

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL SOUNDING BOARD WORKSHOP
Action Note**

**21 June 2005
Berkeley House, Cross Lanes, Guildford**

Present:

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Riki Therival | Chair |
| Martin Tugwell | South East England Regional Assembly |
| Joanna Cleasby | South East England Regional Assembly |
| Wout Janssen | South East England Regional Assembly |
| Steve Williams | English Heritage |
| Peter Midgeley | Environment Agency |
| Ian Hepburn | Climate Change & Natural Resource Advisory Board |
| Robert Beasley | Environment Agency |
| Eike Muller | GOSE |
| Tony Cook | SERTAB |
| Christine Drury | SEFS |
| Claire Kerr | English Nature |
| Alistair Fulton | ERM |
| Roger Laws | Economic Advisory Board |
| Chris Kenneford | Housing Advisory Board |

1. Apologies

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Trish Haines | Policy Advisory Board |
| Jackie Spiby | GOSE/South East Public Health Observatory |
| Harry Rutter | Public Health Observatory |
| Wendy Mesher | Urban Renaissance Advisory Group |

2. Matters Arising/Notes of last Meeting

Martin informed the Group that Brian Wyld has resigned from being a member of the Group due to time commitments. RAISE are looking for a replacement for Brian.

Martin thanked Ian Hepburn and his colleagues for the supply of Biodiversity Data. The Group was advised that on balance the view remained that bio-diversity was an issue best considered at the sub-regional level. Ian requested that the notes of the meeting recorded his concern that the Assembly has not provided an adequate explanation for this decision.

ACTION: It was agreed that:

- 1. The Assembly will ensure that the final version of the Key Sustainability Issues report emphasises that Regional and Sub-**

- Regional Key Sustainability Issues are of equal importance.**
2. **It was noted that ERM would take into account the points raised with regards to the symbology used in the Sustainability Report in the final version of the report.**
 3. **It was confirmed that a detailed audit trail would be included in the final version of the Sustainability Report.**

3. Update on Process/Outstanding Issues Arising from RPC 13 June

The group was updated on the initial findings of the appraisal of the revised strategy and regional policy framework agreed by Regional Planning Committee on 13 June. Some amended policies have been very positive, for example on Sustainable Development and Resource Management, however there was concern that the decision to defer consideration of the proposed spatial designations meant that the amended policy framework would fail to address one of the key weaknesses identified in the first draft of the Sustainability Appraisal Report.

It was confirmed that the second draft of the Sustainability Appraisal Report would only address the implications of the proposed changes to the policy framework and spatial strategy compared with the consultation draft of the South East Plan.

A briefing meeting of the officers leading the development of the advice at the sub-regional level had been arranged for 22 July. This would enable any outstanding issues arising from the appraisal process to be discussed.

ACTION: It was agreed that the Sounding Board's concern at the failure to address weaknesses identified in the original draft of the Sustainability Appraisal Report have yet to be fully addressed.

4. Consideration of Further Advice from Sub Regions

The Group were reminded that the planning issues being addressed by each sub-regional group were those set out within the appropriate planning briefs. Although there were some common issues, there were also some issues that were distinctive to a particular sub-region(s). Consequently, it was wrong to assume that the appraisal work for the sub-regions would be uniform in its coverage. It was confirmed that following receipt of the final advice from the sub-regional groups on 9 December ERM would undertake an audit of the appraisal results submitted and that this audit would be discussed by the Sounding Board.

ACTION: to note

5. Second Draft Sustainability Appraisal Report

ERM updated the group on emerging headlines from the 2nd Draft Report. It was noted that a growth level of 28,900 dwellings per annum would not address the backlog for affordable housing and homelessness as quickly as higher rates would

have.

ERM notes that implementation of the South East Plan places great emphasis on demand management and behaviour change. On the matter of demand management, there is a need for the Assembly to consider what measures and delivery mechanisms are required in order to facilitate such changes.

It was noted that in many instances the proposed changes to detailed wording and content of the policies had addressed points identified in the first draft of the report, however the greatest concern remained the uncertainty surrounding the spatial definition, or rather lack of it, within the Plan.

The level of detail required as part of the Appraisal process in respect of policies or proposals that were locationally specific was queried. It was suggested that Government guidance on this issue was inconsistent between individual Departments.

ACTION: It was agreed that GOSE would provide clarification on the level of detail required in respect of policies or proposals that are locationally specific.

6. Assessment of Cumulative Impacts

The Group split into 3 groups to discuss in detail a limited number of topics and in particular how the need to undertake a cumulative impact assessment might assist in the development of the Plan. To assist them in this exercise each group used the framework circulated in advance of the meeting.

The outcomes from the Groups were as follows:

- Housing Group - a logical thought process is represented on the prepared schedule. However the question of why we were doing this was raised as the Group felt that the cumulative impacts are broadly acknowledged in the SE Plan, this is because of the holistic nature of the Plan. They could see no value in taking this forward as they felt it would not be the most efficient use of resources.
- Water Resources/Quality Group – The cumulative impact assessment process needs to focus more on mitigation. The Group felt that more was needed on cause and effects, they felt that the Plan was not addressing new usages which brings us back to demand management measures. We cannot deliver Sustainable Development because of the lack of mechanisms. The Group asked if there were any mechanisms to allow these issues to be brought to the attention of Government. Generally felt that phasing was the best way forward, but evidential basis would need to be provided.
- Waste Group – the question of what type of waste was raised, whether it was household or industrial.

The conclusion of the group as a whole was that cumulative impact assessment could provide valuable information and a structured approach for analysis that

could have added value for the plan making process.

ACTION: It was agreed that:

1. **The draft framework prepared by ERM could be used for undertaking a cumulative impact assessment, but that the order of the columns should be changed as follows:**
 - **Key Sustainable Issues**
 - **Context/current situation**
 - **Limits, thresholds, current status, etc**
 - **Potential influence of the RSS**
 - **Cumulative/synergistic effects**
 - **Affected receptors**
 - **Relevant plans and programmes**
 - **Potential mitigation**
2. **The cumulative impact assessment could be used by the Assembly to:**
 - **Identify the need for new or enhanced implementation mechanisms**
 - **Assist in consideration of issues of phasing of growth**
 - **Provide insight in cross cutting aspects of the policy framework**
3. **ERM will circulate a refined framework and initial report on cumulative impact assessment prior to the next meeting in October.**

7. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

8. Dates of Next Meeting

06 October 2005

Key areas for discussion likely to include:

- **Cumulative Impact Assessment;**
- **Monitoring of work underway at the sub-regional level;**
- **Further consideration of structure of the final report (i.e. the final report that is submitted to Government with the Plan in early 2006)**

12 January 2006

Key areas for discussion likely to include:

- **Review treatment of sustainability issues in the final advice from the principal authorities in respect of the sub-regional strategies and “other areas”;**
- **Final consideration of structure of final report**
- **Identification of any outstanding issues that may need to be considered by Assembly members.**

8 July 2005