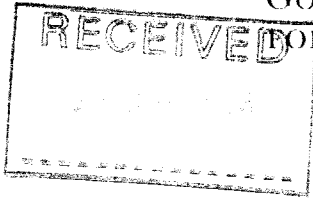


PT08. ITEM 55



GOVERNMENT OFFICE
FOR THE SOUTH EAST



Regional Spatial Strategy Team
Bridge House
1 Walnut Tree Close
Guildford
Surrey
GU1 4GA

Switchboard: 01483 882255

www.go-se.gov.uk
17 July 2008

Dear Consultee

THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE DRAFT REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR THE SOUTH EAST.

Please find enclosed a copy of the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East (the South East Plan), together with supporting documents.

Your views on these changes and the accompanying draft Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment are now sought.

This is an important step in the review of the Regional Spatial Strategy, within which there are three main stages. For South East region, these stages are as follows:

- The South East of England Regional Assembly prepared a draft RSS between 2003 and 2006. The Assembly submitted this draft to Government on 31st March 2006. A period of public consultation then drew over 7,000 responses from over 350 separate individuals and organisations. A copy of this draft can be found on the Assembly's website at www.southeast-ra.gov.uk
- An independent Panel of Planning Inspectors examined the draft South East Plan and comments made at an Examination in Public (November 2006 to March 2007), testing it for soundness. Their report of their recommended changes can be viewed on the GOSE website at www.gose.gov.uk/planning/regionalPlanning
- Following publication of the Panel's report in August 2007 the Government is now in the process of finalising the Plan. Legislation requires that after the Examination in Public the Government must publish and consult on any 'proposed changes' it intends to make to the draft RSS revision. The enclosed documents encompass this stage of the process.

As part of Proposed Changes the Government must publish a 'statement of reasons', showing why changes have been made to the draft. Regulations and guidance also leave scope for discretion about the best way to present proposed changes and the statement of reasons, depending on the complexity and types of changes and reasons.

In the case of the draft South East Plan the following format has been used:

For consultation

- **A Schedule of Changes.** This document sets out tables of the changes proposed to be made, together with the Secretary of State's reasoning for making the changes. The introduction to the Proposed Changes document explains the format of these tables.
- A separate draft **Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment** report. This report, prepared by Scott Wilson and Levett-Therivel consultants is part of an ongoing technical process designed to inform the preparation of the plan.

It is these documents that are being made available for public consultation, and your views are sought.

Not for consultation

- A separate **Companion Document** showing what the final plan would look like if all the changes set out were to be incorporated. This document is for information and is intended to help the reader understand the implications of the Proposed Changes. It is not open for consultation as much of it contains policy and text from the original Assembly draft, which is not proposed to be changed. A full 'tracked changes' document has not been compiled (as in other regions) as it was considered that such a document would be excessively long and unwieldy in light of the extent of the changes made, particularly in terms of changes to the structure of the draft and the amount of supporting text that has been deleted.

A twelve week consultation period on the Proposed Changes and draft Sustainability Appraisal/Habitats Regulation Assessment starts today and ends at 5 pm on Friday 24th October. Government will then assess these responses and prepare the final version.

How to Respond

Consultees are asked to express their views on the Proposed Changes and Draft Sustainability Appraisal/Habitats Regulation Assessment by using the online consultation portal, which includes an online response form. This is to be found, together with the enclosed documents on the Government Office website at: www.gose.gov.uk/gose/planning/regionalPlanning

Alternatively, a paper response form is available. This is enclosed and can also be downloaded from the GOSE website or requested from the Government Office. The response form also enables views to be expressed on the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment of the Proposed Changes.

Forms can be requested and sent:

by email to rss@gose.gsi.gov.uk

by fax to 01483 8822489

by post to: Regional Spatial Strategies Team,
Government Office for the South East, Bridge House, 1
Walnut Tree Close, Guildford GU1 4GA.

The deadline for consultation responses on the Proposed Changes and the Sustainability Appraisal is **5pm on Friday 24th October 2008**. Please do not send duplicate responses in more than one format.

This letter and the consultation/supporting documents are being sent to all of the Region's Local Authorities, Parish Councils, MP's, MEP's and all those who took part in the Public Examination. It is being made widely available for public inspection.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Lemon', written in a cursive style.

Richard Lemon
Head of Housing and Planning



Copy of letter to the Chairman of the
South East England Regional Assembly

PT08 . ITEM 55
Parmjit Dhanda MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

**Department for Communities and Local
Government**

Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

Tel: 020 7944 3016
Fax: 020 7944 4339
E-Mail: parmjit.dhanda@communities.gsi.gov.uk
www.communities.gov.uk
17th July 2008

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE DRAFT SOUTH EAST PLAN

Following the Examination in Public into the draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East and publication of the Panel Report in August 2007, I have pleasure in enclosing a copy of the following documents;

- A Schedule of the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the draft South East Plan and Reasoned Justification
- The South East Plan incorporating the Proposed Changes, and
- The Non-Technical Summary of the Sustainability Appraisal and the Habitats Regulations Assessment

The Proposed Changes take account of the recommendations of the independent Panel which examined the draft between November 2006 and March 2007, and the recommendations of a combined Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment which is also published today.

Views on the Proposed Changes, the Sustainability Appraisal and the Habitats Regulation Assessment are now sought during the consultation period which starts today and ends on Friday 24th October 2008.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Members and staff of the South East England Regional Assembly for their hard work in preparing the draft document and in contributing to the Public Examination. I am also grateful to Corinne Swain, Martin Shaw and Mary Travers and their team for holding and reporting on the Examination, and to Peter Burley, who held the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area technical sessions.

The Schedule sets out the changes proposed by the Secretary of State and the reasons why these are proposed. For clarity, and to assist consultees, we are also publishing a separate 'companion' document showing what the final South East Plan would look like if all the changes were incorporated. The Panel Report largely supported the draft submitted by the Regional Assembly but concluded that it gave insufficient weight to economic and demographic factors. The Secretary of State is proposing to incorporate the majority of the recommendations made by the Panel, but some recommendations have not been accepted, and some additional changes are also proposed to ensure that the Regional Spatial Strategy is aligned with national policy.

The following key changes are proposed in addition to those recommended by the Panel;

- a) An increase in the regional housing figure to an annual figure of 33,125, from 32,000 in the Panel report - a total of 662,500 over the plan period. This provides for a 15% increase in net additional dwellings over the figure proposed in the draft South East Plan, and 4% over that recommended by the Panel
- b) The identification of eight Strategic Development Areas (SDAs). In addition to those sites either in the original draft or recommended by the Panel, new SDAs are proposed at Milton Keynes (housing figures remain as identified by the Panel but comprise an additional uplift to accommodate a new SDA and a reduction to take out allocations identified by the Panel in the East of England), Shoreham and Whitehill/Bordon. An SDA south west of Reading recommended by the Panel has not been included in the draft because of concerns about its potential impact on flood risk

- c) A new policy on Thames Basin Heaths to encourage joint working in local authority clusters, taking on board elements of the draft delivery plan
- d) Targets for renewable energy in new development to be set locally, using the Assembly's suggested requirement of 10% as a starting point
- e) Aligning the definition of 'smart growth' with the Regional Economic Strategy
- f) Deletion of the Strategic Gap policy in line with Planning Policy Statement 7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas)
- g) Amendments to policy and supporting text on infrastructure to strengthen the requirement for use of existing infrastructure and encourage demand management
- h) Tightening of policies in the draft RSS on community and social infrastructure provision
- i) Various amendments in response to the Sustainability Appraisal and the Habitats Regulations Assessment
- j) Strengthening of policy on Green Infrastructure
- k) Amendments to policy on water efficiency to acknowledge the relationship between the spatial planning system and ongoing amendments to building regulations, in line with the supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1(Planning and Climate Change)

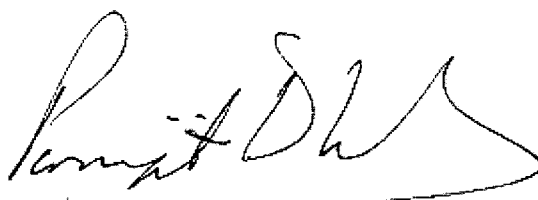
In addition the Secretary of State has amended the draft to follow the structure recommended by the Panel in Appendix B of their report to help reduce the length of the document and to provide a more concise and regionally specific vision which does not repeat national policy. In particular the sub regional elements of the draft have been amended to reduce length and remove duplication with core policies. We welcome any views on how it could be made more concise.

This letter and the documents are being sent to all of the Region's local authorities, parish councils, MP's, MEP's and all those who took part in the Public Examination. It is being made widely available for public inspection at local authority offices and libraries. Copies will also be available from the Government Office for the South East and on the internet (www.gose.gov.uk/planning/regionalPlanning). Responses should be sent to GOSE by 24th October 2008 and should be made via the online 'consultation portal' accessed via the GOSE website. A paper response form is also available.

As required by the Regulations I would be obliged if you would make these documents available for inspection at your offices and, on your website, either publish the documents and details of how they can be accessed, or a link to the appropriate GOSE website. Copies for this purpose will be sent under separate cover.

Publication of the Proposed Changes is an important step in putting in place a strategy to deal with the challenges that the South East faces over the next two decades, and I look forward to the Assembly's response to the Proposed Changes.

Yours sincerely,



PARMJIT DHANDA MP