

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS &
SOUTH EAST STRATEGIC LEADERS
JOINT MEETING**



Date: 25 June 2015

Subject: **CLG and councils delivering devolution in the South East**
Guest speaker: Andrew Campbell CB, Director General CLG

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

Recommendations:

- i) Welcome Andrew Campbell's update on his new CLG/LGA joint role supporting councils in brokering devolution deals with Government.
- ii) Highlight the potential that devolution to councils in the South East offers for national and local economic growth.
- iii) Suggest how this new role can best support effective devolution bids from councils in the South East.

1. Background

- 1.1 SEEC and SESL are pleased to welcome Andrew Campbell CB to the meeting. Currently Director General at CLG, Andrew is soon to be seconded to the Local Government Association to support councils in brokering effective devolution deals with Government. He was previously CLG director of local government policy 2006-10, director of strategy 2010-13, and chairs the South East ERDF European funding Local Management Committee. Today's discussion gives South East Leaders the opportunity to help inform Andrew's important new role.

2. Discussion – CLG and councils working together for effective devolution deals in the South East

- 2.1 Andrew will explain his new role and outline expected parameters and timescales for local devolution deals, including what CLG is looking for. SEEC and SESL have previously emphasised to Ministers the scale of the South East's potential and the benefits of allowing devolution opportunities for all South East councils. These could secure national economic benefits and improve services for our 9.8 million residents by:
 - **Maximising South East economic growth to help the whole UK**, with devolution enabling investment in the local infrastructure that business needs to grow. This would deliver high returns on investment which make the nation wealthier and support public spending UK-wide.
 - **Delivering better, more affordable public services for the UK's largest population**, with councils streamlining and integrating health, care, emergency and other services.
- 2.2 In discussion members may wish to explore these issues further, including:
 - How Andrew's new role will support constructive partnership working between CLG and councils in the South East to broker effective devolution deals?
 - The opportunities and implications of the Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill and how it will support devolution in non-city/two-tier areas in the South East?
 - What will CLG expect from bids and what is the timescale?
 - How far might Government go in devolution deals with councils to reflect the scale of the South East's profitability for UK plc (£80bn net return to Treasury over 10 years, the highest in England)? For example SEEC/SESL research identified £3.3bn of additional investment opportunities in 2015-16 to support economic growth if South East councils were allowed to keep all property taxes (including 100% of business rates) in place of central grants.