

MINUTES OF THE ALL-MEMBER MEETING

Thursday 8 November 2012

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



1. **Apologies, Declarations of Substitutes and Declarations**
 - 1.1 See attendance list (attached). No declarations of interest were made.
2. **Minutes of SEEC All-Member & AGM on 21 June 2012 and Matters Arising Not Elsewhere on the Agenda**
 - 2.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.
3. **The UK Industrial Strategy & the local government role in growth**
Speaker: Amanda Brooks, Deputy Director for Growth, Department of Business, Innovation & Skills
 - 3.1 Amanda Brooks introduced the Government's new Industrial Strategy. It proposes developing partnership strategies/programmes for growth in three key sectors - advanced manufacturing, knowledge intensive traded services and 'enabling' sectors. It also progresses cross-cutting initiatives on:
 - Access to finance - Developing a business bank for long-term financing.
 - Procurement - Giving businesses more clarity and confidence about Government procurement plans, and maximising flexibility of EU procurement rules.
 - Technologies - Maximising advantage in emerging technologies.
 - Skills - Enabling businesses to direct funding to deliver the skills they need. A review of apprenticeships is also due to report soon.
 - 3.2 Amanda also reported that the Government had broadly welcomed Lord Heseltine's economic growth review. She was leading work on the Government's formal response, expected in the spring, and would welcome members' views.
 - 3.3 In discussion members emphasised the importance of the South East to the national economy and asked for examples of how the Government is helping maximise SE growth. Members also asked about the definition of cities, discussed the roles of LEPs and local authorities, and urged swift progress in setting up a business bank. The need to develop the renewable energy sector to compete globally was raised.
 - 3.4 Amanda explained the Government is looking at how to make City Deal type arrangements more widely available to support local growth. She also highlighted the concentration of the Government's key industrial sectors in the South East. During questions, Amanda acknowledged the challenge of retaining skills developed in UK Universities (whether overseas or British students) to benefit the UK economy. Amanda promised further information after the meeting on Government investment in the South East and Government's definition of cities (see Annex 1).
 - 3.5 Members agreed that SEEC should produce a short report to influence Government on how best to support the local commitment to economic growth in the South East.
ACTION 1: SEEC to prepare a short paper to influence Government policy and investment to support local commitment to economic growth in the South East.
ACTION 2: Amanda to provide further information to SEEC re outstanding member questions on Government investment and city definitions. (See Annex 1).
4. **European Funding 2014-2020 – prospects for the South East**
Speakers: Richard Ashworth MEP, Conservative Leader in the European Parliament, Budget Committee member and South East MEP; and Sandra Turner, EU 2014 negotiation team, BIS
 - 4.1 Richard Ashworth MEP highlighted challenges facing the European Union and how these might impact on future funding programmes. He outlined three main

problems: the impact of the banking crisis; Eurozone financial difficulties including high public debt; and increasing global competition.

- 4.2 Richard said changes were needed to the EU's approach, structure and funding priorities to focus on supporting economic recovery. For example with 25 million unemployed was it viable to spend 40% on the Common Agricultural Policy? Future priorities should include technology, sustainable energy, digital economy, R&D and high quality education. There was a strong will for flexibility in funding to meet local needs, but this had to be reconciled with the EU's drive for a sharper thematic focus and the final size of the EU budget.
- 4.3 Questions covered how the Eurozone will recover and the issue of differing views across the EU towards tackling public debt, taxation and social reforms. Members also emphasised the importance of locally-led EU funding such as the Leader Programme and the benefit of maintaining these in the future. Richard explained the EU's long standing failure to achieve budget sign off from the Court of Auditors was due to the EU's inability to access member states' accounts to scrutinise spending of EU/matching funds. This means the EU can only achieve a qualified statement of assurance. Resolving this will require new powers to audit member states' spending.

ACTION 3: SEEC to circulate a copy of Richard's presentation notes to members.
(Post meeting note: [Richard's presentation notes are now available online](#)).

