

SOUTH EAST FIRST



The Newsletter of South East England Councils

July 2018.

New leadership for SEEC

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Skills: Adapt for economic success

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SEEC Executive members for 2018-19 named

Members of SEEC Executive for 2018-19 were appointed on 28 June. The Executive is a cross-party group of councillors from county, unitary and district councils across the South East.

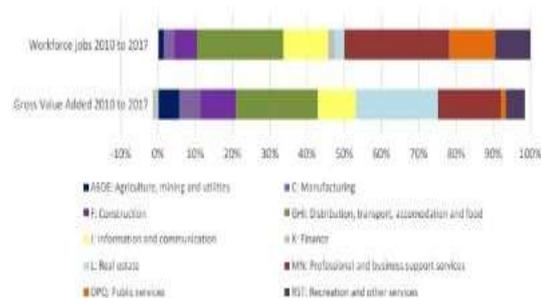
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Skills vital as 99% of future jobs need qualifications

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News Roundup

Non metropolitan local government after Brexit

SEEC is working with the LGA on a South East roadshow, giving South East local authorities the opportunity to help shape proposals for greater devolution to local government after Brexit. After leaving the EU in 2019, there

is potential for local authorities to take on greater powers and resources to deliver local solutions to meet challenges in their communities. The South East roadshow will take place on **Tuesday 18 December** 2018 from 10am-1.30pm at the LGA, Smith Square. The agenda is currently being developed. [Early bookings can be made online.](#)

Suggestions for SEEC business plan – by 20 August

SEEC members have until 20 August to put forward ideas and suggestions for SEEC's work programme for 2018-19. Headline topics considered at SEEC's AGM on 28 June included infrastructure and housing; economic growth; and funding, services and devolution. Member suggestions for additional areas or specific topics within these broad headline themes are welcome. Please email suggestions to heatherbolton@secouncils.gov.uk by 20 August 2018.

Asylum dispersal meeting with Immigration Minister

Chairman of the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration (SESPM) Cllr Roger Gough met Immigration Minister Caroline Nokes this month to discuss dispersal of asylum seekers. He highlighted that, so far, 30 South East authorities have agreed in principle to accept asylum seekers but high costs are often a barrier to finding accommodation. He also called for Government help in meeting other asylum seeker costs – for example social care and education. Local discretion is important too, allowing councils to develop a place-based approach that considers asylum, refugees and unaccompanied migrant children in totality, rather than creating parallel streams of work.

Modelling the impact of funding changes

Uncertainty about the impact of proposed changes to local government funding is causing concern for many SEEC authorities. While discussions continue and consultation is now underway on addressing negative RSG in 2019-20, the LGA has produced two new tools allowing councils to model possible local impacts of [relative needs assessment proposals](#) and [relative council tax deductions](#).

SEEC Dates

[28 September – SEEC Executive](#)

[30 November 2018 – SEEC Executive](#)

11 January 2019 - Wider South East Summit

Contacts

[Heather Bolton – SEEC Director](#)

[Nick Woolfenden – Policy Co-ordination](#)

[Hayley Austin – Admin](#)

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New Leadership for SEEC

SEEC's Annual General Meeting on 28 June [elected a new leadership team](#) for the coming year. The new SEEC Chairman is Cllr Roy Perry (Conservative), who is the Leader of Hampshire County Council.

Roy takes over from Cllr Nicolas Heslop (Leader of Tonbridge & Malling BC) who stepped down after three years. Roy was a South East MEP (1994-2004) and was previously Leader of Test Valley BC in Hampshire (1985-1994). He has been Leader of Hampshire County Council since 2013.

Cllr **Ralph Bagge** (Con, South Bucks DC) is SEEC's new Deputy Chairman and Cllr **David Monk** (Con, Leader of Folkestone & Hythe DC) was re-elected as SEEC Secretary & Treasurer.

Cllr Perry thanked outgoing Chairman Nicolas Heslop and pledged to continue work to raise Ministers' awareness of the South East. He said: "I am delighted to have been elected as SEEC Chairman and look forward to working with councillors from all parts of the South East to create a strong, united voice for our area. Infrastructure – which is crucial if we are to take more housing – and social care (for adults and children) are two of the key issues I want to address in the coming year.

"The continued success of the South East economy is essential for the UK's public finances but to secure this for the future, the South East will need significant infrastructure investment. We will also need to work with Government to find a solution to meeting the care needs of our rising elderly population."

Skills: Adapt for economic success

Workforce skills must adapt to support South East economic success. This was the message from SEEC AGM keynote speaker Alan Mak MP, PPS at DBEIS and Chairman of the 4th Industrial Strategy APPG.

