



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
SOUTH EAST

CPRE South East eBulletin

5 September 2007

The South East Plan: The EiP Report

The draft South East Plan already pushed the South East towards its environmental limits. The report on the Examination in Public published last week goes further and pushes the region's environment to the edge. This is not helped by the huge contradictions in the inspecting Panel's report. It is very concerned about the need for regeneration of the economy of the Thames Gateway and Sussex coast but directs investments to the Golden Arc area where the environment is already straining under burgeoning growth. The green belt is as ever in the front line with the Panel adopting the government's line of protecting green belt policy while encouraging building on green fields: a dozen or so sites within the green belt have been put up for grabs by the Panel. The Regional Assembly had taken a strong stance on affordable housing but the Panel imposes significant cuts in affordable housing in two areas where they are urgently needed. The Panel makes only modest attempt to tackle the problems of infrastructure, but then lays down the mantra that a lack of infrastructure cannot delay house building. Flood risks assessments are often incomplete but the Panel tells planners to assume that these risks can be coped with.

There is of course some good news; rejection of the case for expansion of Lydd airport in Kent and the dismissal of a new town on Dunsfold airfield in Surrey are examples. But there should be no doubt that this report will deliver increased urban sprawl while failing to tackle the problems of housing affordability, and will lead to worsened congestion that will ultimately constipate the economy.

And the process has not ended. The government has already said the Inspectors' report "only takes into account policy up to the end of March 2007, predating our policy development in the Housing Green Paper". As soon as the Plan is signed off it seems, it will be torn up by the government and rewritten.

The Panel Report: Highlights

1. Highlights

Soundness of plan. The Panel finds that the Plan is sound overall, except in housing numbers. It condemns the Regional Assembly for giving "too much weight on the results of consultation with existing residents... and gives insufficient weight to demographic and economic factors." It calls for the Plan to achieve "sufficient" rather than "reasonable" levels of housing. It criticises the Assembly for not focusing development on areas already economically buoyant, for not having a more flexible approach to the green belt, and for dismissing opportunities outside the subregions. And the Panel is not kind on the process that led to the draft Plan, criticising both consultation and research.

Vision. The vision for the South East should be one of a healthier region: people, environment, neighbourhoods and housing, and heritage should all be healthier and sustainable.

Economy. The Plan is to gain a stronger emphasis on the Inner South East (see below for definitions, jargon and abbreviations). Housing is being increased to meet the Plan's target of 3% GVA. It is to be concentrated in areas of current economic potential "to ensure economic potential is not restricted". An early review of the Plan is needed to identify strategic employment sites.

Housing. In pushing housing levels up by a further 11%, the panel concentrates the increase in the London Fringe, Central Oxfordshire and the Western Corridor/Blackwater Valley—"to ensure economic potential is not restricted". The backlog of affordable housing need cannot be cleared in the first years of the Plan, unless more than 25% affordable housing is achieved. The Panel supports a 35% affordable housing target across the South East, but it has lowered affordable housing in Aylesbury and Oxford.

Green and Brown Space. Green belt reviews are likely at perhaps a dozen sites, with the largest intrusions expected at Guildford and Oxford. Additional major developed sites in the Green Belt "could contribute to development needs in a sustainable way." Reviewed green belt boundaries will endure to 2031. Strategic gaps are out of favour with the Panel, which calls for them to be reviewed and reduced. The Panel is ambivalent about a 60% target for brownfield and says sometimes it should be higher, sometimes lower. A new policy, however, should be drawn up for green infrastructure.

Rural areas. The Panel says the Plan's approach to rural areas is sound. Greater emphasis should be given 'regionally distinctive' landscape features, and greater emphasis to the positive role of the countryside. The importance of environmental stewardship to land management in the region and the contribution that agriculture can make to climate change through biofuels should be explicitly recognised. There are unlikely to be any locations for sustainable new settlements in the South East.

Ecology. The Panel's recommendations often squeeze the environment, nowhere more so than the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area but in a few areas it calls for stronger emphasis on the environment, for example, on the Sussex Coast. The Panel is supportive of a regional target for CO2 emissions but it does not agree with environmentalists that these should be more challenging. It rejects targets for ecological footprints for development preferring "aspirations".

Implementation. The Implementation Plan should be a living document and regularly updated.

The Panel Report: Policies

2. Spatial Strategy

The Plan defined nine subregions to give a sharp focus to economic and housing development. The Panel has endorsed and sharpened the policy focus on these, which will contain 87% of development. Following advice from SEEDA, the Inner South East will take 47% of the housing.

There will be six Strategic Development Areas of at least 4–5,000 dwellings. Two new SDAs are proposed for south Oxford and south Reading, along with Fareham, north of Hatch End, south west Milton Keynes and south east Milton Keynes. Twelve towns are to be designated Centres for Significant Change: Ashford, Aylesbury, Crawley, Chatham, Guildford, Milton Keynes, Oxford, Portsmouth, Reading, Redhill-Reigate, Southampton and Woking.

The Panel finds "much merit" in the Golden Arc concept; this will concentrate a higher level of development surrounding towns in the north-eastern arc from Reading and Oxford to Aylesbury, Milton Keynes and the MKSM subregion. This embraces the Oxford to Cambridge Arc, which the Panel strongly supports. It also recognises the Western Corridor's importance within a highly networked information-rich knowledge economy.

3. Economy

The Panel says the Plan is too passive about the economy. It is sceptical about the potential of smart growth and says it cannot be used to reduce housing estimates. The consequence of this thinking is that housing levels must be increased to meet the Plan's target of 3% GVA. The Panel is not confident that there will be a step change in economic performance of the more deprived and regeneration areas. It directs growth to the more economically buoyant parts of the region: especially Western Corridor Blackwater Valley, London Fringe, Central Oxfordshire and Gatwick subregions. The Panel is sceptical that constraining economic growth in these more buoyant areas will lead to investment in the regeneration areas; they say it will simply go outside the region. There is a need for new or substitute employment land. An early review of the Plan is needed to identify strategic employment sites.

