

Minutes of the South East England Councils Plenary and Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 14 July 2010

Church House Conference Centre
Dean's Yard
Westminster
London, SW1P 3NZ



Present:

See attached attendance list

Minutes of the meeting

Paul Carter welcomed all attendees to the 2nd Annual General Meeting of South East England Councils

1. Apologies, Declarations of Substitutes and Declarations of Interest

These were recorded on the attendance list circulated at the meeting and attached for information. No declarations of interest were made.

2. Minutes of Meeting on 16 June 2010 and matters arising not elsewhere on the Agenda

The minutes of the previous Plenary were agreed as a true and accurate record.

3. Election of South East England Councils' Chairman

Paul Watkins announced that one nomination had been received for the position of SEEC Chairman which was for Paul Carter. That being the case, the AGM agreed that Paul Carter continue as SEEC Chairman for the following twelve months.

4. Chairman's Update: Report on the past year

In his report, Paul Carter referred to the extensive and sweeping changes that have taken place since the May elections as the new coalition government sets about the task of reducing public spending. Difficult decisions are having to be made about closing regional organisations and reducing local services right across the country.

Paul Carter emphasised the importance of the implementation of 'Control Shift' which aims to create a Big Society and a smaller state, however this will take time to achieve. He also said he was pleased that the LGA had recognised the need for the regional voice to be made into the LGA Executive. He believed there was a role for SEEC in

lobbying for essential infrastructure and investment and managing relationships with powerful bodies such as the LGA and GLA.

Paul Carter played tribute to all the SEERA Ltd staff and the work they had done over the last 10 years. He proposed a vote of thanks by the Plenary members which was acknowledged with a round of applause. Paul Carter also thanked the Chairs of the main Delivery Boards, Paul Watkins for his work as SEEC Secretary, Chris Williams for his support and advice and to Heather Bolton for the work she has already done to improve SEEC's communication capacity.

5. Future Capability at a South East-wide Level

Paul Carter reported that following the morning's Executive meeting, discussions had progressed further. The new proposal put forward was to cut local council subscription levels by 50% from the £500,000 level proposed in Plenary papers, which would generate around £250,000. The remaining £250,000 would come from SEERA Ltd reserves following the company's wind-up. This would allow SEEC time to see how future regional working needs to develop and reduce the financial burden on local authorities. Paul Carter said that the full proposed compliment of 6.5 staff would not be made initially, but phased. He also reported that cash-flow could be critical as it is unlikely that SEERA Ltd reserves would be available until at least December. It was recognised that SEEC was in a fast changing environment however there remained a risk that other regions could be better prepared than the South East, particularly when it came to bidding for scarce funding.

Gerald Vernon-Jackson (Portsmouth) supported the need for a group to lobby for resources for the South East and for outcomes over the coming year to be evidenced. He also raised a concern that if some authorities chose to give notice to withdraw from SEEC, that subscription levels could rise for those wishing to remain members.

Ann Ducker (South Oxfordshire DC) said that the SEEC Constitution requires that authorities must give notice of intention to withdrawal and therefore subscriptions would remain payable for the forthcoming year regardless. Jeremy Birch (Hastings BC) said that it was more important to debate the future functions of SEEC rather than subscription levels.

Action: SEEC agreed to the revised proposal as follows:

- i) Reduce the local authority subscriptions set out in Appendix B of the report by 50% to generate approximately £250,000**

(subscription schedule attached to these minutes for information)

- ii) For a further £250,000 to be utilised from SEERA Ltd reserves to create an overall budget for SEEC of £500,000**

- iii) **To require councils to give 12 months written notice (as per the revised constitution agreed at Agenda item 6) of any intention to withdraw from SEEC. Individual authority subscriptions for any councils giving notice would be payable in full for the forthcoming year.**
- iv) **The proposed staffing level of 6.5 staff will not be appointed immediately. Recruitment will be phased according to future developments and resource availability. The first appointment made will be for the Head of Policy Co-ordination.**

6. South East England Councils' Constitution

Paul Watkins explained that a refresh of the SEEC Constitution was required particularly in respect of holding money and appointing trustees. In addition, it was proposed that the notice period to withdraw from SEEC should be extended from six to twelve months to allow SEEC to plan its employment responsibilities. Comments raised were that the full make-up of the Executive should be more specific about which office holders were included and that issues relating to any successor body should be as clear and unambiguous as possible.

