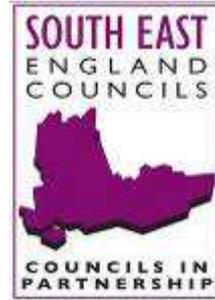


**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

Date: 4 April 2014

Subject: Duty to co-operate: South East implications

Report of: Heather Bolton, SEEC Director



Recommendation:

SEEC Executive members are asked to:

- i) Consider a South East-specific workshop to help SEEC 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 The duty to co-operate (DTC) was 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.
- 1.2 Local planning authorities must use DTC to make every effort to secure co-operation on strategic cross boundary matters before they submit a Local Plan. At the independent examination of the Plan by the Planning Inspectorate, authorities must demonstrate how they have complied with DTC – if they cannot do so, the Plan will not be able to proceed.
- 1.3 The South East has recently seen a number of high profile cases where authorities' Plans have stalled after planning inspectors deemed they did not meet DTC requirements.

2. Potential workshop for SEEC members

- 2.1 It has been proposed that SEEC should consider a workshop for members to help them understand and address the challenges of DTC in the South East, where authorities are facing significant pressure for additional housing growth. Member views are invited on a possible event and potential topics to cover. An event would be free for SEEC members and officers, provided as part of the SEEC subscription.
- 2.2 As an event focused specifically on the South East, a SEEC workshop could help address the particular pressures faced by high-growth areas, including:
 - Duty to co-operate – what it means 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, environment, economic growth and infrastructure and the environment
 - Housing numbers – estimating local need, cross-border demands and pressure from London
 - The role of green belt and protected land, such as AONB
 - Decisions on green belt development – the role of local authorities vs inspectors following public correspondence between Planning Minister Nick Boles and the Planning Inspectorate.