



GOVERNMENT OFFICE
FOR THE SOUTH EAST

Representing Central Government in the South East

By email

Colin Byrne
Regional Director
2nd Floor
Bridge House
1 Walnut Tree Close
Guildford
GU1 4GA

Switchboard: 01483 882255
Tel: 01483 882260
FAX: 01483 882269
GTN: 3011 2260
e-mail: colin.byrne@gose.gsi.gov.uk
www.go-se.gov.uk
3rd December 2008

Dear Colleague

FORTHCOMING REGIONAL PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

I write to update you on the outcome of the recent Parliamentary debate and vote on Government's proposals on regional accountability and to explain how the Government Office for the South East will be engaged in future implementation. As you may be aware, Parliament has agreed that, with the exception of London, each region will soon have a Regional Select Committee and a Regional Grand Committee.

Regional Select Committees will conduct focussed, targeted scrutiny of regional strategies and regional bodies. They will be comprised of nine MPs, proportionately balanced in line with the political composition of the House of Commons (i.e., five Labour, three Conservative and one Liberal Democrat / other). They will undertake inquiries and publish reports, but their terms of reference will be drafted so that they do not duplicate any existing lines of accountability. Initially we expect that the focus of their inquiries will be on the work of the RDA and its partners, however the committees themselves will decide which organisations and issues will be the subject of scrutiny. All regional bodies will be able to submit evidence to their inquiries, and all could be drawn into the subject of scrutiny.

Regional Grand Committees will have a different role. Meeting once or twice a year, these will provide a forum for all MPs from the region to debate key regional issues once or twice

a year and give Regional Ministers the opportunity to be held directly accountable for their work.

The committees will be established in the New Year and we expect that Regional Select Committee inquiries are likely to start in February, with Regional Grand Committee hearings to follow from around May onwards.

By making a wide range of regionally-organised public bodies – and Regional Ministers – directly accountable to Parliament, these new arrangements constitute a new and high profile opportunity to examine how Government serves the regions and how public service delivery can best meet each region's needs. In doing so, they bring the regions into the centre of Parliamentary business and also with meetings outside of London on a regular basis, Parliament into the regions.

The Government Office Network will be leading for Government on this new agenda and the Government Office for the South East will act as the region's "centre of expertise" on the work of the committees for the South East. We have established a new Regional Parliamentary and Private Office which will deal with this work. Any queries you may have about the Regional Select Committees should be sent to SEMinisterial@gose.gsi.gov.uk or by telephoning the Regional Parliamentary and Private Office on 01483 88 2697. Further information will be posted on the GOSE website as and when it (such as topics for inquiry) becomes available.

Yours sincerely



Colin D. Byrne