

**DRAFT**

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **YOUNG PEOPLE GIVEN A GREATER VOICE**

There will be a new voice at the next South East England Regional Assembly full meeting on 12 July. Matt Burghes, Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) for Hampshire has been elected by the region's MYPs to represent young people on the Assembly.

Membership of the Assembly was offered to the UK Youth Parliament South East, an organisation representing the region's 11-18 to ensure young people's views are considered in Assembly decisions for the future. Matt, the first youth member on the Assembly, takes up his seat at the July 2006 plenary meeting for the first time.

"Many of the decisions taken by the Assembly have long term implications – essentially decisions taken today will have the greatest effect on today's children and young people, tomorrow's workforce. It is therefore vital that there is some direct representation on the Assembly. Additionally, the Assembly must plan facilities for the children and young people of tomorrow and I think the most informed people to advise on these matters are today's children and young people," said Matt Burghes, the Assembly's new youth member.

### **What do young people think?**

Two new initiatives will help Matt represent his generation's views to the Assembly. The first is a video vox pop from the UK Youth Parliament South East region annual event highlighting young people's views on the planning issues that are most important to their quality of life. They see environment, transport and housing as areas for improvement.

Second is an Assembly poll by Ipsos MORI asking young people about their attitudes towards living in the South East.

On the whole, young people are satisfied with living in the South East. Seven out of ten (70%) are satisfied with this area as a place to live. Only one in ten are dissatisfied.

Jobs are important to young people. It was the top answer to the question about what would make their area a better place to live, chosen by 43%. However, a massive 95% said that being

able to get a job was the most important factor in deciding whether they live in the South East in future.

Protecting the environment is important to 67% of young people and many put this into action, with 65% recycling household rubbish at least once a week and 63% recycling paper at least once a week. However young people are less environmentally aware on water and public transport. Only 35% used public transport once a week, while just 29% did anything to save water on a weekly basis.

The vox pop and opinion poll highlights will be presented to full Assembly in July and can be downloaded from the Assembly's website.

## **ENDS**

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### **Notes to Editors:**

- 1) Visit the Assembly's website (Surveys section) to download the Ipsos MORI report on young people's perceptions of the South East (June 2006). <http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/publications/surveys/index.html>
- 2) The South East England Regional Assembly is the "voluntary regional chamber" for the South East. It was established in January 1999 to give a representative voice to the South East region, which covers Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East and West Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire, and Surrey.
- 3) The Regional Assembly is made up of 112 members including elected councillors nominated by the region's local authorities and 37 representatives from other sectors of the community (including business, trades unions, education, housing, health, sports, culture, tourism, faith groups, environmental, community and voluntary organisations) as well as the New Forest National Park Authority.
- 4) The Assembly has three areas of core business:
  - a) It is the representative voice of the South East, engaging and representing its member organisations and, through them, the wider public.

- b) The Assembly has a specific role under the Regional Development Agencies' Act 1998 to ensure the accountability of the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) to the region.
- c) The Assembly has been the Regional Planning Body for the South East since April 2001. It has responsibility for proposing strategic planning and transport policies to Government.

Please visit the South East England Regional Assembly's website for further information at [www.southeast-ra.gov.uk](http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk).