



## **SOUTH EAST PLAN PART 2 HOUSING DISTRIBUTION TO DISTRICTS**

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL  
LOCAL COMMITTEE (GUILDFORD)  
20<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2005**

### **KEY ISSUE:**

One of the key stages in preparing Part 2 of the South East Plan is the allocation between districts of the county and sub-regional housing requirements established by the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) in July. The County Council has led work on this with the district authorities. A period of public consultation on the proposed allocations is taking place before consideration of final advice on the sub-regions in December.

### **SUMMARY:**

Part 1 of the South East Plan has set the overall housing requirement to 2026 for the county, together with indicative figures for sub-regions and other areas within it. SEERA has requested that the County Council as a Principal Authority develop the sub-regional framework for the Plan prior to its submission as Part 2. The outcome of technical work undertaken jointly with district councils to distribute the county housing figure is presented. A preferred option for the housing distribution has been identified on which public consultation is required. The consultation runs from 19 September to 31 October. A consultation leaflet entitled 'The Future of Housing in Surrey' setting out the options has been made widely available.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the Surrey County Council Local Committee (Guildford):

- 1) endorses the preferred option for housing distribution across Surrey which is based on housing potential within urban areas to protect the Green Belt, and
- 2) makes such other comments on the consultation as it deems appropriate to the subsequent consideration by the Executive.

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1 The South East Plan (the Plan) is being prepared by SEERA and will form the statutory regional framework for development in the region to 2026, setting out scale, priorities and broad locations for change. The Plan will replace current regional planning guidance (RPG9) and the Structure Plans, including the Surrey Structure Plan 2004.
- 2 Part 1 of the Plan was approved by SEERA in July and has been submitted to the Government Office for the South East. Part 1 covers the overall regional strategy and core policies including the development requirements, notably housing numbers, for the period 2006-2026.
- 3 Part 2 of the Plan will cover the sub-regional strategies which form an important part of its implementation. SEERA has sought assistance from the County and Unitary Councils, as Principal Authorities, in preparation of the sub-regional elements of the Plan. One of the key stages in Part 2 is the allocation of the county and sub-regional housing requirements established in July between districts. SEERA has asked that the County Council lead this work, organise a period of public consultation on the proposed allocation and take this into consideration before submitting final advice on the sub-regions in December.
- 4 Guildford lies in two of the sub-regions identified by SEERA, principally in the London Fringe but Ash and Tongham together with parts of Normandy and Pirbright are included in the Western Corridor/Blackwater Valley. A small area of the district to the south east of Guildford is outside both sub-regions.

## REGIONAL HOUSING REQUIREMENT

- 5 In light of responses to the consultation on the South East Plan, SEERA has agreed that the regional housing requirement be set at a level of 28,900 dwellings per annum. This figure approximates to a roll forward of RPG9 levels of development, taking account of the additional commitments in Growth Areas arising from the Sustainable Communities Plan.
- 6 As far as distribution of the regional total was concerned, SEERA accepted that the figures proposed by the South East counties should be used as the basis for distribution of the 28,900.
- 7 The figure agreed by SEERA for Surrey is 2,360 dwellings per annum, which corresponds to the current requirement in the Structure Plan. This figure was sub-divided into indicative figures for each of the sub-regions which affect Surrey and a residual or 'Rest of County' figure.

## HOUSING DISTRIBUTION IN SURREY

- 8 The housing allocations to districts contained within the Structure Plan 2004 cover the period to 2016. These figures were based on housing capacity estimates and a strategy of making best use of urban areas and seeking to maintain Green Belt boundaries.

- 9 An assessment of the potential land supply within urban areas between 2016-2026 has been undertaken jointly with the district authorities. This work includes a review of the potential land supply pre-2016 in the light of planning decisions over the period 2003-05. This work has been done on a district-wide basis rather than a sub-regional one.
- 10 The results of the assessment of housing potential are set out in the table below. This indicates that the twenty year requirement of 47,200 dwellings for the county as a whole can be accommodated primarily in urban areas. The estimates of housing potential assume that existing policy for the intensification of urban development and further transfer of land currently in non-residential land uses to housing use will continue. Higher densities are assumed for the town centres of Guildford, Redhill and Woking, to reflect their regional hub status, but specific proposals will need to be tested locally with respect to design and character. This is the preferred option in terms of distribution of the housing requirement to districts as it meets the objectives of the South East Plan to maintain an urban focus and protect the Green Belt.

