

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – SOUTH EAST PLAN CONSULTATION





Summary of Purpose and Recommendations:

This report recommends consider the draft South East Plan, as published for consultation by the South East England Regional Assembly and recommends a response to the Assembly. The recommendations include detailed comments on the proposals as they would affect New Forest District.

Cost to Council: £Nil

Within existing budget? Yes

Contribution to Corporate Plan (Minor/Moderate/Major/Neutral):

	+		-		+		-
		Neutral		Priorities			
	Major			Clean Streets & Public Places		Neutral	
	Major			Crime & Disorder		Neutral	
	Major			Housing	Major		
	Major			Managing our Finances		Neutral	

Comments on Impacts on Corporate Objectives and Priorities:

The South East Plan will set the context for the preparation of the Local Development Framework, which in turn is meant to be the spatial expression of the Council's Community Strategy.



SOUTH EAST PLAN – RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report recommends a response to SEERA on the South East Plan Public Consultation Draft.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The South East Plan is being prepared by SEERA (the South East England Regional Assembly). This is an important matter. The South East Plan will form part of the statutory development plan, providing the strategic context for the Local Development Frameworks to be prepared by this Council and the National Park Authority.
- 2.2 SEERA has produced a set of documents for public consultation called “A Clear Vision for the South East – The South East Plan”. SEERA is inviting comments by 15th April. The documents have been distributed as follows:
- all of the documents are on the SEERA South East Plan web-site: southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/index.html
 - all of the documents are available in the NFDC Members’ Room
 - all of the documents have been made available in NFDC Local Offices and in libraries
 - a summary leaflet and questionnaire (“Your Shout”) is being posted by SEERA to every household in the region.
- 2.3 A copy of the South East Plan Executive Summary accompanies this report.
- 2.4 This is the first part of a two-part consultation. At present, the proposals are presented at the broad regional and sub-regional levels. There are 9 defined “sub-regional strategy areas” in the Plan but these do not cover all of the region. The remaining parts of the region are included in “rest of County” areas. The eastern part of New Forest District (Totton and the Waterside) lies within the South Hampshire sub-region. The rest of New Forest District is within the “Rest of Hampshire” area.
- 2.5 Later on this year, there will be a second consultation on more detailed proposals – including District housing requirements.
- 2.6 The programme for the work from now on is being considered at the SEERA Planning Committee on 23rd March. Cabinet will be updated on this but it is understood that the programme is likely to include SEERA making a decision in June on the overall growth levels for each sub-region and “rest of County” area. It is likely that SEERA will ask the local authorities in each sub-region/rest of County area to produce options for the distribution of housing and other development to meet these total requirements. The local authorities will be expected to complete this work by September, including having carried out public consultation in July/August. This is a very tight timetable.

- 2.7 The draft South East Plan was considered at meetings of:
- The Economy and Planning Panel on 16th March
 - The New Forest District Local Strategic Partnership on 16th March
 - New Forest District Parish and Town Councils on 17th March.
- 2.8 The main comments raised by the Panel and LSP are summarised in Section 7 of this report.

3. COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT SOUTH EAST PLAN

- 3.1 This report does not attempt to summarise the draft South East Plan. The Executive Summary (circulated with this report) already does that. A full officer presentation is being given to the Economy and Planning Panel meeting on 16th March. This report focuses on the sections of the draft South East Plan that will have particular implications for New Forest District and recommends a response to SEERA.

The Core Strategy – including regional spatial options for housing development (Section C)

- 3.2 The Core Strategy sets out proposals for the scale of development and the broad regional pattern of growth. Table C2 from the South East Plan, included in this report, shows the 6 options proposed for distributing housing development around the region. These options are illustrated on maps included on pages 4 to 6 of the Executive Summary.
- 3.3 The options are based on 3 different regional growth levels:
- 25,500 dwellings a year – based on the past 5 year build rate
 - 28,000 dwellings a year – approximately the current planned build rate
 - 32,000 dwellings a year – an increase above the current planned build rate
- 3.4 For each growth rate there are 2 options, based on
- continuation of existing policy, or
 - “sharper focus” – i.e. concentrate more development in the defined sub-regions and reduce the proportion in the rest of the counties.
- 3.5 Hence there are 6 spatial options presented at this stage as set out in Table C2. These include a range of housing development levels in each of the “South Hampshire “ sub-region and in the “Rest of Hampshire”. There is no further information available at this stage about the implications for individual Districts. That will be covered in Stage 2 of the work.
- 3.6 Issues regarding South Hampshire, including the housing options, are dealt with later in this report (paragraphs 3.19 to 3.25). The housing options for the “Rest of Hampshire” are considered immediately below.

TABLE C2

Summary of Spatial Options

Area	Continuation of Existing Policy		Sharper Focus	
	Spatial Option i	Spatial Option ii	Spatial Option i	Spatial Option ii
	25,500	32,000	25,500	32,000
Kent Thames Gateway	2,900	2,900	2,900	2,900
Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale	3,300	3,300	3,300	3,300
East Kent and Ashford	2,400	2,800	2,600	2,800
Central Oxfordshire	1,300	1,700	1,400	1,900
Gatwick Area	900	1,300	1,300	1,800
London Fringe	1,500	2,100	2,000	2,800
South Hampshire	2,800	3,800	2,900	4,000
Sussex Coast	2,700	3,600	2,300	3,100
Western Corridor and Blackwater Valley	3,500	4,800	4,300	5,900
Sub Total	21,300	26,300	23,000	28,800
Rest of Berkshire	100	100	100	100
Rest of Buckinghamshire	200	300	200	300
Rest of East Sussex	300	500	400	500
Rest of Hampshire	1,200	1,600	700	1,000
Rest of Kent	700	1,000	200	200
Rest of Oxfordshire	700	900	300	400
Rest of Surrey	200	300	200	200
Rest of West Sussex	400	500	100	100
Isle of Wight	400	600	400	500
Sub Total	4,200	5,700	2,500	3,200
GRAND TOTAL	25,500	32,000	25,500	32,000

Notes

- These are indicative figures only.
- Figures are rounded to the nearest 100. Rounded figures may not sum.

Proposals for “Rest of Hampshire” (in Sections C)

- 3.7 All of New Forest District outside the South Hampshire sub-region is included within the one defined area of “Rest of Hampshire”. In addition to most of New Forest District, this includes Central Hampshire i.e. large parts of Test Valley, Winchester, East Hampshire and a small part of Basingstoke District.
- 3.8 The draft South East Plan includes a range of housing options for the “Rest of Hampshire” varying from 700 dwellings a year up to 1,600 dwellings a year (i.e. 14,000 to 32,000 dwellings over the 2006 to 2026 period). At the moment there is no proposed breakdown to individual Districts. This will be part of the “Stage Two” work. Neither are there any specific proposals for other land uses included at this stage.

Comments on proposals for “Rest of Hampshire” and spatial options

- 3.9 For the “rest of County” areas, the draft South East Plan at this stage is over-focused on housing development numbers. It does not provide an integrated spatial strategy that would form a proper basis for preparing Local Development Frameworks.
- 3.10 The housing figures included in the range of options for the rest of Hampshire are the highest for any of the counties in the region (see Table C2). While Hampshire is a large County, about half of this area will be constrained by the (existing) New Forest and (proposed) South Downs National Parks. There is a large element of “trend planning” in the figures proposed for the counties outside the defined sub-regions. Accordingly the range of housing figures proposed for Hampshire includes large figures because Hampshire has had a high development rate in the past.
- 3.11 At this stage it is not possible to say what the implications would be for New Forest District. However it is recommended that the following comments be made to SEERA:
- (i) New Forest District Council is concerned about the high figures (in comparison with other counties) proposed for the “Rest of Hampshire” in the “continuation of existing policy” options. It is essential that the implications of the National Parks are taken into account. Provisional work indicates that it would not be possible to accommodate the higher options without severe adverse consequences. So far as Table C2 relates to Hampshire, the “Sharper Focus” options should be preferred over the “Continuation of existing policy” options.
 - (ii) Before any final decision is made on the overall growth levels for the “rest of Hampshire”, and on the distribution of this growth between the various Districts, it is essential that a proper and integrated Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) is carried out. It has to be satisfactorily demonstrated that the growth proposed can be accommodated without serious adverse impacts on the environment and quality of life in this area.
 - (iii) Particular account must be taken of any adverse impact of development on the New Forest National Park, taking into account the factors set out in Policy C1 (page 146) and its associated text.
 - (iv) New Forest District Council fully supports the retention of the Green Belt to the south and west of the New Forest (Policy CC9, page 54)

- 3.12 Based on provisional technical work carried out by the planning officers within New Forest and Central Hampshire, it is estimated that the bottom of the range of housing options proposed for the “Rest of Hampshire” is too low and would not provide enough scope to meet the area’s affordable housing needs. An annual build rate of more than about 1,000 dwellings a year, however, would be difficult to accept environmentally. It is understood that a Council Leaders meeting on 24th March will be recommended to support a housebuilding rate of 1,000 per annum in Central Hampshire and the New Forest in the individual Council responses to the draft South East Plan. An update will be given to the Cabinet meeting.