The Panel frequently returns to the debate on how many jobs are needed. The Regional Assembly wanted to use employment growth estimates that take account of the constraints of housing provision but the Panel rejects this in favour of SEEDA's approach which is to use projections that assume that the availability of housing has no impact on employment levels. Discussions over the Plan have, however, led to a general agreement on job projections. The Panel says that, based on Regional Assembly projections, there will be 90,000 more jobs than labour supply in Western Corridor Blackwater Valley, 51,000 in London Fringe and the 15,000 in Central Oxfordshire. The result is a higher level of predicted jobs and with it a higher level of housing, on the basis of one house for each job.

4. Housing Numbers

Despite the bureaucratic language, the Panel delivers strong criticism of the Regional Assembly's research on housing levels, saying it appears to have been used to justify a pre-selected regional housing level. The Panel does not subscribe to the 'predict and provide' approach but says not enough account has been taken of demographic predictions. It says that the South East must continue to plan for continued out-migration from London, international in-migration and reduction of household size for international in-migrants over time. The Panel also places great weight on previous government housing proposals, particularly in RPG9, and on current housing delivery rates.

The headline increase of 62,080 dwellings (10.7%) disguises the strong local variations in increases. The Panel says that it would be entirely wrong to pro rata the housing increase across the South East, but accepts that its allocations at District level involves assumptions about capacity to accommodate new growth.

- ◆ Berkshire gets the biggest absolute and percentage increase; 15,600 extra houses bring the total to 68,080, including an 7,500 home urban extension south of Reading.
- ◆ The more rural areas of Hampshire and Kent outside the subregions see disproportionate increases in housing, with 4,900 and 3,880 extra houses, and totals of 20,900 and 27,880 respectively.
- ◆ East Sussex emerges with a modest increase of 2,000 houses, while in West Sussex the coast takes the brunt of the 6,100 extra houses planned for the county.
- ◆ Central Oxfordshire is to take a 6,100 (18%) increase to 40,100; 4,000 houses will be located in a new urban extension to the south of the city.

	Draft SE Plan Av/annum 2006-2026	Draft SE Plan Total 2006- 2026	Panel Recommend- ed Change dpa	Panel Report Av/annum 2006-2026	Panel Report Total 2006-2026	Increase above Draft SE Plan levels	% increase above Draft SE Plan levels
Berkshire	2,624	52,480	780	3,404	68,080	15,600	29.7%
Buckinghamshire	4,040	80,800	282	4,322	86,440	5,640	7.0%
East Sussex	1,900	38,000	100	2,000	40,000	2,000	5.3%
Hampshire	6,100	122,000	315	6,415	128,300	6,300	5.2%
Isle of Wight	520	10,400	0	520	10,400	0	0.0%
Kent	6,100	122,000	479	6,579	131,580	9,580	7.9%
Oxfordshire	2,360	47,200	370	2,730	54,600	7,400	15.7%
Surrey	2,360	47,200	473	2,833	56,660	9,460	20.0%
West Sussex	2,900	58,000	305	3,205	64,100	6,100	10.5%
South East	28,904	578,080	3,104	32,008	640,160	62,080	10.7%

See the end of this eBulletin for the full tables of proposed changes to housing levels.

The new housing levels are targets, not aspirations. But they should not be as treated ceilings, and planning permission should not be restricted to avoid exceeding them. Brownfield sites at Shoreham Harbour (West Sussex) and Whitehill-Bordon camp (Hants) are given as examples of sites that might take more housing than expected. The Plan endorses the 40 dwellings per hectare target in the short-term, but suggests more flexibility in the longer term. The Panel wants a greater emphasis on design in respect to density.

The Panel supports intensification of housing in urban and suburban areas, the Plan should require local authorities to identify suitable locations for intensification.

5. Affordable Housing

The Panel agrees that the South East cannot build its way out of the affordability crisis and says it strongly supports the Plan's emphasis on increasing housing affordability. It is not optimistic that its proposed increase in housing levels will improve affordability of market housing, but says that affordability will worsen without this increase.

For affordable housing, the PPS3 definition is to be used. This includes social rented housing and intermediate housing: shared equity products, other low cost homes for sale and subsidised rent. The target for affordable housing will remain 35% (25% social and 10% intermediate), but the Panel is attracted to the use of indicative targets rather than firm targets. While the Panel agrees that social housing should comprise 25% of the regional total, it does not see that the backlog of affordable housing need can be cleared in the first ten years of the Plan unless more than 25% is achieved. One of the reasons for increasing housing totals have been increased to give greater flexibility to meet the backlog.

One problem is that if smaller sites are not required to contribute to affordable housing then larger sites will need to take more than the 35% average level. The Panel says the Plan should give explicit encouragement for Local Development Documents to set lower site households where appropriate; this will particularly help rural areas. A reference to affordable rural housing is retained in policy H4 for its "psychological importance" but the Panel says there is nothing regionally distinctive about affordable rural housing needs in the South East that the Plan can help with.

The Panel says that the "lack of affordable housing also risks constraining the economy, particularly in buoyant parts of the region... we also encourage everything possible to be done to increase the provision of affordable housing." But it then cuts the number of affordable houses allocated to Aylesbury Vale and Central Oxfordshire Subregion. And the Panel is clear that it expects to see the 35% target underachieved because of other demands on S106 agreements, existing housing commitments and the difficulty in securing affordable housing out of smaller developments.

