

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND LEADERS BOARD-SEEC EXECUTIVE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 16 OCTOBER 2009

Present: Paul Carter (Chairman)
Paul Watkins (Secretary)
Mike Appleyard
George Beckett
Louise Bloom
Elizabeth Cartwright
Myles Cullen
Tony de Vere
Moirra Gibson
Ian Hudspeth
Gordon Keymer, CBE
Andrew Povey
Tony Reid
Cec Tallack
Ken Thornber, CBE

In Attendance: Chris Williams, Chairman of the LACE Group
Aidan Shutter, Policy Officer, SEEC
Jenny Whittle, Communications Manager, SEEC
Diana Pogson, Interim Managing Director, Partnership Board
Strategy Unit
Catriona Riddell, Director of Planning, Partnership Board
Strategy Unit
Irene Cripps, PA to Diana Pogson, Partnership Board
Strategy Unit
Mary Blanche, Acting Regional Partnership Manager, SESPM
Howard Ewing, Deputy Regional Director, GOSE (for Section
A items only)
Pam Alexander, Chief Executive, SEEDA (for Section A items
only)

A. SEE Leaders' Board (SEELB)

A1. Apologies and Declarations of Substitutes

A1.1 Apologies were received from Mary Ballin, John Furey, Mary Mears, Tony Page, David Robertson, Henry Smith, Ed Turner and David Tutt.

A1.2 Myles Cullen substituted for John Furey.

A2. Minutes of Previous Meeting on 16 June 2009 and Matters Arising

A2.1 The minutes were **agreed**.

A2.2 Catriona Riddell **advised** SEELB that:

- The Examination in Public on Aggregates had been held the previous week and it was expected that the Panel's report would be published at the beginning of December 2009.

- The Examination in Public on Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Partial Review of the South East Plan is scheduled for the first week of February 2010. The Planning Panel had met the day before and had considered new information in respect of transit provision; the Planning Panel's recommended approach will be considered at the November meeting of the Strategy Board.

A2.3 Howard Ewing **advised** SEELB that Arun District Council's legal challenge of the South East Plan had been dealt with and the relevant paragraph quashed by the Crown Court as the wording had been included in error. The other challenges were in respect of the greenbelt around Guildford and in Oxfordshire; these were still going through the legal process.

A3. Update from GOSE

A3.1 Howard Ewing **advised** the Board that the Regional Grand Committee had met in Reading in September and all the South East region's MPs had attended; it is likely that there will be more of these committees.

A3.2 He **also advised** that several bids from across the region, amounting to approximately 4,500 jobs, had been made to the Government's jobs fund reported on at the last meeting. Further bids are being considered and the outcome will be known in November.

A4. Update from SEEDA

A4.1 Pam Alexander said that SEEDA is pleased with the feedback from recipients of its economic reports and would be happy to add anyone else who would like to receive them to the circulation list.

A4.2 She **advised** the Leaders' Board that the latest report shows that the South East is not setting the pace for recovery, and that services are being hit the hardest. The labour market is still subdued and therefore redundancies are still being made; although there is more than double the number of benefit claimants than a year ago, the South East still has a lower unemployment rate. Responding to a question, she **confirmed** that SEEDA is pressing Government to invest in the South East.

A4.3 She **also advised** that significant issues seem to be around bank loans; overdraft rates of 27% are not uncommon and there is still a reluctance between banks to lend. Responding to the comment that SMEs in Hampshire are not being supported by banks and they need to be more adventurous, Pam Alexander **advised** that SEEDA now has a South East Financial Services Forum which banks attend and to date there have been two meetings; it may be helpful for the Forum to have a discussion on regional variations to identify particular problems.

A4.4 Responding to the suggestion that it would be a worthwhile exercise to scope the number of people employed in civil engineering, construction, defence, etc. across the South East that are connected to the public sector, Pam Alexander **agreed** it would be worth considering this.

A4.5 She **further advised** that since the last meeting of the Leaders' Board the first meeting of the Regional Infrastructure Fund Investment Panel had taken place; this had allocated £15m of the funding available for RIF. Subsequent to that SEEDA's Board had endorsed the Panel's recommendations and is working with Ashford to get the agreements in place. Work is ongoing to identify opportunities to invest the remaining

RIF funds, in particular to commit the remaining £20m of DFT funding, at the earliest opportunity.

