

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

BOARD MEETING 31 JANUARY 2008

ITEM 12

AGENCY REPORT

Recommendation

The Board is invited to **NOTE** the Agency Activity Report for January which represents a cross section of reports from within SEEDA organised according to the themes of SEEDA's Corporate Plan 2005-08.

A. STRATEGIC INFLUENCING

Thames Gateway

1. Following the recent departure of the Thames Gateway Chief Executive, SEEDA, EEDA and LDA have been working closely with the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) and the Thames Gateway Executive to shape emerging strategic priorities and delivery mechanisms in the Gateway. This strategic dialogue is increasingly important given that the physical regeneration and housing delivery functions of the Thames Gateway Executive will be taken into the new Homes and Communities Agency from 2009.

Strategic Economic Investment Fund / Economic Development Investment Plan

2. In autumn the Greater South East RDAs came together with partners from across the Gateway to discuss joint pan Gateway proposals for the future economic regeneration of the Thames Gateway and a draft Economic Development Investment Plan (EDIP). A £275 million dual RDA/ CLG Strategic Economic Investment Fund (SEIF) was announced at the Thames Gateway Forum. The fund, which will support pan-gateway strategic economic priorities in the EDIP is comprised of £30 million SEEDA investment; £30 million EEDA; £60 million LDA; £80 million CLG, and £75 million to be brought in from other sources.
3. A final version of the EDIP will be considered with partners and presented to the Thames Gateway Strategic Partnership in March, to be published in the spring. The final version of the EDIP will outline the initiatives to be taken forward, identify priorities and timings, provide an estimate of total costs, set out the contribution of the SEIF and partners and indicate where other partners would contribute. Work is ongoing to ensure SEEDA corporate planning reflects, and adds value to, these emerging commitments.
4. SEEDA has already worked with partners to ensure that stakeholders from the three regions were fully engaged over the proposals in the Economic Development Implementation Plan at a well-attended event in December. This has led to better engagement with partners and improved understanding of

what needs to be achieved through transformational actions to deliver sustainable economic growth across the Gateway.

Joint RDA Board Thames Gateway Subcommittee

5. Last autumn it was agreed that the 3 RDAs would create a joint RDA Board Thames Gateway Subcommittee to coordinate RDA input to the Thames Gateway. A joint RDA executive governance steering group has now been established to shape proposals for this committee structure.

Regional Assembly Select Committee on Reducing the South East's Ecological Footprint

6. The Regional Assembly's Select Committee on Reducing the South East's Ecological Footprint was held on 19th November. This Select Committee took a different format from earlier committees. Given the need for concerted activity by different organisations to achieve the region's ecological footprint target, the Committee considered the actions of a range of regional bodies, including but not limited to SEEDA. The Committee was keen to explore ecological footprint as a policy tool, and to consider key areas where action is needed including housing, food, transport and behaviour change
7. SEEDA had submitted written evidence in advance focusing on the questions posed by the Assembly: the value of ecological footprint as an indicator; how to ensure that the target for the South East is 'real'; whether the priorities considered by the Committee were correct; and who needs to deliver on the target. At the hearing SEEDA fielded a strong team led by Rob Anderson, SEEDA Board Member, and including the Chief Executive, Pam Alexander, and Oona Muirhead, Executive Director Sustainable Prosperity. The Committee's draft report is in preparation and will be considered by the Regional Assembly's Executive Committee on 25th January.

Planning Policy Statement 4 (PPS4) – Planning for Sustainable Economic Development

8. In response to recommendations made in the "Review of Land Use Planning" by Kate Barker (2006) and a Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) paper on "Planning for Economic Development" (2006) a consultation draft for a national Planning Policy Statement on "Planning for Sustainable Economic Development" (PPS4) was published by government in December 2007. The draft PPS4 states that planning policies should be flexible to respond to the economic challenges and opportunities that globalisation and technological advances bring. The planning policy framework needs to provide tools for regional planning bodies and local planning authorities to plan effectively and proactively for the economic growth they need to help create and maintain sustainable communities.
9. The Regional Development Agency (RDA) Planning Leads Group, led by One North East, are developing a joint response to the consultation, in particular highlighting concerns about the draft PPS4 not mentioning the important role of RDAs. RDAs are supportive that there should be a flexible approach to the supply and use of land with a good range of sites being identified for economic

development, including sites for both small and large businesses. There is, however, concern about this needing to be balanced with PPS3 on Housing which encourages the change of use of surplus employment sites to housing. PPS4 should therefore provide a clear framework for positive and integrated plan making for economic development at both regional and local level based on a sound evidence base and responsive to changing needs and demands of businesses.

