

AGENDA ITEM 9

From Jorn Peters - South East England Partnership Board

BRIGHTON AND HOVE CITY COUNCIL SCRUTINY PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Date: 20 October 2009

Subject: **Regional Planning addressing Climate Change Adaptation**

Report of: Regional Planner, South East England Partnership Board

1. New Governance Arrangement for Regional Planning

- 1.1 The Partnership Board comprises four members of the board of SEEDA and eight members of South East England Leaders' Board (councillors from the region's local authorities). The staff of the South East England Partnership Board is made up of the former Regional Assembly secretariat and some South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) staff.
- 1.2 Together they provide support to the Partnership Board in order to deliver a new Regional Strategy which brings together the Regional Economic Strategy and the Regional Spatial Strategy, the South East Plan.
- 1.3 Further details are available on our website www.se-partnershipboard.org.uk and a brochure will be available at the Scrutiny Panel meeting.

3. Climate Change Policy in the South East Plan

- 3.1 The South East Plan was published in May 2009. It provides a regional framework for planning and development over the next 20 years. Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) have to conform to the South East Plan.
- 3.2 Policy CC2 of the South East Plan addresses climate change mitigation and adaptation. It sets out that climate change adaptation should be achieved through:
 - Guiding strategic development to locations offering greater protection from impacts such as flooding, erosion, storms, water shortages and subsidence.
 - Ensuring the new and existing building stock is more resilient to climate change impacts.
 - Incorporating sustainable drainage measures and high standards of water efficiency in new and existing building stock.
 - Increasing flood storage capacity and developing sustainable new water resources.
 - Ensuring that opportunities and options for sustainable flood management and migration of habitats and species are actively promoted.
- 3.3 Adaptation is also integrated into a wide range of sectoral policies such as water management and housing design.

4. Implementing the South East Plan Policy

- 4.1 In March 2007 the former Regional Assembly held a Climate Change Summit in Brighton and launched a user-friendly guide on how to implement the then draft Climate Change policy. This Climate Change Implementation Plan sets out a suit of actions for key partners to help deliver the policy aspects set out in the policy. The document also suggests sectors/organisations that should be responsible for individual actions.
- 4.2 Concerning the resilience of buildings for example actions include the use of planning conditions to ensure raised floor levels and save access as well as improving building design to allow cooling/shading. Sources of detailed information such as the British Research Establishment (BRE), the Environment Agency and CIRIA¹ are provided.
- 4.3 The Climate Change Implementation Plan can be downloaded from the Regional Assembly website www.southeast-ra.gov.uk² and a CD will be available at the Scrutiny Panel meeting.
- 4.4 In addition, the Three Regions (London, East and South East of England) Climate Change Group has jointly produced a Checklist for Development and a practical guide on retrofitting existing housing for changing climatic conditions. The documents can be downloaded from the following website www.london.gov.uk/trccg/publications.

5. Overcoming Barriers to the Delivery of Climate Change Adaptation

- 5.1 Despite the above there are many barriers including knowledge gaps, lack of coordination and funding, conflicting priorities and resistance to change. Therefore, we commissioned further research and identified the following key actions to overcome these barriers.
- 5.2 Organisational actions
- Improve knowledge and awareness - making existing information and advice more widely and easily accessible to decision makers and delivery agencies in different sectors.
 - Improve leadership - making the challenge of adaptation relevant to leaders from a range of sectors and organisations by increasing their understanding of the benefits of adaptation so that they are keen to test innovative approaches.
 - Ensure consistency of the policy framework - ensuring that all policies are climate proofed using common definitions/goals/indicators.
 - Improve partnership working - using existing networks and partnership initiatives to promote the delivery of adaptation measures.
- 5.3 Technical actions
- Integrate adaptation considerations into existing policy assessments such as sustainability appraisals and flood risk assessments.

¹ Construction Industry Research and Information Association

² http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/documents/regional_planning/START.pdf

- Identify good practice and promote common standards on resilience across the area/authority.
 - Establish water metering in all properties and improve water efficiency for new development.
 - Encourage policies and management agreements for sustainable drainage and agree strategies for surface water management.
 - Develop a robust evidence for the vulnerability of habitats/species.
- 5.4 The full research report can be downloaded from the ESPACE website www.espace-project.org.³ ESPACE is a European-funded project, which has informed our work on adaptation over the last few years.

6. Specific Planning Guide on Adaptation

- 6.1 The Partnership Board has recently produced a specific online guide to help local authority planners ensure that their LDFs reflect the climate change policies of the South East Plan. The guide is structured around the various stages of plan preparation so that it can be used as a 'dip-in-and-out' resource.
- 6.2 The adaptation sections of the guide focus primarily on water management and resilience of the built environment and infrastructure. Some key recommendations include:
- Identify at an early stage with relevant departments in the authority (environmental policy, health, emergency planning, building control, colleagues dealing with National Indicator 188 on adaptation) and external stakeholders such as the Environment Agency and the local water company if likely climate change impacts could threaten proposed growth.
 - Identify available research that investigates the impacts of climate change on the area.
 - If further research is required ensure it is tailored to the specific problems/threats related to future development and consider joint working with other relevant council departments and neighbouring authorities.
 - Reflect the evidence on current and future vulnerabilities when allocating growth and identify the ambition of adaptation measures and infrastructure needs.
 - Be clear about the level of risk the authority is taking with its level and location of development.
 - Use the Sustainability Appraisal to ensure that long-term climate change considerations appropriately inform policy development.
- 6.3 The guide is available on the new Partnership Board website <http://www.se-partnershipboard.org.uk>.⁴

³ http://www.espace-project.org/publications/Extension%20Outputs/SEERA/Annex%201%20-%20adaptation_revisedsummaryreport_13May.doc

⁴ <http://www.se-partnershipboard.org.uk/page/5/view/97/sub/73/subc/26/ldf-guides>

7. Assessing Climate Change Vulnerabilities within the Region

- 7.1 The Partnership Board has started to undertake a regional climate change vulnerability assessment to reflect requirements of the Planning Policy Statement on Planning and Climate Change. The assessment will help to identify vulnerability 'hotspots.' This will inform the options for future growth and enable us to prioritise the type and location of adaptation measures.
- 7.2 The initial assessment covers a wide range of sectors including public health, natural resources, the built environment, infrastructure and economic development. For these sectors we are exploring the following questions and identify indicators, for which sub-regionally specific data are available.
- What affects current vulnerabilities to severe weather?
 - What are consequences currently experienced?
 - Do these vulnerabilities/consequences significantly accelerate through climatic change?
- 7.3 We are working with local authorities on this assessment as they are also required to assess climate change vulnerability. We aim to use and compare in particular their Local Climate Impact Profile (LCLIP) findings.
- 7.4 Looking into the future, the following two major questions are of particular importance from a strategic planning perspective:
- Is a fundamental change in spatial development and investment required or can we make relatively minor adjustments to improve resilience to change?
 - How can we inform and improve decision-making to ensure adaptation and resilience in the future?

For more information about our climate change adaptation work please contact:

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