SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS
MINUTES OF THE JOINT SEEC-SESL SESSION &
SEEC AGM & ALL-MEMBER MEETING
Thursday 25 June 2015
Engineering Employers' Federation, Broadway House, Tothill St, London, SW1H 9NQ

Part 1: Joint South East England Councils & South East Strategic Leaders

1. Welcome

1.1 David Hodge and David Burbage MBE welcomed members to the joint meeting.

2. Treasury, CLG and councils delivering devolution in the South East

2.1 David Burbage MBE introduced the Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP, Exchequer Secretary HM Treasury, and Andrew Campbell CB, Director General CLG.

2.2 The Minister explained that the Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill offers devolution opportunities to all areas. The Government does not want weaker economic areas to grow at the expense of strong economies like the South East. Its flexible approach recognises that some areas will not be able to move forward with devolution at the same speed as others. He stressed that local government knows best on local decisions, so the Government will work with areas to find the best, accountable way forward and provide the extra powers needed to improve local public services.

2.3 Andrew Campbell introduced his forthcoming role at the LGA, supporting councils to work up devolution proposals. He emphasised it is important to have a well-developed, clear, evidence-based proposal, and highlighted four questions that councils should address:

- How would it boost economic growth and what is the evidence for this?
- How will the changes make life better for residents?
- How will changes increase efficiency and represent better value for money?
- Is the governance structure easy to understand and is there clear accountability?

2.4 Responding to member questions, the Minister highlighted that elected mayors are just one model and are not compulsory. Andrew Campbell CB emphasised that the public and private sector, including LEPs, must come together to support proposals. Andrew would be pleased to speak to council leaders about local bids.
ACTION 1: SEEC to circulate Andrew Campbell's LGA contact details.

3. South East devolution & infrastructure investment – SEEC-SESL campaigns

3.1 David Hodge summarised recent joint SEEC and SESL work.

- Devolution: A small group of SEEC and SESL members will meet Greg Clark MP and Theresa May MP over the summer to discuss South East devolution opportunities.
- London: SEEC and SESL have built a strong dialogue with London, providing a forum for discussing housing and infrastructure. Members were encouraged to attend forthcoming Roundtables with the GLA.
- Strategic transport: SEEC and SESL are updating work on South East strategic transport investment to present to the new Government. Members agreed the five large, cross-boundary projects included in a draft 'Missing Links' report. In discussion, members said the final report should also highlight the need to speed up progress on the Lower Thames Crossing and better airport train links from Hampshire. The report must stress that wherever airport expansion occurs, the South East needs supporting infrastructure investment.

ACTION 2: Following agreement of 5 key projects, members to provide further comments on Missing Links to Heather Bolton (heatherbolton@secouncils.gov.uk) by 21 August.

4. Future of joint working by SEEC and SESL

4.1 Discussion on the future of joint working between SEEC and SESL will be revisited following further SESL internal debate.
ACTION 3: SESL Members to report to SEEC Executive in September on options for future joint working by SEEC and SESL.

Part 2: South East England Councils AGM & All-Member Meeting

5. Welcome, apologies, declarations of substitutes and declarations of interest

5.1 David Hodge welcomed members. Apologies and substitutes are attached. There were no declarations of interest. Apologies were passed on from retiring Chairman Gordon Keymer CBE and his thanks to officers and members for their support during his 3 years of Chairmanship.

6. SEEC political balance following May 2015 elections

6.1 Allocation of SEEC Executive seats following the May 2015 elections was Conservative 12, Labour 3, Liberal Democrats 2. Smaller parties have 10.72% of votes, but no single party exceeds the 5% of seats threshold for Executive representation, although a coalition could take 2 Executive seats. Neil Dallen proposed that a Residents/ Independent coalition should fill the smaller party seats as happened last year, and should be able to discuss nominations in advance of the AGM next year. He nominated himself and Chris Townsend as a coalition to fill the 2 Executive seats.
ACTION 4: SEEC to write to smaller parties setting out the proposal for a Residents/ Independent coalition on the Executive, with a deadline for objections of 10 September.

7. Election of South East England Councils' Chairman for 2015-16

7.1 Nicolas Heslop (Tonbridge & Malling BC, Con) was elected Chairman. Thanks were recorded to Gordon Keymer CBE, stepping down as Chairman.

8. Election of SEEC office holders and nominations to external bodies 2015-16

8.1 Roy Perry (Hampshire CC, Con) was elected Deputy Chairman. Thanks were recorded to David Hodge, stepping down as Deputy Chairman. David Monk (Shepway DC, Con) was elected as new Secretary/Treasurer. Tony Page (Reading BC, Lab) and Keith House (Eastleigh BC, Lib-Dem) are SEEC Vice Chairmen.