- 4.4 Sandra Turner, updated members on the UK Government's approach to new EU funding programmes for 2014 onwards. The EU expects funding programmes will continue to support economic, environmental and social cohesion and growth. They should have greater focus on results and less on process/bureaucracy, but this will require more stringent performance frameworks to draw down money. There will also be more flexibility to align different funds. Place-based and localised initiatives will help communities address local needs more effectively.
- 4.5 The Government aims to consult on the draft Partnership Agreement underpinning the new funds in spring 2013. BIS is leading the UK's planning for new programmes, including stakeholder roadshows in November/December. The earliest the new programmes will start is mid 2014, but delays agreeing EU budget totals may delay this further. Final funding will depend on the EU budget and may be lower than now.
- 4.6 Once agreement is reached nationally, programmes will need to move forward swiftly. Sandra encouraged members to start working with partners, including LEPs, to develop local priorities for the new programmes, and attend the roadshows or write to Government to share views and priorities.

ACTION 4: SEEC to consider written input to Government to influence new programmes.

5. Planning changes and the impact on the South East

a) The London Plan – representing South East views to the Mayor

- 5.1 Nick Woolfenden explained the Mayor of London is consulting on improving engagement with partners outside London on strategic planning issues. Members were invited to discuss the benefits this could offer the South East and priority topics to raise – for example including growth issues, such as commuting & infrastructure.
- 5.2 The Chairman supported engagement with London. Members agreed a draft response should be circulated for comments to meet the December deadline.

ACTION 5: SEEC officers to circulate draft response for member comments prior to submission by Christmas.

b) Update on Government proposals, including Growth & Infrastructure Bill

- 5.3 Following a [submission on s106 planning proposals](#), SEEC was considering writing to planning minister Nick Boles regarding effective operation of the new planning system. Members' constructive proposals & suggestions were invited to shape this.

ACTION 6: Members to share constructive suggestions on planning with SEEC officers.

6. SEEC Business Plan 2012-13

- 6.1 Heather Bolton explained that following discussion of SEEC's business plan at previous meetings, SESL had now also discussed its business plan. Proposed areas for joint working by SEEC and SESL were presented to members and agreed.
- 6.2 Joint work will focus on planning; regeneration & economic development; local government finance; welfare reform; skills & employability; health & public health. SEEC will also work on infrastructure & transport, EU funding, data dashboard and will continue to host the migration partnership.

7. SEEC and SESL closer working – verbal update

- 7.1 The Chairman reported that progress was being made towards closer and more cost-effective working between SEEC and SESL following recent discussions.

8. Items for information

- 8.1 Links were provided to recent SEEC submissions on [Local Government Finance](#), the [Care and Support Bill](#) and [public health funding](#).
- 8.2 Heather reminded members that the Local Government Finance Act had been enacted and the Government had set up a £100m Council Tax Benefit transitional funding for schemes that meet its criteria.

9. Confirmed forward meeting dates:

- 18 December 2012 – Ageing population/demographic impact workshop
- 7 February 2013 – SEEC All-member meeting (shared date with SESL)
- 27 March 2013 – SEEC Executive, followed by Growth & Infrastructure Summit.

10. Any other business

- 10.1 Heather drew members' attention to Government's consultation on liberalising pension fund investment in infrastructure, with a deadline of 18 December. She also said individual authorities may wish to respond to the Government's consultation (closing 23 November) on draft regulations for business rates retention, to help implement the Local Government Finance Act.
- 10.2 There being no further business, the meeting closed at 3pm.

Signed:

Cllr Gordon Keymer CBE, Chairman

Date: 7 February 2013

1. Response from Amanda Brooks (Deputy Director - Growth, BIS): See para 3.4 above

- A. First on the criteria for cities, which I have interpreted as meaning in relation to City Deals (as I had mentioned them). In wave 1, we offered city deals to the 8 core cities outside London. In wave 2, 20 cities were selected to put in expressions of interest for city deals. These were the next 14 largest cities by population; and the 6 fastest growing cities by population growth, 2001-2010.

Within the Greater South East area, wave 2 includes: Milton Keynes, Oxford, Reading, Southampton, Portsmouth, Southend, Cambridge, Ipswich, Brighton and Hove. (Bournemouth and Swindon just outside the area are also included.) This is a quite a significant proportion of the 20 cities asked for an expression of interest. I would be quite interested to know if there are particular omissions that gave rise to the question.