6. Landscapes

With the urban focus of the strategy, the Panel says that there will be sufficient flexibility at a local level to avoid impact on high quality landscapes, but acknowledging the loss of greenfield in urban extensions, for example, that in Reading.

The Plan treated the green belts as inviolate and the Panel says that "to our mind this indicates how unchallenging the chosen housing provision levels are". Two or three selective green belt reviews are proposed. The reviews are termed 'selective' because the 'direction' (i.e. the intended result) of the review is already known. They are at: Guildford, to accommodate 2,000 houses northeast of the town; Oxford, to accommodate 4,000 houses in the much disputed area known as "south of Grenoble Road"; and possibly south of Woking. "Minor adjustments to boundaries" are suggested at Reigate/Redhill and Tondbridge, and at a dozen or so places in the London Fringe and Western Corridor Blackwater Valley. Major developments in the green belt should also be considered. The Panel identifies Chersey in the London Fringe as a candidate. The new green belt boundaries will endure to 2031 and might contain safeguarded land to ensure that they do so.

Strategic Gaps to prevent coalescence of settlements of 10,000 people are not favoured by the Panel. The gaps are to be reviewed regularly to ensure that sustainable options for new development are not missed. Such reviews are needed now in West Sussex and south Hampshire. The proposed five mile maximum gap is reduced by the Panel to two miles.

The urban-rural fringe does not need mapping or zoning. There will, however, be a new cross-cutting strategy on Green Infrastructure and Green Arc initiatives should be given more prominence.

7. Sustainability and Ecology

The Panel accepts that there were genuine uncertainties about the environmental implications of some new infrastructure even at the original proposal of 28,900 dwellings a year. In subregions where the Panel calls for a increase in housing, "there would be [environmental] challenges to be worked through in varying degrees". The Panel is intrigued by ecological footprints but is sceptical about their use in planning and believes that footprints will inexorably increase with the rise in housing provision. The Panel believes that sufficient account has been taken on the Habitats Directive. Appropriate Assessments at the LDD or application stage of planning may lead to a partial review of the Plan. The Plan should be clear that internationally important sites should be given more protection than those of national importance. The importance of environmental stewardship to land management in the region and the contribution that agriculture can make to climate change through biofuels should be explicitly recognised.

The Panel is persuaded by Natural England's support of mitigation measures for the Thames Basin Heaths, and in the light of this feels that an increase in housing in and around above the 40,000 recommended by its own assessor is justified. The Plan should refer to buffer zones, alternative recreational land and access, to build on the lessons of the Thames Basin Heaths.

The Regional Assembly is congratulated for its regional lead on climate change and the Panel wishes to make climate change more explicit in several areas, which with the Green Infrastructure Policy would harden up mitigation and adaptation efforts. But more challenging targets for CO2 reduction are ruled out.

8. Water, Flooding and Rivers

Water supply and flooding are local issues and will not affect the regional distribution of settlement.

The Panel is satisfied it has taken sufficient account of the impact on flooding where it has imposed additional housing, even though not all the Strategic Flood Risk Assessments have been completed. It acknowledges that the greatest concerns on flood risk are in South Hampshire, Kent Thames Gateway, Milton Keynes, East Kent and Ashford, and Reading.

The Plan should be more specific about managing water demand but the Panel accepts that regional bodies can have little influence on water efficiency. According to the Environment Agency, additional demand from up to 40,000 new homes can be accommodated each year without undue impact on water supply and quality. The Panel supports the twin track approach of reducing demand and increasing supply and notes the long lead times for new projects. The Plan should give specific reference to the location of five reservoir schemes; Upper Thames Reservoir; enlargement of Bewl reservoir; Broad Oak reservoir; Clay Hill reservoir; and Havant Thicket reservoir. It stops short of saying it favours these schemes but says that the Upper Thames Reservoir is necessary for Oxford's water supply.

Greater emphasis should be given to the non-tidal Thames, including a coordinated policy framework for riparian local authorities, especially for enhancing the river bank where it passes through urban areas, but the Panel rejects the proposal for a cross-cutting policy for the river. A new policy on River Water Quality Management should be created.

9. Infrastructure and Transport

The Panel does not agree that housing levels can be made contingent on delivery of infrastructure, and describes the Plan's attempt to link housing and infrastructure as "unsound". Instead of the Plan's policy of holding back housing until infrastructure is in place, the Panel calls for "timely delivered" infrastructure.

The Panel does not say it in such terms, but it accuses the Plan of not having a joined up policy on transport. Central to its criticism is that the regional transport strategy is not reflected in the subregional strategies, and that measures to reduce car use are given such a weak emphasis they will not be carried forward to LDDs and LTPs.

The Panel dryly notes that the Plan "scarcely contains a proper freight strategy". It calls for identification of three to four new freight exchanges but not for any location to be preferred. That said, it plumps for the strategic importance of the Kent International Gateway, located where the CTRL meets the M25.

While there are corridors where highways improvements are required, dependency on car travel must be reduced the Panel says, but it is unrealistic to expect a reduction in car use in the life of the Plan. The Panel is strongly supportive of road user charging (RUC). It is critical of the Regional Assembly's reluctance to support it and agrees sarcastically with the Assembly's comment that RUC is a case of "everybody leaving it to everybody else". The policy to reduce car use should be strengthened in the Plan.

The Plan should be amended to be consistent with the predict and provide model in the Aviation White Paper. Land for a new runway at Gatwick should be safeguarded. The following transport infrastructure schemes should be priorities: London–Channel ports corridor road & rail improvements; Midlands–south Hampshire corridor rail freight upgrade; East–West Rail; Thameslink; Crossrail; several London orbital schemes and inter-regional link improvements; Airtrack; Reading Station; Route Utilisation Strategy for Brighton and Great Western Mainlines.