- A4.6 It was **agreed** that updates from the RIF Investment Panel should be a standing item for information.
- A4.7 Responding to the comment that since the region's Joint Europe Committee had ceased to exist it seemed that European issues and funding were being lost sight of, Pam Alexander **advised** that Paul Lovejoy will be taking on an overview of European issues and that there are critical milestones to meet; making sure that funding is being taken up is challenging. A comprehensive update will be provided. It was **agreed** that it would be helpful if SEEDA's European update has a wide circulation and that SEEC should be looking at ways of disseminating this information. It was **noted** that Paul Lovejoy had already agreed to provide updates.
- A4.8 It was **noted** that in addition to funding there are issues around European governance and legislation and there needs to be a constructive way of working between SEEDA and SEEC. It was **agreed** that SEEC should discuss these issues further and then have a further discussion with SEEDA.
- A4.9 Responding to a query about SEEDA's reorganisation, Pam Alexander **advised** that the consultation will be completed by mid-November; SEEDA will have a much narrower focus, concentrating on areas where interventions will add value. A summary of the revised Corporate Plan will be published at the annual open meeting in November.

A5. Government Consultation - Regional Strategies and Establishment of Leaders' Boards

- A5.1 The paper was received and the response to the consultation was **agreed** as drafted.

A6. Boards, Delivery Boards, and Planning Panel

a) Regional Housing and Regeneration Board

- A6.1 Elizabeth Cartwright **reported** that the first meeting of the RHRB had been very successful, although it was largely a "getting to know you" meeting; the RHRB will be supported by Jane Lawrence, the new RHRB Manager, and by three members of the Local Authority Chief Executives' Advisory Group. She highlighted the Government's response to the Regional Funding Advice submission, which emphasised the pressure on spending and hinted at cuts to come; she also highlighted concern about the proposed reduction in growth funding.
- A6.2 It was **agreed** that more detailed information on the HCA's budget across the South East would be provided at the January meeting of the Leaders' Board; this information would include a breakdown of the percentage spend on delivering housing and the percentage spend on wider regeneration initiatives, such as infrastructure investment, to enable housing development.
- A6.3 It was **also agreed** that a report on housing starts would be taken to the January meeting of the Leaders' Board; this would include affordable housing starts.

- A6.4 It was **noted** that members are very keen that the outcome of the study on the Housing Revenue Subsidy process is used to emphasise the unfairness of the system.
- A6.5 It was **noted** that SEEC intend to hold a half day conference on major issues in the New Year and that housing should be on the agenda. A plenary meeting is scheduled for 5 March but this could be brought forward to cover urgent issues.
- A6.6 It was **noted** the GLA's London Plan had been published this week and the figure to test was similar to that previously put forward; to meet London's targets the GLA will need to look to the East and South East. Following the consultation period, the Plan will be signed off by the London Mayor, not the Secretary of State. A proposed response to the consultation will be taken to the next meeting of the Partnership Board for sign off.

b) Regional Transport Board

A6.7 The report was received and points **noted** were:

- i) The initial findings of the aviation study will be considered at the RTB meeting on 23 October and reported back to the Strategy Board.
- ii) Members asked for clarification in respect of priorities for DaSTS projects; advice given in another forum had indicated that there is no priority in terms of the schemes that have been put forward, whereas this report refers to the delivery strategies for the West Sussex Coast and PUSH as being the region's top two priorities.

c) Partnership Board

A6.8 The minutes of the first meeting of the Partnership Board on 24 July were received and points **noted** were:

- i) Work is being done on six think pieces on key regional issues with input from experts. These will be debated at workshops to be held in February 2010 and are seen as a starting point for members' input into the Regional Strategy.
- ii) The Partnership Board website is now operational and meeting papers and the forward programme are available for downloading. It has a link to SEEDA's website and will have a link to the SEEC website when that is operational.
- iii) The delay in launching the SEEC website is due to the difficulty in obtaining a '.gov.uk' web address; when the site is in place it will have links to both the Partnership Board and SEEDA websites.

d) Strategy Board

A6.9 The minutes of the first Strategy Board meeting on 17 September 2009 were received and **noted**.

