

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Date: 11 April 2008

Subject: **'Prosperous Places' - Sub-National Review Consultation Document**

Report of: Chief Executive

Recommendation:

That the Committee notes that the Government's consultation document on implementing the Sub-National Review (SNR) was published on 31 March and that a proposed response on the Assembly's behalf will be brought to the next meeting of the Committee on 13 June 2008.

Purpose of Report:

To alert members of the committee to the publication of the SNR consultation document and to invite initial comments to feed in to the proposed response on the Assembly's behalf. The document is attached as the annex to this brief cover report.

Key Issues:

- I. The document confirms that each region is invited to develop its own model of regional working within given parameters, which are:
 - RDAs will take over responsibility for regional planning.
 - They will develop a single integrated regional strategy working closely with local authorities and others to achieve 'co-ownership'.
 - Through a regional leaders' forum local authorities collectively will have responsibility for signing off the draft strategy and for scrutinising its delivery.
 - Regional forums of council leaders should be streamlined, manageable and representative of all types of authority and key sub-regions.
 - RDAs will remain business-led, although they will need to change significantly and board membership will need to reflect new responsibilities.

- Stakeholders are important consultees to be 'engaged and managed' by the RDA.
 - RDAs will become increasingly strategic, delegating funding on a programme basis to local authorities and others.
 - RDAs will agree the balance of their funding directed to various policy areas with local authorities and regional partners.
 - RDAs will work with partners to develop and manage the change process in each region, e.g. to create new working arrangements and new structures and to build capacity.
2. The document includes proposals for integrating regional spatial strategies and regional economic strategies into a single streamlined process involving community engagement, a robust evidence base, sustainability and options appraisal and independent examination in public. The new regional strategy will incorporate other regional plans such as sustainable development frameworks, housing and cultural strategies. Each region will be set a target to raise 'the sustainable trend rate' of economic growth. If the RDA cannot agree the strategy with local authorities in the region they will refer it, noting differences of view, to the Secretaries of State for BERR and CLG to resolve.
 3. There is a further section on the proposed duty on strategic local authorities to undertake an economic assessment of their area. This includes provision for sub-regional working across local government boundaries.

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