



SMART REGIONS GROUP

5th MEETING, SANDNES 1-2 NOVEMBER 2018

REPORT AND MINUTES by Live Hegelstad and Geir Sør-Reime

Participants

Cllr Barney Crockett	Chair	Aberdeen City Council (UKS)
Cllr Birgitta Adolfsson	Vice-Chair	Västra Götaland Region (SE)
Cllr Otto Kjær Larsen	Vice-Chair	North Denmark Region
Mr Geir Sør-Reime	Advisor	Rogaland County Council (NO)
Ms Irma Ganibegovic	Ass.exec.secr.	North Sea Commission
Cllr Iris Walker		Aberdeenshire Council (UKS)
Cllr Beate M. Johnsen		Vest-Agder County Council (NO)
Ms Karen Greve Somersset		North Denmark Region
Mr Hans Inge Gloppen		Hordaland County Council (NO)
Mr Alistair Reid		Aberdeenshire Council (UKS)
Ms Siv Hemsett		Vest-Agder County Council (NO)
Mr Karsten Bækgaard		Central Denmark Region (DK)
Ms Live Hegelstad		Rogaland County Council (NO)
Ms Laura Paterson		Aberdeen City Council (UKS)
Ms Lillian Brodin		Tjörn Municipality (SE) *
Ms Pamela Alverbo		Tjörn Municipality (SE) *
Ms Eli Viten		Rogaland County Council (NO) *

*participated 1 November only

The meeting was held at the Quality Residence Hotel in Sandnes, Rogaland.

The Chair, Lord Provost Barney Crockett of Aberdeen introduced the first day of the meeting, a workshop focusing on ageing population. He stressed that many countries face an elderly wave in the coming years, and we must find ways to deal with this challenge.

The main presentation was by Mr Rune T. Slettebak from Rogaland County Council.

Some important points from his presentation:

The southwestern part of Norway faces challenges because of an ageing population. Some causes for this are centralization, migration, fertility and life expectancy. In Norway most of the population is concentrated along the coast, and some sparsely populated areas inland. In this region we have a varied demography ranging from Dalane in the south (literally meaning «valleys»), Jæren (agriculture in the south, urban in the north), Ryfylke (large mountainous areas with some small settlements), Haugalandet (urban area mostly, some agriculture).

Centralization is an issue all over the region. Young people move away from the smaller places where they grew up to go to university, and often find jobs in the cities.

Many never move back again. This causes an increase of elderly people remaining in the smaller municipalities. Sauda for example has negative population growth. The one stabilizing factor is migration, mostly immigrants/refugees from outside Norway. Population growth is dependent on immigration from abroad in many regions, it is necessary to lower the average age in many municipalities. Although Rogaland has long benefitted from an attractive jobmarket, which has led to this region having a somewhat young population, this can change very quickly should we lose attractive jobs in, for instance, the oil industry.

Geir Sør-Reime then referred from an article in the local paper, Stavanger Aftenblad on 27 October. The headline was The elderly wave to hit Sandnes.

This article talks about the cost of an increasingly ageing population in Sandnes, it is estimated to cost 1,6 billion NOK, with annual costs around 528 million NOK. Elderly people do not move from place to place like the younger generations. Therefore one must assume that Sandnes will be hit by a wave of elderly people. The municipality is looking for ways to deal with this issue. Some solutions can be in using technology, finding ways for the elderly to live in their own homes longer, modern medicine dispensers, homecare and training, to mention a few.

The next presentation was by Ms.Lilian Bohlin and Ms.Pamela Alverbo from Tjörn Municipality in Västra Götaland Region, Sweden, on the Tubbe Model

They presented a model for relationship-based health care for the elderly, called the Tubbe Model. The project started in 2013 and they also cooperate with several municipalities in Belgium, following the same model. The model focuses on doing things in cooperation with the residents, like eating meals together, making activities for the resident to keep them active. Organize them in smaller groups to encourage conversations and getting to know one another. The administration is hands on, all the nurses and assistant nurses as well as the residents take part in the decision-making. It is about giving the elderly a dignified life. Some residents need a little help, some need a lot of help, and the staff works hard to find good solutions for the individuals. The purpose of the project is to improve the quality of life for the elderly, long-term thinking financially and streamlined decision-making. The success factors are homelike environment, relationship based, good structure, group organization, clear visions, good food and social gatherings.

Cllr Otto Kjær Larsen from North Denmark Region then presented the Nursing Homes of the Future project.

This is a project started in Ålborg in 2014. There are four important factors; inclusion, motivation to move around, welfare technology and stimulation of senses. Technology: a floor sensor system to prevent injuries, toilet with automatic wash and airdrying, ceiling lift system, moveable sink, rubbish suction with compression to reduce smell and environmental disadvantages. There is a library and an it-cafe. All of this makes the elderly feel part of the world. They also have a bus available to go on trips or shopping.

After these presentations relating to the main theme, ageing population, Irma Ganibegovic, Assistant Executive Secretary of the North Sea Commission first introduced the work on the post-2020 North Sea Region strategy.

The current North Sea Region Strategy 2020 was adopted in 2011 and now, the work on a post-2020 strategy has started. The four thematic groups of the North Sea Commission are asked to contribute to the work, which is co-ordinated by an administrative task force consisting of the NSC secretariat, the four advisors and representatives from each member state.

The work was already discussed at the NSC Annual Business Meeting in Fredrikstad in June, and some key points were agreed there, including the need to have a shorter document than the current one.

Now, the work has concentrated on identifying new key action areas for the 2021-27 program period. The Smart Regions Group must identify what it would like to see as priority areas and key actions within its remit.

The she gave an update from the CPMR General Assembly on its session of migration management.

Migration management has become a new core area for CPMR because of the refugee crises in 2015.

She also informed about the CPMRs work on a new strategy for the organisation.

At the ABM there was an interactive session on the new strategy to be adopted by the ABM in 2020. Three issues were discussed:

1. What is the CPMR – tasks and goals

Here, most delegated answered 'A lobby group promoting regional views on key pieces of EU legislation'

2. Which policy area should CPMR cover

Where 'Prioritise its work on territorial cohesion, accessibility and maritime issues' got most votes

3. How should the CPMR work

Here, 'Develop the provision of 'intelligence' on EU policies for all core policy areas' received most votes

Then Karen Greve Somerset gave an update on the Blue Growth key action area.

The EU regional fund and its support for maritime investments will focus on research, and will involve private industry/businesses to invest to develop new ideas and getting them into the market to earn money. There will be a Maritime Investments Platform, and there will be matchmaking conferences and workshops.

CPMR has taken an initiative for maritime industries, calling EU institutions to develop a new and ambitious European strategy for maritime industries.

Blue growth will continue to be a part of the focus in the future.

THE SECOND DAY OF THE MEETING

The meeting approved the minutes of the 4th meeting in Fredrikstad 13 June 2018 as true records of the proceedings.

Then, Mr. Sander Olsen, Mayor of the Youth County Council of Rogaland gave a presentation of the Youth County Council and the participation of youth in political processes in general.

The Youth County Council of Rogaland is party neutral, the members are between 15-20 years old, and there is one representative from each municipality in the region. It is organized like the County Council and is very professional. It meets 4 times every year, and the administrative council meets 6 times. This is very popular amongst the youth; many young people want to represent their municipality in the Youth County Council.

Sander is the first leader, elected in February this year. Youth participation and the ability to influence politics and politicians in the region is highly treasured by the members of the Youth County Council, they want to make a difference and they want to be heard.

Geir Sør-Reime, the advisor, followed up by announcing that There will be a Youth Parliament Conference 21-22 March 2019.

This conference will take place at Hotel Residence in Sandnes. Rogaland Youth County Council will help host the conference and participate as key note speakers, together with other key note speakers.

In Norway the law has recently changed, and every municipality and County Council must have a youth council. This is not fully achieved yet, but hopefully within the next year or so. Youth participation is important. One theme for the conference can be: How can youth contribute to the established political system?

CPMR wants the youth council to discuss their new strategy.

Next key action area update was circular economy, and Ms. Maryon Paulsen Strugstad, the county geologist of Rogaland County Council talked about sustainable management of construction and demolition waste in Rogaland.

For sustainable management it is important to find ways of how to dispose of construction surplus materials.

This is especially important to Rogaland as this is one of the largest producers of construction surplus materials.

This is 34% of all export at a value of 510 mill NOK.

It is used for road construction, concrete and offshore industries. It is estimated we have around 15 more years left of sand and gravel in Rogaland. The solution is to think circular economy. We have to find ways to use and reuse. There is a regional plan for the management of excavated materials.

Mr. Karsten Bækgaard from the Central Denmark Region then addressed the key action area tourism and talked about tourism development at the Danish North Sea Coast.

This initiative has three focus areas:

Culture and food experiences

UNESCO Global Geopark

Cycling and walking

There is a need for better organization of tourism. More cooperation between municipalities is important to increase the income due to tourism. The Danish North Sea Coast offers great opportunities for this, there are 11 municipalities divided in 3 regions.

The purpose is to have long-term tourism development in the area, giving tourists better quality when they come, and giving investors possibilities. Together it is easier to ensure the proper respect for nature and the coastline.

15 hotspots have been identified along the coastline within four different themes:

Fishing

Food production

Landscape and nature

Drinks – production of beer, juice, whiskey, liquor, wine etc

Examples from Skjern and Varode municipalities – sea side resort.

New growth project between Thorsminde and Thyborøn in business development and increased tourism. They work together to attract new investors, to expand the capacity of holiday houses, to develop distinctive products and experiences.

There are also plans for a geopark, paths for cycling and walking along the North Sea Coastline.

After this presentation, the group walked to **Vågen Upper Secondary School** located close to the hotel, and were greeted by the Head Master, Ms Bente Jelsa, who then took the delegates for a walk through this modern and impressive school.

Next meetings

A preliminary schedule for future meetings (dates to be announced later):

Spring: Helsinki, European Capital of Smart Tourism 2019

June: Marstrand, Västra Götaland Region, focus on circular economy

Autumn: Kristiansand, Vest-Agder County Council, Norway, focus tbc

The chair group will meet in Aberdeen 17 January 2019 and more details will be announced after that meeting.