

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING

Monday 23 September 2013

The Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining
1 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5DB



Present: David Hodge (Chairman)
Andrew Bowles
David Burbage
Van Coulter
Ken Crookes
Myles Cullen
Roland Dibbs
Ian Hudspeth
Gill Mattock
David Neighbour
Barry Norton
Tony Page
Carole Paternoster
Roy Perry
Andrew Wickham

In Attendance: Chris Williams, Buckinghamshire CC
Heather Bolton, SEEC
Nick Woolfenden, SEEC
Philippa Mellish, SESL
Roy Millard, SESPM
Mona Sehgal, LGA
Marianne Abley, IESE
Andrew Larner, IESE
Meyrick Gough, Southern Water
Clare Gray, Buckinghamshire CC

1. Apologies, declarations of substitutes and declarations of interest

1.1 Apologies were received from Mary Ballin, John Burden, Paul Carter (substitute Andrew Wickham), Martin Tett, Paul Watkins, Moira Gibson, Gordon Keymer, Keith House, Bob Standley.

David Burbage and Tony Page declared an interest as Members of iESE.

2. Minutes of SEEC Executive on 23 March 2013 and matters arising

2.1 The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record.

3. Water Infrastructure: the South East's future needs

3.1 Meyrick Gough, Water Quality and Policy Manager, Southern Water, gave a presentation on the company's 25-year Water Resources Management Plan. The Plan was updated every 5 years; it included future demand growth, resilience plans, options for periods of drought and customer and stakeholder priorities. Members discussed the Plan and the following points were made:

- Further work was needed on public education to reduce the amount of water used for flushing toilets and watering gardens.
- What new initiatives were being put into place for new homes to protect water supplies? Tanks to store rainwater in each new build house would cost £2-3,000 at time of construction. Use of water meters reduced wastage significantly. Water re-use and desalination were likely to be seen in the future. When transferring water

from other places to combat shortages, Southern Water always chose the cheapest option to keep bills low.

- Thames Water bills were increasing to fund investment and a question was raised about the financing of Southern Water. For new investment, Southern Water would approach the market and issue bonds.
- Concern was raised by Members about the lack of financial and investment information. Meyrick Gough reported that funding was set by Ofwat, the business plan showed investment of £1.8 billion over the next 5 years and bills would increase no more than RPI. The cost of water was £1.10 per cubic metre.
- How was essential agriculture need supported in the plan? Meyrick said some farmers had their own reservoirs and water trading was also helping farmers.
- Water leaks created problems for infrastructure, for example damaging roads and sewers. Southern Water had put plans in place to reduce leaks – since privatisation they had reduced by 67%.
- Southern Water liaised annually with planning authorities on their housing plans.

ACTION 1: Customer feedback on priorities to be circulated to SEEC Executive.

ACTION 2: SEEC to write to the Director of Southern Water requesting information on the level of investment required to reduce water leaks, wastage and initiatives for new homes to re-use water.

4. Next steps for shared services and integrating health and care

4.1 Andrew Larner and Marianne Abley, iESE gave a presentation on the next steps for shared services and integrating health and care. iESE Ltd is the first 'not for profit' local government owned social enterprise to support local authority efficiency improvement. For example, work with Kent CC Human Resources had saved over £400,000. Any iESE surplus was spent on researching new ways of delivering local services.

4.2 In looking at alternative delivery models and shared services, members should ask three questions in their own authorities:

- Is place based leadership to the fore? Focus on people not processes/structures.
- Is there a strong change management culture to drive innovation and ensure officers have commercial acumen?
- Is a clear, phased approach in place?

4.3 Members supported joint research by SEEC, SESL and iESE on good practice in integrating health and social care. In discussion, members made the following points:

- Dementia had huge implications for councils, particularly how to delay onset as extending the period that older people could remain independent reduced costs..
- Health savings that could be made through increasing residents' physical activity.
- Extra care housing was not always counted towards affordable housing targets.
- Integration of health and care was hindered by the high salaries paid to people in Public Health compared to local authorities.

ACTION 3: Joint work should focus on case studies around prevention and supporting people in their own home.

5. SEEC Draft Business Plan

5.1 Heather Bolton presented the revised business plan, which incorporated further information on transport and infrastructure to support economic growth, including greater devolution of powers and freedoms. Members approved the Business Plan and made the following points:

- The importance of making the case for greater local discretion on planning issues and to ensure that unitary councils are included.