Europe's Social Reality Consultation

10. The South East's Joint Europe Committee (JEC), comprising representatives of SEEDA, the South East England Regional Assembly and local partners, submitted a response to the consultation on "Europe's Social Reality". Informed by a JEC partners' conference in November 2007 a number of key messages were highlighted, in particular drawing attention to considerable intra-regional variations of economic and social performance in the South East of England, issues of multiple deprivation, lifelong learning, the impact of anti-social behaviour and migration.
11. Detailed comments were provided on the transition to a post-industrial knowledge and service economy, the welfare state, demographic changes, changing values, well-being, access to services and facilities, skills, employment and economic activity in the South East. The full consultation response is available on the South East England Regional Assembly website: <http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/meetings/europe/2007.html>.

Launch of South East England Brussels Office

12. The South East England Brussels Office, the joint office for SEEDA and the South East England Regional Assembly in 45 Rue du Commerce in Brussels, was opened on 28th November 2007, marking the successful cooperation of SEEDA and the Regional Assembly at European level. As keynote speaker Luc Van Den Brande, the first Vice President of the Committee of the Regions, addressed the about 100 guests celebrating the opening of the new premises.
13. The modern and open plan office, managed by Kent County Council, provides space for three partnership offices: the South East England Brussels Office, the Southern England Local Partners Brussels Office and the Kent Brussels Office.

EQUAL

14. The delivery phases of SEEDA's two flagship EQUAL programmes "Cultural Shift South East" and EXODUS came to a close on 31st December 2007. Both programmes have made significant contributions to the national policy arenas of their respective subject areas (Social Enterprise and Ex Offender Rehabilitation).
15. Cultural Shift South East has created a public sector change theory that will now become the main focus of research for the Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship at Oxford University over the next two years, with a book about the programme being co-authored with Julian Le Grand. It has also

created an independent regional partnership for social enterprise in the South East

16. Exodus has supported 800 prisoners through training, support and rehabilitation processes. The outcomes of the programme will now be fed into the Ministry of Justice Review into Third Sector involvement in rehabilitation

Creating a Pathway to a Zero Waste Region

17. SEEDA, with the Environment Agency, has continued to lead work on developing a Zero Waste approach in the region. SEEDA used its leadership and influence with waste delivery partners in December to overcome some criticisms and achieved a significant degree of consensus about the approach and importance of the initiative. As a result, the Agency has started to achieve some promises about private sector funding contributions. Defra has expressed interest in the initiative despite a move to withdrawal of funding from Business Resource Efficiency & Waste Programme (BREW) projects more generally.

Oxfordshire Quadrant

18. The Oxfordshire Quadrant held its second Board Meeting on 29th November 2007. Chaired by SEEDA Board Member Poul Christensen, the Quadrant brings together key stakeholders with an interest in the economic growth of central southern Oxfordshire. The public private partnership has been formed by Oxfordshire County Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Harwell Science & Innovation Campus (including UK Atomic Energy Authority and Science & Technology Facilities Council), MEPC Milton Park and SEEDA. The Quadrant partnership will be an important mechanism in delivering the aspirations for the Central Oxfordshire Sub Region in terms of both the South East Plan and the RES.

South Hampshire Task Group

19. The inaugural meeting of SEEDA's Internal Task Group on Urban South Hampshire, which will be looking at the challenges and opportunities in South Hampshire, took place in December. The creation of key task forces in SEEDA's priority areas is one of the developments heralded as part of the organisational review.
20. Chaired by Paul Lovejoy, SEEDA's Executive Director of Strategy & Communications, the group will meet again in February 2008. At this meeting, SEEDA directorates will present their individual plans for area-based activity and investment in South Hampshire for review and comment by the lead Chief Executive for the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH), Brad Roynon (Southampton City Council) and the lead Chief Executive of the PUSH economic development group, Bernie Topham (Eastleigh Borough Council).

