

**PLANNING PANEL OF THE  
SOUTH EAST ENGLAND PARTNERSHIP BOARD**

**1<sup>ST</sup> DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 12 JANUARY 2010**

**Present:**

Mary Ballin (Bracknell Forest BC)  
Ian Beardsmore (Spelthorne BC)  
Paul Clokie (Ashford BC)  
Moira Gibson (Surrey Heath BC) Chairman  
Ian Hudspeth (Oxfordshire CC)  
Royce Longton (West Berkshire Council)  
Jerry Patterson (Vale of White Horse DC)  
Peter Pragnell (Hastings BC)  
Martin Tett (Buckinghamshire CC)

**SEEDA Board Member:**

Keith Riley

**Stakeholder Liaison Group:**

Ian Hepburn (Environmental Stakeholder)  
Warren Finney (Social Stakeholder)

**Officers In Attendance:**

Kate Aulman (Partnership Board Strategy Unit)  
Alison Bailey (Partnership Board Strategy Unit)  
Sue Janota (Partnership Board Strategy Unit)  
David Payne (Partnership Board Strategy Unit)  
Jorn Peters (Partnership Board Strategy Unit)  
Catriona Riddell (Partnership Board Strategy Unit)  
Cath Rose (Partnership Board Strategy Unit)  
Louise Wilby (Partnership Board Strategy Unit)  
Jane Griffin (SEEDA)  
Sue Morgan (GOSE)  
Nick Woolfenden (SEEDA)

**1. Apologies for Absence and Declaration of Substitutes**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Howard Ewing (GOSE), Lynne Hack (Surrey CC), Tim Stansfeld (SEEDA) and James Swindlehurst (Slough BC).
- 1.2 Substitutions declared were Sue Morgan for Howard Ewing (GOSE) and Nick Woolfenden for Tim Stansfeld (SEEDA).

**2. Minutes of the Meeting on 15 October 2009**

- 2.1 The Minutes were **agreed** with no amendments.

**3. Matters Arising Not Elsewhere on the Agenda**

- 3.1 Agenda Item 4:  
In response to a question Sue Janota confirmed that the bold text had been agreed with the sub-group after the meeting.

- 3.2 Page 5, para 3:  
Jerry Patterson reported that Keith House had become a SEEDA Board member and that Royce Longton had taken his place for this meeting. The Liberal Democrat Group will advise the Panel of Keith House's replacement.
- 3.3 Page 5, Agenda Item 5:  
Catriona Riddell advised Members that the Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Examination in Public will start on 2 February 2010. The Partnership Board will be responsible for responding to the Panel Report prior to sign off by the Secretary of State (if the Panel report is received after 1 April 2010).
- 3.4 Page 6, para 8.1:  
Martin Tett asked about the arrangements for substitutes. The Chairman reported the agreement that each political group will establish a list of substitutes with planning experience who could consistently attend. The need for a balanced geographical representation was noted. Substitutes need not necessarily come from the South East England Councils (SEEC) or the South East England Leaders Board (SEELB). The leader of each group was best placed to organise substitutes at short notice. In the event of the Chairman being unable to attend another Member will be asked to chair the meeting.

#### **4. Regional Strategy**

- 4.1 Catriona Riddell provided the context for her report. She advised that two workshops on key drivers for change will be held at Lingfield Park on 11 February and in Reading on 23 March 2010.
- 4.2 Cath Rose reported that issues raised by the Planning Panel had been incorporated into the Draft Project Plan. Strategy Board feedback had been very positive. The amended plan will go before the Partnership Board on 9 February 2010 prior to being submitted to Government.
- 4.3 Some local authorities had expressed concern that the groupings for evidence gathering may not be appropriate for policy development. The areas shown on Map 1, page 5 should therefore be treated as interim and will be reviewed. Hampshire's grouping arrangements will be confirmed by the end of January.

The following points were made during the ensuing discussion:

- 4.4 The need to assess the impact of London, especially transport issues, on the fringes of the South East, the South Midlands Growth Area and the Swindon Growth Area. Catriona Riddell gave assurance that these issues will be considered through the inter-regional dimension and Local Development Frameworks (LDFs).
- 4.5 Martin Tett declared an interest as a member of the Milton Keynes South Midlands Executive Board and noted the difficulties of cross regional working in relation to transport, planning, health and the economy.
- 4.6 Concern was expressed about the impact of London's future targets for delivering affordable housing on the funding available to the South East.
- 4.7 Keith Riley noted that the level of flood risk planning will be determined by the targets set for carbon emissions.

