

**Meeting 10:15 am 10<sup>th</sup> November 2010  
At Local Government House, Smith Square, London**

**Minutes**

**Attending:**

Richard Read (Hampshire County Council) (Chair)  
Adrian Lee (Hampshire County Council) (Secretary)  
Peter Day (Oxfordshire County Council)  
Tony Cook (East Sussex County Council)  
David Paine (GOSE)  
Stuart Hylton (Berkshire JSPU)  
Rosemary Morton (Berkshire JSPU)  
Michael Elkington (West Sussex County Council)  
John Prosser (Kent County Council)  
Bryan Geake (Medway Council)  
Mike Tregent (Environment Agency)  
Emma Winchester (Environment Agency)  
Melvin Caton (SEEDA)

**Apologies:**

Paul Archer (Hampshire County Council)  
Chris Waite (SEERAWP)  
Nick Hollands (Veolia)  
David Greenfield (IESE)  
Alison Walters  
David Maxwell (Surrey County Council)  
Chris Mills (Isle of Wight Council)

**Paul Archer had previously announced his intention to withdraw from his role as the SERTAB chairman due to other work commitments, so Richard Read agreed to chair the meeting. The meeting wished to record its sincere gratitude for the work that Paul Archer had carried out on behalf of the group and convey its good wishes to Paul for his future work.**

**Item 2. Actions From Last Meeting (4<sup>th</sup> October 2010)**

- A report of the workshop meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2010, prepared by Deborah Sacks, had been previously circulated . It was agreed that Deborah had done an excellent job facilitating the workshop.
- Para 3.3 ME suggested that it was over optimistic to suggest that “waste movements are now *generally well understood*”.

- Para 3.9 TC noted that it was agreed that each authority should be invited to meetings of the data group. It was also agreed that meetings be held on the afternoon of the main SERTAB meeting.  
**Action 1: AL to invite all authorities to the next Data Group meeting.**

### **Item 3. SERTAB Role and Action Plan**

#### Background

- 3.1 AL introduced a report that had been previously circulated. It had been prepared from discussion at the last two meetings, in March and October 2010. He noted the significant changes in the planning and local government background since consideration of the role in March, that were set out in the report.
- 3.2 The report suggested the following five key functions that the SERTAB should fulfil in order to fundamentally refocus its work towards supporting WPAs in their waste planning responsibilities, in the absence of the regional planning body and framework;
- i. Developing its executive function
  - ii. Developing and sharing good practice
  - iii. Proving mutual support and facilitating cross boundary working
  - iv. Maintaining a data hub and information exchange
  - v. Undertaking liaison with external bodies.

It then set out a 20 point action plan to deliver these functions.

- 3.3 The report suggested the following four delivery options to achieve the above, although AL stressed that these options are not exclusive and are not the result of a detailed assessment; the costs particularly are illustrative rather than worked up. It is important to note that options A - C are sustainable within current payments for three years, but only options A & B are sustainable in the longer term. Options C & D require a considerable increase in subscription levels. Option B requires a greater commitment of staff time from all authorities in order to achieve its objectives.

**A. Continue the current model of limited admin input and commissioning ad hoc studies and support.**

**B. Develop the current model to include an enhanced input to prepare and circulate the common support material, undertake liaison and provide data hub and research functions *on a shared authority basis*;**

**C. Develop the current model to include an enhanced input *by a single local planning authority* to prepare and circulate the common support material, undertake liaison and provide data hub and research functions;**

**D. Develop the current model to include an enhanced input to prepare and circulate the common support material, undertake liaison and provide data hub and research functions *on the basis of the majority of the work being commissioned from consultant(s)*.**

## Discussion

### 3.4 Scope

It was agreed that the South East is the basic building block, particularly in terms of the evidence base, but we should not be too inward looking. We need to have flexibility to deal with issues and groups beyond the South East; on the one hand, to take account of national policy and issues such as specialist wastes, but on the other hand we need to work on a more local basis where issues or political influences demand.

There was a strong view that the group's work should not become too diluted and should not, for instance become too involved in the waste management agenda, particularly as the future direction for waste management is likely to focus on delivery by the private sector. It was also agreed that the issues around dealing with London's waste cannot be ignored and the group needs to engage with waste planners in the capital

### 3.5 Role

The group agreed that we need to demonstrate that we can add value to the work done by individual WPAs, and justify the resources put into it, its role should focus on supporting WPAs to fulfil their statutory role in waste planning and support any duties to cooperate which may be enshrined in forthcoming legislation. We need to seek support from existing agencies where possible to develop and promote our agenda and we need to discuss and develop a common view on various issues in order to lobby government and agree a collective view in responding to consultations. It would also be useful to set a framework or manifesto of what we seek to achieve and to prepare an annual report to set out what we have achieved and signpost our programme for the following year.

### 3.6 Data

There was a strong view that the waste evidence base we have built up should not be dissipated or lost and it is vital to proceed as early as possible with measures to improve on this work, including development of the online data entry model, refinement of the waste capacity work and exploring opportunities for training on such matters as using the waste interrogator

### 3.7 Delivery options

There was a consensus that option A was not sufficiently ambitious to achieve our basic objectives, but equally, there was little appetite for pursuing option C. There was a common view that we should identify some short term actions, particularly liaison with other groups (e.g. to progress the London waste issue) and around data provision. We should utilise current SERTAB balances to do this by commissioning appropriate data studies and by using external consultants to build capacity and develop the engagement programme (see also item 7). To that extent, the consensus was that we should move forward on the

basis of a hybrid of options B and D at present with regular reviews of our programme and financial position.

3.8 Action Plan

The meeting agreed not to consider in detail the action plan set out in section 3 of the report, but each authority is to re-consider it in the light of the discussion and agreement on the delivery options etc.

3.9 Tasks

Two immediate tasks were therefore agreed to move forward the programme. Firstly to prepare a manifesto or business plan to describe the objectives of the group and secondly to gauge the view and needs of each authority. SH agreed to draft and circulate these within the next week for a response within a further two weeks (i.e. deadline end of November).

3.10 **Action 2; SH to (i.) prepare and circulate within a week manifesto or business plan to describe the objectives of the group and (ii.) to gauge the views and needs of each authority.**

**Action 3: All to respond to SH by the end of November**

**Action 4: AL to pursue procurement issues.**

## Item 4. Environmental Infrastructure Tool

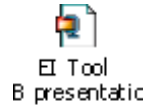
- 4.1 Emma Winchester, Principal Officer, Town and Country Planning Environment & Performance at the Environment Agency Southern region office, gave a presentation on the Environmental Infrastructure Tool which the EA has been developing in partnership with GOSE, Natural England, the former SEEPB, Jacobs and 5 local authorities in the South East.
- 4.2 EW emphasised that the project is a pilot based on the South East and is still at a developmental stage. Its origins were in the development of the revised South East Plan, but its capabilities can be equally applied to county or district level planning in the absence of regional planning. Its main purpose is to help LPAs to make informed decisions about the environment by;
- Helping to identify appropriate sites for major development.
  - Testing environmental capacity to cope with future development scenarios.
  - Identifying any shortfall in current infrastructure provision.
- 4.3 Further development of the tool relies on a business case being prepared and agreed within EA and EW requested feedback from SERTAB as to whether they found the tool useful and meaningful and whether they would support development of it.
- 4.4 The geographic basis of the data was raised and EW advised that it is based on County Areas. It suggested that the tool should also include areas of mineral safeguarding and contaminated land.
- 4.5 In discussion it was considered that the tool is useful to those authorities that do not have the levels of GIS information layers which the tool contains. It was however noted that much of the environmental assessment work for plan making is based upon judgements and perceptions, so the tool would need to build in these "health warnings". It should be treated as a "high level" tool with more detailed studies to follow up for sites emerging from the initial sieve. It was also suggested that the tool could provide an important basis for developing policy and supporting negotiations for contributions for new waste infrastructure.
- 4.6 It was agreed that the tool is beneficial for undertaking and demonstrating Sustainability Appraisal over a large geographic area. It is also useful to undertake such exercises to a consistent basis and it could particularly help support the localism agenda in terms of making environmental data widely available.
- 4.7 It was further agreed that all authorities would help to refine / improve waste data held in the model as part of their general actions to improve and maintain the evidence base and the SERTAB should

consider the opportunities for using GIS to manage and report its own data.

**Action 5: All to forward any further comments to EW**

([emma.winchester@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:emma.winchester@environment-agency.gov.uk))

**Action 6: EW to keep the group updated on progress**



DRAFT

## **Item 5. Local Development Frameworks / Major Applications**

### 5.1 Policies for LLRW.

AL advised that NuLeAF, the Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum, seeks to build capacity within local government to be able to engage effectively with nuclear legacy management. To this end, it produces regular briefing papers and e-bulletins to advise on issues related to low level radioactive waste and the UK strategy for the management of waste from the nuclear industry. A number of South East WPAs are represented on the working group and can relay any issues / questions to SERTAB.

<http://www.nuleaf.org.uk/>

### 5.2 East Sussex

TC advised that an application for a biomass plant has been submitted; the developer claims that the market for recycling wood has collapsed and this plant represents a viable and sustainable alternative.

### 5.3 Oxfordshire

PD advised that the result of the inquiry into the Viridor application for an incinerator at Audley was expected in January. In the meantime, the applicant has submitted a revised application for a temporary 35 year permission. The County Council has resolved to permit this but it has been referred to the SoS as a departure. An application from WRG has also been submitted for an MBT plant, with some or all feedstock proposed to come from outside the County (Berkshire or London).

[http://portal.oxfordshire.gov.uk/content/publicnet/council\\_services/environment\\_planning/planning\\_applications/applications\\_we\\_decide/decisions\\_progress/MembersMonthlyReportOct10.pdf](http://portal.oxfordshire.gov.uk/content/publicnet/council_services/environment_planning/planning_applications/applications_we_decide/decisions_progress/MembersMonthlyReportOct10.pdf)

## **Item 6. National Guidance - Decentralisation and Localism Bill**

- 6.1 It was noted that the bill was expected to be published later in the month. News of the High Court judgement on the recent decision of the SoS to abandon RSS was relayed to the meeting. Also, the Chief Planner at DCLG had issued revised guidance to Planning Officers.
- <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/letterabolitionregional>

## **Item 7. AoB**

- 7.1 The Chairman raised the issue of the ongoing chairmanship of the group. RR suggested that one option is to appoint an external chair or convenor / coordinator who could chair the meetings and progress other work on liaison etc. (see 3.7)
- It was agreed to appoint an external consultant to convene SERTAB meetings on a trial one year basis from January 2011.

**Action 7: AL to investigate options and procurement issues.**

## **Item 8. Meetings Programme for 2011**

- 8.1 It was agreed that with the expected rate of rapid change in planning issues likely to continue next year, the group should aim for four meetings and that the first should be in early February 2011 (Main meeting in the morning, data matters after lunch). **Action 8: AL to pursue.**

**N.B. 2011 Meetings have subsequently been arranged at Local Government House, London, for;**

**18th January, 11th April, 4th July and 6th October**

**On each of those days, the main meeting will commence at 10:15 am and the data issues meeting will commence at approx. 2 pm.**