

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS



EXECUTIVE

Date: 20 September 2019

Subject: Wider South East political engagement – update and next steps

Report of: Nick Woolfenden, Head of Policy Co-ordination, South East England Councils

Recommendation:

Members note and consider next steps following September's Wider South East Political Steering Group.

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- 1.1 The Wider South East Political Steering Group met on 9 September. This partnership (more information [here](#)) brings together members from South East England Councils, GLA/Deputy Mayor of London, London Councils and East of England Local Government Association. The South East was represented at this meeting by Cllrs Ralph Bagge, Colin Kemp, Tony Page and Carole Paternoster.
 - 1.2 Key issues included next steps on the London Plan and future engagement on other key growth and infrastructure issues affecting the Wider South East. The inspectors' report on the draft London Plan Examination in Public (EiP) is due in autumn 2019 and the Mayor will publish the final Plan in spring 2020. South East England Councils gave [evidence](#) to the EiP hearings earlier this year, and will assess South East implications when the report is published.
 - 1.3 In the meantime, some in the Political Steering Group felt it was important to sustain momentum on ongoing issues of engagement. It was therefore agreed a small joint member working group should be set up this autumn to identify practical issues and approaches on some key issues affecting the Wider South East. It is proposed that SEEC's Deputy Chairman Cllr Ralph Bagge, who made representations at the recent London Plan EiP, will represent South East England Councils on the working group.
 - 1.4 The terms and specific focus of this joint working group are to be considered as part of its initial meeting. At the Political Steering Group, some members suggested exploring ways to firm-up what the Mayor's 'willing partners for growth' deals (referred to in the draft London Plan) would look like in practice eg. what the Mayor could offer/ask for from any councils that may want to explore working on growth issues with him; and associated actions to help sustainable local place-making eg. jobs/economic growth and infrastructure. Another theme raised by some members related to London boroughs 'placing' households to council areas outside London's boundaries. The importance of continuing to make the case to Government for actions to help councils tackle housing delivery barriers, including funding vital infrastructure, was also suggested by some members e.g. options for land value uplift capture.
 - 1.5 The Political Steering Group also agreed that - given London Mayor and local elections next spring - the annual Wider South East Summit will be held in autumn (rather than spring) 2020, also giving time for implications of the published London Plan to be considered. SEEC members will receive invitations to this event when the date is confirmed. A forward programme of Political Steering Group meetings, and supporting officer working groups, is also being jointly arranged.

Nick Woolfenden, Head of Policy Co-ordination