

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
ANNUAL MEETING**

Date: 16 July 2008
Subject: **Annual Scrutiny Report**
Report of: Assembly Deputy Chair

Recommendation:

That the Assembly notes this report.

Purpose of Report:

To update members on our scrutiny work since my report at the Assembly plenary in March 2008.

Key Issues:

We have held one select committee since March which looked at SEEDA's activities and operations in the coastal South East. We have two further select committees this year - the first looking at labour force and employment (meeting in October 2008), and the second looking at SEEDA's approach to sub-regional working (meeting in January 2009). Preparatory work for these is under-way.

We also anticipate the report of the Parliamentary Modernisation Select Committee, expected before the summer recess, to include proposals for regional Parliamentary Select Committees. I will keep members informed about progress on this.

1. Select Committee on SEEDA's Strategy and Activity in the Coastal South East

- 1.1 Our first select committee of 2008-09 considered the extent to which SEEDA's policy and programmes help unlock the potential of the coastal parts of the region and improve their performance. We commissioned a 'context and issues' paper from consultants, the Mackinnon Partnership. This was used as the basis for consultation with external stakeholders prior to the select committee and provided context for our deliberations.
- 1.2 The select committee meeting itself, on 5 June 2008, consisted of a workshop with stakeholders from regional organisations followed by debate with SEEDA. This provided an opportunity to debate the impact and effectiveness of SEEDA's activities. Our report and recommendations will be presented to the Assembly Executive Committee in September 2008. Our final report will then be made available on our website¹, where supporting documentation is already available.

2. Update on SEEDA's Corporate Plan

- 2.1 Our response, based on our select committee deliberations in February, was agreed by the full Assembly meeting in March 2008. SEEDA was broadly supportive of our comments and undertook to make a number of changes to its Corporate Plan. SEEDA has since indicated disappointment that whilst several of the changes were accepted, a number of the proposed changes were rejected by BERR². BERR felt they pre-empted the outcomes of the consultation on the Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration. The final Corporate Plan was published in June 2008, following approval by BERR Ministers³.

3. Forthcoming Scrutiny Topics

- 3.1 We have two further select committees this year - the first looking at labour force and employment (meeting in October 2008), and the second looking at SEEDA's approach to sub-regional working (meeting in January 2009). Further information on these will be available on our website during the course of the year⁴.

4. Regional Parliamentary Select Committees

- 4.1 We understand that the Parliamentary Modernisation Select Committee is likely to publish its findings before the summer recess. It is anticipated that it will set out proposals for new regional Parliamentary Select Committees. I will keep members informed about progress on this.

Ian Chisnall
Deputy Chair

27 June 2008

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¹ http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/committees_select_2008-02.html

² BERR: Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, SEEDA's sponsoring department.

³ <http://www.seeda.co.uk/Publications/docs/CorporatePlan2008.pdf>

⁴ http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/accountability_selectcom.html