

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**



Date: 25 September 2014

Subject: SEEC workshop on Duty to Co-operate: 28 November 2014

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

**Recommendations:**

SEEC Executive members are asked to:

- i) Note plans for SEEC's Duty to Co-operate workshop for council leaders, portfolio holders and officers on **28 November 2014** and share the date with colleagues.
- ii) Comment on proposed key topics to cover, and suggest local case studies, to ensure the workshop helps members respond to duty to co-operate challenges given the high pressure for housing growth in the South East.

**1. Duty to co-operate and the South East**

1.1 Members agreed at SEEC's last Executive Committee to hold a South East workshop on the Duty to Co-operate (DtC). Introduced to the planning system by the Localism Act 2011 following abolition of former regional planning structures, the DtC is a mechanism to ensure local authorities liaise with neighbouring councils when developing their core strategies. In the South East, house-building is a particular focus of DtC discussions, given the high pressure for housing growth. The South East has seen a number of high profile cases where authorities' Plans have stalled after planning inspectors deemed they did not meet DtC requirements.

**2. Workshop for SEEC members and officers**

2.1 SEEC's workshop will be held on **Friday 28 November at RCOG, 27 Sussex Place, London NW1 4RG, 10am-3.45pm**. It will be free for SEEC members and officers, provided as part of the SEEC subscription. Invitations will be sent to member councils once the agenda is finalised, but in the meantime please note the date and pass details on to relevant colleagues.

2.2 The workshop will give members the opportunity to discuss key issues and help understand and address the challenges of DtC in the South East. Speakers are expected to include senior representatives from government and the Planning Inspectorate, as well as councillors and independent experts. They will discuss issues, answer questions, and share advice and experience with members.

2.3 To help finalising the agenda, member views are invited on proposed topics to cover, including:

- Duty to co-operate – the building blocks needed for plan preparation and cross-border co-operation where there are complex relationships and high housing demand.
- What the planning inspectors will test and how to demonstrate requirements have been met when dealing with multiple partners.
- Balancing local and strategic needs for housing, economic growth and infrastructure and the environment, including relationship with LEPs.
- Housing numbers – estimating local need, cross-border demands and pressure from London.
- The role of Green Belt and protected land, such as AONB, National Parks and Special Protection Areas.
- Local case studies of cross-boundary working - *suggestions for relevant case studies are welcome.*