

Wider South East (WSE) Political Steering Group
18 July 11:30 – 14:00, City Hall, Room 1.2, London

Meeting Notes

ATTENDANCE

East of England

Name	Responsibility	Council	Group
Cllr Linda Haysey	Leader	East Hertfordshire DC	Con
Cllr Robin Howe (sub)	Deputy Leader	Huntingdonshire DC	Con
Cllr Roy Davis	Leader's Representative	Luton BC	Lab
Mayor Dave Hodgson	Leader	Bedford BC	Lib Dem

South East

Name	Responsibility	Council	Group
Cllr Carole Paternoster	SEEC Executive member and Cabinet	Aylesbury Vale DC	Con
Cllr Nicolas Heslop	SEEC Chairman and Leader	Tonbridge & Malling BC	Con
Cllr Tony Page	SEEC Vice Chairman and Deputy Leader	Reading BC	Lab

London

Name	Responsibility	Council	Group
James Murray	Deputy Mayor of London for Housing	Greater London Authority	Lab
Cllr Kevin Davis	Leader	Royal Borough of Kingston	Con

Officers

Name	Responsibility	Organisation
Russell Williams	Lead Chief Executive	Ipswich BC
Richard Hatter	Chairman of the East of England Officer Working Group	Thurrock Council
Cinar Altun	Policy and Secretariat Manager	East of England LGA
Hannah Shah	Senior Manager	East of England LGA
Heather Bolton	Director	South East England Councils
Nick Woolfenden	Head of Policy Co-ordination	South East England Councils
Katharina Winbeck	Head of Transport, Environment and Infrastructure Policy	London Councils
John Lett	Strategic Planning Manager	Greater London Authority
Jorn Peters	Senior Strategic Planner	Greater London Authority
Martin Tedder		Transport for London

Introductions

- 1.1. Members and officers introduced themselves. Apologies were received from Cllr Peter Martin (Surrey CC), Cllr Paul Bettison (Bracknell Forest BC), Cllr David Finch (Essex CC), Cllr James Jamieson (Central Beds C), Cllr Claire Kober (LB Haringey) and Cllr Stephen Alambritis (LB Merton). *[post meeting note: The membership of the London Enterprise Panel is currently under review. Its new representative will be nominated as soon as possible.]*

2. Welcome

- 2.1. James Murray welcomed colleagues from the East, South East and London to City Hall and affirmed the GLA's commitment to Wider South East (WSE) collaboration. James Murray noted that the Mayor of London recognised that working as an island was not an option for London and that it was important that the WSE work helps to better deliver housing and infrastructure. The challenge for London was the level of growth where tough choices need to be made.
- 2.2. With respect to the London Plan Review, James Murray said this would be undertaken as quickly as possible - within 2-3 years. In the meantime, he reiterated that there would be early opportunities to engage (including the next Political Steering Group meeting and the WSE Summit on 9 December). In order to make the work of the WSE effective it would be important to strengthen and broaden its influence. The collaboration could benefit prosperity across the WSE.
- 2.3. Cllr Linda Haysey welcomed colleagues, and stressed the need for a common purpose around common problems. Cllr Nicolas Heslop welcomed James Murray's recognition of the wider challenges and the positive approach to collaboration. Whilst noting that there was a need for London to be able to meet its own growth needs, Cllr Heslop also stressed that the WSE Steering Group should aim to add value and be greater than the sum of its parts. He also reiterated keenness for Councillors outside London to meet the new Mayor. Clarification was also sought about the future involvement on this Group of London Deputy Mayors for Planning and Transport.
- 2.4. **ACTION: GLA to confirm future Steering Group attendance and seek Mayor's commitment to meet Wider South East partners.**

3. Notes of the last meeting

- 3.1. The notes of the previous meeting dated 10 March 2016 were approved.
- 3.2. **ACTION: Officers will draft an outline of a programme for the WSE Summit in December and will present this to Members at their next meeting in October.**

4. London Plan Review

- 4.1. John Lett provided an update on the London Plan Review. Slides are attached as **Annex A**. He highlighted the following points:
 - Emerging GLA need estimates suggest London may require 55,000 – 60,000 pa additional homes. The Government is considering the Local Plan Expert Group alternative methodology which could raise this to 70,000 pa or more. This would make it even more difficult for London to meet its own need.

