

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

Thursday 28 June 2018

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



**1. Welcome, apologies, declarations of substitutes and declarations of interest**

1.1 Nicolas Heslop welcomed members. He congratulated Gillian Brown (Arun DC, Con) on her recent OBE. Apologies and substitutes are on the attached attendance list. Nicolas Heslop declared an interest on item 5 (skills) as an employee of The Edge Foundation.

**2. SEEC political balance following May 2018 elections**

2.1 Members agreed recommendations on rounding of seat allocations for SEEC Executive seats following the May 2018 elections. Seats are: Conservative 13, Labour 3, Lib-Dem 2. Smaller parties have 7.5% of votes, but no single party exceeds the 5% of seats threshold for automatic Executive representation. If smaller parties form a coalition they could take one Executive seat. In principle, members supported a proposal for an Independent/Residents' association coalition, subject to no objections from other smaller parties.

**ACTION 1: SEEC secretariat to write to UKIP and Green representatives to ask if they have any objections to the proposed Independent/ Residents' Association coalition. Responses will be requested by mid September allowing arrangements to be confirmed by the next SEEC Executive on 28 September.**

**3. Election of South East England Councils' Chairman for 2018-19**

3.1 Roy Perry (Hampshire CC, Con) was elected Chairman. Thanks were recorded to out-going Chairman Nicolas Heslop who stood down after three years.

**4. Election of SEEC office holders and nominations to external bodies 2018-19**

4.1 Ralph Bagge (South Bucks DC, Con) was elected Deputy Chairman, and chaired the AGM in Cllr Perry's absence due to prior commitments. David Monk (Folkestone & Hythe DC, Con) was re-elected as Secretary/Treasurer.

4.2 In addition to the names above, Executive Committee appointments were:

**Conservatives:** Carole Paternoster, Aylesbury Vale DC; Eileen Lintill, Chichester DC; Matt Furniss, Guildford BC; Paul Carter, Kent CC; Lynne Hack, Reigate & Banstead BC; John Furey, Surrey CC; Andrew Bowles, Swale BC; Bob Standley, Wealden DC; Jeanette Clifford, West Berkshire Council; James Mills, West Oxfordshire DC.

**Labour:** Tony Page, Reading BC; Jason Brock, Reading BC; third name to be confirmed.

**Lib-Dems:** Keith House, Eastleigh BC; David Neighbour, Hart DC.

**Ex Officio:** Moira Gibson (Surrey Heath, Con) District Leaders' Chairman; Stephen Parker (Hart DC, Con) Districts' Deputy Chairman; Paul Bettison OBE (Bracknell Forest Council, Con) SEEC/SESL Crossover Member, Nicolas Heslop (Tonbridge & Malling BC, Con).

**Nominations to external bodies:** Roy Perry was nominated as the SEEC representative on the LGA Executive with Ralph Bagge as substitute. Nicolas Heslop will remain one of 5 SEEC representatives on the Wider South East Political Steering Group.

**5. Key Discussion: Skills needed for the South East's future economic success**

5.1 Alan Mak, MP for Havant, PPS at DBEIS and Chairman of the Fourth Industrial Revolution APPG spoke about skills needed in the South East for future economic growth. He focused on the significant challenges and opportunities technological change will have on businesses. He endorsed the work of SEEC, and highlighted that the South East is already a successful economic contributor to the UK as a whole. Advances like AI, robotics, internet, life sciences and 3D printing are all set to transform the national economy, increasing productivity and boosting efficiency. The South East needs to ensure people have the right skills to take advantage of this new 'fourth industrial revolution' which has the potential to create jobs, grow the economy and raise living standards and prosperity for residents. Local and national political leaders have a role to support and enable these changes.

5.2 Alan highlighted there is still a significant unmet demand for science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) skills with 40% of South East employers reporting a shortage of suitable graduates. Academic and vocational training options will be important in providing workforce skills needed. He highlighted that the Government is investing to improve STEM skills, and is introducing new technical T-levels. Creative and people skills will also be essential in the new

economy. The Government's Industrial Strategy recognises that different areas have different needs. While the Government must provide a national guidance framework, funding and a high quality national education system, there will be specific challenges and opportunities that must be addressed at local level, including through new Local Industrial Strategies. He encouraged councils to work with their LEPs and Government on these. Alan offered to meet any members who wanted to discuss local issues further (contact via HeatherBolton@secouncils.gov.uk).