- A7. Forward Programme for the Partnership Board, Strategy Board, Regional Housing and Regeneration Board, Regional Transport Board, Regional Economic Development and Skills Board, and Planning Panel**
- A7.1 Responding to Paul Carter's query regarding airport capacity, Catriona Riddell **advised** that the work currently in hand would soon be available. Any additional work required would need to be commissioned by SEEC.
- A7.2 It was **noted** that the regional press had reported on a potential Ashford to Gatwick rail link; it was **agreed** that Martin Tugwell would be asked to provide the Board with more information.
- A7.3 It was **noted** that Paul Carter is talking to Lord Adonis about a rail link between Manston-Ashford/HSR and that he is keen for the Regional Transport Board to consider this issue.
- A7.4 It was **noted** that the first meeting of the Planning Panel had been held on 15 October and the next one is scheduled for 12 January 2010. Moira Gibson, Chairman of the Planning Panel, gave a brief report of the discussions at the meeting and the following points were **noted**:
- i) Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople sites - the Panel recommends a network of sites approach.
 - ii) The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and the wider infrastructure funding issues are causing concern and the Panel proposed that a robust response from the Partnership Board, jointly signed by Jim Brathwaite and Paul Carter, be sent.
 - iii) Concern had been noted in respect of Thames Basin Heaths, particularly in connection with management issues and the CIL process.
- A7.5 It was **noted** that the infrastructure agenda should be discussed at the SEEC plenary meeting scheduled for 4 December 2009.
- A7.6 Chris Williams **advised** members that the Local Authority Chief Executives' Advisory Group will be submitting a paper to the SEEC plenary in December setting out what the Group would want to do on a voluntary basis in the South East if a Conservative government is returned following the next General Election.
- A7.7 Catriona Riddell **advised** that the Strategy Unit has very little financial resource to cover consultations and is looking at how best to handle the Regional Strategy consultation. The Planning Panel wants thought to be given to getting community input to the strategy, more than what had originally been proposed.

B. SEEC Executive

B1. Minutes of Previous Meetings and Matters Arising:

a) SEEC AGM on 15 July 2009

- B1.1 It was **noted** that Richard Kemp of the LGA is to be replaced by David Shakespeare.
- B1.2 It was **agreed** that Chris Williams should draft a paper for discussion at the next SEEC Executive meeting on the business plan and the proposal to the LGA; when agreed this would then be discussed at the following plenary meeting.
- B1.3 It was **agreed** to invite Paul Bettison to a meeting of the SEEC Executive to give an update on the activities of Improvement and Efficiency South East (IESE - formerly RIEP).
- B1.4 The following changes and corrections to membership of the various boards were **noted**:
- i) SEEC Executive/Leaders Board correction - Louise Bloom prefers the title of Vice-Chair to Vice-Chairman.
 - ii) Partnership Board - Mary Mears replaces Mike Appleyard.
 - iii) Strategy Board - Mike Appleyard replaces Mary Mears.
 - iv) Regional Housing and Regeneration Board correction - Lib Dem members are Gerald Vernon-Jackson and Angela Lawrence.
 - v) Regional Economic Development and Skills Board - since the AGM the ToR had been agreed and SEEC would now have four members on this board (three Conservative and one Lib Dem). It has been agreed that the members will be Mike Appleyard (lead member for SEEC), George Beckett, Kevin Lynes and David Tutt; Jonathan Glen and Mary Mears would be named alternates.

b) SEEC Executive on 24 July 2009

- B1.5 The draft minutes were **agreed subject** to the following change:

Inter-Regional Forum: Partnership Board to read Strategy Board.

c) Matters Arising:

i) Members' Allowances

- B1.6 Following discussion of the proposals it was **agreed** that:

- the Chairmen of the main Boards and the Planning Panel will receive a monthly allowance as per the proposal;
- all members of the Boards and Planning Panel will receive a one-off payment of £500 for the year 2009/2010.

These will be paid through the payroll. There will be a review prior to the 2010 AGM.

B2. European Update:

a) European Update

- B2.1 It was **noted** that Gordon Keymer will be attending a meeting in Brussels on how local authorities can make a real contribution on legislation issues.
- B2.2 Paul Watkins **advised** that a meeting of those involved in European issues will be called as soon as possible, at which a template will be agreed on how best to pick up these issues in future; the outcome will be reported to the Executive.

b) Committee of the Regions Report

- B2.3 The paper was received and it was **noted** that four of the six nominees put forward for membership of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) had been approved as follows:

Gordon Keymer, CBE (Conservative; Tandridge DC) - full member

David Shakespeare, OBE (Conservative; Buckinghamshire CC) - alternate member

Paula Baker (LibDem; Basingstoke and Deane BC) - alternate member

Linda Gillham (Independent; Runnymede BC) - full member

B3. Inter-Regional Forum

- B3.1 It was **noted** that the South East's five representatives would be:

Paul Carter - Chairman of SEEC

Mike Appleyard - Lead SEEC member of the Regional Economic Development and Skills Board

Elizabeth Cartwright - Chairman of the Regional Housing and Regeneration Board

Moira Gibson - Chairman of the Planning Panel

David Robertson - Chairman of the Regional Transport Board

B4. South East Regional Forum on Ageing (SERFA)

- B4.1 It was **agreed** that SEEC should take up the offer of having a representative on SERFA and that Paul Watkins would approach local authorities for nominations and arrange a ballot.

