



COUNCILS AND
COMMUNITIES
IN PARTNERSHIP

published 13.03.08

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This Bulletin reports the main issues covered at:

FULL ASSEMBLY (PLENARY)	05.03.08
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE	30.01.08

FULL ASSEMBLY (PLENARY)

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Assembly Chairman, Cllr Keith Mitchell CBE, updated members on the work of the Executive and Leadership Group since the last plenary in November. Cllr Mitchell's report covered:

- Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration Review (SNR)
- Learning and Skills Council (LSC)
- Health
- South East Plan Implementation

South East Plan

The Chairman noted that it has been two years since the draft South East Plan was published and seven months since the independent panel of inspectors' report. It is believed, after much delay, the Government intends to publish proposed changes to the plan by the end of July.

At the Plenary, members agreed a resolution proposed by Robert Hamlin, a social and environmental partner, criticising Government's delay. The resolution says:

The South East England Regional Assembly as the Regional Planning Body has no confidence in the Government's handling of the draft South East Plan. The Assembly therefore calls on the Government to focus its efforts on publishing its response to the South East Plan EIP Panel Report, and making the current regional planning arrangements work.

The Chairman will write to Ministers asking the reasons for delay.

SUB-NATIONAL REVIEW

Before the Plenary South East councils and the South East social, environmental and economic stakeholders met separately to discuss their respective views on SNR.

Cllr Mitchell informed the Assembly that the South East councils had agreed to oppose the transfer of strategic planning, transport and housing powers to government-appointed regional quangos. Instead, the RDA should be a 'shared regional agency', with local authority representatives making up a majority of its board.

They also called for the maximum delegation of economic development delivery and funding from the RDA to local authorities.

Cllr Mitchell reported the councils had established a regional local government grouping of all 74 councils and would create a 'task and finish' group of up to 15 councillors to develop proposals for a shared agency and negotiate with Government and SEEDA.

The councils agreed to support an orderly transition to new regional arrangements with a view to retaining expert and experienced staff and protecting the region's knowledge and evidence base.

Assembly Deputy Chairman, Ian Chisnall, reported the views of the South East social, environmental and economic stakeholders. He told the Assembly that stakeholders believed it was important that they retained a voice at the top table in future arrangements.

GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE CONSULTATION

A [resolution](#) was agreed to postpone a consultation on Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople pitches until September 2008. This was agreed to allow local authorities time to provide further information on pitch numbers to ensure consultation figures will be as robust as possible. The new timetable for consultation is:

- March- April 2008: An updating of evidence
- 21 May: Regional Planning Committee reviews new data and recommends consultation options
- 16 July: Full Assembly endorses consultation options
- September- November: 12 week public consultation

REGIONAL SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK

Members agreed to endorse the final draft of the [Regional Sustainability Framework \(RSF\)](#). The RSF sets out a vision, objectives and priorities to guide sustainable development in the South East. The meeting was told that a 12 week consultation had informed the final draft. The project's other regional partners,

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MEETING DATES

FULL ASSEMBLY	16.07.08	12.11.08	04.03.09
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)	16.05.08	10.07.08	23.10.08
REGIONAL HOUSING BOARD (RHB)	15.05.08	03.09.08	20.11.08

including SEEDA and GOSE, are being presented with the RSF for endorsement. A final RSF will be published in May 2008.

SEEDA'S CORPORATE PLAN 2008-11

The Assembly agreed its response to SEEDA's [draft Corporate Plan](#) consultation. The response, based on findings from an Assembly scrutiny select committee, covers:

- *The policy context, particularly the SNR.* Members want clarity on issues such as funding for regional planning and engagement with councils and communities.
- *Resourcing and funding issues.* Greater clarity is needed on how decisions will be made to allocate resources to local and regional initiatives.
- *Organisational and operational matters and how they are presented in the Corporate Plan.*
- *SEEDA's approach to working at the local level.* There was concern that the Plan needs to be clear that Local Area Agreements (LAA) are mechanisms for delivery alignment rather than methods of delegating funds.

SEEDA Chief Executive, Pam Alexander, assured members that a number of the Assembly's recommendations had already been taken on board, including the point on LAAs.

AGGREGATES CONSULTATION

The Assembly agreed consultation on Primary Aggregates Apportionment. This will seek views on three options for deciding how much sand, gravel and other such minerals should be extracted from each minerals planning authority area.

- 'Demand led' – weighted 70% on construction demand; 10% on past sales; 10% on resources not constrained by built up areas or internationally protected land; and 10% on resources not constrained by built up areas or internationally or **nationally** protected land.
- 'Environmental led' – weighted 70% on resources not constrained by built up areas or internationally or **nationally** protected land; 10% on past sales; 10% on resources not constrained by internationally protected land or built up areas; and 10% on construction demand.
- 'Demand and Resource led' – evenly weighted between sales/demand and resources, but with more emphasis on construction demand than past sales, and more emphasis on international than national designations.

The current method of apportionment, based on past sales, will also be included as an option for comparison.

Members also agreed a resolution to say the Assembly:

"Agrees that this provides a starting point for producing a revised apportionment of primary land-won aggregates based on a robust, rounded and forward looking approach."

