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# **SAVE THE SOUTH EAST – RE-LOCALISE BRITAIN**

**A DISCUSSION PAPER**

**Dr Caroline Lucas MEP and Colin Hines**

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### **Preface**

As a Member of the European Parliament for South East England, I am regularly asked by my constituents to intervene in planning processes which seem intent on ever greater development in the South East. Whether it is as a result of more roads running through protected areas, or the expansion of ports and airports, or yet more executive housebuilding, many people feel "developed to death", as they see the last remnants of green space in their communities being eaten up by more concrete and tarmac.

This cannot be simply dismissed as "nimbyism". It is a legitimate concern about a pattern of development that prioritises expansion in the South-East both at the expense of those living in the region itself, and those in other regions which are crying out for further jobs and investment. And while there is certainly an urgent need to tackle homelessness, and to provide more affordable housing, analysis by groups like CPRE has demonstrated that a massive increase in largescale housebuilding will do nothing to make housing more affordable for those most in need.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, data from the 2001 Census reveals that there is an excess of dwellings over households of between 3.2%-4.7% in every English region outside London, and that in London the excess has remained unchanged at 2.5%.

With a population of over 8 million (more than several European countries), the South-East is the most densely populated area in England apart from London. Its role as the "engine of the British economy" has brought considerable prosperity to the region. Taken on its own, the economy of the South East (excluding London) generates a GDP of around £140 billion per annum - equivalent to the national economies of Portugal, Norway, Greece and Denmark. In fact, if South East England were an independent country, it would rank as the 22nd largest economy in the world.

Such prosperity has made the region the focal point for domestic and foreign investment, job creation, infrastructure development and inward migration. But it has brought with it other problems - high inflation, lack of affordable housing, ever-worsening travel congestion, a growing mismatch between the demands of the "new" economy and the skills base of the workforce, and ever more threats to green belt land and open spaces from property and infrastructure development.

While graduates, investment and industry are attracted to London and the South East, many communities in the North are desperate for investment. Whilst more and more houses are crammed into the South East, no less than 730,000 houses lie empty in England. Economic output per person in the North East is about two thirds that of London and the South East. For all the talk of "sustainable development" within Government documents, there is a lack of an adequate overall national strategy.

And within the South East itself, not everyone has benefited from the region's impressive growth rate. While many towns and neighbourhoods have witnessed increased affluence and a marked improvement in standards of living, these places often exist alongside pockets of

severe deprivation. The Government's Index of Local Deprivation in 2000 revealed that 119 wards in South East England are amongst the 20% most deprived in Britain.

Acknowledgement of these problems is not lacking. Launching the "Sustainable Communities" initiative in February 2003, Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott said:

*"Sustainable communities need more than housing. They need a strong economy; jobs: good schools and hospitals; good public transport; a safe and healthy local environment, better design, more sustainable construction, better use of land and much more."* Government documents are peppered with the new buzz-words of "local regeneration", "sustainability", and "community development".

But the reality fails to reflect the rhetoric. It is hard to see how development which threatens many of the remaining protected areas in the South East, which attracts yet more people to an already over-crowded region, which demands more transport, more land and more resources, while at the same time diverting resources away from other regions which need jobs and investment, can possibly be defined as sustainable.

This discussion paper sets out a different way forward. It challenges the current "predict and provide" approach to development in the South East, and proposes that all plans for major new developments be subject to intra-Regional Impact Assessments. In particular, it draws on forthcoming European legislation on Strategic Environmental Assessments (EU Directive 2001/42/EC), which aims to provide for a *"high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development."* The importance of SEAs is that they make environmental capacity a crucial factor against which other aims should be weighed, and that they are conducted *while* plans are being drawn up, not afterwards. It is an invaluable tool to assess *where* development might do least damage, *how much* an area can absorb without irreversible effects, and whether "reasonable alternatives" for meeting people's needs have been taken adequately into account.

In my role as MEP for South East England, I am concerned to stimulate more debate about how we make development in the region genuinely equitable and sustainable, and committed to ensuring that European legislation on environmental assessments can help to achieve that. The proposals in this paper are intended as a contribution to that process.

Caroline Lucas MEP  
March 2004

## Introduction

The Government claims that it aims to "*protect the diverse nature and character of the South East and the high quality of the countryside.*" (Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future, ODPM, February 2003). At the same time, the South East Regional Economic Strategy argues that "*The South East must punch its weight internationally. We must do this if our people are going to have a high quality of life they rightly expect and must also do this if the South East is going to continue to drive the UK economy.*"

Unfortunately, there seems to be little recognition of the fact that these two aims are quite simply incompatible. For as long as the South East is expected to be the economic powerhouse for the whole country in conventional economic terms, it can expect more building, more traffic, and more executive housing, and a deterioration in the quality both of life and of the countryside.

Yet the damaging concentration of both existing and planned development in the South East, with its mirror image of a relative decline in other regions, is becoming increasingly well recognised. Even the Government's own Select Committee has concluded that:

*"Building more homes is not a panacea and the impact of such a housing programme on the environment could be unsustainable. The impact of developing so many homes in the South East, one of the most densely populated regions in Europe, has not been fully assessed."*<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, the new expansion proposals for this already crowded region are likely to limit the options for economic improvements in other regions of the country, as well as exacerbating the current problems in the South East of over-development and overheating.

However, while the Select Committee Report, together with reports from the IPPR and Catalyst thinktanks, have all documented the situation and suggested reforms to improve regional development and to minimise regional discrepancies, they do not adequately address two key factors. First, they fail to give consideration to exactly what kind of livelihoods could be provided in the process of regenerating the regions, and second, they give little indication as to how such a transition could be funded.

This discussion paper proposes a way forward that tackles these shortcomings. It takes as its starting point the belief that there are a number of practical steps that could be taken in the near future to halt the present trend of planning for ever more large scale development in the South East. Such steps include the need to:

- challenge the 'predict and provide' strategy of allowing the growth of large-scale developments in the South East on land that hasn't been previously developed, and that are likely to have a negative impact on other regions.
- ensure that plans benefit from a Strategic Environmental Assessment
- carry out an intra-regional Impact Assessment on the effects of such developments on other regions
- suggest what radical alternatives could reduce regional disparities and how to fund them

Many regions have large areas where the original source of work - be it agriculture, manufacturing, or more recently high tech services - is now in decline. We make the case

that a significant new source of employment could be provided by renewing and increasing the regional and local infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, low cost housing, local road and regional train improvements, energy provision and water and sewerage systems.

We also outline how a substantial and new regional source of money to fund this could be provided by People's Pensions. These would allow some of the hundreds of billions of pounds in existing private pension schemes to be relocated to build local infrastructure for rent and so provide a guaranteed return for the pensioners concerned. It has recently been reported<sup>3</sup> that the Treasury is to allow local authorities more freedom to borrow for capital projects. If the latter were to issue municipal bonds these would be a perfect vehicle for 'People's Pension Funds' nationally: not only could they restore confidence in the pensions system, they would also be of social benefit to the areas where the savers live, both before and during their retirement.

### **THE SOUTH EAST TODAY, AND EVEN WORSE PLANS FOR TOMORROW**

*And that will be England gone,  
the shadows, the meadows, the lanes,  
the guildhalls, the carved choirs.*

*There'll be books; it will linger on  
in galleries; but all that remains  
for us will be concrete and tyres.*

#### **From *Going, Going* by Philip Larkin**

*The gap between the English regions affects everybody. Not only do people in the less prosperous regions have less opportunities where they live and suffer from worse health and greater deprivation but people in the south east are increasingly suffering from congestion and unaffordable housing. The gap between the English regions is persistent and increasing. Reducing this gap could improve everyone's quality of life.*

#### **Select Committee of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions Ninth Report of the Session 2002-2003<sup>4</sup>**

Although at first sight, many might think Larkin's poem a little extreme, most people are likely to agree with the Select Committee's analysis of the effects of the dominance of the South East<sup>5</sup>. However when the planned expansion of developments in the South East are fully assessed, Larkin's prediction begins to seem less of an exaggeration.

On February 5<sup>th</sup> 2003 the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, announced the publication of a report, *Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future*, which lays out the Government's vision for economic growth in England over the coming decades. The plan identifies four key growth areas as focal points for development in the "Greater South East" region, whilst at the same time trying to regenerate declining cities in the North of England. The four growth areas – which include the London-Stansfeld-Cambridge M11 corridor, Thames Gateway in

North Kent and Essex, Ashford and the area around Milton Keynes – are likely to see a massive expansion of housing, industry and roads in rural villages and market towns.

According to the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE), the plans could mean more than half a million new homes being built on greenfield sites over the next 30 years, covering between 12,530 and 14,730 hectares (113 square kilometres) of countryside. This is in addition to all the other greenfield building continuing elsewhere in the South East.<sup>6</sup>

Several of these proposed developments also border areas of outstanding natural beauty and sites of special scientific interest, meaning that sensitive habitats are likely to be destroyed or severely disrupted. They will generate increased demand for road and rail infrastructure, causing increases in traffic and pollution in these areas. There will also be increased demand for water, energy and landfill space that will place additional stress on the region's already-overburdened natural resources.

Indeed Transport 2000 has an even more ominous warning. Its report *The Threat of a Second M25: The South-east as the Los Angeles of Europe*, shows how pressure is building for a new Lower Thames Crossing between Kent and Essex which could act as the trigger for a new Outer Orbital strategic route around London. This second M25 orbital would be a mix of upgraded existing routes, road schemes already underway or proposed, and new green field build.

The blindness of this Government's gung ho 'predict and provide' approach to large-scale expansion of buildings and roads in the South East was illustrated by its lack of serious consideration of the need to cope with increased demand for energy, landfill space and particularly water. Indeed, given that the South East is one of the driest regions in Europe, then the more concrete between the sky and the water-bearing rock of the region's aquifers, the more run off results. This in turn swells rivers and the valuable water is lost straight out to the sea. Moreover, in the Thames region more than half the pipe network is more than 100 years old, and a third more than 150 years old. Given the present inadequate expenditure on updating the infrastructure, it has been estimated that, at current rates of repair, some of the Victorian pipework will have to serve until the middle of the 23<sup>rd</sup> century. It has also been reported that - incredibly - the water companies were not involved in the government's planning of new developments in the South East until after its proposals for expansion had been published.<sup>7</sup>

But it is not only the environment that is at risk of destabilisation. Dozens of small towns and villages captured in the growth catchments will be radically transformed, becoming either high-tech hubs or sprawling satellite commuter zones. This will affect not only the physical character of these communities, but also the affordability of property prices and the nature of the local economy – including the viability of independent retailers and the distribution of local services. It will also almost inevitably undermine the Government's stated ambition to reduce disparities in prosperity between the English regions, sharpening the divide between the over-heated South East economy and the rest of the country.

Local democracy will also be undermined. Under the proposals put forward by the Deputy Prime Minister, local councils will be forced to meet targets for building new houses, and the planning process will be streamlined to encourage development by cutting out the input of county councils.<sup>8</sup> The abolition of the county planning structures in favour of Local

Development Frameworks is likely to lead to a fragmented approach to transport and housing development, and ironically weaken effective public participation in planning.

### **Reasons for the concentration of developments in the South East**

The promotion of the South East as the economic powerhouse for the whole country has a number of interlinked reasons, centring around developments in trade, economics, politics and technological developments. Europe became a bigger destination for UK exports, accelerating a pre-war trend which saw a shift in the production and transportation emphasis from the West of the country to the South East. The increasing pressure from international competition, combined with fewer opportunities to introduce or keep protective barriers, meant that the industrial and raw material heart lands of the Midlands and North went into decline. At the same time, the new high tech and computing production and service industries tended to concentrate in the South East, as did the headquarters of large UK companies that were becoming increasingly involved in international trade and investment. Add to this the Westminster based political and lobbying machinery and the increasingly London based media, arts and commercial services such as finance, design and advertising, then it is not surprising that increasingly political, media and commercial emphasis became centred upon the concerns and interests of the capital.

