

Committee	Cabinet
Date	14 December 2005
Report By	Director of Transport and Environment
Title of Report	South East Plan
Purpose of Report	To endorse the Council's final advice to the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) on future housing provision in East Sussex and the Sub-regional Strategy for the Sussex Coast

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. note the outcome of the Council's consultations on future housing provision;
 2. agree the Sub-regional Strategy for the Sussex Coast, including the district-level distribution of SEERA's overall housing targets for this area;
 3. support the designation of Hastings as a Regional Transport Hub; and
 4. support the identification of the Sussex Coast as a priority Regeneration Area.
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1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 The extra costs of technical work and public consultation for the SE Plan have been supported in 2005/06 by a one-off allocation of £40,000 and a SEERA contribution of £5,000.

2. Supporting Information

Background

2.1 SEERA submitted its core, region-wide policies in Part 1 of the SE Plan to Government in July 2005. This established overall housing targets to 2026 for the South East as a whole, and for its nine-sub-regions and 'rest of county' areas. Part 2 of the Plan will include more detailed sub-regional guidance, including district housing figures.

2.2 The Council has agreed to provide SEERA with advice on the distribution of housing figures to district level by 9 December, together with further strategic planning advice on:

- the final strategy and policies for the Sussex Coast sub-region;
- the justification for designating Hastings as a regional transport hub; and
- the identification of priority areas in the SE Plan.

2.3 Subject to some minor amendments, proposals in respect of all these matters were supported by the joint Members' Steering Group for the Sussex Coast, chaired by Councillor Reid, at its meeting on 25 November. The draft revised strategy for the Sussex Coast that Cabinet is asked to endorse is attached as Annex A. The deadline for completing this report to Cabinet means some editorial changes may have been made prior to submission to SEERA on 9 December. Any significant changes will be reported at the meeting.

Housing advice to SEERA

2.4 The County Council and Brighton & Hove are asked to accommodate an annual average housing provision figure of 1,900 new homes, 2006-2026. This is 15% less than both the average building rate since 1991 and the current Structure Plan requirement.

2.5 The City Council has consulted on Brighton & Hove accommodating 550 new homes per year. In East Sussex, consultation has been on the county making provision for 1,350 new homes

per year, divided between the Sussex coastal towns (1,050 homes per year) and the more rural 'rest of county' area (300 homes per year).

2.6 Annex B provides further information on the consultation proposals which remain unchanged in the final advice to SEERA. The majority of future housing supply will come from existing sites already committed for development and from further building on 'windfall' sites. The provisions also imply that new strategic land allocations will be needed for about 3,500 extra homes (about 13% of the total requirement to 2026). It is expected that these will be met on brownfield land in Hastings (500 homes), on the fringes of Bexhill (1,000 homes) and in south Wealden (2,000 homes). However, it will be for the district councils to determine actual locations through their Local Development Frameworks.

2.7 The six week public consultation programme was generally well received and prompted 639 written responses. Further details are given in Annex C. This feedback showed widespread support for the strategy approach and that some benefits of development are recognised (e.g. helping to provide more affordable housing). Generally, however, perceived benefits do not outweigh stakeholders' broader concerns - the most significant of which are the extra pressure development has on local services/infrastructure and the need to ensure that new development is accompanied by timely provision of essential supporting infrastructure.

Other advice to SEERA

2.8 SEERA consulted on the Council's initial advice on policies for the Sussex Coast in early 2005. As well as incorporating proposals for future housing provision, the latest advice to SEERA further develops that original strategy by including a detailed policy (SCT8) on affordable housing and re-introducing details of essential strategic infrastructure requirements (in policy SCT9). A number of minor changes have been made for clarification.

2.9 Proposed submissions in support of Hastings being designated a Regional Transport Hub and on the whole of the Sussex Coast sub-region being identified as a priority Regeneration Area are attached as Annexes D and E respectively. Such designations will lend further crucial support to the regeneration objectives that lie at the heart of our sub-regional strategy proposals.

3. Environmental Issues

3.1 The developing strategy for the Sussex Coast has been informed by comprehensive sustainability appraisals, full details of which are given on the Council's website.

4. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

4.1 Following public consultation and consideration by the Sussex Coast Members' Group the Cabinet is asked to formally agree the revised Sub-Regional Strategy for the Sussex Coast and associated proposals listed in the recommendations, which will help to promote sustainable regeneration and growth throughout East Sussex.

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07 December 2005 C14December-South East Plan

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

New Homes for East Sussex 2006-2026 (Full Report and Summary Leaflet), East Sussex County Council, September 2005.

South East Plan Part 1:Core Regional Policies, South East England Regional Assembly, July 2005.

First Consultation Draft South East Plan, South East England Regional Assembly, January 2005.

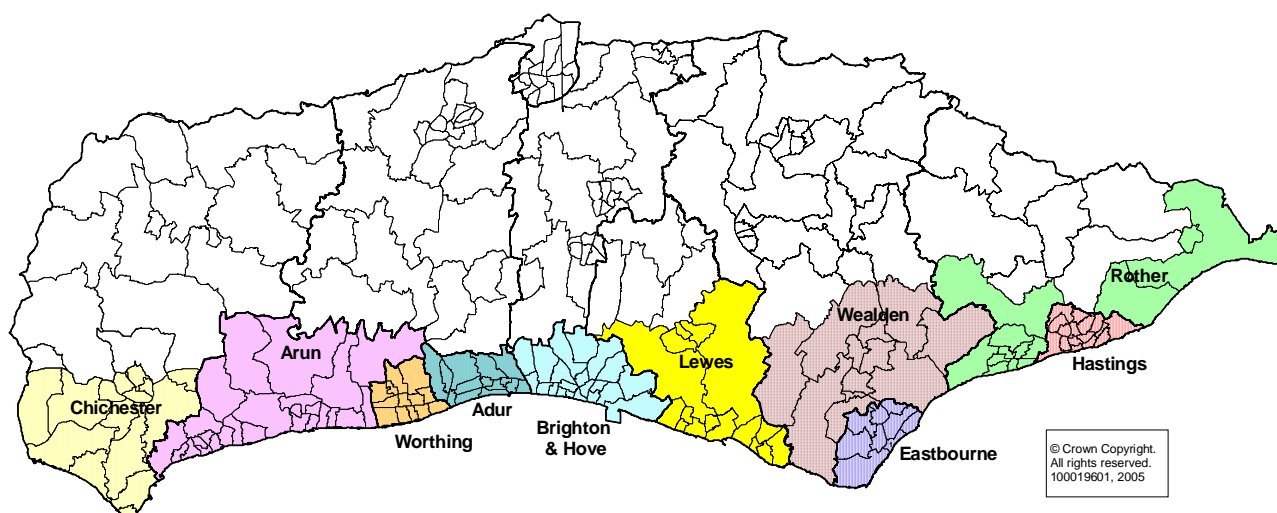
Sub-Regional Strategy for the Sussex Coast, East Sussex County Council, October 2004.

Revised Strategy for the Sussex Coast Sub-region

1 The Sussex Coast

1.1 This sub-regional strategy covers the length of the Sussex Coast from Chichester to Rye which is home to nearly 1 million people (see the map below). At its centre is the city of Brighton & Hove, the largest urban area with around 250,000 residents. It includes the two county towns of Chichester and Lewes along with the other major urban areas of Eastbourne, Hastings, Worthing, Bexhill, Bognor Regis, Littlehampton and Shoreham together with their immediate rural hinterland extending into the Sussex Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In terms of local authority areas, the sub-region covers the whole of Adur, Arun, Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne and Hastings and parts of Chichester, Lewes, Rother and Wealden districts. It does not include any part of Horsham or Mid Sussex districts.

Map of the Sussex Coast sub-region



1.2 In response to the sub-region's extensive socio-economic difficulties, Policy CC9 on Spatial Emphasis in Part 1 of the Plan identifies the Sussex Coast as a priority Regeneration Area. It also presents, in Section C4, a summary 'Statement of Strategy' for the sub-region which states that its purpose is:

To improve the overall economic performance of the sub-region, giving particular priority to achieving high levels of sustainable economic development. The intention is to bring performance closer to the regional average and reduce deprivation and social exclusion. The strategy should also take forward recent success in the Brighton area in realising economic potential and addressing deprivation.

1.3 The current nature and extent of structural weaknesses in the sub-regional economy is illustrated by reference to just a few key indicators. These reveal:

- very high levels of multiple deprivation in many of the Sussex coastal towns – most especially in Hastings and Brighton & Hove (which are amongst the worst affected areas in the whole country);
- Gross Value Added (GVA) per head, in the sub-region as a whole, is 30% below the regional average;

- gross weekly earnings in the Sussex coastal districts are the lowest in the South East (excluding the Isle of Wight) and, generally, around 15% below the national average;
- unemployment rates in many of the wards along the Sussex Coast are typically significantly higher than the regional average;
- low rates of growth in the number of VAT-registered businesses – particularly in Eastbourne and Worthing where new business formation has been less than half the regional average since 1994, and in Hastings and Rother which have seen little business growth at all;
- that, by 2001, the numbers living in the sub-region but travelling elsewhere to work had increased to over 71,000 people – leading to a daily net commuting outflow from the sub-region of nearly 37,500 employees;
- a high percentage of residents with no qualifications and a low proportion of residents with degree level qualifications in many of the coastal towns (with the notable exceptions of the county and university towns).

1.4 The sub-region is also quite distinctive in a number of other key respects by virtue of its demographic characteristics, the degree to which further development potential is constrained by extensive environmental designations and the poor quality of its transport infrastructure and services (which both frustrates potential strategic development opportunities and reinforces its peripherality). While there may be a shortage of available new business sites and premises in some parts of the sub-region, in other areas the strategic employment sites which are allocated have proved difficult to develop because of the high costs involved relative to the yield attainable and/or due to a lack of transport infrastructure to serve them.

1.5 With 25% of people in the sub-region over pensionable age, the number of deaths exceeds the number of births among the resident population leading to a substantial decline in population over time. This decline more than offsets the increased housing requirement arising from falling household sizes. As a result the Sussex Coast has virtually no locally-generated requirement for additional housing. Population and household growth in the sub-region arises solely as a result of continuing net in-migration, primarily from London and the rest of the South East. Because of the range of economic problems, the buying power of in-migrants, the limited scope for further development and the depleted stock of social rented housing, access to private housing is very difficult for a significant proportion of existing and newly forming households and affordability problems loom large.

1.6 While the Sussex Coast's high quality environment must be protected both for its own sake and as an important economic asset, the sub-region's future development is substantially constrained by a large number of extensive environmental designations of national and international importance. These include the two AONBs (one of which is proposed as a future National Park), Heritage Coast, Ramsar sites, SSSIs and Ancient Woodland. The area is also susceptible to fluvial flooding and faces coastal management issues. These constraints are very close to the urban edge of many towns and severely limit their scope for sustainable outward expansion. The built environment also contains many areas of heritage and cultural importance, although a large percentage of the housing stock is old, with physical decay apparent in some towns.

1.7 Achieving the required step change in economic performance to increase the range and quality of local employment opportunities and to tackle deprivation and social exclusion will therefore clearly demand very careful spatial planning in such a unique area.

