

a clear vision

FOR THE SOUTH EAST

UPDATE ON THE SOUTH EAST PLAN

Number 5 December 2004



South East Plan approved for public consultation

The Assembly's top priority is currently the preparation of an important new document called the **South East Plan**. The Plan will set out how we can make best use of space and resources in the South East to ensure the region continues to be economically successful and an attractive place to live. It will cover 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

Approval

Members of the South East England Regional Assembly at the Plenary meeting in Woking voted unanimously in favour of putting the draft South East Plan out to public consultation in the New Year.

Meeting on 29 November, the 111-strong Assembly also agreed three options on housing growth to be put to the region's eight million residents.

However, members voiced concerns about the commitment from Government to the investment in physical and community infrastructure required to cope with existing build rates, let alone increased growth. As a result the Assembly decided by a majority vote to scale down the options for future levels of housing development to be put before the public in January.

Cllr Nick Skellett, Chair of the South East England Regional Assembly said: "After an extensive debate the Assembly concluded that we should consult on a lower range of options for growth. Without certainty on the question of infrastructure investment, we could not see how the higher levels of growth proposed were sustainable. We now want to hear what the public and the region's stakeholders think."

Consultation

Consultation on the draft Plan will run from 17 January to 15 April 2005. It will ask for views on three levels of housing growth and views on where new development should be directed.

The three options on housing growth for the region agreed by the Assembly are:

- 25,500 homes a year (for the next 20 years)
- 28,000 homes a year (for the next 20 years)
- 32,000 homes a year (for the next 20 years).

The consultation will include a questionnaire to every household in the region, MORI opinion polls, radio and newspaper campaign and focus groups.

Policy amendments

The Assembly has regularly expressed concerns about the effect of infrastructure, or lack of it, upon development and voted to strengthen the policy on Infrastructure and Implementation (CC4) by supporting an amendment from Cllr Henry Smith, West Sussex County Council.

Other amendments passed at the Plenary included the revision by Cllr Jonathan Glen, Hampshire County Council, that the Regional Planning Committee, in line with the agreed lower housing figures, should review the proposed growth figures for areas outside the sub regions. His other motion that the Assembly should test alternative settlement size thresholds for allocating growth and that details of the technical work should be published was also agreed.

Chris Corrigan, South East Forum for Sustainability, had two amendments approved strengthening the Plan's commitment to better management of resources and consumption to provide a framework for sustainable development.

Cllr Anthony Reid, East Sussex County Council, had amendments agreed concerning the focus of regeneration and investment in regeneration areas and the Sussex Coast sub-region.

It was agreed that work would be carried out to provide appropriate guidance on the issue of gypsies and travellers developing land without authorisation, following the amendment by Cllr Don Phillips, Chiltern District Council.

Cllr Mrs Maureen Holding, New Forest District Council, requested a strengthening of the policy concerning rural interests and this was agreed by the Assembly.