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To: All SEEC Members

Dear Colleague

We have now over 90% of the 74 councils across the region as members of South East England Councils (SEEC) and I hope that we will have 100% sign-up in the near future. It is particularly important that we speak with a single voice on the issues of critical importance to our region, particularly given an upcoming General Election and the opportunities to influence the main parties' agendas. We also have a long-term picture of significant public spending restraint whilst needing major investment in our key infrastructure that will present a major challenge for all of us.

Following the first South East England Councils' (SEEC) AGM on 15 July, the SEEC Executive/Leaders' Board met the following week to talk through the serious concerns expressed by colleagues at the AGM about the operation of the structure chart/wiring diagram relating to the terms of reference and the modus operandi of the various delivery boards. I am pleased to report that the Leaders' Board reached a consensus at our meeting on 24 July, having talked through the issues in detail with Martin Tugwell and Diana Pogson from the Partnership Board. We were given assurances about SEEC's role and the items coming up on the Forward Programme.

We also agreed that if we feel it is necessary, a review of the terms of reference can be undertaken in a year's time. In order that the boards carry out their business effectively, it is essential that we have a sensible Forward Programme for the various boards and that their business can be discussed as a standing item at the SEEC Executive/Leaders' Board meetings as well as the Strategy Board.

I attach a copy of the briefing note circulated at the Leaders' Board meeting on 24 July. The note reiterates the importance of the SEEC Executive in empowering the SEEC nominees on the Delivery Boards to represent the collective SEEC views. Most importantly, the briefing note makes it clear that in terms of 'sign-off' of submissions to Government, this will rest with

the Partnership Board; day-to-day management of the programme agreed by the Partnership Board/Government will be undertaken by the delivery boards.

Pages 3-4 of the note outlines the various channels in which SEEC will influence and participate in decision-making which I have copied the relevant section below for ease of reference. I hope this will reassure all SEEC Members of the key role that we will play in determining our regional priorities and allocation of expenditure against those priorities.

How does SEEC get its views fed into the work of the Delivery Boards?

- Under the terms of reference SEEC nominates a number of representatives to sit on each of the delivery boards (note that the number of local authority representatives on the Regional Transport Board (RTB) has increased from 4 to 7; on the Regional Housing and Regeneration Board (RHRB) it has increased from 4 to 8).
- The SEEC nominees to the delivery boards are there to represent the interests of Local Authorities collectively; they are not there to represent their own consistency interests.
- The SEEC nominees to the delivery boards are accountable back to the wider SEEC membership; it is therefore important that they are mandated to represent SEEC.
- SEEC Executive Committee meetings should have as a standing item on its agenda the opportunity to review the work of the delivery boards and to consider forthcoming issues on their agendas. The forward programme of meetings should be the focus for this discussion; it sets out the proposed items for future meetings and is updated on a regular basis by the secretariat in liaison with the delivery board Chairman.
- SEEC should look to the Chairman of the RTB and RHRB and the lead member of the EDSB to update the Executive Committee on the work of the delivery boards and for identifying key issues on which the Executive Committee need to agree a line in advance of future meetings.
- The forward programme of meetings will also be a standing item on the Strategy Board agenda.
- Under the terms of reference the proposal is that each delivery board will prepare an annual business plan (in effect a programme of work) for the forthcoming 12 months – this is new and has been put forward as a way of ensuring the work of the delivery boards is focused. An annual business plan is also important in order to gain commitment from all partners to provide the resources required to support these partnership boards' work.
- It is proposed that the Strategy Board perform an oversight role on the delivery boards business plans (alongside the business plan for the Strategy Unit).

I enclose a copy of the **Forward Programme** which details the key issues for discussion at the Partnership Board, Strategy Board and delivery boards in the coming months.

We agreed at the Leaders' Board meeting on 24 July that future Leaders' Board meetings need to be timed before the meetings of the Regional Transport, Housing and Regeneration and Economic Development and Skills Boards in order to review the items coming up on the Forward Plan that will eventually be ratified or otherwise by the Partnership Board.

I would also be grateful if you could reserve the following **dates** in your diary:

Friday 5 March 2010: SEEC PLENARY

Wednesday 14 July 2010: SEEC AGM

If you need further information, please contact me or Jenny Whittle, our Communications Manager (07855 767968 or jenny.whittle@live.co.uk).

Regards

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Carter', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Paul Carter
Chairman, South East England Councils

Enc: Background Briefing on Delivery Boards
 Forward Programme
 Minutes of the Leaders' Board meeting on 24 July 2009