

Committee	<b>Cabinet</b>
Date	<b>17 November 2004</b>
Report By	<b>Director of Transport and Environment</b>
Title of Report	<b>Gatwick Sub-Regional Strategy</b>
Purpose of Report	<b>To consider the endorsement of this sub-regional strategy as advice to South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA)</b>

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

**The Cabinet is recommended to endorse the submitted Strategy for the Gatwick Sub-Region as appropriate advice to SEERA for the purposes of the South East Plan.**

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### **1. Financial Appraisal**

1.1 There are no immediate financial consequences for the County Council.

### **2. Supporting Information**

2.1 Under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, there is a requirement on principal authorities, i.e. county councils and unitary authorities, to produce advice on development strategies for sub-regions, where these have been identified as necessary in the revision of Regional Spatial Strategies. In South East England, SEERA is responsible for preparing the South East Plan, looking ahead to 2026, and has asked West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) to lead on preparing advice for the sub-region centred on Gatwick (and Crawley). This followed the recommendations of an earlier study, also led by WSSCC and submitted to SEERA in May this year, that the area does require a distinct sub-regional strategy. (East Sussex County Council has also acted as the lead agency for the development of the Sussex Coastal Towns Strategy. See report elsewhere on the agenda).

2.2 Although the advice on such a strategy has already been prepared and submitted to SEERA by WSSCC, after consultation with other authorities and agencies (see Annex 1 attached), the two other principal authorities involved, East Sussex and Surrey County Councils, also need to endorse the advice. This Council has been an active participant in meetings of officers and members from all the local authorities in the sub-region which has helped to guide the emerging strategy. However, as lead authority, final responsibility for the submitted proposals rests with WSSCC.

2.2 Only the north-western corner of Lewes District (with a population of around 3,500) forms part of the defined Gatwick sub-region. However, the sub-region does have a substantial boundary with East Sussex. It also lies astride significant strategic transport corridors serving the county and there are important economic linkages with East Sussex.

2.3 The earlier study identified the sub-region as having a dynamic and generally prosperous economy with generally good road and rail links, although there are problems of congestion at some points. The quality of the environment is seen as one of the sub-region's main assets. In the proposed strategy, the vision for the sub-region includes diversifying the economy, improving skills and providing better transport links (both within and to the sub-region) whilst protecting the character and identity of existing countryside and settlements when accommodating new development. It assumes that Gatwick will remain a single runway airport.

2.4 The recently adopted West Sussex and Surrey Structure Plans already make provision for substantial development in the sub-region in the period to 2016. The Strategy concludes that this development will be sufficient to meet the needs of the sub-region until then but emphasises that this will require significant investment in supporting infrastructure. A list of necessary transport improvements is included which, if implemented, would safeguard the performance of strategic transport routes serving East Sussex (such as the A23/M23 and the Brighton Main Line rail services). Beyond 2016, the needs of the sub-region should be met by the development of between 3,700 and 15,400 more homes, the majority of which would be in the form of major developments at/or adjoining Crawley and other main towns within the north/south and east/west transport corridors serving the sub-region. The strategy concludes further studies should assess the capacity of these locations to accommodate such further development as urban extensions.

2.5 The strategy is, therefore, unable to quantify precisely the amount of development that will be needed after 2016 but expects that this will amount to no more than a continuation of existing planned rates of development. Population and employment projections and forecasts supplied by SEERA to help quantify future development requirements did not provide a satisfactory basis upon which to estimate any potential regional 'need' for any development above the levels now proposed for the sub-region.

### **3. Environmental Issues**

3.1 The South East Plan and its sub-regional elements will be subject to a comprehensive strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal.

### **4. Community Safety Issues**

4.1 Such issues will need to be considered when detailed land allocations are made and the design of development is considered at district level in conformity with policy requirements that will be established in the new South East Plan.

### **5. Human Rights Act Implications**

5.1 The South East Plan will be subject to statutory consultation procedures and a full Examination in Public before an independent panel.

### **6. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation**

6.1 It is disappointing that the sub-regional strategy is unable to be more precise about the amount and location of housing provision beyond 2016. However, this is not surprising given the difficulties in quantifying such potential requirements and in the absence of any clearer guidance from SEERA on the possible extent of wider regional needs for development. Furthermore, the outline of a spatial strategy, concentrating as it does on the main north/south and east/west transport corridors can be supported and does not raise any immediate issues for East Sussex. However, this authority would wish to be directly involved in any further studies exploring the development potential in the Burgess Hill and East Grinstead areas.

