

Matter 9B /South East England Regional Assembly



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Matter 9B: Rest of Kent

9B.1 Does the draft RSS take proper account of the capacity of towns/locations in the rest of Swale, Medway, Dartford, Gravesham, Sevenoaks, and Ashford, and in Tonbridge & Malling, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells for sustainable development (including Policy HI bearing in mind recent building rates, existing commitments and local housing needs?

9B.2 How does the role of Maidstone as a regional hub relate to the Thames Gateway (Policy KTG11), and to the East Kent and Ashford sub-region?

9B.3 What is the role of Tonbridge-Tonbridge Wells as a double-regional-hub (Policy CC8b)?

9B.4 How does the policy on Strategic Gaps relate to the Green Belt in Kent and can it be justified (Policies KTG3 and KTG11)?

1. The process of preparing housing provision figures for District Council areas and parts of Districts in Kent outside the sub-regional strategy areas has been undertaken by the principal authorities, in this case Kent County Council and Medway Council. In this section our response concentrates on Matters 9B.2 and 9B.3 and the role of the two regional hubs of Maidstone and Tonbridge-Tunbridge Wells.
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 there is a need for a co-ordinated set of policy responses across administrative boundaries in order to address a specific policy deficit.
3. On the evidence basis available there is no requirement for a separate set of policies for the area covered by the Rest of Kent. However, there was an identified need for specific policies to be included in order to provide the policy framework for the regional hubs of Maidstone and Tonbridge/Tunbridge Wells. The policy (CC8c) is included in the cross-cutting section of the plan as part of the cross-cutting spatial policies and following policy CC8b on Regional Hubs. The wording of this policy draws on the advice submitted to the Regional Assembly of 9th December 2006 by Kent County Council and Medway Council.