

Matter 8G /South East England Regional Assembly



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Matter 8G: Gatwick Area Sub-Regional Strategy

8Gi Role and Economy

8Gi.1 What is the rationale for and role of this sub-region, having regard to its geography and functional relationships?

8Gi.2 Is the sub-regional strategy an appropriate response to the economic potential and the social and environmental attributes of the area?

8Gi.3 Is Policy GAT4 sufficient to guide LPAs and other stakeholders on the steps that should be taken to foster the future development of the sub-regional economy?

8Gi.4 Does the proposed strategy adequately reflect the role and potential of Crawley, including the role of Gatwick Airport as an economic driver?

1. The Gatwick Area is characterised and constrained by the existence of Metropolitan Green Belt in the extreme north of the sub-region, and the High Weald and South Downs AONBs to the south, with one regional hub (Crawley) and several smaller supporting centres spread across the central axes that make up a cruciform marked out by the key transport linkages north-south and east-west, centred on Crawley. This implies a growth and distribution of development that must be primarily focused on the key locations along the transport corridors as described below while recognising the need to promote smaller-scale development at other locations.
2. The rationale for the sub-region reflects the need for an explicit sub-regional policy framework. Most importantly, it is the only sub-region that is home to a principal international airport, which historically has played the dominant economic role in the area's development. This continuing economic role is explicitly picked up in Policy GAT4 which ensures linkage with the continuing role of the Airport as a one-runway, two terminal airport upon which sub-regional economy will continue to be strongly related, but which is now also promoting economic growth that is less dependent on the airport through a "smart growth" high value-added approach.
3. Policy GAT1 set down the policy framework of a sub-region of distinct settlements set in attractive countryside that are not planned to coalesce, which supports the intent of (supporting text) para. 1.3 of Section E9 which outlines the sub-region's vision and para. 4.6.7 of Section C which provides the framework of the sub-region within the framework of the regional policies. Policy GAT1 and para 1.3 of Section E9, and para. 4.6.7 of Section C of the Plan are therefore mutually consistent and supporting.

4. Sitting within this high level spatial strategy are Policies GAT2 and GAT4, setting the key locations for housing and economic development respectively, namely Crawley and the other main settlements set on the key road and rail transport corridors. As the work of the Principal Authorities demonstrates, it is at these broad locations that growth should be focused in the sub-region whereas a smaller scale level of development should be directed at the smaller settlements so as to maintain the essential character of the sub-region. Therefore, when considered alongside the housing development locations proposed in Policy GAT2, Policy GAT4 is clearly sufficient to guide development of the sub-regional economy. This ensures that a smart growth approach to economic development is encouraged, with the emphasis on the provision of new employment floorspace being at the key locations identified in Policy GAT2, including the development of a university campus in the sub-region.
5. The Gatwick Area's labour supply has traditionally consisted of a semi-skilled but high value workforce, characterised through the emphasis on employment in the key sub-regional centres and on the levels of in-commuting to London. However, while the Gatwick Area has stronger economic linkages to the north than the south, it is not considered that the level of linkage to South London is sufficient for the sub-region to be considered as simply an adjunct to South London given its economic importance in its own right, not least due to the presence of Gatwick Airport.
6. In considering the rationale for the sub-region, it is equally important to understand how the both the nature and policy needs of the Gatwick Area are distinct from the adjoining sub-regions. In contrast to the London Fringe to the north, it is not subject to Metropolitan Green Belt planning policy for the most part and so planning policies for Gatwick must recognise this distinction, bar the very north of the sub-region. The London Fringe also exhibits strong east-west linkages of regional and national importance through the existence of the M25 and North Downs rail line (Tonbridge – Redhill – Guildford), the nature of which are not replicated in the Gatwick Area. Of more concern are the sub-regional linkages east to west. To the south, the Sussex Coast sub-region also exhibits distinct characteristics. The economic base is weaker, as set out in the Sussex Coast strategy and the policy foci there are aimed principally at raising the economic performance and growth of the area.

8Gii Housing and Environment

8Gii.1 Is the proposed housing provision for the sub-region at the most appropriate level, having regard to social, economic and environmental considerations?