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4 November 2004  
CABINET:C17November-Gatwick

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Local Members: All

### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Strategy for the Gatwick Sub-Region: paper supporting the strategy (WSCC).

**The South East Plan  
The Strategy for the Gatwick Sub-Region**

**Advice presented to the South East England Regional Assembly  
by West Sussex County Council, October, 2004**

1. The Gatwick Sub-Region lies at the heart of the Gatwick Diamond and is centred on Crawley/Gatwick and Horley, extending north towards the edge of Redhill, east to East Grinstead, south to Burgess Hill/Haywards Heath, and west to Horsham.
2. The Sub-Region has a dynamic and generally prosperous economy. Gatwick Airport helps to underpin the economic health of the area and is one of the main generators of economic growth, along with financial services, and pharmaceutical and advanced manufacturing companies. There are generally good road and rail links, although there are problems of congestion at some points. Part of the area is served by the Fastway guided bus system.
3. The Sub-Region's environment and character are amongst its main economic assets. As well as the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to the south and east of Crawley, the Sub-Region has pleasant lowland countryside. The towns and villages provide high quality environments. It will be imperative to maintain and, where possible, enhance the quality of the local environment and create high quality, safe and attractive places to live. This includes encouraging good design so that the construction, layout, scale, appearance, materials, and landscaping of new development respect the character of the Sub-Region.
4. The Vision for the future of the Sub-Region is that it should continue to provide an excellent quality of life for its communities including:-

maximising the value added by the Sub-Region's economy by:-

- capitalising on the proximity to Gatwick Airport;
- encouraging Gatwick Airport to be a first class airport for business travel;
- providing modern accommodation at sustainable locations where business wants it;
- encouraging diversification of the economy to reduce dependency on Gatwick Airport-related activity;
- providing significantly better education and training opportunities, including university level, within the Sub-Region to help local residents take advantage of local job opportunities;
- encouraging the higher value-added knowledge economy and the sharing of economic research and intelligence between agencies;
- raising education standards and vocational skills;
- improving business support infrastructure and initiatives;
- providing the necessary social, environmental and economic infrastructure.

providing a high quality transportation system which meets the demands that will be placed upon it by:-

- providing better links to, from and between Gatwick, Heathrow and Stansted Airports;
- providing better links between the Sub-Region and adjacent areas including the coastal towns;
- providing better links with and along the corridor to central London especially Redhill and Croydon, and east-west links;
- providing better access within and around the Sub-Region;
- providing better links with and between the towns serving Gatwick and Heathrow Airports;
- providing reliable and low cost public transport services;
- addressing local bottlenecks and deficiencies;

providing adequate new housing and other development including affordable housing, designed and built to a high standard, in a way that enhances access to services and facilities by:-

- following sequential and sustainable development principles;
- protecting and enhancing the unique environment of the Sub-Region;
- safeguarding the intrinsic character and local distinctiveness of the Sub-Region's countryside, towns and villages and
- retaining the separate identities of towns, villages and their communities.

#### Development strategy

5. To achieve this Vision, this Sub-Regional Strategy sets out the key policies and a framework for action. The character and environment of the Sub-Region must be protected and enhanced in parallel with supporting and encouraging appropriate economic growth and meeting the needs of the whole community. This points to the need for a "smart" strategy which manages the amount, type and quality of development and spatial change.
6. Existing plans for the Sub-Region already make provision for a substantial amount of new housing, employment and related development. This development is sufficient to meet the needs of the Sub-Region up to about 2016, including the growth of Gatwick Airport as currently planned, the more general growth in the local economy, and the attraction of high value-added inward investment. Numerically this is also sufficient to meet identified housing needs.
7. The planned development includes, as prerequisite to growth, the provision of infrastructure. It's delivery, and the future delivery of further required infrastructure to meet new needs, is a necessary precursor to any further development beyond 2016.

