

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & ALL-MEMBER MEETING**

Date: 11 July 2013

Subject: **South East England Councils' Draft Business Plan**

Report of: Heather Bolton, SEEC Director



Recommendation:

Members are asked to contribute views on priority topics and work areas for inclusion in SEEC's business plan 2013-14.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 An initial draft SEEC business plan has been prepared to prompt discussion and input from members on priorities for 2013-14.
- 1.2 Members are invited to review the proposed plan and put forward alternative or additional work areas for SEEC's small secretariat to take forward in the coming year.
- 1.3 Building on last year's agreement on topics for joint working with SESL, there is again potential to develop joint projects and areas of work once SEEC and SESL members have each set out their priorities. Officer discussions on joint opportunities will take place over the summer, feeding into a final draft business plan to be submitted to SEEC Executive in September 2013.

2. Proposed work areas for 2013-14

- 2.1 The business plan has been prepared in line with SEEC's 4 principles, which are:
 - Strive for a fair funding deal for the South East
 - Promote the South East's position as a leading global economy
 - Act as single democratic voice for South East interests
 - Monitor the pulse of the South East.
- 2.2 Building on priorities agreed last year, the attached business plan for 2012-13 focuses on three main areas:
 - Infrastructure
 - Health and wellbeing
 - Ongoing policy and data work to support the South East case.
- 2.3 Common themes running throughout the business plan proposals include:
 - Making the case for greater investment in South East infrastructure to help drive national economic benefits and deliver an excellent return on public investment.
 - Greater devolution of power, responsibility and funding to South East local authorities to help support economic growth and effective, integrated service delivery.
 - Maximising the benefit to the South East of national and EU funding streams.
 - The need to minimise the bureaucracy and central direction imposed on local services from national Government and Europe.

FIRST DRAFT SEEC business plan 2013-2014

A. Infrastructure	
<p>Aim A1: Secure transport and other key infrastructure investment to drive the economy, including highlighting the return on investment for the national economy that South East projects offer.</p>	<p>Activity planned includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Prepare strategic transport case for cross-boundary projects that will support economic prosperity for UK PLC, working with member authorities, LEPs and other key partners. ii) Influence MPs on the case for greater infrastructure funding for the South East as engine room of the UK economy, offering excellent returns on investment. iii) Make the case for greater devolved powers, freedoms and financial ability to allow local government to support economic growth better. iv) Build relationships with London to influence and inform joint working on strategic issues where the South East and London are interdependent (eg infrastructure investment, commuting, housing supply). v) Update members on wider South East infrastructure issues and relevant opportunities to influence these areas (eg skills, power, water, broadband).
<p>Aim A2: Support delivery of South East housing and commercial development to support economic growth.</p>	<p>Activity planned includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Make the case for greater local discretion on planning issues, including powers to encourage delivery of approved developments.
<p>Aim A3: Influence funding for South East authorities, including national Government and EU funding streams.</p>	<p>Activity planned includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Make the case for greater local authority funding to support growth, including an increase in the local share of business rates and more local democratic control over funding sources. ii) Member and officer input to management of current ERDF 2007-13 funding programmes and project selection. iii) Ensure local authority influence in new LEP-led ERDF and ESF funding management post 2013. iv) Regular updates on funding opportunities for all member authorities.

B. Health & wellbeing	
Aim B1: Influence health and care funding to ensure fair, adequate allocations for South East authorities.	Activity planned includes: i) Influence public health spending allocations for 2015 onwards to ensure the needs & views of South East authorities and their residents are considered. ii) Make the case for adequate funding for integrated and proposed Care Bill reforms, including the impact of Dilnot changes on social care, given the high proportion of self-funders in the South East.
Aim B2: Identify and share good practice in integrating health and social care across all tiers of South East local government.	Activity planned includes: i) Share good practice on integrating health and social care to deliver better services more cost effectively. Options include publication of case studies and a potential workshop for members on integration.
Aim B3: Monitor welfare reform impacts on all tiers of local government in the South East.	Activity planned includes: i) Update members on the impact of changes to welfare reform for South East authorities.
C. Other on-going areas of work	
Aim C1: Maintain an evidence base to support SEEC influencing work.	Activity planned includes: i) Publish two Data Dashboard updates per year, identifying key policy issues for SEEC and partners to act on.
Aim C2: Monitor national/EU policy & legislation affecting local government to identify relevant opportunities to influence direction, minimise bureaucracy and support local determination rather than central regulation.	Activity planned includes: i) Ensure South East views are represented through responses to consultations, discussions and briefings on relevant policy issues at national and European levels. ii) Priority topics for SEEC influencing work include proposals affecting local government finance and funding, planning, infrastructure and economic growth. iii) Make the case for minimising burdens and bureaucracy arising from proposed EU policy affecting local government, eg the forthcoming EU waste framework legislation review.
Aim C3: Maintain hosting arrangement with South East Strategic Partnership for Migration, ensuring updates for members on key migration issues.	Activity planned includes: i) Publish findings of work into the causes of illegal migration in the South East.