The Panel Report: The Subregions

10. South Hampshire

The Panel strongly supports the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire and rejects arguments at the EiP that the economic aspirations of PUSH would have severe environmental impacts. It has reservations about the 3.5% GVA target but rejects the County Council's lower target, which it feels was designed to protect greenfield. It believes the housing levels proposed to be environmentally sustainable but higher levels proposed in the Roger Tym report to be unsustainable. Higher housing levels would lead to unacceptable in meeting the Habitats Directive and flood risk.

The Panel accepts that flood risk and sewerage constraints will influence district allocations and phasing of housing. Development in the Fareham and Hedge End Strategic Development Areas should not be dependent on brownfield availability. But the pace of housing development should be coordinated with the rate of infrastructure provision. Strategic Gaps in south Hampshire should be reviewed with the aim of reducing their extent.

11. Sussex Coast

There is an urgent need to stimulate the economy, especially in the east of the subregion, and to achieve a better balance between jobs and housing. The Plan lacks a job growth target and the Panel sets this at SEEDA estimate of 30,000, though this may not require new land. The Plan had set housing levels lower than previous guidance, so the Panel increases the level to 54,900, of which 40% would be affordable. The scope for further increases is limited by the need for sustainable economic regeneration and to avoid adding to out-commuting. Greater emphasis should be given to the rail and rapid transit network, and development should be located around train stations.

The Core Strategy is too economy biased and should allow for enhancement of the environment. There will need to be greenfield urban extensions linked to new employment in Arun, Chichester, Rother and Wealden districts. There should also be greater emphasis on brownfield land, especially in Brighton and Hove.

12. East Kent and Ashford

The Panel accepts SEEDA's job projections which imply a higher growth than labour supply. Housing is increased to 53,000 and the Panel agrees a target of 30% affordable housing. The scope for higher housing levels is limited by the need to avoid a significant increase in out-commuting. High levels of commuting will continue but the subregion has the "least stress" on its strategic highways network and the commencement of CTRL domestic services in 2009 will be "transformational". Ashford provides most potential for inward investment but development cannot proceed without a new M20 junction 10A. There should be no reference to growth of Lydd Airport or to Wye Campus in the Plan.

New water supplies will be needed and there are flood risk issues. The importance of the Kent AONB should be recognised in the Core Strategy.

13. Kent Thames Gateway

The "challenging" employment target of 58,000 is accepted, and this should have a focus on knowledge-based industry, given the areas improved connectivity and the "Olympics effect". Only 1,000 extra houses are recommended as higher housing levels will result in greater use of greenfield sites and will risk increasing out-commuting. The Panel is persuaded that a 30% affordable housing target is justified.

The Panel accepts the Plan's focus on brownfield and that over-reliance on greenfield would detract from regeneration. But once brownfield is exhausted, urban extensions into greenfield will be needed. Major development should be located at the regional hubs at Ebbsfleet and Chatham, and at locations served by the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. Bluewater/Ebbsfleet should not be regarded as a town centre.

The main impact of water supply and waste will be on phasing of development, not the level or location of housing. Several major development sites are at risk of flooding, but the precise risk cannot be established until studies are conducted. The Environment Agency's *Thames Estuary 2100* study due in 2008 will be needed to be taken into account when assessing flood risk. But the Panel says that planners should in the meantime assume that the flood risk can be dealt with.

Even with the CTRL, difficult transport thresholds are being approached in the subregion. The Panel agrees with the Regional Assembly that reliance on private cars to accommodate rise in transport demand is a cause of concern, and that transport and mobility measures should be more prominent in the Core Strategy for the subregion.

14. London Fringe

Of all the subregions, this is the most problematic in terms of boundaries but it is nevertheless endorsed by the Panel. It says that the Plan's approach needs to be creative to protect the environment while addressing economic expansion. Perhaps as an example of such creativity, it says that the Plan's approach to the Metropolitan Green Belt is fundamentally wrong as it rules out changes to boundaries. There is greater potential for growth at the three regional hubs: Redhill/Reigate, Woking, and especially at Guildford. A selective review of the green belt to the northeast of Guildford is needed for 2,000 houses and, if required, reviews of the green belt to the south of Woking, and around Redhill/Reigate and Tandridge. The Panel admits that all the district housing allocations in the subregion may require small intrusions into the green belt.

Insufficient weight has been given to demographic and economic factors, and the Plan is too reliant on smart growth. This threatens achievement of the regional GVA target. The Panel accordingly increases the housing by 23% to 46,120. Affordable housing is set at 40%, with non-residential development to make a contribution of appropriate. If new employment land is needed it should be in the urban extensions and at Chertsey. The latter DERA site will take 2,500 dwellings on a mixed use site. Congestion is already high and growth will add to it. The Airtrack rail scheme is of considerable importance.

15. Western Corridor Blackwater Valley

The overall level of housing provision is too low because insufficient weight has been given to economic and demographic forecasts, and too much weight has been given to avoiding greenfield development. The Panel seeks a 20% increase in housing to 107,600. Reading gets an additional 1,800 houses, and an urban extension of 7,500 dwellings between the town and the M4: the South Reading Special Development Area. This is in West Berkshire District and a Greater Reading Development Partnership is recommended for delivery. Wokingham gets another 2,500 houses especially between the town and the M4. Bracknell Forest gets the challenging target of 1,000 extra houses. Minor adjustments to green belt boundaries may be necessary.

The Panel regrets that the need for employment land is unquantified, and calls for employment land reviews. Greenfield release at Wokingham might be needed if the University of Reading needs a research-based science park.

There is a need for the Core Strategy to balance economic growth with transport and environmental considerations. Greater Reading should be a strategic focus for development and transport investment. Planning should start now for Crossrail and early improvements for Reading Station are essential. The Highways Agency should examine increasing and managing the capacity of the M4. Current heavy congestion on road and some rail networks will need local traffic and demand management measures.

