

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS
MINUTES OF THE AGM & ALL-MEMBER MEETING

Thursday 11 July 2013

Church House Conference Centre, Dean's Yard, London SW1P 3NZ



1. **Apologies, declarations of substitutes and declarations of interest**
 - 1.1 See attendance list (attached). There were no declarations of interest.
2. **Minutes of 7 February 2013 and matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda**
 - 2.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.
3. **SEEC political balance following May 2013 elections**
 - 3.1 Paul Watkins explained the allocation of SEEC Executive seats following the May 2013 elections was Conservative 11, Lib-Dem 3, Labour 3. Combined independent groups now exceed the 5% threshold for Executive representation and – if able to form a coalition – they could take 2 additional Executive seats. If not, the SEEC representation formula would reallocate the 2 seats to Conservatives.
ACTION 1: Independent groups to report back on whether a coalition can be formed to take up seats on SEEC Executive. In the interim, Conservative members to be asked to fill the seats.
4. **Election of South East England Councils' Chairman for 2013-14**
 - 4.1 Gordon Keymer CBE (Tandridge DC, Con) was re-elected Chairman.
5. **Election of Deputy Chairman, Secretary/Treasurer & spokesmen**
 - 5.1 David Hodge (Surrey CC, Con) was re-elected Deputy Chairman and Paul Watkins (Dover DC, Con) re-elected as Secretary/Treasurer. No spokesmen were appointed.
6. **Group appointments for Vice Chairmen; Executive Committee; and Districts' Chairman/Deputy**
 - 6.1 Tony Page (Reading, Labour) and Keith House (Eastleigh, Lib-Dem) were appointed SEEC Vice Chairmen. Moira Gibson (Surrey Heath, Con) was appointed District Leaders' Chairman with Roland Dibbs (Rushmoor, Con) as Districts' Deputy Chairman.
 - 6.2 In addition to office-holders named in paragraphs 4.1, 5.1 and 6.1 above, Executive Committee appointments were:
Conservatives: Mary Ballin, Bracknell Forest Council; Andrew Bowles, Swale BC; Paul Carter, Kent CC; Myles Cullen, Chichester DC; Ian Hudspeth, Oxfordshire CC; Barry Norton, West Oxfordshire DC; Roy Perry, Hampshire CC; Bob Standley, Wealden DC; Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire CC. If independent groups do not take up available Executive seats, Conservative appointments would be Carole Paternoster, Aylesbury Vale DC and Ken Crookes, Hart DC.
Labour: John Burden, Gravesham BC; Van Coulter, Oxford City Council.
Lib-Dems: Gill Mattock, Eastbourne BC; David Neighbour, Hart DC.
7. **Nominations to external bodies**
 - 7.1 Gordon Keymer (Tandridge DC, Con) was nominated as the SEEC representative on the LGA Executive. Mary Ballin (Bracknell Forest Council, Con) was nominated as the SEEC representative on the LGA Transport Futures Group. A nomination to South Central Ambulance Trust will be decided following a member ballot.
ACTION 2: SEEC to conduct a ballot of members to select a representative to serve on the South Central Ambulance Trust.
8. **Baroness Hanham CBE, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, DCLG**
 - 8.1 The Minister acknowledged the South East had contributed significantly more to the Treasury in recent years than other parts of the UK. While pressures, such as large

population increases, were putting a strain on the cost and availability of housing in the South East, there was also strong leadership by South East authorities in transforming public services.

8.2 The Government was supporting councils by devolving power and responsibility for local economic growth. It had introduced the general power of competence for local authorities, created a £730m Growing Places Fund and rewarded growth through the New Homes Bonus. Councils and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) needed to work together on long term economic vision to make a compelling case for investment. More funding and power would be devolved to LEPs, including £2bn from the Single Local Growth Fund. She acknowledged disappointment with EU Structural Fund allocations for 2014-2020, which did not see the South East's share increase substantially. She said the Government had been constrained by the EU on this.

