

SOUTH EAST PLAN

PROJECT PLAN UPDATE

August 2005

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This project plan provides an update on the information on the South East England Regional Assembly's Project Plan for preparing a spatial strategy for the South East. When approved by the Deputy Prime Minister the strategy will replace existing regional planning guidance contained in RPG9 and extend the time period covered from 2016 to 2026.
- 1.2 The project plan envisages the submission of a draft strategy by the Assembly to the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) on 31 March 2006. Following a period of formal public consultation undertaken by GOSE in Spring 2006 and a public examination in Autumn 2006, approval of the strategy by the Deputy Prime Minister would be likely in the second half of 2007.
- 1.3 Policy Planning Statement 11 on Regional Spatial Strategies (PPS11) sets out the requirement for the process of revising the spatial strategy for the South East and should be read in conjunction with this document.
- 1.4 The Plan has been reviewed and adjusted to reflect emerging considerations, and other changes, especially in the light of the 2004 Planning Act.

2. OBJECTIVES

The Need for a Full Review of RPG9

- 2.1 The Assembly is to undertake a comprehensive review of the provisions of RPG9 in as far as they apply to the South East Region¹ in order to:
 - Develop long-term regionally specific spatial policies for the new South East Region for the period to 2026 to provide:
 - provide the framework for the production of local development documents, local transport plans and other relevant regional strategies;
 - provide the context for investment decisions to be taken by a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations.
 - Review and develop more clearly the sub-regional dimension to policies in regional planning guidance.
 - Take account of government guidance in PPS11 on the preparation of regional spatial strategies. (In its present form RPG 9, which was

¹ RPG9 relates to the area covered by the present South East Region, London and three counties in the East of England Region – Essex, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.

approved by the government in March 2001, does not fully accord with advice in PPS11).

- Assess the implications of changes to government policies and to the key spatial planning issues facing the South East since the approval of RPG9.
- Articulate the key inter-regional linkages and reflect these in the strategy.
- Provide the framework for longer-term development in the existing regional growth areas of Ashford, Milton Keynes/South Midlands and the Thames Gateway.

Selective Reviews of RPG9

2.2 The Assembly has already progressed the following selective reviews of RPG9 to deal with aspects of guidance which require early attention:

- Transport;
- Tourism and related recreational development;
- Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy;
- Waste and Natural Resource Management;
- Minerals;
- Development to 2016 in the growth areas of Ashford and Milton Keynes/South Midlands, the latter in conjunction with the East Midlands and East of England Regions.

2.3 The policies and proposals contained in the reviews have been incorporated in the wider regional spatial strategy, although modifications have been made to ensure consistency with other topic areas and to cover the longer period to 2026, as appropriate.

3. AREAS TO BE CONSIDERED

Style and Content of the Regional Spatial Strategy

3.1 The South East Plan should:

- Articulate a spatial vision;
- Provide a concise spatial strategy for achieving that vision;
- Address regional or sub-regional issues;
- Be consistent with an supportive of other regional frameworks and strategies;
- Be specific to the region;
- Be locationally but not sit specific;
- Be focused on delivery mechanisms;
- Provide a clear link between policy objectives and priorities, targets and indicators;
- Apply the test of adding value to the overall planning process; and
- Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

- 3.2 The South East Plan is not restricted to matters that can be implemented through the planning system or local transport plan process. However, policies will have a spatial dimension and help guide activity to appropriate parts of the region as the sub-regional work is completed. The Plan will also include major infrastructure proposals and management policies. Where these cannot be implemented through the planning and local transport plan processes the means of delivery will be clarified with the appropriate agencies through the Implementation Plan.
- 3.3 Account has also been taken of a wide range of activities and programmes which will have a bearing on land use activities including health, education, culture, economic development, skills and training, social inclusion, crime reduction and the impact of climate change, through work with the Assembly's partners and membership.

Relationship with Other Regional Strategies

- 3.4 The South East Plan is supportive of other regional strategies and statements in delivering sustainable development in the South East. By virtue of its long-term, statutory nature, it provides the hub for a number of inter-connected strategies, including the Regional Economic, Transport, Housing, Cultural and Waste Management Strategies. It has been and will continue to be informed by these strategies and in turn provide the long-term spatial context for their development. (see figure 1).
- 3.5 Account has also been taken of community strategies being prepared by local strategic partnerships, the South East Social Inclusion Statement published in 2002 and particularly the Integrated Regional Framework (IRF), most notably through the Sustainability Appraisal. The IRF is essentially an evolution of the existing Regional Sustainable Development Framework (RSDF) and aims to aid integration between strategies by highlighting linkages and establishing a common sustainability appraisal process based on the overall objectives currently in the RSDF.

