

EERA NEWS

The region's strategic partnership

July 2009

KEEPING YOU CLOSER TO THE ISSUES

There is important business to conduct before the summer now that the local elections have concluded.

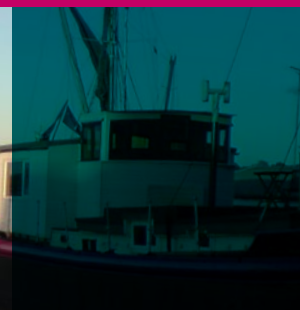
The Assembly's Annual General Meeting on 17th July 2009 will need to consider future regional arrangements for local government to replace EERA in March 2010. It will also need to reflect on the next stages of the review of the East of England Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy).

My colleagues Cllr William Nunn, Chairman of the SNR Members Task Group, and Cllr Derrick Ashley, Chairman of the Regional Planning Panel, provide updates on the latest progress in these areas.

Nationally, we are talking with the Local Government Association and the emerging Leaders' Boards in each region about how we can best work together in future. There are opportunities for co-operation on a range of local government issues that we need to explore. We also need to influence the Government as the final legislation and guidance on the Single Regional Strategy and Leaders' Boards takes shape.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who contributed to EERA in 2008/9 and also welcome new members of EERA for its final year, particularly the new authorities of Central Bedfordshire and Bedford.

**Cllr John Reynolds,
Chairman, EERA**



SUB-NATIONAL REVIEW News emerging from the region

Thank you to all those who responded to the 'End of an EERA' consultation on the future of local government arrangements in the East of England. We received over 50 responses, most of which were thoughtful and constructive.

A key message from the consultation was better representation for district councils on the Leaders' Board. The proposal has therefore been revised so that the Leaders' Board comprises all 52 council leaders in the East of England. The Broads Authority will also be a member as required by the legislation.

The Task Group is also meeting with EEDA to discuss arrangements for working together on the Single Regional Strategy. A proposal is being developed for a Regional Strategy Board to undertake the detailed work on any new Strategy. It would comprise 10 council leaders (1 vote each), 5 EEDA Board members (2 votes each), non-voting representatives from the Homes and Communities Agency, Environment Agency, Natural England, Strategy Health Authority and the new Stakeholder Partnership.

I look forward to presenting the Task Group's final recommendations on 17th July at the EERA AGM meeting.

**Cllr William Nunn, Chairman of
the EERA Members' Task Group**



FURTHER INFORMATION

including the consultation document is available at:
www.eera.gov.uk/Who-we-are/future-of-eera

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PLANNING FOR THE REGION'S FUTURE

Cllr Derrick Ashley outlines the latest stage of the review of the East of England Plan.

The Regional Planning Panel meeting on 29th June gave Panel members an opportunity to discuss the latest position on the review of the East of England Plan and particularly a number of development scenarios for the Assembly to consider at the AGM in July.

The scenarios have been developed on the basis of information from Councils, the Government's National Housing Planning Advice Unit (NHPAU) and modelling commissioned by EERA and EEDA. It is proposed that the scenarios are thoroughly tested through the public consultation process in September-November this year before EERA considers a draft option to submit to Government in March 2010. The Assembly will have the opportunity to consider the scenarios on 17th July. The scenarios look at different housing and job growth possibilities.

In housing terms, the four broad scenarios that are recommended to the Assembly are:

1. RSS roll forward (based on existing spatial strategy) – 27,000 dwellings per annum for the period 2011-2031 based on the spatial strategy in the existing RSS;
2. NHPAU Low end of the scale (based on the Regional Scale Settlement Study) - RSS roll forward plus additional growth as per the Regional Scale Settlement Study in Bedfordshire, North and East Essex, Huntingdonshire and parts of Suffolk;
3. NHPAU Low scale based on a moderated economic forecast – RSS roll forward plus additional growth as per the Updated Economically Moderated Scenario (April 2009) in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, parts of Essex (different to those under Scenario 2), Hertfordshire and some parts of Norfolk and Suffolk;
4. 2006-based household projections – district-by-district disaggregation of the 2006 Household Projects which locates a majority of further development in Hertfordshire, Essex and particularly Norfolk and Suffolk.

Each of these will be tested against a 'baseline' position of past delivery, which was 22,000 dwellings per annum since 2001 and their environmental, social and economic implications.

The Regional Planning Panel recommended the four scenarios for consideration by the Assembly but with some additional resolutions (see in panel on right). The forthcoming public consultation is a crucial part of challenging the robustness of these scenarios.