- The importance of extending high speed broadband into rural areas to support economic growth and farmers. There was concern about public money supporting BT as a monopoly supplier.
- The importance of SEEC working with partners to maximise national and EU funding streams coming to democratically-elected councils rather than to Local Enterprise Partnerships.

ACTION 4: SEEC to take account of Member comments and to issue the Business Plan for 2013-14.

ACTION 5: SEEC to invite the Planning Inspectorate to a future meeting to discuss planning issues.

6. Caring for our future – draft consultation response

6.1 Nick Woolfenden presented his report on consultation around implementing changes to social care funding and delivery. Member comments would feed into a joint response from SEEC, SESL and SECASC. Members made the following points:

- Surrey CC and partners were looking at a financial model on care costs.
- Planning obstacles on change of use should be relaxed to ensure families who want to develop their house to include a 'granny annex' can do so.
- Aylesbury Vale was looking at how to include Housing for Life in its local plan.
- Surrey wanted to promote new developments to encourage older people to downsize and release larger homes for families. Other areas were looking at co-habitation, where families move into older people's houses and in return provide services e.g cleaning. France had successful 'adopt a grandparent' schemes.
- In some areas out of area placements were a serious problem and should be included in the response.
- Points to strengthen were the high number of South East self-funders coming to councils in future for care and assessments; the need for clearer public information on responsibility for payment above £72,000; and encouraging people to make their own financial provision, eg via insurance.

ACTION 6: SEEC to finalise response taking on board Member comments and to circulate the response to Members before final sign-off by the Chairman.

7. Consultation Roundup: SEEC response to New Homes Bonus consultation and overview of other current planning and finance consultations

7.1 Members supported SEEC's New Homes Bonus response and backed individual rather than collective responses on other consultations, including capital receipts. In discussion Members made the following points:

- Concerns about the cost of HS2 and its impact on other infrastructure funding. It was suggested 51m should present their proposals for alternative uses of HS2 funding, but as some SEEC members supported HS2 a balanced argument was essential.
- The South-East has one of the most thriving economies therefore there should be more investment in this area to support strong economic growth potential.
- Properly funded compensation schemes were vital for projects such as HS2.

ACTION 7: SEEC to consider an invitation to both sides of the HS2 debate for a future meeting.

8 Relocation of Government-employed Afghan Staff

8.1 Heather Bolton outlined a request from the Home Office for local authorities to consider hosting relocated Afghan staff and their families. Councils accepting interpreters who previously worked for the UK Government would receive a resettlement package. Interested authorities should contact Heather who can provide a copy of the Government's 'in confidence' briefing. It would be up to each Authority to express an interest and negotiate a financial package with the Home Office to ensure adequate support for relocated families to integrate. Roy Millard, South East Strategic Partnership

for Migration, said initially families would have leave to stay for 5 years. A suggestion was made to link this to Military Covenant Agreements, including community cohesion.

ACTION 8: SEEC to contact Military covenant co-ordinators with information about the relocation scheme.

9. Items for information

- 9.1 Links to new policy announcements, such as the extended Coastal Communities fund, were included on the agenda for information. Members raised concerns about Growth Deal guidance and the implications for councils of the duty to co-operate with LEPs and LEP governance structures.
- 9.2 Chris Williams reported on a meeting with Sir Edward Lister, London Deputy Mayor, attended by David Burbage, David Hodge and Gordon Keymer. They had discussed exploring joint lobbying over the new funding regime (Tony Travers to meet members); the relationship between London and South East on planning and housing (the South East to provide some housing data in conjunction with the SEEC and SESL planners' group); and transport investment (building on joint work with South East Directors). There would now be regular meetings with Sir Edward Lister.

10. Confirmed forward meeting dates

- 13 November 2013 – SEEC Executive meeting 2.15pm. Members are also invited to attend an LGA South East Roadshow earlier this day
- 6 February 2014 – SEEC All-member meeting (shared date with SESL)
- 4 April 2014 – SEEC Executive meeting.

11. Any other business

- 11.1 There was no other business, the meeting closed at 12.20pm.

Signed:

David Hodge, Deputy Chairman

Date: 13 November 2013