“The Regional Policy Framework” (Section D)

- 3.13 This part of the Plan includes many general policies [cross-cutting policies, economy and tourism, housing, communications and transport, sustainable natural resource management, countryside and landscape management, management of the built and historic environment, town centres and social, cultural and health dimensions].

Comments on the Regional Policy Framework (including affordable housing)

- 3.14 In general, the policies set out in these parts of the Plan can be supported, subject to the following comments:
- (i) It is difficult to comment meaningfully given that the draft Plan is so incomplete at the moment – and especially as it does not include District-level proposals at this stage. Any comments made at this stage must therefore be subject to reconsideration when the whole Plan is available for comment later in the year.
 - (ii) The Regional Plan needs to demonstrate more how it can have a real impact. There is no point in it just repeating national policy. At present, the implementation plan is not very well developed. Before the Regional Plan is finalized and submitted, the policies, Implementation Plan, and Monitoring and Indicators need to be better developed to demonstrate the impact on the region that the Plan aims to have and to show how this will happen. Given the abolition of County Structure Plans, the South East Plan (including its sub-regional strategies) must properly fulfill the role of providing a strategic framework for the preparation of Local Development Frameworks.
 - (iii) The new development proposed in the region must be accompanied by the provision of adequate new infrastructure. The provision of this must be assured before a commitment is made to development.
 - (iv) The objectives of a step change in affordable housing delivery, providing the right type of housing and making better use of the existing stock (Section D3 paragraph 1.2) are to be very strongly supported. However, these are not fully reflected in the policies as proposed.
 - (v) The split between different types of affordable housing (Section D3, Policy H4) should be determined at the sub-regional or local levels in the light of local circumstances.

- (vi) The statement in Section D3, paragraph 5.5 with regard to affordable housing contributions is to be strongly supported -i.e. “in many parts of the region the scale of need, combined with the predominance of small to medium housing sites, means that site thresholds may need to be set below the levels in Government guidance”.
- (vii) The principle the Plan establishes that affordable housing needs should be met where they arise (page 79) is strongly supported. However implementation needs to take account of environmental constraints.
- (viii) The inclusion in Section D4: “Transport and Communication” of the following major “schemes” in the South Hampshire and Isle of Wight Investment framework 2006 and 2016 is welcomed:
 - M27 various junction improvements including J3-4
 - Rail improvements east of Southampton along the coast
 - Workplace parking / congestion charging *investigation*.
 - Plus consideration of output from A34 corridor study.
- (ix) The document (Section D5) acknowledges that the South East is the driest area in the country, but does not appear to attempt to reconcile this with the levels and distribution of development proposed. This should have been fundamental to sustainability appraisal of development options.
- (x) Section D7: “Management of the Built and Historic Environment” needs to be updated to refer to the requirements in PPG1 for well-designed development that improves the character and quality of an area.
- (xi) The town centre policies (Section D8) imply too great a concentration of facilities in the larger town centres (none of which are in New Forest District) and are potentially damaging to smaller town centres.

Minerals and Waste policies (in Section D5)

3.15 The draft South East Plan includes the Minerals and Waste policies from the deposited SEERA Minerals and Waste Strategies (2004). NFDC made representations on policies W18, M3 and M5 when originally published, as debated at the Examination in Public (EiP) held in October 2004. These concerned issues relating to the location of waste recycling facilities in the Green Belt, AONBs and National Parks, and the proposed aggregates apportionment for the New Forest. In the draft South East Plan these policies are repeated in their original form although it states that they are liable to change. The District Council maintains its objections to these policies as they stand, but supports the conclusions of the EiP Panel which generally supported NFDC’s representations (EiP Panel Report December 2004). We would expect that the necessary amendments are included in the revisions to South East Plan following this consultation.

The New Forest (Section D6, paragraphs 1.5 to 1.7 and Policy C1)

- 3.16 The draft South East Plan includes this policy:

POLICY C1: THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK

The Plan gives the highest priority to protecting and conserving land within the New Forest National Park. The local planning authority and other partners should also develop supportive sustainable land management policies, both inside the National Park and within the zone of ‘New Forest commoning activity’, including protection of grazing land outside the National Park which is needed to support National Park purposes.

- 3.17 The related text (Section D6, paragraphs 1.5 to 1.7, pages 145-6) explains the situation with regard to National Park designation, refers to the Strategy for the New Forest (2003), summarises the key issues regarding the New Forest and states that the area should become “a model for sustainability”. A tailor-made policy framework related to the special circumstances of the New Forest is advocated.

Comments on New Forest National Park section

- 3.18 Policy C1: The New Forest National Park and the related text (Section D6, paragraphs 1.5 to 1.7) is very strongly to be supported and must be retained in the Plan when it is submitted to the Government. The New Forest is the only National Park in the region (the South Downs may follow) and also includes the richest concentration of international nature conservation designations in the region. In this context it is perfectly appropriate for the Regional Plan to include a policy and text specifically relating to the New Forest. Policy C1 is needed to set the policy framework for further development plan work to be carried out in due course by the New Forest National Park Authority and the surrounding local authorities. The South East Plan would be failing to meet its duties if this policy was not included.

SOUTH HAMPSHIRE (Section E1)

- 3.19 This Council has been closely involved in the development of the South Hampshire sub-regional strategy through the “ PUSH” (Partnership for Urban South Hampshire) group of local authorities. The Economy and Planning Portfolio Holder and various officers have been particularly involved.

- 3.20 The section of the draft South East Plan dealing with South Hampshire is based on following overall strategy submitted to SEERA by the PUSH Group.

POLICY SH1: OVERALL STRATEGY

Development in South Hampshire will be led by economic growth and urban regeneration. Portsmouth and Southampton will be dual focuses for investment and development as employment, retail, entertainment, higher education and cultural centres for the sub-region. The other towns will play a complementary role serving their more local areas. Investment and improvements in transport will reflect this, as will the location of sites for development. High density development will be encouraged in the city and town centres, around public transport hubs and at sustainable waterfront locations. The preferred spatial option is to be determined during development of the sub-regional strategy. The scale and pace of land release for development will be related to the rate of economic growth taking

place across the sub-region and to the provision of new infrastructure.

3.21 In summary, the proposed strategy for South Hampshire is based on the following range of development:

Preferred Levels of Development		
	Lower Estimate	Upper Estimate
Economic growth rate	3% pa	3.5% pa
Land for employment	approx. 400 hectares	approx. 500 hectares
Total new housing	RPG plus 15% 79,000	RPG plus 20% 82,000
Accommodated through existing commitments and urban capacity	47,000 – 56,000	47,000 – 56,000
Additional housing required on greenfield sites	23,000 – 32,000	26,000 – 35,000

3.22 Members will see that new green-field sites for some 23,000 to 35,000 dwellings would be needed (for development by 2026) plus some 400 to 500 hectares of employment land (it is understood that recent work suggests that these figures may need to be increased). This new green-field housing development is additional to the estimated capacities of the existing urban areas to take more development (having regard to government advice on this issue).

3.23 There are going to be no easy options to accommodate this scale of development. The “Stage One” consultation does not include a preferred spatial option, but does say that “Strategic Development Areas will be allocated north of and in close proximity to the two cities” (Policy SH2, page 184). The spatial strategy will be worked up during “Stage Two” (i.e. by September).

Comments on the strategy for South Hampshire

3.24 It is understood that the PUSH Group as a whole intends to respond to the draft South East Plan and that the draft PUSH response will be considered at a meeting on 6th April (after the Cabinet meeting). At the time of writing this report, the proposed PUSH response is not available but an update will be given at the Cabinet meeting.