The consultation will run between May and July, despite the delay to the Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople consultation.

SCRUTINY

Assembly Deputy Chair and lead member for scrutiny Ian Chisnall informed members that since the last Plenary there had been two select committee meetings. These were on SEEDA's draft Corporate Plan 2008-11 and the South East's efforts to stabilise and then reduce its ecological footprint.

The Ecological Footprint Select Committee made a number of [recommendations](#) for a range of regional organisations, including SEEDA.

Select committees planned for 2008-9 will cover SEEDA's Coastal Strategy; labour force and employment; SEEDA's relationship with sub-regional partnerships.

There was also a dialogue with the [Environment Agency](#) in December 2007.

ASSEMBLY BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGET

Members approved the Assembly [Business Plan and budget](#) for 2008-10, subject to minor changes that will provide more details on several projects.

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

Chairman of the Regional Planning Committee Cllr Moira Gibson told members that since the last Plenary, the committee had responded to the following:

[Thames Basin Heaths Interim Strategic Delivery Plan Consultation](#)

[Planning Bill and Planning Policy Statement 12 \(PPS12\)](#)

[Draft Planning Policy Statement 4 \(PPS4\) Consultation](#)

[Adding Capacity at Heathrow Consultation](#)

REGIONAL HOUSING BOARD REPORT

Cllr Elizabeth Cartwright, Chairman of the Regional Housing Board, updated members on [work of the RHB](#).

REGIONAL TRANSPORT BOARD REPORT

Cllr Nick Skellett, Chairman of the Regional Transport Board, outlined the [RTB's recent work](#).

PLANNING BILL AND RELATED AMENDMENTS TO PPS12

A response was agreed on behalf of the Assembly to the Planning Bill 2008. The [response](#) raises concerns regarding the handling of major infrastructure decisions and the lack of democratic input into such decisions.

In particular, the committee wants local authority views to be seriously considered by the proposed national Infrastructure Planning Commission, before it decides on major projects.

Members also want to see proposed National Planning Statements subject to the same rules as regional and local plans, especially on consultation and sustainability.

Responding to consultation on streamlining Local Development Frameworks in Planning Policy Statement 12, the Committee supports the proposal to allow local authorities to produce Supplementary Planning Documents based on regional and national policy.

REGIONAL SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK

The Committee recommended that the Full Assembly endorse the final draft of the Regional Sustainability Framework. The Framework sets out a vision, objectives and priorities to guide sustainable development in the region.

MINERALS CONSULTATION

The Committee recommended the Full Assembly accept three [consultation options](#) on how responsibility for the supply of aggregates should be allocated across the region.

GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE CONSULTATION

The Committee recommended four consultation options covering the distribution of permanent residential pitches for Gypsies and Travellers across the region.

NB: The Full Assembly meeting on 5 March 2008 subsequently postponed consultation until autumn 2008, so data and consultation options will be reviewed again by the Regional Planning Committee in May.

HEATHROW EXPANSION CONSULTATION

A response to Government's consultation on expanding Heathrow Airport was considered by the Committee. The response opposes any expansion of the airport as plans lack vital transport details and fail sustainability tests. Also a third runway and sixth terminal would jeopardise the quality of life for local communities.

The [Assembly's final response](#) was sent to Government on 27 February 2008.

THAMES BASIN HEATHS: INTERIM STRATEGIC DELIVERY PLAN

The Committee discussed consultation on the Thames Basin Heaths: Interim Strategic Delivery Plan. The plan includes proposals to allow homes to be built without damaging the heaths' special protection area, which stretches across parts of Berkshire, Hampshire and Surrey.

Members [recommended](#) a review of membership of the Steering Group to ensure that Hampshire and Surrey County Councils and Bracknell Forest were represented. The Committee also advised the Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership Board:

- The need for joint working was supported by the independent Panel of Inspectors that conducted the Examination in Public.
- The need for a document, such as the ISDP, that encourages and supports cross boundary working between local authorities on a consistent basis was recommended by the independent Panel of Inspectors.

DRAFT PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 4 (PPS4)

A [response to PPS4](#) was agreed by the committee. The Committee felt PPS4 guidance should help successful South East economies as well as failing ones elsewhere. It also raised the issue of the need to support infrastructure and affordable housing in more buoyant parts of the country to sustain economic growth.

EXTENSION OF SAVED BERKSHIRE STRUCTURE PLAN POLICIES

The Committee has asked the Government Office to extend certain Berkshire structure plan policies. The policies will expire in July 2008, but delays in Government's approval of the South East Plan mean that they must now be extended to prevent a policy vacuum in Berkshire.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

The Committee received updates on the following subjects:

- 1) [Sub-National Review](#) - Government is in the process of preparing a consultation.
- 2) [Freight](#) - recommends updating freight policy on strategic multi-modal freight interchanges.
- 3) [Planning Policy Statement 1 \(PPS1\)](#) - a supplement was published on 17 December 2007 on planning and climate change.
- 4) [LDD Conformity Statistics](#)
- 5) [Major Planning Applications Statistics](#)
- 6) [Implementation Plan](#)