

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS
EXECUTIVE MEETING**

Date: 10 September 2010

Subject: Consultation on draft South East Skills
Priorities Statement

Report by: Heather Bolton, SEEC Head of Communications & Public Affairs

Recommendation:

SEEC Executive is asked to consider the draft South East Skills Priority Statement prepared for BIS and feedback views, comments and suggestions to SEEDA by 10 September.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has commissioned SEEDA to prepare a statement highlighting skills priorities in the South East and showing how skills investment could be refocused to support economic recovery and growth. The statement will help inform BIS's national Skills Investment Strategy, and colleges & training organisations will use it to guide delivery.
- 1.2 SEEDA is currently consulting on the draft statement and is keen to gather local authority input before submitting the final statement to BIS. SEEDA has approached SEEC for its views. A copy of the draft statement and covering letter was sent to all SEEC leaders and chief executives with SEEC's latest newsletter at the end of August, with a request to provide feedback to SEEDA **by 10 September 2010**.
- 1.3 Today's meeting is an opportunity to the SEEC Executive to consider the draft statement and feedback comments to SEEDA.

2. Context

- 2.1 The South East statement aims to provide an overview of the skills required to support a reviving economy and sets out challenges to be addressed. The statement sets three core objectives:
 - Develop the skills base to meet and stimulate demands of emerging and growth industries, especially higher level skills.
 - Increase skills of those in and entering employment to improve personal progression and support higher productivity.
 - Support those areas and groups disadvantaged in the labour market.
- 2.2 These objectives are based on evidence suggesting:
 - A shortage of relevant skills at the higher levels 3 & 4.
 - The rate of skills increase in the South East is lagging behind other areas.
 - 500,000 South East residents seeking work.

- 2.3 Councils are asked for views on the content of the draft statement, for example:
- Are the three core objectives correct?
 - Are any additional priorities needed?
 - Does the evidence base reflect the situation in your area?
 - What do local authorities need to support local discussions and relevant delivery?
- 2.4 Item 8 on today's agenda reports on the impact of migration on public services and employment in the South East. A cross sector group (item Ex8 para 5.3) has outlined the need to prioritise key sector skills and for a strategy to improve skills of resident workers. Does the SEEC Executive think the current draft skills statement offers a way of addressing these priorities?
- 2.5 A full copy of the draft Skills Priority Statement and a covering letter are attached as, respectively appendices 1 and 2.

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