

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY SELECT COMMITTEE ON SEEDA's APPROACH TO LABOUR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT

Submission from: **Channel Chamber of Commerce**

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From a local (district-wide) perspective there seems practically NO joined-up or coherent approach between SEEDA, Job Centre Plus or the LSC

If anything at this local level, SEEDA appears to fund quite separate projects that merely overlap and duplicate what the other agencies are already undertaking - rather than simply adding value.

There is a general lack of 'engagement' from SEEDA at a local level and with the separate strategies of Job Centre Plus, LSC and the local authorities this merely creates confusion and frustration within communities - and particularly local businesses. The result of this is that 'all' these agencies appear to approach businesses individually (ie countless skills brokers knocking on everyone's door).

Solution

The record of SEEDA and the other key Govt agencies working to address this issue has been very poor - particularly within the areas of greatest need.

One major example of this failure must be the coastal areas of the south east where pockets of serious deprivation continue to be a major barrier to growth and prosperity.

The solution must be to encourage and create the capacity for these local communities to manage their own futures through strong 'local' partnerships. These 'local' partnerships will fully understand the needs and demands of their own communities and will therefore be in the best position to deliver significant improvements across the employment and skills agenda.

SEEDA should be the agency to fund and support these 'local' partnerships - not for just a year or two but long term.

Job Centre Plus and the LSC should also provide support and work with these local community partnerships to better understand the local market and the needs of businesses (recruitment and skills).

There appear to be some excellent examples of this already happening across the UK but, SEEDA and the other RDA's are reluctant to devolve their 'powers' and 'funds' in this way.

Regards

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