



GOVERNMENT OFFICE
FOR THE SOUTH EAST

Matter 8Dii / East Kent and Ashford: Ashford

Government Office for the South East of England (7447)

Draft RSS for The South East of England -The South East Plan
Examination in Public - November 2006 to March 2007
Written Statement on behalf of HM Government - December 2006

8Dii.1 Does the level housing provision proposed at Ashford post 2016 take appropriate account of it's growth area status, local constraints and opportunities, and current build rates (Policy EKA3)?

1. Over the last 3 years the build rates for Ashford have risen from 726 in 02/03 to 962 in 04/05. The annualised rate at January 06 was 933. This has already delivered 4,292 houses in Ashford.
2. The current build rate would therefore deliver over the housing provision as set out in the Chapter 12 – Ashford Growth area, of 13,100 houses by 2016.
3. However, the table at Policy EKA 1 sets a figure to 2026 of 22,400 which does not equate to the final agreed figure of housing to 2031 of 31,000 houses as set out in the Ashford Futures study, the Greater Ashford Development Framework or in the Sustainable Communities Plan. To reach this figure would require 8,600 houses to be built in 5 years with an approximate build rate of 1,720 per annum.
4. We would ask the Panel to investigate these figures further.

8Dii.2 Is the level of 30% affordable housing justified and capable of being implemented (Policy EKA3)?

1. This point has already been covered under Matter 4 but we would ask the Panel to question the evidence supporting this lower figure for the East Kent and Ashford sub-region.

8Dii.3 How valid is the concept of reducing numbers particularly at Ashford in the event of delays in the provision of infrastructure, services and employment (Policy EKA3) and how would this be applied?

1. We have already raised this issue earlier in the Examination.
2. The provision of employment has been widely discussed through the Ashford Futures Study and the General Ashford Development Framework. The Sustainable Communities Plan supports the view that housing should be developed in line with employment and the figures for Ashford indicate that 28,000 jobs by 2031 is the best match for the projected housing numbers to the same timeline.

3. We would ask the Panel to investigate the extent to which managing resources and managing the use of infrastructure could allow the growth aspirations for Ashford to be supported.
4. It is noted that the Strategic Infrastructure Tariff in Ashford may also have an effect on achieving delivery and would ask the Panel to consider this point.