

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING

Wednesday 27 March 2013

Church House Conference Centre, Dean's Yard,
Westminster, London SW1P 3NE



Present: Gordon Keymer CBE (Chairman)
David Hodge (Deputy Chairman)
Paul Watkins (SEEC Secretary/Treasurer)
Robert Bliss
Andrew Bowles
David Burbage
Ken Crookes
Myles Cullen
Roland Dibbs
Ann Ducker
Moira Gibson
David Holmes
Keith House
Gill Mattock
David Neighbour
Tony Page
Rodney Rose

In Attendance: Chris Williams, Buckinghamshire CC
Heather Bolton, SEEC
Nick Woolfenden, SEEC
Jill Hogg, SEEC
Roy Millard, SESPM
Katherine Allenby, Sussex Police
Tracy Damestani, National Casino Industry Forum
Kate Jones, SESL
Philippa Mellish, SESL
Helen Keats, DCLG
Mona Sehgal, LGA
Marianne Abley, IESE

1. **Apologies, declarations of substitutes and declarations of interest**

1.1 Apologies were received from Mary Ballin, John Burden, Paul Carter, Peter Hardy, Ian Hudspeth, Arif Hussain, Barry Norton, Bob Standley, Martin Tett, Ken Thornber CBE. Rodney Rose substituted for Ian Hudspeth, Ann Ducker substituted for Barry Norton and Robert Bliss substituted for Bob Standley.

2. **Minutes of SEEC Executive on 11 September 2012 and matters arising**

2.1 The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record. Under matters arising, a concern was raised about suggestions that future public health funding should place more weight on deprivation than morbidity rates. This could mean the South East loses funding, leaving it with inadequate funds to combat real public health needs.

ACTION 1: SEEC to make representations to Government highlighting that future public health funding should reflect the South East's real levels of need.

3. **Impact of migration on policing and local services**

3.1 Katherine Allenby, Staff Officer to Sussex Police Assistant Chief Constable, outlined the impact of migration on policing and local services from a report commissioned by

SESPM. The South East has the second highest number of migrants after London and this brings service pressures – EG the number of migrant looked-after children in Kent and translation services. At a time of record migration, overall crime has not increased. Those on work or study visas mainly have no impact on policing. There are, however, examples of some localised Eastern European crime gangs. Migrants can also find themselves victims of crime, for example destitute asylum seekers. Cultural awareness is critical for police and local authorities to help tackle community tensions when migrant and local communities do not integrate well. There are examples of good practice where police, local authorities and voluntary sector work together to share intelligence and manage problems effectively.

- 3.2 Members said that funding is needed to help address the pressure on services from migrants. In some areas there are particular service pressures arising from the Slovak Roma community, who fall within Gypsy and Traveller legislation. In other areas migrants, such as Gurkha veterans, have made positive contributions to the local economy, although integration is an issue in other areas. Concern was raised that uncertainty following abolition of the UK Border Agency could mean a hiatus in good practice projects, such as voluntary return initiatives for migrants which cost 10% of formal removal proceedings. Members agreed SEEC should write to Government to emphasise the need for funding to address migrant service pressures in the South East and clarify how new structures will work with local partners.

ACTION 2: SEEC to write to Government highlighting need for funding to address migrant pressures on SE services and to seek clarification on new national structures.

ACTION 3: Presentation slides to be circulated to members.

4. Localising decision-making on casinos by making licences portable

- 4.1 Shepway DC Leader Cllr Robert Bliss asked SEEC to support portability of casino licences. There is investor interest in developing a casino in Shepway. The council supports the plan and the jobs/economic growth it will deliver but has no route to acquiring a casino licence even though there are 40 unused licences nationally. Cllr Bliss wants a change in the law to allow transfer of an unused licence to his own authority to allow development to go ahead. This would not increase the number of casino licences but would allow transfer from another area that does not want its licence. Tracy Damestani from the National Casino Industry Forum explained a new statutory instrument is needed to allow licence transfers to take place.

