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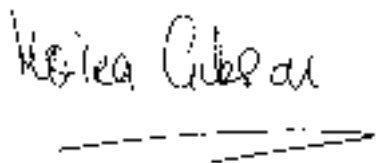
Foreword

The Regional Monitoring Report 2007 (RMR07) is the sixth annual monitoring report produced by the South East England Regional Assembly. This report sets out to measure progress towards objectives presented in the Integrated Regional Framework (IRF) and policies put forward in Regional Planning Guidance 9 (RPG9) and the new regional spatial strategy, the draft South East Plan.

Once again, the evidence gathered to paint a picture of the South East in this document provides reasons to celebrate and also causes of concern. This RMR is intended to highlight those highs and lows, providing the platform from which action must be taken to address issues discussed in the report. Without this document the plan, monitor, manage approach would not be possible.

In broad terms I am delighted to say that the region continues to do well. Of particular note are the sustained levels of housing delivery that outstrip both current and recommended targets. Development on previously developed land for housing, commercial and leisure uses also exceed targets. However, I feel it vital to note that this success is built upon a strong, buoyant economy both regionally and nationally. A decline in this is likely to have a major impact on the region's ability to deliver on its priorities, especially housing.

The RMR07 has again been produced in collaboration with a variety of regional and local partners. I would like to personally thank all those involved in producing this report.



Cllr Moira Gibson
Chairman, Regional Planning Committee



The South East England region



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Chapter **01**
Introduction

Chapter 01

Introduction

MONITORING THE REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY

The Regional Monitoring Report 2007 (RMR07) monitors the current Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) in the South East, Regional Planning Guidance 9 (RPG9), and the formal alterations to RPG9¹. It also monitors objectives and indicators set out in the Integrated Regional Framework (IRF). These are included within the chapters of this report alongside relevant RPG9 policies. However, the key difference between this document and previous RMRs is that, in places, this report refers also to emerging South East Plan policies. This is of particular note in the housing chapter, where local authorities are, in many cases, reporting housing completions against Plan targets themselves.

The South East Plan (the Plan), the new draft RSS for the South East, underwent an Examination in Public which closed in March 2007². The inspectors subsequently published their report³ in August 2007. The Secretary of State is now considering the recommendations made in the report and expects to publish proposed changes to the draft Plan in mid 2008. The Plan, once approved later in 2008, will replace RPG9. The inspectors' report endorses the Assembly's proposed approach to monitoring, which builds upon six year's experience of monitoring RPG9. While this document continues to monitor RPG9, the Assembly is developing means by which the Plan Framework may be implemented and future monitoring reports will monitor the Plan. This involves additional indicators and therefore data collection, improved data collection methods and wider dissemination of resulting information. Central to this development is the





region's observatory, the South East England Intelligence Network (SEE-IN).

The RMR is a platform through which the Assembly monitors changes against targets and objectives. It is used as a tool to promote change and actions required to ensure the region progresses towards those targets and objectives. The Plan sets out a monitoring framework which describes how the RMR will continue to do this once the Plan is adopted.





STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

Last year the structure of the RMR was altered to provide a first step towards monitoring the Plan. This year's report builds on that well-received new structure.

The report follows the chapter structure set out in RPG9, with IRF objectives and indicators included within those relevant chapters. The chapters begin with a table setting out all indicators, the latest data for each indicator, the progress of the indicator (since the previous year or previously available data), the RPG9 policy, related IRF objectives and the target for the indicator or policy. The National Core Output Indicators for regional planning are highlighted in grey in the tables⁴, while significant effects indicators put forward through the South East Plan sustainability appraisal⁵ are boxed. The progress of the indicator is shown by one of the following symbols:

-  Clear improvement
-  Little or no change
-  Clear deterioration
-  Insufficient or no comparable data

The tables are followed by discussion of the key policy implications for each policy area. These are accompanied by a traffic light for each policy, determined as follows:

-  **Green:** Targets and objectives set out regionally or nationally have either been met or data indicates progression towards targets/objectives.
-  **Amber:** This can be for a number of reasons:
 - There is more than one indicator for the policy and they are moving in different directions
 - The policy needs close attention in the following monitoring year.
-  **Red:** The data indicates under-performance against targets and objectives set out regionally or nationally.
-  **Grey:** A traffic light for the policy cannot be determined because:
 - There is a lack of data available to fully assess performance
 - There is no detail available to explain the trends in data
 - Further research is required.

The main bulk of the chapter then follows. Only those indicators that show significant change or are National Core Output Indicators are presented, along with their key findings and commentary. Those indicators that do not show significant change are simply summarised in the table at the start of the chapter.