3.25 Cabinet is recommended to support the overall strategy for South Hampshire as set out in Policy SH1 subject to the following comments:

- (i) It is essential (as is recognised by the PUSH group) that any growth in South Hampshire is matched by the necessary infrastructure and services, both to cater for the additional growth and to help resolve existing problems. This will require additional funding in a similar manner to the funding that is being provided to the already identified regional growth areas (Milton Keynes, Ashford, Thames Gateway).
- (ii) New Forest District Council, on the basis of the evidence presented so far, would not support any growth levels for South Hampshire higher than the range proposed in the draft South East Plan.

- (iii) Before any final decision is made on the overall growth levels for South Hampshire, and on the distribution of this growth between the various Districts, it is essential that a proper and integrated Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) is carried out. It has to be satisfactorily demonstrated that the growth proposed can be accommodated without serious adverse impacts on the environment and quality of life in the sub-region.
- (iv) This SA/SEA must specifically include a full and detailed analysis of the impacts of the growth proposed in South Hampshire on the adjoining New Forest National Park and be able to satisfactorily show that any adverse impacts are avoided, having regard to the requirements set out in Policy C1: The New Forest National Park (see paragraph 3.16 above).
- (v) It is essential that economic growth is accompanied by an increase in affordable housing supply. Without this, in-migration for employment, together with a probable increasing polarisation of high/low income levels, will place greater pressure on local housing markets which will disproportionately disadvantage those on lower incomes.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 No direct implications arising from this report. However, the South East Plan is likely to have important financial implications.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 These are a key issue in preparing the South East Plan and the associated sub-regional strategies. Full Sustainability Appraisals and Strategic Environmental Assessments will be required.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 No direct implications arising from this report. However, the South East Plan will deal with issues that have implications for crime and disorder.

7. MAIN COMMENTS MADE AT THE MEETINGS OF THE ECONOMY AND PLANNING REVIEW PANEL, and LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP.

- 7.1 The Economy and Planning Review Panel was presented with a summary of the recommendations in this report and generally supported the points made, with particular emphasis on the following points:
 - While the “sharper focus” option is preferred over the “continuation of past trends”, it should be recognized within the South Hampshire sub-regional strategy that Totton and the Waterside are not appropriate locations for further major development, particularly because of the proximity to the New Forest;
 - The necessary infrastructure should precede further development;
 - There is concern about the possible loss of important existing Strategic

Gaps within the District;

- Some members expressed strong concern that the range of growth options proposed in the draft S E Plan is too high, and considered that Government policy should be directed to encouraging more growth outside the south east region;
- There is concern about where the increased population would work if there is further growth, especially if the loss of employment sites continues;
- The Panel expressed very strong support for the New Forest section and policy and for the recognition of the need to protect essential land around the National Park.

7.2 Members of the New Forest District Local Strategic Partnership, while not expressing any formal view, expressed views that:

- The New Forest section and policy should be supported;
- The relatively poor economic performance of South Hampshire is surprising;
- Green Belt policy at the regional level should be looked at again, while recognizing the need to protect the Green Belt south and west of the New Forest from development;
- Infrastructure should precede development and must be defined in the widest sense (e.g. including youth provision).

8. ECONOMY and PLANNING PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS

8.1 It is important that the South East Plan remains what it is purported to be, a strategy for the economic growth of the region and is not turned into an attempt to merely increase the number of houses being built.

8.2 As a District I hope that we would support our colleges in neighbouring towns and cities who wish to see this economic growth maximised and who consequently are prepared, once they are provided with adequate infrastructure, to accommodate an increase in housing numbers; however New Forest District should not become a place in which to locate those houses that neighbouring towns and cities believe they do not have the capacity for.

8.3 The Plan recognises not only the unique qualities on the New Forest National Park but also the importance that the surrounding area has in preserving the ability of the Park to function and it would appear that it accepts that both areas deserve protection. I trust that these laudable statements continue to be widely supported for this major cultural and environmental asset to the Region, even when the difficult decisions, on where development takes place, are being made.

9. RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 That Cabinet agrees and submits to SEERA the comments on the draft South East Plan as set out above:**
- **Proposals for “Rest of Hampshire” and spatial options - comments in paras 3.9 to 3.12**
 - **Regional Policy Framework (including affordable housing) - comments in para. 3.14**
 - **Minerals and Waste policies - comments in para. 3.15**
 - **New Forest National Park section - comments in para 3.18**
 - **Strategy for South Hampshire - comments in paras 3.24 to 3.25.**

For further information please contact:

Graham Ashworth,
Team Leader Policy and Plans,
New Forest District Council
Tel: 023 8028 5352
e-mail: graham.ashworth@nfdc.gov.uk

Background Papers

“A Clear Vision for the South East” – The South East Plan.
Draft for Public Consultation
January 2005

Graham\Regional\SEPLAN-CABINET\22.3.05

a clear vision FOR THE SOUTH EAST

THE SOUTH EAST PLAN Executive Summary

● **Draft for Public Consultation**
January 2005

SOUTH EAST
ENGLAND
Regional Assembly



Introduction

The South East Plan is a new type of Plan. It springs from the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. When eventually approved by the Government, it will provide a statutory regional framework for development to 2026, setting out scale, priorities and broad locations for change. It will integrate with other key regional strategies and with the new local planning system, operating through Local Development Documents. It will place considerable emphasis on measures to achieve implementation and delivery.

This Consultation Draft is the first stage in formulation of the Plan. It sets out the main elements for debate and seeks views on development options and other issues. It does not offer a complete picture of some aspects, for example implementation requirements. Some matters are also the subject of ongoing research. These dimensions will be included in the Plan submitted to Government, following consultation and further analysis.

This Consultation Draft also contains one significant and deliberate omission: district level housing targets. These will be an important component of the Plan submitted to Government but, in many ways, they need to be decided in the context of the focus and direction of the overall Plan. They will therefore form the basis of a second stage of consultation later in 2005. This Consultative Draft can therefore be termed Part One of the Plan, and the district targets, Part Two.

Components

The elements of this Part One Consultative Draft comprise:

- i This Executive Summary
- ii The South East Plan document
 - Context
 - Vision and Core Strategy
 - Development Options
 - Regional Policies
 - Sub-regional Policies and Options
 - List of other relevant strategies
- iii Implementation Plan
- iv Monitoring Section
- v Initial Sustainability Assessment.

The Vision

The Plan vision is derived from a series of discussions, most notably during the Spring Debates, a series of stakeholder workshops in April-May 2004. It is also closely related to the objectives in the Integrated Regional Framework 2004. The Framework, jointly produced by the Assembly and other regional partners, provides a regional base, which all organisations in the region should use to try and achieve more sustainable development throughout the region.

The draft Plan's vision takes as its theme 'A Healthy Region' and sets the challenge that there will be a sustained improvement in quality of life in the South East by 2026, measured in terms of social well-being, the economy, environment and the management of the region's natural resources.

Core Strategy

The core strategy for the region is closely related to this overall vision but it also emphasises the region's key international and inter-regional role. Foremost among these are the region's strong links with London, although it is also envisaged that links with other adjoining regions will also become more intense over the Plan period. Within the region, the strategy emphasises the need to reduce economic and social disparities between the east and west of the region and the need to achieve regeneration in the Thames Gateway and a number of coastal towns and cities.

The strategy envisages strong and sustained economic growth over the period. The annual rate of growth however, at 3% per annum, would be rather less than the rate achieved since 1991. Increased use of new technology to assist productivity increases will be encouraged, but significant levels of new development will still be required. The precise scale of that development is for further debate.

Infrastructure

The Assembly has placed considerable emphasis throughout the draft Plan on the importance of adequate infrastructure provision. It is concerned that too often in the past infrastructure investment has lagged behind development or, in some cases, has not happened at all. As a result it believes that, in some parts of the region, there is an existing infrastructure deficit which needs addressing. It acknowledges that a substantial programme of infrastructure investment by Government is now under way, but it now expects to see more specific commitment and assurance about infrastructure investment as part of the overall Plan.



This will require the establishment of a more positive and creative framework, and probably new mechanisms to capture and release development value.

The Assembly, in partnership with others, is undertaking further analysis of infrastructure needs and is developing a draft concordat, to submit to Government, to underpin the new arrangements. The overall scale of development in the Plan eventually submitted to Government will be conditional upon progress on this issue.

Development Options

The Assembly is required, under the terms of the new Act, to consult on a range of development options, at both the regional and sub-regional levels. After considerable debate, the Assembly has decided that the consultation should focus on options for three levels of regional growth, and two options for distribution of that growth. The three growth options are:

- **25,500** additional homes per annum – a lower figure than the current planned rate
- **28,000** additional homes per annum – approximately the current planned rate
- **32,000** additional homes per annum – higher than the current planned rate.