- 4.2 Members agreed to write in support of portability of licences on condition that local authorities have the final decision on any transfer to or from their areas. This should be an issue for local elected councillors, not a central Government decision. Decisions should be based on a clear business case setting out the local economic benefits of new casino proposals. Members also called for greater regulation and advertising controls on on-line gambling to bring them more in line with land based casinos.

ACTION 4: SEEC to write in support of the case for portable casino licences.

5. The Ageing South East – action plan & update from workshop in December 2012

- 5.1 Members agreed the action plan. Invitations to attend a SEEFA Symposium on 15 May will be circulated to all members. Member authorities will also be invited to suggest pilot areas for a project aiming to recruit mature unemployed people into social care jobs.

ACTION 5: SEEC to write to all members asking for volunteers to progress the social care workforce pilot and for nominees to attend the SEEFA Symposium.

6. SEEC financial update 2012-13 and plans for 2013-14

- 6.1 Paul Watkins summarised SEEC's financial update for 2012-13 and the proposed budget for 2013-14. He proposed subscriptions should continue at current levels and

SEEC should maintain joint working with SESL wherever possible to increase collective impact and maximise efficiencies. The Chairman invited members to contact him with specific policy areas they would like SEEC to concentrate on in the coming year. Members agreed the proposed budget. The subscription freeze will be presented to the SEEC AGM in July for endorsement before invoices are sent to members.

7. Items for information

- 7.1 **A New Model for Local Government, LGA South East roadshow** – the Chairman represented South East interests as a key speaker at this event on 4 March.
- 7.2 **Cross-boundary working with London and the Mayor** – SEEC attended a recent officer workshop, as a pre-cursor to member-level dialogue. Members agreed to write to Deputy Mayor Sir Edward Lister proposing a small member-level meeting to discuss shared strategic issues vital to the economic success of London and the South East. Members also discussed the importance of engaging with LEPs. Chris Williams highlighted the opportunity to involve LEPs in the SEEC/SESL strategic transport report.
ACTION 6: SEEC to invite Sir Edward Lister to a small member-level meeting in summer 2013.
- 7.3 **Update on strategic transport priorities** - Heather Bolton said that SEEDEPT are updating the draft report presented to members on 7 February to prepare a version for submission to Ministers. Members stressed the need for the report to present a strong economic case and the opportunity to discuss the updated report with LEPs.
ACTION 7: SEEC to work with SEEDEPT to help finalise the strategic transport report.
- 7.4 **Links for information**
ERDF Funding Round 6 (£8m) – Members were reminded of the 30 April bid deadline. Members were also reminded that recent SEEC submissions on EU funding, UK Power Networks and the Taylor Review of planning are available online:
- [SEEC input on EU structural funds post 2013](#)
 - [SEEC input to UK Power Networks business plan](#)
 - [Taylor review of planning](#)
8. **Confirmed forward meeting dates**
- 8.1 An extra date has been added to the SEEC calendar. On **20 June 2013** there will be a special All-member meeting with DfT Minister Stephen Hammond. Members agreed to also invite SESL councils not currently in SEEC membership. Other dates for 2013 are:
- 11 July 2013 – SEEC AGM and All-member meeting (shared date with SESL)
 - 23 September 2013 – SEEC Executive Committee 10am (amended date)
 - 13 November 2013 – SEEC Executive Committee 2pm (amended date).
- ACTION 8: Circulate member invitations for 20 June meeting with Stephen Hammond.**
9. **Any other business**
- 9.1 Members highlighted the importance of discussing aviation in light of the Airport Commission, suggesting it should be the focus of a future meeting.
ACTION 9: SEEC to consider aviation at a future meeting.
- 9.2 There being no further business, the meeting closed at 11.45am.

Signed:

Gordon Keymer CBE, Chairman

Date: 23 September 2013