

9D REST OF EAST AND WEST SUSSEX

9D.1 Does the draft RSS take proper account of the capacity of towns/locations in the rest of Chichester, Lewes (except northern part), Wealden, and Rother for sustainable development (including Policy H1)? If not, how would any additional growth here impact on the Sussex Coast and South Hants sub-regional strategies?

1. If we assume growth in the towns and villages across the rest of Sussex outside the coastal towns is properly linked to local need and available infrastructure capacity then there should not be any impact on the Sussex Coast sub-regional strategy and the development is likely to be sustainable.

2. However, the reality is that there is pressure to build in these areas to house two different categories of people who are not seeking a local sustainable solution. Lower cost greenfield sites attract developers who are able to build cheaper properties than those available in the coastal towns and the southern suburbs of London.

3. These properties attract people from those towns who will then become commuters, placing increased pressure on the road and rail networks. The other people attracted to these areas are those who seek better properties in pleasant surroundings rather than living in the coastal towns, and they are willing to pay higher prices for this, further squeezing out the local people and increasing commuting and hence congestion. In both cases the impact on the Sussex coastal towns is negative. These towns need to be improved so that people want to live there.

4. Within Chichester District the opportunities for housing development are limited to the eastern end of the coastal plan, at Tangmere, and at the eastern boundary of Chichester City. These sites offer reasonable road links, some employment opportunities and some brownfield capacity. Any development north of the Downs is likely to be in the AONB, in attractive countryside with poor road networks, poor services including schools and hospitals, little new employment, very few brownfield sites, and attractive small market towns. Hence the Plan should NOT identify any more development locations here. This area must retain its identity, not become totally overshadowed by the Sussex Coast and South Hants strategies and should not become part of an extended 'Solent City'.

5. Development opportunities for areas in Wealden District and Eastbourne Borough served by Hailsham North and Hailsham South water treatment facilities are constrained by the limits of these treatment works. A recent study by the Environment Agency identifies constraints on the connection of additional dwellings to both Hailsham South and Hailsham North sewage treatment works (STW) even with improvements to these works. At Hailsham North 2,800 additional dwellings can be connected and an additional 1,900 at Hailsham South (an additional 4,700 in total). Water supply constraints and flood risk will also restrict development in these areas. These constraints will be clearer when the flood risk assessment study work is completed and published by the EA

9D.2 Does the strategy take proper account of the capacity of towns/locations in the rest of Horsham, Mid Sussex and the northern part of Lewes for sustainable development (including Policy H1)? If not, how would any additional growth here impact on the Gatwick sub-regional strategy?

6. Over the past 10 years there has been a surge of people into Crawley from all surrounding areas attracted by its employment opportunities. We believe further growth in these “Rest of Sussex” areas would simply be unsustainable, in-migration and so commuter growth, further clogging the infrastructure in and around Crawley.

7. Horsham, Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath have all absorbed considerable new development in recent years with more to come, a legacy of the Structure Plans which has yet to be built. However, infrastructure is either at capacity or nearing it for most of these towns. The Brighton – London rail link is heavily congested, as too are roads at peak times. Community facilities are stretched, in particular medical and school places in short supply. Waste disposal and Water Supply have little head room to accommodate significant population increases. It should also be noted that were a town has taken large scale development over a short space of time, new residents need time to “bed in” and allow communities to form.

8. It is unlikely that growth in towns outside the Gatwick Sub-Region will ease the pressure within it as it is highly likely that the majority of new residents just outside the sub-region will rely on Gatwick and Crawley for employment.

1Environment Agency - Creating a Better Place: Planning for Water Quality and Growth in the South East October 2006

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