The two distribution options are:

- **Continuation of Existing Policy** – essentially a roll forward of the pattern of development established in existing regional planning guidance
- **Sharper Focus** – a variation which places more emphasis on a combination of areas requiring regeneration and areas with notable economic potential.

Maps CI – 6 show the potential distribution patterns for the options.

Although these rates of growth are useful for debate and further testing, it should also be appreciated that the rates of growth could vary over the Plan period, perhaps rising in the middle period of the Plan and then falling away. The potential and appropriateness of such variations is a further aspect on which comment is invited.

The different scales of growth and distributions have their differing merits but, in essence, lower levels of growth bring relatively modest infrastructure requirements, and probably (although not certainly) have a lesser environmental impact. On the other hand, they would be unlikely to meet forecast housing demand and might inhibit growth in the labour supply and therefore the economy. Conversely, growth at the highest level would increase infrastructure and possibly environmental demands but would be more likely to respond to housing demand, supply and the economy. Comments are invited on these options.

Policies

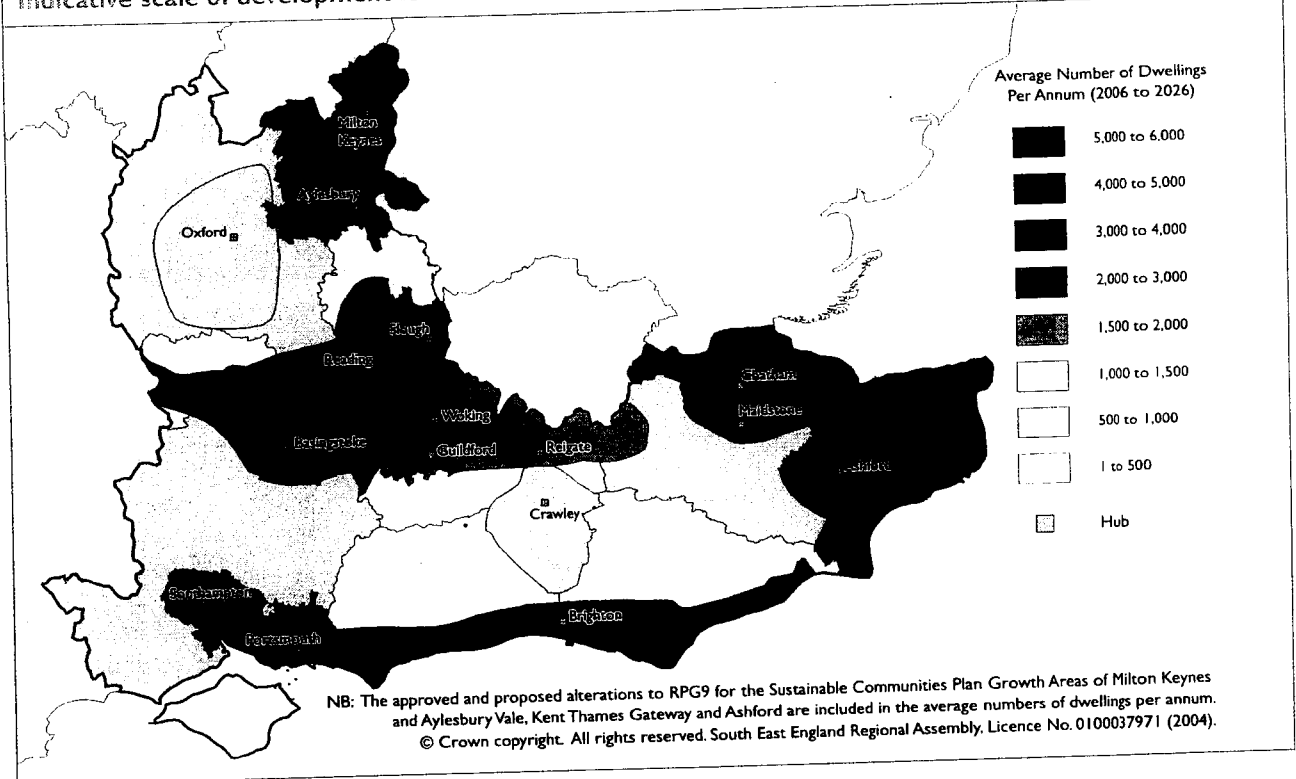
A set of regional policies, to set priorities and targets and guide action, forms a core component of the Plan. They are structured in three groups:

- A set of policies that apply to all aspects of the Plan, which are termed 'cross-cutting'
- New regional policies on the economy, housing, natural resources, countryside and landscape, the built and historic environment, town centres and social, cultural and health considerations
- Existing regional policies, which have already been approved by the Assembly, following earlier consultation and debate. These relate to transport, waste management, minerals, energy, tourism and sport.

Comments on the first two categories are now invited. All the policies can be viewed on the Assembly website or in the full draft Plan but, in view of the significance of the cross-cutting policies, they are also summarised on page 7.

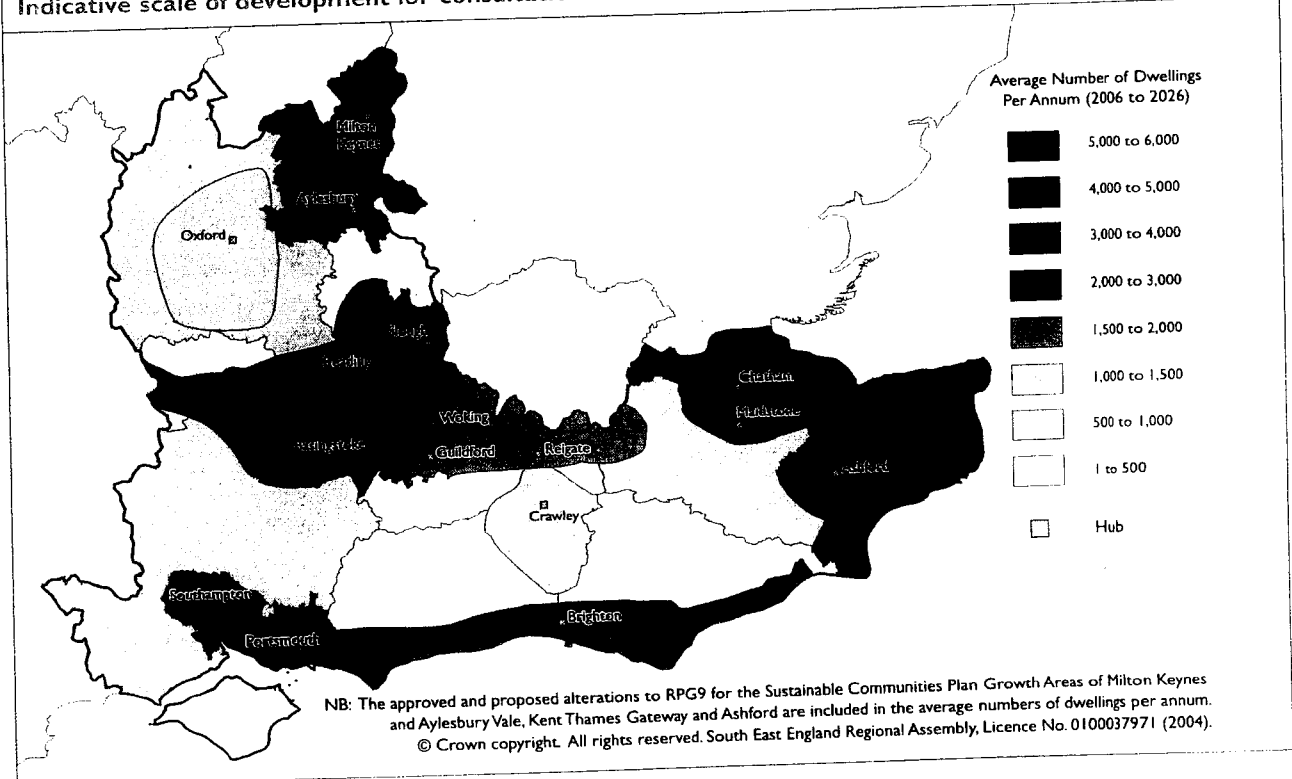
MAP C1

Option ia. Continuation of Existing Policy – 25,500 dwellings per annum (annual average)
 Indicative scale of development for consultation and debate