PUSH Workshop

21. On 7th January, PUSH, lead agency partners (SEEDA, Learning & Skills Council, Job Centre Plus, Business Link and Government Office SE) and business-facing bodies (Hampshire Economic Partnership, Business

Southampton and the Portsmouth & SE Hampshire Partnership) held a workshop to inform the Economic Development Strategy in the PUSH Business Plan. The workshop, which was sponsored by SEEDA, demonstrated the significant amount of cross-boundary and cross-agency support for the development and implementation of a common Business Plan for South Hampshire, which will be a key plank in the working up of a Multi-Area Agreement (MAA) over the summer. There was considerable commitment to directing funding to PUSH priorities and the group will be seeking key flexibilities to funding from Central Government as part of the MAA.

B. SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

WORLD CLASS INNOVATION

Sector Consortia

22. The seventh Sector Consortia, the Security Innovation & Technology Consortium (SIT-C) is now established. Contracts have been signed, a high profile Chair has been identified and recruitment for a Chief Executive is about to take place.

Alphasat

23. The European Space Agency confirmed the formal award of the Alphasat satellite project to Inmarsat on 23rd November. The new satellite, Alphasat I-XL, will support a new generation of mobile technologies and enable communications across Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East. The project will bring significant economic and social benefits to the UK, including creating and retaining over 500 high technology jobs within the Greater South East region during the development and operation of the satellite. It will further maintain and develop a high level of skilled labour in the region and generate revenues for London-based Inmarsat, through subscriptions to satellite services. The project is important to the South East as Astrium, based in Portsmouth, will develop and build the satellite.

Manufacturing Advice Service (MAS)

24. MAS-SE has now been accredited to deliver the Development & Performance stream of the Society of British Aerospace Companies' 21st Century Supply Chain (SC 21) strategy. This provides South East based Aerospace companies (especially SMEs) the ability to become SC21 accredited with the support of MAS-SE.
25. MAS-SE recently held their Best Practice Network conference at BMW, Oxford. 72 delegates from 41 companies attended the event where it was announced that the Best Practice Network had directly added £10 million of value of the participating businesses over the last 12 months. Delegates at the conference heard from Mark Bown of Cummins Power Generation, Paul Mincham and Charlotte Lowcock of Double H Nursery Sales and Business guru David Hall.

SEEDA Designing Demand Programme

26. The SEEDA Designing Demand programme continues to make good progress. A recent design workshop in Ashford attracted a record number of participants with 10 of the participating businesses immediately going on to the full design programme - a record for the programme in the UK. Over 300 companies and individuals have now attended design workshops being held all over the South East. SEEDA in partnership with the Design Council is delivering the programme through the South East Business Link network. So far feedback is extremely positive with one of the most successful companies going through the programme, JS Humidifiers of Littlehampton, now featuring on the Design Council's web site.

South Coast Design Forum

27. SEEDA and Business Link Wessex have supported the development of a network of designers and design companies to help get local designers into companies. South Coast Design Forum led by Peter Spence and chaired by Wayne Hemingway, one of the UK's leading designers, has now built up a membership of 170 companies and developed a regional newsletter now going out to 450 designers. The network at present covers Portsmouth, Chichester and inland areas but is extending to Brighton and Southampton. The network had a high profile launch at the Spinnaker Tower in November which featured on Meridian TV.

Science and Innovation Campuses

28. Professor Jim Lynch OBE has become a senior advisor on SEEDA's development of a Science and Innovation Campus in Sustainable Systems and an International Institute for Sustainability. Jim Lynch is a Distinguished Professor of Life Sciences at the University of Surrey, Chairman of Terraform PLC, and Director of C-Questor PLC.
29. He will lead on Sustainable Systems which will mirror and complement projects at Shellhaven in the East of England and Lower Lea Valley in London. He will also work with Arup, EEDA, LDA and the Thames Gateway London Development Corporation, as well as other partners, to set up the International Institute for Sustainability. The aim of the Institute is to capture and create value from the work needed to develop Dongtan Eco-City in China and the Thames Gateway as the UK's first Ecoregion.

