

EMPLOYMENT POLICIES IN SUB-REGIONAL STRATEGIES

I. Introduction

1.1 The project brief containing the specification for further technical work required to develop and support the sub-regional strategy mentioned that further advice would be provided following a discussion with the Assembly's Economy Advisory Group on:

- i) the type of policy and level of detail required on employment land and premises
- ii) the further work which is being undertaken at the regional level on employment issues.

The following note sets out this additional advice.

2. Employment land and Premises

2.1 Government Policy Background

- i) PPS11 requires that Regional Spatial Strategies provide general locations and criteria for strategic site selection for economic development and regeneration.
- ii) The new paragraph 42(a) in PPG3 (ODPM January 2005) stresses the importance of having an up-to-date review of employment land in considering proposals for using land allocated for industrial or employment uses.
- iii) The good practice guidance note 'Employment Land Reviews' published in 2004 by ODPM refers to Regional Planning Bodies taking account of and co-ordinating employment land studies in the region. Employment land reviews should form part of the review of RSSs and be an integral part of the preparation of LDFs.

Approach in the South East Plan

2.2 It is not intended to include land area or floorspace figures for employment uses in the Plan. However, to provide the framework in each sub-region for the preparation of local development documents and to inform the more detailed employment land reviews to be carried out by local planning authorities:

- i) broad locations for new employment generating development should be identified, and;
- ii) strategic criteria should be given for the provision of employment land and floorspace, building on the draft region wide Policy RE4.

In this context, 'broad location' means the area of search suitable for the development in question, within which a number of suitable sites may exist. Broad locations may include areas for regeneration and redevelopment as well as green field sites.

- 2.3 In the time available sub-regional groups will be reliant primarily on a review of existing reports and data and discussions with key stakeholders. The loss of employment sites to other uses, especially housing, and the suitability of existing stock and commitments are issues that have been raised by a number of sub-regional groups. Qualitative and quantitative information that exists on the supply of employment land and premises needs to be collated, focussing on trends and broad locations. Conclusions need to be drawn on the broad locations for employment uses and in general terms on the scale, type and quality of future provision of land and premises. Criteria for ensuring supply of such provision within the sub-region should be identified. The technical work can be refined at a later stage following submission of the South East Plan, as more information becomes available from the local employment land reviews.
- 2.4 In undertaking this work regard must also be had to the demographic projections and economic forecasts previously supplied by the Assembly for the sub-region, the Assembly's Commercial and Industrial Land Survey and completed and ongoing regional research projects listed in the Annex.
- 2.5 No further advice is being sought on employment/ land premises outside the sub-regions. Development in these areas is covered by policies RE1 and RE4 in the draft South East Plan.

3. Economic Forecasts

- 3.1 Sub-regional groups are also asked to examine critically the employment forecasts prepared for the Assembly by Experian Business Strategies. Figures for sub-regions and the rest of county areas were circulated last autumn. References will be made to forecast employment growth in each sub-region in the draft South East Plan to be submitted to Government in July 2005, although it has still to be decided whether indicators or targets should be included in sub-regional policies.