

SOUTH EAST FIRST



The Newsletter of South East England Councils

June 2018

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News Roundup

New SEEC leadership team expected on 28 June

SEEC's AGM on 28 June will elect a leadership team for the coming year. Elections will be held on 28 June for Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Secretary and Executive members for the next 12 months. SEEC members who want to vote but are not yet registered to attend the AGM should email admin@secouncils.gov.uk by 26 June.

Creating a better connected Thames Gateway

SEEC Executive Member Cllr Andrew Bowles, Leader of Swale BC, outlined the importance of better transport connectivity to the future success of the Thames Gateway at a conference last week. Speaking at 'Next Steps for Growth in the Thames Estuary' on 21 June, he emphasised the importance of transport projects, including those supported by SEEC in [Missing Links](#) and by SEEC and its Wider South East Partners. Projects such as the Lower Thames Crossing and M2 upgrades are vital to help make the area's infrastructure fit for purpose to support more jobs and better productivity; mitigate local concerns about growth; and ensure sustainable communities.

New date for Summit with London Mayor Sadiq Khan

The next Wider South East Summit, giving SEEC members the opportunity to meet London Mayor Sadiq Khan, will now take place on Friday 11 January 2019. This replaces the previous date of 12 December 2018. The Summit will be an opportunity to hear an update on London's growth plans and how the Mayor aims to minimise impacts on the South East. Invitations will be sent to council leaders and LEPs later in the year.

SEEC Dates

[28 Sep – SEEC Executive](#)

[30 November 2018 – SEEC Executive](#)

11 January 2019 - Wider South East Summit

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SEEC sets out social care proposals for Minister

SEEC members have set out proposals to improve social care, writing to Health and Social Care [Secretary Jeremy Hunt](#) in advance of his social care green paper expected later this year.

A SEEC Executive discussion identified key points for the letter, building on member debate about the role of all tiers of councils in improving health and care outcomes for their residents. Members agreed that cross-tier co-operation is essential to meet people's needs at home wherever possible. They also called for more investment in preventative work by all tiers to help mitigate local authorities' social care funding crisis.

SEEC is calling for a Royal Commission to carry out a formal review of social care funding and the potential for better integrating social care and health. A time limit on the review will be important as the LGA estimates councils already have a social care funding gap of £2.3bn. SEEC's letter also includes calls for:

- A long term, sustainable funding solution for social care. Funding should be raised nationally rather than through council tax.
- A review of boundaries between NHS and social care, with greater investment in local authority-led preventative work to reduce NHS admissions and reduce or delay expensive residential care

- placements.
- A review that covers social care needs for all ages, not just the elderly.

New SEEC study to identify South East skills gaps

Skills will be the main debate at SEEC's 28 June AGM, with launch of newly-commissioned analysis on South East skills gaps, alongside two keynote speakers and member discussion.

Alan Mak, MP for Havant, PPS at DBEIS and Chairman of the Fourth Industrial Revolution APPG, will speak about addressing skills needs and Phil Swann, Executive Chairman of Shared Intelligence (SI), will outline trends and skills gaps identified in the new analysis.

The newly-commissioned analysis, carried out by independent experts SI, will be published in a report to help members understand the South East's skills gaps and needs. The analysis will help SEEC members shape thinking on how to design an agile skills system that can nurture new and developing economic sectors, address the care needs of a growing ageing population and respond to potential impacts of Brexit.

The new evidence suggests the South East may see a polarisation between high skill and low skill jobs. This suggests forward planning needs to consider how training routes can be designed to ensure South East residents are well placed to make the most of future job opportunities and ensure the economy continues to thrive.

Successful year for SEEC: Annual review 2017-18

SEEC has published an annual review of the year '[SEEC Highlights 2017-18](#)' in advance of its AGM on 28 June.

The review summarises SEEC's work over the past year to help members make the case for greater funding and powers for South East local authorities. It also sets out some of the areas where SEEC has successfully influenced Government thinking. These include evidence of rising infrastructure allocations for the South East, launch of a review into unimplemented planning permissions and changes to planning fees and HRA caps.

During the year SEEC's successes included:

- 5 free events for members – an expert panel on housing and infrastructure; a Brexit event; commercialisation event; LEP & Local Industrial Strategy workshop; and a Summit with London Mayor Sadiq Khan.
- Meetings with Ministers Dominic Raab and Chris Grayling.
- Influential speakers at SEEC events – including LGA Chairman Lord Porter and Homes England Chairman Sir Edward Lister, plus a wide range of senior public and private sector speakers.
- A package of 23 proposals and consultation submissions on members' key policy areas.

The annual review will be considered at SEEC's AGM on 28 June. The [agenda and all AGM papers are now available online](#). 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 who have not yet reserved a space should RSVP to admin@secouncils.gov.uk by 26 June.

Councils can help deliver integrated communities

South East local authorities could do more to help deliver integrated communities if they are given the necessary funding and resources.

This is the key message in a South East [response to consultation on MHCLG's Integrated Communities Strategy green paper](#). SEEC and the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration (SESPM) worked together on a joint response to the consultation, which closed on 5 June. The response highlighted:

- The positive role that councils can play in integrating migrants into local communities. For example, South East authorities have so far accepted over 1,000 Syrian refugees but much of the work to ensure successful integration depends on direct funding from central Government.
 - Funding shortfalls elsewhere (e.g for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children) discourage South East authorities from taking part in programmes to place and integrate some groups.
 - Resource constraints are driving many authorities to close libraries and children's centres, which are often hubs for integration activities such as learning English.
 - More funding is needed for teaching English to migrants, as language skills are essential to integration.
 - National Government needs to be clearer on its long term vision and desired outcomes and then join up central Government departments to achieve these.
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