### **THE USUAL SOLUTIONS POSED<sup>9</sup>**

Although there is a general agreement about the need to rebalance developments and inequalities between the regions, the usual policy proposals tend to concentrate on redirecting Westminster's resource allocation decisions. These include proposals to decentralise government departments in an effort to break the mental arm lock of London centred thinking. Calls are also made for government investment decisions including transport, culture and sport, defence and research and development to be made taking into account their consequences on regional economies. The total allocation of funding to all parts of the UK is also considered to be in need of review as part of the post-devolution constitutional process.

Finally there is a debate about centralisation versus local control.<sup>10</sup> The balance sought is between the need for reducing regional inequality through the redistribution of adequate resources from the centre, versus what control and disbursement decisions should be retained at the local level, and what level of funds should be allowed to be raised locally. Central government would check the efficiency with which local government spends its centrally provided funds, whilst the latter would feed back suggestions/demands for improvement to central government.

### **THE SHORT TERM AND LONGER TERM SOLUTIONS**

The limitations of these approaches is that they don't appear to have a short term, yet overarching, policy programme that could result in more equitable, environmentally sensitive regional development.

This discussion paper proposes that a moratorium on plans for large-scale development in the South East should be at the heart of such an approach. In their place should be the introduction of radical tests for existing and future plans and proposals that - once passed -

would ensure the enhancement of the economic diversity of other regions, as well as maximum use of previously developed land and buildings rather than greenfield sites.

We also address the central question of how such a regional "rebalancing" could be financed, and proposes the redirection of some of the enormous private pension funds into 'Peoples Pensions' as one significant way forward.

## **A MORATORIUM ON LARGE SCALE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SOUTH EAST- RELOCALISE THE NATIONAL ECONOMY**

The growing resistance in the South East to the ever more intense development of housing, roads, and airports planned for the region needs to be linked with those fighting for a better deal for their own regions. The first step would be for such groupings to join together both to call a halt to such adverse developments, and to propose an alternative policy framework that would result in more equitable and environmentally sustainable initiatives across the regions.

### **Policies for halting adverse development:**

1. Call for a moratorium on the 'predict and provide' strategy of allowing significant new developments in the South East on land that hasn't been previously developed and which are likely to have a negative impact on other regions. These would include the proposed expansions in airport capacity and large-scale road, port and house building projects.
2. Ensure the Governments Communities Plan, Regional and Subregional Plans benefit from Strategic Environmental Assessment which include the examination of alternative ways of meeting people's needs.
3. Carry out a Regional Impact Assessment on the effects of such developments not just on the South East but on other affected regions.
4. After a consultation process organised by those affected and other interested parties, propose an alternative to the development, if one is thought necessary. This should emphasise the use of appropriate previously developed land and buildings, and suggest possible sources of funding.

The usual claims for the emphasis of evermore development in the South East is that it benefits that region, then the country as a whole benefits. Recently however it has been reported that the Government is realising the asymmetry of such dependence and is taking measures to prioritise developments in the North to counter the 'overheating' in the South East.<sup>11</sup>

Of course some economic development in the South East region is inevitable and necessary, but not on the huge scale at present envisaged by the government and not focused on 'regional hubs' involving unacceptable loss of greenfield sites. Such development needs to be smaller in scale and located and centred on areas of deprivation in the South East. It should have the goal of reinvigorating the local economy, increasing local employment and thus strengthening communities.

## Central Role for the Strategic Impact Assessment (SEA)

A crucial new factor that should make the approach set out above potentially feasible is the use of the new EU Directive 2001/42/EC *on the assessment of certain plans and programmes on the environment* which comes into force on 21 July 2004. Known as the Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), one of its major purposes is: *'to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development'* (Article 1).<sup>12</sup> The importance of SEAs is that they makes environmental capacity a crucial factor against which other aims should be weighed. It is an invaluable tool to assess both *where* development might do least damage and *how much* an area can absorb without irreversible effects.

Another key part of the SEA process is the participation of the public, and environmental authorities (Article 6). In plain English these mean greening plans and programmes and enabling people to get involved in decisions which affect their quality of life and that of future generations. Many public plans and programmes could come under the requirements of the Directive, including those for agriculture, energy, transportation, and land use planning.