- The GLA is exploring scenarios in terms of different levels of reduced migration from the EU following the Brexit vote. The real impact of Brexit on migration numbers will remain unclear for many years.
 - It is currently estimated that the new London Plan is likely to be adopted in autumn 2019.
- 4.2. The Steering Group discussed the role of the Green Belt. James Murray reiterated the Mayor of London's commitment to the protection of the Green Belt but noted the concerns raised by councils across the WSE (many of whom have to consider release of Green Belt to meet their own needs) that they do not want it to be ruled out in the Mayor's options for meeting London's housing need.
- 4.3. The ability of London to deliver on its housing need was raised, with James Murray stressing that new/additional forms of delivery beyond conventional house building (e.g. Build to Rent) should be promoted and that a range of stakeholders (developers, housing associations, councils, etc.) would need to collaborate (see Section 5 for further details).
- 4.4. Transport for London clarified that 790,000 people commute daily into London and that, in particular, the proportion travelling into Central London is increasing.
- 4.5. **ACTION: James Murray will share the concerns raised in terms of the Green Belt with the Mayor and keep the group informed on emerging London Plan policy.**

5. Tackling Barriers to Housing Delivery

- 5.1. Nick Woolfenden presented on the barriers to housing delivery and set out options for joint working to address the challenges (slides attached at **Annex A** and Annex 2 of meeting papers for full report provided separately). Many areas within the WSE were failing to meet their supply targets in terms of completions despite granting more than enough approvals and it was confirmed that this was an urgent issue where a collective approach could add value.
- 5.2. A range of aspects were highlighted by Members in the subsequent discussion including:
- shortening permission durations and discretionary powers to charge council tax on unimplemented permissions
 - land banking and management
 - new forms of delivery beyond conventional supply
 - challenges to securing delivery of the right mix of homes to meet needs, including the "unaffordability" of affordable housing and impact of Starter Homes
 - the capacity of the industry including skills
 - funding/flexibility for local authorities
- 5.3. **ACTION: Officers will co-ordinate work with the National LGA to ensure Wider South East lobbying activities are complementary to the national position.**
- 5.4. **ACTION: Officers will draft a joint letter for member approval to send to relevant Government departments - including planning, housing, transport, skills. It will cover points from the meeting paper and from the meeting discussion, and relevant ministers will be invited to meet representatives of the Political Steering Group to discuss how to bring sites forward for development and what kind of powers could help councils encourage build out of permissions. Approaching Government now is particularly timely following recent changes. A letter will be submitted over the summer, proposing ministerial meetings in the autumn after the next Steering Group.**

6. Strategic Infrastructure Improvements

- 6.1. John Lett presented on strategic infrastructure improvements, stressing the need to concentrate on schemes with a real pan-regional impact (**slides attached as Annex A** and Annex 3 of meeting papers for full report provided separately).
- 6.2. The criteria for the identification of schemes were agreed by Members in principle, but the different stages the schemes are at and a stronger focus on deliverability and next steps should be reflected. The individual infrastructure schemes presented were generally considered as a good starting point. The following specific issues were raised:
- the South East has identified specific key strategic schemes through its recent 'Missing Links' report which will help inform views; the East of England is reviewing options
 - Local Enterprise Partnerships, devolution areas, and existing lobbying groups should be involved when collating further information about schemes
 - consideration should be given to the potential for orbital routes to release pressure on radial routes into Central London
 - Government's decision on airport expansion would have significant impacts on infrastructure needs
 - the joint lobbying could be undertaken in phases, as schemes are all at different stages and not all would benefit to the same degree from immediate action
 - more clarity on potential next steps for each schemes and what we want Government to do would be useful
- 6.3. **ACTION: Officers will revise the meeting paper, including further details where available, and looking particularly into the potential phasing of lobbying activities. The revised paper should not include more than 10 schemes and will be presented to the next meeting in October for consideration.**