Action: SEEC agreed the revised Constitution

7. Elections for Deputy Chairman, Secretary/Treasurer and three spokespeople

The following were elected to serve for the forthcoming year:

Gordon Keymer (Tandridge DC)	SEEC Deputy Chairman
Paul Watkins (Dover DC)	SEEC Secretary/Treasurer

Spokespeople

David Robertson (Oxfordshire)	Transport & Infrastructure
Moira Gibson (Surrey Heath)	Planning, Housing & Sustainability
Mike Appleyard (Buckinghamshire)	Economy and Skills

8. Group Appointments for Vice-Chairmen and Executive Committee

The Group appointments for Vice-Chairmen were:

Louise Bloom	Liberal Democrats
TBC	Labour

The appointments to the Executive Committee were confirmed as:

County (7) – Conservative 7

Paul Carter	Kent CC
Andrew Povey	Surrey CC
Ian Hudspeth	Oxfordshire CC
Ken Thornber	Hampshire CC
Mike Appleyard	Buckinghamshire CC
Myles Cullen	West Sussex CC
TBC	East Sussex CC

District (8) – Conservative 4, LD 3, Labour 1

Barry Norton	West Oxfordshire
Andrew Bowles	Swale
Elizabeth Cartwright	East Hampshire
Lynne Hack	Reigate & Banstead
TBC	TBC (Labour)
Louise Bloom	Eastleigh
Kelsie Learney	Winchester
Tony de Vere	Vale of White Horse

Unitary (4) – Conservative 2, LD 1, Labour 1

Andrew Cumpsty	Reading
Mary Ballin	Bracknell Forest
TBC	TBC (Labour)
Cec Tallack	Milton Keynes

9. South East England Councils' Business Plan

Heather Bolton introduced the draft business plan which will need refining as resources and direction dictate. Andrew Povey believed that Objective 2 which focuses on providing a framework for co-ordinated action was the key area for SEEC to deliver on over the next twelve months.

Action – The draft Business Plan was agreed but may be subject to further review by the Executive Committee in the light of changing circumstances

10. South East England Councils' approach to the Spending Review

Chris Williams advised the Plenary that the Government's Spending Review (SR) would be announced on 20th October. However to ensure representation, SEEC should contribute to the debate by the end of July. He advised that SEEC prepare a suitable response to include:

- Welcoming the drive for devolution and localism

- The importance of planning and transportation to economic development
- Concerns about future use of Area Cost Adjustment
- The need for further public service reforms

Gordon Keymer suggested including a request to include returning Business Rates to local control. Gerald Vernon-Jackson believed that the previous Lyons review will be influential within the new CSR. Paul Carter referred to the planned review of Local Government finance and that SEEC should press for a more transparent system to be introduced. Miles Cullen raised the unfairness of SE businesses being penalised under new NI discounts available in other regions and Jeremy Birch suggested that the SE is just as vulnerable to public sector job cuts as any other region.

Action – Chris Williams will produce a draft response to be agreed with Spokespeople. Paul Carter will sign off final submission.

Update reports were also provided as follows:

- **Transport Board** – David Robertson reported a positive meeting with Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport, Norman Baker. Mr Baker said DfT was keen to work collectively with South East authorities as were other organisations like Railtrack. Andrew Bowles (Swale BC) said the primary focus should be on schemes that unlock economic development such as Manston aerodrome and its economic benefits to areas like Thanet.
- **Housing and Regeneration Board** – Elizabeth Cartwright reported that as part of the Housing Revenue Account Review, authorities including Winchester and Waverley had been particularly hard hit. She added that evidence was needed to put into a response to Grant Shapps on the Private Sector Housing Renewal Fund. Elizabeth added that there was a typo error in para 2.3 (2nd line) of her report and it should say ‘without’ rather than ‘within’. This will need correcting before the SR submission is made. Paul Carter added that SEEC should continue to monitor house building rates across the South East.
- **Economic Development and Skills** – Mike Appleyard reported that Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP’s) will be the future vehicle for Economic Development. However two areas remained critical to the region
 - a) Inward Investment
 - b) To protect the Intellectual assets of the South East

David Tutt (Eastbourne BC) said that SEEC should continue to present a strong economic development view to both Government and Europe.

