

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY MONITORING ADVISORY GROUP

NOTE OF MEETING & ACTIONS 29 JANUARY 2007

Present:

Graham Ashworth	Chair; New Forest District Council
Nikki Nicholson	South East England Regional Assembly
John Pounder	South East England Regional Assembly
Sandrine Mathard	South East England Regional Assembly
Tom Kingston	South East England Regional Assembly
Richard Hanna	SEE-iN
Janet Chard	Wycombe District Council
Richard O'Callaghan	Environment Agency
Claire Kerr	Natural England
Michael Knight	Natural England

Apologies:

Mike Holford	Brighton & Hove City Council
Sunethra Mendis	GOSE
Peter Welsh	Kent County Council
Bryan Lyttle	Berkshire Joint Strategic Planning Unit
Alan Cole	Hampshire County Council

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.
- 1.2 It was noted that for the previous 1-2 meetings there has been an increased lack of attendance from district and unitary authorities. Reasons for this suggested by the attendees are the current South East Examination in Public, LDF's and a general increase in workload in the Monitoring area. The group in attendance felt the meetings are still productive and should continue, but agreed that perhaps there needs to be fewer, but more focussed agenda items. It was suggested that when this years AMR is published a link to MAG could be created to raise the profile of the group and to push the monitoring agenda.

2. Minutes and Updates from the Last Meeting

- 2.1 Note 2.2 regarding the Waste Monitoring Data. An update has not been received from Bryan Lyttle so this action is carried forward.
- 2.2 Note 3.8 actions; are complete with the exception of bullet no. 4 which will be actioned at the RPC Monitoring Member Group meeting on 12 March.

- 2.3 Note 4.3 bullet 1 - complete with the exception of the Housing Advisory group (meeting in early February) and SERTAB and SEERAWAP. The monitoring team will be emailing these two groups for their comments.
- 2.4 Note 6.10 regarding the Affordable Housing Task Group. Sandrine Mathard is due to meet with Lynn Cousins and Alison Bailey and then a meeting of the group will be set up in March.

ACTION:

- **Nikki Nicholson to circulate to the group the attachment sent by Sunethra in her comments to us.**
- **Assembly to circulate to the group the EiP Statement for Matter 10B.**

- 2.5 The minutes were otherwise agreed by the group as a true record of the meeting.

3. Regional Monitoring Report (RMR) 2006 - First Draft

- 3.1 The aim of the meeting today is for the monitoring team to talk through the revised structure; present initial layouts from the publishers; gain feedback on general points on design & layout; gain feedback on high level points emerging from data and go through policy implications and actions, in particular what should be put in the Executive Summary.
- 3.2 Nikki informed the group that the main changes to the RMR this year are the changes in layout and design. There have also been some changes to the way the indicators are reported up on. This format will be used for another year until the South East Plan has been put into place, when the format of the RMR will be revised.
- 3.3 Further, more detailed, comments are requested to be sent by Friday 9 February.
- 3.4 The first draft of the RMR has been seen by other Advisory Groups and their comments have been received.
- 3.5 The RMR will include an introduction (executive summary) and 8 different chapters. Each chapter will have tables showing key indicators and headline policy implications; latest data on each indicator; the trend; key findings and conclusions and a summary of actions - what we need to do next.
- 3.6 The Executive Summary is currently being drafted and that, along with the main report, will be presented to Regional Planning Committee on 21 March 2007.

- 3.7 It was suggested by the group that the trend column is a little confusing and it was therefore recommended that an alternative to the 'up' and 'down' arrows are used; for example a colour coded traffic light system. It was suggested by the group that a note would be made on each page to advise that an 'up arrow' might not always be positive. This is currently explained in the introduction, but the group felt that it would be useful to have in the footer of each chapter.

ACTION:

- **Monitoring team to clarify what will be contained in the 'trend' column and make amendments to the RMR accordingly.**

- 3.8 One of the group indicated they felt some of the comments (in the policy implications tables) are a bit more detailed than perhaps they need to be and they aren't as specific compared to others. It was also raised that it could cause confusion when reading the indicators and policy implications.

