

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**



Date: 4 April 2014

Subject: Migration update

Report of: Roy Millard, Manager, South East Strategic Partnership for Migration (SESPM)

Recommendations:

SEEC Executive members are asked to:

- i) Consider whether SEEC and SESPM should write to Ministers calling for migration impact funding to be re-instated, paid for by an increase in visa fees
- ii) Note and discuss the update on current migration issues and research underway in the South East

1. Funding for local impacts of migration

- 1.1 South East local authorities face significant levels of international migration. In four of the past 9 years, South East net migration has been second only to London's. The net incoming figure in 2011-12 alone was some 14,000 people, creating significant pressures on council services.
- 1.2 Until 2010 central Government provided a Migration Impact Fund (MIF) to help councils and local partners respond to migration pressures. Although MIF has ended, pressures on local areas remain, leading to suggestions that MIF should be reinstated with funding raised by increasing visa fees rather than using UK taxes.
- 1.3 The suggestion has gained support in SESPM sub-regional meetings, so members are asked to consider supporting a joint MIF proposal to Ministers from SESPM and SEEC. Member views are invited on whether to submit a new MIF proposal and the key areas where funding could be focused – for example help with additional learning support in schools, English language provision and community cohesion projects.

2. Syrian vulnerable persons relocation – request to South East authorities

- 2.1 Following Government's decision to accept several hundred vulnerable refugees from the Syrian conflict, Home Secretary Theresa May is encouraging local authorities to apply to receive refugees. Central government will meet councils' costs for support, education, health and integration for the first year.
- 2.2 It is anticipated that several hundred people will be supported over three years with the first expected in April 2014. The Home Office will be issuing a briefing document and a draft statement of requirements/ funding levels. Interested authorities should initially contact roymillard@secouncils.gov.uk or heatherbolton@secouncils.gov.uk

3. Modern Day Slavery Bill – free South East seminar

- 3.1 A draft Modern Day Slavery Bill is starting its Parliamentary process. Legislation will have a significant impact for local authorities, particularly front line staff who will have a new legal duty to report potential victims of trafficking. SESPM is working with councils and partners across the South East to raise awareness of the Bill. This includes two high level seminars to learn from recent trafficking cases. Some free places are still available at Bramshill, near Basingstoke, on 25 April. Members interested in attending the workshop should contact roymillard@secouncils.gov.uk

4. Latest national migration statistics

- 4.1 New ONS statistics show a national increase of 37% in net migration between October-December 2013. South East figures will follow later this year. Previous years show the South East has some 12% of the national total. National headlines include:
- A 58,000 increase in net migration with more EU migrants arriving and a 6% decrease in emigration
 - The highest increases in National Insurance registrations issued were for citizens from Poland, Spain, Italy & Portugal
 - There was a 15,000 (40%) increase in Bulgarians and Romanians entering the UK. It was estimated 70% arrived for work and 30% for study. This figure applies to the period **before** transitional controls were lifted on 1 January 2014.
 - Work and study remain the top reasons for visa grants. Family visa grants reduced
 - There was an 8% increase in asylum claims driven by rises from Syria, Eritrea and Albania.

5. Impact of migrant birth rates on school places in the South East

- 5.1 Following debate at the last SEEC Executive, SESPM is working with Scott-Flynn consultants to produce a concise report on the impact of migrant birth rates on school places in the South East. The work will highlight the significance of birth rates in terms of overall numbers, identify a five year trend, breakdown between EU and non-EU, analyse the impacts and draw comparisons across the South East and nationally. Latest progress will be reported at the Executive.

6. Assessment of jobs filled by international migrants to the South East

- 6.1 Following discussion at the last SEEC Executive, SESPM is working with the University of Reading to assess the types and numbers of jobs filled by international migrants in the South East. The project aims to better understand the apparent contrast between two recent reports:
- UCL research showing European workers make a greater net fiscal contribution than non-EU workers
 - Previous SESPM research which highlighted non-EU workers in higher skilled jobs.
- Project progress will be reported at the Executive.