11. Nominations to Outside Bodies

Paul Watkins presented the report for information. He added that with the demise of SEEDA and possibly GOSE, that there is a potential European vacuum as these two organizations provide the main administration support. SEEC already has a Europe working group looking at the under-subscription of funds across the South East and is also able to lobby through Gordon Keymer to the Committee of the Regions. Cec Tallack said that we are only in Year 3 of a seven year European funding block so someone must pick up this work.

12. Confirmed meeting dates

The confirmed Plenary dates were noted. There were also two planned meeting of the SEEC Executive before the next Plenary on 19th November.

13. Any other Business

Paul Carter reported back on a meeting with SEEDA which took place on 2nd July. He said the wind-down of SEEDA was expected to take place as soon as practicable however both Pam Alexander and Rob Douglas indicated their continued commitment and co-operation to ensure the best possible outcome for the South East region.

Close of Plenary & AGM

For further details about South East England Councils (SEEC) please visit
www.secouncils.gov.uk



SEEC Extraordinary Plenary Meeting – Attendance List

Wednesday 14th July 2010

Church House Conference Centre, Dean's Yard, Westminster, London, SW1P 3NZ

Name	Organisation	Attended
Cllr Neil Parkin	Adur District Council	No
Cllr Gillian Brown	Arun District Council	No – Apologies received
Cllr Paul Bartlett	Ashford Borough Council	No
Cllr John Cartwright	Aylesbury Vale District Council	Yes – sub Carole Paternoster
Cllr Andrew Finney	Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council	Yes – sub James Lewin
Cllr Mrs Mary Ballin	Bracknell Forest Borough Council	No
Cllr Mary Mears	Brighton and Hove City Council	No
Cllr David Shakespeare	Buckinghamshire County Council	No
Cllr John Gilbey	Canterbury City Council	Yes
Cllr Barry Wood	Cherwell District Council	Yes – sub Michael Gibbard
Cllr Myles Cullen	Chichester District Council	Yes
Cllr Nick Rose	Chiltern District Council	No
Cllr Bob Lanzer	Crawley Borough Council	Yes – sub Duncan Crow
Cllr Jeremy Kite	Dartford Borough Council	No
Cllr Paul Watkins	Dover District Council	Yes
Cllr David Parkinson	East Hampshire District Council	Yes – sub Elizabeth Cartwright
Cllr Peter Jones	East Sussex County Council	No
Cllr David Tutt	Eastbourne Borough Council	Yes
Cllr Louise Bloom	Eastleigh Borough Council	Yes
Mr Roy Taylor	Elmbridge Borough Council	No
Cllr Keith Mann	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council	No
Cllr Sean Woodward	Fareham Borough Council	No
Cllr Mark Hook	Gosport Borough Council	Not SEEC Member
Cllr Michael Snelling	Gravesham Borough Council	Yes
Cllr Tony Rooth	Guildford Borough Council	No
Cllr Ken Thornber, CBE	Hampshire County Council	No

