**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

Date: 18 February 2011

Subject: **SEEC Data Dashboard Task & Finish Group:
             Report of first meeting**

Report by: Nick Woolfenden, SEEC Head of Policy Co-ordination

Recommendation:
SEEC Executive is asked to note the actions from the first meeting of SEEC's Data
Dashboard Task & Finish Group

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Present: Mike Appleyard, Paul Carter, Myles Cullen, Ann Ducker, Moira
                    Gibson, Kelsie Learney

In Attendance: Heather Bolton, Head of Communications & Public Affairs, SEEC;
                    Roy Millard, Partnership Manager, South East Strategic Partnership for
                    Migration; Ivan Perkovic, Head of Research and Economics, SEEDA;
                    Chris Williams, Chief Executive, Buckinghamshire County Council; Nick
                    Woolfenden, Head of Policy Coordination, SEEC

1.   Appointment of Chairman
1.1   Mike Appleyard was appointed Chairman by the group.

2.   Apologies, declarations of substitutes and declarations of interests
2.1   Apologies were received from Andrew Cumpsty and Paul Watkins. Myles Cullen
        was attending as substitute for Elizabeth Cartwright.

2.2   There were no declarations of interest.

3.   Agreement of Terms of Reference
        a) Draft terms of reference attached for review and comment
        and
        **b) Initial discussion on how to approach the group's proposed key work
             areas**

3.1   It was agreed the group's focus should be to identify a focused 'dashboard' of data
        that would help SEEC and its member local authorities to:
        • Understand strategic issues affecting their areas, and consequently
        • Influence government policy and investment decisions on these key issues.

3.2   It will be important to clearly identify SEEC's priority lobbying areas in order to help
        gather appropriate data. The group agreed it would initially explore data under five
        thematic headings, shown below, to cover SEEC's broad areas of interest. The
        dashboard may also be helpful in demonstrating how well the government's
        localism agenda is working in practice.

3.3   Given SEEC's relatively limited resources, the group agreed the aim should be to identify a small number of key data/indicators under each theme. The focus must be on data available from existing sources rather than requiring commissioning of new research. Members suggested possible indicators for exploration, shown as 'egs' below:

   i.   <u>Economy and employment</u> eg. skills; unemployment; business births/deaths; job growth/losses; job vacancy rates
   ii. <u>Housing and infrastructure</u> eg. housing starts/completions; social housing investment/completions; levels of new homes bonus achieved.
   iii. <u>Public finance and grants</u> eg. distribution of local government/health funding; amount of Regional Growth Fund awarded; EU programme funding.
   iv. <u>Demography and migration</u> eg. age structure and projections; national and international migration to South East; deprivation; life expectancy; Migrant National Insurance numbers (NINOs)/other key migration data.
   v.   <u>Environment</u> eg. recycling rates; waste arising.

3.4   As well as presenting the South East position as a whole, data should be used to identify significant local variations.

3.5   It will also be important to have comparative data to assess performance of the South East against other parts of the country, as well as global economic competitiveness. Consideration will need to be given to the appropriate geographic scale to present the data, as well as the frequency that the data can/should be updated and shared. Time series data will also be important to assess trends. In some cases it may be most appropriate to just share headline information in the dashboard, but provide links to sources of further information for member authorities who want more detail.

3.6   The importance of effective selection, analysis and presentation of data was discussed. For some indicators, such as deprivation, it is only by showing the absolute numbers of people affected that the scale of the issue becomes apparent; percentage figures mask it.

3.7   Opportunities for working closely with the new Local Enterprise Partnerships were discussed, as they too will need to understand their economies and key socio-economic data. Members agreed that SEEC should explore opportunities to work with LEPs as well as non-LEP areas on data sharing and analysis. One suggestion was to investigate whether, through a coordinated approach, individual partners could specialise on particular data themes, collecting and interpreting information to share with others across LEP and local authority boundaries. Local Economic Assessments, where available, may also be a useful source of intelligence and information.

3.8   Members discussed SEEDA's economic dashboard approach with Ivan Perkovic. Ivan offered to provide further advice on the possible economic indicators SEEC should consider including. He also explained a summary of SEEDA's research work is in preparation as part of the organisation's transition to closure which may be of interest to the group. He will share this with SEEC when available.

