



Strategy Options and Sustainability



I The Core Strategy

- 1.1** The Plan needs a core strategy around which the other elements can be assembled. When the Plan is submitted to Government, that core strategy will comprise two components:
- i** A Statement of Policy
 - ii** A set of proposals for development at the regional level, indicating the scale of development and the pattern of that growth.
- 1.2** At this stage in the process, however, the scale of development and the distribution pattern cannot, indeed should not, be determined. Government advice makes it clear that, in this consultative draft, there is a need to consider and publicly debate several options, at both the regional and sub-regional level. This is also necessary to meet Government guidance on the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations.
- 1.3** This section of the consultative draft therefore proposes a core statement of policy, but then describes a set of options for debate. It also comments on the process and initial results of the Sustainability Assessment process that the Assembly has put in place.

2 Statement of Policy

- 2.1** The core Statement of Policy needs to reflect the vision, parameters, forecasts and other considerations already decided. It should also be a weave of several policy strands, reflecting the international, national, inter-regional and intra-regional levels at which the Plan must engage. In particular, it needs to relate to:
- i** The region's aspirations for its global and European role
 - ii** The region in a United Kingdom context and especially in relation to the other English regions
 - iii** The evolving relationship between London and the region

- iv** The sustainable development context, set by Government policies and the Integrated Regional Framework
- v** The region's response to its own existing and future development needs
- vi** Forecast imbalances between the patterns of need and potential development, especially between the east and west of the region
- vii** The urban and urban renaissance emphasis of existing regional guidance
- viii** The critical links between the development aspirations in the Plan and the timely provision of infrastructure and services
- ix** A need to become more efficient in the use of natural resources by raising standards and improving management
- x** The Government's major investment programmes for health, education, skills and social/affordable housing
- xi** The different pace of change that is likely to be appropriate over time, both for the region as a whole and for its sub-regions
- xii** The degree of uncertainty that travels with longer-term forecasts and the consequent need for a degree of flexibility
- xiii** Conversely, a need to develop a strategy that provides some markers beyond 2026.

- 2.2** On this basis, the core strategy is proposed as follows:

- 2.2.1** **The South East is already a region of economic opportunity and enterprise, with an especially varied and attractive countryside and a perceived high quality of life. But it is also a region with considerable inequalities, environmental conflicts and development tensions. Over the period of the Plan to 2026, the Assembly and its partners intend to nurture and enhance the region's assets, maintain its high quality of life, increase its prosperity and meet its reasonable needs through a sustainable programme of more intensive management, rising**

standards of resource use and development and increased adaption and mitigation. This strategic combination is intended to provide for a substantial programme of housing development and economic growth, phased and closely related to the availability of infrastructure and associated services. The overall result of this Plan will be a healthier region, a more polycentric and sustainable pattern of development, a dynamic and robust economy, a reduced level of social exclusion, a more bio-diverse environment and a reducing level of natural resource consumption.

2.2.2 The region will remain a key international gateway and a pillar of the UK economy, maintaining strong links with London and a considerable degree of mutual interdependence. The linkages with other English regions will grow, reflecting the polycentric emphasis of the Plan, and the economic and social disparities with the other regions will have lessened. Similarly, within the region, economic and social disparities between the east and west of the region will have significantly reduced, with the successful regeneration of the Thames Gateway and a number of coastal towns and cities.

2.2.3 Over the Plan period, a level of economic growth equivalent to a GVA increase of 3% per annum is assumed and planned for, although temporal and intra-regional variations will occur. In order to accommodate the growth and its development consequences, technology and new working practices will be encouraged so as to foster productivity increases and relieve development and resource need. Adequate land and property for business, housing and other services will nevertheless be required and measures to achieve adequate provision forms part of this Plan. Delivery will need to be planned at both the regional and sub-regional level. At a regional level, the pace of growth will vary over the Plan period.

2.2.4 All development options will require assurances and greater confidence about the timely delivery of infrastructure. The Assembly looks to the Government to create that confidence and to establish a national and regional framework that will enable the Assembly and its regional and local partners to agree creative solutions and achieve the successful implementation of the Plan.

3 Strategic Options

3.1 There are two dimensions to the development of strategic options: firstly, the scale of growth that may be appropriate; secondly the policy choices for distribution of that growth. These two aspects are considered in turn.

3.2 Options for Scales of Growth

3.2.1 Work on the sub-regional strategies has revealed serious concerns about the implications of levels of growth beyond that which is reflected in the existing Regional Planning Guidance for South East England (RPG9). Concerns include the environmental impacts of a faster pace of development and doubts that adequate infrastructure can be provided for high levels of growth.

3.2.2 In addition there are serious reservations about projections of household growth derived from trend-based population projections. Population projections have inherent weaknesses particularly when they are based in part on assumptions about future levels of economic growth – an area where forecasting is notoriously problematic. Moreover they include assumptions about the level of in-migration to the region. This is highly volatile and can be affected by a wide range of factors including UK inter-regional economic performance and quality of life, as well as changes in political situations in other parts of the world and the UK's immigration policy.



- 3.2.3** It is also the case that, since 1998, developers in the South East have repeatedly failed to build at the current planned rate set out in RPG9 (28,000 dwellings per annum). The five year average build rate 1999/2000 to 2003/04 is 25,500.
- 3.2.4** The Assembly therefore proposes to reflect both the reality of house building on the ground and concerns about environmental impacts and the delivery of infrastructure in the consultation options for housing growth. In summary, the Assembly is now consulting on three levels of growth:
- Option 1:** 25,500 dwellings per annum
 - Option 2:** 28,000 dwellings per annum
 - Option 3:** 32,000 dwellings per annum
- 3.2.5** The Assembly is aware that these choices are expressed in terms of housing numbers. In many ways this is unfortunate, because the scales of growth relate to a range of development patterns and choices and housing numbers are only one dimension. They are nevertheless a proxy which can be relatively easily understood and which can fairly readily be translated into local guidance. The numbers are therefore used as a focus for debate, but with the caveat set out.
- 3.2.6** There is also some danger in debating options for growth over the whole period of the Plan that this will imply a 'steady state' for development with no scope for variation. In practice, this should not be the case. The pace of change need not, will not and probably should not be consistent over the Plan period. It is reasonable therefore to give further consideration to a variable rate, particularly leaving open some options beyond 2021 and perhaps 2016.
- 3.2.7** There is a strong case for increasing the pace and scale of development to 2016. For the following five years to 2021, that scale of growth might be maintained, with a reducing rate in the last five years of the Plan to reflect economic uncertainty and the long-term impacts of Government regional policy. In other words, the Plan 'average' rate of development would in practice vary significantly over the Plan period on a rising and falling curve.
- 3.2.8** The rise and fall of that curve is for debate, although the degree of variation possibly increases with the time horizon. Thus in the period to 2011 only a relatively modest increase in current rates of development is probably possible, given lead times and the fact that the Plan itself will not be approved until 2006. Beyond 2011 there is progressively more scope in each five year period for a change of pace.
- 3.2.9** The rate of overall development and sharpness of any increase will also be dependent on assumptions about infrastructure availability. Assembly members have made it clear that they are prepared, albeit with a degree of reluctance, to contemplate growth, but only if it is linked in a tangible and transparent way to the assured provision of necessary infrastructure. We have begun to term this 'conditional growth'. It is possible to therefore pitch the 'growth curve' more or less steeply according to the degree of optimism felt appropriate about infrastructure.
- 3.2.10** A range is reproduced here simply to illustrate the point, although it is not intended to be in any way definitive. Further comments on the issue would be welcome in the consultation and further assessment of this dimension will be undertaken. (See figure C1.)