Mr Ken Crookes	Hart District Council	No
Cllr Jeremy Birch	Hastings Borough Council	Yes
Cllr Tony Briggs	Havant Borough Council	No
Cllr Robert Nye	Horsham District Council	No
Cllr David Pugh	Isle of Wight Council	No
Cllr Paul Carter	Kent County Council	Yes
Cllr Ann De Vecchi	Lewes District Council	No – Apologies received
Cllr Chris Garland	Maidstone Borough Council	No
Cllr Rodney Chambers	Medway Council	Not SEEC Member
Cllr Garry Wall	Mid Sussex District Council	No
Cllr Cec Tallack	Milton Keynes Council	Yes
Cllr James Friend	Mole Valley District Council	No
Cllr Barry Rickman	New Forest District Council	Yes – sub Edward Heron
Cllr Ed Turner	Oxford City Council	Not SEEC Member, but apologies received
Cllr Keith Mitchell CBE	Oxfordshire County Council	Yes – sub Ian Hudspeth
Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson	Portsmouth City Council	Yes
Cllr Andrew Cumpsty	Reading Borough Council	Yes
Cllr Lynn Hack	Reigate and Banstead Borough Council	Yes
Cllr Carl Maynard	Rother District Council	No
Cllr David Burbage	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council	No
Cllr John Furey	Runnymede Borough Council	No
Cllr Rowland Dibbs	Rushmoor Borough Council	Yes
Cllr Peter Fleming	Sevenoaks District Council	Yes
Cllr Robert Bliss	Shepway District Council	Yes
Cllr James Swindlehurst	Slough Borough Council	Yes
Cllr Adrian Busby	South Bucks District Council	No
Cllr Ann Ducker	South Oxfordshire District Council	Yes
Cllr Alec Samuels	Southampton City Council	No
Cllr John Packman	Spelthorne Borough Council	No
Cllr Dr Andrew Povey	Surrey County Council	Yes

Cllr Moira Gibson	Surrey Heath Borough Council	Yes
Cllr Andrew Bowles	Swale Borough Council	Yes
Cllr Gordon Keymer, CBE	Tandridge District Council	Yes
Cllr Ian Carr	Test Valley Borough Council	No – Apologies received
Cllr Robert Bayford	Thanet District Council	No
Cllr Mark Worrall, OBE	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Yes
Cllr Roy Bullock, MBE	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	No
Cllr Tony de Vere	Vale of White Horse District Council	Yes
Cllr Robert Knowles	Waverley Borough Council	Yes
Cllr Robert Standley	Wealden District Council	No – Apologies received
Cllr Graham Jones	West Berkshire Council	No
Cllr Barry Norton	West Oxfordshire District Council	Yes
Cllr Louise Goldsmith	West Sussex County Council	No
Cllr Kelsie Learney	Winchester City Council	Yes
Cllr John Kingsbury	Woking Borough Council	No
Mr David Lee	Wokingham Borough Council	Yes – sub Rob Stanton
Cllr Keith Mercer	Worthing Borough Council	No
Cllr Mrs Lesley Clarke	Wycombe District Council	Yes – sub Mike Appleyard
Councillors in attendance		
Cllr Tony Page	Reading Borough Council	Yes
Cllr David Robertson	Oxfordshire CC	Yes
Cllr Mike Dobson	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Yes
Other attendees		
Chris Williams	LACE Chairman	Yes
Simon Eden	LACE	Yes
Heather Bolton	SEEC	Yes
Aidan Shutter	SEEC	Yes
Irene Cripps	Partnership Board	Yes
Catriona Riddell	Partnership Board	Yes
Martin Tugwell	Partnership Board	Yes

Diana Pogson	SEERA Ltd	Yes
Roy Millard	South East Strategic Partnership for Migration	Yes
Observers		
Becky Whale	South East Strategic Leaders (SESL)	Yes
Peter York	Civic Trust South East	Yes
Daniel Humphreys	Tourism South East	Yes

Total attendance by SEEC member authorities – 35 out of 74 (47%)

SEEC Subscriptions for 2010/11

AUTHORITY	Multiplier	Base rate 2010-11	2010-11 subs income	
District, City and Borough Councils	52	1	1,705	88,660
County Councils				
Buckinghamshire	4	1,705	6,820	
East Sussex	5	1,705	8,525	
Hampshire	11	1,705	18,755	
Kent	12	1,705	20,460	
Oxfordshire	5	1,705	8,525	
Surrey	11	1,705	18,755	
West Sussex	7	1,705	11,935	
Unitary Authorities				
Bracknell Forest	3	1,705	5,115	
Brighton and Hove	5	1,705	8,525	
Isle of Wight	3	1,705	5,115	
Milton Keynes	5	1,705	8,525	
Portsmouth	4	1,705	6,820	
Reading	3	1,705	5,115	
Slough	3	1,705	5,115	
Southampton	5	1,705	8,525	
West Berkshire	3	1,705	5,115	
Windsor and Maidenhead	3	1,705	5,115	
Wokingham	3	1,705	5,115	
Total subs income			250,635	