

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS MINUTES OF THE ALL-MEMBER MEETING

Thursday 7 February 2013

Institute of Materials, 1 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5BP



1. **Apologies, declarations of substitutes and declarations of interest**
 - 1.1 Attendance list (attached). No declarations of interest were made.
2. **Minutes of SEEC All-Member Meeting on 8 November 2012 and matters arising**
 - 2.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.
3. **LGA priorities 2013-14 – SEEC input to LGA forward plan**
 - 3.1 Michael Coughlin, LGA's Executive Director, outlined the draft LGA Business Plan 2013/14. Priorities include economic growth, jobs and prosperity; financial sustainability for local government; public sector reform; and adult social care funding/ integration. The LGA is also working on a 'new model' for more independent local government to influence politicians in the lead up to the 2015 general election. A South East roadshow on 4 March will enable councils to give views on this and the LGA business plan.
 - 3.2 Questions covered how well the LGA meets councils' needs and what the LGA considered its main achievements. SEEC members raised the importance of making the case for adult care funding and for a greater local share of business rates. Ministers' criticism of council fees (eg for parking) was also raised, as this hampered councils' ability to raise income. Michael explained the LGA had recently conducted a member survey and was reviewing the results and offered to provide further information on LGA achievements. He saw business rate reform as a long term objective and saw potential to raise local fees with Ministers if it was a widespread concern. He welcomed SEEC's input to shape the LGA's work.
ACTION 1: LGA to invite SEEC members to 4 March roadshow on future LGA priorities and provide SEEC with details of LGA achievements (see annex 1).
4. **Infrastructure, transport and economic growth in the South East**
 - a) **Strategic transport investment priorities for the South East –report from SE Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport (SEDEEPT)**
 - 4.1 Trevor Pugh, Surrey CC Strategic Director, updated members on SEDEEPT's work for SEEC and SESL to identify strategic transport needs across the South East. The work aims to present a strong case to Government for investing in strategic road and rail schemes with national benefits that are beyond the scope of individual councils, LEPs and Local Transport Bodies. Investing in these schemes will help maintain global competitiveness and offer strong returns on investment. Priorities include better national access to South East global gateways (such as ports and airports), improving links to London and other parts of the country, and unlocking the South East's economic potential. Costs of several billion pounds would need public and private sector funding, including local and central government and LEPs.
 - 4.2 SEEC members emphasised the importance of making a robust case given national competition for limited public funding. Members also discussed specific projects and additional priorities, such as better road and rail links along the south coast. Trevor noted issues for further consideration, including modifications to the map of schemes. The Chairman highlighted the importance of joint working between SEEC, SESL and SEDEEPT on this and that LEP support would strengthen the case.

ACTION 2: SEEC to provide comments for inclusion in a further draft of the report, which would then be circulated to LEPs to seek their support before being presented to Government.

4.3 **ai) Norman Baker MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport**
The Minister explained the Department for Transport's strategic priorities are to enable economic growth and cut carbon emissions. He recognised the national value of the South East economy and emphasised Government's commitment to investing in transport to support this – including announcements in the Autumn Statement such as the local pinch-point fund, funding for 'shovel ready' schemes, the highway maintenance package, and investment in cycling. Local authorities and LEPs have a vital role and can now make decisions locally for their own areas, with £1.1bn devolved to Local Transport Bodies (LTBs) in the next spending review period. Transparency, value for money and accountability through elected councillors remain critical. The Minister is encouraging Network Rail, Highways Agency and others to engage with LTBs to identify strategic schemes. The focus must be on deliverable schemes that will make a real difference to the economy, not simply revisiting old schemes. Attracting external funding is also vital to make public money go further.

4.4 In discussion, members asked the Minister to ensure DfT was as supportive as possible to local partners progressing schemes. The Minister invited individual members to write to him outlining barriers that were holding back projects. Members also pointed out that South East and national economic growth were being held back by lack of infrastructure investment in the South East, and hoped SEEC's work on major transport priorities would inform the Department's future funding plans.
ACTION 3: SEEC to submit final strategic transport report to the Minister.