Mr Mak recognised the South East's critical role as a national economic powerhouse. He endorsed SEEC and member councils' important work in making the case for investment and skills needed sustain the area's success.

His view is that the next industrial revolution will be driven by people and technology. Together these assets have the potential to improve productivity, efficiency, prosperity and living standards, and deliver the Government's Industrial Strategy. However, workforce skills need to adapt and change to achieve this and meet the needs of all key economic sectors. For example, while the South East has world class universities, it still faces gaps in much-needed Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths (STEM) skills, as well as collaborative and people skills. Reforms are needed to give people effective vocational and academic training options.

Mr Mak highlighted the vital role for councils in bringing partners together to shape their areas' futures, providing local understanding and experience, which Whitehall alone cannot deliver. He also agreed with SEEC members that work is needed to ensure apprenticeships are relevant and appeal to young people, to ensure LEPs are fit for purpose and to [work with them in developing Local Industrial Strategies](#).

Also speaking at the AGM was Phil Swann, Executive Chairman of Shared Intelligence, who introduced [new data analysis](#) from SEEC's newly published [report](#). Phil pointed to growing demand for higher and lower-skilled workers but a 'hollowing out' of mid-range jobs. He also highlighted the potential to encourage unqualified working age residents into training to help fill gaps. At present half the people without qualifications are unemployed.

SEEC Executive members for 2018-19 named

Members of SEEC Executive for 2018-19 were appointed on 28 June. The Executive is a cross-party group of councillors from county, unitary and district councils across the South East.

The leadership team of Cllr Roy Perry, Cllr Ralph Bagge (pictured) and Cllr David Monk sit on SEEC's Executive, alongside Vice Chairs Cllr Tony Page, (Lab, Reading BC) and Cllr Keith House (Lib-Dem, Eastleigh BC). In addition, the following have been [appointed to the Executive](#):

Paul Bettison, Leader Bracknell Forest Council (Con); **Andrew Bowles**, Leader Swale BC (Con); **Jason Brock**, Reading BC (Lab); **Paul Carter CBE**, Leader Kent CC (Con); **Jeanette Clifford**, West Berkshire Council (Con); **John Furey**, Deputy Leader Surrey CC (Con); **Matt Furniss**, Deputy Leader Guildford BC (Con); **Moira Gibson**, Leader Surrey Heath BC (Con); **Dr Lynne Hack**, Reigate and Banstead BC (Con); **Nicolas Heslop**, Leader Tonbridge & Malling BC (Con); **Eileen Lintill**, Deputy Leader Chichester DC (Con); **James Mills**, Leader West Oxfordshire DC (Con); **Stephen Parker**, Hart DC (Con); **Carole Paternoster**, Aylesbury Vale DC (Con); **Bob Standley**, Leader Wealden DC (Con).

The AGM also supported the proposal that **Chris Townsend**, Surrey CC (Ind) and **Clive Woodbridge**, Epsom & Ewell BC (Residents) should alternate attendance at the Executive, representing a coalition of Independents and Residents' Associations. Two further names are yet to be confirmed, one each from the Labour and Lib-Dem groups.

Skills vital as 99% of future jobs need qualifications

SEEC is calling for action on skills as newly published research shows that 99% of South East job opportunities will be closed to people without qualifications in the next 6 years.

Greater powers for local authorities would help them address shortages in the skills that employers need. Data in the report [Evidencing the South East's skills gaps and challenges](#), published by SEEC and research specialists Shared Intelligence, shows:

- By 2024, only 1% of South East jobs are expected to be filled by workers with no qualifications, down from 8.8% of jobs in 2004.

- By 2024, 48.5% of jobs will need at least a foundation degree, up from 27.9% in 2004.

While South East employers' demand for skills is rising, opportunities for high-level apprenticeships are limited and take up of other vocational training is falling. The report shows:

- Despite large, growing South East hi-tech and high-skill service sectors, only 8.5% of the South East's 47,000 apprenticeships offer degree-level qualifications.
 - The proportion of South East residents training for NVQ level 2 qualifications has fallen by 57% since 2011-12.
 - Almost a fifth of all job vacancies (18.5%) fall in the education or care sectors.
 - Half the South East residents without qualifications (49%) are unemployed.
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South East England Councils | Room 215, County Hall, Penrhyn Road, Kingston upon Thames KT1 2DN

Tel: 0208 541 7555 | info@secouncils.gov.uk | www.secouncils.gov.uk

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