3.3 Policy/Distribution Options

3.3.1 The development of policy/distribution options has moved through several cycles of analysis and debate and the options presented here for consultation are a distillation of that work. A technical note setting out that process in detail is published separately. It is available on the Regional Assembly website.

3.3.2 A critical stage in the process was a workshop for the full Assembly at Portsmouth in October 2004, when a matrix of six possible policy/distribution options was debated. These are summarised in **table CI** and the subsequent text which explains the definitions.

3.3.3 The three policy options were:

- i Regional Guidance** – A reference case to test a roll forward of existing policies, as set out in RPG9 and structure plans, along with the proposed or finally adopted RPG9 alterations (in the case of Kent Thames Gateway the Inter-regional Planning Statement). This would imply a continuation of existing policies that

TABLE CI

Spatial Options Iteration Two

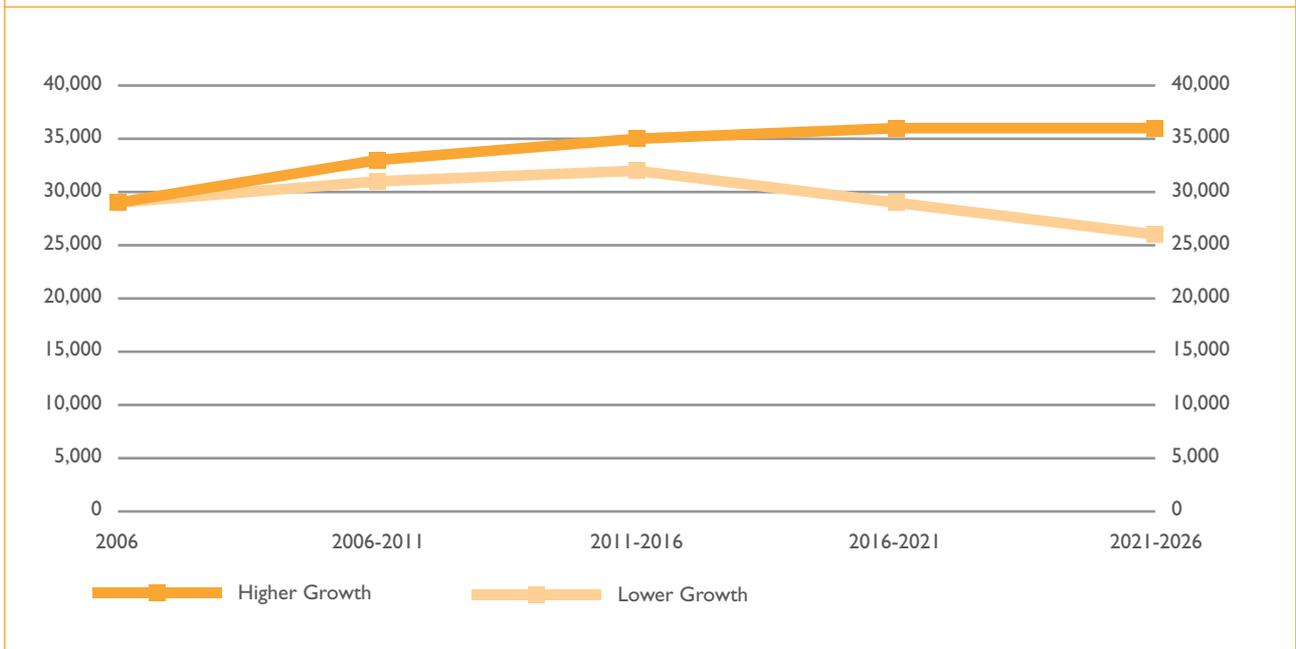
Strategic Policy Options	Strategic Distribution Options	
	Hubs	Urban Concentration
Regional Guidance	X	X
Economic Potential	X	X
Reducing Intra-Regional Disparities	X	X

seek to both support the sustainable growth of the region’s most dynamic sub-regional economies, whilst focusing resources on regeneration.

- ii Maximising Economic Potential** – In order to maximise economic potential it will be necessary to meet the demand for land and labour emerging from the fastest growing parts of the region. Under this option demand for development would be met where it arises, ie those areas forecast to experience the highest population and

FIGURE CI

Possible Scale of Change 2006-2026



employment growth would experience the highest rates of physical development.

- iii **Reducing Intra-regional Disparities** – under this scenario economic policies would be even more focused on rebalancing the regional economy by further promoting growth in the south and east well above recent trends. In effect this would mean a policy shift towards the more deprived areas of the region. This would necessarily include emphasis on skills development, environmental enhancements and significant investment in public transport to improve access to and along the coast thereby reducing peripherality.

3.3.4 The two distribution options were:

- i **Transport Hubs** – Within this option the transport hubs identified in the Regional Transport Strategy are the focus for development and services. This would disproportionately concentrate development on the 17 settlements (all of which are contained in the sub-regions) with the objective of achieving a critical mass sufficient to support higher order functions which may not currently be supported (eg high level health, cultural and education facilities).
- ii **Urban Concentration** – This is the basis of the existing spatial strategy as set out in RPG9. Currently, 66% of all new housing development is located in urban areas. Under this option all new development would need to be located in or as close to urban areas as possible. Urban areas have been defined as those with an existing urban population of over 10,000.

3.3.5 As a result of comments at the workshop and further evolution, these options were reduced to a single distribution option, combining hubs and urban concentration, and two policy options. The policy options are:

- i **Continuing existing policy** – a roll-forward of the existing pattern in Regional Planning Guidance (RPG9).

- ii **Sharper Focus** – a distribution that focuses development on two policy emphases defined at an earlier stage in the process: firstly, areas with strong economic potential; secondly, areas with a particular need for regeneration to reduce disparities and increase social and economic cohesion.

3.4 Consultation Options

3.4.1 On this basis, a total of six options are therefore put forward for consultation, as follows:

- i **Continuation of Existing Policy**, at the following levels:
 - a 25,500 dwellings per annum
 - b 28,000 dwellings per annum
 - c 32,000 dwellings per annum.
- ii **Sharper Focus**, at the following levels:
 - a 25,500 dwellings per annum
 - b 28,000 dwellings per annum
 - c 32,000 dwellings per annum.

