

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

Date: 25 September 2014

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

Report of: Heather Bolton, SEEC Director



**Recommendation:**

Members are asked to review proposed additions to the SEEC Business Plan, agree what should be included in the final work programme for the coming year and how SEEC resources should be prioritised.

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 An initial draft business plan for 2014-15 was presented to the SEEC AGM for discussion in July. Responding to the request for comments and suggestions, a number of members have put forward additional topics.
- 1.2 Additional proposals include:
- a) Review political engagement with London on housing and infrastructure needs to influence forthcoming GLA reviews. (Today's agenda item 5c proposes a member task and finish group).
  - b) Fracking. A discussion with expert speakers to explain advantages and disadvantages of fracking in the South East.
  - c) Emergency responses. Encouraging full collaboration from water, utilities and partners in emergency response activities, building on experience during winter 2014 flooding.
  - d) Commercialising local authority operations. A good practice session on how councils can maximise income.
  - e) SEEC-SESL working relationship. A member task and finish group to consider successes to date and next steps.
- 1.3 Recognising SEEC's limited resources, it has also been proposed that if members pursue discussions on political engagement with London (item 1.2.a above) the scale of research on a more balanced approach to investing in successful economies could be reduced (item A1.v below).
- 1.4 The Executive is now asked to review the proposed additions and make a decision on what should be included in the final work programme. Decisions are requested on:
- Whether all or some of the proposed new additions should be included
  - Whether any other items should be removed or scaled back in compensation
  - If there is support for items b-d above, should they be covered as part of an existing planned meeting or as a dedicated session.
  - How business plan changes fit with the three previously agreed priorities
    - Infrastructure and funding
    - Health and wellbeing
    - Ongoing policy and data work to support South East interests.
- 1.5 New additions to the business plan are highlighted in yellow below. After officer discussions with SESL, symbols in the business plan now also highlight areas and projects where the two organisations aim to work together over the coming year. TBC indicates there is not yet agreement on joint or separate work.

**FIRST DRAFT SEEC business plan 2014-2015**

<p><b>A. Infrastructure and funding</b></p>	
<p><b>Aim A1:</b> Secure greater infrastructure investment and funding devolution to help South East councils drive economic growth as part of the engine room of UK plc</p>	<p><b>Activity planned includes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>i)</b> Present the South East case for investment and financial devolution to help influence 2015 General Election manifestos.</li> <li>● <b>ii)</b> Raise the profile of South East strategic transport investment needs using the Mind the Gap report to engage MPs, partners and media.</li> <li>● <b>iii)</b> Ensure South East priorities are reflected in London’s Infrastructure 2050 debate, highlighting the mutual benefits of investment in shared transport, utilities and services.</li> <li>● <b>iv)</b> Make the case for greater devolved funding and powers for South East authorities, including greater tax retention to help fund infrastructure that is essential to economic growth <b>and transforming services.</b></li> <li>TBC <b>v)</b> Research to examine the case for a more balanced approach to investing in successful economies such as the South East.</li> <li>● <b>vi)</b> Work to define the benefits of localising skills &amp; employment funding and an action plan for devolving responsibility to local authority level.</li> <li>TBC <b>vii)</b> Member workshop on how to maximise South East economic potential and work successfully with LEPs to boost growth and productivity.</li> <li>● <b>viii)</b> Update members on wider South East infrastructure issues and opportunities to influence areas such as aviation, power, water, skills and broadband. <b>Ensure responses to key consultations.</b></li> <li>TBC <b>ix)</b> <b>Member session to consider arguments for and against fracking as a future source of energy and potential impacts for the South East.</b></li> <li>TBC <b>x)</b> <b>Member discussion on securing emergency response collaborations.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Aim A2:</b> Support South East councils in their work to develop sustainable local plans that reflect local housing and infrastructure needs.</p>	<p><b>Activity planned includes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>i)</b> A workshop on Duty to Co-operate to help members and officers consider the building blocks required for sound local plans.</li> <li>● <b>ii)</b> Represent South East views at the London Plan Examination-in-Public.</li> <li>● <b>iii)</b> Make the case for greater local discretion on planning issues, including powers to turn planning approvals into real development.</li> <li>TBC <b>iv)</b> <b>Establish a member task &amp; finish group to make recommendations on future political engagement with London on housing and infrastructure.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Aim A3:</b> Influence funding for South East authorities, including national Government and EU funding streams.</p>	<p><b>Activity planned includes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>i)</b> Make the case for Government core funding of councils to be based on population, reflecting South East demand as the UK’s most populated area.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ ii) Report on progress of EU funding in the South East via ERDF 2014-2020 and potential for council involvement in managing committees.</li> <li>■ iii) Ensure updates for members on emerging UK and EU funding potential.</li> <li>TBC iv) Member session to share good practice on income generation by commercialising council operations.</li> </ul>
<b>B. Health &amp; wellbeing</b>	
<b>Aim B1:</b> Influence funding and policy decisions to help South East authorities deliver effective, integrated local services, particularly in health and care.	<p><b>Activity planned includes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● i) Present the case for changes in health and care funding &amp; policy, including a single budget, to influence 2015 General Election manifestos.</li> <li>● ii) Make the case for adequate funding for Care Act reforms, particularly the impact of the care cap on South East authorities with high populations and high numbers of self funders.</li> <li>● iii) Promote the role of democratically-elected councillors in leading effective integration of health, care and wider services to meet local needs, including responses to key consultations.</li> <li>● iv) Work with London Councils to ensure effective communications on London residents who need to be housed in South East council areas.</li> </ul>
<b>C. On-going areas of work</b>	
<b>Aim C1:</b> Maintain an evidence base to support SEEC influencing work.	<p><b>Activity planned includes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ i) Publish two Data Dashboards a year, identifying key policy issues for SEEC and partners to act upon.</li> </ul>
<b>Aim C2:</b> 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.	<p><b>Activity planned includes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ■ i) Ensure South East views are represented in responses to relevant consultations, discussions &amp; briefings on national and EU policy issues.</li> <li>● ■ ii) Priority topics for SEEC influencing are maximising local control and minimising bureaucracy in local government funding, planning, infrastructure, economic growth and service reform.</li> <li>■ iii) Make the case for minimising burdens and bureaucracy arising from any EU policy proposals affecting local government as the new EU work programme emerges following May 2014 elections.</li> </ul>
<b>Aim C3:</b> Maintain hosting arrangement with South East Strategic Partnership for Migration, ensuring updates for members on key South East migration issues.	<p><b>Activity planned includes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● i) Update members on a proposed South East Anti-Trafficking Partnership to help tackle Modern Day Slavery.</li> <li>■ ii) Regular reports on migration trends, including economic &amp; service impact</li> </ul>
<b>Aim C4:</b> Maximise efficiency of operations	TBC i) Set up a member group to recommend next steps in working with SESL.

**Key** ■ SEEC work ● Joint work SEEC and SESL ● ■ Some joint work/ some separate TBC No agreement yet on joint or separate