DATA WITHIN THE REPORT

As stated, this report only contains full data and analysis for those indicators deemed significant in terms of change over time or those included in the list of National Core Output Indicators. However, all data for indicators listed in this report (where publicly available) is accessible on the Assembly website. The information is organised into MS Excel workbooks for each chapter and may be downloaded from the website or ordered free of charge on CD direct from the Assembly⁶. Additionally, the South East England Intelligence Network (SEE-IN)⁷ will make the data available through the Data Hub.

HEADLINE IMPLICATIONS

The main **causes for concern** discussed in this report include:

Climate change – hotter, drier summers predicted as a consequence of climate change could result in an increase in days of moderate or high air pollution at rural sites, unless the primary pollutants from which ozone forms are reduced. While policies are still assessed as amber, unless measures are taken to mitigate climate change these policies will turn to red. We emphasise that the indicator is limited as it relies on data from only five sites for 2006 and local differences are hidden.

Socio-economic disparities – the disparity in economic performance from across the region remains significant and of concern, not least the continued differences between the generally more affluent north and west parts of the region as opposed to the less economically successful south and east of the region. Any possible economic downturn nationally is also

clearly a risk to future growth. Of strategic concern is that the percentage of children living in deprived households appears to have increased by 1% since 2004, concentrated along the coast and in Kent.

Affordable homes and housing affordability – the ratio of average income to average house prices shows the difficulties with housing affordability in this region and our monitoring information illustrates that despite rapid increases in housing delivery in recent years, affordability continues to worsen. Completions of affordable homes are running at some 30% below the rates set out in the draft South East Plan. Data from the National Affordable Housing Programme shows that starts on sites have been slower than forecast in the first half of 2007-08. A continuation of the current tenure split will not address identified needs; the region should be providing more social rented homes and fewer in intermediate tenures. Providing urgently needed family-sized homes and ensuring that affordable homes are built to higher environmental standards also add to the costs of new affordable homes. The Regional Funding Allocation for housing in the South East for 2008-11 leaves a funding gap for affordable housing amounting to some £400m.

Biodiversity – while the national farmland bird indicator shows a broad stabilisation of populations since the early 1990s, the South East indicator is still showing declines. The new Environmental Stewardship schemes have not been in place long enough to translate into changes to the index. Although the targeted approach of Higher Level Scheme (HLS) does enable action to be taken, in particular on farmland bird hotspots where most benefit will

be seen, Entry Level Scheme (ELS) farmland bird option take-ups also need to be monitored. In addition to the declines in bird populations, on the basis of the recent trend it appears unlikely that the region will achieve the Public Service Agreement target of 95% of Sites of Special Scientific Interest in favourable condition by 2010.

Transport – the overall distance travelled per person per year continues to increase. The proportion of schoolchildren walking to school in the South East continues to decrease, with an apparent quickening of the downward trend in the last 12 months for which data is available. This appears to correlate with South East schoolchildren of all ages travelling the furthest to school among the whole of England, which may be a result of policy choices outside transport. Perhaps more worryingly, the South East remains off-target for the reduction of killed or seriously injured casualties on the road network.

¹ Transport – Approved by the Secretary of State July 2004, Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy – Approved by the Secretary of State November 2004, Tourism and Related Sports and Recreation – Approved by the Secretary of State November 2004, Waste and Minerals – Approved by the Secretary of State June 2006, Ashford Sub-Regional Strategy – Approved by the Secretary of State July 2004 and Milton Keynes South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy – Approved by the Secretary of State March 2005.

² For information relating to consultation and the EiP please see www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/index.html

³ For the inspectors' report please see www.gos.gov.uk/gose/planning/regionalPlanning/southEastPlan/

⁴ See ODPM (2005) Core Output Indicators for Regional Planning – www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/147426

⁵ See the full sustainability report and further details on it at www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/key/sustainability.html

⁶ See www.southeast-ra.gov.uk for downloads or contact the Secretariat on 01483 555200 to order a free CD.

⁷ See www.see-in.co.uk

Flooding – climate change may exacerbate flooding as probability and severity increase. This highlights the need for investment in flood and coastal defences in certain parts of the region, for example South Hampshire. Conversely, climate change may also alter the frequency and severity of future droughts in a region where pressure on water resources is already high.

Waste exported from London – London continues to export large amounts of waste to the South East and other regions for disposal. Robust data is lacking but is improving. The London Plan has targets to improve its self sufficiency in waste management. There is a need for alternative management capacity, minimising waste generation in the first place and reducing imports from London. The region's landfills are filling up and have only between six and eight years' capacity.