The Panel is concerned about the mismatch between jobs and labour supply, which is the highest in the South East, particularly in the Thames Valley. It is sceptical about smart growth and says that it would be unwise to assume significantly higher productivity levels and changes to commuting levels.

16. Central Oxfordshire

Economic factors have been given insufficient weight, while too much weight has been given to the setting of Oxford and the green belt. There should be greater acknowledgement of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc and the internationally important science base. Growth will be accommodated at Oxford and the county towns of Didcot, Wantage/Grove and Bicester. The jobs target is increased to 18,000; accordingly the imbalance between labour and jobs will worsen. The housing target is increased by 17.9% to 40,100.

The Panel says that a strategic extension into the green belt to the south of Oxford will not damage the city's setting and will give significant benefits to its economy and housing affordability. 4,000 houses will go in green fields south of Grenoble Road following a "highly focused selective" review of the green belt. The Panel does not accept a 50% affordable housing target, and recommends a target of "at least 40%".

The Panel was persuaded that new land will be needed for employment despite the lack of numerical evidence for it. There will be adequate water supply if the Upper Thames Reservoir is built.

17. Milton Keynes & Aylesbury Vale

The very different characters of Aylesbury and Milton Keynes are noted, and the Panel seems uncomfortable with the policy differences between the two settlements that result.

The economic role of Aylesbury town needs to be strengthened and out-commuting reduced; employment areas should be ring-fenced. The jobs to new homes ratio is 1:1 and the Panel rejects an increase to 1:1.25. The job growth forecast for Aylesbury Vale is described as ambitious and the Panel "anticipates that development agencies will have to be proactive to achieve this ambitious level".

The Panel examines the case for the location of urban extensions to Milton Keynes, but gives little weight to protecting existing villages. It plumps for an urban extension of 10,400 to the southeast of the town (after 2011) and a 5,390 extension to the southwest around Newton Longville (after 2016). The existing town area will get 10,410 extra houses but the Panel says this will not erode the quality of the green infrastructure. Sustainable opportunities for growth could exist at Buckingham and Winslow. Housing levels in Aylesbury remain static at 16,800 but affordable housing is reduced from 40% to 35%.

The Oxford to Cambridge Arc should have greater emphasis and the East West Rail Link will be vital to its success.

18. Gatwick

The Panel accepts the Regional Assembly's jobs target of 17,400. There should be a university campus at Crawley. Employment land can be accommodated on brownfield. The Panel calls for land for a second runway to be safeguarded and approval of second runway would trigger a review of the Plan for the subregion. Housing is increased by 4.5% to 34,500; higher levels are constrained by the green belt, noise levels and the proposed South Downs National Park.

The Panel proposes small scale reviews of the green belt at Redhill/Reigate (see London Fringe), and also "very limited" reviews at Salfords and Horley. Some strategic gaps will be removed, and the Panel rejects the need for a strategic gap around Gatwick Airport. Despite flood risk being of concern, the increased housing can be managed.

19. Isle of Wight

Greater weight should be given to the environmental assets of the island. Although the forecasts is for a net loss of jobs, the Panel recommends a policy led target of 7,000. New housing will attract second home owners so no increase to the Plan level of 10,400 is proposed.

The Panel Report: The Rest of the South East

20. Thames Basin Heaths

The Panel has recommended an increase of 6,000 houses within 5km of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area, mainly at Guildford and Woking, as well as a major public sector owned site. This is above the 40,000 level proposed by the Assessor that the Panel appointed to guide them. The Panel think that the houses can be accommodated in a few large schemes where Suitable Accessible Natural Green Space (SANGS) can be provided on site; these spaces should be forward funded by the Regional Infrastructure Fund. The effectiveness of SANGS needs to be tested but the Panel is reassured by Natural England's support for this mitigation measure. A strategic partnership to coordinate policy for protection of the SPA is needed.

21. The Rest of the Counties

Rest of Hampshire. Any intrusion into greenfield at Winchester will be north of the city. 2,500 houses at Whitehill-Bordon and 600 at Andover, but no new settlement at Micheldever Station.

Rest of East Sussex. 600 more houses focused at Uckfield.

Rest of West Sussex. 600 extra houses on brownfield in Horsham.

Rest of Kent. 3,880 extra houses in Maidstone, Tonbridge & Malling, and Tunbridge Wells. The Mid Kent and Medway Towns–Sittingbourne Gaps to be reviewed.

Rest of Surrey. 400 extra houses in Waverley but no extra in the Mole Valley. A new settlement on the airfield at Dunsfold Park would be unsustainable due to its location and accessibility.

Rest of Oxfordshire. 1,000 extra houses for Banbury to reflect its economic role.

Rest of Buckinghamshire. An extra 500 houses for Chiltern and 200 for Wycombe.

The Reaction in the Press

22. CPRE has "great concern"

CPRE South East expressed "great concern" over the proposals. The group criticised the call for reviews of the green belt. "The pressure for new housing in the south-east is more intense than in any other region of the country," it said. "This poses a serious challenge to the character, beauty and tranquillity of the region's countryside." South east regional director, Edward Dawson, said: "There will be huge pressures on... water and transport, and large areas of valued countryside, including the internationally important Thames Basin Heaths, are under serious threat. We urge the Government not to accept the proposed increase in numbers." (Planning Portal: <http://tinyurl.com/2rz5z8>; CPRE: <http://tinyurl.com/2k8pmy>).

CPRE Kent. Dr Hilary Newport, of Kent CPRE, warned that the housing figures could go even higher. Dr Newport said Panel report would result in extra housing equivalent to a town the size of Sevenoaks being built: "This is regrettable, given the constraints that we already know will face us in Kent and the wider South East, not least water availability and congestion" (Kent News: <http://tinyurl.com/333res>; CPRE Kent: <http://tinyurl.com/287tma>).