2 The sub-regional strategy

2.1 The overall aim for the sub-region is to secure sustainable economic regeneration that will substantially reduce the social and economic disparities with the rest of the region, while protecting and enhancing its environment and the quality of life of its residents. In this way, the sub-region intends to make an increased contribution to the wealth of the regional economy rather than continuing to depress its overall performance.

2.2 The strategy seeks to increase the priority given to the sub-region in investment decisions in both the public and private sectors. Recognition of the sub-region's needs at regional and national level must be translated into purposive action and support if any real and lasting progress is going to be made in delivering sustainable economic regeneration and growth. Locally, promoting such a renaissance demands more focused and better co-ordinated efforts on laying the foundations for economic development through measures such as skills training, removing the barriers hindering the development of existing employment allocations and making sufficient new sites and premises available in appropriate locations that will suit modern business requirements.

2.3 At the same time as pursuing such regeneration objectives, the Sussex Coast must also make appropriate provision for future housing development – both to address its own needs for affordable housing and help meet wider regional demand. The overall scale of housing development required of the sub-region is set at 2,700 dwellings a year and represents a slight reduction compared to past requirements and actual construction rates. This is in recognition of the need to moderate future housing growth to a more sustainable level that better matches both the tightening physical constraints on further development and the sub-region's realistic prospects for future employment growth.

2.4 The overall spatial strategy for the Sussex Coast can be characterised as promoting a 'balanced dispersal' of development across the sub-region. This matches development requirements with the scope and limitations imposed by the physical environment while aiming to spread the benefits of new development as widely as possible across the communities of the Sussex Coast. Although this strategy very deliberately seeks to optimise the use of previously-developed land within the coastal towns, meeting the sub-region's overall housing target will almost certainly require sustainable urban extensions to towns in Arun, Chichester, Rother and Wealden.

2.5 By minimising potential requirements for new greenfield development, the strategy also aims to make the most of existing infrastructure and services concentrated within the towns. Nonetheless, considerable investment in new and improved infrastructure, facilities and services will certainly be required if this sub-regional strategy is to actually succeed in delivering sustainable economic regeneration and growth and a general improvement in residents' overall well-being.

2.6 Most significant amongst the requirement for new investment in the sub-region is the pressing need for substantial improvement in its strategic transport infrastructure and services. These improvements are essential to improve accessibility within the sub-region, to better integrate the Sussex Coast with the rest of the South East, to make it more accessible to wider markets, to make it more attractive as a business location by reducing the sub-region's peripherality. Particular urgency is attached to securing improvements along the A27/A259 corridor as the route's limitations are currently delaying the delivery of key housing and business proposals in existing development plans.

2.7 Delivering the sub-regional strategy and achieving its overall aim will not be easy. It will require concerted and co-ordinated action to be taken by a variety of agencies at national, regional and local levels on a number of fronts. It requires an approach that is both consistent in addressing the sub-region's common problems and issues yet sufficiently sensitive to

respond to the range of different circumstances, needs and opportunities that exist in the various communities along the Sussex Coast.

3 Sub-regional policies

3.1 The core strategy for the Sussex Coast outlined in Policy SCT1 focuses on the need for a greater and more co-ordinated effort to deliver the substantial regeneration of the sub-region to raise its economic performance towards the regional level. It recognises that the extent of problems, as well as the scope for addressing them, is not uniform across the sub-region and that locally sensitive approaches and solutions will be necessary. It stresses the central importance of major improvements in strategic transport infrastructure to achieving the strategy's main objectives.

3.2 Accommodating further development must also be accomplished in a way that respects environmental constraints and minimises the need for people to commute to jobs outside the area. If successful, the strategy will contribute significantly to reducing deprivation and social exclusion throughout the sub-region. In raising local wage levels, it should help ease the acute difficulties many local households face in gaining access to decent, affordable, private housing by helping to reduce the house price/local earnings 'affordability gap'. However, there will always be those for whom such problems cannot be resolved by economic growth alone and who will require more direct assistance through the provision of increased affordable (i.e. subsidised) housing for rent or shared ownership.

3.3 This more pro-active response to tackling the economic and social problems of the sub-region also needs to recognise that maintaining a high quality physical and cultural environment as another valuable ingredient contributing to economic success as well as to the well-being of local residents, employees and visitors.

POLICY SCT1: CORE SUB-REGIONAL STRATEGY

Local authorities and other agencies should, as a priority, pro-actively pursue and promote the sustainable economic growth and regeneration of the Sussex Coast that will:

- i reduce intra-regional disparities and help bring the performance of the sub-regional economy up to the South East average**
- ii respond to the different needs, opportunities and characteristics of each town, or group of towns and all sections of their communities**
- iii build upon and help deliver major improvements to the strategic transport infrastructure and services both to reduce its peripherality and to improve accessibility within the sub-region**
- iv achieve a better balance between the provision of housing and the capability of both the local environment and economy to absorb this in a sustainable way whilst responding as far as possible to the needs of local people (including key workers) for decent homes at a price/cost that they can afford**
- v protect the sub-region's high environmental quality (in both town and country), enhance its cultural and historic assets and promote excellence in the design of new development in recognition of their importance to economic success and quality of life.**

Enabling economic regeneration

3.4 Policy CC9 on 'spatial emphasis' identifies the whole of the sub-region as a priority Regeneration Area where persistent problems of poor economic performance and associated deprivation are concentrated. To deliver the sustainable regeneration that is needed to narrow these regional disparities, a consistent and concerted effort is required from all relevant agencies, especially the key infrastructure providers. These agencies must work to a common agenda to ensure that the necessary increased priority in national, regional and local investment decisions is rightly afforded to the Sussex Coast.

3.5 However, social and economic needs do vary within the sub-region to some degree. Therefore, within the general framework of increased priority to the Sussex Coast, Policy SCT2 advocates that weight in investment decisions and other support should be more sharply focused on those areas within the sub-region that exhibit the greatest economic and social needs. In this respect it is the central and eastern parts of the sub-region where the most severe problems exist and which should receive greater emphasis. This will also help to facilitate the implementation of the comprehensive, multi-agency frameworks required to stimulate an economic renaissance. It is not intended that such targeting should exclude other areas of the sub-region with pockets of quite severe deprivation from receiving the attention and investment that they also need. Indeed, the identification of the whole of the Sussex Coast as a Regeneration Area recognises the importance of taking action over a broader area.

3.6 In the same vein and equally as important, realising substantial improvements in strategic transport communications and infrastructure is a priority for the sub-region as a whole and is seen as crucial to the success of the strategy. Improving east-west rail links and services and making the A27/A259 trunk route fit for purpose will improve complementary connections with other key sub-regions along the south coast as an alternative to using the M25 for longer journeys. It would also improve access within the sub-region, help widen employment opportunities throughout the Sussex Coast and improve the balance of labour supply and demand. Improving north-south strategic transport links, especially to Gatwick and London, is equally important to reduce the area's peripherality from the rest of the region and other key markets.

POLICY SCT2: ENABLING ECONOMIC REGENERATION

To help realise a step change in the sub-region's economic performance, national, regional and other relevant agencies and authorities should give increased priority to investment decisions and other direct support for the sub-region. Key measures should include:

- i directing national and regional assistance and expenditure to promote the social and economic regeneration of areas in greatest need by:**
 - a continuing the support being given to Hastings/Bexhill and Shoreham in general whilst**
 - b increasing the priority given to other parts of the Sussex Coast (from Shoreham to Rye, including Brighton and Hove and Hastings)**
 - c targeting other pockets of social and economic deprivation throughout the sub-region**
- ii delivering improvements to east-west transport links by road and rail to improve accessibility, facilitate strategic development opportunities and enable the better functioning of overlapping local labour and housing markets**
- iii maintaining and/or improving key north-south communication links that will also help to knit the coastal towns better into the rest of the South East and increase its attractions as a business location.**

Management of existing employment sites and premises

3.7 The sub-region needs to ensure that more, and a better mix of, quality sites and premises are available to address business needs, including high quality starter space for innovative and growth-orientated businesses. However, the majority of the existing stock of industrial and office accommodation is over 30 years old and not well suited to the needs of new industries and more dynamic growth sectors of the economy. There are also several key strategic employment sites and business park allocations that have remained undeveloped over a number of years, particularly in East Sussex. Nearly 290 hectares of land within the Sussex Coast is earmarked for industrial and commercial (B1-B8) development but only around 50 hectares of this total is readily available – the vast majority of which is located in the West Sussex coastal districts.

3.8 There are serious problems of viability in some areas where low rental yields (allied to high development costs in some cases) make the development of prospective employment sites unprofitable. Poor transport links, access problems and other constraints are also significant barriers in some areas to the delivery of industrial and commercial development. It is vital that the sub-region finds creative ways to utilise the opportunity that these sites present, especially with the limited scope for replacing them. In certain cases, realising the maximum potential benefit to the local economy may require the judicious introduction of other uses as part of a mixed-use scheme to help fund the provision of otherwise unviable employment space. The focus of any such alternative uses should be on housing development wherever possible as this will also help to achieve other aims of the strategy and its extent can be finely tuned to minimise any necessary loss of employment potential.

3.9 Some existing sites may no longer be suitable for business purposes. If such redundant sites are 'lost' to other uses, local planning authorities should also pursue the possibility of securing development contributions towards bringing forward employment provision on other sites. As addressed in Policy SCT3, the successful regeneration of the Sussex Coast will largely depend on ensuring that an appropriate range of good quality sites and premises in accessible locations is available to respond quickly to the needs of local businesses and realise opportunities for securing much needed investment.

POLICY SCT3: MANAGEMENT OF EXISTING EMPLOYMENT SITES AND PREMISES

To deliver sufficient appropriate sites and premises for business and other uses that will help to facilitate the regeneration of the local economy, local authorities should, in addition to Policy RE3:

- i protect existing and allocated employment sites from other uses unless they are demonstrated to be incapable of meeting the needs of businesses**
- ii develop and co-ordinate with other agencies delivery mechanisms to unlock and implement sites with economic development potential, including port and airport sites at Newhaven and Shoreham, existing allocated business parks and other important sites that have persistently remained undeveloped**
- iii be prepared to permit mixed use schemes on existing or allocated employment sites in circumstances where this would deliver necessary employment space at the right time on sites which would be unviable for an employment only scheme**
- iv seek to improve and upgrade existing industrial estates and business areas to bring them up to modern standards required by business.**

Employment priority in new land allocations

3.10 One of the key challenges in this sub-region is to reconcile the competing demands for the limited development opportunities that remain. Given the main objective to achieve an economic renaissance, priority in allocating land for development should be given to economic development over housing in terms of location, particularly as employment requirements tend to be more specific. Unless enough land that can readily be developed for business use is made available with good access to improved strategic communications networks, the economic renaissance is unlikely to be delivered.

3.11 In determining employment land allocations, local planning authorities will need to acknowledge and provide for a full range of economic development requirements to ensure that an appropriate mix of business sites and premises is readily available. It is important that adequate space and facilities are provided to retain existing firms in the area and to give them and new employers the flexibility they need to prosper and grow. It is also vitally important to provide high quality opportunities capable of attracting new inward investment to the Sussex Coast. The need for economic regeneration is so great, and suitable site opportunities so limited, that some limited encroachment into environmental constraints may be justified to meet the specific economic needs of particular towns. Policy SCT4 is intended to be flexible enough to allow such a policy response, in selected cases, where it can be clearly demonstrated that no sustainable alternative exists that would deliver the identified regeneration needs. Such an approach would require comprehensive justification in local development documents.

