

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
STRATEGY ADVISORY GROUP
17 May 2005**

Note of Meeting

Present:

Mike Gwilliam	South East England Regional Assembly (Chairman)
Martin Tugwell	South East England Regional Assembly
Ray Bowers	South East England Regional Assembly
Lindsay Gardner	South East England Regional Assembly
Pushparani Webster	South East England Regional Assembly
Alison Quant	Hampshire County Council
Chris Cousins	Oxfordshire County Council
Colin Byrne	GOSE
David Hackforth	Milton Keynes Council
Douglas Horner	CBI
Edward Dawson	RAISE
Chris Swanwick	Wycombe District Council (POS)
Chris Corrigan	SEFS
John Kilford	West Sussex County Council (Chair SEERAWP)
Paul Hudson	SEEDA
Steve Thwaites	Waverley Borough Council (POS)
Tony Stevens	Horsham District Council (POS)
Huw Jones	Buckinghamshire County Council
Leigh Herington	Kent County Council (Chair HAG)
Jackie Spiby	GOSE
Stuart Hylton	Joint Strategic Planning Unit
Tony Curtis	Basingstoke and Dean (POS) (Chair Cross-Cutting)
Trevor Cherrett	Action in rural Sussex (Chair RAG)

1. Apologies

Alistair Robson	East Sussex County Council (Chair EAG)
Callum Findlay	Surrey County Council (Chair TAG)
Catherine Johnstone	RAISE
Mike Gill	GOSE
Trevor Gasson	Maidstone District Council

2. Notes of Meeting on 28 February 2005 /Matters Arising

The notes were agreed.

The Regional Housing Strategy is anticipated to be published by the end of June, with a formal launch scheduled for mid-July.

3. Presentation by IPPR

IPPR briefed the meeting on the key outputs arising from their work for the Commission for Sustainable Development. IPPR stressed that they had approached the work from the perspective of taking Quality of Life as the key policy priority. The work had involved the preparation of discussion papers on a number of key issues facing the region including the economy, future demands (including demands for housing), transport and natural resources (particularly water). IPPR confirmed that their programme of work envisaged a final report being published in late June/early July and that a presentation to an invited audience (including potentially Ministers) would be arranged for around the same period of time.

Although the group acknowledged that the work added to the overall debate, there were a number of concerns expressed around the table at the way in which the work had been undertaken. Some aspects of the work appeared to do little more than repackage material that had been undertaken by others.

Action: PW to circulate the IPPR presentation to members.

4. South East Plan

a) Timetable/South East Plan Update

The Chairman confirmed recent changes to the timetable for the South East Plan following on from recent debates within the Assembly. The key change identified was that submission of the final draft of the Plan would not now take place until after the Plenary in March 2006. This was as a consequence of the fact that final advice from the Sub-regional Strategy groups would not be received until early December 2005.

b) Responses

The Chairman welcomed the level of response to the consultation. In many respects the responses displayed a high level of support for the general direction of the overall strategy and policy framework, few responses had questioned fundamentally the approach set out in the consultation document. The analysis of public opinion (both the structured survey work undertaken by MORI, and the responses to the "Your Shout" leaflet) showed opinion to be divided on the issue of housing growth. Whilst the responses to "Your Shout" showed a preference for lower levels of growth the demographic profile of respondents was not representative of the region. The results from the MORI survey work was less clear in that opinion was equally divided between the three levels of growth set out in the consultation document.

The Chairman drew attention to the responses from a number of key stakeholders, including GOSE and SEEDA. The latter had both identified the need to consider a high level of growth than had been considered in the consultation draft. Comment was made on the extent to which longer-

term uncertainties in economic forecasting and the external environment needed to be more explicitly acknowledged within the South East Plan.

c) Report of Cross Cutting Group

Tony Curtis reported back on the discussion at the most recent meeting of the Group. The Cross Cutting Group had considered in detail a number of the key aspects of the consultation document (as set out in the notes of their meeting of 5 May). Two specific aspects of the Group's discussion were considered further by the meeting.

Responding to a criticism in the response to the consultation by the South East County Leaders the Cross Cutting Group had reaffirmed the importance of the sub-regional approach. The meeting supported the Cross Cutting Group's recommendation that the sub-regional approach was appropriate.

On the matter of the urban focus, and in particular the emphasis given to the network of hubs as the focus for concentration of development, the Cross Cutting Group had reaffirmed the importance of the hub principle. Again the meeting supported the Cross Cutting Group's recommendation that the hub principle was appropriate.

d) Recent research and intelligence base

The Chairman outlined the extent of the on-going programme of research designed to provide the evidential underpinning for the Plan. It was noted that a summary of the key research completed or underway would be presented to members of the Regional Planning Committee.

e) Summary of Advisory Group views

Key issues raised by the Advisory Group Chairmen were:

- Housing Advisory Group – noted the greater underpinning of the South East Plan arising from the “sharper focus”; also supported the changes to the rural policy which was considered to provide an appropriate balance between controlling growth and enabling an appropriate scale of development that would support rural communities;
- Minerals – noted the mismatch between the 2016 timescale in the proposals currently being considered and the 2026 timescale of the South East Plan.

5. Implementation and Prioritisation

The proposed changes to the Implementation Plan arising from the consultation were set out in the paper circulated prior to the meeting. The meeting supported the proposed way forward. It was noted that the Implementation Plan represented Work In Progress and that its content could not be finalised

until the final advice had been received from the Sub-Regional Strategy groups. The Chairman noted the importance of the sub-regional groups identifying the key pieces of infrastructure investment that would be required to support the spatial strategy at the sub-regional level.

Work on the application of the Assembly's Prioritisation Methodology to the interventions in the Regional Transport Strategy was continuing apace. Drawing upon experience gained in the initial phase of applying the methodology the pro-forma used to collect information from delivery agencies had been revised. Work was in hand to commission advice on how the methodology might be applied to other forms of infrastructure.

6. Infrastructure

The Chairman updated the meeting on the progress made in developing a new approach to the delivery of infrastructure. There was a consensus as to the need for new and innovative methods of funding infrastructure. The concept of a Regional Infrastructure Fund – which would use contributions from the private sector to forward fund investment – appeared to offer substantial potential for addressing this issue. The concept of a concordat with Government had been identified as a potential way forward.

A paper on infrastructure would be presented to the next meeting of the Regional Planning Committee.

7. Sustainability Appraisal

The meeting was advised that work was in hand to prepare a Second Draft of the Sustainability Report. This would report on how the proposed changes to the policy framework arising from the consultation would help address the key sustainability issues. The Second Draft report would be available to members of the Assembly in advance of the Plenary in July.

8. Any Other Business

None

9. Date of next meeting

27 June 2005 at the Assembly's office at 1.00pm