

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**



Date: 11 September 2012
Subject: Local Government Finance
Report of: Heather Bolton, SEEC Director

Recommendations:

- i) Members consider any next steps to take in responding to the Parliamentary stages of the Local Government Finance Bill
- ii) Members discuss the draft briefing for MPs on local government finance and agree any amendments needed before circulation.

1. Local Government Finance Bill

- 1.1 A verbal update will be provided on House of Lords discussions in the lead up to recess.

2. Finance Briefing for MPs

- 2.1 At the July Executive, members discussed ongoing concerns about local government finance. It was agreed that a short briefing for MPs should be prepared to counter the widespread belief that business rate retention will solve all local government's funding problems. A draft 2-page document is attached (Annex 1) for discussion and comment.
- 2.2 The draft briefing addresses concerns about both business rate retention and localisation of council tax benefits. It also asks MPs to support changes to give local authorities greater control over finances and make the systems more workable.
- 2.3 Once the final briefing is agreed, SEEC will circulate to MPs, Ministers and key members of the Lords. Members are also asked to help make the case by highlighting key points in discussions with personal political contacts.