

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND LEADERS BOARD/SEEC EXECUTIVE**MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 16 JUNE 2009**

Present: Paul Carter (Chairman)
Paul Watkins (Secretary)
Mike Appleyard
Mary Ballin
George Beckett
Louise Bloom
John Furey
Moirra Gibson
Jonathan Glen
Mary Mears
Tony Page
Jerry Patterson
Andrew Povey
David Shakespeare, OBE

In Attendance: Chris Williams, Chairman of the LACE Group
Diana Pogson, Interim Managing Director, Partnership Board
Strategy Unit
Catriona Riddell, Director of Planning, Partnership Board Strategy
Unit
Martin Tugwell, Director of Regional Investment, Partnership Board
Strategy Unit/SEEDA
Jill Wedge, Interim Head of Communications, Partnership Board
Strategy Unit
Irene Cripps, PA to Diana Pogson, Partnership Board Strategy Unit
Jenny Whittle, Communications Manager, SEEC
Suzy Tigwell, SEEC
Colin Byrne, Regional Director, GOSE (for Section A items only)
Paul Lovejoy, Executive Director of Strategy and Communications,
SEEDA (for Section A items only)

A. SEE Leaders' Board (SEELB)**A1. Apologies and Substitutes**

- A1.1 Apologies were received from Roger Belson, Elizabeth Cartwright, Keith Gill, Gordon Keymer CBE, Henry Smith, Cec Tallack, Ken Thornber CBE and Ed Turner.
- A1.2 David Shakespeare substituted for Gordon Keymer and Jonathan Glen substituted for Ken Thornber.
- A1.3 It was **noted** that Keith Gill had stood down following the change of control of his authority following the recent elections; however there was no overall change to

the number of seats on the Leaders' Board for LibDems and representatives would be confirmed at the forthcoming AGM.

A2. Minutes of Meeting on 3 April 2009 and Matters Arising

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

A2.2 A list of confirmed meeting dates, as at 15 June, was **received**. This covered the Members 'Getting to Know You' Workshop, first meetings of the Partnership and Strategy Boards, Transport Board, Housing Board, SEELB/SEEC Executive, SEEC AGM, SEERA Ltd, Inter-Regional Forum and SEEDA annual public meeting. Dates were still to be confirmed for the Economic Development and Skills Board and Planning Panel. It was **noted** details of meeting dates and venues for the public meetings would be published on the Partnership Board's website as information became available.

A2.3 Members who had not already done so were asked to respond to the invitation to the workshop on 9 July indicating their availability as soon as possible so that numbers could be confirmed with the venue.

A2.4 It was **noted** that the forward programme of work would be published on the Partnership Board's website.

A3. South East Plan Update

A3.1 Catriona Riddell **advised** SEELB that:

- The Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople consultation had started and would run to 1 September 2009. The Examination in Public would start in February 2010.
- The consultation on Aggregates would close on 26 June 2009. The Examination in Public would commence on 5 October 2009.

A3.2 Responding to the query about the possibility of requesting reinstatement of the conditional approach to infrastructure, she **advised** that this would not be possible as this is almost the final version of the Plan; however although the policy was not as strong as the Assembly had wished, what was included was better than it had been.

A4. Report from the Working Group on Delivery Boards/Members Working Groups

a) Minutes of Meetings on 5 and 11 May 2009

A4.1 These were **received and noted**.

b) Terms of Reference for Delivery Boards and Member Working Groups

A4.2 It was **noted** that further work was required on the draft ToR for the new Economic Development and Skills Board. It was **also noted** that the draft ToR

for all the Boards would be put to the Partnership Board meeting on 24 July for approval/adoption.

- A4.3 It was **noted** that the draft ToR for the new Planning Panel would be put to the Strategy Board meeting on 17 September for approval/adoption.

A5. Update from GOSE

- A5.1 The Chairman welcomed Colin Byrne to the meeting, saying that SEELB looked forward to this being a regular agenda item.

- A5.2 Colin Byrne **informed** the SEELB that a couple of weeks previously the select committee had held its first meeting and would be taking evidence again in about a week's time, and he that he would report back on the recommendations made after its final meeting in July.

