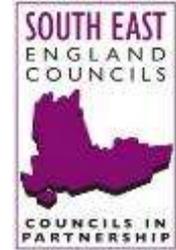


## SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS EXECUTIVE MEETING



Date: 30 November 2018

Subject: **Latest SEEC activity report and updates**

Report of: Heather Bolton, SEEC Director, and Nick Woolfenden, SEEC Head of Policy Co-ordination

### Recommendation:

Note updates on SEEC's recent work and contact [heatherbolton@secouncils.gov.uk](mailto:heatherbolton@secouncils.gov.uk) with any queries or suggestions for future activity.

SEEC activity to raise the profile of members' interests in recent weeks has included liaison with London and representations to Ministers on social care and Right to Buy proposals.

#### a) SEEC business plan 2018-19: final version

- a.1 After member discussion and in-principle agreement of SEEC's draft business plan at September's Executive, comments have been incorporated into the [final business plan](#) that runs from October 2018 to October 2019.
- a.2 Building on member comments the aim is to focus January's All-Member meeting on Brexit practicalities, including migrant skills, developing home-grown skills (eg via apprenticeships) and how to ensure business and public service continuity.

#### b) London Plan Examination in Public and Wider South East Political Liaison

- b.1 SEEC had confirmation in early November that it will be giving evidence at the forthcoming London Plan Examination in Public (EiP), ensuring views of South East councils are heard on the Mayor's ambitious growth plans and on how to manage potential implications for the South East. Following consultation on the draft London Plan earlier this year, the EiP will run from 15 January until mid May 2019. The panel of inspectors has invited written submissions before then. SEEC will be responding, emphasising key points from our consultation response and will be taking part in some EiP hearings, in co-operation with South East Strategic Leaders.
- b.2 SEEC members also discussed key issues with London Deputy Mayor Jules Pipe at October's Wider South East Political Steering Group (PSG). Over the summer GLA published minor suggested changes to the London Plan, clarifying certain points following consultation. There are no major changes to policies affecting the South East, but changes in supporting wording now specify that the Mayor will aim to meet the 'vast majority' rather than 'all' of London's housing need in his boundaries. He estimates a gap of 1,065 homes per annum for 10 years that he cannot provide in London. The Mayor is still inviting councils outside London to come forward to work with him as 'willing partners for growth' to help accommodate London's housing and economic growth needs, with mutual benefits.
- b.3 SEEC members emphasised it must not be assumed the gap can be met in the South East, given its own existing high growth levels and constraints. They also highlighted the Mayor still needs to be clearer on what he could offer to any South East councils that might be interested as 'willing partners'. There would need to be more information on mutual benefits to help persuade areas outside London to take additional homes or jobs displaced from London - for example help with infrastructure investment. Other PSG discussions included future engagement with the emerging Sub-national Transport Bodies who are developing investment priorities; and work to tackle housing delivery barriers - including options for land value uplift capture to help fund infrastructure.
- b.4 Preparation is underway for the next Wider South East Summit with the Mayor of London on 11 January 2019. Summit invitations for SEEC members are being circulated shortly.

#### c) SEEC input to Government

- c.1 During October SEEC submitted responses to Government on housing and social care, both critical issues affecting South East authorities. Members [welcomed proposals to relax some of the rules on Right to Buy receipts but called for further freedoms](#) to ensure that councils can deliver one-for-one replacements for homes sold. SEEC called for:

- Councils to keep 100% of receipts to replace Right to Buy (RtB) sales with an equivalent number of alternative properties. Rules should also allow 5-year (rather than 3-year) time limits for spending existing and future receipts.
  - Councils to have full freedom to use RtB receipts to replace stock as appropriate locally – eg. not only building new homes but via conversions or purchases.
- c.2 Representations on [social care were made to the Lords Economic Affairs Committee](#). SEEC’s response to the committee’s inquiry into social care funding in England highlighted the fast-growing demand for adult care in the South East and emphasised that:
- Local authorities have a vital role in adult social care. This must be underpinned by a system that provides stable, adequate and long-term funding, recognising that all tiers of councils have important roles in care and wellbeing.
  - There are opportunities to improve structures – eg. redesigning systems to create locally-responsive, seamless services that bring together health and care.
  - Addressing the need for additional social care funding through council tax is unsustainable, and is not keeping pace with the growing demand. Care is a national problem and it should not fall to local tax payers to be the main funders.
- d) SEEC Communications update**
- d.1 SEEC circulated a [same-day Budget briefing](#) to members on 29 October, highlighting key South East issues from the Chancellor’s statement. Members welcomed the fact that several announcements reflected [SEEC’s pre-Budget submission](#), which called for investment in three South East priorities of infrastructure, housing and sustainable local service delivery.
- d.2 An [article by SEEC’s Chairman appeared in LGC](#) on 2 November, highlighting the need for a fairer funding deal for local government to deliver more equitable per capita spending across England. SEEC also circulated its [October Newsletter](#), including links to expert presentations on modular construction.