4.5 **b) Member debate – measures needed to help the SE economy grow: identifying key messages for a report to ministers on how to support growth, including transport & wider infrastructure needs and new devolved powers**
Nick Woolfenden invited members' input to shape SEEC's report on how Government could best support and enable the local commitment to economic growth. Independent think tank Localis has been appointed to write a report to be submitted to Government in the summer. It will set out why South East growth matters, what local authorities are doing and recommendations on how Government could help overcome barriers to growth. Members discussed asking Government to match local investment pound for pound. Other suggestions included the importance of identifying and addressing skills gaps, promoting enterprise among young people, apprenticeships, and the need to attract EU funding for South East projects.
ACTION 4: Members to email Heather Bolton or Nick Woolfenden with any further suggestions for the report, particularly good practice or examples of barriers.

5. SEEC response to UK Power Networks' business plan 2015-2023

5.1 Heather Bolton explained SEEC had been invited to join the UK Power Networks' stakeholder panel reviewing plans for 2015-2023 and there was now an opportunity to formally respond to its draft business plan. UKPN is responsible for the electricity infrastructure in Kent, Sussex and Surrey. Their charges make up 18% of consumers' electricity bills. Members agreed SEEC's draft response, focusing on improving quality and cost of service, planning assumptions & emergency planning.
ACTION 5: Submission to be finalised and submitted by February 2013.

6. SEEC response to Lord Taylor review of planning guidance

6.1 Nick Woolfenden explained the Government had appointed Lord Taylor (LD) to review national planning guidance following introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework. Members agreed SEEC's proposed response, welcoming Lord Taylor's proposals to reduce and simplify national guidance with the proviso that local government play a key role in ensuring the guidance is fit for purpose.

ACTION 6: Finalise and submit SEEC's response by February 2013.

7. Data Dashboard – latest trends in the South East

7.1 Nick Woolfenden highlighted key policy implications from the latest draft Data Dashboard for member discussion. Members approved the dashboard, commending its use both locally and to influence government. It will be circulated to South East MPs and published on SEEC's website. Members also agreed SEEC should write to government requesting publication of overdue information on national and international migration flows.

ACTION 7: Publish Data Dashboard and highlight key issues with SE MPs.

ACTION 8: SEEC to write to Government, in liaison with SESPM, requesting release of overdue migration flow data.

8. Items and links for information

8.1 **Letter to ministers re EU funding 2014 onwards** – SEEC plans to write to Government making further representations on the new European Structural Fund programmes post-2013. This will emphasise that funding should reflect the needs and opportunities of the SE; the importance of local government in the new arrangements; and allowing local flexibility to join up the different funding streams.

ACTION 9: Letter to be submitted by March 2013.

8.2 **Letter to London Mayor on cross boundary working** – Following member discussion, SEEC had responded to the Mayor of London's proposals for improved cross boundary working on planning. SEEC emphasised the importance of member-level dialogue on key economic growth issues. The GLA indicated support for SEEC's response, suggesting officers scope issues prior to member engagement. Members agreed to move forward on this basis.

ACTION 10: SEEC officers to attend cross boundary officer scoping meeting.

8.3 **SEEC newsletter** – SEEC's winter newsletter has been published. Members can contact Heather Bolton to suggest topics for future editions.

