate monitoring and joint working arrangements will therefore be put in place.

**POLICY CC76:  
INTER-REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY**

~~The Assembly will engage in joint research programmes and partnerships with neighbouring regions in order to address issues of common interest. These will especially relate to the economy, housing, transport, natural resources and water. The relationship with London will be of special significance but, over the Plan period, linkages Inter-regional co-ordination will be fostered with adjoining regions, in order to positively address inter-connectivity, development need and opportunities. The relationship with London will continue to be of prime importance but over the Plan period linkages with~~ with the East of England and East Midlands regions will grow in economic, social and environmental terms. The scope for further links with the South West, West Midlands and Nord-Pas de Calais regions will be kept under review. ~~Appropriate arrangements to foster this inter-regional arrangement will be sustained and enhanced as appropriate~~

**Urban Focus and Urban Renaissance**

- I.20 Previous Regional Planning Guidance (RPG9) emphasised the twin themes of an urban focus and the achievement of an urban renaissance. This Plan reinforces these themes. Future development should be focused in and around urban areas, in order to make best use of the region's valuable and finite land resource and develop more sustainable patterns of development and lifestyles. Our analysis has shown that intensifying the use of urban areas offers many benefits in terms of maximising the viability of existing infrastructure and service provision at the same time as protecting the countryside of the South East. It can help to enhance the viability of public transport infrastructure through the increase of populations within catchments served by rail and bus services. Potential benefits in terms of sustaining established service provision range from community services such as education, health, social and cultural facilities, to water and energy supply.

**POLICY CC87:**

**URBAN FOCUS AND URBAN RENAISSANCE**

The prime focus for development in the South East should be urban areas, in order to foster accessibility to employment, housing, retail and other services and services, and ~~where it will make effective use of limited land resources avoid unnecessary travel.~~

Local planning authorities should formulate policies to:

- i) concentrate development within the region's urban areas;
- ii) seek to achieve at least 60% of all new development in the South East on previously developed land and through conversions of existing buildings;
- iii) ensure that developments in and around urban areas, including urban infill/intensification and new urban extensions are well designed and consistent with the principles of urban renaissance and sustainable development;
- iv) use urban potential studies to identify the scope for redevelopment and intensification of urban areas, maximising-seeking opportunities for intensification around transport hubs and interchanges, ~~as defined in the Regional Transport Strategy.~~

**Spatial Emphasis**

- 1.21 In the context of Policy CC7, and in order to give a clear emphasis in terms of geographical priority, it is proposed to include in the final submission to Government a set of policy designations and a list of urban centres or groups of centres which form key hubs of activity and development. Members have requested that these issues however should be the subject of further consideration and debate, and no specific proposals are therefore put forward in this Part I submission.

**POLICY CC98:**

**SPATIAL EMPHASIS**

[See paragraph 1.21 above]

**Green Belt and Strategic Gaps**

- 1.22 The Government has confirmed its continuing commitment to the Green Belt as an instrument of planning policy, and consultation has confirmed very strong public support for the concept. Green Belts fulfil five main functions: to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas; to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another; to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; to preserve the special character and setting of historic towns; and to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and

other urban land. All of these functions are consistent with the Assembly's vision for the South East, and the Assembly considers that there is no case for any strategic review of Green Belt within the region.

- I.23 For most of the region, Green Belt policy does not apply. In some counties, policies to identify and protect gaps between settlements have been developed, in order to maintain identity and provide some longer-term spatial flexibility. Analysis has however shown that the definition of these gaps varies widely and there is little locational consistency. The Assembly believes in principle that a statement of consistent criteria on the identification and definition of gaps in the Plan would be appropriate and would overcome the present inconsistency. Further consideration of the options is therefore being undertaken so that a statement may be incorporated in the final Plan submission to Government.

**POLICY CC109:  
GREEN BELTS AND STRATEGIC GAPS**

~~The existing Green Belts in the region will be retained and supported and the opportunity should be taken to improve their land-use management and access as part of initiatives to improve the urban rural fringe. Elsewhere in the region, the following gaps and corridors of regional significance will be identified by the Assembly, following further consideration and assent, and protected from inappropriate development. Further detail will be added following further work and analysis of the consultation responses on the draft Plan.~~

The existing Green Belts in the region will be retained and supported and the opportunity should be taken to improve their land-use management and access as part of initiatives to improve the urban rural fringe.

Elsewhere in the region, strategic gaps and corridors will be protected from inappropriate development with the purpose of maintaining the character of the region by retaining the separate identity and preventing the coalescence of settlements.

If there are any cases ~~Where there are small areas~~ for small scale local review, these can be pursued through the local development framework process.

Local authorities should identify, in Local Development Frameworks, strategic gaps and corridors that will protect the character and pattern of development and prevent coalescence.

### **Supporting an Ageing Population**

- I.24 Demographic changes highlight the need to take account of the ageing population. Available projections for the UK suggest that the South East will have the third largest number of people over 65 of all the English regions. The

South East already has some of the greatest concentrations of those aged over 75 in the country, particularly along the South Coast. More older people will be living in the southern part of England in the next 20 years due to migration at retirement and higher life expectancies.

- I.25 Although to date the elderly are tending to live longer and be healthier this major rise in the very elderly will present a demand for more health and social support. At present 25% of pensioners live alone and this may increase as more people chose to remain single. There will be a need for ongoing policies that support older people living alone at home, enable them to maintain active lives physically and socially and provide social and hospital support when required.
- I.26 There will need to be careful consideration within transport plans to ensure continued mobility of the elderly. Housing policies should specifically consider how to enable people to stay at home and urban and rural planning should consider the needs of the very elderly. There is a shortage of residential and nursing home places in the region as that sector finds it hard to exist in the market. The continued increase in growth in the region, high land prices and difficulty in employing people in the low pay sector will exacerbate this. The increase in the elderly will continue to put pressure on those still economically active, a group falling in size, and the young elderly as carers and supporters. All policies should consider this.

## **POLICY CC11** **SUPPORTING AN AGEING POPULATION**

In order to reflect a significant increase in the proportion of older people in the region over the Plan period, local authorities and public agencies should pay particular regard in Local Development Frameworks and other programmes to assessing and planning for the social needs that will arise. Policies and programmes should particularly address the following issues:

- i).— The need to adapt the existing housing stock and make provision in new housing developments to support older people living independent live in their own homes (Lifetime Homes).
- ii) The provision of reasonable access to services, through the provision of public transport and the extension of communications and information technology.
- iii) The provision of leisure, recreational and community facilities that help older people maintain healthy lifestyles.
- iv) Facilitating access to training and development opportunities that support available employment for the workforce beyond the existing retirement age.

THIS PAGE HAS BEEN LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

|