## **Policy 1**

**A) Provision will be made for the development of about 22,600 homes and associated development and infrastructure, up to 2016. This includes:-**

- **975 completions between 2001-3;**
- **3,400 homes already allocated in Local Plans or permitted;**
- **a target of at least 5,300 homes on previously-developed land 2003-2016;**
- **major urban extensions of:-**
  - **5,200 homes at Crawley;**
  - **2,500 homes at East Grinstead;**
  - **1,400 homes at Haywards Heath;**
  - **2,300 homes at Horley; and**
  - **1,000 homes at Horsham; and**
- **560 homes as the small-scale, gradual growth of other towns and villages.**

**B) Beyond 2016, the needs of the Sub-Region should be met by the development of between 3,700 and 15,400 homes\*.**

(\* The precise number cannot be determined at this stage because insufficient information is available to narrow the number down within this range, but testing indicates that it will be no more than a continuation of existing planned rates of development.)

**C) Subject to further studies and provision of the infrastructure identified in Policy 3, the strategy for accommodating this development should be:-**

**(i) at least 3,700 homes on brownfield sites;**

**(ii) the majority of any further development should be in the form of major developments at or adjoining Crawley (supporting its role as a transport hub and regional centre) and other main towns within the north/south and east/west transport corridors; and**

**(iii) small-scale, gradual growth of other settlements to meet local needs and support the rural economy.**

**D) The detailed location of new development will be carefully controlled to minimise any adverse impact on, and maximise any benefits to, the infrastructure, character and environment of the Sub-Region.**

8. Further development will be required in the period beyond 2016 to meet housing needs and to enable the economy to continue to grow and adapt. However, at this stage, it is not possible to precisely quantify the amount of development that will be needed. Possible strategies for accommodating post 2016 growth have been tested. This testing shows that perhaps 3,700 homes could be accommodated by development on brownfield sites. The testing has also considered possible strategies to accommodate a further 11,700 or 21,700 homes on greenfield sites. In both cases accommodating these numbers of homes would result in the need to encroach into areas currently subject to national designations (Green Belt and/or AONB).

9. At both levels of growth, it would be neither practicable nor desirable to concentrate development at one location. The capacity of the towns within the main transport corridors in the area to accommodate further development as urban extensions would need to be assessed in detail through further studies. These will assist in establishing to what extent, if any, there is capacity to accommodate further development in these areas, what the impacts would be, and what infrastructure would be required. They might also highlight cross-boundary issues that need addressing.

### Social and economic progress

10. Economic growth in the Sub-Region should bring benefits for all in the immediate area, contribute to the economic strength of the wider South East Region, and help deliver infrastructure improvements. To achieve this, growth will need to be managed to ensure that it delivers the Vision for the Sub-Region and benefits all. This means concentrating on encouraging the sort of economic growth that is consistent with the Sub-Region's needs - this points to focussing on high value-added investment and increasing the value-added in the economy on the one hand, coupled with enhancing the skills and flexibility of the local workforce on the other so as to help address social inclusion. This "smart" growth will minimise pressure on land and labour resources in the Sub-Region. One of the key challenges in this Sub-Region is to reconcile the competing demands for the limited space available.

### **Policy 2**

**High value-added economic growth and development which seeks to maximise the value added by the Sub-Region's economy will be encouraged where it can be accommodated without creating excessive pressure for housing or labour in the Sub-Region, as will development that contributes to the improvement in the skills and flexibility of the local workforce. This includes:-**

- providing employment floorspace in association with the major developments in Policy 1;
- provision of high quality sites for start-up and micro-businesses, as well as the growth of existing local businesses and the attraction of high value-added inward investment;
- retention of existing businesses;
- protecting existing employment sites from other development where they are important in delivering the aims of this policy;
- the continuing function of Gatwick Airport as a business airport; and
- provision for a university and other improvements to tertiary education.

11. Gatwick Airport is an important influence on the Sub-Region and the wider South East, and is a major stimulus to economic and employment growth. The Strategy supports the continued operation and function of Gatwick Airport as a business airport and transport interchange, subject to environmental safeguards and an increasing proportion of staff and travellers using public passenger transport.

### Infrastructure and services

12. A common complaint about new development is that it has taken place despite deficiencies in infrastructure or in advance of the provision of new infrastructure required to serve both existing needs and the additional needs it will generate.

13. This Strategy aims to ensure that current infrastructure deficiencies are addressed and that new development meets the needs that it generates for new or improved infrastructure without expecting the existing communities to meet those needs. All development in the Sub-Region should maintain or, if possible, enhance the quality of life and address social inclusion, following the principles of sustainable development. This will necessitate the phased and coordinated provision of good community, economic, environmental and social infrastructure in parallel with development.