1. The Assembly supports the detailed work of the Principal Authorities in developing the strategy in relation to Policy GAT2: Housing Distribution and the overall sub-regional context set out in Policy GAT1. The Assembly response to Matters 1H and 4 sets out the rationale and reasoning for the overall housing provisions set out in the Plan.

8Gii.2 Is the target that 40% of new housing should be affordable justified and appropriate (Policy GAT3)? Is it capable of being achieved?

1. Bearing in mind the detailed level of work which has been undertaken in developing the sub-regional strategy, and the imperative for affordable housing within the sub-region as set out in the local evidence base and reflected by the Principal Authorities in their submissions, the need for affordable housing provision as set out in policy GAT3 of 40% is appropriate and supported by the Regional Assembly.

8Gii.3 Is the proposed apportionment of the overall housing provision to the Districts at the most appropriate level, taking account of socio-economic and environmental factors?

1. The apportionment of the overall housing provision between Districts, as set out in Policy GAT2 is supported by the Assembly, and has been arrived at through the detailed level of work undertaken in determining the sub-regional strategy and consideration by sub-regional partners of the implications of different spatial options through the development of their Advice to the Regional Assembly. The Assembly supports the basis on which this work was undertaken.

8Gii.4 How should the potential of transport corridors, including their relationship with adjacent sub-regions and with London, be taken into account in the spatial strategy (Policies GAT1 and GAT2)?

1. This question is addressed in paragraphs 1 to 6 above.

8Gii.5 How should the uncertainty regarding expansion of Gatwick be reflected in the housing distribution?

1. The Assembly supports the sub-regional housing distribution set out in Policy GAT2, which reflects the role of Gatwick as a one runway, two terminal airport. The Assembly has clearly stated its position that the levels of growth set out in the Air Transport White Paper are inherently unsustainable.

8Gii.6 Has the sustainability of developing Green Belt land for housing and mixed uses been properly considered?

1. The housing distribution of Policy GAT2 has been arrived at through the detailed level of work undertaken in determining the sub-regional strategy and consideration by sub-regional partners of the implications of different spatial options. The Assembly therefore supports the statement made by the Principal Authorities on this issue.

8Gii.7 Is the approach to Strategic Gaps properly justified (Policy GAT1)

1. The Assembly has no comment to make on this matter.

8Giii Infrastructure and Implementation

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

1. The work of the sub-regional partners in arriving at their Advice for the Regional Assembly has been fully taken into account in arriving at Policy GAT5, particularly in terms of the distribution of development being directed primarily at the key locations on transport corridors to maximise sustainable provision of infrastructure and the sustainability of transport movement in order to reduce the need for inter-urban movements by car. The Implementation Plan sets out more specific proposals for key infrastructure development in the sub-region.
2. The water companies and the EA were members of the Stakeholder Reference Group that contributed to the testing of scenarios at an early stage of the development of the sub-regional policies. Policy GAT4 requires improved water supply and water treatment capacity as well as improvements to the existing sewage system/works - amongst others - as crucial strategic infrastructure. It also highlights the need for more efficient use of resources including water.
3. Further modeling work by the EA regarding waste water treatment at Crawley has now been completed indicating that the proposed growth can be handled with appropriate and timely investment and that a detailed water cycle study is no longer required.
4. Policy GAT4 also identifies surface water drainage management at certain locations to minimize flooding as crucial strategic infrastructure.
5. Close co-operation between the PA and the EA took place in areas targeted for development such as Crawley and Horley. For the development sites at Horley a detailed assessment of flood risk had already been undertaken as part of the Local Plan process.
6. The new LDFs will be required to assess flood risk. Several authorities have already started a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. It is expected that there are sufficient sites available outside the EA Flood Zones to meet the sub-regional housing allocations including the potentials within the urban area of Crawley.

8Giii.2 Are the proposals in the Implementation Plan¹ (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 ID and IOA 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.
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.

¹ Updated by the Assembly prior to EiP and available online at <http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/key/infrastructure.html>