Figure 1 : RSS Relationship to other Regional Strategies



Regional Objectives

3.6 Many of the key development principles contained in RPG9 remained relevant in developing objectives for the South East Plan, in particular, the emphasis on concentrating development in urban areas, the focus on use of brownfield land, the promotion of regeneration, renewal and social inclusion, the sustainable management of resources, the evolution of a multi-purpose countryside and reducing the reliance on the private car for some forms of travel. Objectives were agreed following public discussion of both the key issues to be addressed in the South East Plan and a vision for the long- term spatial development of the region. The vision and objectives of the South East Plan are set out here:

South East Plan Vision

The Healthy Region

Through the Plan and other measures, the South East will show a sustained improvement in its quality of life over the period to 2026, measured by the well-being of its citizens, the vitality of its economy, the wealth of its environment and the prudent use of natural resources.

In particular, the region will achieve:

- Better management of the impact of its consumption on people and the environment in other countries reflecting its recognition of its global responsibilities
- A reduction in the disparity experienced across the region by raising the performance of the most deprived areas.
- An increase in the overall level of accessibility to essential services
- More and better quality housing, so that most individuals have access to a decent home
- More prudent use and management of natural resources, including land, water, energy and waste, with the emphasis on reducing our use of resources, and increasing their reuse and recycling
- Better management of the impact of increased activity and development on the environment
- Realising opportunities to improve the quality of the built and natural environment
- Steady and sustainable levels of economic growth, capitalising in the region's strengths and the opportunities to increase productivity
- Providing for, and retaining, a broader education and skills base across the whole population
- Improved levels of health amongst the region's citizen.

South East Plan Objectives

- i. The need for a clear vision supported by challenging targets and which reflects quality of life considerations aligned with and tested against the objectives in the Integrated Regional Framework.
- ii. The need to plan positively for a reasonable level of economic growth, with consequent labour supply, physical and social infrastructure implications.
- iii. The need for further measures to reduce economic and social disparities in the region.
- iv. The need to plan positively for a reasonable level of housing.
- v. The need for a substantial increase in the supply of appropriate affordable housing, and for a package of measures to deliver that goal.
- vi. The need for timely infrastructure provision that keeps pace with development and greater reassurance on that issue through a dialogue with Government on how to plan for that development.
- vii. The need to develop clear investment priorities and improve key transport links.

- viii. The need to improve access via transport and other means, especially for disadvantaged groups.
- ix. The need to promote new initiatives to tackle skills deficits.
- x. The need for radical thinking about health provision and access.
- xi. The need to place increased emphasis on natural resource management and efficiency.
- xii. The need to incorporate measures for climate change mitigation and adaption in the Plan.
- xiii. The need to protect and improve the best of the region's natural environment both for its own sake and to underpin the social and economic development of the region.
- xiv. The need to promote a sustainable balance between economic prosperity, environmental quality, social well-being and a high quality of life in the South East.
- xv. As a sub-region level, the need for a high priority to regenerate the coastal towns.
- xvi. The need to decide whether any strategic development areas should be proposed.
- xvii. The need to develop a strategy that creatively balances support for the regeneration and growth areas in the east with a positive response to the economic and housing pressures in the west of the region.
- xviii. The need to develop the Plan in a manner which recognises uncertainty in and incorporates phasing and flexibility.
- xix. The need to prepare and advocate much improved delivery and management arrangements to secure implementation of the Plan.
- xx. The need to set the Plan in a clear inter-regional and European context.
- xxi. The need to ensure high quality development.

3.7 The strategy will need a degree of robustness and flexibility so as to respond to change over the period to 2026, not all of which can now be foreseen, for example changes in working practices and economic structure. Account will have to be taken of sub-regional needs and aspirations, assess the amounts of new housing required in each district and the broad locations for development of regional and sub-regional significance. All of this work continues over the coming months to culminate in the submission to the Secretary of State in March 2006. In addition, priorities need to be set for major infrastructure projects and their delivery in a manner which closely and clearly links them to the wider spatial development pattern. The level of detail given will be less for the later years of the period covered by the South East Plan.