5.3 In discussion members highlighted:

- The importance of influencing Ministers on the need for better skills and infrastructure investment in the South East. Some members felt it would help to have a Minister for the South East to champion these issues.
- The potential benefits of changing work experience from one solid week to one day a week over a much longer period, ensuring a more meaningful opportunity for the student and business.
- The protracted bidding process for funds through LEPs, which can put businesses off engaging.
- The reduction in the number of students taking design & technology because the current curriculum does not generate sufficient interest and encouragement.
- The importance of apprenticeships and how to ensure the 'brand' attracts people and is not seen as old fashioned.

5.4 Continuing the skills debate, Phil Swann, Executive Chairman of Shared Intelligence, gave an overview of a new SEEC commissioned evidence base on South East skills opportunities and challenges. A hard copy of the summary was made available to members and the [full report](#) was added to the SEEC website after the meeting. Overall the South East has a strong skills base to build upon, but has local variations and a polarisation of job opportunities – this includes growth in highly skilled service sector/knowledge intensive businesses, but also a growth in low skilled jobs. There are significant job vacancies in education and care sectors. There is a hollowing out of the economy with reductions in jobs at a medium skill level.

5.5 Looking at the skills of the South East workforce, there has been a significant decline in adults training up to NVQ levels 1 and 2. Some 51% of working age adults with no skills are not in work and there are unfilled low skilled vacancies. Other current and emerging skills demands in the South East include caring roles to keep pace with the public service needs of an ageing population; hi-tech capabilities and the need to fill any sectoral gaps emerging from Brexit, such as agriculture.

5.6 In discussion members discussed:

- Whether LEPs have a role engaging in the care sector's economic/skills needs? Phil encouraged members to discuss this with their LEP, as he believes it falls within their remit.
- The potential to help fill the workforce shortages in low level jobs by upskilling unemployed people with no formal qualifications.

**ACTION 2: SEEC to circulate Phil Swann's slides and a link to the full report to members.**

## **6. SEEC review of the year and annual accounts**

6.1 Outgoing Chairman Nicolas Heslop highlighted key SEEC achievements over the past year. He said it had been a privilege to be SEEC's Chairman. One of his key aims had been to make SEEC an influential voice for members and residents. To achieve this, SEEC had taken a very proactive position responding to consultations, influencing Ministers and other decision makers, and communicating with MPs on key issues such as infrastructure, housing, social care and economic growth. He suggested a summary of SEEC achievements over the last three years be shared with members. He recorded his thanks to the SEEC secretariat team.

6.2 Members approved SEEC's annual accounts. Looking forward, Ralph Bagge encouraged members to consider how to re-recruit former members of SEEC. Thanks were recorded to Surrey County Council for hosting SEEC.

6.3 Members discussed SEEC subscription costs for 2018-19. The proposal to freeze subscriptions for 2018-19 was agreed. However some members were concerned that a freeze would require significant use of SEEC reserves to fund operations in future years. Following discussion, it was agreed subscription rates would be reconsidered once any opportunities for cost-savings linked to possible further SEEC/SESL collaboration are clearer.

**ACTION 3:** 2018-19 subscription invoices to be sent, with rates frozen at the existing level.

**ACTION 4:** SEEC secretariat to review subscriptions options and report back to SEEC Executive in November, which will consider budgets for 2019-20.

**ACTION 5:** SEEC summary of achievements over the last three years to be refined and circulated to members with the minutes.

## **7. Latest SEEC activity report & updates**

7.1 Members welcomed the updates on SEEC's recent work, including:

- **SEEC business plan priorities for 2018-19:** Heather Bolton asked members for views on priorities for the coming year. Many current priorities could be carried forward for the coming year. Any comments or suggestions were requested by 20 August.
  - **Data Dashboard:** Members were invited to send Nick Woolfenden any comments by 10 July. Nick informed members that population data has been updated nationally, which will be included in the published version of the Dashboard.
  - **Draft London Plan:** SEEC engagement with the Mayor's office continues in the build up to the London Plan EIP in the autumn-winter 2018-19.
  - **SEEC guide to working with LEPs:** Available on SEEC's website.
  - **SEEC responses to consultations:** Recent SEEC submissions included responses to the National Planning Policy Framework; Developer Contributions; Heathrow extension proposals; and Major Roads Network.
  - **SEEC's member and MP briefings:** Recent work includes: briefing for meeting with Dominic Raab MP; social care letter to Jeremy Hunt MP; and South East local elections briefing.
- Verbal update on closer working between SEEC and SESL:** Following a meeting of SEEC's working group chaired by Roy Perry, a letter was sent to the Chairman of SESL inviting further dialogue and setting out SEEC's thoughts and ideas. Members supported a meeting between SEEC and SESL Chairmen to discuss next steps and a suitable date is being sought.

