

## SOUTH EAST ENGLAND LEADERS BOARD

### 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. General**

### **B1. Dates and Timings of Future Meetings**

#### a) Timing of SEELB/SEEC Executive Meetings

B1.1 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

B1.2 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

B1.3 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.

### **B2. Any Other Business**

B2.1 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.

B2.2 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.