4. TIMETABLE

4.1 The timetable for the Plan is set out below and is also available in the form of a Gantt chart which is attached as Annex A:

Time Period	Sub-Regions	SE Plan Part One	SE Plan Part Two	Sustainability Appraisal	Consultation
July 2003 – Sept 2003	Sub-regional Studies underway	Development Work			Rural and Urban Conference
Oct 2003 – Dec 2003	Sub-regional Studies underway	Development Work			
Jan 2004 – Mar 2004	Sub-regional Studies underway	Preparation for Spring Debates		Advice on SEA impacts on South East Plan	Spring Debates 2004 commence April 2004
Apr 2004 – Jun 2004	Sub-regional Studies completed May 2004	Further Development work and drafting of South East Plan		Scoping Work – Phase One	Spring Debates 2004 finish May 2004
July 2004 – Sept 2004	Sub-regional Strategy work commences July 2004	Drafting of South East Plan			
Oct 2004 – Dec 2004	Sub-regional Strategies completed Oct 2004	Finalised document for consultation	Development work	Scoping Work – Phase Two. First Sustainability Appraisal of South East Plan. First Sustainability Appraisal Report	
Jan 2005 – Mar 2005	Consultation on Sub-regional Strategies (Jan-Apr 2005)	Consultation of South East Plan part one	Development work by sub-regional groups	Consultation of South East Plan and First Sustainability Appraisal Report	Consultation of South East Plan part one begins Jan 2005
Apr 2005 – Jun 2005	Development work by sub-regional groups	Final Drafting of South East Plan begins	Development work by sub-regional groups	Second Appraisal of South East Plan Part One	Consultation of South East Plan part one close Apr 2005
July 2004 – Sept 2005	Development work by sub-regional groups	Final drafting of South East Plan – Regional Strategy. Approved and submitted to Secretary of State.	Development work by sub-regional groups	Second Sustainability Appraisal Report of South East Plan Part One	Consultation on housing distribution led by Principal Authorities
Oct 2005 – Dec 2005	Development work by sub-regional groups		Sub-regional/housing distribution work finalised.	Preparation of Final Sustainability Appraisal Report	Consultation on housing distribution led by Principal Authorities
Jan 2006 – Mar 2006	Final Sub-regional Strategies formally submitted to Secretary of State.	Final South East Plan part one formally submitted to Secretary of State.	Final housing distribution figures submitted to Secretary of State	Final Sustainability Appraisal Report	

5. SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

- 5.1 An independent sustainability appraisal is an integral part of the South East Plan process and has been and will be used to inform the development of spatial options and policies, on an iterative basis, using the IRS as a benchmark.
- 5.2 The Assembly has co-ordinated the preparation of a common regional approach to appraisal to be used for the South East Plan and all other regional/sub-regional strategies. This was based on the process we have already established to assess our proposals in the on-going selective reviews of RPG9.
- 5.3 Account has also been taken of the Strategic Environmental Assessment European Directive and the appraisal methods used in rural proofing, climate change proofing, futures proofing and Health Impact Assessment.
- 5.4 To aid the sustainability appraisal process, the Assembly is establishing a sustainability appraisal Sounding Board. It also acts as an independent voice in the process, with representatives from the Statutory Environmental Bodies, and key Regional Stakeholders. For more information on the sustainability appraisal Sounding Board and the published sustainability appraisal reports, see the Assembly's South East Plan website at www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/key/sustainability.html

Progress to Date

- 5.5 A draft Sustainability Appraisal Report was prepared that related to the consultation draft of the South East Plan. This report was published alongside the consultation draft. Respondents to the consultation were able to use the contents of the report to inform their responses. They were also able to comment on the appraisal process itself.
- 5.6 The draft Sustainability Appraisal Report identified a number of issues regarding the policies and proposals in the draft South East Plan. The Assembly team has worked with the Advisory Groups to review the policies and proposals. As part of this review the points raised in the draft Sustainability Appraisal Report have been taken into consideration alongside the consultation responses and any additional technical work. An audit trail is being maintained that records how the issues identified in the draft Sustainability Appraisal Report have been addressed in the revision of the policies and proposals.
- 5.7 In parallel with the work above, the draft Sustainability Appraisal Report is itself being reviewed. The Assembly's consultants are reviewing the comments made on the draft report arising from the consultation. They are also updating the report to take into account more recent technical work

that is now available. This will enable a second draft Sustainability Appraisal report to be prepared.

