

South East England Regional Assembly Economy Advisory Group

Notes of the meeting held on 17 March 2005

Present:

Alistair Robson	East Sussex County Council - CHAIR
Roger Lawes	Hampshire County Council
Eileen Armstrong	SEEDA
Sabine Rumscheidt	SEEDA
Ross McNally	South East Chambers of Commerce
Tim Martin	Kent County Council
Sue Cooper	West Sussex County Council
Brenda Pollack	South East Forum for Sustainability
Ray Bowers	South East England Regional Assembly
Nikki Nicholson	South East England Regional Assembly
Nick Woolfenden	South East England Regional Assembly
Catherine Rose	South East England Regional Assembly

1. Introduction and Apologies

Apologies for absence

John Shapley	Buckinghamshire County Council
Barry Deller	ACTVAR
Graham Tuck	Eastleigh Borough Council
Mick Dunford	Sussex University
Nigel Horton Baker	Surrey Economic Partnership

2. Notes of the EAG Brainstorming Session held on 12th January 2005

No outstanding actions noted.

3. Future Role of EAG / Work Programme

Alistair summarised the outcome of the meeting of Advisory Group Chairs:

- Use of more task groups was needed
- Cross-Cutting Group needs to be more closely involved in co-ordinating technical work, in contrast to StAG
- StAG's role is important as a political filter between RPC and other advisory groups
- Membership of advisory groups should be reviewed

There was discussion around the need for clarity in the role of advisory groups and membership. With the devise of Skills Insight it was felt that a new member to cover the skills area was needed. Alistair asked all members to provide comments on

membership including suggesting the types (job title/role) of new members needed on the group.

ACTION: All members to provide comments on membership of EAG

4. Sustainability Appraisal

Roger outlined the work which the Sounding Board and Sustainability Appraisal consultants had been carrying out. The list of key comments and recommendations on the economy policies had been circulated. It was stressed that this needed to be read in conjunction with the points raised by ERM in their overview on the appraisal as well as more detailed comments in annexes. Each recommendation was discussed:

- **RE Overall: there should be more focus on ensuring that deprived areas benefit from regional growth and development** – members agreed with the recommendation but commented that clarification was needed on the terminology: by deprived areas is the reference to regeneration areas? What is meant by regional growth? Also need to decide where the recommendation should be addressed i.e. the cross-cutting policies, economy policies and/or in the sub-regional strategies?
- **RE1: Add criteria on locations which provide employment opportunities which are accessible to the most deprived communities and RE4: Recommended strengthened to include a specific focus on deprived areas** – members agreed this should be taken into account in the redrafting of policies RE1 and RE4. Also need to rename policy RE1.
- **RE4: Add 'which minimise reliance on the car/lorry'** – members agreed this should be taken into account in the redrafting.

ACTION: Members involved in policy drafting to take account of recommendation of the sustainability appraisal

5. EAG discussion on development of policies

Points raised included:

- Need to link sub-regions work on employment policies to the regional policies. Task 4 of the work programme includes reviewing sub-regional policies for consistency and impact on regional policy
- The balance in the section with only four economy policies and seven tourism policies. There is a need to provide a context for the tourism policies by stating that the sector is only a small percentage of employment in the region and hence not necessarily more significant than other sectors discussed.
- Need to distinguish between policies which set the strategy for the region and those which set actions for implementation by local authorities and others
- Draft text for policy RE2 was tabled and discussed at the meeting. The text and points raised are summarised in the attached note on the sector policy. Comments by all members of EAG are invited on the draft wording.

- Need to reconvene the sub-group who drafted policy RE4 to revisit in light of the ODPM guidance (January brainstorm concluded that a criteria based approach for three types of area should be drafted), sustainability appraisal, future proofing of policies and consultation responses

ACTION: All EAG members to provide comments to Cath on policy RE2 by 15th April.

ACTION: Alistair to reconvene sub-group for drafting policies RE1/4 (Alistair, Tim, John and Roger).

6. Updates

Eileen updated the group on the research which Deloitte's has been carrying out to provide the framework for SEEDA's response to the South East Plan and unpacking smart growth.

There was discussion around the need to work together to understand Smart Growth and particularly the composition of the 3% GVA growth rate advised by Experian and how it relates to housing. The Assembly are working with SEEDA on the work they have commissioned from Deloitte's to unpack Smart Growth.

The Assembly provided an update on the economic forecasts:

- The work to date will be sensitivity tested by commissioning a different modelling organisation to produce a high level forecast at the regional level
- The Experian model will be re-run with 'add factors' as needed once the sub-regional responses have been reviewed.

7. Any other business

None

8. Date of Next Meeting

2:00, 12th May at Berkeley House