

PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTH EAST PLAN

6 MAY 2009

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government today published the final South East Plan. The Plan is available on the Government Office for the South East website (<http://www.gose.gov.uk>). A supporting document summarising the Proposed Changes consultation and Sustainability Appraisal accompanies the Plan.

Headline messages

The majority of the Plan remains much the same at the Proposed Changes version published last summer. However, there are a small number of substantive changes of note:

Spatial Strategy

The spatial strategy is largely unchanged, however there is one significant change, as the Strategic Development Area (SDA) proposed to the East of the M1 motorway in Milton Keynes has been deleted in the final Plan. This reflects representations made by the Regional Assembly and local planning authorities. Some further clarification has been provided around the definition of SDAs, with a distinction now being made between:

- SDAs identified around hubs in the 'Golden Arc' (defined as Bournemouth/Poole and South Hampshire extending through Reading and Oxford onto Milton Keynes and Cambridge); and
- SDAs identified on the basis of further opportunities for significant growth and regeneration (Whitehill/Bordon and Shoreham).

Economic circumstances

Supporting text within the Plan has been amended to reflect the recent economic uncertainties. However, the economic growth target for the region (an increase in Gross Value Added of 3% per annum over the period 2006-2016) is retained.

Housing

The final total housing provision is 32, 708 dwellings per annum (dpa), or 654,160 dwellings over the plan period (2006-2026). This is a reduction on the Proposed Changes figure of 33,125dpa; although it remains slightly above the total of 32,000dpa recommended by the Examination in Public Panel.

The reduction in the regional housing total results from:

- deletion of the East of the M1 SDA (see above)
- reduction in figures for Reigate and Banstead from 562dpa to 500dpa
- reduction in figures for Brighton and Hove from 620dpa to 570dpa
- reduction in figures for Winchester from 637dpa to 612dpa.

We anticipate that the supporting document will explain the rationale for these reductions.

All references to housing allocations being 'minima' have now been removed, following strong objections by the Regional Assembly and others.

Table I (*separate document*) sets out the final district, county and sub-regional housing allocations, along with a more detailed analysis of the percentage change in relation to the draft South East Plan figures, Panel's recommended distribution and the Proposed Changes housing figures. The map in **Annex I** summarises the annual average district housing figures.

Infrastructure

The Proposed Changes policy on Infrastructure and Implementation has been retained with minor amendments. The Regional Assembly strongly objected to the deletion of the conditional approach to infrastructure, however this has not been reinstated. The policy instead makes it clear that where new development creates a need for additional infrastructure, a programme of delivery should be agreed before development begins.

Green belt and strategic gaps

The Proposed Changes policy on Green Belts has been retained, identifying the need for Green Belt reviews:

- to the north east of Guildford (and possibly to the south of Woking)
- to the south of Oxford
- in the area of the former DERA site at Chertsey; and
- small scale reviews in other locations including around Redhill/Reigate.

The strategic gaps policy, which the Regional Assembly requested was reinstated, has not been included.

The need for review

The Plan makes it clear that a review will be needed:

- to take account of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill, and its requirement for new single Regional Strategies
- to take account of the advice on regional housing figures published by the National Housing and Planning Advice Unit
- to provide robust guidance on the scale and location of employment land and floorspace required.
- to take account of further work that is required to assess the need for additional town centre floorspace within the region.
- to provide a regional carbon dioxide emissions reduction target for 2026.

Notwithstanding these reviews, Government are clear that there is a need for rapid progress on the delivery of the South East Plan strategy and the direction of growth it currently sets out, and that local authorities and others should ensure that the Plan is reflected and implemented without delay.

Next Steps

We will be producing a more detailed briefing note shortly. This document will be made available on our website.

**South East England Strategy Unit
6 May 2009**

Map – South East Plan district housing allocations

