

South East England Regional Assembly Economy Advisory Group

Notes of the meeting held on 12 May 2005

Present:

Barry Deller (CHAIR)	ACTVaR
Eike Muller	GOSE
Paul Lovejoy (part)	SEEDA
Eileen Armstrong	SEEDA
Sabrine Rumschedit	SEEDA
Philip Craig (part)	South East England Regional Assembly
Ray Bowers (part)	South East England Regional Assembly
Graham Tuck	Eastleigh BC
Roger Lawes	Hampshire CC
Ross McNally	South East Chambers of Commerce
Tim Martin	Kent CC
Sue Cooper	West Sussex County Council
Brenda Pollack	South East Forum for Sustainability
Mick Dunford	Sussex University
Roger Kidd	Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
Nikki Nicholson	South East England Regional Assembly
Nick Woolfenden (part)	South East England Regional Assembly
Catherine Rose	South East England Regional Assembly
Louyse Pearce	South East England Regional Assembly

1. Introduction and Apologies

Apologies for Absence

Alistair Robson	East Sussex CC
John Shapley	Buckinghamshire CC

2. Notes of the previous meeting held on 17 March 2005

Comments on membership of EAG noted. Suggested that new members could include representatives to cover input on skills and training, social partners, trade unions and community development sector. Nikki to discuss with Alistair and identify potential new members as appropriate.

3. EAG input to RES review

Philip Craig, Head of Policy at Regional Assembly presented his paper on the review of the RES and the Assembly's and EAG's role inputting to the review. Eileen tabled the timetable for the RES review and outlined the proposed consultation events. The RES review will be launched on 15th July with a workshop on the South East as a global region. Further workshops will consider aspects of competitiveness and productivity, sustainable development, and influencing Government.

Discussion focused around the overall process and the links between the South East Plan and the RES. London and the East of England have completed RES reviews recently and the other six RDAs are carrying out a similar review process to that in the South East. The RES will be reviewed again in three years time. The growth parameters in the South East Plan needs to set the boundaries for the RES review.

- EAG to discuss and contribute to the RES review over the next year.
- Regional Assembly to ensure future dates of EAG are set to allow EAG to input to the process.

4. EAG discussion on development of policies

Nikki introduced the papers and emphasised that the revised economy chapter is a working document. Tourism is now likely to have its own chapter. Key points raised in the discussion of the revised draft are set out below.

Context

Forces shaping the South East Economy

The context has been revised and significantly improved. However, the third paragraph needs to be made clearer and rewritten to say “Any downturn in the business sector...” rather than the current “A downturn in the business sector...”

The loss of reference to deprivation and exclusion (para 1.4) and quality of life problems (1.6), and to ‘sustainable development’ was discussed – it was agreed that whilst the chapter should be read in the context of the Plan vision there should be appropriate cross referencing in the Economy Chapter.

The South East Economy in 2026

The description (in bold) was welcomed – however it was agreed that this was not so much a ‘vision’ as an ‘aspiration’ and should be referred to as such.

Achieving Diverse Economic Growth

It was highlighted that there are several different views as to what Smart Growth means. It was agreed that there is a need for a paragraph on productivity, possibly referring to Smart Growth, as productivity is high in the South East region but is comparatively low compared to other areas within Europe. Include a statement on the need for the RES Review to further unpack what is meant by Smart Growth.

Policy RE1

- The Cross Cutting Group is redrafting policy CC8. Nikki will circulate the revised policy to EAG when it is available.

The revised policy was generally welcomed. It was agreed that consistency is needed between this policy and the new CC8.

Policy RE2

The policy was welcomed. It was questioned whether the criteria that was in the original RE4 should be reinstated. It was agreed that these were fundamental and should be included.

The order of policies was discussed. It was agreed that the sectors policy should be reinstated as RE2, RE2 Employment Land Provision should become RE3. It was questioned whether the first paragraph of the policy was needed. The policy should state that the policies should 'take account of sub-regional strategies rather than 'provide for'.

It was agreed that whilst more locationally specific information would not be provided in this chapter, cross-reference should be made to the sub-regional strategies.

Policy RE3

The policy title needs rethinking and should include reference to clusters. Suggested 'Support for Key Sectors and Clusters'

It was agreed the policy should focus more clearly on regional sectors that are genuinely high productivity, high value – this will make it clearly distinct from RE2.

Policy RE4

Graham suggested the policy should include reference to planning agreements to secure training measures.

The reference in paragraph 3 of the supporting text to 'seven million adults' to be corrected.

Policy RE5

It was discussed that Rural Economy section could be added to RE1 rather than being a separate policy.

Policy RE6

The information Communication Technology (ICT) section will look very out of date in 20 years time

It was agreed that this policy should focus more on changing working practices and lifestyles and access to ICT rather than on roll out of infrastructure (especially broadband). The title should be revised to reflect this.

Consultation responses

The group noted these.

Monitoring

Ray explained that once policies were agreed there was a need to decide how each would be monitored. Given the tight timescales, it was agreed that once policies were finalised, this would be done remotely by the group.

5. SEEDA Research

Paul Lovejoy presented to EAG work undertaken by Deloitte for SEEDA on the South East Plan.

- Nikki to circulate report to group

The report was discussed, including GVA and productivity assumptions, and the impacts of offshoring and migration.

Nick Woolfenden updated the group on further regional employment and economic forecasts recently commissioned from Experian. These correspond with the consultation South East Plan's growth options of 25,500 and 28,000 dwellings pa. These show a slowing in annual average GVA growth compared to the forecasts based on the 32,000 dwelling pa option. However they also show the gap between labour supply and demand would continue to be significant. Assembly officers will be undertaking further analysis of these forecasts to inform Assembly Members' decisions in the coming weeks.

7. AOB

None discussed.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Date to be confirmed