Recommendations

In recommending the four scenarios to the Assembly, the Panel made clear that it accepted them as reasonable scenarios on the basis of the evidence before it, but had concerns that more robust evidence would be needed for the decision-making process. It also agreed on an approach to preparing and presenting supporting evidence to recommend to the Assembly, as well as a set of existing Plan policies to be reviewed. In addition, it reiterated EERA's long held stance that growth in the Region needs to be supported by the provision of infrastructure in its fullest sense, as well as addressing current infrastructure deficits.



*Cllr Derrick Ashley,
Chairman of the Regional Planning Panel*

PLANNING FOR THE REGION'S FUTURE

Region building on success – more affordable housing completions in 2007/8

The number of affordable houses completed in the East of England by April last year reached a seven-year high, EERA revealed this month in its Annual Monitoring Report of the East of England Plan. 5,208 new affordable homes were completed in 2007/8 compared with 4,411 during the previous year.

This will come as welcome news to many in the Region, however the figure still falls short of the regional need for new affordable homes. In a recent report commissioned by EERA, the Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research conclude that 11,600 affordable homes are required annually up to 2031 to meet regional needs.

The Annual Monitoring Report highlights the challenges that local authorities face in addressing the key issue of providing the large number of affordable homes that are needed. With an ageing population, migration into the region and smaller households, the need for housing in the Region continues to grow. At the same time, house prices are still high and mortgage lenders are increasingly cautious so the provision of affordable homes is vital in helping those priced out of the open market onto the property ladder.

Councillor Susan Barker, Chair of EERA's Housing and Sustainable Communities Panel, said: "The delivery of new, affordable housing is one of the region's top priorities. With the average house price in the East of England costing nearly £230,000, key workers and first time buyers are finding it impossible to get onto the housing ladder. The supply of housing is difficult to predict in the long-term. The 'credit crunch' has resulted in a sharp decrease in new construction projects.



*Affordable housing completions (new build) in 2007/8
% of all housing delivered and actual numbers completed*

Sub-region	%	number of homes
Bedfordshire	16	438
Cambridge	19	1077
Greater Norwich	22	548
Haven Gateway	14	793
London Commuter Belt	25	1667
Peterborough	20	202
Rural East Anglia	12	279
Thames Gateway	13	157
Yarmouth & Waveney	7	47
East of England total	18	5208

FURTHER INFORMATION

EERA's Annual Monitoring Report 2007/8 can be found at: www.eera.gov.uk/publications-and-resources/annual-monitoring-reports. Affordable Housing figures appear on pages 73-79



SCRUTINY

EEDA welcomes Assembly recommendations on Business Link delivery

EEDA has welcomed the feedback and recommendations contained in the Assembly's recent review, reported in the previous issue of EERA News, of the way in which EEDA commissions Business Link services.

At the May meeting of the EERA/EEDA Liaison Panel (EELP), the Agency said it was pleased that executives from its Enterprise & Skills Directorate had been given the opportunity to work closely with EERA and Business Link East on the review.

The Agency's responses were generally very positive and the majority of the Assembly's recommendations are being acted upon. Assembly members were particularly pleased that EEDA acknowledged the need for an up-to-date Business Support Strategy for the East of England, which it is understood will be developed and consulted on in the

early autumn, and that a new performance framework would be introduced for Business Link since the current three key performance indicators are unhelpful and fail to drive the intensive assistance that businesses are seeking.

In addition to its detailed response to the Assembly review report, EEDA has agreed to invite members of the EERA Business Link review panel to join the EEDA task group dealing with the shaping of the future Business Link contract.

FURTHER INFORMATION

www.eera.gov.uk/What-we-do/representing-the-region/scrutiny

SCRUTINY

Supporting Economic Development

120 local authority personnel attended the launch of an economic development capacity building project for local authorities, delivered by EERA in partnership with EEDA with support from Improvement East.

The aim of the two year project is to support and enhance the capacity and performance of Local Authorities in delivering economic development through a portfolio of training and development opportunities.

In addition to introducing Supporting Economic Development the event addressed the crucial issue of conducting Local Economic Assessments (LEAs) following the Sub-National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR).

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact Richard Weaver on 01284 729446
or email: Richard.weaver@eera.gov.uk



Economic Summit Outcomes

Four Economic Summits were held in April to hold EEDA to account for its strategies, plans and actions. As well as allowing EEDA to demonstrate the work it had conducted over the previous year, the Summits allow sub-regional stakeholders the opportunity to understand EEDA's impact in their area.

