



COUNCILS AND
COMMUNITIES
IN PARTNERSHIP

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This Bulletin reports the main issues covered at:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	25.01.08
REGIONAL HOUSING BOARD	17.01.08
REGIONAL TRANSPORT BOARD	24.01.08

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 25.01.08

SEEDA CORPORATE PLAN

The Committee received a [presentation](#) about SEEDA's Corporate Plan 2008-11. The Plan will be presented to the SEEDA Board on 31 January, before being launched for six weeks' consultation ending on 14 March. The draft plan will be scrutinised by an Assembly select committee on 13 February, the outcome of which will be reported to the next Assembly plenary on 5 March.

Members expressed concern about the scope of the Plan and the lack of reference to the Sub-National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR). Pam Alexander, SEEDA Chief Executive, explained that the Plan has been written on the basis of SEEDA carrying out its existing role for the next three years. Changes that will come from SNR have not been included yet, as although they will impact SEEDA, it is difficult to predict those impacts until details are announced. SEEDA also feels that the single regional strategy will not be developed in the years covered by the Plan. Pam Alexander welcomed recommendations from the Committee to refresh the Plan in a year's time, once SNR was more clear.

Members were also concerned about the lack of stress on environmental and social issues in the top level targets set for SEEDA by Government.

GOSE REPORT

Rolande Anderson, Regional Director, updated the Executive on GOSE's key areas of work:

Ministerial reshuffle

Caroline Flint has been appointed Housing Minister at the Department for Communities and Local Government. She replaces Yvette Cooper who has moved to the Treasury. Jonathan Shaw remains the Minister for the South East.

Stephen Timms is now Minister of State at the Department for Work and Pensions having moved from Department for Business,

Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR). He will be replaced by Shriti Vadera.

SNR

Ministers have been engaged by GOSE, SEEDA and the Assembly on the SNR. They seem to understand the South East's issues, but as yet there is no formal view from Government. Consultation on the SNR is now expected in February and there are plans for joint consultation events by GOSE, SEEDA and the Assembly in March.

CLlr Keith Mitchell, Assembly Chairman, informed the Committee that the Conservative Group had agreed a position on SNR that was 'positive, yet tough' and that he would be meeting the other Assembly groups to discuss it before the full Assembly meeting in March. Ian Chisnall, Assembly Deputy Chair, reported that the stakeholder members were also developing proposals for the Assembly following a meeting with Regional Minister, Jonathan Shaw.

Eco towns

Proposals for Eco towns are being considered by CLG and the department will liaise with any local authorities affected. There will then be a public consultation in February on short listed schemes. Development of eco towns is intended by Government as a way of getting developers and scheme promoters to consider the environmental impacts of new homes and Rolande Anderson assured the committee the schemes will not bypass the normal planning process.

Members expressed concerns that eco towns would be outside the regional spatial strategy process and would be extra homes above the figures agreed by the Assembly and tested at the Examination in Public.

Also several councils had not received official notification of proposals for their area and others were unsure if they were affected or not.

SIGN UP TODAY >>>>

MEETING DATES

FULL ASSEMBLY	05.03.08	16.07.08	12.11.08
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	11.04.08	13.06.08	12.09.08
PLANNING COMMITTEE (RPC)	19.03.08	21.05.08	23.07.08
REGIONAL TRANSPORT BOARD (RTB)	24.04.08	10.07.08	23.10.08
REGIONAL HOUSING BOARD (RHB)	15.05.08	03.09.08	20.11.08

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NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Copies of the full papers for Assembly meetings, are available on the Assembly website: www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/meetings

Cllr Keith Mitchell, Assembly Chairman, will write to the new housing minister to update her on all the housing issues in the South East and highlighting the need to keep eco towns within the existing planning process.

New appointment

Rolande Anderson announced that she will be leaving GOSE in March to take up a new post as Director-General for Transformation at the Office of National Statistics. Colin Byrne (previously interim regional director) will return from CLG as her replacement.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Assembly Chief Executive, Paul Bevan, updated the Committee on the following issues:

- Implementing the Sub-National Review (SNR) - Government issued a [holding statement](#) on 21 December 2007. The consultation paper on implementing the SNR is still awaited
- Assembly budget and business plan 2008-10 - late notification of budgets and business plan guidance prevented a presentation of the draft business plan to the Executive. Instead the Leadership Group will agree a budget and business plan for direct submission to the March meeting of the full Assembly
- The Regional Sustainability Framework (RSF) - following a 12-week consultation a new draft RSF has been produced. The RSF will be considered at the next Regional Planning Committee and will be presented, for endorsement, to the March meeting of the full Assembly.

ECO FOOTPRINT SELECT COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee received the [report of the select committee](#) on efforts to stabilise, and in time reduce, the region's ecological footprint. Given the need for concerted activity across the South East, the select committee considered the actions of SEEDA and a range of other regional organisations.

