

**MINUTES OF THE 108th MEETING OF THE SOUTH EAST ENGLAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY HELD ON 10 DECEMBER 2009, SEEDA HQ, GUILDFORD**

**Present:**

Rob Douglas (Chair)	Les Dawson
Jeremy Birch	Keith Mitchell
Pamela Charlwood	Alex Pratt
Dolores Byrne	Keith Riley
Imtiaz Farookhi	Phil Wood
Peter Jones	Bob Goldfield

***In attendance:***

Pam Alexander	Phil Bailey
Lee Amor	Susan Priest
Jeff Alexander	Katie Lloyd
Paul Lovejoy	Oona Muirhead
Robert Crawford	Heather Bolton

***Guests:***

Ian Coates (GOSE)

**Item 1        STANDING ITEMS**

**1.01    Apologies for absence and Declarations of Interest**

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| 1 | Apologies were received from Sue John. The Chair reminded the Board that this would have been Sue John's last SEEDA Board meeting.  |
| 2 | Dolores Byrne, as Managing Director of Innovation in QinetiQ, declared an interest in respect of item 3.02 'Project and Programmes Update' because Qinetiq are involved in the potential SEEDA funding of the Oxford Turbine Test Facility project. |

**1.02    Minutes of previous meeting**

- 3 The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September have been amended and were approved as a correct record of proceedings.
- 4 The minutes of the November Board meeting were approved as a correct record of proceedings.
- 5 Keith Riley noted that he had contacted SEEDA in regard to his concerns on the consistency of SEEDA's consideration of the criteria for planning applications (item 2.3 of the minutes) compared with those of the planning panel of the Regional Partnership. It was agreed that Paul Lovejoy would follow up on this note.

**ACTION:**

Paul Lovejoy to respond to Keith Riley's note on common criteria for planning applications by the end of January.

**1.03 Matter Arising**

- 6 The Board noted progress on Matters Arising.

**1.04 Committee minutes**

**a) MPC minutes**

- 7 Keith Riley and Imtiaz Farookhi noted that they had reported an interest in regard to the SUSCONS project which should be recorded on the MPC minutes which were being amended.
- 8 Keith Riley reported that Committee remained concerned about the Sustainable Construction Skills Training Academy (SUSCONS), in particular whether funding would be sustained in the future. The Committee endorsed the decision on the Monitoring of Aircraft Component Health (MACH) and noted that the Physical Regeneration Joint Venture proposal would be brought back to the Board in January.

**ACTION:**

Head of Programme Office to amend MPC minutes.

**1.05 Chairman's report (oral)**

- 9 The Chair reported on meetings that he attended since the previous Board meeting. These consisted of meetings with Ministers, business and Local Authorities, including:
- RDA Chairs' meeting on 30 November, followed by a meeting with the Rt Hon Ken Clarke MP and Mark Prisk MP
  - Meetings with Ministers – Rosie Winterton and Kevin Brennan
  - BIS 6 monthly Strategic Review
  - CBI South East Regional Council Meeting
  - FE Colleges (the Windsor Group and the 157 Group)
  - Interviews with the Daily Telegraph and Kent on Sunday
  - SEEDA All Staff Awayday on 8 December
- 10 The Chairman indicated that a common theme running through these meetings was that he reported back on business views on the economy and investment required to ensure competitiveness of the South East economy. This prompted a wide-ranging discussion amongst the Board of the key strategic issues that they felt needed to be addressed and how this might be taken on board by the region.
- 11 The issues that were raised included business concerns on the future of power supply (which might lead to decisions to re-locate elsewhere, outside the region), waste (increasing costs for business), energy, water, transport infrastructure, access to high speed broadband, skills needed by business (acknowledging the new role for the Agency in preparing a Regional Skills Strategy) and the accessibility of investment finance (in particular how the Agency might help stimulate the banking business and supply of credit).
- 12 The Board noted that there were other dimensions to this discussion, for instance, the social dimension because of the need to address the issue of NEETs and investing in communities and the need to ensure that increased investment was also accompanied by a reduction in the carbon footprint.
- 13 Members recognised that there were arrangements in place where these issues could be considered, in particular the Regional Housing and Regeneration Board, the Regional Transport Board and the Economic Development and Skills Board. Some Boards had existing terms of reference that would not be appropriate to encompass the wider range of utility, skills and infrastructure issues (e.g. the Regional Transport Board). However it was felt that the underlying theme was competitiveness and therefore the Economic Development and Skills Board (EDSB) was the right home, ensuring these issues are picked up by the sub-groups of EDSB that were being established to provide the framework for successful businesses.
- 14 It was agreed that SEEDA would reflect further on these points and come back with some proposals.

**ACTION:**

Paul Lovejoy to consider how best the new partnership arrangements could address wider 'competitiveness' issues and bring this back to the March Board meeting.

**1.06 Chief Executive's Report**

- 15 Paul Lovejoy set out the key points emerging from the PBR announcement the previous day. A handout was provided to Board Members
- 16 The Chief Executive reported that the Women's Enterprise Task Force had received positive feedback on its final report and recommendations.
- 17 The Agency was in contact with Lloyds TSB Banking Group about their recent announcements on redundancies in Aylesbury and in Brighton and Hove. More broadly the new South East Financial Services Forum was proving to be of value to SEEDA and the banking representatives.

