

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS EXECUTIVE MEETING



Date: 26 November 2015

Subject: **Final SEEC business plan and resource options**

Report of: Heather Bolton, SEEC Director

Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

- i) Endorse the final SEEC business plan and ask officers to report back to the Chairman & leadership team on projects where joint working with SESL could be agreed
- ii) Note the update on SEEC's new communications officer and existing admin/policy post.

1. Introduction

1.1 At the September Executive members provided comments on a draft SEEC business plan and agreed to recruit a part time communications officer. This paper updates members on progress since September.

2. Business Plan

2.1 A revised 2-page business plan is set out below for final approval. Changes made following member input are:

- Proposal to add one workshop to the regular programme of meetings. Item 17 proposes a workshop to cover the benefits of devolving greater health responsibilities to councils and the role of all tiers in transforming health, care and prevention services to reduce demand and manage costs. This would be an ideal candidate for joint work with SESL.
- The workshop would act as a catalyst to inform influencing work on integration and pooling of budgets and would help share good practice through case studies.
- A review of potential actions on the Housing and Planning Bill after the Spending Review to decide on the need for South-East-specific influencing on the Bill rather than working nationally through the LGA.
- Linking proposed timing of work more closely to likely Government announcements. This has altered the timings for a small number of projects. For example, the plan now specifies that making the case for infrastructure investment to support airport expansion will follow the Government announcement on location of an extra runway.

3. Communications resource and wider staffing

3.1 The new SEEC communications officer post has been advertised as a part time post for an initial 12-month fixed term contract, as agreed at September's Executive. Closing date for applications is 7 December and interviews are scheduled for mid-December.

3.2 The post will help raise the profile of member views on key South East policy issues via the media, ensure regular communications with members and Parliamentarians as well as more regular website updates. Salary and all on-costs for the new post are fully expected to be in line with September's estimate of £30,000-£33,000 in a full year.

3.3 Since the last meeting SEEC and SESL's shared administration and policy officer Sarah Momber has handed in her resignation in order to take up another post. This role has also been advertised, with interviews scheduled for late November and will once again be shared by SEEC (60%) and SESL (40%).

FINAL SEEC business plan September 2015 - October 2016

Devolution		Timing
<p>Aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press the case for significant devolution of funding and powers, ensuring opportunities are open to all tiers of councils in the South East • Facilitate knowledge exchange between areas to help support robust devolution proposals • Agree joint working with SESL where appropriate, to ensure a single South East voice and avoid duplication. 	<p>Activity planned includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Briefing for Parliamentarians during debate on the Cities and Devolution Bill to emphasise the needs of multi-tier devolution proposals, highlight the potential of current South East devolution bids and support LGA-led Bill amendments. Includes input to Parliamentary committees, APPGs and briefings. 2. Commission and publish options for achieving double or triple devolution within the South East as a multi-tier area to ensure devolution reaches all levels of local government. 3. Work with members to share emerging options and models for local business rate retention within devolution deals. 4. Discussion for members on devolution good practice, review of successful bids, devolution pros and cons. 5. Supporting communications on all devolution work. 	<p>Ongoing, including activity pre Spending Review (SR)</p> <p>Post SR</p> <p>Post SR</p> <p>Autumn</p>
Infrastructure, housing & the economy		
<p>Aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure greater infrastructure investment to help South East councils drive economic growth as part of the engine room of UK plc • Support South East councils in their work to overcome barriers to housing delivery • Work with London and East of England to influence plans for London's future. 	<p>Activity planned includes:</p> <p>INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Make the case for the South East's top priority strategic transport investment needs, using the <i>Missing Links</i> report to engage MPs, partners and media. 7. Explore potential for work with member councils on a shared framework for assessing the economic benefit of South East transport investments. 8. Work with London on potential for joint influencing to secure investment in mutually-beneficial infrastructure (eg transport, utilities and services). 9. Present the case for substantial investment in South East infrastructure to support runway expansion. 10. Research & publish options and good practice for funding local infrastructure drawn from inside and outside the South East, including how funding devolution could support investment. Consider joint work with LEPs, including those who form part of emerging South East combined authorities. 11. Research & publish benefits of local skills commissioning in the South East. Focus on cross-tier/ combined authority practical steps to deliver economic benefit/ welfare reductions, including case studies. Consider as joint work with SESL, alongside work to press for greater devolution of skills funding. <p>HOUSING AND PLANNING</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Review impact of unimplemented planning permissions in the South East, building on LGA data with South East case studies. 13. Devise & publish recommendations on overcoming barriers to housing delivery, including a review of planning powers in devolved administrations. Work with South East planners' group to present proposals for 'use-it-or-lose-it' powers & improving 	<p>Autumn</p> <p>Early 2016</p> <p>2016</p> <p>After Govt decision</p> <p>2016 (post SR)</p> <p>2016</p> <p>2016</p> <p>2016</p>

	<p>development viability criteria and operation of CIL/S106 to ensure contributions to affordable housing.</p> <p>14. Consider options for South East specific work on the Housing & Planning Bill or supporting LGA national work, eg on starter homes vs other affordable homes.</p> <p>LONDON</p> <p>15. Establish formal political dialogue with the GLA, Mayor, London Councils and East of England to influence London's next statutory plan, including options for meeting London's housing inside or outside the capital.</p> <p>16. Supporting communications on all infrastructure, housing & economy work.</p>	<p>Post SR</p> <p>Dec-Jul</p>
Health and care		
<p>Aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the case for adequate funding and devolved powers to help South East authorities deliver effective, integrated local health and care services for the UK's largest and most ageing population. Agree joint working with SESL where appropriate, to ensure a single South East voice and avoid duplication. 	<p>Activity planned includes:</p> <p>17. Workshop for SEEC-SESL members with NHS England and Department of Health on devolution to South East cross-tier council partnerships/combined authorities. Explore the role of all tiers in transforming health, care and prevention services to reduce demand and manage costs.</p> <p>18. Use workshop outputs to make the case for greater pooling of health budgets/ devolution to local authorities to support integration and streamlining of health and care services for South East residents. Also publish good practice case studies on health, care and public health, including transfer of 0-5 responsibilities.</p> <p>19. Press for adequate funding to maintain care services and a viable care market to support the South East's very high elderly population.</p> <p>20. Present the case for greater public health funding for South East authorities, moving more quickly towards higher agreed target allocations and illustrating the impact of cuts.</p>	<p>2016</p> <p>18, 19 & 20 to follow on from item 17 or in response to relevant consultations</p>
Underpinning, on-going work		
<p>Aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise the profile of SEEC's work with members, Ministers, MPs, Peers, media and opinion formers. Maintain an evidence base to support SEEC influencing work. Monitor emerging policy to ensure topical, timely responses on matters relevant to SEEC councils. Maintain hosting arrangement with South East Strategic Partnership for Migration, ensuring updates for members on key migration issues. 	<p>Activity planned includes:</p> <p>21. Regular communications programme comprising newsletters, briefings, publications for members and contact with Parliamentarians & media.</p> <p>22. Review format & publish two Data Dashboards a year, identifying key policy issues for SEEC and partners to raise with Ministers, MPs and opinion formers.</p> <p>23. Ensure South East views are represented in responses to relevant policy consultations and discussions. Priority topics for SEEC influencing include maximising local control and devolution, while minimising bureaucracy. For any remaining central funding the focus will be on ensuring population-based grants reflect the scale of the demand in the South East as the UK's most populated area.</p> <p>24. Update members on migration trends – eg refugees, Home Office proposals for dispersal of asylum seekers and local authority duties relating to Modern Day Slavery.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Feb/Jul</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>