8.3 In discussion, members raised the effect on local authorities of transferring part of the New Homes Bonus to LEPs, the democratic legitimacy of LEPs and the potential impact on council funding of a fall in business rates. The Minister said local authorities had a strong role to play in LEPs, both in helping deliver accountability and influence their funding decisions. Government wanted to incentivise councils to foster business in their areas and, longer term, hoped to leave more with councils. Questions also covered the need for greater local authority powers to deal with Gypsies and Travellers and how to give districts a greater voice in public health given their responsibility for leisure services. The Minister invited suggestions for additional powers on Gypsies and Travellers and encouraged districts to make their voice heard through public health partnerships and their relationships with counties.

ACTION 3: SEEC to explore submitting a proposal on extra powers for dealing with Gypsies and Travellers.

9. Maximising the South East economy – helping local authorities deliver.

9.1 Steven Howell from Localis outlined a forthcoming SEEC-commissioned report on overcoming barriers to local economic growth. The report will make recommendations about how greater devolution on finance, planning, housing, transport and infrastructure would help boost economic growth.

9.2 In debate members discussed reform of quangos such as the Highways Agency, financial independence for local government, devolved powers for the South East similar to those in Scotland and Wales, broadband and parallels with LGA work. Steven said there was significant potential to devolve much more to local level, including Highways Agency powers, and to give greater freedom over setting local taxes. Members called for rural broadband to be expedited and gaps in coverage identified as soon as possible. The Localis work would highlight South East specific opportunities, complementing the LGA's national work.

ACTION 4: SEEC to send the report to members following publication in the autumn.

10. Review of the year: Cllr Gordon Keymer CBE, SEEC Chairman 2012-13

10.1 SEEC had focused on two main topics during the year: Infrastructure and Health & Well-being. SEEC had welcomed three ministers to hear the case for investment in South East infrastructure and work had also highlighted the need for funding to reflect the fact that the South East had the UK's largest population. Successes included recognition of population figures in allocation of the Growing Places Fund. An Infrastructure and Growth Summit had shared good practice on turning planning applications into development and SEEC had made links with London's Deputy Mayor to discuss strategic infrastructure.

10.2 SEEC had helped secure an increase in public health funding for many South East authorities through input to the Department of Health. This year's allocations give above average 10% increases to members to help redress previous under funding.

- 10.3 Closer working between SEEC and SESL had created a single, united voice for the South East on key issues, while co-ordination of meeting dates and sharing admin costs had helped both organisations reduce expenditure. SEEC's own work programme had been delivered under budget.
- 10.4 On EU funding, members asked about the accountability of future structural funding programmes in the South East and whether the Leader programme would continue. In future, local accountability would be the responsibility of LEPs so members should engage with their LEPs to ensure representation.
- ACTION 5: SEEC to update members on the future of the Leader programme.**
- 11. South East impact of Spending Review 2013**
- 11.1 A joint SEEC and SESL briefing on the Spending Review 2013, set out challenges and opportunities for South East authorities. These included an opportunity to work with LEPs to compete for £2bn pa 'single pot' economic growth funding. Funding for local transport and road maintenance had increased but this did not address the 'gap in the market' for cross-boundary schemes that are beyond the means of single authorities or groups of councils. SEEC will continue to make the funding case for cross-boundary schemes with a national economic impact.
- ACTION 6: SEEC to respond to any relevant consultations on the detail of Spending Review announcements**
- 12. Summer 2013 Data Dashboard**
- 12.1 Nick Woolfenden presented the draft Data Dashboard. It showed the South East's on-going, critical need for investment to support continued economic growth. Members were asked to comment on the draft before publication and circulation to MPs.
- ACTION 7: Members to email Dashboard comments to Nick Woolfenden by 31 August.**
- ACTION 8: SEEC to publish the Dashboard online and circulate to MPs & Ministers.**
- 13. SEEC financial report: Accounts 2012-13 and subscriptions 2013-14**
- 13.1 Members noted the accounts for 2012-13, thanked Surrey CC for hosting SEEC and froze subscriptions for 2013-14.
- 14. SEEC business plan 2013-14**
- 14.1 Heather Bolton presented a draft business plan setting out three priorities: infrastructure; health & well-being; and on-going work to support the South East. Members requested greater prominence for transport and clarity over joint working with SESL. Any further comments were required by 6 September.
- ACTION 9: Members to email business plan comments to Heather Bolton by 6 September.**
- ACTION 10: Final business plan to be presented to SEEC Executive in September.**
- 15. Confirmed forward meeting dates**
- 23 September 2013 – SEEC Executive
 - 13 November 2013 – SEEC Executive
- 16. Any other business**
- There being no further business, the meeting closed at 2.50pm.

