SEEC work programme 2010-11

This work programme is based on output from the SEEC Executive Committee workshop on 15 October 2010. Subject to resources, it covers the period to July 2011.

1. **SEEC PRINCIPLES**

1.1 **Strive for a fair funding deal for the South East**
Make the case for fairer national funding settlements for South East Councils and maximise councils’ access to EU funding opportunities.

1.2 **Promote the South East’s position as a leading global economy**
Make the case for strategic infrastructure and investment needs to maintain the South East’s international competitiveness, including joint working with business.

1.3 **Act as single democratic voice for South East interests**
Represent all-tier and cross-boundary views to Government, maintaining dialogue with neighbouring areas such as London and East of England, and represent South East local government interests on external bodies.

1.4 **Monitor the pulse of the South East**
Track data to illustrate South East successes and pressure points in delivering effective local services and supporting economic growth. This will include a focus on SEEC’s priority areas below, for example home building, affordable housing, economic trends and impact of migration.

2. **SEEC PRIORITY TOPICS**

2.1 In 2010-11 SEEC will focus its work in the following areas:
- Finance – a fair funding deal for South East Councils.
- Economy - the case for investing in the South East and joint work with LEPs on strategic infrastructure eg broadband.
- Europe – raising awareness of EU funding opportunities for South East councils and review SEEC role in ERDF.
- Housing – delivering through localism and community planning.
- Migration – Impact of migration on local services.
- Transport - making the case for major South East transport projects that will support UK-wide economic growth.
3. **ACTION PLAN**

### 3.1 Member involvement

**Aim:** Ensure member input and involvement to SEEC through a regular programme of meetings, task & finish groups and news updates.

i) **Deliver an annual programme of member meetings, working groups and events** to agree SEEC’s position on priority issues: Four Executive meetings, two all-member meetings and at least one annual all-member conference.

ii) **Establish a minimum of two member task and finish groups** to direct work on priority topics. Drawn from the full SEEC membership, chaired by an Executive Committee member and reporting to the SEEC Executive. Suggestions for 2010-11 are:
   - Developing the South East dashboard – key data to be collected to monitor the pulse of the South East.
   - Delivering housing through the localist agenda that co-ordinates with upper tier services.
   - Maximising access to EU funding across the South East.

iii) **Deliver a programme of member and external communications** to raise awareness of SEEC work, including:

   - At least four member newsletters a year; website redesigned to reflect agreed priorities; media relations on output from key SEEC projects.

iv) **Nominate SEEC members to represent the South East on external bodies,** such as LGA and other relevant committees and organisations.

v) **Work with SESL** to ensure the two organisations’ work programmes are complementary and avoid duplication.

vi) **Establish regular member dialogue with neighbours** in London and other areas of England to discuss shared issues and problems.

### 3.2 Finance

**Aim:** Ensure the South East councils’ case for fairer funding is understood by national Government.

i) **Commission independent report on funding** and return on investment in the South East relative to other areas.

ii) **Submit evidence to Government on need for fundamental reform of local government finance.**

iii) **Meet ministers to influence fairer funding for the South East** and contribute views to consultations on changes to local government financing.

### 3.3 Economy

**Aim:** maintain an overview of the South East as the UK’s most successful economy and work jointly with the business sector as a strong, single voice to make the case for strategic needs.

i) **Invite LEP chairmen to a future SEEC Executive committee** alongside business representative organisations to discuss joint working on strategic priorities.

ii) **Aim to gain agreement to a high level SEEC/LEP forum,** meeting three times a year to identify, agree and influence
delivery of strategic priorities affecting the UK’s most profitable economy.

iii) Develop a joint SEEC/business campaign on broadband to promote swift delivery of next generation broadband.

3.4 Europe

Aim: Provide information to help South East councils identify potential for attracting EU grant funding.

i) Establish a task and finish group on EU priorities to agree how SEEC should use its resources on EU matters at attract funds and influence future allocation of EU funds to the South East.

ii) Establish a regular mechanism to feed information to Committee of the Regions members to enable them to make the case for the South East in Brussels.

iii) Meet South East MEP(s) to build relationships and support MEPs in making the case for South East needs.

iv) Invite a leading South East MEP to address a SEEC all-member meeting on accessing funding.

3.5 Housing

Aim: Ensure Government understands what SEEC members need to be able to deliver housing to support economic growth.

i) Organise a SEEC housing conference on overcoming barriers to delivery of new homes, targeting ministerial attendance.

ii) Establish a task and finish group on delivering housing to agree how different tiers will work together to deliver strategic needs and fund infrastructure and services to support new homes.

iii) Meet CLG minister(s) to explain SEEC views on new housing and respond to consultation on new policies.

3.6 Migration

Aim: Track the impact of migration on provision & funding of local authority services and the wider South East economy in areas such as skills and housing.

i) Monitor trends in migration and cost impact for services via regular reports to SEEC Executive.

ii) Co-ordinate work to share best practice on migration issues via the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration (SESPM).

iii) Contribute views on migration to Government through SEEC and/ or SESP on major issues and consultations.

3.7 Transport

Aim: Ensure Government understands South East transport needs and the UK-wide economic benefits of improvements in the South East. Work with neighbouring areas to raise awareness of common issues.

i) Meet transport ministers to discuss councils’ input into future transport decision making for cross boundary, strategic projects.
ii) Meet GLA, Mayor and TFL Board SE representatives to ensure London understands the impact of transport decisions on the South East.

iii) Work with LEPs to support the case for major transport projects that will deliver significant economic benefits.

3.8 Monitoring the pulse of the South East
Aim: Maintain oversight of key South East data and trends as an evidence base to inform strategic needs.

i) Create a monitoring ‘dashboard’ to maintain an overview of key data and trends across the 74 South East councils to inform strategic needs.

ii) Establish a task and finish group to identify key data to be collected.

iii) Use key data as evidence base to inform views to Government and other external organisations when making the case for South East needs or in responding to consultations.

4. METHODS OF WORKING
4.1 SEEC will deliver the work programme via the following methods:

i) Building relationships & dialogue with ministers, MPs and MEPs to raise awareness of South East needs, using a strong evidence base to support our case.

ii) Building relationships with external organisations to create a strong joint voice for South East concerns (eg GLA, East of England).

iii) Maximise value of influence achieved by South East membership of the LGA Executive and other groupings.

iv) Maximising use of limited resources by drawing on existing officer expertise in councils to provide policy support and evidence base to help members make the case for the South East.

v) Managing a programme of meetings to ensure strong member input, backed up by a communications programme for members and external audiences to raise the profile of SEEC priorities.