- A5.3 He **also informed** the meeting of the following:

- i) Following the recent Government reshuffle, John Healey is now the Minister for Housing and Planning; Rosie Winterton's portfolio covers local government at CLG and the economic brief for business and skills, in addition to being one of the Regional Ministers; Jonathan Shaw remains the Regional Minister for the South East and will continue to chair the South East Regional Economic Council, which is a key forum for identifying actions to help alleviate the impact of the recession. Jonathan Shaw had recently visited Milton Keynes and would be visiting Tunbridge Wells in July, with a further regional visit planned for September.
- ii) GOSE is working closely with local authority emergency response teams in connection with the outbreak of swine flu; to-date there had been 93 reported cases in the South East.
- iii) The £1bn jobs fund to assist 18 to 24 year olds with obtaining six months' work experience is time limited and will be available until March 2011. The funding provides a subsidy for those companies that provide work experience for this group, which is expected to be around 160,000 by the end of the scheme. The unemployment 'hot spots' in the South East are Thanet and Hastings. This is a rolling programme and all local authorities and the voluntary sector are being encouraged to apply to the fund; Job Centre Plus is hoping to work with local authorities to prepare their bids. Responding to the request for clarification of what exactly was meant by 'unemployment hot spots' as there are several small ones across the South East other than those mentioned, he advised the Board that the methodology used by the DWP only identifies Thanet and Hastings; however the rolling programme is available for anywhere in the region and all local authorities had been written to advising them of the programme.
- iv) The background to the Operational Efficiency Programme is the tightening of the fiscal situation and the need to make operational efficiencies; an additional element is local incentives. Kent is leading in the South East. The programme is to look at more radical ways of delivering public

services and bring about savings. Learning from this and other pilots needs to be shared across the South East.

- v) The Government is to publish the latest projections on climate change, which use three scenarios and more specific areas - down to 25 sq km. These projections will be important in preparing the Regional Strategy and it was **noted** that he would like a conversation at some point about how the South East's thinking is developing on this.
- vi) To-date there had been three legal challenges to the South East Plan, all in respect of the greenbelt - one from the Guildford area and the other two from the Oxfordshire area. The closing date for receipt of challenges is 17 June. The Plan will stand as it is while the cases go through court. Responding to the statement that a challenge was expected from the Eastleigh area, he said that so far it had not been received.

POST-MEETING NOTE: A total of six legal challenges has been received by GOSE.

- vii) Peter Jones and Sue John are coming to the end of their terms of office as SEEDA Board members and will be stepping down; the local authority vacancies have been advertised and the closing date is 4 July 2009.

A6. Update from SEEDA on the Economic State of the Region

- A6.1 The Chairman welcomed Paul Lovejoy, who was attending on behalf of Pam Alexander, to the meeting saying that SEELB looked forward to receiving regular updates from the RDA.
- A6.2 Paul Lovejoy said that if he could only call on one indicator it would be the Purchasing Managers Index and he thought that there is evidence that the economy may be approaching some stability following the very sharp decline in February/March.
- A6.3 It was **noted** that although 34,000 people had recently been added to the unemployment list, 31,000 had found employment and that this indicated there is a good chance of people finding work within three to six months of becoming unemployed.
- A6.4 He informed the meeting that SEEDA had been successful in redirecting funds to assist otherwise sound companies during the early months of the recession, prior to the national scheme being put in place.
- A6.5 The Chairman **noted** that the Members' workshop on 9 July, to which all members of all the Boards had been invited, would provide an opportunity to discuss this in more depth.
- A6.6 Paul Lovejoy **agreed** to circulate SEEDA's economic reports, which are currently circulated to local authority leaders, to the relevant portfolio holders as well.

B. SEEC Executive

B1. SEEC Constitution

- B1.1 Paul Watkins advised that following the April meeting the Constitution had been reviewed in respect of representation between tiers; he **confirmed** that the Executive has the power to nominate members to other bodies and therefore there is no need to amend the Constitution.
- B1.2 It was **noted** that it would be helpful to members to have the relationship between the different boards and groups clearly set out and it was **agreed** to provide an updated structure chart for the forthcoming AGM.
- B1.3 It was **noted** that the nominations made to other bodies at the April meeting of the Executive only held until the AGM in July, when there would be political group pre-meets before the full plenary at which nominations for the various boards would be put forward.
- B1.4 It was **noted** that nominations for the three delivery boards (transport, housing and regeneration, economic development and skills) still had to be considered. It was **also noted** that the Partnership Board would be required to ratify the Terms of Reference.