PROVISION OF DATA

There continue to be problems associated with both the availability and the collection of data for this report. The headline implications identified in the report relating to the way in which data is collected include:

Housing densities – the recording of a gross measure of density as opposed to a net measure is still a problem in many local authorities.

Monitoring developments in town centres – the collection of data on developments in town centres remains a challenge and the Assembly continues to work with local authorities to improve this.

Habitat change – the South East Regional Priority Habitat Dataset was put together in 2006 using data collected by the Local Environmental Records Centres in the region. Although data is improving year on year significant data gaps remain in Surrey, East Sussex and West Sussex.

Commercial and leisure survey – the Assembly needs to continue working with local authorities to improve data collection through this survey.

Tourism data – the Assembly continues to work with Tourism South East and SEEDA to enhance sub-regional and local tourism data in the region, which currently suffer from inconsistency and small sample sizes.

Affordable housing – the Assembly circulated an updated and improved affordable housing survey in 2007. Survey data is now being evaluated and will be further developed in 2008.

Monitoring geography – the Assembly employs a variety of monitoring geographies in its surveys, some of which cause difficulties for data providers. These will be reviewed, in consultation with data providers, in 2008.

Flooding – although the Assembly has sourced data for this indicator from the Environment Agency it is not possible to compare it with data for previous years.

Waste – there is a continued need for the Assembly to work with regional partners on the development of inter-regional waste

movement data. There are also problems in monitoring hazardous waste, largely due to changes in the regulations governing what is classified as hazardous, making trend analysis impossible at this time.

Minerals – research to fill the data gaps on wharves and rail depots is ongoing.

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople – local authorities need to start monitoring authorised permanent and transit Gypsy and Traveller pitches – both public and private. They also need to monitor Travelling Showpeople plots and all unauthorised pitches and plots.

OTHER MONITORING

The Regional Assembly is also responsible for monitoring the conformity of Development Plan Documents (DPDs); ie the Assembly assesses the extent to which the DPD conforms to RPG9 and the draft South East Plan⁸.

FUTURE MONITORING AND DATA COLLECTION

During 2007 the Assembly reviewed and updated the IRF to produce the Regional Sustainability Framework (RSF). The RSF sets a common vision, 25 objectives and four priorities that will help guide sustainable development in the South East. All regional strategies and policies should follow RSF

⁸ For those that have been submitted, Assembly formal opinions on conformity of local authorities' DPDs are available on the website at www.southeast-ra.gov.uk along with an advice note on the process to local authorities.

principles to ensure the actions of all South East organisations contribute to a consistent vision of a sustainable future. The RSF will entirely replace the IRF. Future monitoring reports will therefore monitor the RSF.

While the South East Plan in its entirety will not be monitored until RMR08 (published in 2009), this report begins to address aspects of the Plan policies. For example, throughout the document Significant Effects indicators are highlighted. These indicators are drawn from the Sustainability Appraisal of the South East Plan⁹ and will be used to monitor specifically the sustainability of the Plan. In some cases the text within the chapters refers to the Plan policies, making the link between them and indicator data.

In addition, we are developing our monitoring systems to adapt to monitoring the Plan. The surveys used to collect data on housing, commercial and leisure development are being developed to provide a new web-based interface for data providers. This will be housed on SEE-iN and will populate a central database used by the Assembly. The online surveys are intended to provide a means by which authorities can upload data to a database without needing to handle cumbersome MS Excel spreadsheets. The system will also allow authorities access to other authorities' data. The surveys will be developed and piloted in consultation with local authorities throughout 2008, ready for full implementation in 2009.

Drafting of the South East Plan and, more recently the RSF, highlighted a number of gaps in key data required to monitor policies and objectives. The Assembly intends to carry out

research into those gaps to identify data or recommend changes to indicators to allow monitoring to take place. Furthermore, there are a number of indicators for which data does exist but no mechanisms for collecting it are in place. In these cases the Assembly will be liaising with data providers throughout 2008 to develop efficient processes for the collection of this information. Wrapped up in this work will be a higher level assessment of whether those indicators are still relevant to the monitoring of the Plan.

In addition to the analysis of data availability, the Assembly intends to produce a monitoring manual which will discuss the purpose and nature of regional monitoring, what will be collected, when and how.

The Assembly regularly produces reports on the demography of the South East. These papers provide a context for policy development and monitoring and may be accessed via the website¹⁰. In future years, these reports may form an annex to the RMR, outlining the key context for regional policies.

⁹ See www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/key/sustainability.html for more information and a copy of the final sustainability appraisal.

¹⁰ See www.southeast-ra.gov.uk