3.4.2 The resulting scales of development are set out in [table C2](#) and shown on [maps C1-C6](#). Further detailed testing of these options will be undertaken in parallel with the consultation process, but comments on the options are now invited.

TABLE C2
Summary of Spatial Options

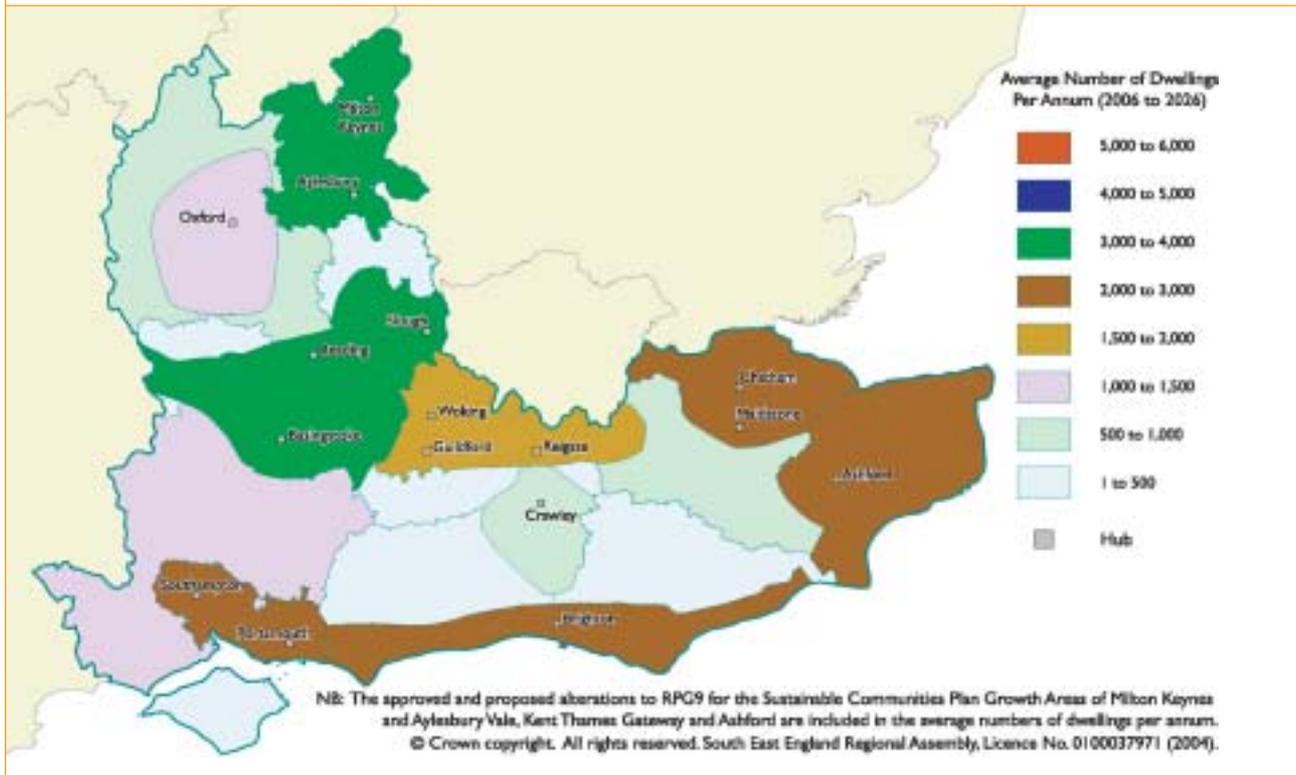
Area	Continuation of Existing Policy		Sharper Focus	
	Spatial Option i	Spatial Option ii	Spatial Option i	Spatial Option ii
	25,500	28,000	25,500	28,000
Kent Thames Gateway	2,900	2,900	2,900	2,900
Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale	3,300	3,300	3,300	3,300
East Kent and Ashford	2,400	2,500	2,600	2,800
Central Oxfordshire	1,300	1,500	1,400	1,600
Gatwick Area	900	1,100	1,300	1,500
London Fringe	1,500	1,700	2,000	2,300
South Hampshire	2,800	3,200	2,900	3,300
Sussex Coast	2,700	3,000	2,300	2,600
Western Corridor and Blackwater Valley	3,500	4,000	4,300	4,900
Sub Total	21,300	23,200	23,000	25,200
Rest of Berkshire	100	100	100	100
Rest of Buckinghamshire	200	200	200	300
Rest of East Sussex	300	400	400	400
Rest of Hampshire	1,200	1,400	700	800
Rest of Kent	700	800	200	200
Rest of Oxfordshire	700	800	300	300
Rest of Surrey	200	200	200	200
Rest of West Sussex	400	400	100	100
Isle of Wight	400	500	400	400
Sub Total	4,200	4,800	2,500	2,800
GRAND TOTAL	25,500	28,000	25,500	28,000

Notes

- These are indicative figures only.
- Figures are rounded to the nearest 100. Rounded figures may not sum.