CPRE Oxfordshire. Andy Boddington for CPRE Oxfordshire said: "The impact of the report will be to severely damage the rural character of the centre of the county. "We are rapidly moving towards two Oxfordshires—an urban Oxfordshire based around Oxford and Abingdon and a rural Oxfordshire." (Oxford Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/2ta28r>; CPRE Oxon: <http://tinyurl.com/ykca8>). Opponents of a planned reservoir near Abingdon claim the inspectors' report into the South east Plan rides roughshod over any future public inquiry into the proposals. Andy Boddington said: "The Inspectors seem to have leapt to the conclusion that a reservoir must be built in Oxfordshire. It should be for the Environment Agency to decide on the best solutions for our water needs." (Herald: <http://tinyurl.com/yo6744>).

23. Other Reaction

Communities and Local Government. The Daily Telegraph and Express secured comment from CLG. A spokesman told the newspapers: "There will be no change to the robust protections of the green belt... We believe it is possible to build the homes that future generations need whilst protecting the environment and green spaces. The Housing Green Paper published last month set out an ambitious package of proposals to do just that... Our clear priority for development will remain brownfield land." The spokesman denied a claim that the inspectors' recommendations fell short of what was required to meet the Government's three million new homes target. "Firstly, the Government has never specified a regional target..." he said. "Secondly, this independent report only takes into account policy up to the end of March 2007, predating our policy development in the Housing Green Paper including eco-towns... The Green Paper is absolutely explicit that the current round of regional plans will not fully meet future need and that we will need to carry out further reviews before 2011." (Express: <http://tinyurl.com/2zvwut>).

Regional Government. SEERA gave cautious acceptance—as long as Government funds vital extra infrastructure (<http://tinyurl.com/355x5s>). Keith Mitchell said the findings were "something that he believes will greatly dismay environmentalists" (BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/25aw3q>). SEEDA welcomed the increased housing figures and said that the South East needs smart growth and infrastructure investment to support new homes (<http://tinyurl.com/33efjo>).

National Press. The Daily Mail splashed the story over its front page "Green Belt must be sacrificed to hit Brown's house-building targets" (Daily Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/25uhr>). The Financial Times looked at the implications for infrastructure. Jim Braithwaite, chairman of SEEDA, told the newspaper building fewer homes would not ease congestion. "Businesses will import labour, commuting will increase and we'll be stuck in gridlock," he argued. "What we need is planned investment in infrastructure." (<http://tinyurl.com/39ur54>). The Telegraph headlined: "Gordon Brown's building plans rejected" (<http://tinyurl.com/2zbo7g>; <http://tinyurl.com/26j9td>).

The **Tories** warned that the proposals will create an "unsustainable urban sprawl". Shadow planning minister Jacqui Lait said promises not to construct houses on green land were now "worthless" (BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/2ugvn8>).

The **Home Builders Federation** said "these woefully inadequate targets will mean more people than ever will be excluded from home ownership." The HBF believes 40,000 houses a year would be a more appropriate target than 32,000 (FT: <http://tinyurl.com/ytl9tl>).

Berkshire. The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead council has said it will continue to fight against pressure for 1,300 additional houses over the next 20 years: "More than 80% of the borough is Green Belt and... a limited number of brownfield sites available" (24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/24etaj>; Maidenhead Adv: <http://tinyurl.com/2395qy>). Plans for more than 42,000 new homes have put a strain on the tempers of West Berkshire and Wokingham planners. But Reading planning and transport lead councillor Tom Crisp said the proposed growth rate for the borough is "reasonable" (Get Reading: <http://tinyurl.com/33yz7e>). Councillors in West Berkshire said recommendations to increase the number of new homes in the area are "out of proportion" with demand (BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/2nfahb>). The leader of Wokingham Borough Council said the increased housing numbers "threaten the very success that central government is trying to promote" (24dash: <http://tinyurl.com/3cqlgw>).

Buckinghamshire. Councillor Carole Paternoster for Aylesbury Vale District Council said the council was disappointed: "We put up a very robust case against any Milton Keynes overspill at Newton Longville... and we are disappointed that the inspectors have chosen to reject our proposals for new development to go east of the M1" (Aylesbury Today: <http://tinyurl.com/325ut9>).

Sussex. West Sussex County Council Leader Henry Smith said 32,000 homes was more than was sustainable and warned against the threat to the environment and economy of building homes without proper infrastructure (Mid Sussex Times: <http://tinyurl.com/ywotxo>). "The Government should listen... our region can cope with even more housing." (Argus: <http://tinyurl.com/32qwzt>). East Sussex County Council's deputy leader said "This is a ringing endorsement of the work the county council led to advise the Assembly on a strategy for the Sussex coast" (Bexhill Observer: <http://tinyurl.com/yrutov>).

Hampshire County Council leader Councillor Ken Thornber said Hampshire could not cope with more housing unless the Government puts money into infrastructure such as roads, sewerage, health services and social services. He added: "I want to make it clear that Hampshire intends to hold back a proportion of these houses in reserve and only release them after 2016 if it is clear that these new houses are still needed and that services like water supply and sewerage treatment can be provided." (This is Hampshire: <http://tinyurl.com/23o5wc>; <http://tinyurl.com/36gnq4>).

Kent. Chris Corrigan for the RSPB said: "this new report backs our belief that the damage caused by [Lydd] airport expansion will far outweigh any benefits" (RSPB: <http://tinyurl.com/ytlkng>).