- 4.8 He noted that renewable energy was complex and cannot be determined at a regional level. He advised that National Policy Statements (NPSs) will only apply to 50 megawatts and above. If local generation occurs one and two megawatts will become increasingly popular. These issues will require further discussion.
- 4.9 Keith Riley emphasised the need to balance basic and more advanced skills. Cath Rose responded that local authorities will provide evidence on skills as part of cross boundary work. Local Economic Assessments will provide key evidence but may not be available in the short term. The Regional Skills Strategy is also currently being developed.
- 4.10 Nick Woolfenden suggested that the collection of evidence relating to specific sectoral needs referred to in Annex 4, (page 15) will provide the opportunity to quantify required skills at different levels. He suggested explicitly defining higher skills. Catriona Riddell advised that the Regional Skills Strategy, which will inform the Regional Strategy, is the responsibility of the RDA, undertaken with the Partnership Board. Future debate will determine which skills can be picked up at regional level.
- 4.11 Nick Woolfenden emphasised the importance of skills to support future industrial needs. He noted that current funding distribution fails to meet the needs of the economy and individuals. He reported that Government is putting a process in place so that regions can influence how skills funding is spent nationally by providing bottom-up evidence relating to the needs of communities and businesses.
- 4.12 Jorn Peters addressed the Panel on Annex 1: Emerging Key Sustainability Issues. He highlighted feedback, mainly from environmental stakeholders through the Sustainability Sounding Board, on the following issues:
- The opportunity for developing advanced skills through the greener economy;
  - The decline of bio-diversity outside protected areas and
  - Concern about imported waste from London.

The following points were made about Annex 1 in discussion:

- 4.13 **Renewable Energy** (page 8): Ian Hepburn suggested that the heading Renewable Energy be amended to Energy and Renewable Energy and that short-falls in production be identified.
- 4.14 **Waste and Minerals** (page 8): The need to consider waste as a cross boundary issue including construction, demolition and other waste.
- 4.15 **Biodiversity, landscape and heritage** (page 8): to be amended to read **Biodiversity, landscape, heritage and green belt**.
- 4.16 **Existing Stock** (page 10): The word 'should' to be replaced by "must" in the final sentence so that it reads, 'If carbon dioxide emissions from housing are to be reduced then the energy efficiency of the existing stock **must** be improved.'
- 4.17 **Flooding and Water Management** (page 8): A fourth bullet point to be added relating to the green belt as a regional constraint in need of protection.
- 4.18 **Renewable Energy** (page 8): Ian Hepburn advised that the issue of total energy relating to power generation was currently undergoing consultation

at Select Committee level. Additional potential gaps will be dealt with at national level.

- 4.19 He advised that sustainable economic growth is defined as growth within environmental limits. These limits are not currently known. He drew attention to an important piece of regional work, funded by DEFRA, which will assess what is meant by environmental limits.
- 4.20 **Biodiversity, landscape and heritage** (page 8): Concern that biodiversity should not be limited to protected areas.
- 4.21 **Quality of Life and Health** (page 9): The implications of overcrowding on health and education to be highlighted.

The Planning Panel:

1. **Noted** the feedback from the Strategy Board on the draft project plan.
  2. **Considered and commented** on the emerging key sustainability issues identified as part of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping process.
  3. **Considered** the proposed groupings of local authorities for the initial evidence gathering phase of the regional strategy development.
  4. **Considered and commented** on the proposed approach to – and scope of – the initial ‘bottom up’ evidence gathering process.
- 5. Aggregates Partial Review: Panel Report**
- 5.1 David Payne provided the context for his report. He stressed the need to press GOSE to finalise the review of Policy M3 as a matter of urgency in view of the imminent general election.
- 5.2 Sue Morgan reported that the aim was to complete the process within the deadline. She advised that the original sustainability appraisal was unusual in considering which of the different distribution options was the most sustainable.
- 5.3 Martin Tett asked why it was important to press for the review to be finalised. He believed that it was more important to correct the model.
- 5.4 Catriona Riddell explained that the new governance structures would impact on arrangements. She advised that the Partial Review was not at the consultation stage. If consultation takes place before a general election the Panel would need to reconsider the methodology. There was uncertainty about how much weight this would carry at the proposed changes stage. If the consultation occurred after an election there would be more time to debate the proposed changes. This will impact on the timetable for Partnership Board meetings.
- 5.5 Sue Janota confirmed that the core strategy must meet the legal requirements of RPG9 and therefore the Panel Report did not carry much weight.