POLICY SCT4: EMPLOYMENT PRIORITY IN LAND ALLOCATIONS

In conjunction with the priorities set out in Policies RE3 and C2, in allocating land for development, Local Development Documents should:

- i give priority to delivering employment development in strategically accessible locations to ensure an appropriate mix of readily available sites and premises whilst also providing sufficient space to:**
 - a retain existing firms and enable their expansion or relocation (within the sub-region)**
 - b create attractive opportunities for inward investment and new uses**
 - c at least match anticipated increases in the resident workforce**
- ii as an exception to general policy, be prepared to allow for some infringement of environmental constraints on development in specific instances, but only where there is a clearly justifiable case for delivering economic regeneration to meet identified needs, and where no more sustainable alternatives exist and the harmful impacts of development can be satisfactorily mitigated.**

3.12 The scale of the economic challenge facing the sub-region is revealed by the economic forecasts and demographic projections that have been commissioned by the principal authorities for the area from independent consultants. The economic forecasts prepared by Experian suggest that, on the basis of national and regional economic trends, the sub-regional economy might be expected to grow by just under 3% per year over the 15 years to 2016, compared to a regional growth figure of 3.1%. In terms of employment, such a growth rate would see labour demand increase by 32,000 full-time equivalents (FTEs). However, the prospects for such growth appears very heavily concentrated in public administration, education and health and other services, while employment in manufacturing and construction is expected to decline further.

3.13 As far as labour supply figures are concerned, the Population and Housing Research Group (PHRG) at Anglia Ruskin University have projected the demographic changes that

might be expected to result from the South East Plan's requirements for future housing provision (at district level). These projections indicate that the workforce is likely to grow by just under 42,700 persons between 2001-2016.

3.14 Although any such detailed forecasts and projections for relatively small areas need to be treated quite cautiously, the degree of uncertainty obviously increases the further ahead we might seek to look. While Experian's forecasts indicate that the rate of growth in the sub-regional economy might reduce to 2.5% after 2016, the PHRG projections suggest virtually no further growth in the resident workforce over the next 10 years to 2026 – despite the Sussex Coast's population being projected to increase by over 20,000 in the same period.

3.15 These projections clearly reveal the potential effect of changing age structures in the resident population on the outturn workforce figures. This in turn, highlights the importance of not placing too much importance on such figures looking so far ahead. In reality, the changing size and composition of the resident population will be very heavily influenced by the age and sex characteristics of both internal and international migration to and from the Sussex Coast. Such net migration flows can be very volatile from year to year and this presents great difficulties in any effort to model future population changes. In any event, the South East Plan and its sub-regional elements will be closely monitored on an annual basis. It will also be subject to a comprehensive review in around five years time which will provide sufficient opportunity to make any necessary adjustments to sub-regional policy in the light of the unfolding socio-economic and demographic intelligence available.

Education and skills

3.16 The skills, knowledge and aspirations of residents are central to the sub-region's economic success yet adult qualifications in the Sussex Coast are below the regional average at all levels, leaving a substantial proportion of the population with no, or very low, levels of qualification. The Area Investment Frameworks across the sub-region and other local research have identified the need for better education and training to improve workforce skills at all levels if the local economy is to prosper and regional disparities in performance are to be narrowed. Current identified priorities include: providing basic literacy and numeracy; raising the level of attainment among those with the lowest levels of qualification to a standard that will equip them to access the job market and progress; and raising higher-level skills that are required by innovative and dynamic sectors of the economy that can contribute to economic growth. There is a clear need to achieve a better match between the skills and training requirements of businesses with pathways to learning and provision that can be effectively accessed by those who need it, in terms of specific and transferable skills. As highlighted in Policy SCT5, to achieve this there needs to be even greater co-ordination between local authorities, education and training providers and business interests.

POLICY SCT5: EDUCATION AND SKILLS

In conjunction with Policy RE4, local authorities should work jointly with the Learning and Skills Council, local education providers, universities, colleges and the business community to deliver co-ordinated programmes to ensure that the local workforce is trained appropriately and flexibly, to enable residents to access and benefit from existing and new job opportunities, recognising the special needs and characteristics of the sub-region.

Co-ordinated leadership and promotion of the sub-region

3.17 A crucial component of the sub-region's future economic success will be to overcome perceptions of the area amongst the business community as one of poor economic performance, low productivity and geographical peripherality. The sub-region needs to raise its profile as a location that is 'open for business'.

3.18 Integrated multi-agency plans and frameworks are an essential component of, and pre-requisite to, achieving a step change in economic performance. Therefore, Policy SCT6 states that each major area of the sub-region should prepare a simple, overarching plan or vision for their area which will provide clear leadership plus an agreed, common purpose and direction so that regeneration efforts are combined to maximum effect irrespective of administrative boundaries. This process of partnership working is as important as the framework itself, as evidenced by the successful process and approach to regeneration being taken in Hastings and Bexhill through the 'Five Point Plan'.

3.19 This approach should also include the consideration of promotional activities in the sub-region with authorities combining together to act as a more powerful force – stressing the common advantages of the sub-region and working in a more co-ordinated and co-operative way to maximise impact rather than each area acting in competition. Key measures will include:

- i targeted marketing and promotion of the Sussex Coast to inward investors;
- ii advice to local businesses, including on site opportunities and the availability of premises;
- iii encouraging development of key local business clusters; and
- iv identifying potential growth sectors to nurture and promote more actively, including high technology, media and arts, universities and spin out businesses from them, leisure activities and tourism.

POLICY SCT6: CO-ORDINATION, LEADERSHIP AND PROMOTION OF THE SUB-REGION

Local authorities, regional agencies, government representatives and other key stakeholders should agree a long-term vision and together develop joint, multi-agency plans and frameworks as a focus for delivering economic and social regeneration for the following areas:

- i Hastings - Bexhill area – to develop and extend the work already undertaken in the 'Five Point Plan' into the longer term and to capitalise on Hastings as a regional transport hub;**
- ii Eastbourne - Hailsham area – to optimise the area's potential to provide employment space and associated housing in sustainable and strategically accessible locations along the A22 corridor;**
- iii Shoreham - Brighton & Hove – to continue to strengthen the economy of Brighton & Hove and the adjoining area as a major centre and transport hub and at Shoreham to capitalise on strategic port and airport site opportunities;**
- iv Newhaven area – to continue the regeneration of the town to strengthen its economic base, revitalise the port and improve the environment; and**
- v Coastal West Sussex from Selsey to the east of Worthing – to develop, over a longer term, the co-ordinated approach fostered by the Area Investment Framework and other specific initiatives.**

Such multi-agency plans should focus on the provision of an appropriate balance of

additional employment space, affordable housing and the necessary infrastructure, facilities and services required to support development, investigation of business clusters, skills development and promotion of the sub-region as a location 'open for business'.

Broad amount and distribution of housing development

3.20 The Sussex Coast sub-region is required to make provision for an annual average of 2,700 new homes per year from 2006 to 2026. Of this total, 1,100 dwellings are to be provided for in the West Sussex part of the sub-region and the remaining 1,600 are to be located in the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove part of the sub-region (see Table C3 in Part 1 of the Plan). This scale of development balances the need to contribute towards wider regional housing requirements with the limitations imposed by the sub-region's poorly performing local economy, where relatively more employment development than housing growth is needed to promote a more sustainable balance between the supply of, and demand for, labour. The overall housing target for the sub-region also reflects the extensive environmental constraints that severely restrict its scope for physical development. The total provision represents a slight reduction over past rates of housing development in the sub-region and represents a level that the Sussex Coast should be able to sustain over the plan period while regenerating its economy, provided that the essential supporting infrastructure is made available.

3.21 The distribution of future housing development between the districts in the sub-region is strongly influenced by the estimated potential supply of housing at 2006 and the scope for making the further sustainable allocations that will be necessary to achieve the overall provision. The figures take account of the potential supply of housing in each district up to 2026 through planning permissions already granted, allocations made in structure plans and existing or emerging local plans and estimates of future development that will continue to come forward on 'windfall' sites (i.e. brownfield sites that cannot be individually identified before planning applications are made). However, in addition to this potential supply, new strategic allocations for around 7,600 new homes across the sub-region are likely to be required to meet the total housing requirement for the Sussex Coast. While it is expected that some of these additional allocations will be provided on brownfield sites within the urban areas, the proposed housing provisions will inevitably require some additional greenfield site allocations which should take the form of sustainable extensions to existing towns.

3.22 The scope for such extensions, beyond that allocated in existing and emerging development plans, is distinctly limited and the range of potential alternative development strategies is consequently very restricted. The towns in the central part of the sub-region from Worthing to Seaford are so constrained by the Sussex Downs AONB that no significant scope for sustainable greenfield development remains. In the east, from Eastbourne to Rye, the only strategic scope for additional greenfield development appears to be in the Bexhill and Eastbourne/Hailsham areas. In the west of the sub-region, any additional scope for such development seems confined to the Chichester area and the area west of the River Arun.

3.23 The proposed housing distribution promotes a 'balanced dispersal' of the identified requirement for new strategic housing allocations. It is considered the most sustainable strategy with distinct advantages over any other options (that would aim to concentrate the extra allocations in one main location) because it will:

- help promote greater business confidence and spread the benefits of employment-generating development across the whole sub-region, thereby increasing residents' opportunities to work close to where they live and reducing the need for longer-distance out-commuting;
- in promoting a better balance between people, homes and jobs and in helping to reduce the need to travel to work and other services, also increase opportunities for people to make more journeys by public transport, cycling and walking;

- ensure that opportunities to secure an appropriate proportion of affordable housing from development will also be spread more widely throughout the sub-region and better match the pattern of needs;
- optimise the use of the coastal towns' brownfield opportunities across the sub-region resulting in less development overall being accommodated on greenfield sites; and
- be delivered without encroaching on to the undeveloped flood plain or into designated sites or landscapes, thereby helping to conserve and enhance biodiversity and the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

3.24 Policy SCT7 sets out the housing requirements that each local authority area included in the sub-region is expected to provide for in its Local Development Framework. For those authorities where only part of their area is included in the sub-region, the provision for the rest of the district is also included so that the sub-regional element can be seen in the context of the total district requirement. The policy also includes an element of flexibility which is designed to allow any district that is 'split' by the sub-regional boundary to vary the provision made within the sub-region and the rest of its area, but only if this is necessary to meet the whole district provision and realise a more sustainable pattern of development without compromising the regeneration of the coastal towns.

3.25 By making the most of development opportunities within towns where existing infrastructure, services and employment are already concentrated, the balanced dispersal strategy will also help to renew outworn areas by maximising the re-use of previously-developed land.

3.26 To meet the overall provisions, new strategic allocations are likely to be required on additional brownfield sites in Brighton & Hove and Hastings. Elsewhere, new greenfield allocations will need to be made as sustainable extensions to existing towns, notably in Arun, Chichester, Rother and Wealden. Such extensions will also need to incorporate appropriate allocations for employment uses, associated facilities and services and open space to ensure that these new development areas can offer residents a high quality of life.

3.27 Delivery of the housing provisions is subject to the prior availability, or timely provision, of the infrastructure needed to serve it, as required by Policy CC5. Infrastructure improvements are needed not only to serve the housing development but, also, to drive the economic regeneration of the area to help close the prosperity gap and reduce the need for residents to commute out of the sub-region to work by increasing the extent and quality of local employment opportunities.