Oxfordshire. Shipton-on-Cherwell in Oxford's green belt was rejected by SEERA and is not mentioned by the Panel, but is now making a bid for eco-town status (Oxford Mail: <http://tinyurl.com/3aekr4>).

Beyond the South East. There are fears that the EiP report could signal the start of a national review of green belt boundaries. Campaigners, including CPRE, are vowing to redouble their efforts to protect Dorset's green belt (Dorset Echo: <http://tinyurl.com/27d4b9>).

24. Timetable

The Panel report is now with Hazel Blears, the Secretary of State. She aims to publish her proposed changes towards the end of the year. There will then be a twelve week period of public consultation on the proposed changes. Following that consultation, the Secretary of State is expecting to publish the final South East Plan around Autumn 2008.

CPRE South East eBulletin is a free service. [Subscribe](#). You can unsubscribe at any time.

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Forward](#) | [Change Details](#) | [PDF Version](#) | CPRE also publishes a national **Campaigns Update**: [more information](#)

Issued by [CPRE South East](#). Editor: Andy Boddington. The information in this eBulletin is gathered from a wide range of sources and views expressed are not necessarily those of the CPRE South East Regional Group. CPRE South East, c/o CPRE, 128 Southwark Street, London, SE1 0SW. ebulletin@cprese.org.uk. www.cprese.org.uk.

Abbreviations, Links and Definitions

Subregions: South Hampshire, Sussex Coast, East Kent & Ashford, Kent Thames Gateway, London Fringe, Western Corridor Blackwater Valley, Milton Keynes & Aylesbury Vale, Central Oxfordshire, and Gatwick. **Coastal South East:** South Hampshire; Sussex Coast; East Kent and Ashford; Kent Thames Gateway; Isle of Wight. **Inner South East:** Gatwick Diamond; London Fringe; Western Corridor and Blackwater Valley; Central Oxfordshire; Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale. **MKSM:** Milton Keynes and South Midlands Growth Area. **GVA:** Gross Valued Added. A measure of economic progress, though SEERA and SEEDA use different definitions. **LDD:** Local Development Document. **LTP:** Local Transport Plan. **RUC:** Road User Charging. **Smart Growth** is "economic growth that does not require the importing of extra labour or the use of extra land. It is achieved by increasing the economic activity rate, increasing the skill base of the workforce, promoting the use of technology to improve productivity or the out-sourcing of jobs that do not have to be based in the area" (Source: SEP D2). **Appropriate Assessment** is a requirement of the European Habitats Directive. Its purpose is to assess the impacts of the plans and projects on internationally designated sites nature conservation sites.

CLG: [Communities and Local Government](#). EiP: [Examination in Public](#). GOSE: [Government Office of the South East](#). SEEDA: [South East England Development Agency](#). SEERA: [South East England Regional Assembly](#). SPA: [Special Protection Area](#). TBHSPA: [Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area](#).

The Report

The Panel report will be found on the GOSE website (<http://tinyurl.com/2v5nzy>).

Annex 1: Recommended Housing Provision by Sub-region and 'Rest of County' Area

Sub-regions	Draft SE Plan Av/annum 2006-2026	Draft SE Plan Total 2006-2026	Panel Recommend- ed Change dpa	Panel Report Av/annum 2006-2026	Panel Report Total 2006-2026	Increase above Draft SE Plan levels	% increase above Draft SE Plan levels
South Hampshire	4,000	80,000	0	4,000	80,000	0	0.0%
Sussex Coast	2,700	54,000	270	2,970	59,400	5,400	10.0%
East Kent & Ashford	2,400	48,000	250	2,650	53,000	5,000	10.4%
Kent Thames G/way	2,400	48,000	50	2,450	49,000	1,000	2.1%
London Fringe	1,868	37,360	438	2,306	46,120	8,760	23.4%
WCBW	4,476	89,520	904	5,380	107,600	18,080	20.2%
MKAV	3,500	70,000	190	3,690	73,800	3,800	5.4%
Central Oxfordshire	1,700	34,000	305	2,005	40,100	6,100	17.9%
Gatwick	1,650	33,000	75	1,725	34,500	1,500	4.5%
Sub-regions total	24,694	493,880	2,482	27,176	543,520	49,640	10.1%
Isle of Wight	520	10,400	0	520	10,400	0	0.0%
Rest of Hampshire	800	16,000	245	1,045	20,900	4,900	30.6%
Rest of West Sussex	300	6,000	30	330	6,600	600	10.0%
Rest of East Sussex	300	6,000	30	330	6,600	600	10.0%
Rest of Kent	1,200	24,000	194	1,394	27,880	3,880	16.2%
Rest of Surrey	230	4,600	20	250	5,000	400	8.7%
Rest of Berkshire	50	1,000	0	50	1,000	0	0.0%
Rest of Oxfordshire	660	13,200	65	725	14,500	1,300	9.8%
Rest of Bucks	150	3,000	35	185	3,700	700	23.3%
Rest of total	4,210	84,200	619	4,829	96,580	12,380	14.7%
South East	28,904	578,080	3,101	32,005	640,100	62,020	10.7%