**ACTION 6:** SEEC secretariat to email members with a reminder of deadlines, encouraging business plan suggestions and data dashboard comments.

**ACTION 7:** SEEC leadership to report back on progress of ongoing discussions with SESL.

## **8. Minutes of SEEC All-Member 1 February 2018 and matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda**

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

## **9. Confirmed forward meeting dates:**

- 28 September 2018 – SEEC Executive (shared date with SESL)
- 30 November 2018 – SEEC Executive (shared date with SESL)
- 11 January 2019 – Wider South East Summit (SEEC, London, East of England)

## **10. Any Other Business**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 13:15.

**SEEC AGM & ALL-MEMBER MEETING, 28 JUNE 2018: ATTENDANCE LIST**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Signature / Apologies / Substitute</b>
Gillian Brown OBE	Arun DC	Yes
Gerry Clarkson	Ashford BC	Apologies
Carole Paternoster	Aylesbury Vale DC	Yes
Clive Sanders	Basingstoke & Deane BC	Apologies
Paul Bettison OBE	Bracknell Forest Council	Yes
Simon Cook	Canterbury City Council	Apologies
Barry Wood	Cherwell DC	Yes
Eileen Lintill	Chichester DC	Yes
Isobel Darby	Chiltern DC	Yes
Jeremy Kite MBE	Dartford BC	Apologies
Keith Morris	Dover DC	Apologies
Angela Glass	East Hampshire DC	Apologies
Stephen Holt	Eastbourne BC	Apologies
Keith House	Eastleigh BC	Apologies
Tim Oliver	Elmbridge BC	Apologies
Clive Woodbridge	Epsom & Ewell BC	Apologies
David Monk	Folkestone & Hythe DC	Yes
David Turner	Gravesham BC	Apologies
Matt Furniss	Guildford BC	Yes
Tony Rooth	Guildford BC	Apologies
Roy Perry	Hampshire CC	Sub: Keith Mans
David Neighbour	Hart DC	Yes
Stephen Parker	Hart DC	Yes
Peter Chowney	Hastings BC	Apologies
Michael Wilson	Havant BC	Apologies
Ray Dawe	Horsham DC	Apologies
Paul Carter CBE	Kent CC	Sub: Catherine Rankin
Ron Maskell	Lewes DC	Apologies
Garry Wall	Mid Sussex DC	Apologies
Vivienne Michael	Mole Valley DC	Apologies
Barry Rickman	New Forest DC	Apologies
Linda Smith	Oxford City Council	Apologies
Tony Page	Reading BC	Sub: Jason Brock
Lynne Hack	Reigate & Banstead BC	Yes

David Coppinger	RB of Windsor & Maidenhead	Apologies
Nick Prescott	Runnymede BC	Apologies
David Clifford	Rushmoor BC	Apologies
Peter Fleming	Sevenoaks DC	Yes
Ralph Bagge	South Bucks DC	Yes
Nick Naylor	South Bucks DC	Yes
Ian Harvey	Spelthorne BC	Apologies
David Hodge CBE	Surrey CC	Apologies
John Furey	Surrey CC	Yes
Chris Townsend	Surrey CC	Yes
Moira Gibson	Surrey Heath BC	Yes
Andrew Bowles	Swale BC	Yes
Martin Fisher	Tandridge DC	Apologies
Jason Savage	Thanet DC	Apologies
Nicolas Heslop	Tonbridge & Malling BC	Yes
David Jukes	Tunbridge Wells BC	Apologies
Julia Potts	Waverley BC	Apologies
Bob Standley	Wealden DC	Yes
Jeanette Clifford	West Berkshire Council	Yes
James Mills	West Oxfordshire DC	Yes
Caroline Horrill	Winchester City Council	Apologies
John Kingsbury	Woking BC	Apologies
Charlotte Haitham-Taylor	Wokingham BC	Apologies
Katrina Wood	Wycombe DC	Apologies
<b>Speakers</b>		
Alan Mak MP	DBEIS	Yes
Phil Swann	Shared Intelligence	Yes
<b>Other Attendees</b>		
Tim Wheadon	Bracknell Forest Council	Yes
Mona Sehgal	LGA	Yes
Heather Bolton	SEEC	Yes
Nick Woolfenden	SEEC	Yes
Hayley Austin	SEEC / SESL	Apologies