POLICY SCT7: BROAD AMOUNT AND DISTRIBUTION OF FUTURE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Local Development Documents will make provision for a net increase in the housing stock for the period 2006 - 2026 in each district in the sub-region as follows. This provision will be subject to the provision of all necessary infrastructure as required by policy CC5 and, in particular, to the strategic infrastructure already identified in policy SCT9.

District	Annual average net dwelling increase 2006 - 26			District total 2006 - 2026
	Sussex Coast sub-region	Rest of county area	District total	
Eastbourne	240	-	240	4,800
Hastings	210	-	210	4,200

Lewes	170	50	220	4,400
Rother	200	80	280	5,600
Wealden	230	170	400	8,000
Brighton & Hove	550	-	550	11,000
East Sussex and Brighton & Hove	1,600	300	1,900	38,000
Adur	130	-	130	2,600
Arun	465	-	465	9,300
Chichester	*	*	430	8,600
Worthing	200	-	200	4,000
West Sussex	1,100			
Sussex Coast Sub-region	2,700			

* Split to be determined.

Although the intention is for each authority to meet its contribution to the sub-regional total as shown, some flexibility will be allowed for those authorities not wholly within the sub-region to vary the relative amounts between the sub-region and the rest of county areas where this is necessary to meet the overall district provision and achieve a more sustainable pattern of development.

Most of the development should be focused on existing towns by optimising the use of previously-developed land and, where necessary, by making new land allocations as sustainable extensions of existing towns (including appropriate provision for employment uses, local services and facilities and open space).

Affordable housing

3.28 In the Sussex Coast, earnings are low relative to both national and regional averages and, particularly, in relation to local house prices. In all but two district council areas, the ratio of flat/maisonette prices (the entry level to owner occupation) compared to average male earnings is higher than the regional average. Consequently, for many people, especially newly forming households, key workers and those on less than average local earnings, access to the housing market is very difficult. For example, recent housing needs surveys undertaken for all the housing authorities within the East Sussex part of the sub-region reveal that between 43% and over 60% of all existing households do not earn enough to purchase a one- or two-bedroom flat locally; for concealed households, these figures rise to 62% - 91%.

3.29 The stock of available social rented housing is also low in the sub-region (12.6% of total stock in 2001) compared to the national and regional averages of 19.3% and 14% respectively. This further limits the ability of people in need to gain access to decent affordable housing, as re-lets typically constitute only 6% to 8.5% of the social rented stock (in East Sussex).

3.30 Recent housing needs surveys indicate that the aggregate scale of net annual need for affordable housing in the Sussex Coast is substantially greater than the entire provision of 2,700 new homes per year for the sub-region. This is clearly beyond what can in practice be delivered, but strongly argues for maximising the opportunities for securing affordable housing through the planning system. However, the extent of such provision will be governed by the limits of development viability and what local housing market conditions can sustain, bearing in mind the requirements for development contributions towards other infrastructure.

3.31 As housing needs and the ability to meet them vary considerably across the sub-region, no single, fixed affordable housing target would be appropriate for the whole area. However, as an initial guideline for local policy, a challenging sub-regional target of 40% is suggested. Prescribing this as a single sub-regional target would be too high for some areas and would stifle housing development, yet for other areas it may be too low a target and this would miss much needed opportunities to deliver affordable housing. It is important, therefore, that the policy allows sufficient flexibility for each of the ten local planning authorities to specify precise targets around this guideline in their own local development documents in the light of local needs and circumstances. Similarly, minimum site size thresholds should be determined locally, but circumstances suggest there is no case for these being higher than the current national advisory minimum of 15 dwellings or 0.5 hectare. In some cases and areas, lower thresholds will be justifiable.

3.32 The scale of need along the Sussex Coast tends to argue for all affordable housing provided through the planning system to be directed towards the social rented sector and those in greatest need. The local housing needs surveys also provide little evidence to substantiate a significant proportion of affordable housing being made available in intermediate tenures. However, it is also important to provide a range of housing opportunities to meet the specific needs of particular groups of people and provision in local development documents should aim to reflect the particular needs in their area. This should include provision for key workers which would also assist in regenerating the local economy and for a range of housing options, including extra care housing and supported housing for specialist groups such as the growing elderly population and people with learning and other disabilities.

POLICY SCT8: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

In line with policy H4 and based on up to date assessments of housing need, Local Development Documents will establish appropriate policies and local targets for the provision of affordable housing in their area. Such policies and targets should comply with the following principles:

- i the appropriate proportion of affordable housing sought should be the maximum that the viability of particular developments can support, bearing in mind the likely contributions towards the provision of infrastructure required under policies CC5 and SCT8;**
- ii no single target is prescribed for the sub-region but, as a general guideline, at least 40% of all new housing development should be affordable housing;**
- iii this guideline should not restrain local authorities from seeking a higher or lower proportion of affordable housing provision where local circumstances clearly justify it;**
- iv in setting site size thresholds, affordable housing should be sought on all sites of 15 units or more, unless individual authorities can justify a lower threshold locally; and**
- v the type, size and nature of affordable housing sought should recognise the distinct needs of different sections of the community, including the elderly, other specialist groups in need of supported housing and key workers.**

Infrastructure

3.33 There is deep public concern about the availability and quality of infrastructure and that, in the past, the provision of the full range of infrastructure, services and facilities has

not kept pace with housing development. The lack of adequate transport infrastructure is already delaying the delivery of some major development provisions in existing development plans across the sub-region, for which there are no more sustainable locations.

3.34 Policy CC5 in the Core Regional Strategy should ensure that development only proceeds if all of the necessary infrastructure is available, or can be delivered in sufficient time, to serve that development. However, it is equally important that the infrastructure required to support development proposals is identified sufficiently early in the planning process so that its provision can be phased in relation to the development it will serve. To help achieve this, local authorities will need to work jointly with the relevant infrastructure and service providers in the preparation of their local development documents to establish precise requirements and ensure co-ordination of provision.

3.35 At this stage, the complete range of necessary infrastructure needed to support this sub-regional strategy cannot be fully identified as some will be dependent upon the specific locations and sites yet to be brought forward in local development documents and other sectoral strategies. However, it is possible to identify the main strategic infrastructure requirements that are considered essential to the delivery of this strategy for the Sussex Coast and which are not so dependent upon such specific decisions on development locations. These critical infrastructure requirements are set out in policy SCT9 and highlight, in particular, the crucial importance to the sub-region's sustainable regeneration and growth of achieving extensive improvements to the strategic transport infrastructure and communication links serving the Sussex Coast.

3.36 In addition to the strategic infrastructure schemes identified in Policy SCT9, there is an additional range of infrastructure that, in accordance with Policy CC5, will be needed to serve properly the developments proposed in this strategy. These include infrastructure and services like schools and colleges, health facilities, waste recycling facilities, public open space and provision for leisure and cultural activities. It is similarly important that these types of requirements are all included in the assessments set out in local development documents.

POLICY SCT9: INFRASTRUCTURE

In preparing their Local Development Documents local authorities should work jointly with other relevant agencies and infrastructure providers to ensure that all of the necessary local and strategic, social and physical infrastructure can be provided in time to serve the developments proposed in this strategy, in accordance with policy CC5.

The strategic infrastructure needed to deliver this sub-regional strategy that has been identified so far includes the following:

Passenger transport schemes

Rail

- **Ashford - Hastings line dualling (to enable 2 way working and increase capacity and access to Channel Tunnel)**
- **Willingdon Chord (to enable faster service from Hastings to Brighton)**
- **New stations at Polegate area, Glyne Gap and Wilting (to encourage an increase modal shift associated with new development)**
- **Improvements to Brighton mainline (following completion of Route Utilisation Study)**
- **Completion of Thameslink (to improve links with other sub-regions)**

- **Central Rail Corridor improvements including reinstatement of Lewes-Uckfield and Eridge-Tunbridge Wells lines (to help regenerate Newhaven and provide capacity relief to Brighton mainline)**
- **Barnham passing loop (to improve capacity, access and timetabling)**
- **Arun Valley line improvements (to facilitate travel to/from the north for east-west passengers)**
- **Worthing passing loop (to improve capacity access and timetabling)**

Bus

- **A259 South Coast Quality Bus Corridor, initially at Bexhill – Hastings following completion of the Link Road and at Peacehaven - Brighton (to encourage modal shift and relieve congestion)**
- **Eastbourne - Hailsham Quality Bus Corridor (to encourage modal shift and in association with new development)**
- **Brighton & Hove Sustainable Transport Corridors (to encourage modal shift)**
- **Brighton & Hove Integrated Rapid Transport System and Park & Ride (to encourage modal shift)**
- **South coast fastway (co-ordinated bus interchange and priority measures to ensure sustainable travel in coastal corridor)**

Trunk road schemes

- **A27 Selmeston and Wilmington improvements and A27 Folkington Link (safety and congestion relief to enable delivery of housing and business development in the Eastbourne and South Wealden area)**
- **A27 Beddingham level crossing grade separation (safety and congestion relief)**
- **A27 Chichester Bypass (congestion relief and to facilitate package of measures including bus priority, park & ride, pedestrian and cycle overpasses)**
- **A27 junction improvements Tangmere - Slindon (to improve access to and from A27)**
- **A27 Arundel Relief Road (to improve east-west communication)**
- **A27 Worthing – Lancing (capacity improvements)**
- **A259 Pevensey – Brenzett improvements (safety and access improvements, especially for commercial traffic, to Channel Tunnel and ports to help regeneration)**
- **A21 Lamberhurst – Hastings improvements (to help regenerate Hastings/Bexhill)**
- **A21 Baldeslow junction with B2092 (to connect to Bexhill/Hastings Link Road and help regenerate the area)**

Other transport schemes

- **Bexhill/Hastings Link Road (to relieve congestion on A259 and enable delivery of housing and business development at NE Bexhill)**
- **Bexhill Country Avenue (to relieve congestion on A259 and enable delivery of further development at N and/or W Bexhill)**
- **Newhaven Port Access Road (to enable delivery of port regeneration and business development)**
- **Eastbourne Park road links (to deliver housing and business development)**
- **Shoreham Harbour sustainable access improvements (for effective accommodation of port, maritime, commercial, housing and related uses)**
- **Chichester bus/rail interchange (to co-ordinate sustainable modes of transport)**
- **East Worthing/West Adur access road – link to A27 (to improve access to/from east Worthing)**
- **Stockbridge Relief Road (to provide access to Chichester and the coastal corridor from the Manhood peninsula)**

- **Bognor Regis Relief Road (congestion relief and to provide access to A27 and A259)**

Other infrastructure schemes

- **New reservoir capacity at Clay Hill and/or increased capacity at Bewl and/or Darwell and/or desalination together with associated trunk main improvements (to meet increased demand)**
- **New wastewater treatment facilities to serve the Brighton & Hove area (to treat wastewater and improve sea water quality)**
- **New wastewater treatment facilities at Hailsham area (to serve increased demand from new development and avoid discharge into Pevensey Levels)**
- **New surface water drainage, and possibly new sea outfall, at Willingdon Levels (to cope with additional development)**
- **Surface water drainage and management in association with major development locations (to manage surface water run off and enable new development)**

4 Implementation and Delivery

4.1 The success of the sub-regional strategy in delivering an economic renaissance for the Sussex Coast will ultimately depend upon the commitment of key national, regional and local agencies to its implementation. The strategic policies and proposals presented here need to be translated into more detailed policies and action plans through local development frameworks, local transport plans, community strategies, local economic strategies, area-based master plans and, crucially, investment programmes. The table below provides an indication of the range of mechanisms that will need to be brought to bear in delivering this over-arching sub-regional strategy, alongside identifying which agencies need to take primary responsibility for delivering (or securing the delivery of) particular aspects of policy and those that will have supporting roles.