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.**

- 3.9 The group were informed that key findings and commentary are not provided for the indicators that have stayed the same or not moved on.

- 3.10 Chapter 3 of the RMR talks about SSSI's. The question was raised as to whether international sites are covered. Natural England offered to give more detailed feedback on how to amend this chapter to reflect international sites, specifically singling out international sites that are useful in relation to the RSS.

ACTION:

- **Natural England to feedback further information by 9 February 2007.**

- 3.11 The Chair asked if there are any Annexes to be added to the RMR and Sandrine Mathard suggested that town centre definitions could be added as an Annex.

- 3.12 For the RMR next year, the Regional Assembly will explore the possibility of sending the RMR to the sub-regional lead officers for their comments on policy implications at a sub-regional level.

4. Monitoring Systems Scoping Study

- 4.1 The Monitoring Systems Scoping Study is now complete and has been published on the Assembly's website. http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/our_work/planning/monitoring/index.html

- 4.2 The key messages discussed were:
- Limited / cut resources in Monitoring are an underlying issue and there appears to be little that can be done.
 - Consistency and clarification is needed on certain issues - i.e. town centres and defining geographical areas.
 - Districts were unaware of the Scoping Study; communication needs improving.
 - Few areas see little value in collecting data less often than housing. Janet suggested that the threshold is too high to be locally significant. The question was asked whether we need to drop the threshold? Should we collect the data at a finer level?
- 4.3 The group agreed to set up 2 task groups; one to review the geographical boundaries used in the surveys and another to develop the database. A draft terms of reference will be circulated to the group before the next meeting.
- 4.4 The group reviewed the Assembly's paper setting out recommendations following the final report by Roger Tym. All actions were agreed by the group with the inclusion of some additional comments.
- 4.5 Paragraph 3.3.1 - the group would like to see more map based data as oppose to grid based data for implementation in 07/08 and full roll out in 08/09.
- 4.6 Paragraph 3.4.1 - the recommendations by the Assembly were agreed by the group.
- 4.7 Section B - the question was asked who is to provide the list of core indicators; whose responsibility is it?
- 4.8 The group fully supported and agreed on the recommendations being suggested by the Regional Assembly.

ACTION:

- **Assembly to ensure all outputs from the Scoping Study are carried forward as discussed.**

5. Notice Board

5.1 Examination in Public.

- 5.1.1 The Assembly feel this has gone well so far. The Assembly feel their key messages have been put across well and have been heard. It has been challenging, but fair. The Panel will now be testing the overall strategy at the sub-regional sessions.

5.2 ERN Implementation Report.

5.2.1 The ERN Implementation Report has been published to advise Regional Assemblies on how to link RSS to Monitoring and Implementation. The report was due to be published late in 2006 and is now 6-months overdue. John informed the group that he has been unable to track down a final version of this report. He assured the group that he is still chasing the report and will track it down within 2-3 weeks and circulate a briefing note to the group.

5.3 SEE-iN

5.3.1 Richard informed the group SEE-iN are currently working on improving their website and have awarded a contract to a new designer to improve their website. It is anticipated the new-look website will go live in March 2007.

5.3.2 A new data tool is being developed and SEE-iN are looking to launch this on their website in April 2007. This new tool will provide additional functionality for monitoring and will possibly be used in the future to help work with the Local Authorities.

5.3.3 SEE-iN supported the Assembly by analysing and preparing data for a number of contextual indicators in the RMR.

5.3.4 The Office of National Statistics (ONS) are to locate two members of staff within each region. In the South East they will be based with the SEE-iN team. They will be working on expanding the ONS regional function and 33% of their workload will be tailored to inherent regional needs.

6. AOB

6.1 No other business was declared.

7. Date of Next Meeting

7.1 It was agreed the date of the next meeting will be circulated to the group once agreed with the Chair and the Regional Assembly. Early indications suggest this will be towards the end of May - i.e. w/c 21 May - avoiding half term if possible.