



This Bulletin reports the main issues covered at:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	19.10.07
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE	26.09.07

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING 19.10.07

SUB-NATIONAL REVIEW (SNR)

The Executive Committee discussed the future of regional arrangements, following the Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR) announcement that regional assemblies will not continue after March 2010.

Proposals to create of a "council of leaders" and "senate" for the region were remitted to the full Assembly meeting on 14 November for further discussion. This will allow all members to participate in a decision before an expected Government consultation on SNR at the end of the year. An agreement on a regional local authority group is important to create a group able to negotiate with Government to make sure there is a strong local authority input into a single regional strategy and delegated powers for economic development.

The Assembly's social, environmental, economic and town and parish members argued for their continuing involvement in regional decision making alongside the politicians.

Members were reminded that the Assembly would not be winding down in the run up to March 2010 as there is still a lot of work to do, including reviews of the South East Plan, advising ministers on regional housing and transport budgets, and the scrutiny of SEEDA.

GOSE

Rolande Anderson, GOSE Regional Director updated the committee on the following issues:

Regional Minister

Following the Sub-National Review, Minister for the South East, Jonathan Shaw MP, along with GOSE, has been meeting the region's local authority leaders, as well as the chairs and chief executives of the Assembly and SEEDA. He has also met the Assembly's social and economic partners.

Finance

Members were told that following the national Comprehensive Spending Review, local authority financial settlements were expected at the end of the year. Government's [Pre-Budget Report](#) announced increased investment in the region, for example there will be funding for the Crossrail scheme linking towns in Kent to Maidenhead through central London.

Local Area Agreements

There will be a GOSE run Local Area Agreements workshop on 12 November

SEEDA

Paul Lovejoy, SEEDA Executive Director of Strategy and Communications gave the committee an update on SEEDA news including:

National Settlement

The national settlement for the Regional Development Agencies sees a 6% reduction in Government funding for 2008 -11. For SEEDA this is expected to mean a reduction of £21m over the three years.

Corporate Plan

SEEDA's corporate plan needs to be signed off by the end of March 2008, and it is hoped a draft will be ready by the end of January. The Executive was told that SEEDA is committed to working with the Assembly in developing the plan. One of the key challenges for the plan will be transparency in where SEEDA makes its investments.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Committee agreed to recommend to the full Assembly that member subscriptions for 2008-9 should be cut by 10% to reflect the financial pressure on local authorities.

SIGN UP TODAY >>>>

MEETING DATES

FULL ASSEMBLY	14.11.07	05.03.08	16.07.08
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	14.12.07	25.01.08	11.04.08
PLANNING COMMITTEE (RPC)	28.11.07	30.01.08	19.03.08
REGIONAL TRANSPORT BOARD (RTB)	24.01.08	24.04.08	10.07.08
REGIONAL HOUSING BOARD (RHB)	05.12.07	17.01.08	15.05.08

PAPER-FREE BULLETIN

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REGIONAL SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK

There was a presentation on the [draft Regional Sustainability Framework \(RSF\) consultation](#), which runs until 26 November 2007.

The RSF is a set of guidelines that will help the South East to improve prosperity and community life while protecting the environment, reducing waste and cutting pollution. It proposes four priorities, which businesses as well as public and voluntary organisations will need to build into their operations:

- Achieving sustainable levels of resource use
- Reducing the region's carbon footprint
- Ensuring that the South East is prepared for the inevitable impacts of climate change
- Ensuring that everyone, including the most deprived people, has an equal opportunity to benefit from and contribute to the region's sustainable prosperity.

The Executive raised the points that there needed to be a consistency between the indicators in the RSF and those in the Regional Economic Strategy and Local Area Agreements, and there should be more Government investment to meet the challenges in the RSF.

These have been added to suggestions made by the Regional Planning Committee (RPC), which contributed comments to the consultation at its September meeting. The RPC wanted the RSF document to compare the South East's economic performance with regions globally, rather than just those in the UK.

Consultation workshops will take place on 7 November in Woking and 9 November in Brighton. For more details visit www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/rsf, email the Regional Assembly at secretariat@southeast-ra.gov.uk or contact Patrick Feehily or Greg Pitt on 01483 555200.

THAMES BASIN HEATHS

The Executive agreed that the Assembly would co-ordinate a consultation on the draft Thames Basin Heaths Interim Strategic Delivery Plan on behalf of the Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership Board.

The plan includes proposals to allow homes to be built that will avoid damaging the heaths' special protection area, which stretches across parts of Berkshire, Hampshire and Surrey.

Cllr Moira Gibson, the Assembly's representative on the strategic board, reported it had agreed to change its meeting dates to enable consultation to be extended from 10-weeks to 12 to allow all groups enough time to discuss the proposals. The consultation is expected to run between mid November 2007 and mid February 2008.