### **Policy 3**

Infrastructure will be required to support the development that is planned and to underpin the strategy as identified in Policies 1 and 2 including:-

- **within the level of housing provided for in the Sub-Region, priority should be given to the provision of affordable housing including housing for key workers;**
- **environmental improvements in town and countryside, including measures to increase biodiversity;**
- **improved water supply and water treatment capacity;**
- **surface water drainage management at particularly at Burgess Hill, Crawley and Horley, to minimise flood risk;**
- **improvements to the existing sewerage system and sewage treatment works at Burgess Hill, Crawley, Felbridge, Horley, Horsham and Scaynes Hill;**
- **the timely provision of additional local educational, health and community facilities and services including leisure, cultural and tourism facilities;**
- **a new regional hospital for which the need has already been identified;**
- **tertiary education facilities including a campus for the University of Sussex (probably at Crawley);**
- **more efficient use of resources, particularly energy, waste (including recycling and composting) and water;**
- **high quality development including sustainable design, construction and innovation;**
- **positive management of the areas around the main towns and the enhancement of the open areas between them;**
- **other utility services including telecommunications and the provision of fibre optic cables to all new development ;**
- **transport infrastructure including by 2016:-**
  - **improved public passenger transport;**
  - **improvements to junctions on the M23 to provide increased capacity as an immediate priority;**
  - **improvements to the A23 Handcross-Warninglid and north of Gatwick to Redhill;**
  - **A24 Horsham to Capel improvements;**
  - **A24 Horsham Western Bypass junction improvements;**
  - **a package of measures to relieve traffic congestion at East Grinstead including a relief road;**
  - **A272 Haywards Heath relief road;**
  - **Crawley western relief road;**
  - **improved rail freight depots at Crawley and Horsham, and inter-modal freight services;**
  - **the Thameslink 2000 scheme;**
  - **improvements to Burgess Hill, East Grinstead, Haywards Heath, Horley, Horsham, Three Bridges and Wivelsfield railway stations;**
  - **a railway interchange west of Crawley;**
  - **extensions to the Fastway transport system to provide an integrated network connecting all the main towns;**

and

- the remodelling of railway track at Gatwick Airport to increase capacity;
- passenger transport improvements in the Gatwick Airport to south coast towns corridor, particularly the area to the east of Brighton;
- improved east-west rail services especially on the Gatwick Airport to Reading line; and
- improved links between Gatwick and Heathrow Airports, and the other airports serving London and the South East.

**Further infrastructure will be necessary as a prerequisite to support further growth.**

14. The local authorities will have to be satisfied that infrastructure is available, or will be provided, before development takes place. Key improvements that are required (subject to further detailed appraisal and statutory procedures) to address the current deficit, facilitate planned developments, and as a pre-requisite to any further growth which is, in itself, likely to require additional infrastructure, are identified in Policy 3. These are additional to the requirements that may be addressed through developer contributions in connection with all new developments. Further work will be needed to determine how these improvements should be phased.
15. Growth and development must be sustainable. To support this, the provision of infrastructure should take place in advance of, or at the very least in parallel with, development. It is essential that investment is secured to facilitate the growth already planned, as well as any longer-term growth. Active pre-planning is necessary to achieve capacity increases in strategic infrastructure, particularly in respect of water supply, waste water treatment, health and education facilities, and sustainable transport.
16. This Strategy supports the provision of facilities, services and infrastructure to meet the area's needs. Where appropriate, contributions from developers will be sought but these will not be sufficient to meet the needs associated with the growth identified in Policies 1 and 2. Investment from central Government in infrastructure provision will also be required (see Implementation and Monitoring).
17. Additional education, health and community facilities will also be required on a phased basis to ensure that sufficient social infrastructure is not only provided in parallel with new housing development but also supports existing development. In particular, there is a need for major new health facilities where they would be readily accessible to the wider area. These requirements will need to be reflected in the delivery programmes of the various agencies (see Implementation and Monitoring).
18. Proposals have come forward for a potential new campus for the University of Sussex in the Sub-Region. This proposal would have major economic and social benefits for area. The local authorities and other partners would welcome such a proposal, in principle, and would seek to contribute to discussions on such a development and its possible location.