Over 200 representatives of local authorities, public bodies, local businesses and voluntary organisations attended the four sub-regional Economic Summits this year. Representatives were also given the opportunity to influence the shape and structure of the East of England Implementation Plan (EEIP) during the second half of the event.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The outcomes can be viewed at www.eera.gov.uk/What-we-do/representing-the-region/scrutiny/economic-summits-2009

Two further Economic Summit events are taking place in September:

**Environmental Summit on 11th
Business Summit on 22nd.**

Contact Sue Houlder on 01284 729427 for more information.

EUROPE

East of England organisations urged to tap into £billions of European funding

The East of England Regional Assembly is encouraging organisations from across the Region to tap into billions of pounds of European Funding.

The Assembly's website now has a comprehensive outline of funding sources covering a broad range of activities. These include £38 million to support the restructuring of the fisheries sector; £700 million for a Youth in Action programme to help inspire a sense of active citizenship, solidarity and tolerance among young Europeans; £7 billion for a Lifelong Learning programme; £1.5 billion for Culture, Media and Sport projects; £4 billion for a wide range of enterprise projects.



FURTHER INFORMATION

To find out how you can tap into these funds go to

<http://www.eera.gov.uk/What-we-do/representing-the-region/europe> or contact Lesley Rayner on 01284 729427 or email: Lesley.rayner@eera.gov.uk or Michelle Armstrong on 01284 729415 or email: michelle.armstrong@eera.gov.uk

£17million of Funding for the Environment from the European Union

How do you get the maximum out of the European Union funding programmes for your environmental projects? Seventy delegates from a wide range of organisations across the Region attended a conference in Cambridge on 1st, organised by EERA, to find out how.

The conference 'Get a Life' informed delegates about the EU's LIFE+ programme for environmental projects which has allocated over £17 million to the UK in 2009. Delegates were informed about specific strands within the LIFE+ funding streams; they were offered first hand information on how to be successful in applying for funding; heard case studies from previous regional recipients of LIFE+ funding; and had an opportunity to raise questions with the national contact for the LIFE+ programme in the UK.

Delegates at the event included local authorities and other public bodies; private commercial organisations and non-commercial organisations including NGOs.

'Flourishing region'

Michael Allen, Chair of EERA's Environment and Resources Panel and Chair of the event said: "Anticipating and adapting to the challenges facing our environmental infrastructure is a key priority for all of us and we see the LIFE+ programme as a critical component in achieving sustainable economic growth that neither diminishes our well-being nor limits our potential growth in the future.

"This conference will have helped organisations in the region to apply for funding for environmental projects which will ultimately contribute to making the East of England a more flourishing region."

FURTHER INFORMATION

The event took place at the Cambridge Science Park. Papers and presentations are available at: <http://www.eera.gov.uk/meeting-and-events/regional-conferences/details/103>

CONFERENCES & NETWORKS



Innovations Day 21 October

Innovations Day 2009 has taken a pirate's theme! It will continue its interactive, hands on approach and once again there will be the chance to hear about innovative ideas from around the region. Local Authorities have submitted applications to win up to £50,000 for new innovative ideas so come along to vote for the winners of the Treasure Chest.

Get down to some serious conversation in the Galley Zone. You will have the opportunity to hear about the innovative work that is already taking place in the region. Here you will be able to attend roundtable discussions, ask the questions that you have always wanted to ask, and share your innovative ideas with potential partners.

Vote for new ideas that you think would be of most value in Treasure Island. Visit the Crows Nest for more informal conversations with one or two of your colleagues and the Exhibition Zone where you can browse throughout the day to learn more about projects and programmes that could be of interest to you and your authority.

FURTHER INFORMATION

To book your place, go to <http://www.eera.gov.uk/meeting-and-events/regional-networks/innovations-day-2009/>

A climate for change in the East of England 28 July

An event to inform and inspire local community action on climate change has been organised by the East of England Regional Assembly and Hertfordshire County Council.

This event brings together specialists from across the East of England, and organisations such as the Community Development Agency for Hertfordshire, who develop sustainable transport plans for the community, Big Barn, the virtual farmer's market, and Groundwork, who have developed practical solutions to climate change. These speakers and more will share their experiences in providing a local response to the global challenge of climate change.

Michael Allen, Chair of EERA's Environment and Resources Panel and Chair of the event said: "It is the actions of those within our local communities that will have the most profound effect in our fight against climate change. This event is part of an action plan to deliver the Regional Social Strategy which includes an objective to support the development of sustainable communities."



FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, contact Sue Houlder on 01284 729421 or email sue.houlder@eera.gov.uk



CONFERENCES & NETWORKS

NETWORKS

www.eera.gov.uk/meetings-and-events/regional-networks

Learning from each other is probably the most effective way of achieving improvements.

We facilitate a wide range of thriving networks, where people from across the region meet to share experiences and advice.