The Executive endorsed eight recommendations including:

- Regional bodies must supplement ecological footprint measures with a range of other indicators to provide a fuller 'toolkit' to guide policy development
- A route map should include activities required to reduce the region's ecological footprint and identify relevant organisations, partnerships and responsibilities for delivering these activities
- There should be a focus on improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings to complement regulations for new buildings
- SEEDA should develop a regular dialogue with the major supermarkets to reduce packaging and waste.

For the full recommendations see the [meetings section](#) on the Assembly website. The Committee also discussed the importance of behavioural change, to encourage people to reduce their impact on climate change.

GLOBAL CHALLENGE SELECT COMMITTEE

SEEDA welcomed the [select committee's findings](#). The high level activity in SEEDA's response will be reflected in its Corporate Plan. More detailed aspects will be taken forward through its business planning and programme development. This is a fast moving area and SEEDA is committed to continually reviewing and adapting its approach to supporting international business activity as global challenges and opportunities continue to change.

ECONOMIC MIGRATION

The Committee was given an update on research into economic migration. Rather than commission separate work, the Assembly agreed to be a partner in SEEDA's research along with the Learning and Skills Council, South East. The research is investigating economic migration and related socio-economic issues in the region. The consultants report their findings in April.

IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE AND SINGLE REGIONAL DELIVERY PLAN

The Executive Committee noted the work underway to update the Implementation Plan that supports the South East Plan.

The Implementation Plan needs updating, particularly given independent inspectors' recommendation that the region should accommodate a higher level of growth. On the assumption that the inspectors' recommendations will form the basis of the proposed modifications it is important that there is an understanding of the implications of higher growth on the investment needs of the region. The work now underway will ensure that an updated version of the Implementation Plan will be available to inform the members' consideration of the proposed modifications.

Work on the preparation of the single regional delivery plan for the RES and South East Plan is also being progressed. The single regional delivery plan will be an important supporting document for the region's updated advice on Regional Funding Allocations (RFA). It is anticipated that the region will be asked to submit its advice in respect of an expanded RFA by the end of the calendar year.

SEEDA REPORT

Pam Alexander, SEEDA Chief Executive, reported SEEDA's recent activities, including:

- The Thames Gateway Economic Investment Plan will be presented in March - there will be CLG funding for transformational projects
- The Homes and Communities Agency will be taking over responsibility for delivering the Thames Gateway Plan
- The Regional Infrastructure Fund is being presented to the SEEDA Board on 31 January.

MEETINGS

The dates for the Assembly's [2009 meetings](#) were agreed.

The Executive also received updates from the following meetings:

- [Social Dialogue Forum](#), 3 December 2007
- [Environment Agency Dialogue](#), 7 December 2007
- [Regional Housing Board](#), 17 January 2008
- [Regional Transport Board](#), 24 January 2008.

Planning the South East's future:

A Single Regional Strategy

Planners, developers, councillors and regional stakeholders are invited to a free event to consider the proposals for a single regional strategy in the Sub-National Review of economic development and regeneration. The Regional Assembly and Royal Town Planning Institute South East Region, will host a half day workshop on Wednesday 12 March 2008.

Places must be reserved in advance by email:

southeast@rtpi.org.uk

For more information see: http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/meetings/other_meetings.html

REGIONAL HOUSING FUNDING

The Board noted Ministers' final decision on the South East's housing funding allocation of £1.39 billion for 2008-2011.

The final allocation includes a small increase of £65,000 in funds available for improving run down private sector homes. Local authority partnerships submitted competitive bids in late 2007 to win a share of this funding. The extra money will be divided between the two highest scoring bids, which cover East Kent and Brighton/ East Sussex.

Overall, however, members believed the £1.3bn allocation was insufficient to deliver the region's affordable housing needs and pledged to continue making the case to Government for extra investment in the South East.

Members agreed to work with civil servants from the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) to clarify two further issues:

- The impact of the national housing subsidy system on the South East
- Government intentions regarding the use of affordable housing funding for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation.

The Board also called for a meeting with CLG on the opportunity for additional South East funding from a Growth Support (Affordable Housing) Fund. It is understood that local authorities will be able to bid for a share of £600million to build social rented homes on condition that 30% of the new homes are allocated to people moving out of London.

BARRIERS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Board agreed to develop an action plan to help the region improve its delivery of affordable homes. In recent years the region has struggled to meet its targets for building affordable homes.

Research has identified a number of barriers and uncertainties that are preventing delivery of affordable homes. These include:

- Lack of funding
- Public attitudes
- Lack of infrastructure to support new homes
- Time consuming and complex ways of working within the new system of Local Development Frameworks
- Uncertainty over how the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will work alongside Section 106 agreements.