Delivery mechanisms and responsibilities

Policy	Delivery Mechanisms	Lead Roles	Support Roles
SCT1 – Core strategy	See specific policies below		
SCT2 – Enabling Economic Regeneration	Selective assistance, funding and investment priority Local development documents Planning decisions	Central Government Highways Agency Strategic Rail Authority SEEDA Local authorities	Highway authorities Economic partnerships Local strategic partnerships
SCT3 – Management of Existing Employment Sites and Premises	Local development documents	City, borough and district councils	County councils Economic partnerships
SCT4 – Priority in New Land Allocations	Local development documents	City, borough and district councils	County Councils SEEDA Economic partnerships
SCT5 – Education and Skills	Education and training provision	Sussex Learning and Skills Council Local authorities	Universities FE Colleges Education authorities Economic partnerships
SCT6 – Co-ordination, Leadership and Promotion	Local development documents AIFs Community strategies	City, borough and district councils Economic partnerships Education and skills sector County councils Local strategic partnerships	SEEDA Regional Assembly
SCT7 – Broad Amount And Distribution of Future Housing Development	Local development documents	City, borough and district councils	County councils SEEDA Economic partnerships Sussex Enterprise Regional Assembly Regional Housing Board
SCT8 – Affordable Housing	Local development documents	City, borough and district planning and housing authorities Housing Associations Developers	County councils Regional Assembly Regional Housing Board Town & parish councils Central Government
SCT9 - Infrastructure	Local development documents Planning decisions Direct provision Development contributions	City, borough and district Councils Highway authorities Infrastructure providers Developers	Central Government Regional Assembly SEEDA

5 Monitoring Performance

5.1 It will be important to monitor the implementation of the strategy and changes in the sub-region that it is trying to affect. The principal authorities will work closely with the Assembly on reviewing progress on infrastructure schemes included in the South East Plan's Implementation Plan and on the production of an annual monitoring report that will track changes in the key indicators listed below.

5.2 The Assembly will compile contextual information on annual population and employment changes. The local planning authorities will be required to support the monitoring process by making available information for their part of the sub-region (which is defined on the basis of whole wards as shown in the map in Section 1 above) on the following output indicators for employment and housing that the Assembly intends to monitor for every sub-region:

Employment indicators

- development of employment floorspace (by type)
- available employment land (by type)
- employment land lost to residential development

Housing indicators

- net dwelling completions (on previously-developed land and greenfield sites)
- projected net dwelling completions to the end of the RSS period
- annual average residual dwelling requirement to the end of the RSS period
- affordable housing completions.

5.3 In addition, the principal authorities will monitor other key changes in local socio-economic circumstances to help assess whether the South East Plan is succeeding in helping to reduce socio-economic disparities with the rest of the region. However, much of this information will not be available at sub-regional level and so will be assessed at the most appropriate scales available. Further contextual indicators that will be monitored by the principal authorities in this way include:

- average earnings
- gross value added (per head)
- business start-ups and closures
- unemployment rates
- dependency on selected benefits
- house prices and affordability ratios
- housing waiting list
- statutory homelessness

Consultation proposals for future housing provision in East Sussex

Proposals for the Sussex Coast

SEERA is looking for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove to accommodate an annual average of 1,600 new homes per year (2006-2026) in its coastal towns. This is about 14% below the annual average building rate since 1991. The City Council is looking at Brighton & Hove providing 550 dwellings per year; and we have consulted on proposals for accommodating 1,050 new homes per year across the county, giving a total requirement for 21,000 additional homes over 20 years.

In East Sussex, the majority of this supply will come from existing commitments for housing development (on sites that have already been granted planning permissions and on additional sites allocated for housing in local plans) and from other windfall sites (largely through conversion and redevelopment activity on mainly brownfield land). Our assessment suggests that this current supply of land for housing from these sources will be sufficient to accommodate around 17,500 new homes. This means that new strategic land allocations will be required for 'only' around 3,500 extra homes to meet SEERA's overall target to 2026. In addition to the committed supply, the preferred strategy in the consultation proposals for meeting the additional strategic requirement is to allocate an extra:

- 500 dwellings for development on brownfield sites in Hastings;
- 1,000 dwellings on the fringes of Bexhill (with, perhaps, some on the western fringe of Hastings at Wilting); and
- 2,000 dwellings in Wealden at Polegate, Willingdon and/or Stone Cross and/or at Hailsham.

Proposals for the rest of East Sussex

Part 1 of the SEP sets out a requirement for the more rural parts of East Sussex (outside of any defined sub-region) to make provision for 300 new homes per year from 2006 onwards. This is 21% less than the annual average building rate for the same area since 1991.

In discussion with district colleagues, we agreed that our consultation proposals for the county's inland towns and villages in the more rural parts of Lewes, Rother and Wealden should be based on quite a straightforward assessment of:

- the number, size and function of all the rural settlements identified in existing local plans;
- the extent of significant environmental constraints potentially affecting any future scope for development at these settlements; and
- accessibility considerations such as the presence/absence of regular passenger transport services and the proximity of settlements to key services such as health and education, facilities, shops and jobs.

A simple scoring system was used to measure such considerations and a percentage distribution for the housing figure was derived from this based on the number of settlements with a high score in each district. This suggested that around 17% of the overall target should be accommodated in Lewes; 25% in Rother and 58% in Wealden.

Overall housing provision figures

The Council's consultation proposals for the distribution of future housing provision in East Sussex to meet SEERA's targets are set out in the table below.

	Average number of new homes proposed per year, 2006-2006			Total provision as a percentage of:	
	Sussex Coast	Rest of East Sussex	Total	The current Structure Plan requirement	The average building rate 1991-2004
Eastbourne	240	-	240	54%	51%
Hastings	210	-	210	70%	95%
Lewes	170	50	220	96%	102%
Rother	200	80	280	102%	122%
Wealden	230	170	400	73%	88%
East Sussex	1,050	300	1,350	75%	85%

Once the district-level housing figures have been settled in the final version of the SEP, it will be for each district planning authority to determine the most sustainable distribution and locations for meeting its housing target via their new-style Local Development Framework. If SEERA decide that the SEP should include 'split provision figures' for some districts, the Council should advise the Assembly to provide some flexibility between targets for the Sussex Coast and the rest of East Sussex to help with the districts' local planning work. However, given that the SEP strategy seeks to focus the bulk of development on towns, as a sustainable strategy, whilst allowing for some development in smaller towns and villages to maintain rural viability, complete flexibility between the coastal towns and rural areas would not be appropriate.

Summary details of the consultations on future housing distribution in East Sussex

Overview

The consultation period ran from 19 September to 31 October 2005. Two consultation documents and a detailed questionnaire were published, together with press releases and a new, dedicated section on our website. The questionnaire was also distributed to the Council's Residents' Panel and could be submitted online by other stakeholders.

A half-day workshop was held in Eastbourne on 4 October for invited stakeholders. This was attended by 49 delegates from a variety of organisations and sectors. County Council officers also gave presentations at six public meetings organised by each borough/district council, and discussed the proposals at meetings of the Economic Partnership, Sussex Association of Local Councils and Local Strategic Partnerships, as well as at a Sussex CPRE conference.

Response rates

Generally, the consultation programme appears have been well received. Excluding the Residents' Panel, it generated 639 separate responses from stakeholders; 463 of these responses (72%) were from private individuals and 176 (28%) from representatives of organisations. Altogether, 576 questionnaires were returned for analysis by independent consultants, BMG.

In addition to the questionnaires, 74 respondents submitted written comments – the great majority of which have come from organisations. These written views have been summarised and analysed separately by council officers, along with the additional comments some respondents included on their survey returns.

Analysis

In addition to the analysis and report of the survey results carried out by BMG, we have summarised a total of 1,235 individual comments that were some way submitted in writing. Around one-quarter of these representations were concerned with infrastructure and the need to ensure that future housing development is conditional upon the availability of necessary supporting infrastructure as and when it is needed.

Opinions regarding housing provision in the East Sussex coastal towns are somewhat divided. Some favour maximising their development potential to aid their economic regeneration and/or to reduce any need for greenfield development elsewhere; others consider the towns to be already overcrowded with little capacity for further development.

Comments relating to the rest of East Sussex emphasised concerns regarding the lack of sufficient infrastructure to support more new housing in rural areas. Other respondents highlighted concerns about the harmful impacts of too much development on the character or rural communities.

Other issues raised quite frequently are:

- the importance of maximising development on previously-developed land in order to keep the loss of greenfield sites/countryside to a minimum;
- the need for more affordable homes for local people to help maintain balanced communities;
- a range of environmental issues – most predominantly concerns about flood risk (especially in relation to Eastbourne and Wealden).

Feedback from the borough and district councils

The formal comments received from the borough and district councils (summarised below) are broadly supportive of the proposed housing targets which, ultimately, they will have to meet through their Local Development Frameworks. Not surprisingly, these responses also emphasise the critical importance of new development being contingent upon the timely provision of all necessary supporting infrastructure.

Eastbourne BC

- Expresses thanks at the way the County Council has included all the Sussex authorities in formulating the proposed housing figures.
- Considers the proposed housing figure for Eastbourne of 240 homes per year to be deliverable, providing that the necessary supporting infrastructure is put in place.
- Firmly reiterates the draft policy in the South East Plan that states that new development will not proceed until the local planning authority is satisfied that the infrastructure required to support it will be available in time. This issue is particularly important for Eastbourne given the additional housing allocations being proposed on the borough's border in Wealden.

Hastings BC

- Agrees with the proposed provision for Hastings of 210 new homes per year.
- Supports the County Council's insistence that all necessary infrastructure must be in place to support development, including the Bexhill-Hastings Link Road.
- Strongly supports the designation of Hastings as an additional Regional Transport Hub.
- Supports the designation of the East Sussex and Kent coastal towns as a priority area for regeneration but believes resources should be concentrated on the most disadvantaged areas.

Lewes DC

- Supports the overall allocation to the district of 220 new homes per year but believes this should be expressed as an overall target for the district rather than being broken down into separate figures for its coastal towns and the rest of the district.
- Considers that no part of the district should be regarded as falling within the Gatwick Area sub-region, and that all future housing development in the north-western parts of the district should count towards any housing target for the 'rest of Lewes' (if the South East Plan persists with 'split provision figures' for some districts).
- Reiterates the need for supporting infrastructure to be available prior to, or in tandem with, new development.
- Believes that a higher proportion of housing in the district will need to be affordable than is proposed by the South East Plan's overall regional targets for such provision.

