

# South East England Regional Assembly (373)/Matter 4/7



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## **MATTER 4/7 BOURNEMOUTH AND POOLE HMA SUB-REGIONAL STRATEGY**

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### **Executive Summary**

The South East England Regional Assembly generally supports the South East Dorset sub-regional strategy. However, we have a number of concerns, which relate to the impact of the proposals on the adjoining areas of the South East England Region.

These include the need to secure a balanced provision of employment and housing, the promotion of sustainable modes of transport, and the protection of internationally important nature conservation sites.

There is a need for continued joint working between the Assemblies to secure the sustainable delivery of the sub-regional strategy.

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### **a) Is the RSS sufficiently clear about the spatial outcomes it is seeking and Bournemouth and Poole in terms of their present and future sub-regional roles and their relationship with the other parts of the HMA?**

1. The South East England Regional Assembly generally supports the Bournemouth and Poole sub-regional strategy and the proposed future role of the sub-region.
2. It is important that the impacts of proposals in the sub-region on the adjoining areas of the South East England region are considered, and we note that the housing market area extended some way into New Forest District.

### **b) Has the scale of additional greenfield development been adequately justified against the likely level of housing requirements and in particular the urban renewal opportunities in the main urban areas?**

3. Wherever possible, further housing development should be located within the existing urban area. Where this is not possible and urban extensions are proposed, the location, size and design of these need to be carefully scoped and fully explored at a technical level to ensure that proposals are sustainable, especially any possible implications for the New Forest National Park. We note that an urban extension opportunity is identified north of Christchurch, in very close proximity to the regional boundary. The South East England Regional Assembly should be fully involved in any preliminary work in relation to this area of search, along with those individual authorities within the South East who may be affected, namely the New Forest National Park, New Forest District Council, and Hampshire County Council.

**c) Has sufficient consideration been given to the impact of lead in times for all or any of the development areas on the required annual output for the HMA?**

4. The South East England Regional Assembly has no comments to make on this sub-matter.

**d) Have environmental limits arising from matters such as flood risk and the protection of environmental assets been adequately taken into account and in particular do the proposals reflect the need to avoid any impact on the integrity of the important nature conservation areas around the conurbation?**

Flood risk

5. The South East England Regional Assembly has no comments to make on this issue.

Impact on integrity of nature conservation areas

6. We welcome the work that the South West Regional Assembly has done on Habitats Regulations Assessment following submission of the draft Regional Spatial Strategy.
7. We note the consideration that has been given of the impact of the draft RSS on Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation that lie beyond the South West regional boundary, in the South East England Region, for example, the Dorset Heaths SAC, Dorset Heathlands SPA, Avon Valley SPA, River Avon SAC and the New Forest SPA – sites that were highlighted in the draft South East Plan Appropriate Assessment<sup>1</sup> as being susceptible to ‘in-combination’ impact from the proposals in the South West RSS. We urge that the recommendations about overriding policy safeguards, thematic policy safeguards and sub-regional policy safeguards be accepted. We also feel that consideration should be given to the need to address, or guard against, impacts on sites where an uncertainty as to whether or not there will be an adverse impact on that site’s integrity has been identified.

**e) Have infrastructure considerations been adequately taken into account?**

and

**f) Do the proposals adequately reflect the need to reduce the need to travel, support the use of public transport and minimise congestion?**

8. It is important to recognise that some degree of commuting between sub-regions and urban centres along the south coast is inevitable – people’s

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<sup>1</sup> Appropriate Assessment of the draft South East Plan, October 2006 ([http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/key/appropriate\\_assessment.html](http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/key/appropriate_assessment.html)) (supporting documentation submitted under Matter 4/2)

choices with regard to where they live and work are not always straightforward, and even in locations that provide a balance of housing and economic development, there will be those who choose to commute further afield.

9. Both Regional Assemblies, along with the sub-regional officers groups for South Hampshire in South East England, and Bournemouth and Poole in the South West have undertaken work to look at commuting flows between the two south coast sub-regions. However, this work has generally indicated that flows between the two sub-regions (across the New Forest) are relatively limited<sup>2</sup>. Similarly, an analysis of census data indicates that the majority of commuting flows into South East Dorset from the South East are from the western parts of the New Forest, and similarly that over half of commuters from South East Dorset into Hampshire are travelling to New Forest District.
10. Given the sensitivities of New Forest natural environment, the South East England Regional Assembly does not consider that there is a case for increasing the road capacity (eg through the upgrading of the A31 at Ringwood). We feel strongly that there is a need to guard against increased pressure on the roads through the New Forest National Park, and if there is a need for increased capacity in this area it the focus should be on rail. The South East Dorset sub-regional strategy should therefore place a stronger focus on the need to reduce the need to travel, especially by car, and seek to accommodate any increased movements into the South East England region by rail. Investment for public transport should be prioritised.

**g) Are the proposed modifications to the Green Belt adequately justified?**

11. The South East England Regional Assembly has no further comments to make on this sub-matter.

**h) Does the draft RSS set out adequate guidance on the provision of Green Infrastructure?**

12. The South East England Regional Assembly considers that the provision of green infrastructure should be an integral part of the development of options for the proposed urban development and urban extensions, as part of the coherent planning framework for this area. More generally, though, green infrastructure is an issue that should be addressed at a regional level, not only where urban extensions or considerable levels of urban growth are being proposed.

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<sup>2</sup> Eastern Dorset, South Hampshire and Isle of Wight Sub-Regional Study, May 2004 ([http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/key/study\\_areas/initial\\_studies/e-dorset\\_s-hants\\_iow.html](http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/key/study_areas/initial_studies/e-dorset_s-hants_iow.html)); Journey to Work Analysis, June 2005 ([http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/our\\_work/planning/transport/journey\\_to\\_work\\_research.html](http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/our_work/planning/transport/journey_to_work_research.html)) (supporting documentation submitted under Matter 4/2); South East Dorset Strategy - SED 09 Commuting, November 2005 ([http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media/pdf/d/3/SED09Commuting\\_1.pdf](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media/pdf/d/3/SED09Commuting_1.pdf))