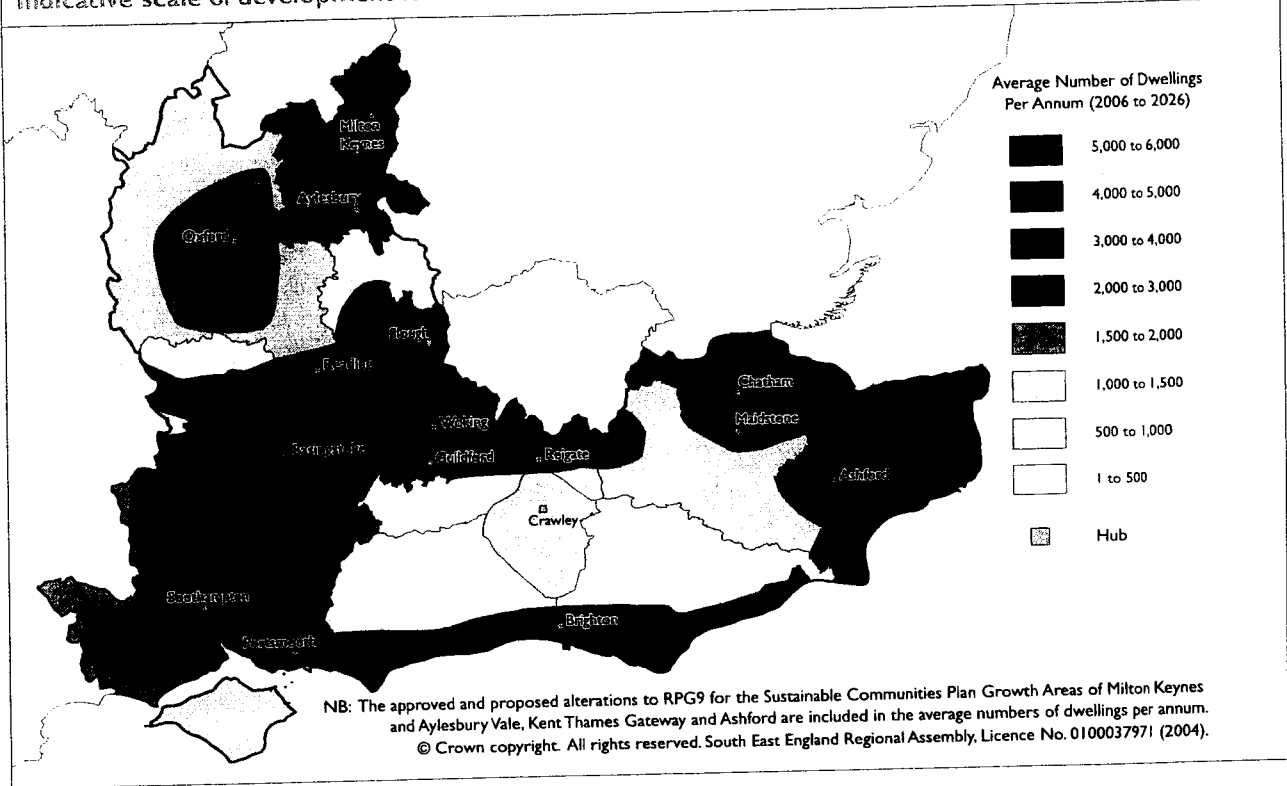
MAP C2

Option ib. Continuation of Existing Policy – 28,000 dwellings per annum (annual average)
 Indicative scale of development for consultation and debate



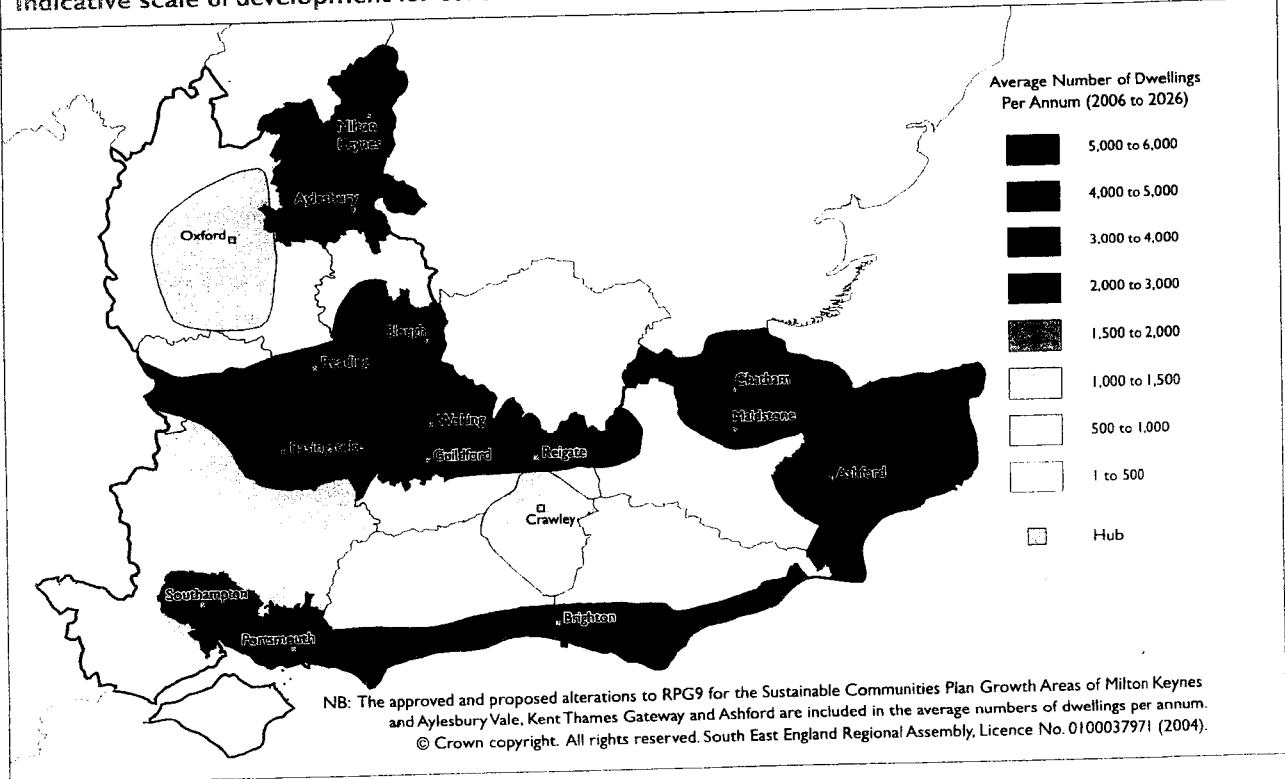
MAP C3

Option ic. Continuation of Existing Policy – 32,000 dwellings per annum (annual average)
 Indicative scale of development for consultation and debate