7. Common Understanding of the Evidence

- 7.1. Richard Hatter presented activities by the GLA and the East of England LGA on the common understanding of technical evidence (slides attached at **Annex A**).
- 7.2. The GLA is expanding the capability of its population and household projection modelling to cover the whole of England and has offered to WSE authorities to get involved. At a technical workshop during June interested demographers were introduced to the model, which is methodologically consistent with the standard ONS projections. It allows users to appraise the model and explore a range of scenarios.
- 7.3. South East representatives stressed that this work by the GLA must not generate any additional risk to authorities seeking to meet the Government's Spring 2017 deadline for Local Plan preparation, given ONS figures are the Government's official starting point for local plan making; however, collaboration to understand GLA's approach might be explored further in the longer-term. East of England representatives suggested that by engaging with the GLA's demographic work such risks could be minimised and model outputs could be influenced. The GLA is seeking independent verification of the model based on ONS recommendations and the East of England is keen to work together with the GLA on this. They feel a verified consistent evidence base would be useful to inform future Strategic Housing Market Assessments and Local Plan Examinations.

7.4. Richard Hatter also highlighted the potential scope for collaboration on economic forecasting and for further joint technical research on demographic and economic matters, which could be explored.

7.5. **ACTION: GLA officers will continue to pursue the validation of their demographic model and will keep WSE partners informed. They are open to collaboration with interested partners. The East of England will continue to shape a programme of potential joint technical research.**

8. Next Steps

8.1. Cllr Linda Haysey summarised the key decisions and actions (see above).

Annex A

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Item 4 - Tackling Barriers to Housing Delivery

