

# a clear vision FOR THE SOUTH EAST

## UPDATE ON THE SOUTH EAST PLAN

Number 13

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## PARTIAL REVIEWS OF THE DRAFT SOUTH EAST PLAN

The **South East Plan** sets out how we can make best use of space and resources in the region so that it continues to be economically successful and an attractive place to live. The Plan covers the period to 2026.

Further information about the South East Plan is available on the South East Plan website: ([www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan](http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan)).

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### AGGREGATES REVIEW

The Assembly is running a consultation from 15 May - 8 August on how targets for providing aggregates (sand, gravel and crushed rock) are allocated to South East Minerals Planning Authorities (MPA) - the county or unitary council.

A reliable supply of aggregates is essential for supporting the region's and UK's economy (it is used in construction, commercial developments and infrastructure to support communities).

The planning system needs to balance these economic requirements with the environmental and social impacts, both negative and positive, from aggregates extraction, processing and transport.

### Updating policy

Policy M3 of the draft South East Plan and current Regional Planning Guidance (RPG9) sets out the tonnage of land-won sand, gravel and crushed rock that each MPA needs to provide to meet the target set out in national and regional guidelines.

The guidelines set a total aggregates supply for the South East of 570 million tonnes (mt) between 2001 and 2016. This includes 212mt of land-won sand and gravel, and 35mt of crushed rock.

Policy M3 sets this out as an annual supply of 13.25 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) of sand and gravel and 2.2mtpa of crushed rock divided by MPA or

groups of MPAs. The current allocation is based on average sales from 1995-2001. The allocation is therefore essentially derived from past rates of production rather than looking at future needs, the likely availability of materials or analysis of environmental and other constraints.

### More robust method

At an Examination in Public (EiP) on aggregates policies in 2004, independent inspectors recommended that a more robust and forward looking methodology should be developed to inform Policy M3.

The Assembly carried out a public consultation on a draft project plan and a sustainability appraisal scoping report for this partial review of Policy M3 in spring 2007, and submitted a final project plan to the Government Office for the South East.

The project plan set out a timescale for technical work to underpin the review, gaining Assembly approval and public consultation. The scoping report was used in reviewing the sustainability of the consultation options.

### Consultation options

We now want views on three different options for allocating aggregates targets to each MPA.

The options are based on factors including:

- likely future demand for construction
- the location of aggregates
- the need to protect and enhance the environment.



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The options for public consultation have been agreed by the Regional Aggregates Working Party (SEERAWP) and the Assembly.

These three options are:

- 'Demand' led - this places the highest weighting on where future construction demand is likely to be
- 'Environmental' - this places the highest weighting on avoiding areas of greatest conservation and landscape importance
- 'Demand and Resource' - this places equal weighting on demand and on the location of aggregates resources.

Each option allocates a different aggregates target to each Minerals Planning Authority.

In some options this means an increase on existing allocations and in others a decrease. Full details are broken down in the consultation document.

The full report, sustainability appraisal and response form are available on the Assembly's website at:

[www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/consultation\\_details.php?consultation=3](http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/consultation_details.php?consultation=3)

Views should be sent to the Regional Assembly by **5pm on Friday 8 August 2008** at the latest.

As a result of this consultation, a revised allocation will be applied to an updated Policy M3. Following approval by the Assembly this will then be submitted to Government, who will hold further consultation and, if necessary, an independent EiP.

## **GYPSY AND TRAVELLER CONSULTATION**

The section of the South East Plan concerning Gypsies and Travellers is being updated to address the under provision of legal stopping places, improve conditions and reduce unauthorised camping and its associated problems and costs.

At its meeting in March, the full Assembly agreed to postpone the consultation planned for May 2008. The delay will allow further evidence gathering by local authorities to ensure the consultation options are as robust as possible. The full Assembly will take a decision on the consultation timetable at our July meeting. In the meantime local authorities have a duty to provide new pitches where there is a clear and immediate need.

### **Proposed Changes to the South East Plan**

Over two years after submitting the South East Plan to Government - in March 2006 - the Secretary of State has yet to publish her proposed changes to the South East Plan.

The response to recommendations from independent inspectors, following the Examination in Public, was originally expected in early 2008. A delay was announced by CLG Minister Parmjit Dhanda in February. He said: "The Secretary of State's proposed changes to the draft regional spatial strategy (RSS) for the South East will be published for consultation later this year. It is difficult, at this stage, to commit to a precise publication date for the proposed changes given the complexity of the issues involved. Our aim, as it stands now, is to publish the proposed changes before the summer recess" (22 July).

The Secretary of State will make a statement to the House of Commons when proposed changes are being published. Government will then undertake a full 12-week public consultation to provide an opportunity to make representations on the proposed changes.