- 5.6 David Payne explained that this meant that the Planning Panel is considering conformity against out of date RSS policy. The Panel should, therefore, press CLG to revise its model using up to date information.
- 5.7 Martin Tett expressed concern about agreeing the recommendations and inadvertently giving credence to the figures.
- 5.8 The Chairman suggested removing the third recommendation to avoid this possibility. This was **agreed**.
- 5.9 In order to strengthen the second recommendation it was **agreed** to ask the Partnership Board to write to CLG requesting a re-run of the model before the proposed changes.

The Planning Panel:

1. **Noted** the recommendations of the Panel for the Examination in Public into the review of Policy M3 of the South East Plan (Primary Aggregates).
  2. **Agreed** to press the Government Office for the South East to finalise the review of Policy M3 as a matter of urgency in order to provide clarity and certainty to Minerals Planning Authorities and the minerals industry.
  3. **Agreed** to press CLG to review the assumptions used in its aggregates forecasting model, re-run it using latest data, and consider an early review of the National and Regional Guidelines to reflect the outputs (that set the amount of aggregates each region is expected to provide for).
  4. **The Partnership Board be asked to write to CLG requesting that the model be re-run before the proposed changes.**
6. **The London Plan: Consultation on Draft Replacement**
- 6.1 Catriona Riddell explained that the most substantive issue was that current mechanisms for inter-regional working were not considered effective and should be reviewed. This issue was exacerbated by London's different planning system and the autonomy of the Mayor.
- 6.2 Martin Tett emphasised the importance of pressing London to clarify its waste provision to enable adjoining authorities to gain greater acceptance for their own targets. He also highlighted the impact on the region's transport network of the widening commuter belt.
- 6.3 Concern was again expressed about the impact of London's future targets for delivering affordable housing on the funding available to the South East.
- 6.4 Keith Riley referred to Minerals and Waste, page 4, para 2.12. He advised that waste converted to Solid Recoverable Fuel (SRF) is recoverable at that point and available to be exported. He cautioned that London does not include this as export of waste. He advised that London could manufacture SRF and send it to the South East. He believed that London had to provide more waste recovery facilities.

The Planning Panel:

1. **Agreed** the response to the draft replacement London Plan (and the subsequent minor alteration to waste arisings/waste apportionments) set out in Section 2 of this report and commended this to the Partnership Board as the formal response to the Mayor's consultation.
2. **Agreed** the approach to a review of the Inter-Regional Forum and current inter-regional working arrangements within the Greater South East, as set out in Paragraph 2.6.

## 7. Regional Monitoring Report

Kate Aulman provided the following additional information:

- 7.1 **Affordable housing and housing size and type** (page 5):  
Data from the affordable housing survey showed that affordable housing was 29% of total completions for 2008/09. This was an increase from 21% for 2007/8. The split between intermediate tenure and social rent was 38% and 62% respectively. 97% of flats built in 2008/09 had one or two bedrooms.
- 7.2 **Housing density and spatial strategy** (page 5):  
Data from the Housing Survey showed that dwellings were 37.5 per hectare for 2008/09 compared with 38.4 per hectare for 2007/08.
- 7.3 Kate Aulman invited the Panel to comment on issues which should be highlighted to the Partnership Board when they consider and sign off the Regional Monitoring Report at their meeting on 9 February 2010.

The following points were noted:

- 7.4 **Waste - Disposal of waste** (page 7): Keith Riley believed that the reason for the fall in landfilled was due to falling investment rather than planning issues.
- 7.5 **Other minerals** (page 7): David Payne undertook to find out whether there are adequate reserves of loose clay for land remediation.
- 7.6 Ian Hepburn suggested a number of improvements to make the Regional Monitoring Report more robust. He emphasised the need to both ensure that the headlines are supported by data and that all emerging trends are reported.
- 7.7 **Biodiversity** (page 8): He noted that the detailed report indicated that the region is consistently performing worse than other regions with respect to the decline in the number of wild birds although this had not been drawn out in the key findings and that key actions needed to be identified to address land management.
- 7.8 He also recommended that cross cutting issues needed to be made more explicit and strengthened particularly relating to energy efficiency and where insufficient progress had been made to reduce the region's ecological footprint.
- 7.9 He stressed the need to ensure that data in detailed reports is supported by assertions and comments in headline reports. He acknowledged the information about Thames Basin Heaths in district council planning applications but suggested that data presented in background reports did not justify the comments in headline reports.