- 5.8 As an integral part of the South East Plan it is important that the work on the development of the sub-regional strategies takes into account sustainability issues. It should be borne in mind that the key issues to be addressed by the sub-regional strategies have been identified in the planning briefs agreed by the Assembly. The range of sustainability issues to be considered in the preparation of the sub-regional strategies are therefore more focused and limited in scope than the ones that need to be considered in preparing the regional policy framework. It is therefore not necessary for separate sustainability reports to be prepared for each sub-regional strategy. Initial guidance on how the sub-regional strategies should take into account sustainability issues was issued to the principal authorities in September 2004. An additional guidance note has been issued to the principal authorities and a briefing seminar held at which the principal authorities were provided with the opportunity to clarify any outstanding concerns.

6. RESOURCES

- 6.1 The preparation of the RSS, including the carrying out of sub-regional studies and the development of sub-regional strategies, will make a considerable call on technical and political resources. A partnership approach will be essential for success, drawing on the resources of the Assembly's own staff, together with significant input from county, district and unitary authorities and from the business and voluntary sectors represented in the Assembly. In addition, specific projects requiring specialist expertise will be commissioned from member organisations or from consultants.
- 6.2 The Assembly will look to the county councils and the unitary authorities (and ultimately the proposed National Park Authorities) to contribute their strategic planning expertise and to input to sub-regional working, in part through the redeployment of resources released by work on structure plans. In addition, county, unitary and district councils will need to work closely together and establish appropriate partnership arrangements to ensure co-ordination between the layers of development planning, and to undertake joint studies.
- 6.3 The development of the South East Plan will also draw on useful work under way in parallel with the RSS, on other Regional Strategies, notably the Regional Housing Strategy and the Regional Economic Strategy. On occasions joint research commissions will achieve this. Data and ideas will also be derived from the evolving Community Strategies/Plan programme, the work of Local Strategic Partnerships and recent structure and Local Plan preparation.
- 6.5 The Assembly's established network of technical advisory groups will play a key role in overseeing the technical work for the RSS. Membership of the groups is broadly based and drawn from local authorities, government

agencies, academics, developers and the voluntary sector. Two new groups have been established to strengthen the technical input to the Plan; one to advise on cross-cutting issues, the other to deal with social inclusion, health and community issues. Time limited task groups have and will continue to be established to deal with specific topics. Advice will be sought from a wide range of expert opinion as the opportunity and need arises. The Advisory Groups are listed below:

- Strategy Advisory Group
- Housing Advisory Group
- Transport Advisory Group
- Economy Advisory Group
- Natural Resources and Climate Change Advisory Group
- Urban Renaissance Advisory Group
- Rural Advisory Group
- Waste (South East Region Technical Advisory Body/SERTAB)
- Minerals (South East Region Aggregates Working Party/SERAWP)
- Policy Advisory Group
- Cross-Cutting Advisory Group

6.5 Working arrangements are already in place to further develop the sub-regional elements of the plan. This comprises sub-regional officer and member working groups taking forward the work in this area of the Plan.

6.6 The Assembly's Business Plan 2005-2008 makes provision for further resource needs/implications over the next three years. To view the business plan please see the Assembly website at www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/publications/bus_plan.html

7. RESEARCH AND TECHNICAL STUDIES

7.1 To support the development of the draft South East Plan a programme of research work will be necessary. This programme of work has focused on the areas of:

- Household/Population/Economic Forecasting
- Housing – Affordable Housing/Housing Need
- Economy/Business trends/patterns
- Retail Development/Analysis
- Social issues - Health
- Rural dimensions
- Natural Environment – Air Quality/Noise/Climate Change/Waste Movement
- Transport – Strategic Transport Model/Prioritisation
- Relationship to London
- Monitoring

- 7.2 As the work on developing the core document and sub-regional work draws to a close, the focus of research will turn to supporting the delivery of the Implementation Plan and the monitoring framework of the South East Plan,
- 7.3 The programme of research that is underway or has been completed is attached in Annex B. As research work is completed it is placed on the Assembly's South East Plan website at http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/publications/research_reports.html

Sub-regional Planning

- 7.4 As part of the South East Plan policy development, where a level of policy definition below the regional level is clearly justified, sub-regions should be defined for the application of specific policies. For the housing distribution the unit will be each district council and unitary authority. Areas appropriate for other policies are likely to vary according to topic.
- 7.5 Extensive discussions were undertaken with local authorities and other regional partners with a view to firming up the sub-region geography in the South East regions and establishing working arrangements for dealing with sub-regional issues. A set of sub-regional studies was undertaken in 2003/2004 to establish what areas of the region required additional specific policies further to those at the region level.
- 7.6 Distinct sub-regions were only agreed where a defined area required a co-ordinated set of policy responses across administrative, and sometimes regional, boundaries and where a specific set of policies are required to address the needs of the area. Such sub-regions would not therefore cover all parts of the South East.
- 7.7 Following earlier work on the need for sub-regional areas 9 sub-regions and a special policy area were agreed and taken forward to develop sub-regional strategies. These sub-regions are:
- South Hampshire
 - Sussex Coast
 - East Kent and Ashford
 - Kent Thames Gateway
 - London Fringe
 - Western Corridor and Blackwater Valley
 - Central Oxfordshire
 - Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale
 - Gatwick Area
 - Isle of Wight (Special Policy Area)

A map of the sub-regions is attached in Annex C.

- 7.8 The sub-regional strategies have drawn extensively on earlier study work in those areas, and particularly work undertaken or taking place on structure

plan reviews and the preparation of community strategies and local plans / local development documents.

- 7.9 Work on the sub-regional strategies is well underway, with sub-regional strategy policies almost complete. Further work by the sub-regions continues focusing on more detailed elements of the strategies, in particular, the distribution of housing.

8. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

- 8.1 The South East Plan will place considerable emphasis on implementation, to a substantially greater extent than has been the case with Regional Planning Guidance. The implementation implications of policies and proposals will be considered and discussed with appropriate agencies. An Implementation Plan will then be drawn up as a part of the strategy in consultation with agencies responsible for the delivery of policies and proposals in the South East Plan. Appropriate targets and indicators to measure the strategy's progress and to allow effective monitoring will also be identified.

Progress To Date – Implementation

- 8.2 The Implementation Plan is an integral part of the South East Plan. Its primary aim is to identify the mechanisms required to deliver the policies set out in the Plan and to set out a programme of investment that will support delivery of that policy framework
- 8.3 A draft of the Implementation Plan was published as part of the consultation document. However this will not be the definitive version; it will only be possible to compile the final version of the Implementation Plan once the final advice from the principal authorities leading the work on the sub-regional strategies has been received in December.

Progress to Date – Monitoring

- 8.4 Monitoring of the South East Plan is essential to establish how the Plan is performing in policy terms and to flag up areas where further policy work is needed. A draft monitoring and indicator report was published for consultation at the same time as the Plan, setting out the proposed indicators the Assembly wishes to use to monitoring the performance of the South East Plan.
- 8.5 Following feedback from the consultation, and as work on policy development at the regional level is well advanced, and underway at the sub-regional level, further work is required to develop a final suite of indicators to measure the success of policies in the South East Plan. The Assembly is setting up two monitoring groups, one with members and one with officers, to assist Assembly officers to develop the final monitoring programme. Drawing on officers and members from around the region, these groups will focus on reviewing the draft monitoring and indicators report, considering key comments from the Assembly's consultation and proposing a final list of

indicators for inclusion in the Plan. The programme for this work, until March 2006, is set out in Annex A.

9. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- 9.1 As part of the preparation of the South East Plan, PPS11 requires the Regional Planning Body (RPB) to produce a 'Statement of Public Participation', explaining how it is involving the public in the preparation of the Plan. Once agreed, the Statement should be reviewed as the Plan preparation proceeds. An update statement, from May 2005, is attached in Annex D and is also available on the Assembly's South East Plan website at http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/comms_strategy.html

ANNEX A

South East Plan Timetable – Gantt Chart

ANNEX B

Programme of Research

ANNEX C

Map of Sub-Regions

ANNEX D

Statement of Public Participation