8.2 In addition to the names above, Executive Committee appointments were:
Conservatives: Andrew Bowles, Swale BC; Paul Carter, Kent CC; Myles Cullen, Chichester DC; Lynne Hack, Reigate & Banstead BC; David Hodge, Surrey CC; Ian Hudspeth, Oxfordshire CC; Stephen Parker, Hart DC; Carole Paternoster, Aylesbury Vale DC; Bob Standley, Wealden DC; Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire CC.
Labour: Peter Chowney, Hastings BC; Van Coulter, Oxford City Council.
Lib-Dems: David Neighbour, Hart DC.
Ex Officio: Moira Gibson, Surrey Heath BC (Con, District Leaders' Chairman); Roland Dibbs, Rushmoor BC (Con, Districts' Deputy Chairman); David Burbage MBE, RB of Windsor & Maidenhead (Con, SESL Chairman).

8.3 Nicolas Heslop was nominated as the SEEC representative on the LGA Executive with Roy Perry as alternate. David Burbage MBE requested SEEC look into nominating Board Members for the South East Arts Council.
ACTION 5: Officers to investigate whether SEEC could nominate representatives for the South East Arts Council Board and report back to the September Executive.

9. The Modern Slavery Act: New duties for South East Councils

9.1 A 2-minute film was screened. Produced by the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration (SESPM) and SEEC, it was accredited by the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (IASC). The film is designed to help councils understand their new duties to report signs of possible slavery seen during day-to-day work and will be used as part of a training package.

9.2 Christopher Ansell, on behalf of IASC, explained the Commissioner's role in the UK's fight against modern slavery, focused on strengthening law enforcement and ensuring public authorities identify and protect victims effectively. He highlighted examples where the local authority could have identified cases earlier than the police.

9.3 Offer Stern-Weiner, Head of the Modern Slavery Unit at the Home Office, explained the Modern Slavery Act 2015 means local authorities will have a duty to cooperate with the Commissioner. There is also now a duty to notify the Secretary of State about victims. Local authorities will need to raise awareness and provide training on changes to the National Referral Mechanism, the way in which the UK identifies and support victims.

9.4 Members agreed that Home Office guidance for local councils on how to identify, report and support victims would be useful. This could also include details on how councils can best cooperate with the police and the new duty on major businesses to disclose the steps they are taking to prevent slavery in supply chains. The Human Trafficking Foundation Trafficking Survivor Care Standards Handbook was recommended.

ACTION 6: SEEC to circulate film, SESPM training pack and speaker slides.

ACTION 7: SEEC and SESPM to offer to work with the Home Office to produce detailed guidance for councils on their new modern slavery duties.

10. Making the case for the South East to Government: Latest SEEC Data Dashboard

10.1 SEEC's Data Dashboard presents key information on South East opportunities and challenges for members to use in communications with Government. It is circulated to members, Ministers and local MPs. Nick Woolfenden requested member comments on how SEEC can best use this resource to make the case for the South East. Nicolas Heslop suggested members could send it out directly to their local MP in future.

ACTION 8: SEEC to circulate the Data Dashboard to MPs and ask SEEC members for comments on improving the format and impact of future editions by 21 August.

11. SEEC review of the year – Cllr David Hodge, SEEC Deputy Chairman 2014-15

11.1 David Hodge summarised SEEC's work over the past year on three main issues:

- Devolution: SEEC's input to the non-met commission was successfully reflected in their final report. The Independent Commission on Local Government Finance report supported SEEC's call for full control of council tax and discounts and 100% business rates retention.
- Transport: SEEC and SESL met Baroness Kramer, who suggested that calls for investment would be clearer for Government if our 10-point programme Mind the Gap was narrowed down. SEEC and SESL's Missing Links report will focus on 5 projects.
- London: SEEC met both London Councils and the Greater London Authority (GLA), giving SEEC members the opportunity to voice South East concerns to London, in particular regarding infrastructure and housing. David Hodge encouraged members to attend one of the upcoming Roundtables with the GLA.

11.2 Thanks were recorded to Surrey CC for hosting SEEC.

ACTION 9: SEEC officers to circulate the Annual Review to members in the summer.

12. SEEC business plan 2015-16

12.1 Heather Bolton presented a draft business plan for member comment.

ACTION 10: SEEC to circulate draft business plan, requesting comments by 21 August.

ACTION 11: Updated business plan to be presented to SEEC Executive in September.

