



SOUTH EAST PLAN - EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC FACTSHEET I: KEY QUESTIONS

What is the South East England Regional Assembly?

The Assembly is a partnership of councils and communities comprising 112 members. Two thirds of members are local authority councillors and one third represent community organisations and the business sector in the South East. The Assembly was set up in 1999 and its responsibilities include regional planning. In its planning role it has created the South East Plan – a 20 year planning vision for the region that is the subject of an Examination in Public between November 2006 and March 2007. In addition to regional planning, the Assembly is also responsible for housing, transport, lobbying Government on behalf of the South East region (eg making recommendations on regional spending priorities), and holding quangos in the region to account (such as the South East England Regional Development Agency).

What is the South East Plan?

The South East Plan sets a framework for how the region needs to change through to 2026 – for example to provide the jobs, homes and environmental protection that will make sure we continue to be economically successful and offer all residents a good quality of life. The Plan is based on evidence gathered over three years, with significant input from councils, businesses and community organisations and extensive public comments.

What is the South East region?

The South East region covers 74 local authorities in the areas of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire, Surrey, East and West Sussex and the Isle of Wight.

What is the Examination in Public (EiP)?

The Examination in Public is a hearing to decide whether the content of the South East Plan sets an appropriate planning framework for the region. It has been requested by Government and will be run by a panel of independent planning inspectors who will look at the Assembly's evidence base for the Plan and hear evidence from other organisations in the South East who support or oppose the Assembly's work. At the end of the EiP the inspectors will make recommendations to Government on whether they think the Plan needs any changes.

Who are the inspectors?

There are three inspectors at the South East Plan EiP who are specialists in planning. They are independent of the Assembly and Government and work for the Planning Inspectorate, which is an Executive Agency of the Department for Communities and Local Government. Their names are Corinne Swain OBE (Chair), Martin Shaw OBE and Mary Travers.

When and where is the EiP being held?

The EiP will last for four months from 28 November 2006 until 30 March 2007, although it will not meet every day during that period. The EiP will be held at four locations across the region and most weeks it will meet from Tuesday-Friday.

- From 28 November – 15 December 2006 in Woking.
- From 16 -26 January 2007 in Chichester.
- From 6-15 February 2007 in Maidstone.
- From 27 February - 30 March 2007 in Reading.

Each day of the EiP is dedicated to a small number of subjects chosen by the inspectors.

Is the South East England Regional Assembly taking part in the EiP?

Assembly planning specialists have been invited to take part in each of the EiP debates to explain how it reached its conclusions and to answer inspectors' questions. The Assembly has no role in organising or managing the day-to-day business of the EiP.

Who can speak at the EiP?

The inspectors invited organisations to take part in the EiP debates after asking for views to be submitted earlier this year. Each day of the EiP has a clear timetable showing issues to be discussed and organisations invited to take part. Members of the public can attend the EiP sessions but they may not take part in discussions.

Why can't the public take part?

The inspectors have invited umbrella groups to speak rather than individuals as this will help them manage their time more efficiently. They have also taken into account the fact that there were extensive public consultation opportunities at regional and local level when the South East Plan was being prepared, for example in spring and autumn 2005.

What happens after the EiP?

At the end of the EiP the inspectors will write a report for Government recommending any changes they think are needed to the South East Plan. If Government considers any of suggested changes valid, it will consult organisations in the region before taking a final decision. After considering consultation responses Government will publish the South East Plan in its final format and it will become a legal framework that local councils must follow when they make planning decisions.

- For more information about the South East England Regional Assembly visit www.southeast-ra.gov.uk or contact us by email at secretariat@southeast-ra.gov.uk
- For more information about the Examination in Public visit www.eipsoutheast.co.uk