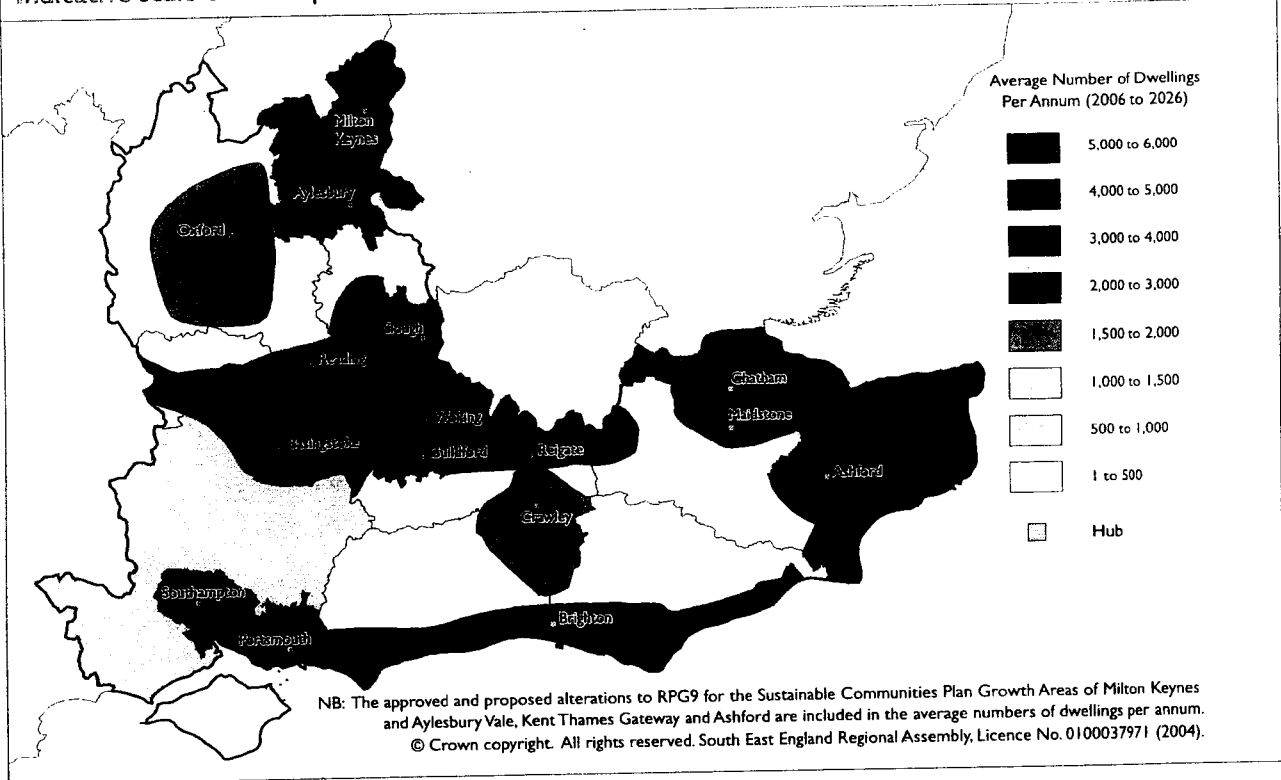
MAP C4

Option iia. Sharper Focus – 25,500 dwellings per annum (annual average)
 Indicative scale of development for consultation and debate



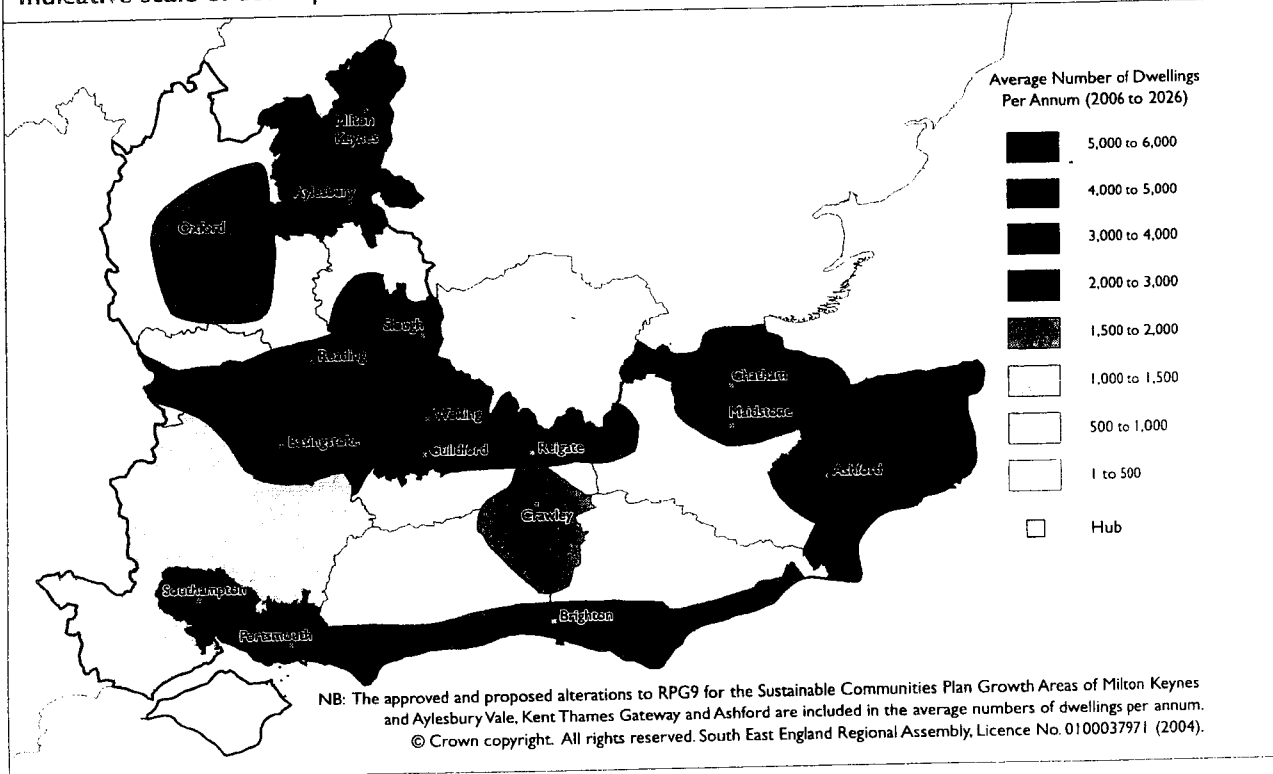
MAP C5

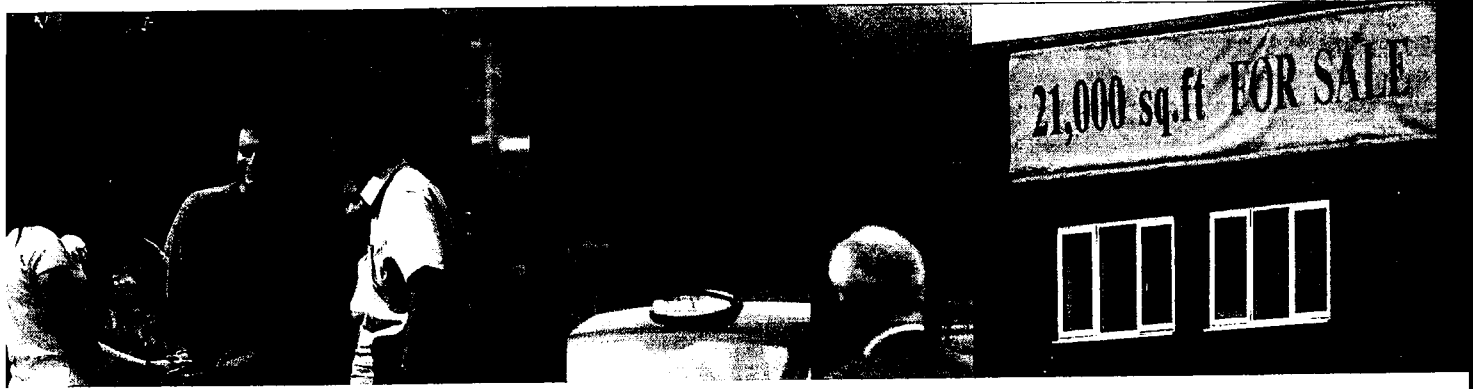
Option iib. Sharper Focus – 28,000 dwellings per annum (annual average)
 Indicative scale of development for consultation and debate



MAP C6

Option iic. Sharper Focus – 32,000 dwellings per annum (annual average)
 Indicative scale of development for consultation and debate





Cross-Cutting Policies

◦ Active Management

There is a particular emphasis throughout the draft Plan on active resource and land management to foster a more positive and dynamic approach to planning and land use across the region, increasing efficiency and raising standards.

◦ Climate Change

Although there is disagreement about the impacts of climate change, it is acknowledged as an issue of regional significance. Climate change can bring opportunities as well as threats. The draft Plan's focus is therefore on developing a combination of mitigation and adaptive measures that seek to protect future options and choices.

◦ Resource Use

Linked with the active management and climate change policies is a drive to make more efficient use of natural resources, in relation to both new and existing development. The aim will be to stabilise, and eventually reduce, the per capita consumption of natural resources in the region and reduce its 'ecological footprint'. The Assembly has set out a very ambitious target of stabilising that footprint by 2010.

◦ Infrastructure and Implementation

The Assembly attaches great importance to the provision of infrastructure (transport, schools, health facilities, green space, etc) taking place in a manner that meets the needs of new and existing development. A substantial investment contribution will be needed from central Government, local and regional agencies and the private sector to attract additional funding. The policies in the Plan eventually submitted to Government will set out proposals to create the necessary framework for phasing infrastructure and land release.

◦ Use of Public Land

There are extensive areas of property and land in public ownership in the region. The land holdings of the Ministry of Defence are particularly substantial. In some cases, the current use of the land is under review and may provide opportunities for development/re-development. Where such sites are of regional

significance, a programme of action should be agreed with the Assembly.

◦ Inter-regional Connectivity

Active co-operation and co-ordination with neighbouring regions will be fostered. Links with London, East of England and the East Midlands are of particular importance.

