



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

Thursday 30 June 2016

Engineering Employers' Federation, Broadway House, Tothill St, London, SW1H 9NQ

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

1. **Welcome, apologies, declarations of substitutes and declarations of interest**
 - 1.1 Nicolas Heslop welcomed members. Apologies and substitutes are attached. There were no declarations of interest. Congratulations were given to Paul Bettison on his OBE.
2. **SEEC political balance following May 2016 elections**
 - 2.1 Allocation of SEEC Executive seats following the May 2016 elections is Conservative 12, Labour 3, Liberal Democrats 2. Among 4 smaller parties, no single party exceeds the 5% of seats threshold for Executive representation. Residents' Association representatives expressed interest in forming a coalition with another party to take 2 Executive seats.
ACTION 1: SEEC secretariat to write to leading councillors in the four smaller parties asking their views on a coalition to give two of the parties seats on the SEEC Executive.
3. **Election of South East England Councils' Chairman for 2016-17**
 - 3.1 Nicolas Heslop (Tonbridge & Malling BC, Con) was re-elected Chairman and thanked members for their support.
4. **Election of SEEC office holders and nominations to external bodies 2016-17**
 - 4.1 Roy Perry (Hampshire CC, Con) was re-elected Deputy Chairman. David Monk (Shepway DC, Con) was re-elected as Secretary/Treasurer. Tony Page (Reading BC, Lab) and Keith House (Eastleigh BC, Lib-Dem) were named SEEC Vice Chairmen.
 - 4.2 In addition to the names above, Executive Committee appointments were:
Conservatives: Ralph Bagge, South Bucks DC; 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; Carole Paternoster, Aylesbury Vale DC; Bob Standley, Wealden DC.
Labour: Peter Chowney, Hastings BC; Van Coulter, Oxford City Council.
Lib-Dems: David Neighbour, Hart DC.
Ex Officio: Paul Bettison OBE, Bracknell Forest Council (Con, SESL representative); Moira Gibson, Surrey Heath BC (Con, District Leaders' Chairman); Stephen Parker, Hart DC (Con, Districts' Deputy Chairman).
 - 4.3 Nicolas Heslop was nominated as the SEEC representative on the LGA Executive with Stephen Parker as substitute.
 - 4.4 Paul Bettison OBE was nominated to the Wider South East Political Steering Group.
5. **Making the case for infrastructure**
 - 5.1 Geoff French CBE, Chairman of Enterprise M3 LEP, highlighted findings from new research identifying the major economic benefits that investing in South East strategic transport links can bring, not just traditional journey time savings. The project looked at 17 road and rail routes across four South East LEPs. The results had been shared with the DfT to influence their future work. Funding for large scale projects is difficult to identify, but Geoff hoped the research would help support the case for investment in high-return South East projects.
 - 5.2 Bridget Rosewell OBE, Commissioner, National Infrastructure Commission (NIC), explained the NIC is expected to become a statutory body by the end of 2016. It is currently consulting on a new National Infrastructure Assessment which will give independent advice to Government on investment priorities. The NIC planned to work bottom up, drawing on evidence and research from councils, LEPs and other bodies. It is also beginning a study of the Oxford- Cambridge growth corridor. Bridget emphasised the case for infrastructure investment should be based on unlocking direct benefits such as jobs, housing, growth, income and quality of life. This should be easier than arguing about potential benefits of connectivity in other parts of the country.
 - 5.3 In discussion members raised a number of points with Geoff and Bridget including:

- The importance of supporting South East infrastructure, and the negative consequences of not investing in the South East as the UK's economic engine room.
- In addition to supporting the South East's own economic success, investment is needed in infrastructure for those commuting to London to reduce overcrowding on commuter lines.
- Investment is needed in flood prevention in the South East.
- The NIC must ensure it takes decisions transparently and allows opportunities for SEEC members to inform its decisions.
- Effective high-speed broadband is vital for future economic success.
- SEEC access to the LEP research economic model could help support members' case for strategic South East infrastructure investment, as set out in the Missing Links report.

5.4 Trevor Pugh, Strategic Director, Surrey CC gave an overview of Sub-National Transport Bodies (SNTB), which the new Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 allows areas to set up on a statutory basis. He emphasised that SNTBs could help support economic growth as Government has to consider their recommendations for priority investments. SNTBs could influence and align funding available from Network Rail and Highways England. Trevor suggested SNTBs are complementary to devolution, but would need to operate over a large area (one example covered 10 LEPs). The DfT is keen to look at a transport board for the South East, and the South East 7 group of councils is looking at possible approaches. In discussion members agreed SEEC should help shape development of the South East's approach to SNTBs and a paper should be brought to the next Executive for consideration.

ACTION 2: Geoff French to share LEP infrastructure economic-impact model with SEEC.

ACTION 3: SEEC to circulate Geoff French CBE [slides](#).

ACTION 4: SEEC to respond to National Infrastructure Commission consultation by 5 August.

ACTION 5: A South East SNTB to be discussed further by next Executive Committee meeting.

6. **Member debate: South East key requirements for business rate reform**

6.1 Nicola Morton, LGA's Head of Finance, updated members on proposed reforms to business rates. Formal consultation is expected in summer, with the legislative process expected to start in 2017. Three key areas to be resolved are funding needs/redistribution, system design and service responsibilities. **Post meeting note:** Consultation was launched on 5 July 2016.

6.1 In table discussions, SEEC members considered a number of questions on how to design a system that ensures fair funding for all local authorities but also ensures there is an incentive for delivering local economic growth. Points raised at the meeting can be found [here](#).

ACTION 6: SEEC to circulate Nicola Morton's [slides](#).

ACTION 7: SEEC to circulate round table discussion write ups and consider points in response to forthcoming Government consultation.