The comprehensiveness of the SEA Directive's approach lies in the fact that it requires the SEA Report to include information on *'reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme'* (Article 5(1)). These should be identified, described and evaluated. Those making decisions on the Plan or Programme under consideration need to explain their *'reasons for choosing the Plan or Programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with'* (Article 9). This is one of the most important aspects of SEA, since the examination of alternatives is broad and should cover both different objectives for the Plan or Programme and different processes e.g. changes in finance to increase affordable housing, rather than merely considering different sites for development.

Equally important in ensuring that the right decisions are made as early as possible in the process is the fact that the Directive says the SEA Report should be taken into account during the *'preparation of the Plan or Programme'* and not merely when the final decision is made.

## Regional Impact Assessment

*In the South East, Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) and the strategy of the Regional Development Agency is aimed at taking the pressure off the 'overheated' area to the west of the region and redirecting it towards the run-down Thames Gateway in the East. A similar approach needs to be applied **across** regional boundaries, but a policy framework at the national level is needed to take it forward. That policy framework is missing. 'Even Regions, Greener Growth' CPRE, February 2002, p8*

A crucial adjunct to interpreting the EU Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment in Britain, which would help determine whether there is a preferable alternative to the large scale developments proposed for the South East, would be a Regional Impact Assessment. There is a government precedent for this, albeit one which appears un-used. In May 2000 Lord Falconer, Minister of State at the Cabinet Office with responsibilities for the Government Regional Offices, referred to the role of the Regional Co-ordination Unit that included:

*'before policies are announced – not all policies but those which impact regionally or locally – there has to be a consideration of what their effect will be on the regions.'*<sup>13</sup>

However this unit was soon seen to be moribund. A year later in response to a Parliamentary Question in May 2001, DETR Minister Beverley Hughes MP admitted that:

*'The Regional Co-ordination Unit has not assessed any initiatives which have included regional selective assistance or funding for the regional development agencies.'*<sup>14</sup>

The exact details of what would constitute a Regional Impact Assessment would need to be the result of consultations with bodies and groups with an interest in more regional equality. But it should included consideration of whether a proposed large scale development in the South East for example would, in terms of other regions:

- Result in a movement of labour both skilled and unskilled from poorer regions to richer ones. The lack of investment in the North and Midlands, for example, has encouraged skilled workers to leave the cities of these areas and move to the South East.
- Result in more firms moving to 'overheated' areas rather than improving the relative attractiveness of investing in less prosperous regions
- Result in greater urban decline
- Result in an increase in pressure on greenfield sites, rather than encouraging a shift to previously developed urban land elsewhere. There are Government moves<sup>15</sup> to curb the profligate use of land for housing and to emphasise brownfield sites more, but this has not been extended to economic development ie factories, offices, and warehouses.

### **Saving Greenfield Sites**

England's supply of previously developed urban land and buildings is concentrated in the North and the West Midlands, yet weak demand, barriers to investment and weak planning controls are preventing their utilisation. This is resulting in continuing pressure on greenfield sites in all regions, but particularly in the South and East.

It is therefore crucial that any response to the results of a Regional Impact Assessment includes the availability of beneficial selective adjustments in business rates, corporation tax and increases in capital allowances for those outside the economic 'hotspots'. To ensure a tight curb on the use of greenfield sites anywhere, the Government must make clear that their development will not be an option for housing or businesses, until every effort has been made to ensure that preference is given to the use of previously developed land and buildings.<sup>16</sup> Indeed it has been suggested that the Regional Development Agencies adopt targets for increasing the proportion of economic development taking place on previously developed sites, so that it would result in a national target of 85%. To date this has been refused.<sup>17</sup>

In addition, the more frequently proposed Government policies for promoting regional regeneration will also be necessary, but they would need to stress the use of previously developed land and buildings. These include giving incentives for more public sector jobs and Government funded R&D to site out of the South East; promoting indigenous skills and relevant training to provide the necessary labour for the urban regeneration and revitalisation of the local economy; and improving public transport links between city centres and existing regional 'travel to work' areas.

