

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

Date: 23 September 2013

Subject: **SEEC Draft Business Plan – Final draft**

Report of: Heather Bolton, SEEC Director



Recommendation:

Members are asked to approve the business plan for 2013-14.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 An initial draft of the SEEC business plan for 2013-14 was presented to SEEC's AGM in July for discussion.
- 1.2 Member requests to separate and expand the transport section have now been incorporated in this revised business plan. In addition, sections on wider infrastructure, devolved powers and funding have now been combined to highlight the links between many of these issues.
- 1.3 Building on last year's agreement on topics for joint working with SESL, there is again potential to develop several joint projects and areas of work. Both organisations have similar aims and the table below shows potential joint projects (green circles) and SEEC only work (purple boxes) as discussed between SEEC and SESL officers. In some areas showing both coloured symbols work is likely to be partially joint and partially separate – for example the recent separate responses on New Homes Bonus consultation.

2. Proposed work areas for 2013-14

- 2.1 Building on priorities agreed last year and members' requests to emphasise the importance of transport, the attached business plan focuses on four main areas:
- Infrastructure (investment, funding and powers for growth)
 - Transport
 - Health and wellbeing
 - Ongoing policy and data work to support the South East case.
- 2.2 Common themes running throughout the business plan proposals include:
- Making the case for greater investment in South East infrastructure, especially transport to help drive national economic benefits and deliver an excellent return on public investment.
 - Greater devolution of powers, responsibility and funding to South East local authorities to help support economic growth and effective, efficient, 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.

FINAL DRAFT SEEC business plan 2013-2014

A. Infrastructure: investment, funding & powers for growth		
<p>Aim A1: Secure funding, infrastructure investment and powers that enable local authorities to maximise support for economic growth. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • highlighting the return on investment for the national economy that South East projects offer • highlighting the support that councils need to deliver housing and commercial development • influencing funding for South East authorities, including national government and EU funding streams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ●■ ■ ● ●■ ●■ ■ ■ ■ 	<p>Activity planned includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Influence MPs on the case for greater infrastructure funding for the South East as the engine room of the UK economy, offering excellent returns on investment. ii) Make the case for greater devolved powers, freedoms and financial flexibility to allow local government to support economic growth better. For example through an increase in the local share of business rates and more local democratic control over funding sources. iii) Make the case for greater local discretion on planning issues, including powers to encourage delivery of approved developments. iv) Build relationships with London to influence and inform joint working on strategic issues where the South East and London are interdependent. For example infrastructure investment, commuting, housing supply. v) Update members on wider South East infrastructure issues and relevant opportunities to influence these areas. For example: power, water, broadband, Infrastructure Commission, skills. vi) Member input to emerging funding proposals from central Government to ensure adequate, fair funding for local services. vii) Member and officer input to management of current ERDF 2007-13 funding programmes and project selection. viii) Ensure local authority influence in new LEP-led ERDF and ESF funding management post 2013. ix) Regular updates on funding opportunities for all member authorities.
B. Infrastructure: Transport		
<p>Aim B1: Secure transport investment for strategic cross-boundary projects that will reduce congestion, improve international competitiveness and benefit the national economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ● ● 	<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, London & other key partners. ii) Target a South East consensus on key airport issues to inform and influence decisions on future aviation growth. iii) Ports – Highlight the need to invest in the South East’s gateway ports to ensure they can maximise their contribution to national economic success.

C. Health & wellbeing		
Aim C1: Influence health and care funding to ensure fair, adequate allocations for South East authorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ● 	Activity planned includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 integration 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 C2: Identify and share good practice in integrating health and social care across all tiers of South East local government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 	Activity planned includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Share good practice on integrating health and social care to deliver better services more cost effectively. For example: case studies to highlight best practice and a workshop for members on integration.
Aim C3: Monitor welfare reform impacts on all tiers of local government in the South East.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 	Activity planned includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Update members on the impact of changes to welfare reform for South East authorities.
D. Other on-going areas of work		
Aim D1: Maintain an evidence base to support SEEC influencing work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 	Activity planned includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Publish two Data Dashboard updates per year, identifying key policy issues for SEEC and partners to act on.
Aim D2: 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●■ ●■ ■ 	Activity planned includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 D3: Maintain hosting arrangement with South East Strategic Partnership for Migration, ensuring updates for members on key migration issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 	Activity planned includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Publish findings of work into the causes of illegal migration in the South East.

Key ■ SEEC work ● Joint work SEEC and SESL ●■ Some joint work/ some separate