

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Date: 16 September 2005

Subject: **Nominations to the Committee of the Regions**

Report of: Chief Executive

**Recommendation:**

That the Executive Committee endorses the following nominations to the Committee of the Regions made by the Assembly Chairman and Vice-Chairs on its behalf:

Full member: Cllr Gordon Keymer, Conservative, Tandridge

Alternate: Cllr Paula Baker, Liberal Democrat, Basingstoke

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**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 For the Executive Committee to ratify the Committee of the Regions (CoR) nominations agreed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairs during August.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The Committee of the Regions (CoR) was set up in 1994 as the official voice of local and regional government in the Europe Union. The CoR provides a forum for the consultation of local and regional authorities on issues affecting them, giving formal recognition to the role of sub-national government in the EU decision-making process. The CoR comments on proposals which impact on the work of local authorities. It is an advisory body which acts to ensure that public authorities are consulted on EU proposals of direct interest to them, especially as they are often responsible for implementing these policies.
- 2.2 Since enlargement of the EU in May 2004, the CoR is made up of 317 representatives of local and regional government from the 25 Member States of the European Union. Members have a four year mandate and were last appointed in January 2002. The Maastricht Treaty specified that the CoR should comprise 'representatives of local and regional bodies'. Consequently Members represent the whole sphere of sub-member state government throughout Europe, including regions, provinces, counties, municipalities and districts. CoR Members are appointed by the Council of Ministers on the recommendation of the Member States.

- 2.3 In the UK , the Foreign and Commonwealth Office co-ordinates the list of 24 full members and 24 alternate members. The Local Government Association (LGA) plays a key role in advising Ministers on nominations to the UK delegation and in supporting the delegation in its work. The delegation is made up of representatives of local authorities or the devolved authorities in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and London. Political and gender balance, as well as ethnic and regional factors, are taken into account in finalising the list of delegates.

### **3. The Fourth Mandate**

- 3.1 CoR Members serve a term of four years; there have been three mandates so far. The current delegation includes four councillors from South East local authorities:

Cllr Ken Bodfish, Labour, Brighton & Hove (full member and Chair of the UK delegation);

Cllr Gordon Keymer, Conservative, Tandridge (full member);

Cllr Susie Kemp, Conservative, West Berkshire (alternate);

Cllr David Shakespeare, Conservative, Buckinghamshire (alternate).

Cllr Shirley Smart (LD, Isle of Wight) was the region's fifth member (alternate), but she lost her council seat in the May elections this year and automatically forfeits her CoR position.

- 3.2 The next mandate starts in 2006, and Ministers are now preparing to compile the list for the new UK delegation. In finalising the composition of the UK delegation the Government seeks to strike a number of balances. These include proportionality by region (the South East usually has five members), proportionality by party, and gender/ethnicity etc. While the LGA co-ordinates the advice to Ministers, regional assemblies in England have been given a role in providing nominations.
- 3.3 To start the process, each regional assembly is invited to nominate one councillor as a full member and another as an alternate. Once these nominations are made a complicated process follows by which the LGA political groups put forward 'top up' nominations to complete the regional/party/gender template. So for any councillor in the South East, the route to CoR nomination may be either through the Assembly or via the LGA top up.
- 3.4 The invitation to the Assembly to nominate councillors to the fourth CoR mandate was received in mid-July with a deadline of 10 August. Without any formal meeting of the Assembly to endorse the nominations, I invited the Chairman and Vice-Chairs Group to agree nominations on the Executive Committee's behalf.
- 3.5 We are required to propose a woman and a man. It is expected that the largest and second largest parties should get the regional nominations. As the nominations are party based, the candidates were considered and agreed by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat political groups regionally. The

Conservative nomination is Cllr Gordon Keymer, of Tandridge, and the Liberal Democrat nominee is Cllr Paula Baker, of Basingstoke. The Chairman and Vice-Chairs Group agreed that Gordon should be put forward as the full member nomination from the Assembly, and Paula as the alternate.

#### **4. Accountability**

- 4.1 Those South East councillors who are either full or alternate members of the CoR are afforded ex officio membership of the Assembly/SEEDA Joint Europe Committee in order to provide a line of accountability back to the region. Cllr Keymer has been particularly conscientious in attending and providing written reports for meetings of the JEC.

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**Chief Executive**

12 August 2005

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