

SOUTH EAST FIRST

The Newsletter of South East England Councils

May 2018



South East responds to planning proposals

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South East update on May 2018 local election results

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News Roundup

SEEC speaker at London planning conference

SEEC Executive Member Cllr Ralph Bagge, from South Bucks DC, represented South East views at a conference on the planning relationship between London and the South East on 16 May. Over 90 delegates attended *'The future for planning in London – growth, sustainability and infrastructure'*. Cllr Bagge outlined how SEEC is working with the London Mayor's office to address shared challenges, such as slow take-up of approved planning permissions and the need for better infrastructure. SEEC strongly supports the Mayor's ambition to meet London's housing needs within its own boundaries. However, if the Mayor can't do this, the South East's own existing high housing demand and infrastructure pressures limit SEEC councils' capacity to accommodate any extra growth.

South East councils can help deliver integrated communities

A South East workshop on 14 May discussed how councils can support and help shape proposals in Government's *'Integrated Communities Strategy'* Green Paper. Organised by the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration and chaired by SEEC Director Heather Bolton, the event encouraged responses to [the consultation, which closes on 5 June](#).

SEEC and new data protection rules

SEEC sends meeting invitations, briefings and updates to elected politicians and officers across the South East. Under the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) we will continue to do this in line with the 'legitimate interests' provisions in the GDPR guidance. This reflects one of the following situations:

- Your organisation has an interest in SEEC work, demonstrated by paying SEEC's membership subscription.
- You are in a publicly-accountable role that influences policy-making affecting SEEC members and South East residents.
- You have actively registered on our database to receive SEEC updates.
- You are in an organisation entitled to free places at occasional events organised by SEEC and partners that are open to those outside the current SEEC membership.

SEEC holds names, email addresses, postal addresses and some personal phone numbers on its internal systems, which are UK-based. We do not rent or sell your contact details in any way. As an individual you can, of course, opt out of SEEC's regular emails by using the unsubscribe link below. Our updated [privacy policy is online](#).

SEEC Dates

[28 Jun – SEEC AGM & All-Member meeting](#)

[28 Sep – SEEC Executive](#)

[30 November 2018 – SEEC Executive](#)

Contacts

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Skills debate to take centre stage at SEEC AGM

Alan Mak MP will outline skills opportunities as keynote speaker at SEEC's AGM on 28 June. He will cover skills challenges and the role that local authorities can play.

The [AGM agenda](#) includes skills as the key discussion, including councils' role in making sure their areas have the right skills to support a successful economy and the growing high-tech sector.

Alan is MP for Havant in Hampshire and PPS to Greg Clark at the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy. He is also Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group on the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which focuses on the value of emerging technology to the UK economy.

As part of the skills discussion, SEEC will also launch newly-commissioned research from Shared Intelligence, which identifies current skills gaps in the South East. Phil Swann, Executive Chairman of Shared Intelligence, will give the AGM an overview of the supply of skills in the South East and the possible workforce impacts of Brexit, an ageing population and technological advances.

The AGM will be held at Broadway House, Tothill Street, London SW1. The main meeting starts at 11.15am, after political pre meetings from 10am. Lunch is available at 1.15pm. SEEC members attending should RSVP to admin@secouncils.gov.uk to confirm a place.

South East responds to planning proposals

Responding to MHCLG consultations on the planning system, SEEC has set out how to give South East local authorities greater powers to encourage delivery of housing.

Two responses were submitted in May to [consultations on a revised National Planning Policy Framework](#) and [Developer Contributions](#). Key points in SEEC's responses include:

- **Amend the housing need calculation methodology** to address unexpected results. The current approach gives increases for many parts of the South East which already have high growth and limited further capacity. It also delivers reductions in other parts of the South East and in major northern cities that could undermine their local growth plans.
- **More tools to tackle unimplemented planning permissions.** SEEC calls for a fuller toolkit of discretionary 'carrots and sticks' for councils to ensure developers turn planning permissions into new homes quickly.
- **Need for greater infrastructure funding,** including affordable homes, as well as improvements to the viability tests. SEEC wants to see action to address the growing South East infrastructure funding gap to help meet demand for better transport, utilities, broadband and affordable homes.

SEEC suggests secondary legislation may be needed to introduce new delivery levers for councils and fiscal measures to support infrastructure. The range of policy changes needed highlights the importance of Government taking a holistic approach to tackling the issues that could unlock homes and sustainable communities.

SEEC members set to choose new Chairman

SEEC's AGM on 28 June gives SEEC members the chance to elect a new Chairman as Cllr Nicolas Heslop steps down from the role at the end of his 3-year term.

There will also be the opportunity to elect SEEC's Deputy Chairman, Secretary/ Treasurer and Executive for the coming year. The [full agenda](#) is now available on SEEC's website.

The AGM will be held at Broadway House, Tothill Street, London SW1. The main meeting starts at 11.15am, after political pre meetings from 10am. Lunch is available at 1.15pm. SEEC members attending should RSVP to admin@secouncils.gov.uk to confirm a place.

South East update on May 2018 local election

results

Local elections were held in 29 South East local authorities on 3 May. [SEEC's one page election summary](#) shows the new political landscape across all 74 South East councils.

The South East position is now: Majority control - Conservatives 55 councils, Labour 6 councils, Lib-Dems 2 councils and Residents' Association 1 council. The remaining 6 councils have No Overall Control (NOC), an increase of one NOC since 2017.

Overall the South East picture echoes the national position, with only relatively small changes between the three largest political parties. In seats elected on 3 May Conservatives lost 38 seats, Labour gained 23, Lib-Dems gained 17, Independents gained 51, Residents Associations lost 7, UKIP lost 55 and Greens gained 4.

Looking at all 3,469 councillors across the South East – not just those elected on 3 May – the position is now:

- Conservatives 2,329 seats and 67.2% of votes cast
- Labour 423 seats and 13% of votes cast
- Lib-Dems 398 seats and 12.3% of votes cast
- Independents 165 seats and 3.8% of votes cast
- Residents' Associations 87 seats, 1.8% of votes cast
- UKIP 36 seats and 0.6% of votes cast
- Greens 31 seats and 1.2% of votes cast.

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