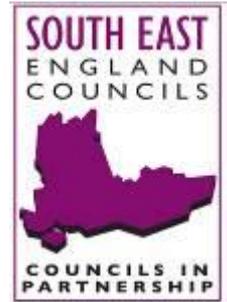


**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & ALL-MEMBER MEETING**

Date: 11 July 2013

Subject: **Baroness Hanham CBE, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for Communities & Local Government**

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



Recommendations:

- i) Welcome the Minister's update on DCLG priorities including devolving powers for economic growth & efficient public services, infrastructure investment and European funding.
- ii) Take the opportunity to raise questions on the next steps in localism and how Government policy could help member authorities maximise the South East's economic potential for local and national benefit.

1. Background

- 1.1 SEEC is pleased to welcome Baroness Hanham CBE to our AGM. She was appointed Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government in May 2010, and led the Growth & Infrastructure and Localism Bills through the Lords. Made a Life Peer in 1999, she was leader of Kensington and Chelsea Council 1989-2000. The Minister has been invited to update members on her DCLG work including:
- Further opportunities for devolution of funding & powers to support economic growth and delivery of effective/efficient local public services
 - Investment in infrastructure to support growth
 - European funding opportunities post-2013.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 Following the Minister's presentation, members will have the opportunity to raise issues and questions and may wish to consider the following issues that SEEC has previously discussed:
- **Local powers and resources for economic growth** - Following the Growth & Infrastructure Act and Heseltine Report, what does the Government see as the next steps in devolving powers & funding to local areas outside 'City Deals' to help them deliver economic growth?
 - **Effective and efficient local public services** - Is there more Government can do to free councils to procure/deliver effective and efficient local services?
 - **Investment in infrastructure for economic growth** – How can SEEC members best work with Ministers to demonstrate the business case for strategic infrastructure investment in the South East that offers national economic benefits and delivers excellent returns on investment?
 - **European funding** – With post-2013 EU Structural Funding levels (ERDF and ESF) recently announced, what are the opportunities for the South East and how will Government ensure local democratic accountability given future delivery via LEPs?