

Note of London and Wider South East Network meeting on 25th November at 11am at ARUP, 13 Fitzroy Street

Present: Duncan Bowie (chair), Chris Tunnell, Sue Janota, Martin Crookston, Simon Eden, Janice Morphet, Judith Ryser, James Stevens, Kevin Reid, Ian Gordon, Josephine Vos Lawrence Thurbin, Tim Marshall, Martin Simmons, Richard Brown, Jorn Peters, Chloe Salisbury, Ismail Mulla, John Parr, Nicholas Falk, Neil Sinden,,Dave Valler

Apologies: Andrew Barry-Pursell, Corinne Swain, Peter Eversden, Faith Wilkinson Vincent Goodstadt, Rebecca Neil, Ian Wray, John Lett, Robert Purton, Penelope Turtill, Nick Smith, Michael Edwards, Michael Bach, Michael Thornton, Andrew Jones

1. Feedback on technical symposium and next steps.

Duncan Bowie thanked ARUP and other colleagues who contributed to the symposium. He noted that presentations and video recording were on the network website.

It was considered that symposium was an interesting event but we needed to focus on next steps.

Corinne Swain's paper on key messages from the symposium was discussed together with Chris Tunnell and Corine Swain's paper on next steps.

Among points raised were the following:

- * The importance of mapping data. We needed data store for Wider South East equivalent to that operated for London by the GLA
- * The need to get greater engagement by appropriate research councils
- * Further discussion on governance options was required
- * The need for greater engagement by MHCLG
- * While the New York Regional Planning Association experience was interesting, their context was different from ours. We first needed to get some agreement between the key players including the Mayor, SE Councils and East of England LGA. It was noted that the last two organisations, despite being invited, were not represented at the meeting.
- * There had been little consideration of the climate change dimension at the symposium

Chris Tunnell introduced the Next Steps paper.

He considered that the research base had to be the foundation of our case for improved collaboration and governance and offered to write a paper for the next meeting based on ARUP's work within WSE

There was a discussion on Conservative and Labour approaches to devolved governance as demonstrated in their recent General Election manifestos. The Conservatives appeared to be considering replicating the Oxford/Cambridge arc arrangements in other sub-regions and were enthusiastic on combined authorities. The recent Queen's Speech had referred to a forthcoming Devolution White Paper.

There was a discussion on how the case for collaborative governance could be research led, and whether the case for arguing a common interest and narrative should be first agreed.

It was noted that while combined authorities and city regional Mayors (which were different

approaches in practice) could in some cases be a factor in sub-regional governance, the revised NPPF nevertheless required individual planning authorities to be strategic and to reflect the sub-regional context through Statements of Common Purpose with neighbouring authorities. This new requirement had yet to be tested.

James Stevens (HBF) referred to his review of sub-regional planning collaboration across England. He noted that in most areas (Liverpool City region being an exception) this was on a voluntary rather than statutory basis. He noted however that BREXIT had reopened the devolution debate. While the Government focused on combined authorities, he noted that some combined authorities appeared to have little interest in strategic planning. James offered to present a paper based on his research to the next meeting.

There was a discussion on the role of central government in supporting sub-regional planning. Jorn Peters (GLA) pointed out that as yet MHCLG had not engaged with the GLA/SE Councils'/EELGA collaborative arrangements. There were different views on whether further government guidance on sub-regional collaboration would be welcome. Simon Eden (Southern Policy Centre) commented that in South Central Area they had developed a joint narrative for the sub-region without any guidance or support from central government.

Kevin Reid (MHCLG) referred to the paras 59-60 of the NPPF, which referred to the neighbouring authority context for local housing needs assessments. It was for Planning Inspectors to assess compliance at Public Enquiry. He recognised that MHCLG should give consideration to how to support WSE collaboration. Chris Tunnell noted that the London Plan EiP Panel report referenced the London housing deficit and pointed to the unsatisfactory governance arrangements in relation to resolving the inter-regional housing distribution issue. Simon Eden pointed to historic collaboration on housing allocations between SE councils. He noted the importance of developing good inter-authority relations as

There was a discussion on the best tactical approach to progressing the issue. It was noted that the symposium had sought to focus on the evidence base for collaboration rather than proposing a specific governance framework to resolve the housing distribution problem. Some group members however stressed the need to promote a wider discussion, not just on housing numbers but on the relationship of alternative development options to climate change impacts, so that the negative consequences of inadequate collaborative governance structures for appropriate decision making at a WSE level were more widely understood.