B2. Outcome from Local Elections: Implications for Group Representation on Committees

- B2.1 Chris Williams **advised** the meeting that analysis of the results showed:

Party	Percentage	Seats
Conservatives	63.87	13
Liberal Democrats	22.4	4
Labour	7.9	2
Other groups (in total)	5.79	-
	TOTAL	19

and that there was very little change to the number of seats and therefore no change to the proportionality on the SEEC Executive.

B3. Response to Invitation to Local Authorities re Membership of SEEC

- B3.1 Jenny Whittle **advised** the meeting that to-date 20 of the 74 authorities had responded and that a further letter, attaching the original invitation and enclosures, would be sent by the end of the week. The letter would emphasise the implications in respect of the AGM on 15 July.
- B3.2 It was **noted** that some authorities may have timing issues in that their scheduled executive cabinet meetings at which membership would be discussed/approved may not have met yet.

B3.3 It was **noted** that the invitation had been sent from the Chairman of SEEC to the authority Leaders and that Chris Williams had circulated copies to the Chief Executives.

B4. Draft Business Plan and Budget

B4.1 Chris Williams introduced the draft plan, which is to be considered for adoption at the SEEC AGM on 15 July.

B4.2 Paul Carter **advised** the Board that at the English Regions Network meeting he had attended that morning it was apparent that there is an opportunity to work more closely with the LGA, thus further empowering regions in several areas; influencing Government policy under the new regional arrangements/the devolution agenda could be an item for debate at the forthcoming AGM. It was **agreed** that the wish to be involved in broader issues should be made clear at the AGM, and that the issues around the LGA should be addressed outside this meeting.

B4.3 Jenny Whittle **advised** the meeting that it would be necessary to launch the SEEC website as soon as possible after the AGM.

B4.4 It was **noted** that brief notes of other relevant meetings, like the ERN meeting that morning, would be helpful; the "SE LGA Voice" had been thought of in the past but nothing had happened.

B4.5 Paul Carter **advised** that he had met with John Healey recently, who was impressed by what the region had achieved in a short time.

B4.6 Paul Carter reminded the SEEC Executive that there are funding constraints to be borne in mind when considering additional areas of involvement. The Strategy Unit is funded by CLG and can therefore only be involved in work in connection with the development and implementation of the Regional Strategy. The LGA is now recognising the Regions' ambitions of what can be achieved by the Leaders' Boards.

B4.7 It was **agreed** that Paul Carter would discuss with Paul Bettison the possibility of SEEC and Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs) working together. Chris Williams said it was his understanding that it was for the leaders of each council to select their member on the RIEPs; SEEC and the Leaders' Board could determine membership.

B4.8 The budget for the first year and the Business Plan were **agreed**.

B5. The Future of the Inter-Regional Forum

B5.1 Paul Carter explained the background to this Forum. Diana Pogson **confirmed** that support for the IRF would be part of the Partnership Board's funding. Paul Carter **confirmed** that membership of the IRF would need to be reviewed and nominations sought at the AGM; this is also a group to which SEELB can nominate members.

B5.2 It was **agreed** to endorse the report and the proposed way forward.

B6. Proposal for a South East Planning Academy

- B6.1 Catriona Riddell explained the thinking behind the proposal and agreed that the title was misleading as this could take a number of forms, even something as simple as a portal for information. For example, SEEDA has proposed ceasing funding of SE Excellence at the end of the financial year; if this is the case then the website could be taken over and developed. She had brought this to the SEEC Executive to see if they would endorse the principle of officers working up proposals for a regional skills resource.
- B6.2 Paul Carter thought this would be an appropriate way forward, adding value and providing for efficiency of resources; it could have a key role in helping with the delivery of the Regional Strategy.
- B6.3 Responding to the question was the proposal seen as a group to develop common policies or day to day matters, Catriona Riddell said that the idea is for it to be a resource for local authorities to tap into, whether they want to develop a policy or see what other authorities are doing; it would be used as a 'first port of call' rather than using a consultant.
- B6.4 Catriona Riddell said it would be helpful if a member of the Board could be nominated to liaise with her to take the proposal forward. It was **agreed** that Moira Gibson would liaise with Catriona and that a detailed report, including a proposed name and costs, would be brought to a future meeting of the SEEC Executive.