WATER CONSULTATION

The Executive agreed a response to a consultation on the [Environment Agency's water resource strategy](#), which addresses the main issues facing water resources in England and Wales for the next 25 years and beyond.

Although the strategy received broad support from the Executive there were some key points it wished the Agency to consider, including:

- South East water resources are under constant pressure so it is important to be able to impose hose pipe bans and other restrictions when necessary
- More investment is needed to cope with the proposed growth in the region.

INTERREG IV

A consultation response was agreed by the Executive on INTERREG IV, two European grant programmes to help promote cross border co-operation between regions.

Both programmes will have a maritime focus and will each total £118m from 2007 to 2013.

The North programme will cover Netherlands, Flanders, Northern France and Southern England, including the South East. Its main priorities will be to support an economically competitive, attractive and accessible area, promote and enhance a safe and healthy environment and improve quality of life.

The South programme will cover Northern France and Southern England, including the South East. Its main priorities will be to reinforce a sense of belonging to a shared area, build partnerships for economic development and ensure sustainable development.

Members broadly supported the schemes, but wanted to see the South programme's theoretical vision of a common sense of citizenship replaced with an objective more focused on co-operation, social inclusion, sustainable development and economic competitiveness. They also recommended that the six Assembly representatives on the two scheme programme monitoring committees should include two stakeholder members and the four local authority places should be shared by county, district and unitary representatives.

The programme monitoring committees will oversee the quality and efficiency of the implementation of INTERREG IV.

SELECT COMMITTEE RESPONSE

The Executive was provided with a [SEEDA action plan and timetable](#) outlining SEEDA's response to recommendations from the Assembly's select committee on business support and Business Links.

SEEDA actions include:

- Preparing a regional business support strategy by 31 July 2008. An initial document outlining the scope and principles of the strategy will be produced before the end of 2007. This will draw on the results of earlier consultation on 'simplifying business support'.
- Developing a method of measuring economic outcomes for business support. This will be included in the corporate plan to be published by 31 March 2008.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Reports from the following meetings were received by the Executive:

- a) [SEEDA Board Committee Social Dialogue Forum, 17 September 2007](#)
- b) [Regional Planning Committee, 26 September 2007](#)
- c) [Regional Health Summit, 28 September 2007](#)
- d) [Regional Housing Board, 5 September 2007](#)

RESPONSE TO PANEL REPORT

The Committee discussed the independent inspectors' report on the South East Plan. Members agreed they had no major matters of principle to add to two letters sent to [GOSE](#) and [the Treasury](#) by Assembly Chairman Cllr Keith Mitchell CBE following an Executive Committee debate on the report.

The letters argue that if house building in the region is to increase by 10% to 32,000 homes a year, as recommended by the inspectors, then there needs to be more funding for transport, schools, parks and utilities.

Members were asked to inform Assembly officers about any points of accuracy in the report.

Assembly members will have a further opportunity to discuss the report at the full Assembly meeting in November. To make debate easier to follow the RPC asked that members' questions should be given in writing in advance of the meeting.

HOUSING TYPE AND SIZE

The Committee approved action to help encourage the building of larger affordable homes.

This follows a report to the RPC on 21 March on [housing type and size](#), which showed a high proportion of affordable homes are smaller houses and flats, despite the need for larger family homes.

Action approved included:

- Assembly officers to investigate the use of National House Building Council data and other sources for monitoring housing information
- Developing guidance in a Councillor's Toolbox to advise councillors on how to make sure there is the right mixture of home sizes in planning applications for high density housing
- To introduce into the South East Plan the requirement that Local Development Frameworks should include the type and size of home required by those most in need.

LDf CONFORMITY

Members agreed to delegate powers to the Assembly Chief Executive to approve the Assembly's opinion on Local Development Documents that conform with the South East Plan. The exception will be documents raising non-conformity issues, when a sub group of RPC members will be consulted.

This change will allow Assembly staff to provide more support for local authorities' preparation of Local Development Frameworks and advice on the implications of the South East Plan.

RAILWAY WHITE PAPER

The Committee agreed a consultation response to Government's [Delivering a Sustainable Railway](#) white paper, which sets out rail network plans for the next 30 years, and funding to 2014.

The committee believed the paper was too London focused and that it failed the South East by:

- Failing to build on the evidence that underpins the South East Plan
- Missing an opportunity to set out how the Government seeks to use the prospect of the 2012 Olympics to benefit the rail system
- Focusing too much on short-term funding that will not allow rail operators to plan ahead.

SOUTH WEST GYPSY AND TRAVELLER CONSULTATION

A response to the South West Regional Assembly's Gypsy and Traveller consultation was agreed. Issues raised included:

- The reliance on a small number of districts to meet a large proportion of the region's accommodation need
- Recommending a greater emphasis be placed on the requirement on local authorities to provide pitch numbers identified in the regional plan
- Recommending the identification of pitch requirements for travelling showpeople.