B5. SEEC Budget and Membership Update

- B5.1 It was **noted** that since the update had been written membership had increased and that 71 of the 74 local authorities in the region had now committed to joining SEEC; the outstanding authorities are Gosport BC, Medway Council and Mole Valley DC. It was **agreed** that these authorities would be contacted by Paul Carter (Medway), Gordon Keymer (Mole Valley) and George Beckett (Gosport).
- B5.2 It was **noted** that there may be a small surplus at the end of the financial year 2009/10.
- B5.3 Errors re party control of authorities on the accompanying spreadsheet had been noted and would be corrected.

B6. Declaration of Interests

- B6.1 It was **agreed** that Paul Watkins would circulate Declaration of Interest forms to members for completion; he would then pass this information to Bridget Williams at the Partnership Board.

B7. Forward Plan

- B7.1 It was **noted** that this item duplicated Agenda Item A7.

B8. Migration Partnership Update

- B8.1 It was **noted** that Paul Watkins chairs the South East Strategic Partnership on Migration (SESPM) and is the only politician on the group; as chairman of this group he also has a seat on the LGA's asylum group. There are many issues, including issues around health, housing, planning and skills.
- B8.2 Mary Blanche gave an update on the work of SESPM. Paul Carter thanked Mary for attending the meeting and giving members a very interesting and informative update.
- B8.3 It was **agreed** that Mary would provide the SEEC Executive with regular updates in the future.

B9. South East Planning Academy - Update on Progress

- B9.1 Catriona Riddell **advised** that the SE Excellence website would transfer from SEEDA to the Partnership Board.
- B9.2 It was apparent at the recent SEE Advisory Board meeting that there are areas where developers and politicians have a common agenda and Moira Gibson **advised** that this is worth further discussion.
- B9.3 The Advisory Board is keen to meet with the SEEC Executive to discuss how to take this forward and it was **agreed** that the Advisory Board should be invited to meet with the SEEC Executive on the afternoon of its next meeting (22 January 2010).

B10. Regional Economic Development and Skills Board - Terms of Reference

- B10.1 The ToR were **noted**.
- B10.2 It was **noted** that the EDSB will be chaired by SEEDA Board member Alex Pratt and that it is hoped the first meeting will be held in early November.

POST-MEETING NOTE: The first meeting will be on 17 November 2009.

C. General

C1. Schedule of Meetings

C1.1 It was **noted** meetings of the Planning Panel in November and December had been included in the schedule in error and the next meeting is scheduled for 12 January 2010.

C1.2 It was **noted** that the next SEEC plenary meeting will be held on 4 December 2009 at a central London venue.

POST-MEETING NOTE: the venue has been confirmed and is Church House, Westminster.

C2. Any Other Business

a) Substitutes for Meetings

C2.1 Questions asked during the discussion of how substitutes should be identified were:

- Does the name of the substitute have to be notified in advance to the meeting?
- Does the substitute have to be found by the individual member or the party group?
- Should the substitute be, where possible, a member of SEEC rather than from the authority of the member not attending?
- Could substitutes be shared around authorities as long as the substitute has the appropriate expertise?

C2.2 Catriona Riddell's commented that the practice of having named substitutes for the Planning Panel provides continuity was **noted**.

C2.3 **Also noted** was Chris Williams's suggestion that SEEC have a similar arrangement to that of the Local Authority Chief Executives' Advisory Group, where each Board/Panel has three or four Chief Executives to shadow and provide support to the members.

C2.4 It was **agreed** that Diana Pogson would, in the interim, amend the ToR to state that the alternate representative may be drawn from either the SEELB members on the Partnership Board/Strategy Board or the Delivery Boards. Diana Pogson to be advised of the names when SEEC has agreed its pool of named representatives.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 13.40.