WCBW = Western Corridor Blackwater Valley

MKAV = Milton Keynes & Aylesbury Vale

Annex 2: Recommended Housing provision by District, Unitary and County

	Draft SE Plan Av/annum 2006-2026	Draft SE Plan Total 2006- 2026	Panel Recommen- ed Change dwellings pa	Panel Report Av/annum 2006-2026	Panel Report Total 2006- 2026	Increase above Draft SE Plan levels	% increase above Draft SE Plan levels
Bracknell Forest	539	10,780	100	639	12,780	2,000	18.6%
Reading	521	10,420	90	611	12,220	1,800	17.3%
Slough	235	4,700	50	285	5,700	1,000	21.3%
West Berkshire	525	10,500	375	900	18,000	7,500	71.4%
Windsor & M/head	281	5,620	65	346	6,920	1,300	23.1%
Wokingham	523	10,460	100	623	12,460	2,000	19.1%
Berkshire	2,624	52,480	780	3,404	68,080	15,600	29.7%
Aylesbury Vale	1,060	21,200	285	1,345	26,900	5,700	26.9%
Chiltern	120	2,400	25	145	2,900	500	20.8%
Milton Keynes	2,440	48,800	-92	2,348	46,960	-1,840	-3.8%
South Bucks	90	1,800	4	94	1,880	80	4.4%
Wycombe	330	6,600	60	390	7,800	1,200	18.2%
Buckinghamshire	4,040	80,800	282	4,322	86,440	5,640	7.0%
Brighton and Hove	550	11,000	20	570	11,400	400	3.6%
Eastbourne	240	4,800	0	240	4,800	0	0.0%
Hastings	210	4,200	0	210	4,200	0	0.0%
Lewes	220	4,400	0	220	4,400	0	0.0%
Rother	280	5,600	0	280	5,600	0	0.0%
Wealden	400	8,000	80	480	9,600	1,600	20.0%
East Sussex	1,900	38,000	100	2,000	40,000	2,000	5.3%
Basingstoke & Deane	825	16,500	70	895	17,900	1,400	8.5%
East Hampshire	260	5,200	125	385	7,700	2,500	48.1%
Eastleigh	354	7,083	0	354	7,080	-3	0.0%
Hedge End SDA	300	6,000	0	300	6,000	0	0.0%
Fareham	186	3,729	0	186	3,720	-9	-0.2%
Fareham SDA	500	10,000	0	500	10,000	0	0.0%
Gosport	125	2,500	0	125	2,500	0	0.0%
Hart	200	4,000	0	200	4,000	0	0.0%
Havant	315	6,301	0	315	6,301	0	0.0%
New Forest	207	4,138	0	207	4,140	2	0.0%
Portsmouth City	735	14,700	0	735	14,700	0	0.0%
Rushmoor	310	6,200	0	310	6,200	0	0.0%
Southampton	815	16,300	0	815	16,300	0	0.0%
Test Valley	446	8,910	30	476	9,520	610	6.8%
Winchester	522	10,439	90	612	12,240	1,801	17.3%
Hampshire	6,100	122,000	315	6,415	128,300	6,300	5.2%
Isle of Wight	520	10,400	0	520	10,400	0	0.0%
Ashford	1,135	22,700	0	1,135	22,700	0	0.0%
Canterbury	360	7,200	100	460	9,200	2,000	27.8%
Dartford	785	15,700	0	785	15,700	0	0.0%
Dover	305	6,100	100	405	8,100	2,000	32.8%
Gravesham	465	9,300	0	465	9,300	0	0.0%
Maidstone	410	8,200	94	504	10,080	1,880	22.9%
Medway	815	16,300	0	815	16,300	0	0.0%
Sevenoaks	155	3,100	10	165	3,300	200	6.5%
Shepway	255	5,100	0	255	5,100	0	0.0%

	Draft SE Plan Av/annum 2006-2026	Draft SE Plan Total 2006- 2026	Panel Recommen- ed Change dwellings pa	Panel Report Av/annum 2006-2026	Panel Report Total 2006- 2026	Increase above Draft SE Plan levels	% increase above Draft SE Plan levels
Swale	415	8,300	50	465	9,300	1,000	12.0%
Thanet	325	6,500	50	375	7,500	1,000	15.4%
Tonbridge & Malling	425	8,500	25	450	9,000	500	5.9%
Tunbridge Wells	250	5,000	50	300	6,000	1,000	20.0%
Kent	6,100	122,000	479	6,579	131,580	9,580	7.9%
Cherwell	590	11,800	50	640	12,800	1,000	8.5%
Oxford City	350	7,000	50	400	8,000	1,000	14.3%
Oxford SDA	-	-	200	200	4,000		
South Oxfordshire	510	10,200	37	547	10,940	740	7.3%
Vale of White Horse	575	11,500	3	578	11,560	60	0.5%
West Oxfordshire	335	6,700	30	365	7,300	600	9.0%
Oxfordshire	2,360	47,200	370	2,730	54,600	7,400	15.7%
Elmbridge	231	4,620	25	256	5,120	500	10.8%
Epsom and Ewell	181	3,620	18	199	3,980	360	9.9%
Guildford	322	6,440	100	422	8,440	2,000	31.1%
Mole Valley	171	3,420	17	188	3,760	340	9.9%
Reigate and Banstead	387	7,740	75	462	9,240	1,500	19.4%
Runnymede	146	2,920	140	286	5,720	2,800	95.9%
Spelthorne	151	3,020	15	166	3,320	300	9.9%
Surrey Heath	187	3,740	0	187	3,740	0	0.0%
Tandridge	112	2,240	13	125	2,500	260	11.6%
Waverley	230	4,600	20	250	5,000	400	8.7%
Woking	242	4,840	50	292	5,840	1,000	20.7%
Surrey	2,360	47,200	473	2,833	56,660	9,460	20.0%
Adur	130	2,600	50	180	3,600	1,000	38.5%
Arun	465	9,300	100	565	11,300	2,000	21.5%
Chichester	430	8,600	50	480	9,600	1,000	11.6%
Crawley	350	7,000	25	375	7,500	500	7.1%
Horsham	620	12,400	30	650	13,000	600	4.8%
Mid Sussex	705	14,100	50	755	15,100	1,000	7.1%
Worthing	200	4,000	0	200	4,000	0	0.0%
West Sussex	2,900	58,000	305	3,205	64,100	6,100	10.5%
South East	28,904	578,080	3,104	32,008	640,160	62,080	10.7%