2. Research gaps

Following a discussion, it was agreed that Chris Tunnel coordinate drafting of a paper for the next meeting which:

- a) summarises key data on LWS,
- b) summarises what is currently being planned,
- c) reviews future projections/ scenarios (quantitative and qualitative)
- d) assesses state of readiness. (Janice Morphet offered input on this part)
- e) considers appropriate governance structures

3. Surrey Futures. Presentation by Sue Janota (Surrey County Council)

The presentation on the development of the Surrey Futures non statutory plan is circulated with meeting note and will be uploaded onto the network website

In the discussion the following points were raised.

As a non-statutory plan, the plan created a framework for Local Plans and could support Statements of Common Ground. It was constructive in identifying growth areas but did not seek to set housing targets for individual districts. It was noted that government NPG on statements of common ground focused on process not content.

Under the Local Government 2000 Act (section 2 on wellbeing powers), such a document could be treated as a primary source for a Local Plan

The links of Surrey Futures to adjacent areas such as Hampshire and Heathrow area - employment and housing growth areas were not bound by the county boundary. It was noted that travel to work areas and housing market areas were complex in Surrey given polycentricity within the county and the relationship to London.

Dave Valler referred to a study of PUSH (South Hampshire) collaborative working.

The success of non-statutory Local Strategic Plans tended to depend on local culture of collaboration. Some comparison with Oxfordshire Growth Board was made.

Like most plans, there was little explicit recognition of potential conflicts between different objectives

The potential for expanding the strategic planning functions of county councils was discussed. Reference was made to Catriona Riddell's paper for the County Councils Network. <https://www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk/advocacy/publications-and-research/>

Martin Simmons offered to write a paper with Catriona Riddell on this issue.

4. Discussion of Panel report on London Plan Examination in Public

Duncan Bowie summarised main implications for LWSE. Panel in reducing London small sites housing capacity had assessed an annual deficit of nearly 14,000 homes a year relative to assessed requirement of 66,000. The Panel had not however recommended how this deficit could be met. The Panel noted that WSE governance arrangements were inadequate to respond to this deficit. The Panel had recommended that the Mayor coordinate a review of the Green Belt within London in terms of identifying potential housing capacity. The Mayor had stated that he did not agree this recommendation. The Mayor's response to the report and publication of a 'for publication' version of the plan had been delayed until after the General Election. Duncan referred to his article in the October of *Town and Country Planning* which reviewed the issue.

James Stevens (HBF) noted that the Panel had concluded that the Duty to Co-operate did not apply to the Mayor's responsibilities in relation to the London Plan and that 33 local planning authorities could not operate a duty to cooperate and agree statements of common purpose in a vacuum. It was noted that the London Plan was drawn up to comply with the original 2012 version of the NPPF, and that the 2018 and 2019 versions had not been applied. He was of the view that there were some opportunities for Green Belt reviews in outer boroughs.

Ian Gordon (LSE) commented that the Panel had focused on the plan's technical conformity with the 2012 NPPF, and had not focused sufficiently on the deliverability of the plan objectives and policy in the current context and potential changed context during the plan period.

It was agreed that the London Plan be discussed further at the next meeting, at which point the Mayor's response to the Panel recommendations and the view of a potentially different central government would be known.

5. Updates by network members

Richard Brown reported that the London Research Centre was reviewing scenarios for London 2050

Neil Sinden reported on three CPRE projects:

a) APPG for London's Green Belt was considering positive vision for the Green Belt
<https://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/housing-and-planning/green-belts/item/download/6004>;

b) Review of borough performance on healthy streets;

c) the Case for defending Metropolitan Open Land

Nicholas Falk referred to URBED undertaking a project on high streets and town centres in England

An update from Vincent Goodstadt on the UK2070 Commission was read. A second report had been published. This took forward some of the recommendations in the first report and included positive proposals for the development of a National Spatial Plan for England, supported by transregional planning frameworks. The One Powerhouse Consortium was preparing a document – Towards a Spatial Blueprint for London and the Wider South East'.

<https://www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk/advocacy/publications-and-research/>

The Commission was also working up options for further devolution and seeking to develop a pan-UK transport network. It was intended to publish the Commission's final report in early 2020.

6. Other matters arising from note of previous meeting

None were raised.

7. Date and agenda for next meeting

Monday 10th February, 11am at ARUP

Agenda to include

Next steps for Network. Paper to be drafted by Chris Tunnell and others

Paper by James Stevens reviewing practice of sub-regional planning in England

Paper by Martin Simmons with Catriona Riddell on strategic planning role of County Councils

The London Plan Review – the Government and Mayoral response to Panel report

Update on UK2070 Commission and One Powerhouse LWSE Spatial Blueprint