◦ Urban Focus

Development in the region will be focused on and around the urban areas. Urban areas are defined by the Government as settlements with a population of 10,000 or more. Infrastructure and other investment will also be concentrated in those areas.

◦ Spatial Patterns

To reflect the overall strategy, a set of sub-regions has been defined, where specific policies and proposals will apply, within the overall regional framework. They are shown on map CCI and are:

- i South Hampshire
- ii Sussex Coast
- iii East Kent and Ashford
- iv Kent Thames Gateway
- v London Fringe
- vi Western Corridor and Blackwater Valley
- vii Central Oxfordshire
- viii Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale
- ix Gatwick

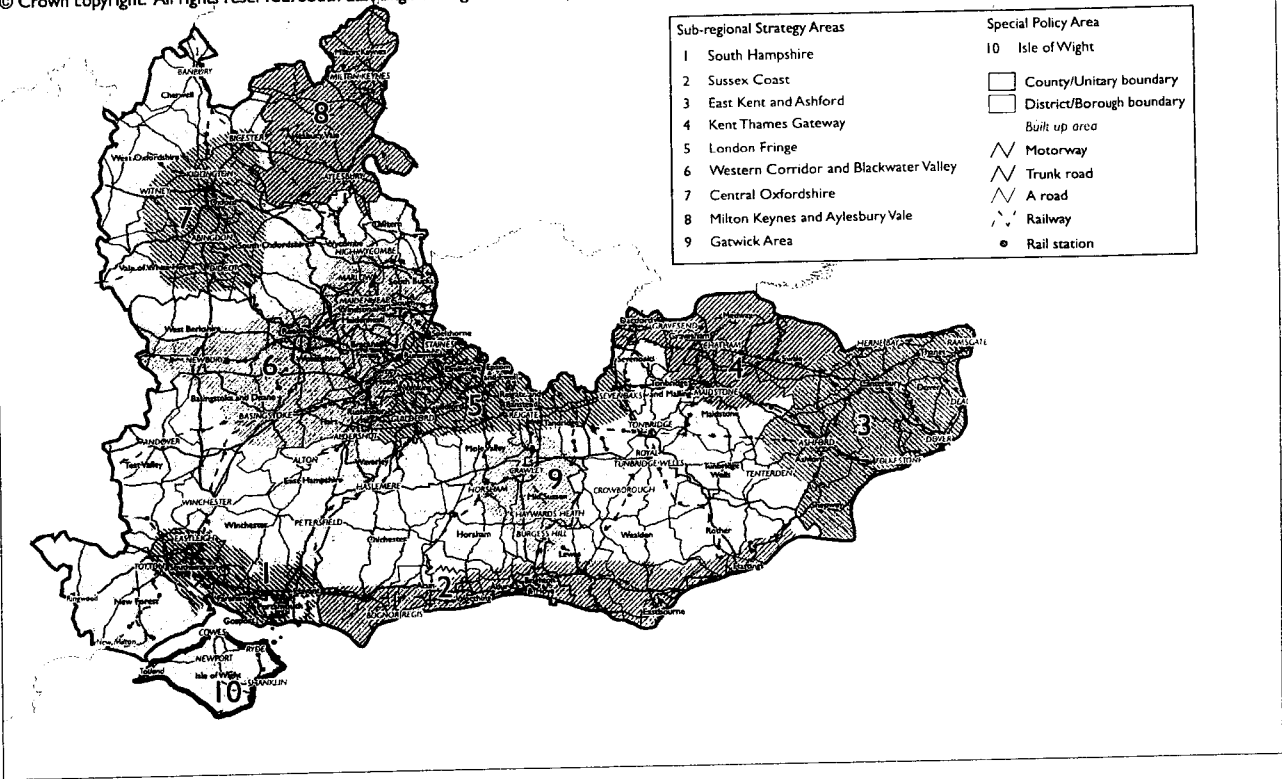
The Isle of Wight is designated a Special Policy Area. The other designations are:

- i Growth Areas – Milton Keynes and Aylesbury; Kent Thames Gateway; Ashford – where major growth has been agreed
- ii Regeneration Areas – Kent Thames Gateway, Milton Keynes, East Kent, the Sussex Coast (from Shoreham to Rye, including Brighton and Hove and Hastings), South Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Slough, Reading and Oxford – where a particular focus is needed on regeneration
- iii Areas of Economic Opportunity – the sub-regions of Western Corridor and Blackwater

MAP CCI

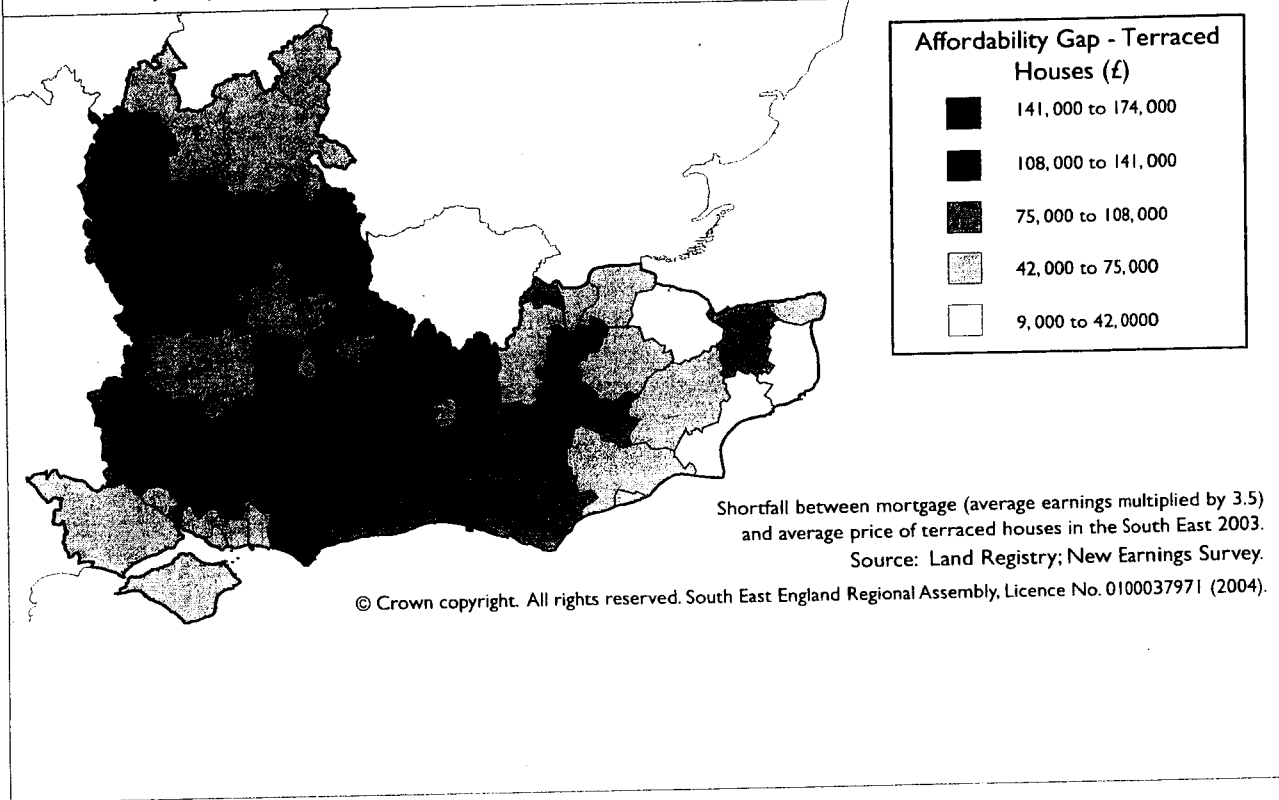
Sub-regional Strategy Areas

© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. South East England Regional Assembly, Licence No. 0100037971 (2004).



MAP H3

Affordability Gap 2003



Valley, South Hampshire, Central Oxfordshire and the London Fringe – where planned provision needs to reflect potential and the development needs arising from economic expansion.

Green Belts and Strategic Gaps

The existing Green Belts will be retained, and the opportunity will be taken to improve their management and access. Elsewhere in the region, the Assembly proposes to identify a limited number of regionally significant gaps and corridors for protection and active management.

Housing Affordability and Deprivation

The Assembly places special emphasis on the provision of a significantly increased supply of affordable housing in the region and the gradual but substantial reduction in deprivation. Affordability of housing is a widespread problem throughout the region as map H3 shows.

