



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 to 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 SESPPM 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.
- ii) 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.

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