Political Steering Group

18 July 2016

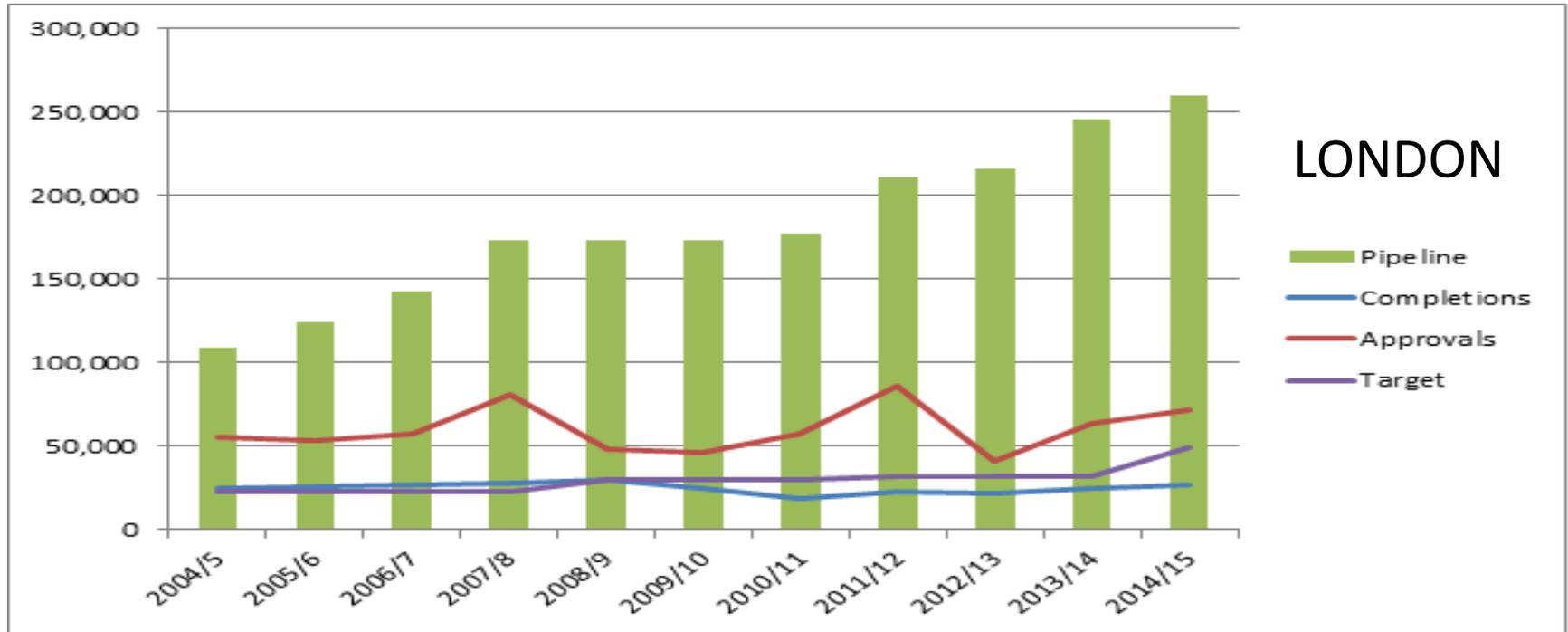
Addressing Barriers to Housing Delivery

What's the problem?

- Members agree a challenge for us all – South East, East & London – turning locally-approved housing permissions/plans into reality
- Industry often slow to build out; infrastructure challenges; capacity/skills issues



Housing delivery: Targets & permissions vs delivery



- **London** - 10 year average 25,000 completions pa; +50,000 approvals; 260,000 unit pipeline on rising trend (London Dev. Database)
- Unimplemented permissions (units, from LGA research):
South East = 67,000+, East = 40,000+



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How can we tackle the problem?

- **A) Industry delivery capacity and approach**

Issues: Business model/land banking; limited competition; skills

Solutions? Incentivise build-out eg charge council tax; increase SME opportunities; local skills funding control

- **B) Public sector capacity and finances**

Issues: Affordable home delivery; sustaining planning dept. capacity

Solutions? More funding/powers for LAs to secure affordable homes; locally set planning fees

- **C) Infrastructure**

Issues: Capacity/investment issues

Solutions? Funding powers to accelerate investment



Possible next steps/actions

- Joint lobbying on core common issues eg. short report to Government/others regarding discretionary local powers needed
- Co-operation and sharing of good practice
- Engaging industry

Related issues for further consideration:

- Planning – housing land supply
- Strategic infrastructure investment



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Item 5 – Strategic Infrastructure Improvements