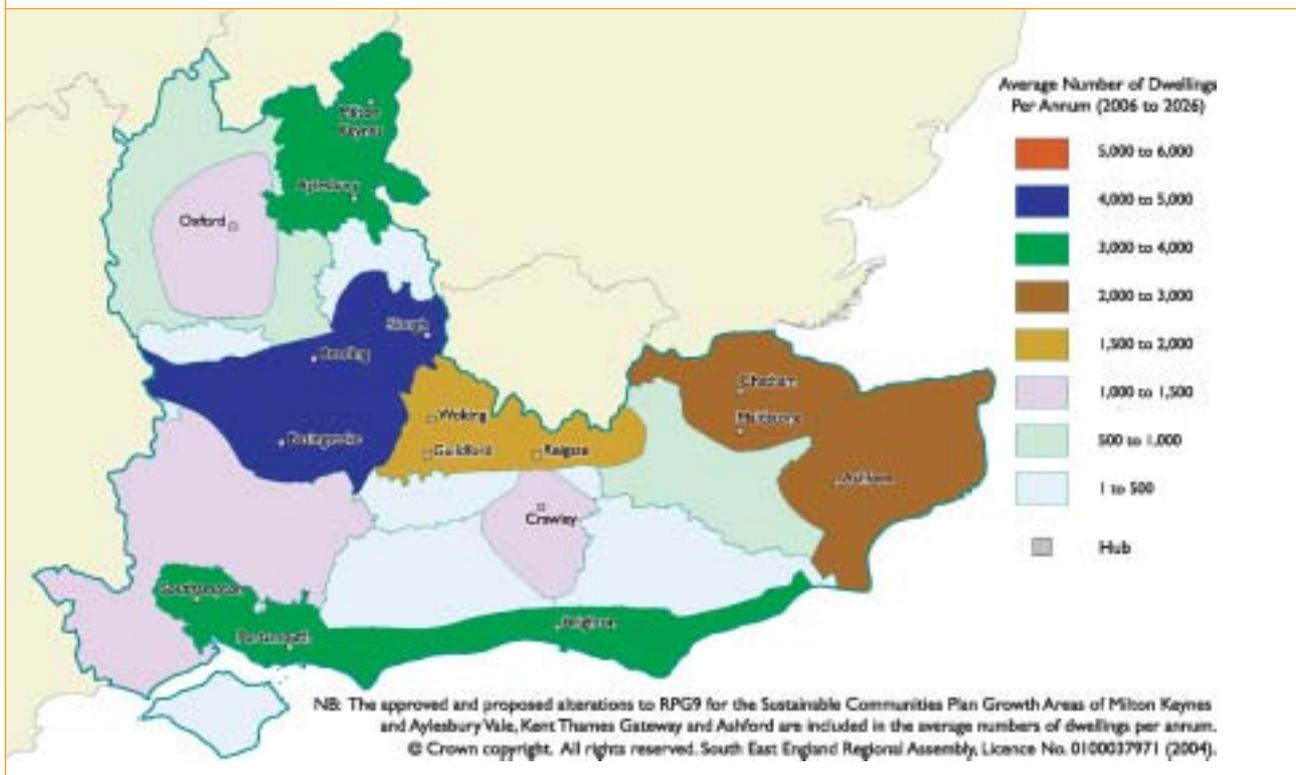
MAP C1

Option ia. Continuation of Existing Policy – 25,500 dwellings per annum (annual average)
Indicative scale of development for consultation and debate



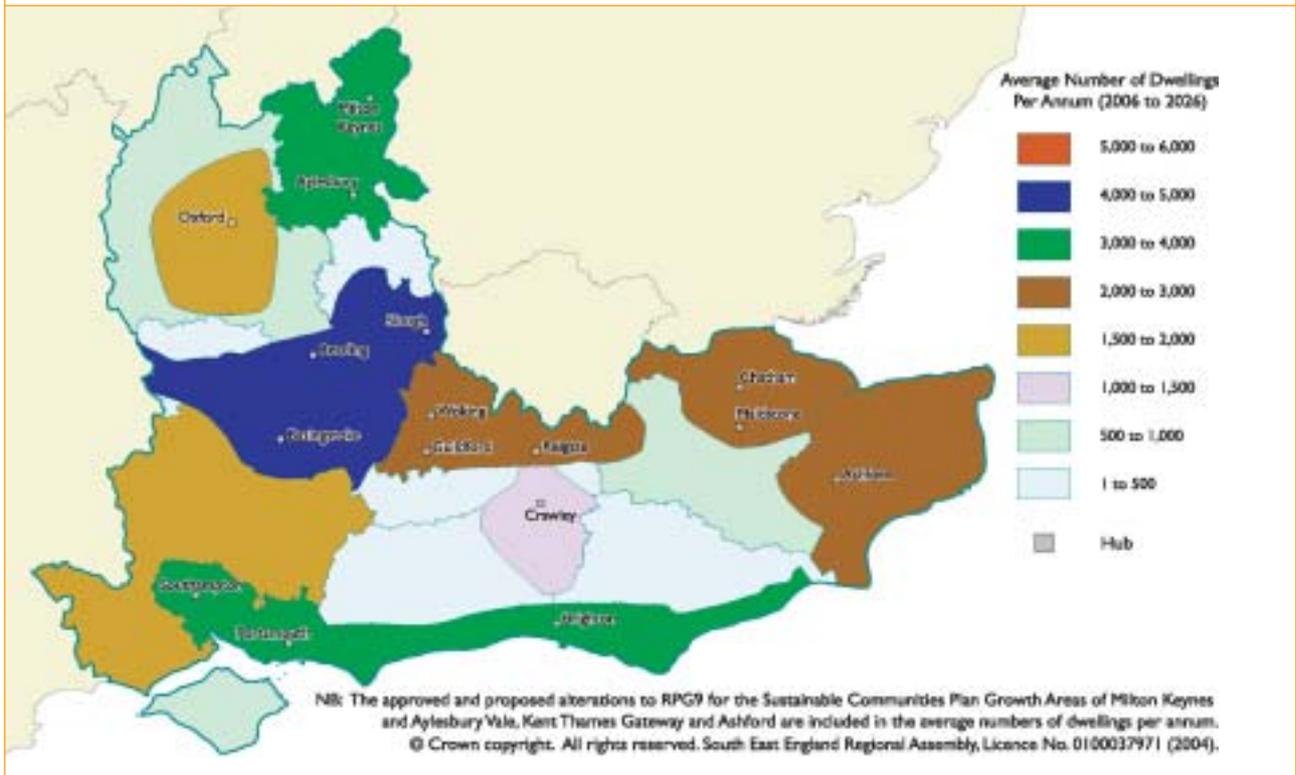
MAP C2

Option ib. Continuation of Existing Policy – 28,000 dwellings per annum (annual average)
Indicative scale of development for consultation and debate



