



**MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 17 JANUARY 2008
AT
MARY SUMNER HOUSE, 24 TUFTON STREET, LONDON**

Present:	Cllr Ron Flaherty Cllr Richard Burrett Cllr Roy Martin Cllr Joy Waite Cllr Marjorie Smallcorn Cllr David Whittaker Cllr Reg Edwards Cllr Maureen Holding Cllr Robin Patten Cllr Dave Mackay Cllr Paul Taylor Cllr Rory Love Cllr Brian Hewitt Cllr Dennis Harryman Cllr Mike Cosgrove Cllr Neville Whiteley Cllr Patrick Lonergan Cllr Norman Buck Cllr Clive Williams Cllr Malcolm Bryant Cllr Rob Stanton	Canterbury City Council Crawley Borough Council East Sussex County Council Hastings Borough Council Havant Borough Council Isle of Wight Council Milton Keynes Council (in the Chair) New Forest District Council Rother District Council RB Windsor & Maidenhead Rushmoor Borough Council Shepway District Council Slough Borough Council Southampton City Council Swale Borough Council Test Valley Borough Council Vale of White Horse District Council Wealden District Council West Sussex County Council (p.m. only) Wokingham Borough Council Wokingham Borough Council
In attendance:	Jennifer McNeill Mark Palmer Shella Smith Oliver Woodman Alexis Garlick	Regional Director Head of Improvement & Governance Head of Employment Services (designate) Head of Employment Services Treasurer

SESSION 1 : Formal meeting

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr Ian Leake Cllr Michael Tunwell Cllr Dr Ray Ellis Cllr Geoff Lumley Cllr Phil Gerrella Cllr Rodney Rose Cllr Stanley Ward	Bracknell Forest Borough Council East Sussex County Council Hampshire County Council Isle of Wight Council Milton Keynes Council Oxfordshire County Council Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
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Prior to the start of the formal agenda, the Regional Director confirmed that the Head of Employment Services, Oliver Woodman, would be leaving SEE at the end of March 2008, and this early retirement had been agreed by the December 2007 Management Committee. Shella Smith, currently HR Business Partner, has been appointed to take over the post and we are now advertising for her replacement.

The Chairman offered congratulations to Isle of Wight Council who are the latest council to achieve Elected Member Charter status. This brings the number of councils awarded this status to five, the other four being Bracknell Forest BC, Spelthorne BC, East Sussex CC and Elmbridge BC.

2. Minutes

2.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2007 were agreed as a correct record.

2.2 There were no matters arising.

3. Subscriptions 2008 - 2009

The Committee received a report from the Regional Director outlining the proposed review of subscription calculations for 2008/09 and future years. The options presented ensured SEE would not be adversely affected by the cessation of the national grant, yet all represented savings to our councils against the amount of subscription paid in 2007/08.

The options were discussed at great length and Members asked that we send a positive message to our councils about the reasons for the change. This should reflect a justification of the added value of being in membership of SEE and the growing range of services we provide.

It was agreed that Option 3 would be adopted.

4. Revised Estimates 2007-2008 and Initial Budget 2008 – 2009

The Treasurer presented the revised estimates for the year 2007/2008, the initial budget for the year 2008/2009 and projections for 2009/10 and 2010/11.

She was pleased to report a reduced deficit of £12,205 over the original estimate of £36,299 for 2007/2008 – largely due to improved interest on balances, reduced salaries and associated costs and income achieved by our staff.

In relation to the initial budget for 2008/2009, the Management Committee in December 2007, had requested that scenarios be presented to the Executive Committee to reflect the cessation of the national grant and the effect on the subscription rates. Three budget options were therefore presented showing the impact of this and the three possible options for member subscription rates.

A query was raised regarding the Training Income projected for 2010/11 under Option 3, i.e. that it is lower than the projection for the other two options. The Regional Director confirmed that under Option 3, we will provide additional services to councils at no cost, not a reduction in work. Members felt it was important that we demonstrated the value we provide through subscriptions and sought to use this as a means to gain additional paid work.

The Revised Estimates were noted and the Initial Budget for 2008/2009 and Projections for 2009/10 and 2010/11 – Subscription Option 3, were recommended for approval to the Full Meeting scheduled for 13 March 2008.

5. Pay 2008 and beyond

The Head of Employment Services gave a verbal update on the forthcoming negotiations to secure a pay deal for 2008 and beyond. As recommended by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, it is likely the Employers will be seeking a 3-year settlement with a 2% limit. The Trade Unions at National level have presented a claim for 6% but only for a one-year deal.

Members were asked to note that the Pay Roadshow for the South East will be combined with the SEE Full Meeting on Thursday 13 March 2008.

The Committee noted the report.