## **FUNDING INCREASED REGIONAL EQUALITY**

A substantial and new regional source of money for the measures suggested above could be provided by Peoples Pensions<sup>18</sup>. These would allow part of the £750 billion locked into existing private pension schemes, (a sum that has been increasing by around £50 billion annually over the last few years), to be relocated to build local infrastructure for rent. It could eventually result in tens of billions of pounds being invested in building schools, hospitals, public transport, social housing and alternative energy systems. These will be rented on long term leases to government departments, local authorities and quasi government bodies such as NHS Trusts who will pay the rent, adjusted for changes in market rates and inflation, over periods of up to thirty years.

The rent will provide a secure financial return that cannot go down, so providing a stable and safe pension investment to pay pensions to the Peoples Pension Fund members. Each fund will be locally based, either at county or regional level and might also be organised for a specific sector e.g. education or health, so providing prospective pensioners with maximum choice about how their pension fund might be invested.

Not only would this provide a guaranteed return for the pensioners concerned, it would have the additional advantage of allowing much of the government money that would otherwise have had to pay for such buildings and infrastructure to be spent on more teachers, doctors, nurses, transport workers etc. The net result for all regions would be more jobs locally, thus providing the improvements in services that the public and politicians desire.

This potentially huge sum could therefore directly, and - through the money it would allow government to redirect into paying more staff in the public sector, indirectly - be the funding source for a 'Look to the Local' approach to regional regeneration. To ensure as much money stayed as local as possible, explicit preference would be given to existing or new firms based in the locality.

Thus 'Peoples Pension' could provide an increased sense of security for pensions as well as being a major funder of regional renewal. It would be the role of central government to ensure that adequate funding was available to compensate for discrepancies between the pension wealth that might exist from region to region. Fortunately there will be increased money available to the public purse, because Peoples Pension could fund a large percentage of the upfront money needed to build public infrastructure.

The potential for local authorities to make use of such a vehicle appears to have increased with reports that the Treasury is considering allowing local authorities more freedom to borrow for capital projects. Were they to issue municipal bonds, these would be a perfect vehicle for 'People's Pension Funds' nationally and could restore confidence in the pensions system and be of social benefit to the areas where the savers live, both before and during their retirement.

## Conclusion

This discussion paper has proposed a range of methods that would help to rebalance future developments across the UK in a more equitable and sustainable way. To achieve such a profound change in direction would require a radical first step. As we have set out above, this would involve a moratorium on the present ‘predict and provide’ strategy of allowing significant new developments in the South East on land that hasn’t been previously developed and which are likely to have a negative impact on other regions. These would include the proposed expansions in airport capacity, roads, and ports as well as large scale executive house building projects.

Of course some economic development in the South East region is inevitable and necessary, but not on the huge scale at present envisaged by the government and not focused on ‘regional hubs’ involving unacceptable loss of greenfield sites. Providing more affordable housing is essential, but CPRE has challenged the assumption that an undersupply of affordable housing can be solved by a huge, general housebuilding programme in the South East.

To really tackle the urgent need for an increase in low cost, affordable housing will require developments that are smaller in scale and increasingly centred on areas of deprivation in the South East. It should have the result of reinvigorating the local economy, increasing local employment and thus strengthening communities. The Thames Gateway, for example, can play an important part in meeting this need through the reclamation of its degraded land and an emphasis on good public transport links and new social housing for low-income families who cannot afford to enter the hypercharged private housing market of the South East.

The latest survey of the National Land Use Database showed that there are 29,000 hectares of brownfield land suitable for housing – enough room for nearly 1.5 million new homes at medium densities of 50 units per hectare. Moreover, according to the latest figures from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, there are more than 700,000 empty homes in England. Indeed, there is a significant surplus of dwellings over households in all regions in England except London, and this has grown since 1991 (except in London where the excess has remain unchanged at 2.5%). Data from the 2001 Census reveals that, contrary to earlier assumptions, there was an excess of dwellings over households of between 3.2 to 4.7% in every other English.<sup>19</sup>

It is therefore time to challenge the Government’s economically and socially destabilising preference for further large-scale expansion in the South East. Those involved in the growing resistance in this region to the planned development of ever more housing, roads, and infrastructure need to be linked more with those fighting for a better deal for their own regions. The first step would be for these groups to join together not just to halt such adverse developments but also to propose an alternative policy framework for relocating and redesigning future development so that it results in more equitable and environmentally sustainable initiatives across the regions. This discussion paper is intended to be a contribution to that vital process, setting out an approach that would both bring greater economic security across the UK, and provide alternatives to today’s unsustainable call of ‘Southward Ho!’

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<sup>1</sup> CPRE, A Basis on Which To Build? February 2004

<sup>2</sup> ODPM Select Committee Report, April 2003

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<sup>3</sup> Roger Blitz and Rohit Jaggi 'Local Authorities can borrow without limits' Financial Times 24<sup>th</sup> February 2004

<sup>4</sup><http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmselect/cmodpm/492/492.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> The South East, excluding London, comprises a region with a population of over 8 million, encompasses 19 county and unitary authorities and 55 districts, stretching around London from Thanet in the east to the New Forest in the west and Milton Keynes in the north. It includes the counties of Kent, Surrey, East Sussex, West Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. The unitary authorities are West Berkshire, Reading, Wokingham, Bracknell Forest, Windsor & Maidenhead, Slough, Southampton, Portsmouth, Brighton & Hove and Medway. The role of South East England as the engine of the British economy has brought considerable prosperity to the region. Taken on its own, the economy of the South East (excluding London) generates a GDP of around £140 trillion per annum ( South East England Development Agency (SEEDA). Regional Economic Strategy for South East England: 2002-2012.) – equivalent to the national economies of Portugal, Norway and Greece. In fact, if South East England were an independent country it would rank as the 22<sup>nd</sup> largest economy in the world.

<sup>6</sup> CPRE Website: <http://www.cpre.org.uk/>

<sup>7</sup> Richard Girling Observer Colour Supplement 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2003, p31-36

<sup>8</sup> BBC News Online. "Prescott Unveils £1bn Housing Plan"

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_politics/2135057.stm#map](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/2135057.stm#map)

<sup>9</sup> Select Committee of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions Ninth Report of the Session 2002-2003; Decentering the Nation. A radical approach to regional inequality By Ash Amin, Doreen Massey and Nigel Thrift, Catalyst Paper 8, September 2003 London; 'A new regional policy for the UK' John Adams. Peter Robinson and Anthony Vigor, ippr London 2003

<sup>10</sup> 'In praise of centralism- a critique of the new localism' by David Walker, Catalyst Paper 2, November 2002, London.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Hetherington *Ministers plan boost for north* The Guardian, Wednesday January 21, 2004

<sup>12</sup> Paul Hamblin, Head of Policy (Transport and Natural Resources), *Strategic Environmental Assessment – Making a Difference* Campaign to Protect Rural England, London.

*A paper presented at a European Environmental Bureau Seminar on SEA*

5 September 2003, Brussels ; Paul Hamblin, Head of Policy (Transport and Natural Resources), *Ten Tests for Legislation on Strategic Environmental Assessment*, Campaign to Protect Rural England, London, and European Environment Bureau, Brussels, 2003.

<sup>13</sup> Giving evidence to the House of Commons Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee's enquiry into the Urban White Paper in May 2000, cited in *Even Regions, Greener Growth* CPRE, London February 2002, p10.

<sup>14</sup> *Official Report*, 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, Column 260W, cited in *Even Regions, Greener Growth* CPRE, London February 2002, p10.

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<sup>15</sup> Planning Policy Guidance Note 3- *Housing* (March 2000)

<sup>16</sup> Fourth Report of the House of Commons Backbench Education and Employment Committee *Employability and jobs, Is there a job gap?* (April 2000), the Committee recommended *innovate, area- specific tax structures aimed at attracting job creating investment in low employment areas* C cited in *Even Regions, Greener Growth* CPRE, London February 2002, p19.

<sup>17</sup> *Even Regions, Greener Growth* CPRE, London February 2002, p16.

<sup>18</sup> *People's Pensions: New thinking for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* by Richard Murphy, Colin Hines and Alan Simpson MP, published by the New Economics Foundation.London 2003. Download the full report from the New Economics Foundation website <http://www.neweconomics.org/>

<sup>19</sup> *Barker Report on Housing: Unnecessary environmental tragedy looms*, CPRE News Release, 17 March 2004