

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & ALL-MEMBER MEETING**



Date: 3 July 2014

Subject: **Political Balance on SEEC Executive following May 2014 Local Elections**

Report of: Cllr Paul Watkins, SEEC Secretary & Treasurer

Recommendations:

- i) Note the results of the May 2014 local election results and the implications for allocation of seats by political party on the SEEC Executive.
- ii) Endorse an approach to ‘smaller parties’ asking them to consider putting forward a formal cross-party alliance to claim 2 available Executive seats.
- iii) Consider options for the 2 ‘smaller party’ Executive seats if no cross-party alliance is forthcoming.

1. Determining political balance on SEEC’s Executive

- 1.1 SEEC’s constitution sets out a formula for allocating seats on the SEEC Executive to political parties in proportion to the percentage of the vote that each party receives across the 74 South East local authorities. This means seat allocation reflects the share of votes cast for each political party, rather than the number of councils controlled by each party.
- 1.2 However, the constitution also specifies a minimum threshold, whereby Executive seats are only allocated to parties who return more than 5% of total councillors across the South East.
- 1.3 The template for Executive seats has been recalculated to reflect the results of local elections on 22 May 2014. Allocations are rounded to the nearest whole number to determine the Executive places for each party.
- 1.4 The 2014 elections saw the percentage of votes for smaller political parties increase to 12.9%, up from 11.8% in 2013. A single party receiving this proportion of the vote would secure 2 seats on the SEEC Executive. However the votes are split between a number of smaller parties and none of these parties individually meets the threshold of 5% of total councillors to qualify for Executive seats in their own right.

	Con	LibDem	Lab	Ind	UKIP	Residents	Green		Total
N° Cllrs	2,228	493	474	142	112	87	38		3574
% Cllrs	62.3	13.8	13.3	3.97	3.13	2.43	1.06		100%
% of vote	58.6	13.6	14.9	3.6	5.7	1.8	1.8		100%
Share of 19 SEEC Executive seats (rounded to nearest whole number):									
	11	3	3	Combined share of vote = 2 but no party alone meets threshold of 5% of councillors					19

- 1.5 In the case of a formal alliance between two or more of the smaller parties, it would be possible to allocate 2 Executive seats to a cross-party alliance which represents more than 5% of the total councillors in the South East. Allied parties could then jointly nominate 2 councillors to represent their collective interests on SEEC Executive. Nominated councillors would have to be drawn from a SEEC member authority.

- 1.6 It is proposed that the SEEC secretariat write to four leading councillors in member authorities who represent the Independent, UKIP, Residents and Green parties setting out the position. In advance of SEEC's next Executive Committee on 25 September they will be asked to indicate whether they are interested in exploring a cross-party alliance to claim the two available SEEC Executive seats.
- 1.7 In a similar situation last year, despite interest from some of the smaller parties, ultimately no formal alliance came forward. Should this be repeated in 2014, members should consider whether they wish to keep the two Executive seats vacant or reallocate them between the Conservative, Lib-Dem and Labour parties in line with the percentage share of the vote for each party. If the seats were to be reallocated on this basis the result would be (rounded to nearest whole number): Conservative 13, Lib Dem 3, Labour 3.
- 1.8. The new template for seat allocations comes into immediate effect for today's SEEC Executive Committee elections.