

# **SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY MONITORING ADVISORY GROUP**

## **NOTE OF MEETING 17 DECEMBER 2007**

### **Present:**

Graham Ashworth	Chair; New Forest District Council
Catriona Riddell	South East England Regional Assembly
Kate Aulman	South East England Regional Assembly
Sandrine Mathard	South East England Regional Assembly
Tom Kingston	South East England Regional Assembly
Phil Eadie	SEEDA
Janet Chard	Wycombe District Council
Tony Trilsbach	Kent County Council
Chris Waite	SEERAWP

### **Apologies:**

Sunethra Mendis	GOSE
Ivan Perkovic	SEEDA
Claire Kerr	Natural England
Michael Knight	Natural England

## **1. Introductions and Apologies for Absence**

- 1.1 Graham Ashworth opened the meeting and welcomed those in attendance. No other apologies were given other than those received in advance of the meeting.

## **2. Minutes and Updates from the Last Meeting**

- 2.1 As the previous meeting had not taken place, an update had been distributed to the Group and this was passed without any alterations or comment.

## **3. Regional Monitoring Report 2007**

- 3.1 The aim of the meeting was for the monitoring team to talk through the chapters completed so far. It was noted that the economy chapter was still being drafted and there was also some data missing from the housing chapter. The Assembly monitoring team sought feedback on general points on design & layout; on high level points emerging from data and to go through policy implications and actions, paying particular attention to the links with indicators.

- 3.2 It was agreed that this report should focus on how monitoring relates to planning. The structure of the report will be the same as in previous years. A discussion took place on the use of the red, green and amber traffic lights system and it was pointed out that there was more amber than either red or green which gave rise to some grave concerns and questions. It was suggested that the report could be bolder with its use of red and green. It was pointed out to the Group that one of the problem areas is that each chapter is put together by an individual and it may be better to have one person over viewing the use of the colour coding to ensure greater consistency.
- 3.3 Chris Waite made a further suggestion – the use of another colour such as grey to indicator those policies for which an actual traffic light cannot be determined because of for example flaws in or lack of data. It was agreed that this should be implemented.
- 3.4 The Group went through the individual indicators to clarify and feedback thoughts and concerns, the problem areas were as follows:
- Indicator 23 – more detail required on why there has been such a decline.
  - Chapter 3 – currently indicated as amber, review these policies.
  - Indicator 25 – check the figures from Kent.
  - Housing – over summarised and affordable housing getting worse. Tony suggested map 9 should be larger and perhaps should distinguish between those LAs reporting gross rather than net figures. It was agreed that the density indicators should be reviewed in light of its' removal from the CLG National Core output Indicators.

**Post-meeting note:** distinction between the two types of figures is not possible as not all LAs make it clear in their returns if the figures are gross or net. Some LAs may also return a mix of gross and net figures.

- Chapter 7 – query on figures given for C&D waste and text – this needs to be checked.
  - Indicator 76 – how is this monitored as no planning applications are required, organisations who provided grants on an individual basis could be hiding the true figures, approach them and obtain their figures.
  - Indicator 76 – smaller scale renewable energy schemes (eg a turbine on top of your house) no longer require planning permission, so how can we monitor them? This point is to be checked with Assembly colleagues.
  - Indicator 77 – no data, therefore this indicator is summarised in the text.
- 3.5 The individual chapters are about to be sent to the relevant Advisory Groups for their feedback and comments which will then be incorporated into the document. The draft document will then be sent initially to the Regional Planning Committee working group for their comments, these in turn will be incorporated into the final draft document which will be submitted to the January RPC for final approval. At this stage, it will be available on our website - 18.01.08 – at which point the group will be notified.

- 3.6 The main report should highlight the actions to be taken and the cover report which goes to RPC will summarise these actions. Overall the opinion of the report as it currently stands is that the general presentation is good and clear.

