

From: The Chairman of the South East England Regional Assembly

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**COUNCILS AND
COMMUNITIES
IN PARTNERSHIP**

Mrs Pam Alexander
Chief Executive
SEEDA
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15 April 2008

Dear Pam

REGIONAL ASSEMBLY RESPONSE TO SEEDA'S CORPORATE PLAN CONSULTATION

I was pleased to hear at Friday's Executive Committee that SEEDA has addressed a number of our key concerns regarding the consultation draft Corporate Plan. However, following discussion, I am still concerned about several important issues. I set these out below and ask that you seek to address them prior to final Ministerial sign-off of the Plan.

Governance

Good governance is a key pillar of sustainable development. SEEDA needs to be more specific about how it will demonstrate clear accountability to the region. This will be particularly important if the region is successfully to negotiate the challenges ahead arising from the Sub-National Review (SNR). The Plan would benefit from a clearer statement of intent on this issue up-front.

Delegation

I welcome the broad statements about how SEEDA will increasingly delegate funding but seek more specific indications of how you will be working with local government in the region to take this forward. I also reiterate our previous recommendation that SEEDA commit to 50% of its budget being delegated by 2010.

Related to this, I suggest you also review the last sentence at the end of paragraph two on p19 ("SEEDA anticipates that the majority of its funding will demonstrably address both local and regional priorities by the end of the Corporate Plan period"). I would assume this should, in fact, be the case now and the change during this Plan period will be that most of SEEDA's funding should be delegated locally and sub-regionally.

Route-map

While I agree that there is considerable uncertainty arising from the SNR, I reiterate our recommendation that you should include a high-level route map setting out key steps and milestones in moving towards the new agency.

more over

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Funding regional planning

I am concerned that the Corporate Plan does not make a stronger case to Government for the need for additional funding to take on your new responsibilities for regional planning. It is not acceptable for Government to assume the cost for this will be met out of your existing budget allocations.

As ever

Keith

Cllr Keith R Mitchell CBE

Chairman, South East England Regional Assembly

cc. Paul Lovejoy, Executive Director
Barbara Hammond, Strategy Director
Rob Nolan, Head of Corporate Planning