

Matter 8D /South East England Regional Assembly



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Matter 8D: East Kent and Ashford Sub-Regional strategies

8Di Strategy and Economy

8Di.1 Does the proposed strategy appropriately identify and respond to the differing circumstances within this sub-region, within the context of its environmental attributes?

8Di.2 Does draft RSS make appropriate provision for significant growth in economic activity (Policies EKA3-7, RE5)?

1. The process of developing the sub-regional strategies has been undertaken by the principal authorities. As such the Assembly, in general terms, supports the responses of the Principal Authority, in this case Kent County Council, involved in developing the sub-regional strategy. In this section our response concentrates on Matter 8Di.1 and a specific point is made on the policies in the Plan on the countryside and the environment. With respect to Matter 8Di.2 specific points are made in relation to Lydd Airport (EKA4) and Wye campus of Imperial College London (EKA7).
2. The Regional Assembly response to Matter 2A.4 sets out the background as to the development of sub-regions contained within the South East Plan. This reiterates that distinct sub-regions will only be defined in the Plan where a defined area requires a co-ordinated set of policy responses across administrative boundaries in order to address a specific policy deficit.
3. The Assembly brief to Kent County Council sets out the strategic issues which the sub-regional strategy was to address. Other issues, including protection of the countryside and the environment are covered by the regional level policies and, as outlined above, sub-regional policies are only required to address the needs of the area where the issues are not covered adequately by the regional level policies. The regional policies in the cross-cutting section (D1) and sections D5: Sustainable Natural Resource Management and D7: Countryside and Landscape Management set out the principal environmental assets and policies in other chapters, e.g. policy T1, include criteria that would need to be satisfied by major development to ensure the environmental assets are not affected.
4. RPG9 identified that the Priority Areas for Economic Regeneration in East Kent required tailored strategies, supported by appropriate resources, to address their problems and maximise their contribution to the sustainable development of the region. RPG9 also identified Ashford as a national growth area and the subsequent alteration to RPG9 set out the spatial strategy for Ashford to 2016. Therefore, the brief for the sub-region embraced both of these concepts exploring post 2016 development in Ashford, and the further development of a positive relationship with the remainder of East Kent. The sub-regional strategy for East Kent and Ashford was developed by Kent

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County Council, and involved all district authorities and representatives of social, environmental and economic sectors.

5. The initial sub-regional strategy work demonstrated that it is a combination of the special gateway role of the sub-region, the need for an urban renaissance of the coastal towns, the fostering of links between the Growth Area and coastal regeneration areas, the development needs of the sub-region, the integration of new development with existing and planned transport capacity and the achievement of integrated coastal management that gives rise to a particular set of issues that need to be addressed sub-regionally.
6. In turn this has led to the setting the overall aim of the sub-region within the Plan (Section C para 4.6.8) to:
7. “Give particular priority to the regeneration of the coastal towns and the continuing development of the Ashford Growth Area. A positive and mutually beneficial relationship between Ashford and the coastal towns will be required in order to realise potentials, enhance economic performance and address priority social problems.”
8. The Sub regional strategy as set out in Section E3 of the Plan develops from this overarching aim and sets out the preferred spatial strategy in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.7. This sets out an appropriate balance between concentrating development and investment at Ashford, responding to housing needs which match employment patterns in the remaining urban areas and the need to manage and enhance an outstanding coastal landscape.
9. The draft South East Plan makes appropriate provision for significant growth in economic activity in relation to policies EKA3-7 and RE5. The submission of planning advice which Kent County Council made to the Regional Assembly on 9th December 2005¹ included an additional sentence in policy EKA4 that “the expansion of aviation at Lydd Airport will be supported provided proposals satisfy policy criteria for the environment, transport and amenity”. The Assembly determined that the role of Lydd Airport is of local not regional significance and accordingly this is more appropriate for consideration at the LDF level.
10. On 15th September 2006 Imperial College London withdrew their proposal for the expansion of Wye Campus at Ashford and therefore the text in policy EKA7 “iii Ashford – at the Wye Campus of Imperial College London.” should be deleted.
11. The remaining policies within Section E3 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

¹ See http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/key/study_areas/east_kent_ashford.html for the main report with the advice

Assembly supports the work of Kent County Council in developing the strategy, and believes it provides the most appropriate balance for the development of the sub-region. The framework provides sufficient detail to enable LDFs to develop a coherent and outcome driven development document, without addressing issues which are more appropriately addressed at the more local level.

8Dii Ashford

8Dii.1 Does the level of housing provision proposed at Ashford post 2016 take appropriate account of its growth area status, local constraints and opportunities, and current build rates (Policy EKA1)?

8Dii.2 Is the level of 30% affordable housing justified and capable of being implemented (Policy EAK3)?

8Dii.3 How valid is the concept of reducing housing numbers particularly at Ashford in the event of delays in the provision of infrastructure, services and employment (Policy EKA1) and how would this be applied?

8Diii East Kent and Ashford sub-region outside Ashford

8Diii.1 Does the draft RSS adequately recognise the potential for housing growth in Dover District given its economic prospects and regeneration needs (Policy H1 and EKA1)?

8Diii.2 Do the level and distribution of housing provision proposed in East Kent outside Ashford take appropriate account of regeneration objectives, the role of regional hubs, and forecast local needs and environmental sensitivities (Policy EKA1)?

8Diii.3 Is the level of 30% affordable housing justified and capable of being implemented (Policy EAK3)?

1. The Regional Assembly supports the work of Kent County Council in developing the strategy in relation to policies EKA1: Amount and Distribution of Housing and EKA2: Affordable Housing.
2. The Assembly response to Matters 1H and 4 sets out the rational and reasoning for the overall housing provisions set out in the Plan.
3. 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 that housing markets are less buoyant in this sub-region than in most other parts of the South East, the Assembly supports the proposed target of 30% affordable housing as set out in policy EKA2.

8Div Implementation and Format

8Div.1 Have the water supply and waste water treatment, flood risk, and transport implications of the growth proposals been adequately considered?

8Div.2 Are the proposals in the Implementation Plan² (including for social and green infrastructure clear), justified and well related to the spatial strategy? What are the priorities?

8Div.3 Does the proposed sub-regional policy framework (14 policies) provide an appropriate level of guidance for LDDs?

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 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.
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. In relation to Matter 8Div.3, as outlined above, the Regional Assembly supports the work of Kent County Council 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 LDFs to develop a coherent and outcome driven development document, without addressing issues which are more appropriately addressed at the more local level.

² Updated by SEERA prior to EiP and available online at <http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/key/infrastructure.html>