**ACTION:**

- **It was agreed the Monitoring team would look at some of the comments paragraphs and see if they could be edited.**
- **Monitoring team to carry out a cross-check of the indicators and policy implications, ensuring they relate to the correct policy.**
- **MAG to be notified when the draft document goes on to the Assembly website.**

**4. Development of the Housing and Commercial and Leisure Surveys**

4.1 Kate updated the Group on the work of creating an online mechanism for the collection of data from all local, unitary and county authorities using the Data Hub which is hosted on SEE-iN. This work follows on from the scoping study undertaken by Roger Tyms in 2006.

4.2 As a result of the Roger Tym work, solutions were identified in the short, medium and long-term and the Assembly is now working towards the medium solutions identified. The work is to be undertaken by the consultants Active Solutions, who are going to take all the excel spreadsheets currently used to collect development data and create the online entry database from these.

4.3 Following a short but robust discussion amongst the Group, it was recognised that several key elements were important and should be carefully considered and managed, these were as follows:

- The importance of engaging with people at an early stage of development
- Put together a workshop for the overview of wire frame
- Create a focus group to oversee all aspects but also open the opportunity up to LAs to trial the system and feedback to the Assembly
- Should have the ability to download blank forms for people who are used to firstly gathering the information manually onto paper format before entering them electronically
- Ensure the correct personnel contacts are kept up to date

4.4 It was also recognised that where the current systems work well between the counties and districts, there should be no attempt to change or interfere with them, which was fully taken on board. It was agreed that this work is primarily designed for process not content.

**ACTION:**

- **Assembly to put together a workshop to look at overview of wire frame which would probably be late spring/early summer.**

## **5. Monitoring Work Programme 2008/09**

### **5.1 Review of Urban Geographies.**

- 5.1.1 The Group were informed that this work would review the boundaries currently used to monitor development in the Assembly surveys. There is a need for consistent boundaries for urban areas and the Assembly is looking to commission work on this project this coming year.
- 5.1.2 It was recognised that the issue of sub-regional boundaries is entirely different from this work. Boundaries must statistically follow wards etc to make sense of current difficult issues. A fundamental question is on how you define an urban area. The offer of assistance from Kent County Council who have been involved in three separate pieces of work in this area was gratefully received.
- 5.1.3 It was also strongly recommended that the Assembly seek involvement of the ONS regional statisticians who are experts in this field and may be able to offer valuable input.
- 5.1.4 Tony requested that wherever possible boundaries should follow existing boundaries such as SOAs.

### **5.2 Evaluating the Gaps in Indicators.**

- 5.2.1 The Assembly is looking to commission work to consider the gaps in data relating to the indicators set out in the South East Plan and the emerging Regional Sustainability Framework. In some cases indicators have been drawn up despite there being gaps in data, or there being limitations in data availability. This work would scrutinise those gaps, consider whether there are any alternative similar data and if not recommend alternative indicators for the monitoring of policy and objectives.
- 5.2.2 A key work area related to this is climate change; the Assembly is considering letting a specific project to define indicators to measure the regions' 'preparedness' for climate change.
- 5.2.3 Chris suggested that the Assembly share a list of all Plan indicators with MAG, highlighting those that are not currently monitored and those that are known to have gaps in terms of data.
- 5.2.4 Graham raised the issue of monitoring the Plan more generally and noted three particular areas of concern – implementation, sub regions and the monitoring framework. Following discussion, the main areas for consideration are listed below:

- Consider work streams which look at the Implementation Plan, Panel Report and other relevant documents
- Sub-regions – how do we monitor these? The who and how is critical and is an issue currently. It was agreed that sub regions should each have 3 or 4 indicators specific to their policies, in addition to the headline ones drafted in the Plan. Kate agreed to draw up a list of the sub regions, who is doing what with respect to monitoring.
- Look at the relationship with the LAA process
- The Panel Report gave specific recommendations and if the Government agree these, then they can be used as a hook for developing the monitoring framework for the Plan.