Rother DC

- Considers the proposed provision of 200 new homes per year for the district's coastal area to be appropriate – provided that: there is a firm commitment to construct the Bexhill-Hastings Link Road in the next 5 years; it is compatible with anticipated growth in potential employment (the importance of which should be reflected in the SEP affording the area priority status as a regeneration area); and proper provision is made for all the infrastructure needed to support and integrate development.
- Accepts the proposed provision of 80 new homes per year for the district's more rural inland towns and villages
- Strongly advocates the designation of Hastings as an additional Regional Transport Hub to complement the regeneration and development strategy for the area.

Wealden DC

- Accepts 'the methodology used for calculating the housing figures' being proposed for public consultation.
- Reaffirms the Council's strong view that the overall scale of development being proposed in the SEP will not be sustainable unless there is a guarantee of prior investment in infrastructure, including for affordable housing and water supply.
- Highlights the need for smarter and more innovative solutions to the challenges of future growth and, also, the need to ensure social sustainability and services in existing villages.

Statement of consultation

A statement of consultation summarising the consultation programme and feedback will be submitted with the Council's final advice to the Assembly by 9 December. This, together with reports of the survey prepared by BMG and a comprehensive schedule of all comments received will be available on the Council's website by 16 December.

The Designation of Hastings as a Regional Transport Hub

Committee	Sussex Coast Members Steering Group
Date	25 November 2005
Report by	East Sussex County Council
Title of report	Designation of Hastings as Regional Transport Hub
Purpose of report	To seek Members' agreement to the case to be made to the Regional Assembly for the designation of Hastings as a regional transport hub

The Members Steering Group is recommended to:

- 1 formally endorse the proposed identification in the South East Plan of Hastings as a regional hub; and**
 - 2 emphasise to SEERA the critical importance of Hastings being identified as an additional hub to the future success of regeneration efforts in this sub-region and to the South East Plan's broader ambitions to promote an urban renaissance while reducing socio-economic disparities across the region.**
-

1 Supporting information

- 1.1 In accordance with the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) that was published in July 2004, Part 1 of the South East Plan currently identifies 17 regional hubs. These are settlements where the provision of (or potential to provide) a range of multi-modal transport services supports the concentration of land uses and economic activity.
- 1.2 Following the Regional Planning Committee (RPC) meeting on 13 June 2005 and the Assembly's AGM on 13 July 2005, SEERA has asked the relevant principal authorities to consider, as part of their ongoing sub-regional advice, whether another 5 settlements should be identified as regional hubs. The settlements referred for such further consideration are:
 - High Wycombe
 - Farnborough/Aldershot/Camberley
 - Tonbridge/Tunbridge Wells
 - Canterbury
 - Hastings
- 1.3 At its previous meeting on 24 August 2005, the Members Steering Group (MSG) for the Sussex Coast considered a background paper prepared by Sea Space, the executive delivery vehicle for the Hastings and Bexhill Task Force. This set out some key arguments as to why Hastings should be identified as an additional regional hub. The paper was unanimously supported by the MSG which emphasised the importance of such a designation to all future ambitions for achieving any significant economic regeneration and growth in this most deprived area.

- 1.4 In the light of further information provided by SEERA, a further paper has now been prepared (appended below) that sets out the more detailed case for Hastings being designated a transport hub in the South East Plan. With Members' agreement, this will be submitted to the Assembly, with the other advice it requires, by 9 December.
- 1.5 Key points about why Hastings should be designated as a hub and how it meets the criteria established in the Regional Transport Strategy include:
- a number of strategic, multi-modal services converge on the town;
 - the town is a major employment centre, supporting higher order activities and both current initiatives and future plans for Hastings and Bexhill will strengthen this role;
 - Hastings is a settlement of regional significance;
 - it is a focus for future major development for employment, housing, retail and leisure uses;
 - increasing accessibility is a central plank of the integrated regeneration package in the Five Point Plan;
 - Hastings is accommodating higher density, quality development for a range of uses; and
 - regeneration initiatives are intended to meet the social and economic needs of both the urban area and the wider local economic area.

THE CASE FOR THE DESIGNATION OF HASTINGS AS A REGIONAL HUB

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In accordance with the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) that was published in July 2004, Part 1 of the South East Plan currently identifies 17 regional hubs. These are settlements where the provision of (or potential to provide) a range of multi-modal transport services supports the concentration of land uses and economic activity.
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 - Farnborough/Aldershot/Camberley
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 - Canterbury
 - Hastings
- 1.3 At its meeting on 25 November 2005, the Members Steering Group resolved to:
- formally endorse the proposed identification in the South East Plan of Hastings as a regional hub; and
 - emphasise to SEERA the critical importance of Hastings being identified as an additional hub to the future success of regeneration efforts in this sub-region and to the South East Plan's broader ambitions to promote an urban renaissance while reducing socio-economic disparities across the region.
- 1.4 This paper sets out the detailed case for Hastings' designation as a transport hub and is the Members Steering Group's advice to the Assembly.

2 The regional strategy

- 2.1 The South East Plan's core strategy focuses on delivering an urban renaissance through concentrating development, promoting better economy in the use of land and achieving greater integration between land use and transport provision. The management and further development of the region's transport system is therefore crucial to the delivery of the Plan's wider spatial strategy. Policy T3 on regional hubs is central to this approach.

POLICY T3: REGIONAL HUBS

Relevant regional strategies, local development documents and Local Transport Plans will include policies and proposals that support and develop the role of regional hubs by:

- i giving priority to measures that increase the level of accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling**
- ii encouraging higher density land uses and/or mixed land uses that require a high level of accessibility so as to create 'living centres'**
- iii giving priority to the development of high quality interchange facilities between all modes of transport.**

- 2.2 The policy reflects the underlying basis for the identification of hubs that informed the RTS. Essentially, regional hubs are seen as settlements where the provision of (or the potential to provide) a range of multi-modal transport services supports the concentration of higher order economic activity. Hub status carries an expectation that such settlements will be a focus for further (higher density) development to meet social and economic needs and for future investment in the transport system to improve accessibility by all modes along connecting transport spokes.

3 The sub-regional strategy

Overall approach

- 3.1 Nearly one million people – around one-in-eight of the South East’s total population – live in the Sussex Coast sub-region. In responding to extensive, well documented weaknesses in the local economy, the South East Plan identifies the Sussex Coast as a priority Regeneration Area. Part 1 of the South East Plan provides a **statement of strategy** that summarises the purpose of the sub-regional strategy for the Sussex Coast which is:

To improve the overall economic performance of the sub-region giving particular priority to achieving high levels of sustainable economic development. The intention is to bring performance closer to the regional average and reduce deprivation and social exclusion. The strategy should also take forward recent success in the Brighton area in realising economic potential and addressing deprivation.

- 3.2 This clear focus on promoting sustainable regeneration and growth is encapsulated in Policy SCT1 of the sub-regional strategy for the Sussex Coast.

POLICY SCT1: CORE SUB-REGIONAL STRATEGY

Local authorities and other agencies should, as a priority, pro-actively pursue and promote the sustainable economic growth and regeneration of the Sussex Coast that will:

- i reduce intra-regional disparities and help bring the performance of the sub-regional economy up to the South East average**
 - ii respond to the different needs, opportunities and characteristics of each town, or group of towns and all sections of their communities**
 - iii build upon and help deliver major improvements to the strategic transport infrastructure and services both to reduce its peripherality and to improve accessibility within the sub-region**
 - iv achieve a better balance between the provision of housing and the capability of both the local environment and economy to absorb this in a sustainable way whilst responding as far as possible to the needs of local people (including key workers) for decent homes at a price/cost that they can afford**
 - v protect the sub-region’s high environmental quality (in both town and country), enhance its cultural and historic assets and promote excellence in the design of new development in recognition of their importance to economic success.**
- 3.3 Achieving the sub-region’s development potential and the desired economic renaissance will require concerted and co-ordinated action by a broad range of organisations across many fronts. In particular, and as highlighted by Policies SCT1 and SCT2, the success of the strategy is critically dependent on securing substantial improvements to the sub-

region's strategic transport network. The communication links serving the sub-region and connecting it with the rest of the South East are generally of poor quality and are widely regarded as a major impediment to its future regeneration and growth.

- 3.4 The standard of east-west transport links is particularly poor and is already holding up the delivery of strategic development opportunities for both employment and housing. Improving the south coast links and services will not only improve connections with other key sub-regions (such as the East Kent and Ashford) but is also essential to improving access within the sub-region – particularly for those towns that do not have strong transport links with the rest of the South East. At the same time, improving north-south strategic transport links with the rest of the South East is equally important to reduce perceptions of the area as peripheral and relatively remote.
- 3.5 Such improvements in accessibility will help enhance access to employment opportunities throughout the Sussex Coast and facilitate an improved balance between labour supply and demand. Unlocking strategic development potential and creating the conditions that will help both new and existing businesses to grow and flourish is essential to providing much improved opportunities for residents to work locally. Increasing local employment in this way will cut the extent of long-distance commuting and, as well as reducing the overall need to travel, should increase residents' opportunities to make more of their journeys by walking, cycling and/or public transport.
- 3.6 At the same time, East Sussex County Council, as the local transport authority, is also committed to implementing local integrated transport measures through its Local Transport Plan and emerging Accessibility Strategy. The authority is working with partner organisations and local communities to develop and implement integrated transport schemes in Hastings to manage traffic demands while improving travel choices for residents, businesses and visitors and increasing accessibility by all modes to jobs and services. This integrated approach to transport is entirely compatible with the requirements for regional hubs.

Regeneration of Hastings and Bexhill

- 3.7 Within the sub-regional strategy framework, particular priority is given to tackling the most widespread and deep-rooted problems of poverty and deprivation experienced in Brighton & Hove and Hastings.
- 3.8 In recent years, Brighton & Hove (which already enjoys regional hub status) has benefited from substantial improvements to its strategic transport links and has begun to experience something of an upturn in its economic fortunes. Together with demand management measures, such improvements (which have included the A27 by-pass) have enabled spare capacity to be used to enhance overall accessibility by public transport, cycling and walking that, in turn, has helped to fashion a much more attractive living and working environment. The growing vitality of Brighton & Hove's local economy is reflected in Experian's latest economic forecasts for the city which indicate GVA growth in excess of the regional average at just over 3% per year to 2026.
- 3.9 As with Brighton, concerted efforts on a multi-agency basis are now being made to promote similar recovery in Hastings which has been shown by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2004 to be the most deprived town in the South East region¹. High

¹ Twelve Super Output Areas (SOAs) in Hastings fall amongst the 10% most deprived SOAs in England. Nearly 40% of the town's 53 SOAs are amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England – this is around twice the level experienced by the next most deprived areas in the South East (Thanet, Portsmouth and Brighton & Hove).

unemployment², widespread child poverty³ and low average wages⁴ all stand as further evidence of the extensive economic and social difficulties facing the area. Economic forecasts also suggest that the wealth gap currently felt in the Hastings area would increase even further⁵ unless the sub-regional strategy and the 'Five Point Plan' ultimately succeed in driving its regeneration and growth.

