

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
PLENARY MEETING**

Date: 17 October 2008

Subject: **Regional Planning Committee**

Report of: Chairman of the Regional Planning Committee

Recommendation:

That the Assembly notes the contents of this report.

Purpose of Report:

To update the Regional Assembly on the meeting of the Regional Planning Committee held on 24 September 2008 and inform Members of the forthcoming meeting of the Inter-Regional Forum due to take place on the 13 November 2008.

I. Meeting of 24 September 2008

I.1 Proposed Changes to the South East Plan

I.1.1 On the 17 July the Government published its proposed changes to the South East Plan which is both a response to the Assembly's draft plan and the Examination in Public Panel's recommendations. This is the final stage in the plan preparation process before the Secretary of State approves the plan.

I.1.2 The Assembly is being asked to endorse the draft response considered at the RPC meeting in September. This includes a detailed response to each change and a response to the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) which we are also being asked to comment on. In addition to the key concerns identified by officers around the Government's proposals for housing delivery and infrastructure and the treatment of Strategic Development Areas (SDAs), RPC raised concerns around the potential threat to the Green Belts; the loss of our proposed policy on 'strategic gaps'; the changing definition of regional hubs; the continued support by the Government for a further runway at Gatwick; and the apparent weakening of support for East-West Rail-link.

I.1.3 The Committee also raised concerns that the Government had not accepted some key advice from the SA/HRA process, particularly in relation to housing, infrastructure and water.

I.1.4 The RPC's response is before the Assembly today for endorsement as our formal view on the Government's Proposed Changes (see Agenda Item 7).

I.2 Partial Review on Apportionment of Primary Land-Won Aggregates

I.2.1 Policy M3 of RPG9 and the draft South East Plan sets out the amount of aggregates each Minerals Planning Authority in the region should provide for. The Assembly embarked on a partial review of this policy in 2007, in response to a recommendation by the EiP Panel for the partial review of the mineral policies of RPG9 in 2004.

I.2.2 The Assembly agreed options for consultation purposes in March this year and undertook a public consultation for amending the sub-regional apportionment between May and August 2008. Following the consultation RPC was asked to consider a preferred option for endorsement by the Assembly at this meeting and submission to Government. While Members did agree to an overall amount that the region should provide for, they were unable to agree on the distribution and therefore deferred a decision on this until the next RPC meeting in November. Officers were instructed to undertake further consultation with Minerals Planning Authority officers to try and reach a solution. The full Assembly meeting following that would be March 2009 where the preferred option would be ratified.

2. Inter-Regional Forum Meeting, 13 November 2008

- 2.1 Recent discussions around SNR and the fact that London has a new Mayor who is keen to improve inter-regional relationships have prompted thinking about the future role of the Forum. As such, in addition to the exiting Members of the Forum, the Assembly Chairmen, RTB / RHB Chairs and Mayor Boris Johnson have all been invited to attend the next meeting to engage in the discussion on inter-regional relationships and priorities. I hope this will prove to be the start of a much stronger and more co-ordinated relationship between London and its adjoining regions.

Cllr Moira Gibson
Chairman of the Regional Planning Committee

30 September 2008