7.10 Catriona Riddell explained that the Partnership Board was moving towards a 'state of the region' report in order to inform and take forward policy. In this context it was appropriate to make assumptions based on knowledge where data does not exist. She acknowledged that the detailed report needed to be accurately reflected in the headlines. She advised that there will be an opportunity to debate many of the issues raised in the Monitoring Report at the February workshops.

7.11 Nick Woolfenden asked for the employment figure of 3.6 million in the paragraph on Employment change (page 3) to be checked. This was **noted**.

Kate Aulman responded to the following comments:

- The decline in the number of wild birds will be followed up;
- Issues relating to CO2 emissions and the ecological footprint will be included in a section on sustainability currently being drafted;
- Clarification will be sought from GOSE about the figures for emissions and
- Consideration will be given to redrafting the section on Thames Basin Heaths to reflect up to date information.

The Panel **noted** the emerging findings of the 2009 Regional Monitoring Report and raised **the issues as recorded in the minutes** which should be highlighted to the Partnership Board when they consider and sign off the Regional Monitoring Report at their meeting on 9 February 2010.

## **8. Local Development Frameworks Surgery**

8.1 Sue Janota confirmed that the half day workshop will take place on 25 March 2010 at the Mandolay Hotel, Guildford. She asked Members to forward comments for the proposed programme.

## **9. Items for Information:**

### **9.1 Draft National Policy Statements**

9.1.1 Peter Pragnell voiced disappointment that Dungeness had not been selected as a site particularly in view of the link with the nuclear skills agenda through the new South Coast College at Hastings.

9.1.2 Ian Hepburn drew Members' attention to the deadline of 15 January 2010 for responses to be made to the Select Committee on Ports and Energy.

9.1.3 Royce Longton queried the wording of page 2, para 1.2.4. Catriona Riddell confirmed that this would be checked. She emphasised the regional significance of NPS and the need for the Partnership Board to consider its response.

9.1.4 Keith Riley noted the major coastal erosion at Dungeness. He asked whether the de-carbonisation from nuclear power plants will be attributed regionally as this will impact on the size of the region's carbon footprint. He noted that regions having more than one power station generating 90-100% of their electricity supply from decarbonised power sources will have lowered carbon footprints.

- 9.1.5 In response David Payne believed that the national certificate would take account of the way CO2 was attributed regionally and the location of power stations.
- 9.1.6 Keith Riley asked when NPS impacted on the local planning process. Catriona Riddell suggested inviting a member of the Infrastructure Planning Commission to a future meeting to look at the implications.
- 9.1.7 Ian Hepburn believed that the Partnership Board's response to NPS on nuclear sites and ports would crucially establish general principles for responses to subsequent statements.
- 9.1.8 Answering a question about the status of new legislation in relation to current water regulations Catriona Riddell advised the intention was to streamline the present national decision making process. However, the implication of spatially specific NPS on local authorities and Section 106 agreements remained unclear.

The Panel **noted** the report.

## **9.2 South East Excellence**

- 9.2.1 Catriona Riddell advised that South East Excellence will not be funded by SEEDA beyond the end of the financial year. Discussions were ongoing with the Partnership Board about future arrangements in particular:

- The continuing use of the website as an effective portal for LDF information;
- The opportunity to bring together expertise from the house building sector and political leaders through the advisory Board for South East Excellence and
- The focus on work on the Making Places Network with the Homes and Communities Agency, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and other delivery agencies.

The Panel **noted** the report.

## **9.3 Lower Thames Flood Risk Management Strategy Consultation**

The Panel **noted** the report.

## **9.4 Conformity Update**

The Panel **noted** the report.

## **10. Any Other Business**

- 10.1 There being no further business the meeting closed at 13.12.

## **11. Date of Next Meeting: June 2010. The date and central London venue to be confirmed**