- 3.10 The Five Point Plan for the regeneration of Hastings and Bexhill (which, together, are home to nearly 130,000 residents) was developed by a special task force⁶ and approved by government in March 2002. In aiming to provide the catalyst for lasting economic, social and physical regeneration, it presents a ten-year strategy around five main themes:
- urban renaissance
 - business and enterprise development
 - excellence in education
 - broadband connectivity
 - transport
- 3.11 The Five Point Plan is fully compatible with the sub-regional strategy for the Sussex Coast. As well as supporting and relying on the implementation of existing development plan proposals for strategic development in Hastings and Bexhill, it is also bringing forward further schemes for employment and housing that go substantially beyond existing development plans.
- 3.12 Such firm development proposals are set out in the Task Force's Business Plan that aims to deliver a ten-year investment programme of over £340 million. This is expected to yield 100,000 m² of new business/education floorspace, some 5,700 new jobs and around 1,400 new homes in high density 'millennium communities'.
- 3.13 Although the Task Force's regeneration initiative is still in its infancy, there has been some impressive progress with some early win projects, including:
- the Innovation Centre (opening February 2006)
 - the Creative Media Centre (Phase 2 opened September 2005)
 - Hastings and Bexhill Enterprise Hub (established April 2005)
 - Hastings Station (opened in 2004)
 - University Centre Hastings (opened in 2003)
- 3.14 These successful projects have been instrumental in bringing about a new optimism in the area's future potential that the sub-regional strategy for the Sussex Coast aims to underpin and build upon further. In Hastings, the provision of more good quality housing will aid the overall regeneration programme and an increased yield from previously-developed windfall sites within the town is anticipated – in the context of a more buoyant market that should provide some additional scope for increasing residential densities. Altogether, the proposed

² In September 2005, unemployment in Hastings at 3.1% was nearly three times higher than the regional average of 1.1%.

³ Twenty (out of 53) SOAs in Hastings fall amongst the worst 20% of in the country for child poverty. More than half of all children living in 8 SOAs in the borough are living in such low-income households.

⁴ At £377 per week, average earnings in the Hastings Travel-to-Work Area were 21% lower than the national average, and 25% below the regional average, in April 2003.

⁵ Experian's Autumn 2005 regional forecasts for the period 2001-2026 show GVA growth of 2.47 and 2.87 per year for Hastings and Rother respectively, compared to a regional figure of 2.91%. By 2026, per capita GVA in Hastings is forecast to fall to just 54% of the regional average in Hastings and 47% in Rother.

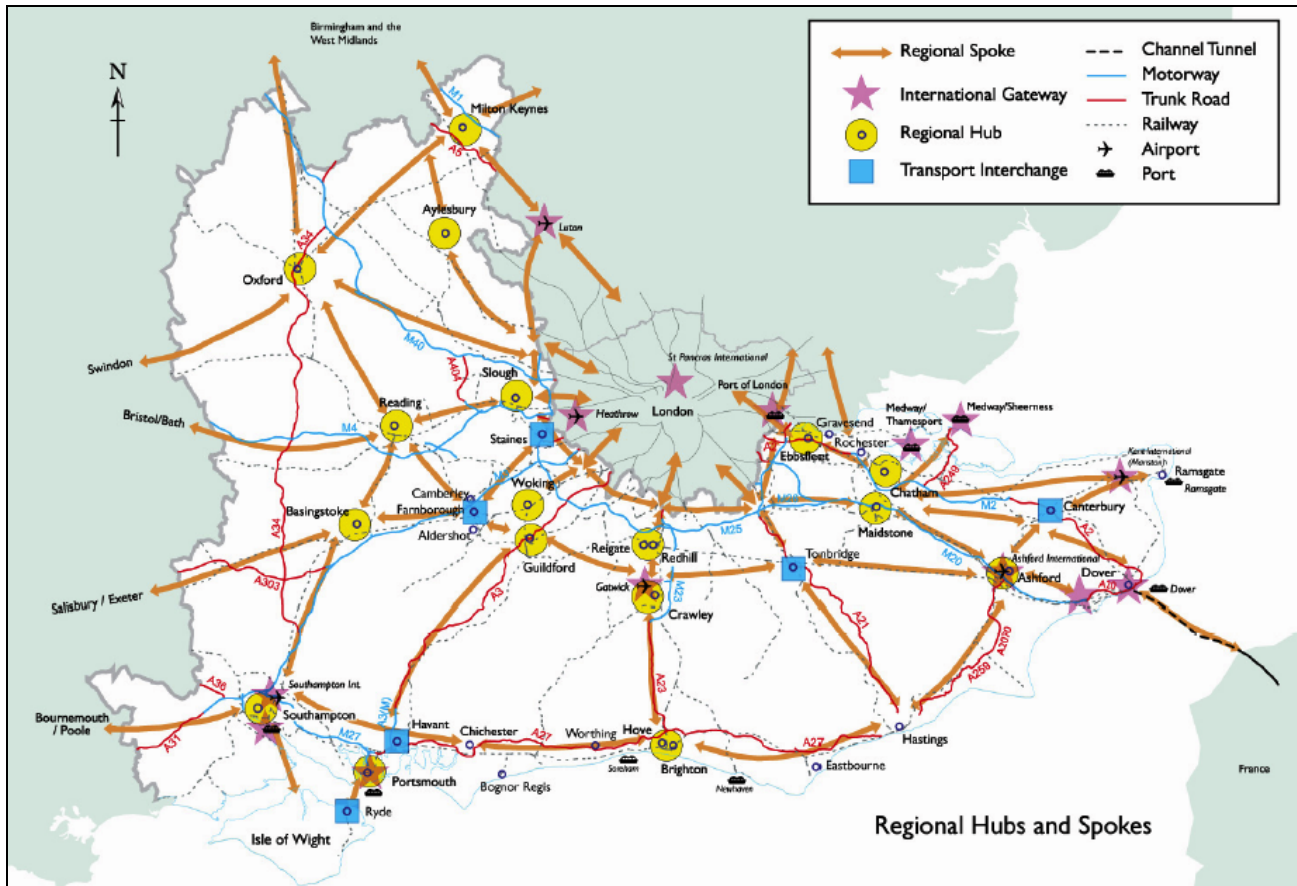
⁶ The Hastings and Bexhill Task Force is led by the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) and also involves the Government Office for the South East (GOSE), English Partnerships, East Sussex County Council, Hastings Borough Council, Rother District Council and the local MPs.

housing provision for the borough to 2026 assumes that an extra 800 dwellings can be provided on brownfield sites (in addition to what is already anticipated on the basis of existing commitments/past trends).

- 3.15 With major environmental designations constraining any outwards expansion of Hastings, further housing provision at Bexhill takes on increasing importance to the area's overall regeneration and growth. On top of the existing development plan proposal for a new community of around 1,100 new homes and a further 100,000 m² of high quality business floorspace (providing another 2,000 jobs) on the edge of Bexhill, the sub-regional strategy for the Sussex Coast proposes a further 1,000 homes should be accommodated as a strategic allocation on the fringes of the town.
- 3.15 Taken together, the Task Force's Business Plan and existing and emerging development plan proposals for Hastings and Bexhill have the potential to deliver around 7,700 extra jobs and some 7,500 new homes (three-quarters of which should come forward on higher-density, brownfield sites).

4 Justifying hub status

- 4.1 Achieving significant improvements in the strategic transport infrastructure serving Hastings and Bexhill is widely regarded as key to delivering sustainable regeneration. As already noted, this requirement is a central tenet of both the strategy for the Sussex Coast and the Five Point Plan. However, not only do the longer-term prospects for economic recovery hang on reducing peripherality and increasing confidence in the area as a good place to do business and invest, the ability to deliver proposed housing allocations for around 8,000 dwellings (nearly one-third of the total provision for East Sussex to 2026) also rests itself on the success of the regeneration programme in prompting a sustained recovery in housing market conditions.
- 4.2 Designation as a regional hub would not only clearly increase the prospects of the required transport improvements actually being realised, it would also act as another significant fillip to investor confidence in the area. However, before considering the criteria for defining hubs in more detail it is worth noting, from just a cursory view of the South East Plan's map of regional hubs and spokes, that there would appear to be a strong prima facie case for identifying Hastings as a regional hub.
- 4.3 Hastings stands at the confluence of three multi-modal transport corridors extending north to London (via Tonbridge), west to Brighton and the other Sussex Coast towns (and on to South Hampshire), and east to East Kent, the Ashford Growth Area (and the Channel Tunnel and ports). Both Brighton and Ashford are already designated Regional Hubs, while Tonbridge is a Transport Interchange that is also currently being considered for hub status (with Tunbridge Wells). In this context, the current absence of regional hub status for Hastings appears quite remarkable.



Defining characteristics

4.4 A very strong and more detailed case for identifying Hastings as an additional regional hub can also be made by considering, in turn, their defining characteristics as established in the RTS and now reiterated in the South East Plan. This states that:

Regional transport hubs are those settlements where the provision of (or potential to provide) a range of multi-modal transport services supports the concentration of higher order economic activity. As highly accessible settlements of regional significance, they should be the focus for development and investment in the transport system that leads to an increase in the overall level of accessibility by all modes between regional, sub-regional and local hubs along transport spokes. They should aspire to accommodate higher density development, the economic and social needs of the settlement, and links to the local economic area.

4.5 The strategic, multi-modal transport services converging on the town are:

- the A27/A259 trunk road and parallel rail services linking west to Brighton, Chichester and South Hampshire;
- the A27/A2070 trunk road and parallel rail services linking east to Ashford and the Channel ports;
- the A21 trunk road and parallel rail services linking north to Tonbridge and London.

4.6 The brand new Hastings Station is served by two train operating companies and is being further developed as an important transport interchange with bus services. Rail services have a very important role for both local and longer-distance movements. With seven stations already in Bexhill and Hastings and more planned, much of the new development

being brought forward for employment and housing is deliberately concentrated around local stations to both exploit and support the value of rail services.

- 4.6 With over 47,000 jobs based in the towns, Hastings and Bexhill is already a major employment centre supporting higher order activities. As a result of further growth and key Task Force initiatives to promote the knowledge economy and higher value-added activities (such as the University Centre, Innovation Centre, Creative Media Centre and Enterprise Hub already highlighted in para. 3.12 above), the towns should in future enjoy an even greater concentration of higher order activities.
- 4.7 With around 130,000 residents, widespread deprivation and as the focus of such extensive Government-backed regeneration efforts, Hastings and Bexhill is clearly a settlement of regional significance.
- 4.8 As part of the region's 'strategic network of town centres' (as identified in Policy TC2 of the South East Plan), Hastings (and Bexhill) should be also be a focus for future major development for employment, housing, retail and leisure uses – a requirement that Section 4 (above) has demonstrated is fully supported by both the sub-regional strategy for the Sussex Coast and the Five Point Plan.
- 4.9 However, as emphasised throughout this paper, whilst Hastings obviously has the potential (and desire) to fulfil such a role, integrated strategies for its sustainable regeneration will not be properly realised unless the area does become much more accessible. This is only likely to come about as a result of hub status leading to the further significant investment in the transport system that is an integral part of the Five Point Plan and which is needed to unlock the area's full development potential and, by increasing accessibility by all modes, make it an attractive business location.
- 4.10 A number of schemes for improving the A21 are either included in the government's targeted programme for investment (TPI) or have been prioritised for implementation by 2011 by the Regional Transport Board. The government has also given provisional funding approval to the Bexhill-Hastings Link Road which will help tackle congestion problems on the A259 and assist local traffic problems whilst unlocking strategic allocations for major housing and employment development at north Bexhill. The longer-term prospects for realising other potential schemes for improving accessibility by all modes – including along the Hastings-Ashford corridor – would be substantially enhanced by the designation of Hastings as a regional hub.
- 4.11 With the Task Force's clear vision and the sub-regional strategy's strong encouragement and support, there is a firm commitment to Hastings embracing the urban renaissance agenda by accommodating higher density (quality) developments for housing, education, business, retail and other uses. This is exemplified by current town centre proposals such as at the 'Station Plaza' where permission has already been granted for a 35,000m² scheme for business, housing and education uses adjacent to a major transport interchange.
- 4.12 Finally, all of the regeneration efforts being brought forward in Hastings and Bexhill are unquestionably focused on meeting the social economic needs of the settlement and its wider links to the local economic area. Hub status, however, will almost certainly be required if such well-intentioned aspirations and the South East Plan's ambitions to reduce economic disparities and social exclusion while improving the overall level of accessibility to employment, services and other facilities are to be made real.

