



GOVERNMENT OFFICE
FOR THE SOUTH EAST

Matter 9B / Rest of Kent

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

9B1 Does the draft RSS take account of the capacity of towns/locations in the rest of Swale, Medway, Dartford, Gravesham, Sevenoaks, and Ashford and in Tonbridge & Malling, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells for sustainable development(including Policy H1) bearing in mind recent build rates, existing commitments and local housing needs.?

1. We have already stated our views on housing figures across the region and asked the Panel to test the evidence which led to the proposed allocation of housing as set out in H1.
2. There are areas and locations within the rest of Kent which may deserve further consideration, for example:
 - Sevenoaks, Tonbridge& Malling, Shepway and Maidstone, which have delivered higher housing numbers than their current allocation and are concerned to attract business in to the area to support a sustainable level of growth.
 - The regeneration of Margate, the possible expansion of Manston Airport and the delivery of the new Westwood Centre.

9B.2 How does the role of Maidstone as a regional Hub relate to the Thames Gateway (Policy KTG 11) and to the East Kent and Ashford sub-region?

1. The Government announced on the 25th October this year that Maidstone is a New Growth Point and as such has its own growth agenda which will compliment and support the other growth areas of the Thames Gateway and Ashford.
2. We are supportive of the new role for Maidstone and encourage the Panel as a consequence to investigate Maidstone's role in regard to the Thames Gateway and Ashford.

9B.3 What is the role of Tonbridge- Tunbridge Wells as a double-regional hub(Policy CC8)

1. The identification of Tonbridge -Tonbridge Wells as a regional hub supports the Governments Sustainable Communities Plan in developing urban areas for both housing and economic growth. However there are constraints at Tunbridge Wells due to the ANOB and the Metropolitan Green Belt.
2. We are concerned that little has been said either in the Policy or supporting text on the needs for delivery of infrastructure to support the regional hub status of these towns.

9B.4 How does the policy on Strategic Gaps relate to the Green Belt in Kent and can it be justified (Policies KTG3 and KTG 11)?

1. We have already put our view on the designation of Strategic Gaps at matter 2B3 and 8Ci.4 and these also apply to the Rest of Kent.