#### Environment and character

19. The Sub-Region is typified by a pattern of mainly closely-spaced villages, interspersed with medium-sized and larger towns set in pleasant countryside, some of which is recognised as being of national importance through AONB designation. The high quality environment requires protection in its own right, but is also among the Sub-Region's main economic assets. In order to maintain the overall character of the Sub-Region, this Strategy seeks to maintain the separate identity and character of all settlements and prevent them coalescing. It also seeks to protect the wide range of habitats, species and geology in the Sub-Region, and to optimise opportunities to enhance nature conservation, particularly where development can contribute to this.

## Policy 4

Development will not be permitted unless it maintains and, where possible, enhances the character, distinctiveness, sense of place and important features of the Sub-Region, including the:-

- existing settlement pattern of mainly closely-spaced villages, and medium-sized and larger towns set in pleasant countryside;
- High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- attractive Low Weald countryside; and
- existing towns, villages and other settlements, preventing coalescence.

**Growth in the Sub-Region should be at a rate that can be assimilated by local communities. The construction, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping of new development should all be of a very high quality.**

20. The environment and character of settlements within the Sub-Region will continue to evolve as they grow and adapt to social and economic needs. It is necessary to achieve a balance between growth and the protection and enhancement of valued features and assets, so that they continue to play a part in promoting economic prosperity by ensuring that the Sub-Region offers attractive living and working conditions. This Strategy aims to protect the quality of air, soil and water which contribute to the biodiversity of the Sub-Region and the health of its residents and the local economy. A large portion of the Sub-Region falls within the High Weald AONB. The Strategy seeks to prevent development that would threaten the natural beauty of the AONB.
21. Development should be of a high quality and reflect the character of the Sub-Region and its different parts. All new development should be well thought out, planned, and laid out so that it integrates with existing communities, respects the local character and the character of the Sub-Region as a whole, and makes a positive contribution to quality of life.
22. The quality of development is not just about what it looks like. Quality embraces a range of aspects which in combination make a development fit for its current or future purpose as well as fitting with its surroundings. These range from the materials it uses and its energy efficiency through to its relationship with adjoining land uses.

### Implementation and monitoring

## Policy 5

**Implementation and monitoring of the Sub-Regional Strategy should be through joint work involving the local authorities, SEERA, Government and other agencies. Attention should be focused on appropriate indicators and targets, so as to inform the review of the South East Plan, the preparation and review of Local Development Frameworks, and other strategies.**

**Implementation depends upon joint working between the local authorities, and agencies (such as the Environment Agency) and other partners, to resolve outstanding deficiencies and issues, and providing the necessary infrastructure for further growth.**

23. Joint studies will be undertaken to progress the development strategy identified in Policy 1. These should be brought forward as a priority to assess how both strategic and longer term needs might be accommodated if appropriate, and identify the scope for growth around these towns for longer-term needs.

24. The Sub-Regional Strategy is pivotal in achieving the spatial elements of this Vision, but other plans and strategies (such as local transport plans, economic strategies and Local Development frameworks) will also contribute to achieving the Vision.
25. The Local Authorities in partnership with independent, voluntary, economic, environmental and social organisations with an interest in the area, should develop complementary strategies to assist in meeting the demand for labour in the area. These should be integrated and cover topics including skills and training, measures to encourage participation in the labour market, encouraging the provision of social and key worker housing, supporting appropriate economic development and securing transport improvements particularly with areas where there are underused labour resources. Such strategies, initiatives and programmes are essential components of, and pre-requisites to, achieving sustainable growth in the Sub-Region.
26. It is essential that land-use planning and transport planning are fully integrated. Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) and Local Transport Plans (LTPs) should seek to implement the Vision's development strategy through their more detailed policies. These will, in turn, feed into the appropriate Minerals and Waste Development Frameworks.
27. The South East Plan, LDFs, and LTPs will also influence the content of further plans and policies, including management plans and guidelines, and landscape assessments and strategies for parts of the Sub-Region.

## Policy 6

**Joint, multi-agency plans and frameworks will be agreed and developed so as to focus efforts and guide economic and social growth, and to provide an appropriate balance of additional valued-added economic growth and ensure infrastructure provision.**

28. Delivering the levels of growth identified in Policy 1 can only be achieved if the funding from all sources, including the Government, developers, Local Authorities and its partners, is clearly identified and delivered. Delivery partners should make a firm commitment to the provision of the necessary infrastructure, services and facilities if growth is to be successfully delivered. The local authorities and the development industry will not be able to fund the necessary infrastructure without assistance.

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