Other qualitative criteria

4.13 A qualitative assessment of potential locations informed the original identification of regional hubs in the RTS. These assessments were based on the criteria listed below which, as the preceding analysis has clearly demonstrated, are all highly relevant to Hastings.

- political/administrative significance
- historical/cultural significance
- commercial/economic significance and vitality/viability of town centres
- population
- transport connections
- strategic interchange opportunities
- proximity of major port, airport or rail terminal
- future growth potential

4.14 SEERA's background paper also emphasises that the characteristics of hubs (existing and proposed) does vary considerably, as will their role as foci for development activity according to their potential and connectivity.

5 Conclusion

5.1 The Secretariat's paper concludes that, on the basis of further analysis and recent evidence, Hastings should be identified as one of five additional regional hubs. It asks the principal authorities for their views on this and to consider the implications of Hastings having such a role for the sub-regional strategy for the Sussex Coast (including future housing provision). It also includes in Table 1 of its paper a concise commentary of key characteristics for each of the suggested new hubs. This states that:

Hastings designation as a hub would reflect its importance as a tourism centre, its size but perhaps most importantly its regeneration potential. The Hastings & Bexhill Task Force, a partnership of public sector organisations, is implementing a regeneration vision up to 2012 focussing on transport, urban renaissance, business, education and broadband. Significant investments are being made in these areas which enables Hastings to become a key sub regional economic driver over the period covered by the Plan.

5.2 In accordance with SEERA's proposal and for all the reasons set out above, the Members Steering Group for the Sussex Coast strongly endorses the proposed designation of Hastings as a regional hub (as was first proposed and seconded to the Assembly's Plenary by the respective representatives for Rother District Council and Hastings Borough Council).

5.3 As the commentary and analysis in this paper has clearly demonstrated, the designation of Hastings as a regional hub is not only fully compatible with sub-regional policies and objectives for the area as set out in the strategy for the Sussex Coast, it is also essential if the parallel objectives of the South East Plan to deliver an urban renaissance and reduce social and economic disparities by achieving high levels of sustainable economic development are to be realised.

Policy Designations in the South East Plan

Committee	Sussex Coast Members Steering Group
Date	25 November 2005
Report by	East Sussex County Council
Title of report	Policy designations in the South East Plan
Purpose of report	To seek Members' support for representations to be made to the Regional Assembly on the revised Policy CC9 on Spatial Emphasis in the South East Plan

The Members Steering Group is recommended to:

- 1 welcome and express their general support for the revised approach SEERA officers are proposing to the South East Plan's policy on spatial emphasis;**
 - 2 draw SEERA's attention to the analysis presented in this report and, in particular, to the detailed comments presented in Sections 3 and 4.**
-

1 Background

- 1.1 Policy CC8 on Spatial Emphasis in the consultation draft South East Plan (January 2005) was intended to convey the plan's overall strategy and urban emphasis. It identified four different (and over-lapping) types of area, each of which was intended to carry 'a distinct development and management component'. They were:
 - growth areas
 - regeneration areas
 - areas of economic opportunity
 - sub-regions
- 1.2 In drafting proposed changes to this policy following the public consultations held at the beginning of the year, SEERA officers proposed substantial changes to Policy CC8. In trying to articulate the plan's spatial strategy more clearly, it was suggested that the plan needs to 'identify areas which require a specific policy emphasis to address wider socio-economic and growth issues'.
- 1.3 In short, the proposed new policy designations dropped any reference to 'areas of economic opportunity' and subdivided 'regeneration areas' into a threefold classification of:
 - regeneration priority areas
 - economic and social development areas
 - priority areas of urban deprivation
- 1.4 In excluding the Lewes coastal towns from any of the above classifications, in separating off the Brighton area and in aligning the other East Sussex coastal towns more closely with Kent, the new proposals ran counter to the approach on priority

areas we have taken in our sub-regional strategy for the Sussex Coast (as encapsulated in Policy SCT2 on Enabling Economic Regeneration).

- 1.5 However, the suggested changes to Policy CC8 and other related aspects of the spatial strategy were rejected by SEERA's Regional Planning Committee (RPC) at its meeting on 13 June. The RPC was concerned that adequate justification had not been presented for the revised proposals and that any changes to such policies needed to be informed by the work and views of the sub-regional groups. The RPC therefore instructed 'officers to reconsider these proposals in the light of the advice received from the sub-regional steering groups and to bring forward appropriate recommendations to a later meeting of the committee.'

2 Latest position

- 2.1 SEERA officers' further work on this issue has since been set out in a draft paper that was presented for discussion at the sub-regional lead officers' meeting on 13 October. The revised approach this outlines also accords with that being developed by SEEDA in updating and reviewing the Regional Economic Strategy.

- 2.2 This latest paper is focuses entirely on reducing intra-regional disparities. It proposes:

- that the South East Plan's core regional policy framework should reinforce sub-regional policies aimed at tackling deprivation and deep-seated economic problems; and
- that the plan should also advocate other strategies reflecting the same spatial emphasis – so that actions and funding can be targeted more consistently and efficiently to reduce the persistent disparities evident across the region and, through more collective action, achieve a step change in socio-economic performance in the most deprived areas.

- 2.2 Analysis of the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 (IMD) and additional research carried out for SEERA shows that persistent problems of poor economic performance and associated deprivation are concentrated along the south coast and eastern parts of the region. It is suggested that this areas worst affected are broadly consistent with the sub-regions for Kent Thames Gateway, East Kent and Ashford, the Sussex Coast, South Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (special policy area) and that these sub-regions should be identified in the South East Plan's core strategy as the priority regeneration areas.

- 2.3 SEERA's recognition that the most serious and regionally significant clusters of deprivation are concentrated in the above sub-regions is very welcome. The acknowledgment that improving such conditions will not only required concerted action targeted on the worst affected areas 'but also interventions to improve economic conditions over a wider area' (ie throughout the identified sub-regions) is similarly welcome and consistent with the approach promoted in the strategy for the Sussex Coast.

3 Feedback to the Assembly

- 3.1 Secretariat has invited views on its developing approach to reducing intra-regional disparities and will draft the new Policy CC9 on Spatial Emphasis once the Assembly has received all the final sub-regional advice from the principal authorities by 9 December.

3.2 The annex to its draft paper presents summary descriptions of the pattern of deprivation in each of the priority areas and officers have also invited comments on these sub-regional summaries.

- 3.3 As stated in para. 2.3 above, the emerging policy approach towards identifying priority areas for regeneration should be strongly supported. At present, however, SEERA's underlying analysis may lean a little too heavily on the IMD and might be improved by the consideration of other key economic measures such as:
- average earnings
 - GVA per head
 - VAT registrations (births and deaths of new businesses)
 - unemployment rates
 - employment change.
- 3.4 As well as the identification of regionally significant regeneration areas, the actual purpose of this policy designation is also crucial. While the draft paper is certainly moving in the right direction in this regard, the final purpose and implications of the new policy does need to be clearer still.
- 3.5 Essentially, the revised Policy CC9 should:
- clearly identify the priority regeneration areas in where the need for concerted action to tackle deprivation and reduce socio-economic disparities is a regionally significant issue;
 - be well-integrated with all other aspects of the plan's core regional policies;
 - lend further support to the sub-regional strategies covering the priority areas which, in turn, should present comprehensive and more focused proposals for addressing the identified key issues;
 - be clear about the meaning of priority status; and
 - require national, regional and local agencies to align their own policies and programmes for the identified regeneration areas, and exhort agencies to work together so that actions and funding might be targeted more consistently, efficiently and effectively on the priority areas.

Priority status and integration

- 3.6 The South East Plan is unlikely to succeed in one of its main aims to reduce intra-regional disparities in social and economic conditions unless it affords some real priority to tackling problems in the regionally significant regeneration areas.
- 3.7 The need for such priority is a thread that needs to run through the whole plan and inform all other relevant policies including, for example, policies on infrastructure and implementation (CC5), urban renaissance (CC8), economic development (RE1), housing provisions (H1) transport investment (T1) regional hubs (T3) social inclusion (S1) and coastal resorts (TSR1).
- 3.7 Another key element of Policy CC9 should be its requirement/expectation that other agencies will afford similar priority to addressing problems in the regeneration areas and accept the need to align their own strategies, business plans and investment decisions accordingly. It should be made clear in the policy (or supporting text) that this requirement is as relevant to the work of SEEDA, the Regional Housing Board and the Regional Transport Board, as well as to government departments and key national agencies such as the Highways Agency, Network Rail and English Partnerships etc.
- 3.8 While concerted action will be required over a broader area to raise local economic performance, it is still the case that greater assistance must be targeted at the areas in

greatest need. The need for any such increased focus on the most deprived areas should be addressed in the relevant sub-regional strategy (as we have done for the Sussex Coast and in Policy SCT2 on Enabling Economic Regeneration). It should also be reflected in the summary descriptions proposed for each priority area (see below).

4 The Sussex Coast

- 4.1 The summary description below on the sub-regional pattern of deprivation is proposed as a draft amendment to that provided in Annex 1 of SEERA's paper. Partners' comments on this will be considered in finalising a version to present to the Assembly with our final advice by 9 December.

The intensity, scale and spatial extent of deprivation varies across the sub-region but tends to increase as you move further east. A number of the coastal towns in both East and West Sussex are consistently among the most deprived in the region on a variety of indicators. In terms of the extent of multiple deprivation, Hastings is the most deprived authority in the South East, while Brighton & Hove and Eastbourne are the third and eighth worst affected areas respectively.

Improved accessibility and the success of concerted regeneration programmes over many years, combined with a vibrant housing market, now appear to be contributing to a greater buoyancy in the Brighton economy that should help to provide further opportunities for addressing enduring problems of deprivation and social exclusion.

In the east of the sub-region, the comprehensive regeneration strategy being promoted by the Hastings and Bexhill Task Force is also helping to fashion a more optimistic outlook following some early successes. However, the longer-term prospects for overcoming structural problems in the local economy largely depend on reducing peripherality and improving overall accessibility to and within the area – both to unlock strategic development opportunities and to make it a much more attractive location for business.

Elsewhere in the sub-region, the fragile coastal economy needs regeneration support to further assist local partnerships and address problems of deprivation evident in Worthing, Bognor Regis, Newhaven and other smaller towns.

Reversing the sub-region's declining fortunes also requires different agencies to work more closely together in taking concerted action on many fronts – for example to improve education and skills, deliver improved business sites/premises and support enterprise and innovation.