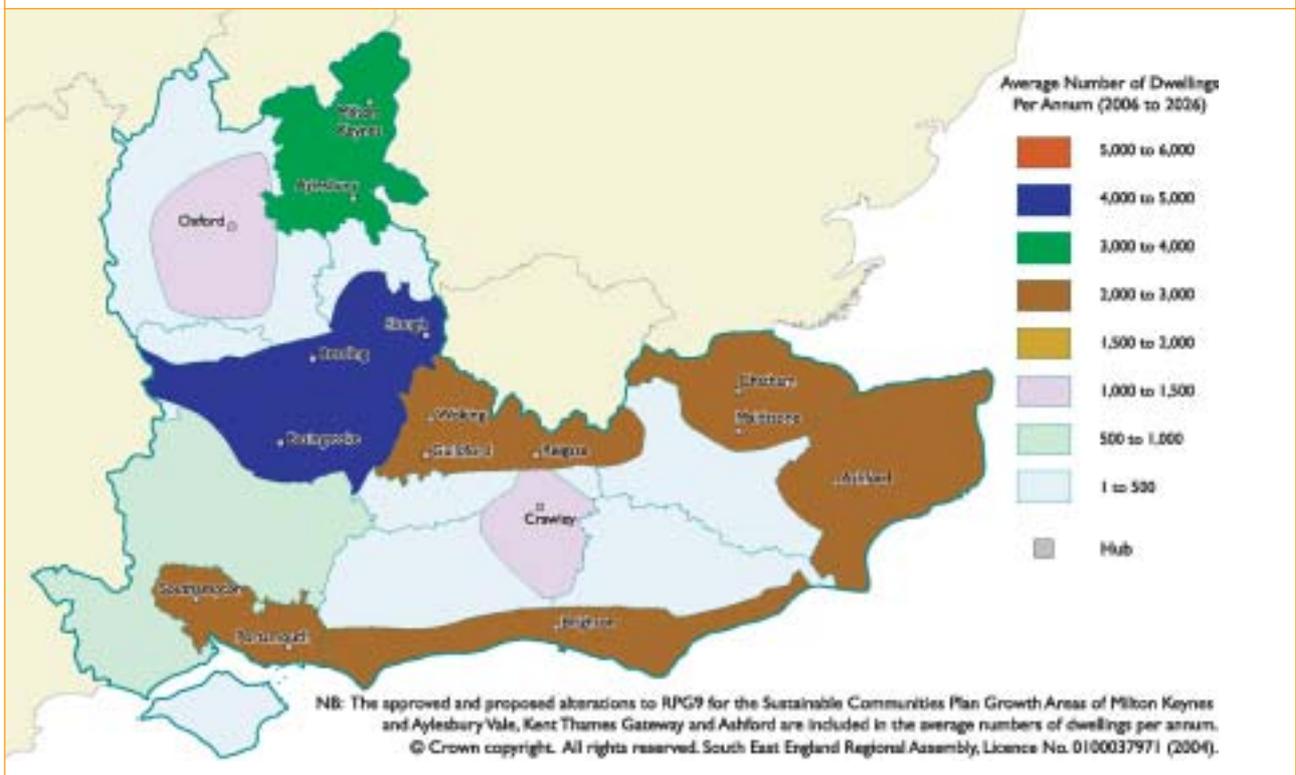
MAP C3

Option ic. Continuation of Existing Policy – 32,000 dwellings per annum (annual average)
 Indicative scale of development for consultation and debate



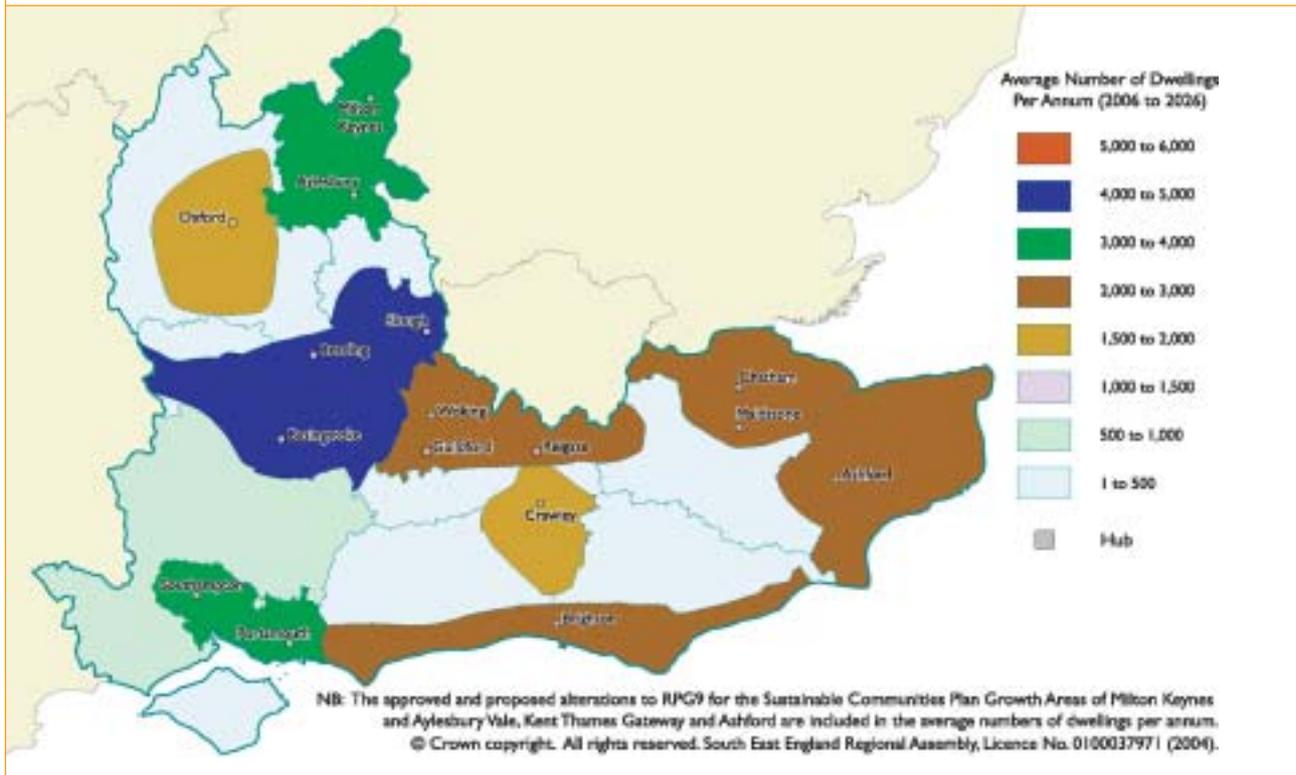
MAP C4

Option iia. Sharper Focus – 25,500 dwellings per annum (annual average)
 Indicative scale of development for consultation and debate