Actions proposed include:

- Working with the Housing Corporation on seminars to help local authorities maximise affordable housing while minimising grant required
- Contributing to development of rules governing CIL
- Identifying best practice case studies to be shared throughout the region.

A detailed action plan will be presented to the Board's next meeting

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

The Board received an update on the South East's proposed Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF). The RIF will fund key infrastructure improvements that will allow new homes to be built, reclaiming costs from developers later. This means infrastructure will be in place alongside new homes, avoiding delays to the delivery of affordable housing.

The RIF is jointly supported by the Regional Assembly and SEEDA. It is expected that RIF will become operational in April 2008, with an initial investment of funding from SEEDA. The Government has not approved the Housing Board's request to invest part of the region's housing allocation in RIF for 2008-9, although discussions continue about future years.

The Board received a draft framework for RIF Governance and Accountability and were asked to respond with detailed comments to Assembly officers.

TRANSPORT PRIORITIES

The Board agreed to advise the Department for Transport (DfT) that the following schemes would remain regional priorities despite significant cost increases:

- Widening of the [A23 Handcross to Warninglid](#) in West Sussex
- Making the [A21 Tonbridge to Pembury](#) in Kent a dual carriageway
- Improving the [A21 Kippings Cross to Lamberhurst](#) in Kent.

This is on the basis that the Highways Agency (HA) funds an appropriate proportion of the increases, as would be the case if the schemes local transport authority projects. Assembly officers will be meeting the HA and GOSE to discuss the issue as a matter of urgency.

[East Kent access phase 2](#) will also continue to be a regional priority despite cost increases, although there will be discussions with Kent County Council, the scheme promoter, as to how the extra cost will be covered.

The Board noted that the proposed A3055 Undercliffe Drive scheme on the Isle of Wight has been withdrawn from the regional transport programme, by the Isle of Wight Council.

TRANSPORT PRIORITIES QUESTIONNAIRE

The Board approved a questionnaire to gather information on transport projects to be considered for inclusion in an updated regional programme.

The questionnaire, sent to promoters of transport schemes in the region, has to be completed by the end of April 2008.

OLYMPIC TRANSPORT PLAN

Hugh Sumner from the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) gave a [presentation](#) on the progress of the transport plan for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Board agreed a response to the plan on behalf of the South East Partnership for the 2012 Games, voicing concern that the partnership's comments, submitted during consultation last year, had not been recognised. This includes the lack of serious engagement with local authorities regarding transport links to Eton Dorney, the South East's only Olympic venue. The status of the 'Olympic Javelin' rail service to Ashford is also unclear.

Responding to Board members' disappointment that the plan fails to adequately consider links to the South East, Mr Sumner said the plan had workable transport solutions within budget. However, the ODA will be working with local stakeholders to develop these solutions.

SOUTH CENTRAL

The Board agreed to make contact with DfT to ensure that the re-letting of the South Central rail franchise – covering south London, East Surrey and the South coast – reflects the South East's spatial and economic priorities.

Matthew Lodge from the DfT told the meeting that there will be public consultation on the franchise specifications in spring 2008 before tenders are sought at the end of the year. The new franchise will be awarded in summer 2009.

EAST-WEST RAIL

The Board agreed to offer leadership, through the Assembly and SEEDA, to develop a funding package to deliver the East-West rail link for Oxford, Milton Keynes, Aylesbury and Bedford.

AIRTRACK

Iain Reeve, chairman of the AirTrack Forum, gave an update on AirTrack. The scheme, which would see Heathrow's Terminal 5 linked by rail to the South East, would be subject to public consultation in the near future.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

David Cooper, GOSE's Head of Transport, gave a presentation on Government proposals for moving towards a sustainable transport system. A white paper on the proposals is expected at the end of the year.

URBAN MOBILITY GREEN PAPER

The Board was asked to submit in writing their views on the European Green Paper: Towards a new culture for Urban Mobility. The paper is part of an initiative to progress the debate on how we can move around our towns in easier, safer and more sustainable ways.

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

A debate on the Regional Infrastructure Fund was delayed until the next meeting of the RTB in April 2008.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

The Board was given information on the following:

- **Mobility Management** - Work has commenced on four programmes and an action plan
- **Local Transport Bill** - Government appears to have taken on board most of the RTB's comments, but issues on funding and resource implications need to be pressed
- **Motorway Service Areas (MSA)** - Assembly officers have responded to an Highways Agency consultation drawing attention to bus and coach work that may require MSAs to be used as coach interchanges
- **Freight** - A letter has been sent to DfT and CLG asking them to re-examine the evidence base and policy for a strategic rail freight interchange
- **Passenger Transport Body Consultation** - DfT's consultation 'Options for strengthening bus passenger representation' runs until 17 March 2008.