**ACTION: This topic to be addressed at the next meeting.  
Kate to draft list of Plan indicators.**

## **6. Notice Board**

### **6.1 Membership of MAG**

6.1.1 The membership of the Monitoring Advisory Group had been looked at and those present were the ones chosen as the best people to carry the work further. The Group needs a few more suitable people and the Assembly had looked to gain one person from each of the other key Advisory Groups such as Economy and Transport, unfortunately, the membership of those groups is also under review as the South East Plan is in place and the emphasis is now on delivery rather than policy. The Assembly continues to work on these issues and will update this Group further.

### **6.2 Affordable Housing Monitoring**

6.2.1 Kate updated the Group on this topic. In 2007 the Assembly carried out an amended affordable housing survey that has been developed in consultation with local authorities (work carried out by Three Dragons). This survey and its results will be evaluated in early 2008, again by Three Dragons, in time to make amendments to the surveys for data collection in the summer.

### **6.3 CLG Review of AMR Core Indicators**

6.3.1 Kate had received a draft report of the CLG Review. There have been some changes to the list of national Core Output Indicators - some of the original indicators had been dropped and some new ones which were felt to be more relevant had been included. Kate agreed to share the document with this Group.

6.3.2 Work is also being undertaken on behalf of CLG on the data flows that operate between national, regional and local bodies. Consultants Informed Solutions

have been contracted to undertake this study on how information is passed between departments, again, the outcomes from this work will be shared with this Group. It is likely to result in a set of recommendations for the development of a mechanism to streamline data flows, making them more consistent and efficient. Tony has been involved in various workshops that are feeding into the research. One of the concerns is that CLG may ultimately wish to request data directly from the Local Authorities (LAs). The Assembly feels that it should maintain control over this process as it could lead to unnecessary disruptions and confusion and additional burden, as the Assembly will require information from local authorities that is in addition to data collected by CLG. A pilot scheme will be run next spring but currently there is a lack of detail to be had.

#### 6.4 English Regions Network

6.4.1 There had been a meeting of the ERN Monitoring Group early in November. The minutes of that meeting are attached.

#### 6.5 SEE-IN

6.5.1 SEE-IN have set up an informal network of observatories and are currently working on putting together a series of roadshows aimed at stakeholders to inform them of the regional picture of data provision and sources. Following a short discussion, it was also agreed that this should include LSPs and Phil Eadie asked the Group if there were any other ideas of who to invite or include. Any suggestions should be made direct to Phil.

6.5.2 Suggestions were also made to Phil that there could be links on individual local authority websites to SEE-IN. It was agreed that if any further ideas came up, they would be emailed to Phil for consideration.

### 7. **Any Other Business**

7.1 The Regional Sustainability Framework (RSF) consultation had concluded at the end of November. The document sets out key objectives and indicators for the RSF which takes over from the Integrated Regional Framework (IRF), this document should be signed off in March 2008. The document will be put before the January Regional Planning Committee at which point it will be published on the Assembly website with the meeting papers.

7.2 Work is also ongoing on the Implementation Plan. Thoughts around the monitoring of implementation are being drawn together; currently there are three strands suggested: the RMR, where monitoring of implementation needs to be more explicit in commentary; monitoring of actions set out in the Plan and updates to the schedule of infrastructure attached to the Implementation Plan. It was agreed that all three of the Implementation Plan monitoring strands may not be monitored every year.

- 7.3 Following a short discussion, it was suggested that the monitoring of specific projects or schemes may be more relevant at a sub-regional monitoring level. And it was suggested that a workshop be held to look at this more closely.

**ACTION: The Assembly will organise a workshop to look at the monitoring aspect of the Implementation Plan early in 2008.**

## **8. 2008 Meeting Dates**

- 8.1 It was agreed that Pat would canvas the Group for the date of the next meeting to be held late February.

**ACTION: Pat to put forward potential dates to the Group and organise the next meeting for end of February 2008.**