Political Steering Group

18 July 2016

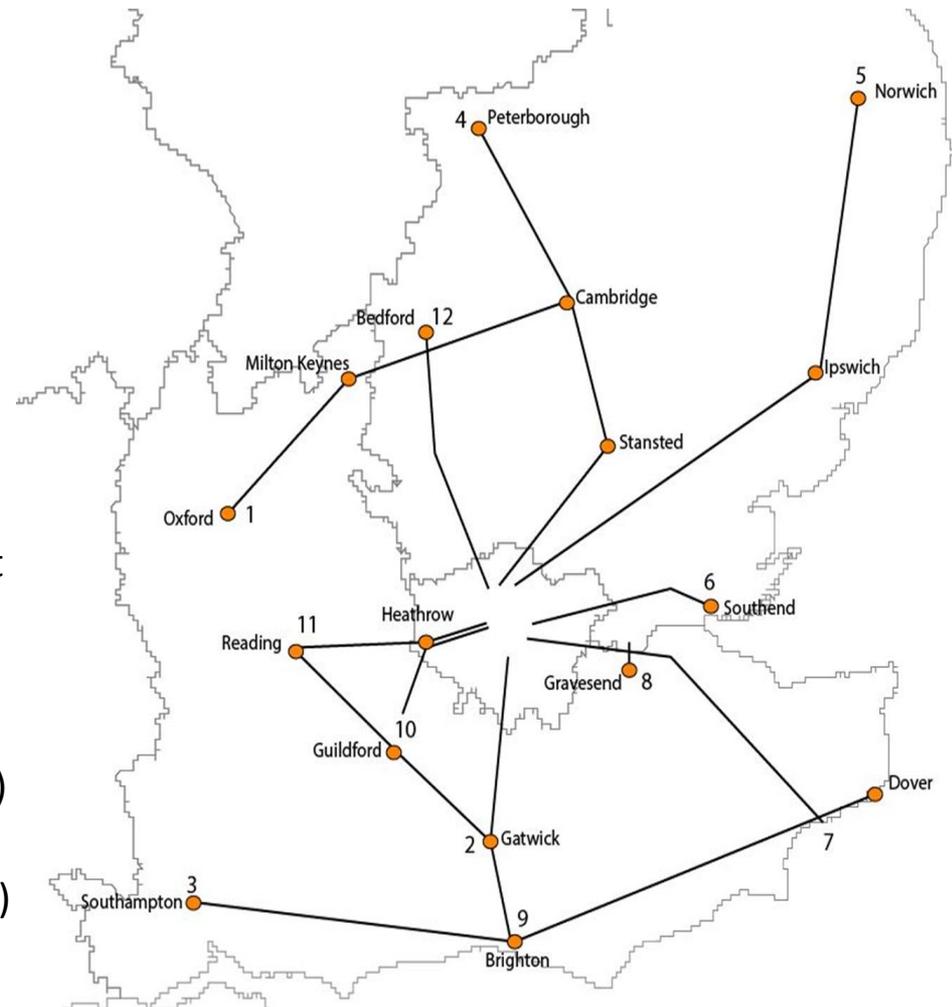
Strategic Infrastructure Improvements

March meeting

- Importance of strategic infrastructure improvements across the WSE
- Considerable combined lobbying power
- Need to focus resources on just a few strategic infrastructure areas/schemes

Long list of areas/schemes

1. East West Rail and new road link (Oxford - Cambridge)
2. North Downs Rail Link (Gatwick – Reading)
3. A27/M27/A259 and rail corridor (Dover – Southampton)
4. West Anglia Mainline and Crossrail 2 North (London – Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough)
5. Great Eastern Mainline (London – Ipswich – Norwich)
6. Thames Gateway Essex: C2C and Crossrail 2 – Eastern Branch (London – South Essex / London Gateway Port)
7. Thames Gateway Kent: Crossrail 1 extension East and HS1 route (London – North Kent – Channel Tunnel)
8. Lower Thames Crossing
9. Brighton Mainline (London – Gatwick – Brighton)
10. South West Mainline and Crossrail 2 South West (London – Surrey / southern access to Heathrow)
11. Great Western Mainline (London – Reading / western access to Heathrow)
12. Midlands and West Coast Mainline (London – Luton – Bedford / Milton Keynes)



Criteria for Consideration

- Real strategic cross-boundary benefits
- Local commitment and benefits
- Deliverability including innovative funding
- Degree of WSE collaborative support valuable (what, when, who to target)
- Early wins and opportunities

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Item 6 - London Plan Review

Political Steering Group

18 July 2016

DEMAND SIDE DRIVERS OF CHANGE: OVERVIEW

Population: 8.7 million (2015)

Projected increase: 76k pa (2036);
c72k to 2041?

Households: 3.4 million (2014)

Projected increase: 40k pa (2036);
c46k to 2041?

