

Matter 8A /South East England Regional Assembly



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Matter 8A: Sussex Coast Sub-Regional Strategy

8Ai Role and Economy

8Ai.1 What is the rationale for and role of the sub-region? Does the sub-regional strategy strike an appropriate balance between economic and environmental objectives (Policy SCT1)?

8Ai.2 Is there sufficient provision for employment land throughout the sub-region, particularly in West Sussex (Policies SCT3, SCT4), and is the policy stance in Policy SCT4ii justified?

8Ai.3 Is there the right balance of emphasis between the coastal towns and does the Plan give enough recognition to their different regeneration needs? If not, what more could be done (Policies SCT2, SCT6)?

8Ai.4 Are economic development opportunities identified with sufficient clarity, for example at Shoreham Harbour (Policy SCT3)?

1. The process of developing the sub-regional strategies has been undertaken by the principal authorities. As such the Assembly supports the responses of the Principal Authorities involved in developing the sub-regional strategy. Our response therefore only concentrates on Matter 8Ai.1.
2. The Regional Assembly's response to Matter 2A.4 sets out the background to the development of the sub-regional framework. This makes it clear that sub-regions have only been defined in the Plan where there is a need for a co-ordinated response across administrative boundaries to address a specific policy deficit.
3. The Sussex Coast was considered as a sub-region largely because it was previously identified in RPG9 as the 'Sussex Coast and Towns' Priority Area for Economic Regeneration (PAER). However, during the process of developing RPG9 there was an indication that other coastal towns in West Sussex, west of Shoreham Harbour, should also form part of the PAER. The Regional Economic Strategy also identifies the whole of the Sussex Coast as a priority regeneration area. As such the whole of the Sussex Coast was included within the sub-regional study undertaken in April 2004 which was led by East Sussex County Council and involved all principal and district authorities.
4. The Study concluded that, given the structural weakness and chronic poor performance of the local economy, the combination of tightening development constraints and the absence of locally generated demand for additional housing, there was a need to consider specific policies to address the needs of the area. In particular these were to focus upon the need to give greater future priority to economic growth rather than further housing development so as to achieve a more sustainable balance of development and to assist with reducing disparities within the region as a whole.

5. This conclusion was accepted by the Assembly and three further phases of work have been undertaken to develop and refine the sub-regional strategy (REF). It is clear from this work that it is the combination of very high levels of multiple deprivation in many of the towns, structural weakness and chronic poor economic performance, high unemployment rates & educational/skills levels, high out-commuting, tightening development constraints and poor transport infrastructure, acting together that makes the area unique and gives rise to such a particular set of issues that need to be addressed sub-regionally.
6. In turn this has led to the setting of the overall aim for the sub-region within the Plan (Section C para 4.6.6) to:

“Improve the overall economic performance of the sub-region by giving particular priority to achieving high levels of sustainable economic development. The intention is to bring performance closer to the regional average and reduce deprivation and social exclusion.”
7. The Sub-regional strategy as set out in Section E2 of the Plan develops from this overarching aim, as reflected in policy SCT1. It sets out an appropriate balance between the needs to address the structural failings of the economy and the need to protect the sub-region’s high environmental quality.
8. The remaining policies within Section E2 balance the overall aim of the sub-regional strategy, with those of other regional level policies, which together set out a coherent and focused framework for the development of Local Development Frameworks and other policy documents. The Regional Assembly supports the work of the principal authorities in developing the strategy, and believes it provides the most appropriate framework for the development of the sub-region, providing sufficient detail to enable Local Authorities to develop coherent and outcome local driven development documents, without addressing issues which are more appropriately addressed at the local level.

8Aii Housing and Infrastructure

8Aii.1 Is housing provision set at the right level in the Sussex Coast, having regard to the assumptions about local employment, and does it “help meet wider regional needs” (Policy SCT7, para 2.3)?

1. The Regional Assembly supports the work of the Principal Authorities in developing the strategy in relation to policies SCT7: Amount and Distribution of Housing. The Assembly response to Matters 1H and 4 sets out the rationale and reasoning for the overall housing provisions set out in the Plan.

8Aii.2 Is a 40% affordable housing appropriate in the Sussex Coast (Policy SCT8)?

1. The Assembly response to Matter 4A sets out the Assembly view of affordable housing. Bearing in mind the detailed level of work which has been undertaken in determining the sub-regional strategy and the imperative for affordable housing within the sub-region, the need for affordable housing provision as set out in policy SCT8 above the regional policy of 35% is appropriate and supported by the Regional Assembly.

8Aii.3 Has the potential for additional housing in the areas identified for development in structure plans been fully explored (Policy SCT7)?

1. The process of developing the sub-regional strategies has been undertaken by the principal authorities. Included within this work has been an assessment of all additional development sites, including those included through the Structure Plan process.

8Aii.4 Have the water supply and waste water treatment, flood risk, and transport implications of the growth proposals been adequately considered (and is there a case for a more co-ordinated sub-regional approach to infrastructure) (Policies SCT6, SCT9, para 11.1)?

8Aii.5 Are the proposals in the Implementation Plan (including for social and green infrastructure) clear, justified and well related to the spatial strategy? What are the priorities?

1. The Assembly response to Matters 1D and 10A sets out how infrastructure requirements have been considered and how the proposals in the Implementation Plan are related to the spatial strategy. For the first time at the regional and sub-regional levels the Implementation Plan specifically identifies the roles, responsibilities and actions required by specified organisations and other key stakeholders to deliver the objectives and policies in the Core Regional Strategy and Sub Regional Strategies. These will be a mixture of investments, policy decisions and behavioural change.
2. The Assembly has worked closely with principal authorities to develop the sub-regional infrastructure investment frameworks (SRIFs), which identify the sub-regionally significant infrastructure investments required to deliver the spatial strategy. They have been prepared in liaison with the relevant statutory infrastructure providers, including the Environment Agency, energy and water utility companies, the Highways Agency and Network Rail. The SRIFs indicate whether the need for infrastructure is prior to or alongside development set out in the sub-regional strategy. The priorities for each intervention are indicated by a combination of the need for infrastructure prior or alongside development, and the temporal period indicated for that intervention, all of which are linked back to the implementation of the sub-regional strategy.

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3. As a framework this provides a context within which detailed proposals for infrastructure requirements at the local level can be prepared through the local development framework process.
4. The Regional Assembly supports the work of the Principal Authorities in developing the strategy, and believes that it provides the most appropriate balance for the development of the sub-region. The framework provides sufficient detail to enable Local Authorities to develop coherent and outcome driven local development documents, without addressing issues which are more appropriately addressed at the local level.