



South East Plan
Issue 8H London Fringe
8Hi Role and Economy

8Hi.1 Bearing in mind its geography and complex interrelationships with other sub-regions and London, what is the rationale for the role of this sub-region?

1. Distinct sub-regions are only defined in the SE Plan where an area requires a coordinated set of policy responses across administrative, and sometimes regional, boundaries and where a specific set of policies is required to address the needs of the area. Thus, sub-regions do not cover all parts of the South East.

2. The London Fringe sub-region is not a readily identifiable unique geographical entity and yet it is distinctly different from the rest of the South East. It lies largely within the Metropolitan Green Belt (MGB) and, to a lesser extent, within the M25 and faces considerable pressure for development and experiences complex travel patterns with London and other sub-regions. Transport infrastructure in the sub-region particularly warrants a coordinated policy approach. The sub-region is home to over 820,000 people (2001 Census) and is one of the most densely settled parts of the South East; and around 40% of the resident workforce travel out of the sub-region to work. House prices are well above national and regional levels. The sub-region is a vital component within the regions', and the nations', economy.

3. The area is characterised by a relatively large number of sizeable town centres that are closer to each other with more complex, overlapping catchment areas than in any other part of the region. It is essential that these are looked at in an integrated way and in relation to their cross-border relationships with centres in outer London and the Western Corridor/Blackwater Valley.

4. It is noted that the "London Arc" is recognised as a sub-region in the East of England Plan. This reinforces the necessity to separately identify the London Fringe sub-region in this Plan.

8Hi.2 Is the sub-regional strategy an adequate response to the area's importance to London and to the South East more generally (Policy LF1)? Does it take proper account of the environmental attributes and constraints affecting the sub-region?

5. The underlying strategy for this area is one of restraint on development and maintaining the separate identity of the towns and communities embedded in the MGB. The challenge is one of managing change better and working with the

adjoining London authorities in a more productive way to maintain the quality of life and the overall integrity of the MGB, whilst providing new homes and supporting a sustainable economy.

6. Constraints on the sub-region include:
 - Congested highway network (peak) – twice national average flows
 - Significant environmental designations (inc SPA and SAC) and Green Belt
 - Congested rail network (peak)
 - Intensely developed
 - Low bus usage in rural areas/urban fringe
7. Key pressures include:
 - Concentration of air traffic growth
 - Continuing strong economic growth in area where economy already vibrant
 - Growth in London's population and economy
 - Increase in long distance commuting – by rail and car
 - Increasing movement of freight by road
8. The opportunities which the Plan seeks to enable include:
 - Development concentrated at hubs – regional and sub-regional (including Woking)
 - Airtrack
 - Smart economic growth
9. The Plan envisages the scale of development achieved being commensurate with the urban potential, whilst recognising the opportunity to increase densities of new development in appropriate locations.

8Hi.3 Do Policies LF1 (I – iii) and LF6 provide appropriate and clear guidance on the steps that should be taken by the LPAs and other stakeholders to secure the future development of the sub-regional economy (Policies LF1 and LF6)?

10. As a spatial planning document the Plan should provide an indication of the scale and general location of development envisaged without being overly prescriptive. To this extent the Plan sets out that development should be concentrated within existing urban areas without encroachment into the MGB; with employment development being primarily on land already in such use. It does not define precise “steps”, since it would be inappropriate to do so¹, but the Plan does clearly identify the necessary considerations a LPA must take into account. This is sufficient guidance for potential applicants and LPAs.

8Hi.4 What are the implications of the apparent serious misalignment of houses and jobs?

11. The forecast for the sub-region is an increase of 37,360 houses and 73,200 jobs in the period 2006 – 2016. There is no direct correlation between these two sets of figures since:

¹ “Policies in the RSS will need to be sufficiently detailed to provide clear guidance for LDDs, LTPs and/or other regional or local strategies and programmes. However, it is important that they strike the right balance between providing a clear strategic framework and avoiding unnecessary or inappropriate detail.” Extract from para 1.5 of PPS 11: Regional Spatial Strategies.

- (a) the economy of the sub-region cannot be divorced from that of adjoining areas in south and west London (outside of the region) and adjoining parts of the region, notably the Gatwick Area and the Western Corridor/Blackwater Valley sub-regions;
- (b) economic growth is directed at smart growth (i.e. high value, low impact sectors);
- (c) the need to create further jobs will be informed by monitoring of the local economy and housing completions; and
- (d) revised forecasts of job provision and housing need will be made available.

12. Technical work has been carried out jointly by Surrey County Council and Borough/District Council officers to assess the potential to accommodate housing in the urban areas. This has concluded that there will be sufficient capacity to accommodate this level of housing in the urban areas without releasing land from the Green Belt.

13. The Council supports the statement made by GOSE at the examination that alignment should not be an overriding factor determining the scale of housing development at the sub-regional level. This statement of policy is supported by the large proportion of out-commuting from the outer London boroughs to jobs within the London fringe sub-region.

8Hi.5 Does the proposed strategy adequately reflect the role and potential of Guildford, Woking and Redhill (Policies LF4 and LF7)?

14. The Council continues to support the designation of Woking as a regional hub. The designation underpins the approach taken in the submitted Woking LDF Core Strategy to promote continued housing and commercial development in and around the town centre, as the most sustainable location. This support is on the understanding that the regional hubs will be a priority for infrastructure investment, particularly transport. This issue is addressed in the Council's representations on policies LF4 and LF5.

15. The vision contained in the Woking BC submitted Core Strategy is of **“Woking as a sustainable, prosperous, attractive and inclusive community in an economically buoyant, growing region.** Woking will continue to grow, as a result of its popularity as a place to live and work. The growth is managed, improves quality of life locally, and uses resources sustainably.”²

16. The key spatial implications are that Woking town centre should be a growing hub for the area – a vibrant, high density, high quality environment in which to work, access major shops and services and enjoy leisure time. This is based on the premise that “Woking Town Centre is the most sustainable location in the Borough for major development. It has reasonable public transport, and there is a critical mass of homes, shops and services from which to develop the “hub” referred to in the South East Plan. This strategy will result in major growth and change in Woking Town Centre over the period of the Core Strategy.”³

17. Much of the out-commuting from the outer London Boroughs is by car, and needs over time to be diverted to public transport. This would reinforce the role of the sub-regional hubs, such as Woking, as accessible centres of employment.

² Extract from Core Strategy Submission Document Woking LDF October 2006, para 3.1

³ Extract from Core Strategy Submission Document Woking LDF October 2006, para 4.14

18. For the sub-regional hubs to perform an effective role the essential infrastructure improvements are reliant on government funding being secured. Thus the commitment by the various infrastructure providers to the implementation plan is a pre-requisite for effective delivery of the strategy.