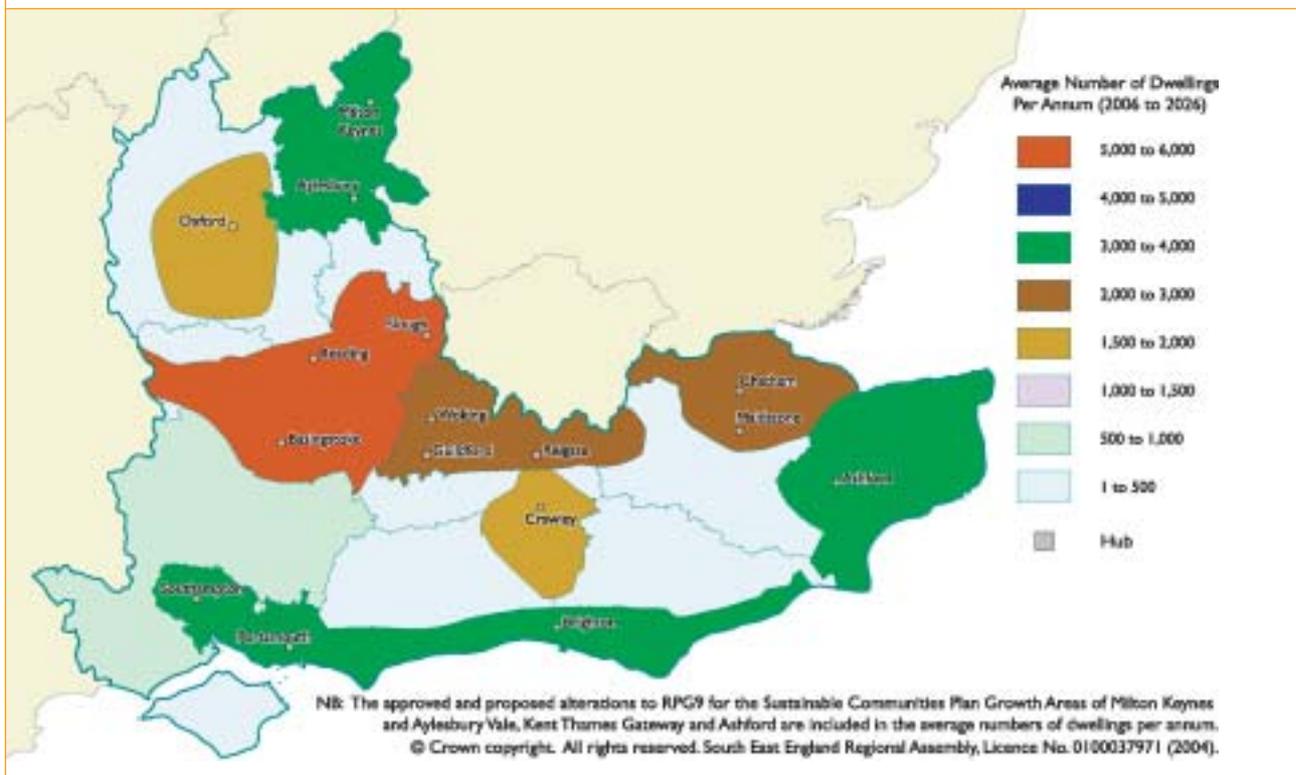
MAP C5

Option iib. Sharper Focus – 28,000 dwellings per annum (annual average)
 Indicative scale of development for consultation and debate



MAP C6

Option iic. Sharper Focus – 32,000 dwellings per annum (annual average)
 Indicative scale of development for consultation and debate



3.5 Sub-regions

3.5.1 Sub-regions form an important part of the strategy. Following an extensive programme of analysis and consideration, a set of nine sub-regions has been agreed for consultation, together with a special policy area to reflect the unique nature of the Isle of Wight. The sub-regions and relevant policies are set out in Cross-Cutting Policy CC8 and in the sub-regional section of the Plan (Section E). In each sub-region a range of options is also put forward for debate, and comment.

3.6 Spatial Change

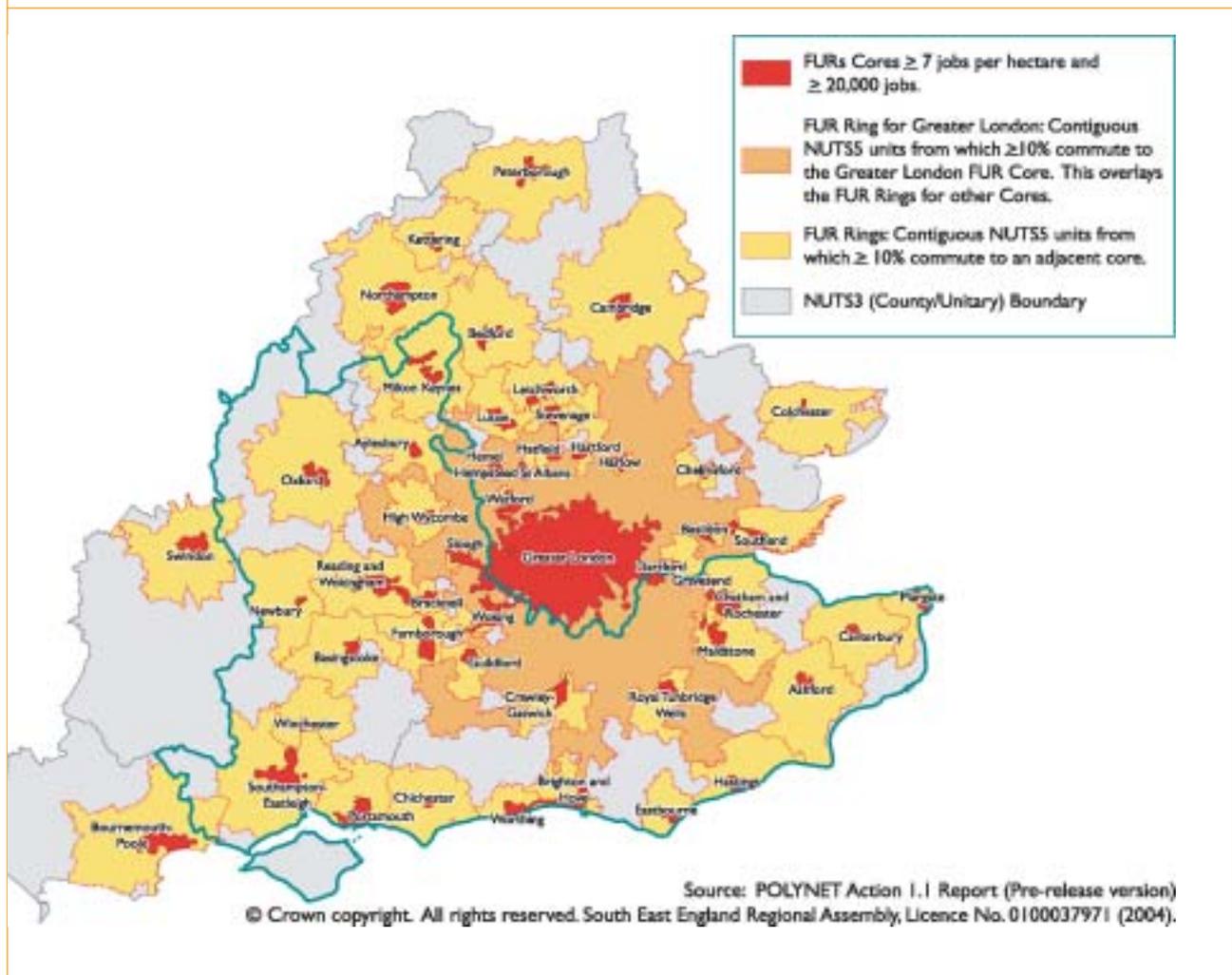
3.6.1 As well as considering spatial change drawn from past patterns and their evolution, long-term planning also needs to consider factors which may alter that pattern. In

order to inform the Plan-making process and identify possible new drivers of change, the Assembly has therefore undertaken a process of functional analysis. That work is not yet complete but it is being informed by research supported by the Assembly as part of the Interreg IIIB POLYNET project. This international research, led by Sir Peter Hall of University College London, is comparing movement and other patterns across cities/regions in seven European countries.