District	Housing Potential 2006-2026 Rounded	Housing Potential 2006-2026 Annual average	Housing Completions 2001-2005 Annual average
Elmbridge	4600	230	385
Epsom & Ewell	3600	180	205
<b>Guildford</b>	<b>6400</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>280</b>
Mole Valley	3400	170	190
Reigate & Banstead	7700	385	430
Runnymede	2900	145	205
Spelthorne	3000	150	290
Surrey Heath	3700	185	200
Tandridge	2200	110	235
Waverley	4950	245	205
Woking	4750	240	280
<b>SURREY</b>	<b>47,200</b>	<b>2,360</b>	<b>2905</b>

- 11 The figure for Guildford of 320 dwellings per annum is similar to the Surrey Structure Plan 2004 figure which guides development to 2016. The outcome of the housing potential exercise assumes that the housing requirement can be met within existing urban areas, primarily Guildford itself, assuming that the current policy framework is maintained. Significant change to policy, such as that related to the protection of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area, has not been taken into account.
- 12 SEERA has indicated that alternative distributions should be assessed even where there is a preferred option identified. In order to identify alternatives it was necessary to make assumptions that the housing potential would not come forward as expected. The assumptions were based on concerns around two issues:
- redevelopment at higher densities changing the character of towns
  - the loss of employment land to housing affecting the local economy.

- 13 The housing potential was therefore re-assessed using an assumption that local policies would be effective in limiting densities to 30 dwellings per hectare outside of town centres and that the rate of loss of employment land would be cut by 50%. These assumptions reduce the housing potential by 10%, requiring releases of land to accommodate 4,720 dwellings. Two possible distributions were identified. The first was to disperse the need for land releases around towns across the county. The second was to concentrate the land releases at the three regional hubs.
- 14 The first alternative of dispersal would have little impact on the housing requirement for any of the districts but there would be a need to release land from the Green Belt to accommodate 400-500 houses. The second alternative would bias the distribution of housing towards the districts with the regional hubs, including Guildford. This would mean that the allocation to Guildford would increase by around 50 dwellings per annum on the preferred option and that the release of land from the Green Belt, sufficient to accommodate up to 1,500 dwellings, would be necessary.

### **CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

- 15 SEERA expects the local authorities to provide for a six week period of public consultation on the housing distribution. The programme for the consultation has been developed in consultation with the Executive Member for the Environment and runs from 19<sup>th</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> October.
- 16 Leaflets are available at libraries and local authority offices and meetings have been arranged in Woking, Redhill, Camberley and Guildford to which key stakeholders have been invited. Publicity has been provided through the media and the consultation leaflet and other material is available on the SCC website.
- 17 Borough and District Councils will have the opportunity to make formal responses to the consultation as well as retaining their input through the Steering Group which is preparing the submission on the sub-regional strategy.
- 18 The responses to the public consultation will be considered this autumn before final submissions on the sub-regional strategy due on 9<sup>th</sup> December. SEERA will consider Part 2 of the South East Plan in January 2006 and submit to Government in March. The Government Office for the South East will publish the Plan for consultation, followed by a public examination opening in November 2006. The Secretary of State will ultimately approve the Plan when it will become the statutory regional spatial strategy for the South East.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 19 None.

### **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 20 The South East Plan Part 1 sets out a core strategy and policies which put sustainable development central to its delivery. There is a commitment within the cross-cutting policies to the provision of adequate infrastructure to support

the scale of development proposed and SEERA has proposed the setting up of a concordat with Government to ensure that adequate funding is available. Part 1 of the Plan also includes region-wide policies on a range of subjects including environmental protection and enhancement which will provide a context for Local Development Frameworks.

**CRIME AND DISORDER**

- 21 It is important that the South East Plan sets out strategies and proposals that support and implement the aims of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy.

**EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 22 None.

**THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT 1998**

- 23 None.

**CONCLUSION**

- 24 The Surrey County Council Local Committee (Guildford) is asked to endorse the contents of this paper, in particular the preferred housing distribution option, and make such other comments on the consultation as it considers appropriate to the subsequent consideration of the matter by the Executive.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS: The Future of Housing in Surrey**