

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY  
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Date: 8 November 2004

Subject: **Assembly Member Workshop – 20 October 2004**

Report of: Director of Planning and Transport

**Recommendation:**

That members note the results of the Assembly Workshop and take them into account when debating the draft Plan.

---

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the Workshop on the South East Plan for all Assembly members held at Portsmouth Guildhall on 20 October 2004, and inform members about the responses.

**2. Comment**

- 2.1 As part of the debate on the South East Plan, the Assembly agreed at its July 2004 meeting to hold a Workshop for all Assembly members. Non-Assembly members of the Planning Committee were also invited. Each member was also invited to bring one supporting officer. The event was well attended by over 100 people. A copy of the agenda is attached at Annex 1, demonstrating that there was a considerable opportunity in both group and plenary sessions for debate and discussion.
- 2.2 During the initial plenary debate, concern was expressed about the potential needs of both economic and housing growth, although counter views were also expressed supporting the need for such growth. Unsurprisingly, there was also considerable concern about the inadequacy of both present infrastructure and future plans. The need to reduce disparities across the region was also emphasised.
- 2.3 The current stage of work on regional spatial options was presented, together with a draft Vision and Statement. The Vision and Statement occasioned little reaction, but the options provoked considerable debate and a degree of confusion.
- 2.4 The two workshop sessions focused firstly on the options at a regional level and secondly the sub-regional implications and comparisons with initial results of the sub-regional studies. A summary of the main points emerging

from each workshop has been posted on the South East Plan website, and the bullet points are attached at Annex 2.

- 2.5 In summary it was clear that there was a need to refine the spatial options and improve their presentation. This is reflected in the options section of the strategy paper now before the Committee (Agenda Item 8). Some of the options could probably be combined, and there was a need to develop an option which blended both economic potentials and regeneration. Concerns about inadequate infrastructure and its implications for scales of growth were further reinforced. On the other hand, few alternative options were suggested, although one group did ask that further consideration was given to a general dispersal strategy and new settlements. The potential importance of Government land, especially MOD sites, which might be for disposal was also emphasised.
- 2.6 In the case of dispersal, this had clearly been considered at an early stage of the process, but had been rejected as inherently unsustainable and unable to provide sufficient focus for problem resolution or infrastructure investment. There might be a role for a small number of new settlements in the region, but the scale of options and suggestions seems insufficient to justify a separate strategy. Indeed none of the sub-regional strategies (with the possible exception of South Hampshire) appears to suggest a new settlement as an element of their proposals.

### **3. Conclusion**

- 3.1 In overall terms, the Workshop was helpful in confirming views and guiding further development of the spatial options. We have sought to weave in other messages to our general drafting of the Plan.

**Mike Gwilliam**  
**Director of Planning and Transport**  
29 October 2004

Contact: Mike Gwilliam, Director of Planning and Transport  
T: 01483-555211 E: [mikegwilliam@southeast-ra.gov.uk](mailto:mikegwilliam@southeast-ra.gov.uk)

Annex 1 Agenda, 20 October 2004  
Annex 2 Feedback points, 20 October 2004



## **ASSEMBLY WORKSHOP THE GREAT DEBATE**

**20 October 2004  
Portsmouth Guildhall, Portsmouth**

### **AGENDA**

- 10.00 Coffee and Registration
- 10.30 Context and Proposals – underlying core strategic options
- 11.00 Plenary Debate on:
  - Scales of Change, especially:
    - Economic pattern/changes
    - Meeting housing backlog
    - National and international migration
  - Infrastructure
    - The evidence base
    - A Way Forward
- 12.00 Overall Strategy Workshops
- 13.00 LUNCH
- 13.45 Workshop Feedback/Discussion
- 14.15 The Sub-Regional Spatial Options Context
- 14.30 Options Workshops (Same Groups)
- 15.20 TEA
- 15.45 Workshop Feedback/Discussion
- 16.20 Close

**Assembly Member Workshop  
20 October 2004  
Feedback – Morning Session**

**Views on the choices at regional level**

Clarify the role of “top down” approach in terms of strategy development.

A step in the overall process – consultation draft will have options to debate.

Take account of:

- infrastructure (in broadest terms) in strategy development
- environmental constraints
- (local) delivery mechanisms

A blend of the options is required, likely to be a combination of urban concentration and hubs

Minority views:

- An emphasis on reducing disparities may not be realistic
- Over emphasis on economic potential may not be realistic

**Where should the emphasis lie in developing options**

Different emphasis required across region to reflect sub-regional opportunities

Infrastructure constraints and opportunities need to be reflected in spatial options

Capacity of infrastructure and opportunities to create capacity need to be taken into account

Clear understanding of link with phasing and delivery mechanisms – new mechanisms

Government must support strategy through action and investment

Spatial Options will be subject to sustainability appraisal

Review opportunities in light of sub-regional strategy advice on new opportunities

**Are there any other options?**

- No clear call for major new options
- Alternative options – minority views:
  - Spread growth evenly across the region
  - Locate development where people work
  - Consider new settlements/satellite settlements – even in “residual areas”

**Assembly Member Workshop**  
**20 October 2004**  
**Feedback – Morning Session**

**Which of the spatial options to be the most sustainable**

**Sussex Coast:**

Economic led over housing  
East-West communications

**Gatwick:**

Relative policy balance is about right

**Thames Gateway**

Relative policy balance is about right  
Focus on the core area  
Community infrastructure

**Ashford/East Kent**

Policy balance is right – emphasis on reducing disparities  
Need to realise infrastructure opportunities  
Increased RDA programme

**London Fringe**

Green belt is a key constraint  
Infrastructure costs higher due to past underinvestment  
New mechanism for affordable housing

**South Hampshire**

A combination of options – reflect the sub-regional circumstances, with emphasis on economic opportunities  
Query water resources

**Milton Keynes/Aylesbury Vale**

**Central Oxfordshire**

Hybrid of realising economic potential  
North/South and East/West infrastructure

**Western Corridor/Blackwater Valley**

Combination of reducing disparities (majority) and economic potential (minority)  
Alternative option – sustainability option  
Query on water resources