

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



Date: 25 June 2015

Subject: **Making the case for the South East to the new Government: Latest SEEC Data Dashboard**

Report of: Nick Woolfenden, SEEC Head of Policy Co-ordination

Recommendations:

- i) Review key messages in the draft Dashboard to ensure it effectively informs the new Government on the scale of South East opportunities and challenges.
- ii) Suggest any content/format improvements to consider for future editions.
- iii) Consider how best SEEC and members can use the Dashboard to raise key issues with Government.

1. Influencing decision makers – SEEC’s Data Dashboard

1.1 Members want to ensure the South East’s key opportunities and challenges are recognised by Government in making policy and funding decisions. Highlighting latest evidence, data headlines and trends on key issues such as the economy, public funding, housing and population change, the Data Dashboard is one way SEEC seeks to influence Ministers and MPs.

1.2 We welcome member comments on the Dashboard (Annex) prior to finalising it. Published twice a year, the Dashboard draws mainly on official published data (supplemented where relevant with existing SEEC commissioned research) highlighting evidence to support strategic policy/funding implications relevant to SEEC’s main priorities. It sets out:

- The scale of issues facing councils in the South East, and the need to recognise these in Government policy/investment e.g. the South East has England’s largest number of older people (790,000 over-75s, projected to nearly double to 1.5m by 2037), raising major implications for councils’ care service funding.
- The importance and further potential of the South East’s economic strength to UK plc e.g. the South East made the largest net contribution to the Treasury 2002-12 (£80bn), but local areas would be able to invest more in economic growth if given further devolution opportunities – such as retention of property taxes.

1.3 Following today’s meeting, the Dashboard will be sent to all South East MPs and key Ministers with a Chairman’s cover letter, which we propose highlights:

- The scale of the South East’s potential and the importance of allowing devolution opportunities for all areas, for example as in the Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill.
- The need for sufficient Government funding to help councils tackle key challenges beyond the scope of local resources e.g. large-scale strategic transport investment, and caring for the South East’s large ageing population.

2. Looking ahead

2.1 This is the 8th edition of the Dashboard and we are keen that it continues to be effective in highlighting key issues to Government. We therefore plan to undertake a short review of format and content, bringing any refinements in with the next (Winter 2015) edition. We welcome member views on content or format. Please respond to nickwoolfenden@secouncils.gov.uk by 31 July.