

Emerging East of England Regional Structures overview

October 2009



Context

The Government published the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill on 5 December 2008, which is the legislation that is changing the regional structures: it takes forward the proposals set out in the Government's Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR) published in July 2007. The Bill is currently in the House of Commons for its final stages.

Statutory guidance

Communities and Local Government has issued draft guidance for consultation about the regional structures, with a closing date for responses of 30th October 2009. The guidance doesn't support stakeholder involvement in the Leader's Board, but it states that one of the main principles of the new regional strategy arrangements are to: "Secure a joined up approach to strategy-making and governance within each region, based on partnership working and stakeholder involvement." With reference to stakeholder engagement it says:

"Reference to 'stakeholders' means all those who have an interest in and a contribution to make to the content of the Regional Strategy. 'Involvement' means more than the provision of information and the invitation to respond to consultation documents, although both of these have a role to play. It means the opportunity to engage and participate in shaping the Regional Strategy, including the development of options and the sustainability appraisal."



[Follow this link to read the full consultation document.](#)

East of England arrangements

EERA dissolution and creation of Leader's Board

The penultimate meeting of the full Assembly was held in July, followed by the Executive Committee meeting in September. The final meeting of the Assembly will be in the New Year. A regional task group initially developed proposals for the new structures, which were presented to the Assembly, and also to a separate meeting of Leaders called on 18th September. This latter meeting was asked to establish a Shadow Leader's Board until the new legislation comes into force – they have agreed to do so when they next meet, in November.

The new Leader's Board will comprise of Local Authority leaders from every county, unitary and district authority in the region. No community stakeholders will be included in the new arrangements.

Single Regional Strategy

A new board is being established to oversee the development and implementation of the Single Regional Strategy, combining economic and spatial priorities. Agreement is still being reached about who will sit on this board, but it will be a selection of councillors from the above Leader's Board (probably 16), plus a number of EEDA members with multiple voting rights.

Several national delivery agencies such as the Homes and Communities Agency and the Environment Agency will have non voting places on this board, and it is proposed that there should also be one representative from the new 'Stakeholder Partnership'.

Consultation on how this new board would work was held during July and COVER submitted a response at this stage, outlining some of our concerns.

 [Follow this link to read our response to this consultation.](#)

Development and Implementation Boards (DIBs)

Five subgroups will be set up, membership of which is being drawn up by EEDA at present. It is likely that there will be VCS representation on them. They reflect the themes of the East of England Implementation Plan (currently under development): Utilities and Green Infrastructure; Transport; Housing and Regeneration; Enterprise and Skills; and Culture and Creativity.

There is some concern that there isn't enough focus within these themes on the social agenda, particularly where the social agenda is not directly contributing to economic or spatial priorities. The Social Inclusion Panel is preparing a paper on this issue, and COVER will be contributing to it.

Stakeholder Partnership

A new partnership of stakeholders is proposed, potentially with membership to be agreed by the current Community Stakeholders group. Very little detail about how this group will work has been agreed as yet, but discussions are underway. The Community Stakeholders group themselves will be addressing this issue on 21st October. A discussion paper highlighting some of the issues has been circulated and COVER has contributed to it. We have also submitted a separate paper suggesting that the VCS is not going to be well represented in the current proposals for the new structures.

If you would like a copy of this paper please contact abigail.patience@cover-east.org

Meanwhile

Extension of the East of England Plan to 2031

The East of England Plan when published last year was only valid up until 2021. Consultation is currently underway to extend this to 2031, and a range of scenarios have been outlined for this consultation. A series of public meetings have been held. COVER will be submitting a response to this consultation.

 [Follow this link to access the consultation information pack.](#)