9. Confirmed forward meeting dates:

- 27 March 2013 – SEEC Executive, followed by Growth & Infrastructure Summit, with keynote speaker Michael Fallon MP, BIS Minister.
- 11 July 2013 – AGM & All-Member Meeting
- 23 September 2013 – SEEC Executive
- 13 November 2013 – SEEC Executive

10. Any other business

10.1 There being no further business, the meeting closed at 3pm.

Signed:

Cllr Gordon Keymer CBE, Chairman

Date: 11 July 2013

Name	Organisation	Signature / Apologies / Substitute
Gillian Brown	Arun District Council	Yes
Peter Wood	Ashford Borough Council	Apologies
John Cartwright	Aylesbury Vale District Council	Sub – Carole Paternoster
Clive Sanders	Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council	Apologies
Paul Bettison	Bracknell Forest Borough Council	Yes
Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire County Council	Yes
John Gilbey	Canterbury City Council	Apologies
Barry Wood	Cherwell District Council	Apologies
Myles Cullen	Chichester District Council	Yes
Nick Rose	Chiltern District Council	Yes
Bob Lanzer	Crawley Borough Council	Apologies
Jeremy Kite	Dartford Borough Council	Apologies
Paul Watkins	Dover District Council	Yes
Glynis Watts	East Hampshire District Council	Apologies
Gill Mattock	Eastbourne Borough Council	Yes
Keith House	Eastleigh Borough Council	Sub - David Airey
John O'Reilly	Elmbridge Borough Council	Apologies
Neil Dallen	Epsom & Ewell Borough Council	Yes
John Burden	Gravesham Borough Council	Yes
Stephen Mansbridge	Guildford Borough Council	Apologies
Ken Thornber, CBE	Hampshire County Council	Apologies
Ken Crookes	Hart District Council	Apologies
Jeremy Birch	Hastings Borough Council	Apologies
Tony Briggs	Havant Borough Council	Apologies
Ray Dawe	Horsham District Council	Sub - Roger Arthur
Paul Carter	Kent County Council	Yes
Elayne Merry	Lewes District Council	Apologies
Garry Wall	Mid Sussex District Council	Yes
Barry Rickman	New Forest District Council	Apologies
Ed Turner	Oxford City Council	Sub - Van Coulter
Ian Hudspeth	Oxfordshire County Council	Yes
David Burbage	RB of Windsor & Maidenhead	Yes
Tony Page	Reading Borough Council	Yes
Graham Knight	Reigate & Banstead Borough Council	Apologies
Carl Maynard	Rother District Council	Apologies
Patrick Roberts	Runnymede Borough Council	Apologies
Roland Dibbs	Rushmoor Borough Council	Yes
Peter Fleming	Sevenoaks District Council	Yes

Robert Bliss	Shepway District Council	Yes
Adrian Busby	South Bucks District Council	Apologies
Ann Ducker	South Oxfordshire District Council	Apologies
Frank Ayers	Spelthorne Borough Council	Apologies
David Hodge	Surrey County Council	Yes
Moira Gibson	Surrey Heath Borough Council	Yes
Andrew Bowles	Swale Borough Council	Yes
Gordon Keymer, CBE	Tandridge District Council	Yes
Ian Carr	Test Valley Borough Council	Apologies
Clive Hart	Thanet District Council	Apologies
Nicolas Heslop	Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council	Yes
David Jukes	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	Apologies
Robert Knowles	Waverley Borough Council	Apologies
Bob Standley	Wealden District Council	Yes
Gordon Lundie	West Berkshire Council	Sub – Pamela Bale
Barry Norton	West Oxfordshire District Council	Sub - Mark Booty
Keith Wood	Winchester City Council	Apologies
John Kingsbury	Woking Borough Council	Apologies
David Lee	Wokingham Borough Council	Apologies
Arif Hussain	Wycombe District Council	Sub - Julia Adey

Speakers

Michael Coughlin	LGA	
Trevor Pugh	Surrey CC	
Norman Baker MP	Department for Transport	

Other Attendees

Chris Williams	SEEC	
Heather Bolton	SEEC	
Nick Woolfenden	SEEC	
Jill Hogg	SEEC	
Kate Jones	SESL	
Roy Millard	SESPM	

Observers

David Godfrey	Kent CC	
Heather Wills	LGA	
Stephen Howell	Localis	