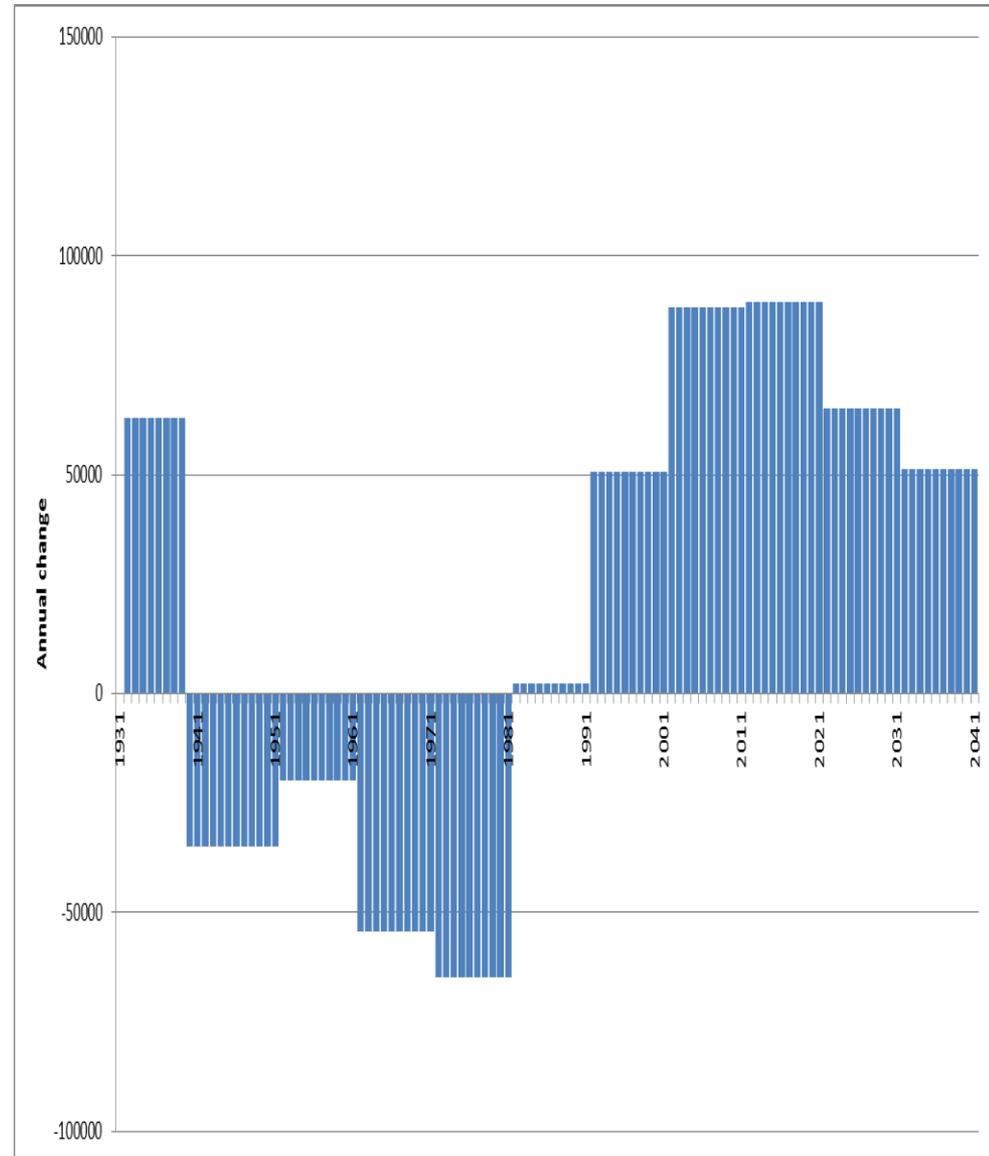
Housing need: 49k pa (2036); 56k+ to
2041?

Housing capacity: designed to meet
need (50k pa achieved)

Employment: 5.6 million (2015)

Projected increase: 32k (2036); 46k to
2041?

But Brexit impact...?



Full London Plan Review

Indicative timetable:

- Informal consultation: Autumn 2016
- Consultation on full draft: Autumn 2017
- Examination in Public: Summer 2018
- Adoption: Autumn 2019



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Item 7 – Common Understanding of Evidence

Political Steering Group

18 July 2016

Common Understanding of Evidence

Three strands of activity on population and economic linkages:

- GLA Population/household projections model
- Interaction and alignment of economic modelling (e.g. GLA Witan and East of England Forecasting Model)
- Further research to understanding migration influences

GLA population/household projections model

GLA developed model consistent with standard ONS/CLG approach

Advantages	Points to resolve
Consistent scenarios; savings for all authorities	Acceptance: independent validation
Local intelligence input	Impact on local plan preparation



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Common Understanding of Evidence

Interaction and alignment of economic modelling (e.g. GLA Witan and East of England Forecasting Model)

- Models work differently; technical comparison needed
- Development of shared scenarios

Further research to understanding migration influences

- Review historical migration patterns within the wider SE and account for the influences;
- Address how housing, labour markets and commuting interact and degree of influence throughout the WSE
- Highlight likely scenarios that should be tested for the period up to 2050.



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Meeting schedule

- 9 Sept 2016 Officer Working Group
- 12 October 2016 Political Steering Group
- 9 December 2016 Summit
- February 2017 Officer Working Group
- March 2017 Political Steering Group



Further Details...

New website – hosted by GLA:

<http://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/organisations-we-work/policy-and-infrastructure-collaboration-across-wider-south-east>

