

**EAST OF ENGLAND PLAN - SECRETARY OF STATE'S PROPOSED CHANGES:
A HIGH LEVEL EERA BRIEFING (January 2007 update)¹**

KEY PROPOSED CHANGES
<p>Overall approach: endorses the Panel recommendations on being a more strategic document, with less locational detail and fewer sub-regions.</p>
<p>Sustainable development: endorses the Panel recommendations on the Plan making a stronger contribution to sustainable development. Includes an overall policy on achieving sustainable development, including the criteria that determine a “sustainable community”. Reflecting the recently announced PPS on climate change the Plan contains proposals for carbon performance trajectories for new development and local authorities will be asked to encourage a proportion of energy supply for new homes to come from renewable or low carbon sources.²</p>
<p>Employment/housing alignment: Housing/jobs ratio maintained at the regional level. Sub-regions yet to be checked for alignment, although both Harlow and Stevenage are identified as locations where Local Development Documents might “exceptionally” identify a need for further job growth.</p>
<p>Employment: Proposed job growth is 452,000 (up from the Panel recommendation of 440,000 and the draft Plan's 421,000). Some increases (Bedfordshire and Norfolk) are consistent with EERA's line at EiP, others reflect increased housing numbers (Cambridge sub-region). Changed approach from Panel in central and north Essex and Hertfordshire, where growth at Harlow and Stevenage is seen as additional to the 'enhanced growth' in the rest of those areas, rather than replacing some of the growth. Central and North Essex also has 11,000 additional jobs related to 2nd runway at Stansted.³</p>
<p>Overall housing: Proposed increase to 508,000 from the Panel's 505,500 (itself an increase of 27,500 homes on the Draft Plan's 478,000). This further increase is additional growth in the Harlow area. Has accepted all other increases in District allocations proposed by the Panel. All housing figures are to be treated as floors and not ceilings and local planning authorities should seek to exceed their targets if more can be delivered through brownfield capacity and, where appropriate, increased densities. There are also strong hints that further increases will be needed in the early review of the RSS, rolling forward to 2031.</p>
<p>Affordable housing: Endorses the Panel recommendations on an aspirational 35% regional target, with all detail of tenure / type of provision left to LDDs and no specific district targets. Applies to new provision.</p>
<p>Longer term strategy: Plan review to commence in 2007 and finish by 2010. Drivers for that review are listed in supporting text and include PPS3 and 'post Barker' policy approach; latest national household projections; “more outward looking appreciation” of region's relationship with London and other regions; water issues; spending review 2007 outcomes; carbon emission trajectories; SA/SEA and hazardous waste.</p>
<p>Spatial strategy: Endorses EERA's general approach of concentrating development on urban areas. Endorses the Panel's recommendations to include Hemel Hempstead and Welwyn/Hatfield as growth locations, with Green Belt reviews (taking into account adjoining District of St Albans). A stronger emphasis on Harlow as a major growth location with a Green Belt review to its north, east and, on a smaller scale, to the south east; and the housing target increased by 2,500 reflecting an anticipated start late in the Plan period for Harlow North. So the Government has disagreed with the EiP Panel's conclusions about growth in the Harlow area. However, does accept Panel recommendation to reject development at North Weald.</p>

¹ This briefing has been updated to correct two errors pointed out by the Government Office as outlined below. Other minor amendments have been made to the briefing for reasons of clarity.

² Correction - this requirement takes immediate effect, not from 2016 as previously stated.

³ Correction – the previous reference to 'Harlow' has been amended to 'Central and North Essex' as indicated on p69 of the Proposed Changes

Sub-regions: Endorse the Panel recommendation to retain only four sub-regions: Thames Gateway, Haven Gateway, Cambridge, and the London Arc (referred to as a sub-area). Cambridge sub-region to also include market towns of Royston, Saffron Walden, Haverhill and Newmarket (as per draft Plan). Other urban areas covered by Key Centre for Development and Change category, to which Watford is added (as per the draft Plan).
Removes majority of transport-related content, including that proposed by the Panel, on the grounds that it will be covered by the Transport policies.

Previously developed land: maintains the proposed 60% target (nb. Deliverability against a higher regional housing allocation needs checking).

Green Belt: Endorses need for strategic reviews (around Hemel Hempstead, Welwyn/Hatfield, Harlow, Stevenage, minor review at Broxbourne, possible review at Chelmsford if arising from LDD review). No further review at Cambridge. Compensating additions to Green Belt in North Hertfordshire (arising from Stevenage) and East Hertfordshire (arising from Harlow).
Supporting text identifies that in undertaking reviews, LDDs should test the release of sufficient land to 2031 at average rate 2001-2021, although whether or not that is then developed post 2021 is a matter for the Review of RSS (this is the same approach as the approved Milton Keynes South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy).

Regional Transport Strategy: On the Regional Transport Strategy the thrust of Panel's recommendations are accepted but aim of absolute reduction in traffic in Plan period is rejected as unrealistic. Priority areas are identified for further work to determine the measures needed to tackle congestion and support growth, these cover large parts of the region including several corridors with London at one end but no East-West corridors. Demand management policies are included, following any future agreed national policy, panel's conclusions regarding road pricing producing more funds for transport investment are rejected. Overall there is very little specificity regarding the measures that may be promoted over and above those already approved through other processes.

Airports: "The RSS does not have a role in determining the rate of air traffic growth or runway provision" - proposes that the policy on airports only covers managing access to them and other associated impacts.

Implementation: Endorses the Panel recommendations on the need for a region-wide implementation plan and high-level regional coordinating arrangements. Refers to existing arrangements, e.g. Regional Partnership Group. Does not reintroduce the Assembly's proposals (Revised IMP2) to regulate the flow of development according to level of investment in key infrastructure.
The boundaries of the growth areas (and hence access to Growth Areas Fund) may be changed in future to reflect the broader approach to housing growth envisaged in the final Plan with a greater role for areas close to London.
Some additional guidance in sub-regional policies on where joint LDDs and co-ordinated working is required.

Sustainability Appraisal/SEA: Have undertaken SA/SEA (not yet reviewed).

Waste: Panel recommendations are largely accepted. Policies now include waste apportionment the figures for which are largely drawn from EERA's September 2006 waste submission. Policy commitment to end practice of landfilling untreated municipal and commercial and industrial waste by 2021, as suggested by EERA, is also included.

Out of town retail: Proposed modifications state that expansion of existing out-of-centre regional or sub-regional shopping centres will be unlikely to meet the requirements of Government policy on town centres. However, views are invited on whether or not there should be additional retail floorspace at Lakeside

Water: introduces a commitment to match development with water efficiencies. EERA need to set a per capita per day consumption target to monitor which is intended to deliver the Panel's recommendation for a 25% water efficiency requirement. Policy added on water resource development.