3.6.2 Initial findings provide a new perspective on the spatial relationships at work in the South East and neighbouring regions. Instead of analysing data on travel to work and business connections in terms of administrative boundaries, the POLYNET research defines functional urban boundaries to encompass all the

MAP C7

Functional Urban Regions in the Greater South East





areas that have daily relationships with a core town or city. These so-called Functional Urban Regions (FURs) comprise a core, defined in terms of employment size and density, and a ring, defined in the terms of regular daily journeys (commuting) to the core. The South East has 29 of the 50 FURs in the Greater South East area shown in [map C7](#). The majority of these lie beyond the London FUR and constitute defined local commuting systems around towns and cities. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the map is that a significant majority (32 of 50) lie to the west of the City of London, indicating that cities and towns in the west have developed as strong and independent economic centres to a far greater degree than those in the east.

3.6.3 In terms of employment, the largest employment centre outside the London FUR in 2001 was Oxford, followed by Southampton. The largest increases in employment between 1991 and 2001 took place to the west of London, with employment increases running equal to population increase in Milton Keynes, Oxford and Southampton. Analysis of commuting patterns also illustrates an increasing complexity of cross commuting patterns between towns 40-100 miles from London. The analysis indicates that the Greater South East (incorporating Greater London, the South East and East of England) is intrinsically quite polycentric, especially on the western side where towns and cities have high and growing degrees of self-containment and strong interactions with each other as well as London.

3.6.4 This has some significance for the way in which long-term options and development patterns in the region may need to develop, suggesting for example that the Oxford-Milton Keynes arc and Oxford-Southampton corridor may become of increasing importance. Further work on this dimension will take place over coming months, making full use of the emerging POLYNET project.

4 Sustainability Appraisal

4.1 The Regional Assembly is undertaking a programme of appraisal, assessment and proofing. This is to ensure that the decision making process takes full account of the implications for sustainable development, and integrates it with development of the overall strategy and the associated proposed policies and proposals.

4.2 It is required that the South East Plan is assessed in two ways:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
- Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

It is also currently considered best practice for planning strategies to undergo Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and Rural Proofing. To these elements, the Assembly has added a fifth – Futures Proofing.

4.3 These tasks each have their own focus, aims and outputs. However, they all encompass the principles of sustainable development as defined by the Government strategy for Sustainability, 'A Better Quality of Life: a Strategy for Sustainable Development'. The principles

of sustainability are set in a regional context in the Integrated Regional Framework (IRF), which was published in July 2004. The IRF contains a set of objectives and indicators for sustainable development in the South East that play a crucial role in the appraisal of the Plan.

4.4 It is essential that the appraisal process is not simply an exercise in ‘box ticking’, but makes a full contribution to the development of the South East Plan. The Assembly is already at the forefront of work in this area. It has carried out sustainability appraisals of the partial reviews of RPG9 that have already been completed. The methodology used for these appraisals, developed for the Assembly, has been fed into the development of the appraisal framework prepared by the consultants commissioned to undertake the appraisal process.

4.5 The different assessments required in the preparation of the Plan have been combined into an integrated programme of appraisal, subsequently referred to throughout this Plan. This provides the Assembly and its partners with several ‘wins’. Firstly it is efficient. The resources involved in undertaking the different assessments required are considerable and integrating them as much as possible will prevent duplication of effort. The second benefit is that it will ensure that the three ‘pillars’ of sustainability – environment, society and economy – are considered equally throughout the process. It will also help ensure that the evidence base used is consistent across the process.

4.6 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

4.6.1 SEA is a tool to undertake the assessment of policies, plans and processes. European Union directive 2001/42/EC requires bodies preparing land-use plans to carry out SEAs. In its conception SEA is very much focused, as its name suggests, on the environmental impacts of a plan. The overall aim of the directive is to provide high-level protection of the environment and to integrate environmental

considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes.

4.6.2 However, the ODPM is keen for planning authorities to take into account the social and economic aspects of sustainability when undertaking the SEA. This will not constitute a dilution of the environmental protection emphasis of the SEA process. Rather it is a way of ensuring that all the facets of sustainability are included in the Plan making process from as early a stage as possible. The approach adopted by the Assembly ensures that the requirements of the SEA Directive are fully integrated into the process by which the South East Plan is being developed.

4.7 The Process

4.7.1 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is the process by which the performance of a plan or strategy is assessed in sustainability terms. In the UK the process generally involves assessing the Plan’s relationship with a defined set of sustainable development objectives.

4.7.2 The Assembly has already undertaken Sustainability Appraisals of the partial reviews of RPG9, employing a methodology developed for it by consultants. This methodology appraised the policy proposals against the indicators in the Regional Sustainable Development Framework (the predecessor to the IRF). The appraisal process being used for the South East Plan is considerably more extensive than that for the partial reviews. However, the experience gained in undertaking the appraisal of the partial reviews has been used in developing a robust methodology for the appraisal of the South East Plan.

4.7.3 There are overlaps between the SA and SEA processes, eg defining the baseline data and appraising/assessing the impacts of the recommended policies. For this and other reasons it was desirable and practical to combine the two processes as far as possible.



4.8 Proofing

4.8.1 Policy Proofing – This is the process by which the impacts of policies on specific themes can be examined and considered in depth and adjustments made if needed. Rural Proofing, developed by the Countryside Agency, has led the way with this process. It is a method by which policies can be ‘proofed’ to ensure their impacts on rural communities have been fully considered and negative impacts avoided. The outcome of this process is that policies take account of specific rural circumstances and needs. The document providing guidance on it is ‘Rural Proofing – Government Policy Makers’ Checklist’. Thus far this approach has only been applied to impacts on rural areas, although it could be applied to urban areas or to themes such as natural resources.

4.8.2 Future Proofing – Future proofing is a process which seeks to ensure that the policy development process has taken full account of potential longer-term change. It is designed to make plans more aware of opportunities, provide early notice of new challenges, help them manage change and risk.

4.9 Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

4.9.1 HIA is a decision-making tool that takes account of the potential effects of a proposal on the health of its target population. It aims to improve the health of communities and individuals; reduce health inequalities; work towards sustainable development; promote fairness and equality for all; target disadvantaged and marginalised groups; and encourage participation of all affected. HIA has a broad remit that ranges across many

policy areas. This is because it is focused on health rather than illness, health being affected by issues such as transport, housing, employment and access to open space amongst many other issues.

4.9.2 The focus of HIA is to inform and influence decision-making – helping those developing and delivering proposals consider their potential impacts on people’s health and well-being and health inequalities. It thereby helps to identify practical ways to improve and enhance the proposals.

4.9.3 There are therefore overlaps and similarities in the HIA and SEA processes, eg the emphasis on collecting the necessary evidence base, developing recommendations and subsequent ongoing monitoring. There are also overlaps with the SA process – in particular the manner in which the scope of HIA ranges over all policy areas and relates to the three pillars of sustainable development. It was for this reason that the Assembly has sought to include key elements of the HIA within the overall appraisal process.