- B. Second, I was challenged to provide some examples of the Government not taking the South East for granted. The number of cities in Wave 2 is certainly one. The South East received its proportionate share of the Growing Places Fund, and even though the Regional Growth Fund has been targeted towards areas where there have been high levels of public sector dependency, the South East has had some notable successes eg in the Solent area. Elsewhere, the South East has benefitted from a number of key infrastructure decisions that the Government has taken, for example East-West rail, and Crossrail.

Name	Organisation	Signature / Apologies / Substitute
Gillian Brown	Arun District Council	Apologies
Peter Wood	Ashford Borough Council	Apologies
John Cartwright	Aylesbury Vale District Council	Sub – Carole Paternoster
Clive Sanders	Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council	Apologies
Paul Bettison	Bracknell Forest Borough Council	Yes
Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire County Council	Yes
John Gilbey	Canterbury City Council	Yes
Barry Wood	Cherwell District Council	Apologies
Myles Cullen	Chichester District Council	Yes
Nick Rose	Chiltern District Council	Apologies
Bob Lanzer	Crawley Borough Council	Yes
Jeremy Kite	Dartford Borough Council	Apologies
Paul Watkins	Dover District Council	Sub – Sue Chandler
Glynis Watts	East Hampshire District Council	Yes
Gill Mattock	Eastbourne Borough Council	Apologies
Keith House	Eastleigh Borough Council	Apologies
John O'Reilly	Elmbridge Borough Council	Apologies
Neil Dallen	Epsom & Ewell Borough Council	Yes
John Burden	Gravesham Borough Council	Apologies
Stephen Mansbridge	Guildford Borough Council	Apologies
Ken Thornber, CBE	Hampshire County Council	Apologies
Ken Crookes	Hart District Council	Yes
Jeremy Birch	Hastings Borough Council	Yes
Tony Briggs	Havant Borough Council	Apologies
Ray Dawe	Horsham District Council	Apologies
Paul Carter	Kent County Council	Sub – Alex King
Elayne Merry	Lewes District Council	Apologies
Garry Wall	Mid Sussex District Council	Yes
Barry Rickman	New Forest District Council	Apologies
Ed Turner	Oxford City Council	Sub - Van Coulter
Ian Hudspeth	Oxfordshire County Council	Yes
David Burbage	RB of Windsor & Maidenhead	Yes
Tony Page	Reading Borough Council	Yes
Graham Knight	Reigate & Banstead Borough Council	Yes
Carl Maynard	Rother District Council	Apologies
Patrick Roberts	Runnymede Borough Council	Apologies
Roland Dibbs	Rushmoor Borough Council	Yes
Peter Fleming	Sevenoaks District Council	Sub – Jill Davison
Robert Bliss	Shepway District Council	Yes

Adrian Busby	South Bucks District Council	Apologies
Ann Ducker	South Oxfordshire District Council	Apologies
Frank Ayers	Spelthorne Borough Council	Apologies
David Hodge	Surrey County Council	Yes
Moira Gibson	Surrey Heath Borough Council	Yes
Andrew Bowles	Swale Borough Council	Sub – Gerry Lewin
Gordon Keymer, CBE	Tandridge District Council	Yes
Ian Carr	Test Valley Borough Council	Apologies
Clive Hart	Thanet District Council	Apologies
Nicolas Heslop	Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council	Yes
David Jukes	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	Apologies
Robert Knowles	Waverley Borough Council	Apologies
Bob Standley	Wealden District Council	Yes
Gordon Lundie	West Berkshire Council	Sub – Pamela Bale
Barry Norton	West Oxfordshire District Council	Yes
Keith Wood	Winchester City Council	Apologies
John Kingsbury	Woking Borough Council	Apologies
David Lee	Wokingham Borough Council	Sub – Rob Stanton
Arif Hussain	Wycombe District Council	Yes

Speakers

Amanda Brooks	BIS	
Richard Ashworth MEP	Conservative Leader in the European Parliament	
Sandra Turner	BIS	

Other Attendees

Chris Williams	SEEC	
Heather Bolton	SEEC	
Nick Woolfenden	SEEC	
Hayley Austin	SEEC	
Kate Jones	SESL	
Roy Millard	SESPM	
Zack Foulds	SESPM	

Observers

Mona Sehgal	LGA	
Heather Wills	LGA	
Jade Appleton	LGA	
Ron Moys	Kent CC	