**1.07 Government Office for the South East Report (oral)**

- 18 Ian Coates drew attention to the recently published 'Putting the Front Line First: Smarter Government' paper and the implications for the South East on the proposal to relocate 10% of Civil Servants away from the South East.
- 19 Ian Coates acknowledged the positive messages on public services for the South East arising from the Comprehensive Area Assessment announcements, which showed strong performance across South East Local Authorities.

**1.08 Operational statements**

- a) Financial and Operational Review**
- b) Half-yearly Review of Results**

- 20 Robert Crawford noted the intention to bring a paper to the January Board setting out SEEDA's proposed programme budget for 2010/11, the extent of committed spend and the headroom that could be deployed according to SEEDA's new agenda.
- 21 Members appreciated the additional information in the Corporate Scorecard and the report on progress against half and full year targets (members recommended that Table 1 should be an annex to the Corporate Scorecard). They welcomed the Agency's performance in the context of the economic situation but wanted to ensure that future performance indicators reflected the Agency's new direction.
- 22 It was agreed that future budgets and performance could be reviewed as part of a wider discussion at the Awayday on SEEDA's future strategic priorities.

**1.09 Regional Partnership Meetings**

- a) **Economic Development and Skills Board – 17 November 2009**
- b) **South East Partnership Board – 26 November 2009**
- c) **Strategy Board – 26 November 2009-12-11**
- d) **Regional Housing and Regeneration Board – 1 December 2009**
- e) **SESETAC – 8 December 2009 (oral)**

23 Lead Members indicated there was nothing to add to the Board Papers. Dolores Byrne reported that SESETAC had considered governance issues and wanted to ensure that the future sectors/clusters strategy and the Innovation Strategy included contributions from other Board members.

**1.10 Risk Register Movements**

24 The Board noted the addition in October of the new risk in regard to loss of knowledge and skills of staff and the action taken to address these issues.

**Item 2 ITEMS FOR DECISION**

**2.01 SEEDA Support for Sectors/Clusters**

25 The Board welcomed the emerging thinking on the proposed sector and clusters strategy and that this opportunity for discussion would feed into the preparation of the strategy. Members acknowledged that SEEDA had selected six broad sectors to be covered by the new teams and wanted to know more about the analysis and evidence that lay behind the selection of these particular sectors and why other sectors were excluded. For instance, the land-based sector had not been included and it was stressed that the relevant SEEDA partners were concerned by this omission and wished to take this forward with SEEDA. The strategy should cover matters such as the global competitiveness of these sectors, their competitive advantage, their receptiveness to intervention and SEEDA's ability and capacity to intervene.

26 The Board also recognised that SEEDA's strategy should be placed in the national context, the NINJ priorities and the response from Lord Mandelson encouraging greater RDA co-operation and collaboration. The paper should also set out performance indicators and how the sector teams will work alongside SEEDA's place based approach and how it relates to the Agency's regeneration strategy.

27 It was felt that these issues might be appropriate to be discussed at the Awayday in February.

## **2.02 Strategy Awayday – 25 February 2010**

- 28 Members discussed the format and content for the Awayday on 25 February 2010. It was agreed there should be a dinner to which a limited number of Local Authority representatives should be invited.
- 29 The Board agreed that the Awayday should focus on the Agency's opportunities for impact, leadership and influencing. This should be in the context of discussing the Agency's priorities and recognising that there may be a different political landscape following the General Election.

### **ACTION:**

Paul Lovejoy to take account of Board Member comments in finalising the programme for the February Board Awayday.

## **3. ITEMS TO NOTE**

### **3.01 Communications update (oral)**

- 30 Heather Bolton stressed that the media coverage of SEEDA was becoming more positive with encouraging articles in the Brighton Argus and local papers in Kent. Key partners and stakeholders were continuing to endorse SEEDA's work.

### **ACTION:**

Heather Bolton to circulate the handout prepared for the RDA Chairs meeting with the Rt Hon Ken Clarke MP and Mark Prisk MP (done).

### **3.02 Project and Programme Update**

- 31 The Board noted the update provided by Oona Muirhead.

### **3.03 Board Forward Look Plan**

- 31 The Board welcomed the Forward Look which complemented the need to obtain early information on the issues that the Board may need to address in the coming months.

**3.04 AOB**

- 32 The Chair asked the Board to show their thanks to Jeff Alexander who was leaving the Agency in December and had been with the Agency since it started operations in April 1999. The Board asked that their thanks and gratitude to Jeff Alexander be recorded formally.
- 33 The Chair also reminded the Board that this was the last meeting for Peter Jones and Phil Wood (as well as Sue John who was unable to attend). The Chair formally recorded the Board's thanks for all the work and contributions made by the retiring Board members.
- 35 The Chair also mentioned that the appointment of new Board members had been confirmed. They were Councillor Keith House, Councillor Andrew Finney, Richard Ascough and Professor Julian M Crampton.

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**Signed off-by**

**Pam Alexander, Chief Executive, 21 December 2009**