

## SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS 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. SEEC Executive**

##### **Apologies and Substitutes**

Apologies were received from Roger Belson, Elizabeth Cartwright, Keith Gill, Gordon Keymer CBE, Henry Smith, Cec Tallack, Ken Thornber CBE and Ed Turner.

David Shakespeare substituted for Gordon Keymer and Jonathan Glen substituted for Ken Thornber.

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.

## A1. SEEC Constitution

- A1.1 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.
- A1.2 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.
- A1.3 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.
- A1.4 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.

## A2. Outcome from Local Elections: Implications for Group Representation on Committees

- A2.1 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	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	19

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

## A3. Response to Invitation to Local Authorities re Membership of SEEC

- A3.1 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.
- A3.2 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.
- A3.3 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.

#### **A4. Draft Business Plan and Budget**

- A4.1 Chris Williams introduced the draft plan, which is to be considered for adoption at the SEEC AGM on 15 July.
- A4.2 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.
- A4.3 Jenny Whittle **advised** the meeting that it would be necessary to launch the SEEC website as soon as possible after the AGM.
- A4.4 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.
- A4.5 Paul Carter **advised** that he had met with John Healey recently, who was impressed by what the region had achieved in a short time.
- A4.6 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.
- A4.7 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.
- A4.8 The budget for the first year and the Business Plan were **agreed**.

#### **A5. The Future of the Inter-Regional Forum**

- A5.1 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.
- A5.2 It was **agreed** to endorse the report and the proposed way forward.

## **A6. Proposal for a South East Planning Academy**

- A6.1 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.
- A6.2 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.
- A6.3 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.
- A6.4 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.

## **A7. South East Strategic Partnership on Migration (SESPM)**

- A7.1 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.
- A7.2 The report was **noted**.

## **A8. European Matters**

- A8.1 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.

- A8.2 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.
- A8.3 It was **noted** that Paul Watkins is to be advised of the party nominations for endorsement at the AGM.
- A8.4 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.

#### **A9. Report from SEERA Ltd Meeting on 2 June 2009**

- A9.1 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.
- A9.2 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.
- A9.3 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.

#### **A10. Report from the Regional Transport Board Meeting on 22 April 2009**

- A10.1 The Minutes were **received and noted**.

### **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.