B7. South East Strategic Partnership on Migration (SESPM)

- B7.1 Martin Tugwell introduced the paper. Paul Watkins **advised** the meeting that the SESPM had agreed the paper at a meeting the previous week, and that funding for another two years beyond the current financial year would be available from the UK Borders Agency. He **also advised** that the existing staff had all applied for other jobs and therefore this would be set up from scratch as there would be no staff to transfer. Paul Carter **advised** the meeting that a proposal would be taken to the AGM.
- B7.2 The report was **noted**.

B8. European Matters

- B8.1 In Gordon Keymer's absence, David Shakespeare **advised** the meeting that in addition to being a member of the Committee of the Regions, Gordon Keymer is also the Leader of the UK Delegation. The CoR nomination process will be slightly different. Regional Assemblies will have the right to put forward their first choice, as last time, but because there is no consistent pattern of Assemblies or Leaders' Boards it will be for the regions to put forward their members, and the LGA will choose the nominees to keep a political, ethnic and gender balance regionally and nationally. A minimum of one third of the UK representation must be female and the region must nominate three people to cover both genders; a letter explaining the process will be sent by the LGA in good time to Assemblies and Leaders' Boards.

- B8.2 Paul Carter **confirmed** that the LGA had already been notified that Gordon Keymer is the region's Conservative nominee. It was **noted** that the other parties have yet to choose their nominees. David Shakespeare **advised** that there is an autumn deadline for receipt of nominations.
- B8.3 It was **noted** that Paul Watkins is to be advised of the party nominations for endorsement at the AGM.
- B8.4 Referring to Minute 10.4 from the April meeting, it was **agreed** that it was no longer necessary for Gordon Keymer to arrange a meeting in view of the above agreed action.

B9. Report from SEERA Ltd Meeting on 2 June 2009

- B9.1 Diana Pogson **advised** the SEEC Executive that currently there are only four directors of SEERA Ltd - Paul Carter, Louise Bloom, Tony Page and herself. All members of SEEC are to be invited to become members of SEERA Ltd, at a nominal cost of £1.00, which would be individual's total liability in the event that the company is wound up. Votes would be one man one vote, but there would be different categories for the directors, i.e. counties, unitaries, districts; between six and eight directors are needed to get the proper representation. Application forms for membership will be available at the SEEC AGM in July and the new SEERA Ltd membership is to be in place for its AGM on 16 October 2009. It is proposed to change the name from SEERA Ltd to SEEC Ltd in October - after the second tranche of CLG funding has been received. It will be necessary to amend the Memorandum and Articles, which will become one document, before the AGM to comply with updated company law.
- B9.2 Paul Carter said a brief update should be on the agenda for the July AGM. He **advised** the meeting that he had sought advice as to the individual authorities' liability for redundancy payments in the event of a change of Government; the advice he had received was that liability would be limited to £1.00.
- B9.3 It was **agreed** a streamlined proposal for governance arrangements would be put to the AGM, which would also cover future arrangements. It was **also agreed** that there should be no more than nine directors of SEERA/SEEC Ltd.

B10. Report from the Regional Transport Board Meeting on 22 April 2009

- B10.1 The Minutes were **received and noted**.

C. General

C1. Dates and Timings of Future Meetings

a) Timing of SEELB/SEEC Executive Meetings

- C1.1 The request to schedule future meetings with a 09.00 or 16.00 start was considered. It was **agreed** to keep the timing to either mid-morning or early afternoon, whichever was appropriate for each date.

b) SEELB/SEEC Executive Meetings

C1.2 It was **noted** that the next meeting will be on 16 October at the Institute of Materials and that the timing would be confirmed in due course. It was **also noted** that the date of the following meeting had yet to be identified but would be in late January 2010.

c) SEEC AGM

C1.3 It was **noted** that this will be on 15 July at Surrey CC, County Hall, Kingston-upon-Thames and that timings would be confirmed shortly.

C2. Any Other Business

C2.1 Chris Williams **advised** the Board that Stephen Ladyman, Chair of the South East Select Committee, had written to all Chief Executives seeking views on economic strategy and SEEDA. At the last meeting of the Board the view was that no representation should be made and he asked if this was still the meeting's view.

C2.2 As a number of local authorities are engaging with the Regional Select Committee it was **agreed** that Paul Watkins would draft a collective response.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 15.50.