3.9   Members also commented on the useful migration data Roy Millard had shared at the SEEC Executive meeting on 7 December[1]. He agreed to help refining this down to a smaller number of key indicators for possible inclusion in SEEC's data dashboard.

3.10   Following this discussion the draft Terms of Reference (attached as Annex 1), circulated prior to the meeting, were agreed, along with the following actions.

Actions:
- *Nick to circulate final Terms of Reference to the group (attached).*
- *Nick/Heather to further develop members' proposals for the dashboard in conjunction with Ivan, Roy and other officers as appropriate; an example of data that could be gathered and how it could be presented will be circulated to the group by early March for consideration by members.*
- *Ivan to share summary of SEEDA's research work when available.*
- *Heather/Nick to explore possible joint working with LEPs/other partners, linked to wider discussion taking place at SEEC Executive meeting on 18 February.*

4.   Priority and phasing of group forward work programme including
**   a)   Frequency of future meetings**
**   b)   Topics for discussion at future meetings**
**   c)   Any papers, presentations or guest speakers required to provide expert advice for members at future meetings**

4.1   The group agreed to hold its next meeting in early April.

4.2   It was agreed Ivan and Roy would be invited to the next meeting to share their insight and knowledge with members.

Action:
- *Heather/Nick to arrange suitable meeting date.*

5.   Any other business
5.1   Members agreed SEEC should urgently write to ministers to express concerns about the limitations of data being used by government to assess Regional Growth Fund bids, which hides the needs of the South East.

Action:
- *Issue to be raised at SEEC Executive meeting on 18 February, with recommendation that SEEC's Chairman writes to the government suggesting improvements to the data sets; Ivan to provide SEEC officers with advice beforehand.*

5.2   Heather also explained there was a web-based mapping system that SEEC might consider using to present data in the future. It was agreed that a presentation on this be arranged for a future meeting.

Action:
- *Heather to arrange presentation as appropriate.*

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[1] http://www.secouncils.gov.uk/upload/files/Item_3b_Migration_statistics_7.12.10.pdf

ANNEX 1

SEEC Task & finish Group: Data & Economic dashboard
Terms of reference

The task & finish group will comprise 12 councillors from SEEC member councils. In line with SEEC's political template, membership will be 8 Conservatives, 3 Lib-Dems, 1 Labour.

The first meeting of the task group will be held in February 2011. At the first meeting
• A Chairman of the task group will be appointed
• An outline schedule of further meetings (actual and/or virtual meetings) will be agreed with the Chairman and members. Meetings will be organised by the SEEC secretariat at dates/ intervals agreed.

Expert officers from member councils or other organisations may be invited to meetings as required to provide advice to task group members on specific topics such as economic data or migration data.

SEEC secretariat and/or staff from member councils will support the task group in preparing their report.

The task group will present its final report and recommendations on the way forward at the SEEC AGM in July 2011.

The proposed remit of the task group is to:

1. Establish the primary objectives of SEEC data collection/analysis. How will SEEC/ local authorities use the data?
2. Identify the <u>critical</u> group of indicators to be estimated.
3. Review to what extent this requirement can be met from sources of publicly available information and any need for specially commissioned research.
4. Review how often key data is updated; how often SEEC needs updates/ reports and how reporting to SEEC is handled – eg via Executive, Plenary or simply via website.
5. Identify how to approach 'dashboard' type presentation of data headlines & trends (eg what should be included, level of complexity and whether web applications can reduce the need for specialist GIS mapping skills).
6. Review the need and cost viability of a shared capacity to anaylse data to underpin South East lobbying. What are the key tasks, staffing, costs, viability of funding a service, economies of scale and any support available from local authorities' own analytical capacity?
7. Should SEEC make an offer to coordinate data collection and analysis for LEPs? If so what would this offer be – eg bespoke analysis for individual LEPs/ council areas?
8. Assess options and costs for funding a shared service.
9. Review geography to be covered – eg whole South East area (74 councils); LEPs only; non LEP areas only; all LEPs with a SE footprint (eg including Essex).

Heather Bolton
17 December 2010
Approved at meeting on 4 February 2011