6. Premature Retirement of Head of Employment Services

The Committee received a report informing members about the Premature Retirement of Oliver Woodman, currently Head of Employment Service with SEE, as agreed by the Management Committee on 5 December 2007. It also suggested a retirement gift to the value of 250.

The Committee noted the report and agreed to a retirement gift to the value of £250.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

The following Information Items were received and noted:

7. Members' Briefing Note

Members expressed the hope that the Members' Briefing Note would continue once Oliver Woodman had left the organisation as they found it extremely informative and passed it to other members of their council. They were assured by Shella Smith that it would continue.

8. SEERA Update Nos 82 and 83

9 CEEP UK NEWSLETTERS Issue 9 & Issue 10

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday 24 April 2008** at Mary Sumner House, Tufton Street, London. **PLEASE NOTE: This meeting is 24th April and not 17th April as stated on the agenda and at the meeting.**

SESSION 2 : Presentation

Joan Munro, IDeA gave a presentation on Workforce Strategy 2008 – “Making Government the Place to be, the Place to Work” and particularly Members' roles in tackling key workforce challenges. The presentation can be found on the SEE website at:

SESSION 3 : Focus Groups

Members were divided into 2 Focus Groups to discuss the following topics:

1. Workforce Strategy (facilitated by Joan Munro)
2. The new Local Government Pension Scheme (facilitated by Oliver Woodman)

Feedback from these groups is given below:

Workforce Strategy

Joan was keen to hear what is working in individual councils. Most councils confirmed that they had a People Strategy and examples of experiences are as follows:

- Cllr Rory Love, Shepway DC: Earlier drafts of the Workforce Strategy influenced their People Strategy. Political input is through the Leader and Personnel Committee. However the uncertainty of planning finance raised difficulties in strategic planning – where Councils are told to save money, this impacts upon staffing priorities.
- Cllr Maureen Holding, New Forest DC: Service priorities had been used to plan staffing.
- Cllr Marjorie Smallcorn, Havant DC: They have already looked at staffing priorities and are now looking at service priorities.
- Cllr Brian Hewitt, Slough BC: They have a new Chief Executive who has re-structured – therefore several new directors. Still have gaps within the organisation – have difficulty getting full time planning people and are using agency staff.
- Cllr Roy Martin, East Sussex CC: Qualifications are up but experience is down – difficult to get the two together.
- Cllr Mike Cosgrove, Swale BC: They are working with Medway and Gravesham to set up a consortium for Building Control staff. Would be useful to develop a South East series of templates. Not enough “blue sky thinking” between HR and the place drivers. Skills and learning is a very poor quality in the South East. They are consulting with staff who are 50/55 and over who want to reduce their hours (“step down”) – in this way the council does not completely lose their knowledge.
- Cllr Reg Edwards, Milton Keynes: Councils have not all signed up to Single Status. Need to think if you have the right Job Evaluation scheme and if you take enough modern apprentices.
- Cllr David Whittaker, Isle of Wight Council: The Isle of Wight is the 2nd lowest paid area within the UK. They had major cut-backs on staffing in 2005 which resulted in the remaining staff now being motivated to take IOW forward. The problem is that they have low wages and no big companies want to locate to IOW due to the education standards and expensive ferries. Once youngsters from IOW go to university, they do not want to return to the island. IOW Council has its own training programme.

Mark Palmer, Head of Improvement & Governance, SEE advised that Joan Munro had already spoken to Heads of HR in the South East about the Workforce Strategy. SEE have set up an OD Network and they would be discussing the Workforce Strategy at their forthcoming meeting in February.

Joan is keen that Members make the Workforce Strategy a key Leadership issue and not just something for the Personnel Committee. A lot more could be shared between councils and some areas have set up public sector academies – Members should lead on this. Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships have not been priorities for the South East.

Local Government Pension Scheme

Points raised were:

- A need for accurate assessment of costs. This required good HR information, a strategic vision and informed HR-valuing financial assessment. There was some misleading information unhelpfully in circulation raising unjustified cost concerns;
- Auto-enrolment in the Scheme (except for those with less than 3 months commitment) would bring a need effectively to separate out the truly casual worker from others. All staff could still choose to opt out. Training was required for those making appointments;
- The new tiered contribution bands required policy decisions from the Council, to determine its approach to term-time only employees, those with more than one job, those in receipt of variable bonus or earnings that vary. There were several discretions open to the Council. Again, training was required for those engaged in administration;
- Schools were a particular challenge, as were other dispersed work sites. There was a need for good information to be made available wherever there were staff;
- Employees could still be able to pay into the LGPS additional sums to increase their benefits through an AVC style system;
- The new Scheme remained complex. This was disappointing since the review had originally set out to simplify;
- A 5.5% contribution for the lowest paid still appeared to some an expensive deduction, although every needed to understand the significant benefits the LGPS delivered.

Signed:

Date: