

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

Submission from: **Isle of Wight Council**

Date: **September 2008**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the context and issues paper.

I note that the primary focus is in relation to achieving goals set out in the Regional Economic Strategy and the Council has aligned its own Economic Strategy to these.

In general the Council believes that there is sufficient strategy at the regional level but it is the delivery where efforts must focus and this needs to reflect local circumstances rather than applying and adapting national and regional programmes and projects to local issues and challenges.

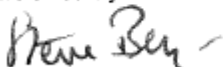
The sub national review has highlighted the need to give more power and resources to the local level where tailored projects and programmes can be better targeted and this is where SEEDA needs to take a more proactive role in ensuring partner organisations work together to make a real difference on the ground. The Council is helping this process through the setting up of an Economy and Environment Partnership Board under the ISP to ensure there is a more joined up approach at the local level with a focus on skills.

The island has particular issues around skills, improving educational attainment and aspiration, job creation and a reliance on the public sector and low productivity sector of the economy (retailing and tourism) which although similar to other coastal areas is not the same as many of the affluent areas of the region. SEEDAS have supported programmes such as the Enterprise Hub to provide start units for new business investment but much more needs to be done.

Linkages are also being made with SEEDA and high education establishments such as Southampton University at assist in delivering the Eco Island vision of the Sustainable Communities Strategy and developing the skills and knowledge to attract new inward investment to the Island

With regards the specific questions posed my overall comment is that there needs to be an appropriate balance between the regional and local level and without the ability to focus resource on projects which are locally driven and owned the regional will fail to make a major impact at a time of economic downturn.

Yours sincerely



Steve Beynon
Chief Executive