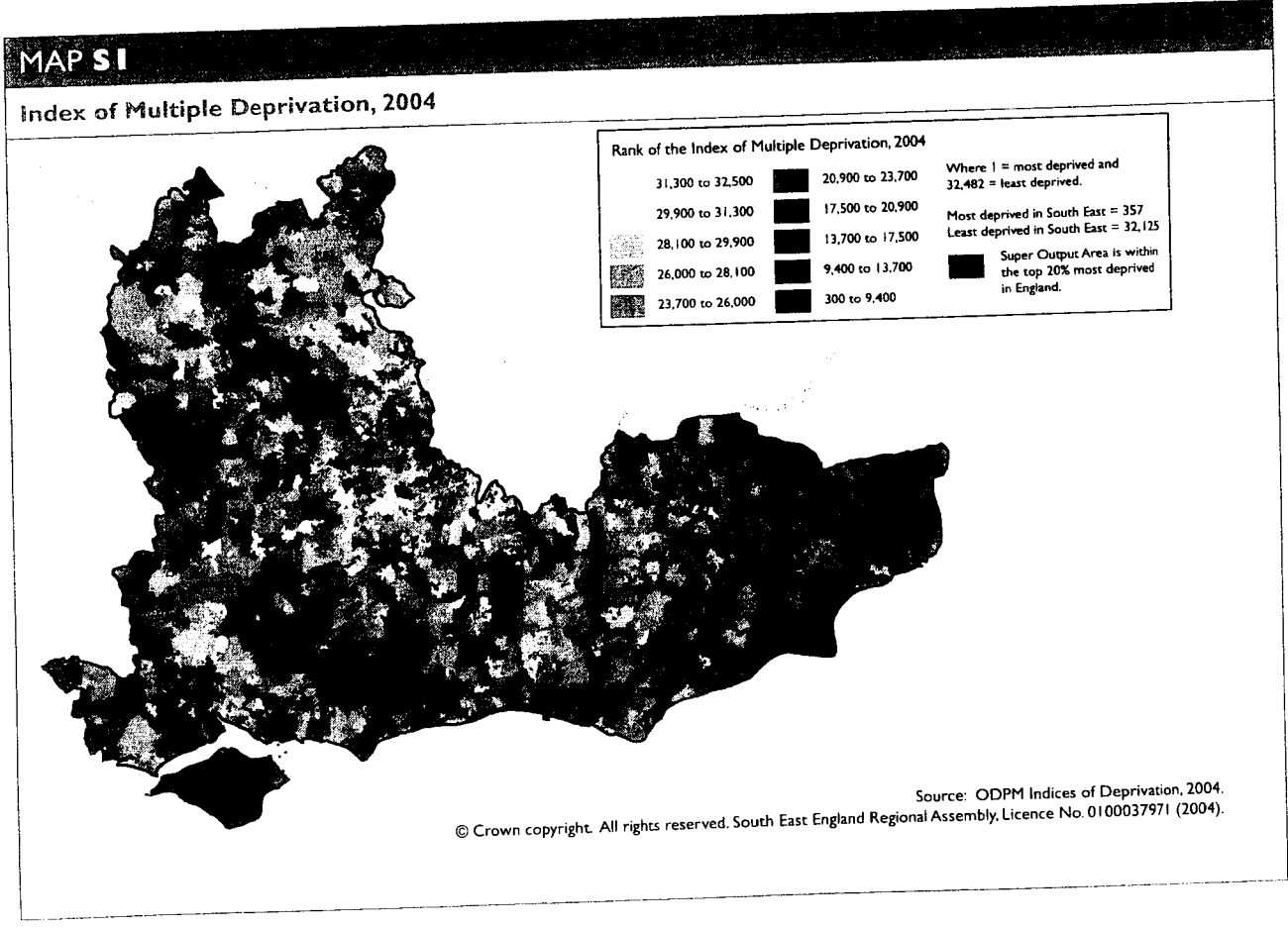
Serious concentrations of multiple deprivation occur in some parts of the region, notably in a number of coastal areas as map S1 shows.

Sub-regions

In preparing the draft Plan, the Assembly is required to consider whether specific sub-regional strategies, policies and proposals are also required. These are required where cross-boundary issues are significant and cannot be dealt with adequately by either regional policies or local actions. After careful study, the Assembly has identified nine sub-regions that require such treatment and they are set out in map CCI.

In addition, distinctive policies are proposed for the Isle of Wight, to deal with the particular issues resulting from its separation and deprivation.

To inform the development of proposals from each sub-region, the Assembly commissioned the preparation of strategies from the principal planning authorities (unitary authorities and county councils) in each sub-region. The resulting sub-regional strategies set out policies and a number of options for development, together with a preferred option. In general, the sub-regional proposals reflect a cautious approach to growth and an acute concern about the inadequacies of physical and community infrastructure, and a wish to link further growth to specific assurances and programmes for infrastructure provision. The full range of sub-regional proposals is set out on the Assembly website and in the draft Plan for comment.



Implementation Plan

The South East Plan differs from previous planning documents in the emphasis that it places on achieving implementation of the Plan proposals.

A key element of the new approach is the Government's formal requirement that an Implementation Plan forms an integral part of the overall Plan. The aim of the Implementation Plan is to identify the agencies and mechanisms that are required to engage with and help deliver the policies and proposals set out in the South East Plan. To be successful, the right organisations and partnerships will need to be engaged at the right time and the Implementation Plan will set the context for achieving the required level of co-ordination and engagement.

In the draft Plan, the Implementation section is only outlined, together with some illustrations of the range of delivery mechanisms and arrangements that need to be considered. Until the scale and form of development has been defined, the detailed implementation requirements cannot be established. Further work on this definition is underway and, in the light of the responses to this consultation, it is intended to develop a full Implementation Plan to accompany final submission of the South East Plan to Government.

Monitoring

As part of the implementation provisions, regular monitoring of progress will be required. A draft set of indicators has already been developed to assist this process and the Assembly publishes an annual Monitoring Report which assesses progress against these indicators. The content of the Monitoring Report will gradually be extended and enhanced as the next stages of the Plan develop.

Other Strategies

The Plan seeks to make positive links with a range of other regional and sub-regional strategies, particularly the Regional Economic Strategy and the Regional Housing Strategy. These strategies fulfil distinct purposes, so that not every impact is relevant to the South East Plan, but an appropriate connectivity is sought and further comments on the adequacy of this aspect of the Plan are invited.

Sustainability Appraisal

It is important that the South East Plan is set within a sustainable development context and the relationship with the Integrated Regional Framework has already been emphasised.

In order to assess and test the Plan's sustainability, the Assembly has therefore commissioned a programme of appraisal, assessment and proofing. The Plan is being comprehensively assessed using the techniques of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA). It is also subject to three further forms of testing or 'proofing': Health Impact Assessment, rural proofing and futures proofing. Independent consultants have been commissioned to undertake the appraisals and they report to a Sounding Board with an independent Chair.

An appraisal framework has been established and an initial Appraisal Report on this Consultation Draft is being published to accompany the consultation. It is available, either in hard copy from the Assembly, or on the Assembly's website.

Comments

Comments on any aspect of the Consultation Draft Plan are welcome. A questionnaire to assist responses is available on request. Comments on the draft Plan should be sent by email to plan@southeast-ra.gov.uk or by post to Secretariat, South East England Regional Assembly, Berkeley House, Cross Lanes, Guildford GU1 1UN by 15 April 2005.

Published January 2005 by the South East
England Regional Assembly.

South East England Regional Assembly
Berkeley House, Cross Lanes, Guildford GU1 1UN
T: 01483 555200 F: 01483 555250
E: secretariat@southeast-ra.gov.uk
W: www.southeast-ra.gov.uk

Copies of the South East Plan are available on the Assembly website and in public libraries throughout the region. Additional copies of full Plan are available from the Assembly at a cost of £30 (incl.VAT). Copies of this Executive Summary are free of charge.

This draft document is open for public consultation from 24 January to 15 April 2005. Following consultation, an updated document will be submitted to the Government Office for the South East by 31 July 2005.

The Assembly agrees to publish this initial draft of the South East Plan for public consultation subject to the following caveats:

- a The draft South East Plan has been developed in little more than a year to a timescale set down by the Government. As a result serious doubts remain over the robustness of the data that underpins much of the technical work on which this draft South East Plan is based and, indeed, over aspects of the technical work itself.
- b The timescale has left little opportunity to date for public involvement in the development of this draft South East Plan.
- c This draft South East Plan has been agreed for consultation by the Regional Assembly as a whole and does not necessarily reflect the views of individual members/local authorities.