4.10 The Integrated Sustainability Appraisal of the South East Plan

4.10.1 The approach taken by the Assembly in undertaking the appraisal of the emerging policy framework has been informed by work it commissioned to provide guidance on what is required during the preparation of the South East Plan to comply with the SEA Directive.

4.10.2 An Integrated Method – The Assembly’s approach combines the SA, SEA and HIA into one overall appraisal method. This approach will:

- i make the process more efficient
- ii ensure that the different aspects of sustainability are given equal attention
- iii develop an evidence base that covers a wide number of areas
- iv make the various processes clearer for people to understand.

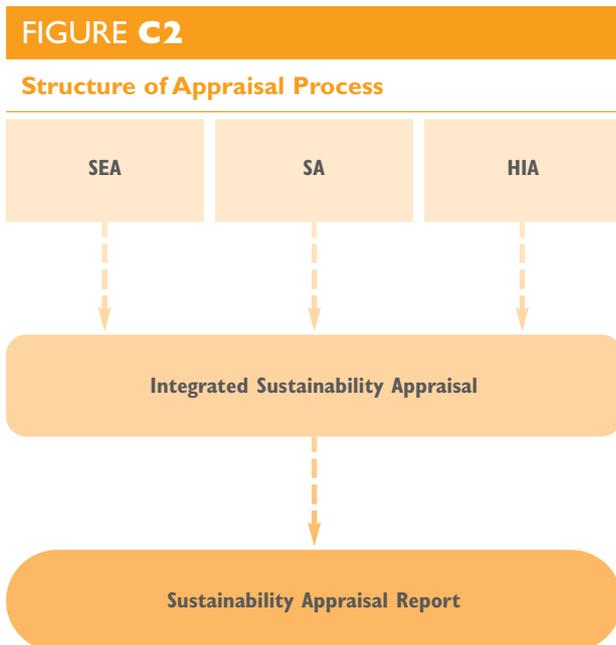
4.10.3 This combined approach is referred to as the ‘Sustainability Appraisal’ (SA) of the South East Plan.

4.10.4 The main output will be a ‘Sustainability Appraisal Report’ (SA Report). This one document will contain the required outputs of guidance on SEA, SA and HIA. This is shown diagrammatically in figure C2.

4.10.5 An initial appraisal of the emerging policy framework, including the regional spatial options, has been undertaken as part of the preparation of this consultation document. A draft of the SA Report has been published alongside this consultation document. This will enable stakeholders and the public to take into account the results of the initial appraisal when submitting their response to the consultation document.

4.10.6 Amendments and revisions to the emerging policy framework arising from the consultation document will be the subject of further appraisal. A revised draft of the SA Report will be available at the time the main policy framework of the South East Plan is submitted to the Government in Summer 2005. The final version of the SA Report will be submitted alongside the submission of the district based housing figures in Autumn 2005.

4.10.7 The SA is being undertaken by consultants commissioned by the Assembly. This ensures that those undertaking the SA have a suitable degree of objectivity and detachment from the Plan preparation process. As part of the overall approach to appraisal, the Assembly has established a Sustainability Appraisal Sounding Board. In addition to including representatives from the statutory environmental bodies, the Sounding Board includes representatives from Assembly advisory groups and other key stakeholders. The Sounding Board provides advice to the Assembly throughout the process and ensures that representatives from outside the Assembly can input into the process and give greater legitimacy to the SA.



4.10.8 Sustainability Appraisal of Sub-regional Strategies – The sub-regional strategies included in the South East Plan need to be included within the SA. They are being appraised using the same framework used for the policies that apply to the whole region. The scope of the appraisal at the sub-regional level is more limited, reflecting the fact that at the sub-regional level policies are focused on the key issues identified in the briefs for each region.

4.10.9 Future Proofing – The Assembly believes that future proofing has an important role to play in the preparation of the South East Plan. It has therefore formed a groundbreaking partnership with the sustainable development charity Forum for the Future, through which the Assembly has developed a future proofing tool. This



tool is being used throughout the development of the South East Plan.

4.10.10 Proofing by Policy Area – The Assembly is also proofing the draft South East Plan by policy area where that is appropriate. This programme of proofing has not been incorporated into the SA. Such policy proofing is not a requirement of either the SEA Directive or SA. It does, however, offer the Assembly the opportunity to insert another check into the policy preparation process, making sure that any unforeseen impacts on other policy areas are picked up. The Assembly’s advisory groups are assisting in this process.

4.11 Progress to Date

4.11.1 The work to date associated with the Sustainability Appraisal of the South East Plan has focused on three principal areas of activity:

- i preparing the scoping report
- ii the preparation of the appraisal framework
- iii the initial appraisal of the regional spatial options, the sub-regional strategies and the draft policies.

4.11.2 The Scoping Report – In establishing the scope for the Sustainability Appraisal it is necessary to review and develop an understanding of:

- i possible appraisal objectives
- ii other plans, policies and strategies of relevance to the South East Plan
- iii baseline information on environmental, social and economic conditions in the region
- iv key sustainability issues facing the region.

4.11.3 The results of this work are set out in the Scoping Report for the Sustainability Appraisal. The content of the Scoping Report has been developed in liaison with the Sustainability Appraisal Sounding Board and in consultation with a wide range of regional stakeholders. It is available on the Assembly’s website. For the purposes of the SA of the South East Plan, the issues identified through the work undertaken to develop the IRF have been taken as the key sustainability issues facing the region.

4.11.4 The contents of the Scoping Report are being kept under review throughout the appraisal process to ensure that the appraisal itself is as comprehensive as the available data permits at the regional/sub-regional level.

4.11.5 The Appraisal Framework – In order to undertake the appraisal itself (including the appraisal of the sub-regional strategies) it has been necessary to develop an appraisal framework. The appraisal framework is in effect a series of questions that the consultants have developed that they are using to appraise the implications of the content of the South East Plan. Although principally based upon the IRF, the appraisal framework takes into account issues raised through the Spring Debates where these have a spatial dimension that is relevant to the development of the South East Plan.

4.11.6 The development of the appraisal framework has taken place in liaison with the Sustainability Appraisal Sounding Board. The appraisal framework is set out in detail in the Scoping Report.

4.11.7 A recurring theme that emerged throughout the Spring Debates and as part of the initial round of sub-regional work was that of Quality of Life. Successful delivery of all the IRF objectives – ie delivery of a more sustainable pattern of development – will lead to an overall improvement in the Quality of Life across the region. Tying in the development of the policies and proposals set out in the South East Plan (including those at the sub-regional level) to the IRF objectives through the SA allows the likely impact on the Quality of Life in the region to be assessed.

4.11.8 The Initial Appraisal – The results of the initial appraisal of the regional spatial options, the sub-Regional strategies and the draft policies are set out in the draft of the SA Report published alongside this consultation document. The draft SA report sets out how the results of the initial appraisal have informed the development of the contents of this consultation document. It also sets out the results of the appraisal of the options in this consultation document.