13. SEEC financial report: Accounts 2014-15 and subscriptions 2015-16

13.1 SEEC delivered its 2014-15 work programme 5% under budget at £257,000. Members noted the 2014-15 accounts and agreed to freeze 2015-16 subscriptions. Andrew Bowles, seconded by David Hodge, asked SEEC to look at a new communications resource.

ACTION 12: SEEC to invoice members for 2015-16 subscriptions in July.

ACTION 13: SEEC Executive to discuss a new communications resource in September.

14. Minutes of 5 February 2015 and matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda

14.1 The minutes of the last all-member meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

15. Confirmed forward meeting dates:

- 10 July 2015 – SE / London Roundtable: housing & infrastructure plans
- 18 September 2015 – SE / London Roundtable: housing & infrastructure plans
- 24 September 2015 – SEEC Executive (shared date with SESL)
- 26 November 2015 – SEEC Executive
- 11 December 2015 – Wider South East Summit with London.

16. Any Other Business

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 15:45.

Signed: _____

Nicolas Heslop, Chairman

SEEC ALL-MEMBER MEETING & AGM 25 JUNE 2015: 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
Paul Bettison	Bracknell Forest Council	Apologies
Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire County Council	Yes
Simon Cook	Canterbury City Council	Yes
Barry Wood	Cherwell District Council	Apologies
Myles Cullen	Chichester District Council	Yes
Isobel Darby	Chiltern District Council	Yes
Jeremy Kite	Dartford Borough Council	Apologies
Paul Watkins	Dover District Council	Sub – Michael Conolly
Richard Millard	East Hampshire District Council	Apologies
Gill Mattock	Eastbourne Borough Council	Apologies
Keith House	Eastleigh Borough Council	Apologies
John O'Reilly	Elmbridge Borough Council	Apologies
Neil Dallen	Epsom & Ewell Borough Council	Yes
John Cubitt	Gravesham Borough Council	Apologies
Stephen Mansbridge	Guildford Borough Council	Apologies
Roy Perry	Hampshire County Council	Yes
Stephen Parker	Hart District Council	Yes
Peter Chowney	Hastings Borough Council	Yes
Michael Cheshire, MBE	Havant Borough Council	Yes
Ray Dawe	Horsham District Council	Apologies
Paul Carter, CBE	Kent County Council	Yes
Ron Maskell	Lewes District Council	Apologies
Garry Wall	Mid Sussex District Council	Yes
James Friend	Mole Valley District Council	Sub – Howard Jones
Barry Rickman	New Forest District Council	Apologies
Van Coulter	Oxford City Council	Apologies
Ian Hudspeth	Oxfordshire County Council	Sub – Rodney Rose
Tony Page	Reading Borough Council	Yes
Dr Lynne Hack	Reigate & Banstead Borough Council	Yes
David Burbage, MBE	RB of Windsor & Maidenhead	Yes
Patrick Roberts	Runnymede Borough Council	Apologies
Roland Dibbs	Rushmoor Borough Council	Yes
Peter Fleming	Sevenoaks District Council	Yes
David Monk	Shepway District Council	Yes
Ralph Bagge	South Bucks District Council	Yes
John Cotton	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	Yes
Gordon Keymer, CBE	Tandridge District Council	Sub – Tony Elias
Ian Carr	Test Valley Borough Council	Apologies
Chris Wells	Thanet District Council	Apologies
Nicolas Heslop	Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council	Yes
David Jukes	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	Apologies
Robert Knowles	Waverley Borough Council	Apologies
Bob Standley	Wealden District Council	Yes
Gordon Lundie	West Berkshire Council	Apologies
Barry Norton	West Oxfordshire District Council	Sub – Colin Dingwall
Stephen Godfrey	Winchester City Council	Apologies
John Kingsbury	Woking Borough Council	Apologies
Keith Baker	Wokingham Borough Council	Yes
David Shakespeare, OBE	Wycombe District Council	Yes
SESL Members (attended Part 1: Joint SEEC & SESL session only)		
James Jamieson	Central Bedfordshire Council	Yes
Matt Clifton	Milton Keynes Council	Yes
David Renard	Swindon Borough Council	Yes
Speakers		
Damian Hinds MP	HM Treasury	Yes
Andrew Campbell CB	Department for Communities and Local Government	Yes
Offer Stern-Weiner	Modern Slavery Unit	Yes
Christopher Ansell	Office of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner	Yes
Other Attendees		
Chris Williams	Buckinghamshire County Council	Yes
Heather Bolton	SEEC	Yes
Nick Woolfenden	SEEC	Yes
Sarah Momber	SEEC / SESL	Yes
Philippa Mellish	SESL	Yes
Heather Wills	Local Government Association	Yes
Piali DasGupta	Local Government Association	Yes