For further information, or if you are interested in joining one of the steering groups, contact our Networks Organiser, Amanda Ankin, on 01284 729403 or email Amanda.ankin@eera.gov.uk

CONFERENCES

www.eera.gov.uk/meetings-and-event/regional-conferences

We deliver quality conference for the region, in the region, at a price you can afford.

Our conference programme is designed together with our 'national' player partners. We also provide a conference administration service for organisations wishing to run their own event.

To find out more about forthcoming conferences, contact our Conference Organiser, Sue Houlder, on 01284 729421 or email sue.houlder@eera.gov.uk



2009 Ashridge Conference

13 and 14 November

A warm invitation to all HR colleagues in the Region. Our time is at a premium, and there is no way we can better add value in our organisations than taking time to think, reflect and plan. The 2009 Ashridge Conference will offer the opportunity to reflect on how we rise to the many challenges we face, to focus on today's key issues in people management, to share experiences and extend networks.

Speakers for 2009 include:

- Linda Moir, former Director of In Flight Services, Virgin Atlantic
- Stephen Taylor, Director, Taylor Haig
- Gillian Hibberd, President of PPMA and Corporate Director, Buckinghamshire County Council

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, go to: <http://www.eera.gov.uk/meeting-and-events/regional-conferences/details/77>

SHARED SERVICES

A joint Employer and Trade Union Event, 14 July

This event is organised jointly with the Trade Unions and is designed to build on the previous Shared Services Event held in 2008.

The aim of the day is to give delegates practical tools to help them to understand the process of moving towards a Shared Service arrangement, starting from making the political decision, through to dealing with a wide range of staffing, procurement and implementation issues, and looking at the methods of evaluation and monitoring.

Chief Executives, HR professionals, Trade Union Representatives, Elected Members and other officers with a particular interest in Shared Services will hear about authorities who have already been through the shared services process.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, go to: <http://www.eera.gov.uk/meeting-and-events/regional-conferences/details/102>

Getting to grips with the new Comprehensive Area Assessment

10 July, Newmarket Racecourse



Improvement East, together with the Member Development Network, is holding a regional event to support elected Members in engaging with their role in the new way of assessing performance in an area. Getting to the bottom of what CAA will really mean for Councillors.

By attending these events Members and relevant officers will be able to:

- Hear from the Audit Commission and elected Members
- Engage in group discussions
- Take part in a question & answer session
- Network with colleagues

FURTHER INFORMATION

To book, visit the events section of the Improvement East website; <http://www.improvementeast.gov.uk/events/> or contact Jayne Cole, 01284 729405 jayne.cole@eera.gov.uk.

WHAT'S NEW?

Joint winners of the Equality Award 2009

The winners of this year's Equality Award were announced at a ceremony at South Cambridgeshire District Council last week. This annual event celebrates and encourages creativity and innovation in promoting equality of opportunities within local authorities in the Region.

Hertfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service

The Herts Fire & Rescue submission relates to a Polish Forum and the Fire and Rescue Service working in partnership to provide space for the Polish community to meet on a regular basis, based at Hatfield Fire Station. During these meetings educational programmes and language classes are held as well as general information on education for children, health care, specific safety advice, accessing employment and many more topics.

St Albans District Council

The St Albans Tiffin Club is a pioneering project initiated by many partners within the community and relates to a unique Luncheon Club for Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic women (BAME) with a special focus on the Bangladeshi, Pakistani, most disadvantaged and under represented women in all areas. The club is designed specifically for women, run by women and in a safe and accessible location.

A special thanks to all authorities who submitted projects including: Basildon District Council – Norfolk County Council – Thurrock Council.



Key Panel Meeting Diary Dates 2009

Executive Committee

Friday 18 September
Thursday 19 November

Employment and Skills Panel

Thursday 15 October

EERA/EEDA Liaison Panel

Thursday 3 September
Friday 4 December

Regional Assembly

Friday 17 July

Europe and International Affairs Panel

Friday 24 July
Tuesday 6 October

Housing and Sustainable Communities Panel

Thursday 22 October

Regional Improvement and Efficiency Panel

Wednesday 8 July

Regional Planning Panel

Tuesday 17 November

Social Inclusion Panel

Tuesday 14 July
Tuesday 13 October

Environment and Resources Panel

Monday 12 October

Local Government Employers Panel

Thursday 24 September

FURTHER INFORMATION

for more dates, agendas and papers go to:

www.eera.gov.uk/meetings-and-events

KEEP UP TO DATE WITH THE ASSEMBLY'S NEWS AND EVENTS BY VISITING OUR WEBSITE, WWW.EERA.GOV.UK.

If you require further information on this document or in a different format or language, please contact:

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