

SOUTH EAST FIRST



The Newsletter of South East England Councils

August 2018

Data dashboard shows South East growth challenges

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MP briefing addresses skills and social care

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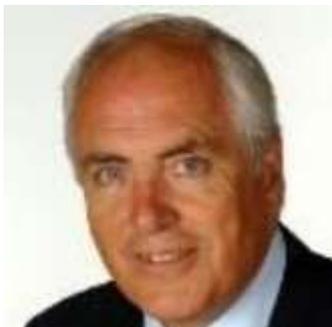
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Investing in the South East is vital for UK plc

Writing in Municipal Journal, SEEC Chairman [Cllr Roy Perry highlights the need for infrastructure investment](#) in proven successful economies, such as the South East. Neglecting to invest in successful areas risks a dip in tax returns to the Treasury.

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Modular building - the future of housing?

SEEC's Executive meeting to be held on 28 September will include a focus on modular building to explore whether modular housing can help deliver more homes more quickly to meet South East demand.

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News Roundup

South East Post-Brexit Roadshow

SEEC is working with the LGA on a South East roadshow to feed into the work of the LGA's Post-Brexit

Commission on the future of non-metropolitan councils in England. The South East event will take place on 18 December 2018 in the LGA's Smith Square conference centre. Topics for debate on the day will include the skills and infrastructure needed to underpin continued success in the South East economy. The roadshow will be chaired by Cllr Gillian Brown OBE, Arun DC Leader and Vice Chair of the LGA's People & Places Board. [Early bookings can be made via the LGA website.](#)

SEEC meeting dates 2019

SEEC is currently finalising details for its schedule of All-Member and Executive meetings for 2019. Two All-Member meetings are being planned - expected to be on 31 January and 27 June 2019 (AGM). In addition three SEEC Executive meetings are expected to be held on 29 March, 20 September and 13 December 2019.

SEEC Dates

[28 September 2018 – SEEC Executive](#)
[30 November 2018 – SEEC Executive](#)
11 January 2019 - Wider South East Summit

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Data dashboard shows South East growth challenges

The [summer 2018 summary drawn from SEEC's data dashboard](#) confirms the South East as the area of the UK with not only the highest population but also the largest number of residents over 75.

Resulting high demand for services is a major concern and service pressures affect **all** SEEC member councils not just those with social care responsibilities.

The summary of the latest dashboard is available online but SEEC member authorities can also access further detailed data via our [password-protected area for subscribing councils only](#).

Alongside a rising population, the South East is also seeing rising unemployment – with an 18% increase in South East unemployment claimants between 2017 and 2018. This is higher than the national rise of 14% and leaves the South East with over 77,500 unemployed people, more than other areas of the UK including the North East and East Midlands.

The South East now has a population of almost 9.2 million, with 820,000 of these residents aged 75+ and both totals are expected to continue to grow over the coming years. Latest projections estimate the South East population will increase by 12% by 2041, to reach over 10.2m. Over the same period South East residents over 75 are projected to increase by 83%, reaching 1.5m by 2041.

Our dashboard shows South East population pressures are greater than in other parts of the country. London has the UK's next highest total population at 9m but just 483,000 over 75s. The North West has the next highest population of over 75s at 609,000 but a total population of only 7.3m.

The rising number of older South East residents is a particular concern for SEEC members because it will increase demand for services especially – but not only – social care, an area that is already facing a funding shortfall.

A growing population also increases demand for housing and supporting infrastructure. The dashboard shows latest data for the South East on these too, for example:

- The South East has a good track record in housing delivery, with over 36,500 additional new homes in 2016-17, more than any other area except London
- However the South East also faces an infrastructure funding gap of £15.4bn by 2030, leaving insufficient funding to deliver essential needs including transport links, schools, health facilities, utilities and flood protection.

MP briefing addresses skills and social care

SEEC's latest [briefing sent to South East MPs](#) focuses on ways to address the challenges that South East local authorities face around skills and social care.

Key employment sectors in the South East need a better supply of workforce skills to ensure they can continue to deliver economic growth. There is a need for high level skills in the South East's successful hi-tech and professional services sectors but there is also demand for more basic skills, for example to ensure the care sector can meet the needs of our growing older population.

SEEC proposals to address workforce challenges include giving local authorities greater influence over skills funding. This could help ensure the right training is available and help reverse the 57% drop in take up of adult education for NVQ level 2 since 2011. Incentives to encourage more degree level apprenticeships should also be considered because currently only 8.5% of apprenticeships are at NVQ level 4+.

On social care SEEC is asking MPs to support a Royal Commission on care funding to identify a sustainable financial model for the future. The funding shortfall in social care is so significant that MPs should assess options for raising funding via national taxes. Council tax is unsuitable for funding social care costs as it bears no relation to local care demands and in low Government grant areas – such as the South East – means that council tax payers fund a disproportionate amount of council spending on care.

Investing in the South East is vital for UK plc

Writing in Municipal Journal, SEEC Chairman [Cllr Roy Perry highlights the need for infrastructure investment in proven successful economies, such as the South East. Neglecting to invest in successful areas risks a dip in tax returns to the Treasury.](#)

Newly released ONS data shows that South East tax returns subsidised public spending in the rest of the country to the tune of £14.8bn in 2015-16.

SEEC has recognised this fact for many years and has previously commissioned its own data, which illustrated the same scale of South East net contribution to Treasury. SEEC members now hope that confirmation from ONS will convince Ministers that they need to ensure a balance of infrastructure investment in both successful and up-and-coming areas.

Cllr Perry said: "Investing in the South East is equivalent to a business investing in its proven and successful brand. It is also important to invest in up-and-coming brands but under-investing in a successful income generator in favour of more uncertain returns from elsewhere is a very high risk strategy.

"No one will gain if underinvestment in the South East sees a decline in our area's profitability as this will simply reduce the pot of tax returns to be spent UK wide," he added.

Modular building - the future of housing?

SEEC's Executive Meeting to be held on 28 September will include a focus on modular building to explore whether modular housing can help deliver more homes more quickly to meet South East

demand.

A number of commercial housebuilders are developing modular construction as part of their business models to help mitigate shortages of skilled tradespeople and minimise site delays caused by adverse weather.

Several local authorities are also using modular construction for small developments – often to create temporary housing to accommodate homeless people.

Topics for discussion at the Executive will include the extent of any cost savings that can be realised, potential to reduce build-time and how to overcome reservations about poor design and quality in previous generations of pre-fabricated homes.

Speakers will include Homes England South East General Manager Paul Kitson and Board Member of Bicester's Gravenhill Development Village Cllr Ian Corkin.

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