Signed:

Gordon Keymer CBE, Chairman

Date:

6 February 2014

SEEC AGM & ALL-MEMBER MEETING 11 July 2013: ATTENDANCE LIST

Name	Organisation	Signature / Apologies / Substitute
Gillian Brown	Arun District Council	Yes
Gerry Clarkson	Ashford Borough Council	Apologies
Carole Paternoster	Aylesbury Vale District Council	Yes
Clive Sanders	Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council	Apologies
Mary Ballin	Bracknell Forest Borough Council	Yes
Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire County Council	Yes
John Gilbey	Canterbury City Council	Sub – Tony Austin
Barry Wood	Cherwell District Council	Apologies
Myles Cullen	Chichester District Council	Yes
Nick Rose	Chiltern District Council	Yes
Bob Lanzer	Crawley Borough Council	Yes
Jeremy Kite	Dartford Borough Council	Apologies
Paul Watkins	Dover District Council	Yes
Glynis Watts	East Hampshire District Council	Apologies
Gill Mattock	Eastbourne Borough Council	Yes
Keith House	Eastleigh Borough Council	Apologies
John O'Reilly	Elmbridge Borough Council	Apologies
Neil Dallen	Epsom & Ewell Borough Council	Yes
John Burden	Gravesham Borough Council	Yes
Stephen Mansbridge	Guildford Borough Council	Sub – Jenny Wicks
Roy Perry	Hampshire County Council	Yes
Ken Crookes	Hart District Council	Yes
Jeremy Birch	Hastings Borough Council	Yes
Tony Briggs	Havant Borough Council	Yes
Ray Dawe	Horsham District Council	Apologies
Paul Carter	Kent County Council	Sub - Bryan Sweetland
Elayne Merry	Lewes District Council	Apologies
Garry Wall	Mid Sussex District Council	Yes
Chris Townsend	Mole Valley District Council	Apologies
Barry Rickman	New Forest District Council	Apologies
Ed Turner	Oxford City Council	Sub – Van Coulter
Ian Hudspeth	Oxfordshire County Council	Yes
Tony Page	Reading Borough Council	Yes
Graham Knight	Reigate & Banstead Borough Council	Apologies
Carl Maynard	Rother District Council	Apologies
David Burbage	RB of Windsor & Maidenhead	Yes
Geoffrey Woodger	Runnymede Borough Council	Apologies
Roland Dibbs	Rushmoor Borough Council	Yes
Peter Fleming	Sevenoaks District Council	Yes

Robert Bliss	Shepway District Council	Apologies
Adrian Busby	South Bucks District Council	Apologies
Ann Ducker	South Oxfordshire District Council	Apologies
Robert Watts	Spelthorne Borough Council	Apologies
David Hodge	Surrey County Council	Yes
Moira Gibson	Surrey Heath Borough Council	Yes
Andrew Bowles	Swale Borough Council	Sub – Gerry Lewin
Gordon Keymer, CBE	Tandridge District Council	Yes
Ian Carr	Test Valley Borough Council	Apologies
Clive Hart	Thanet District Council	Apologies
Nicolas Heslop	Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council	Apologies
David Jukes	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	Apologies
Robert Knowles	Waverley Borough Council	Yes
Bob Standley	Wealden District Council	Apologies
Gordon Lundie	West Berkshire Council	Apologies
Barry Norton	West Oxfordshire District Council	Yes
Keith Wood	Winchester City Council	Apologies
John Kingsbury	Woking Borough Council	Apologies
David Lee	Wokingham Borough Council	Apologies
Tony Green	Wycombe District Council	Yes

Speakers

Baroness Hanham, CBE	DCLG	
Steven Howell	Localis	

Other Attendees

David Morrall	DCLG	
Chris Williams	Buckinghamshire County Council	
Nick Easton	LGA	
Heather Bolton	SEEC	
Nick Woolfenden	SEEC	
Ian Ludgate	SEEC	
Philippa Mellish	SESL	
Roy Millard	SESPM	