7. **Member debate: SEEC future priorities, meeting format and subscriptions**

7.1 Members agreed to freeze subscriptions for 2017-18. In discussion members agreed the September Executive would consider recruitment approaches to non SEEC members.

7.2 In light of uncertainty arising from the recent referendum result to leave the EU, members agreed to defer the business plan to the next SEEC Executive Meeting. Members said SEEC should be proactive in identifying what the South East needs to sustain its economic success for the whole country during a period of significant change, including raising the importance of sustaining the South East economic 'engine room' with Ministers and MPs.

ACTION 8: SEEC Executive to consider the best approach to recruiting non-members.

ACTION 9: Members to email SEEC business plan 2016-17 suggestions to [Heather Bolton](#), by 1 September, including proposals on priorities post EU, for discussion at September Executive.

8. **SEEC review of the year and update on latest SEEC activity:**

8.1 Nicolas Heslop summarised SEEC's successful work over the past year on a range of key issues including devolution, infrastructure and housing. Work included written submissions to decision makers and engagement with Ministers, GLA and LGA. Other welcome developments included a new electronic newsletter and positive national media coverage, after the appointment of a communications officer. The Data Dashboard was recognised as an important resource and member views were invited on the latest draft. Thanks were recorded for Heather Bolton and SEEC's officer team.

ACTION 10: SEEC to circulate the Annual Review to MPs.

ACTION 11: Members to send Data Dashboard comments to Nick Woolfenden by 8 July, to allow circulation to SEEC members, MPs and Ministers before summer recess.

9. Minutes of 29 January 2016 and matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda

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

10. Confirmed forward meeting dates:

- 30 September 2016 – SEEC Executive (joint date with SESL)
- 1 December 2016 – SEEC Executive (joint date with SESL)
- 9 December 2016 – Wider South East Summit

11. Any Other Business

11.1 Members agreed points for a letter to Ministers seeking clarity over funding for councils accepting unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC).

ACTION 12: Chairmen of SEEC and South East Strategic Partnership for Migration to write to Ministers asking for greater clarity on UASC.

The meeting closed at 16.00.

Signed:

Nicolas Heslop, Chairman

SEEC ALL-MEMBER MEETING & AGM 30 JUNE 2016: 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 OBE	Bracknell Forest Council	Yes
Simon Cook	Canterbury City Council	Apologies
Barry Wood	Cherwell District Council	Yes
Myles Cullen	Chichester District Council	Yes
Isobel Darby	Chiltern District Council	Apologies
Jeremy Kite MBE	Dartford Borough Council	Apologies
Paul Watkins	Dover District Council	Apologies
Angela Glass	East Hampshire District Council	Apologies
Gill Mattock	Eastbourne Borough Council	Apologies
Keith House	Eastleigh Borough Council	Yes
Stuart Selleck	Elmbridge Borough Council	Apologies
Clive Woodbridge	Epsom & Ewell Borough Council	Yes
John Cubitt	Gravesham Borough Council	Apologies
Paul Spooner	Guildford Borough Council	Apologies
Roy Perry	Hampshire County Council	Yes
Stephen Parker	Hart District Council	Yes
Peter Chowney	Hastings Borough Council	Sub- Kim Forward
Michael Cheshire, MBE	Havant Borough Council	Apologies
Ray Dawe	Horsham District Council	Apologies
Paul Carter, CBE	Kent County Council	Yes
Ron Maskell	Lewes District Council	Sub- Bill Giles
Garry Wall	Mid Sussex District Council	Yes
Vivienne Michael	Mole Valley District Council	Apologies
Barry Rickman	New Forest District Council	Apologies
Van Coulter	Oxford City Council	Apologies
Ian Hudspeth	Oxfordshire County Council	Apologies
Tony Page	Reading Borough Council	Yes
Dr Lynne Hack	Reigate & Banstead Borough Council	Yes
Simon Dudley	RB of Windsor & Maidenhead	Sub- David Coppinger
Peter Waddell	Runnymede Borough Council	Apologies
David Clifford	Rushmoor Borough Council	Apologies
Peter Fleming	Sevenoaks District Council	Sub- Michelle Lowe
David Monk	Shepway District Council	Apologies
Ralph Bagge	South Bucks District Council	Yes
John Cotton	South Oxfordshire District Council	Apologies
Ian Harvey	Spelthorne Borough Council	Apologies

David Hodge	Surrey County Council	Yes
Moira Gibson	Surrey Heath Borough Council	Sub- Josephine Hawkins
Andrew Bowles	Swale Borough Council	Yes
Martin Fisher	Tandridge District Council	Apologies
Chris Wells	Thanet District Council	Apologies
Nicolas Heslop	Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council	Yes
David Jukes	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	Apologies
Julia Potts	Waverley Borough Council	Apologies
Bob Standley	Wealden District Council	Apologies
Roger Croft	West Berkshire Council	Apologies
James Mills	West Oxfordshire District Council	Yes
Stephen Godfrey	Winchester City Council	Apologies
John Kingsbury	Woking Borough Council	Apologies
Keith Baker	Wokingham Borough Council	Apologies
Katrina Wood	Wycombe District Council	Yes
SESL Members (attended Part 1: Joint SEEC & SESL session only)		
Speakers		
Geoff French CBE	Enterprise M3 LEP	Yes
Bridget Rosewell OBE	National Infrastructure Commission	Yes
Nicola Morton	Local Government Association	Yes
Trevor Pugh	Surrey County Council	Yes
Other Attendees		
Heather Bolton	SEEC	Yes
Nick Woolfenden	SEEC	Yes
Emma Sutton	SEEC / SESL	Yes
Ian Mackie	SEEC	Yes
Neil Border	SESL	Yes
Heather Wills	Local Government Association	Yes
Neil Dallen	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council	Yes