International

30. SEEDA has secured 4 foreign direct investments which will create/safeguard 145 jobs over the next 3 years. Other activities included:

Nano Forum

31. Working in partnership with UKTI, SEEDA hosted a visit by 66 senior international nanotechnology experts, drawn from academia and industry to

Oxford. The visit afforded SEEDA the opportunity to highlight the region's leading nano related technologies and promote collaboration between the visitors and the region's academic and industrial base. Presentations were given by the Universities of Oxford, Surrey and Portsmouth, the Nano Technology Knowledge Transfer Network and five regional companies with internationally competitive nano-related technologies. In the short term, two exciting investment leads are being pursued and two of the speakers are in early discussions to explore possible collaborations.

UKTI New Zealand Seminar

32. SEEDA's Australia representative supported UKTI's 'Investment Ready' seminar in Auckland, New Zealand. The event enabled SEEDA to promote the region and SEEDA's service to a targeted group of technology driven companies seeking to internationalise their business. The visit resulted in two leads and a further strengthening of SEEDA's relationship with UKTI.

European Sector Consortia Collaboration

33. A new approach to identifying new opportunities for two-way trade and investment is being piloted in the French market by SEEDA's representative, which focuses on bringing together the sector consortia in the South East and the Poles de Competivite (clusters) in France. Work so far has focused on the aerospace, marine, ICT and creative industry sectors, with relationships forged between:
- Farnborough Aerospace Consortium (FAC) and Aerospace Valley (home of Airbus), PEGASE (UAVs) and ASTECH (Space) in France;
 - South East Media Network (SEMN) and Cap Digital in Paris;
 - Marine South East (MSE) and Poles Mer de Bretagne/ PACA and Technopole de Cherbourg in France; and
 - Sofia Antipolis (Nice - largest ICT cluster in France) and Thames Valley Economic Partnership.
34. To date these relationships have identified 28 French companies that are looking to enter the UK market.
35. As well as generating inward investment leads, these highly valuable relationships create new opportunities for Anglo-French collaboration. Currently, FAC has agreed with Aerospace Valley to collaborate on a programme that will enable SMEs to provide composite capacity to the global aerospace industry. Cap Digital in Paris has expressed interest in working with SEMN on their "Digital Passway" project and has included SEMN and eHampshire in a European project they submitted to the Commission. Marine South East will be signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Poles Mer PACA/Bretagne at the Oceanology International Exhibition.

Global Representatives Familiarisation Visit

36. SEEDA's 11 global representatives visited the region to gain a greater understanding of the opportunities and the business support available in the region. Visits were undertaken to Kent and South Hampshire and presentations were received on the growth areas. Meetings were also undertaken with UKTI and trade organizations.

COMPETITIVE ENTERPRISE

Social Enterprise Annual Progress Report

37. January will see the launch of the pan-RDA annual update on progress against the National Social Enterprise Action Plan. Coordinated by SEEDA, the report shows how all RDAs have made significant progress towards delivering their agreed actions, including the development of a three-year, £9 million business support programme for social enterprise, which will be delivered in partnership between the social enterprise sector and Business Link.

Corporate Social Responsibility

38. SEEDA is working with BT to develop a regional cross-sector collaboration that will contribute to economic inclusion, regeneration, quality of life and well-being aspirations set out in the RES. Delivery will be undertaken in collaboration with third sector organisations, particularly those working in disadvantaged areas and with excluded groups. Third sector support organisations, such as RAISE, will act as a broker between regional partners and local community voluntary sector groups.
39. Six key corporates in the region met with SEEDA on 20th November 2007 for an initial meeting to establish areas of joint interest and working. Founder members include: BT, Proctor and Gamble, MITIE, TaTa Consulting Ltd, Abbotts Diagnostics, and Legal and General. The Group will be taking a strategic approach to their Corporate Social Responsibility investment within the region and SEEDA is undertaking spatial analysis of deprivation types relative to their locations to inform next steps. Particular areas of interest for joint working within the group include: health, financial inclusion, digital inclusion and diversity. The next meeting will take place in February 2008.

Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE)

40. Approval has been given for the new rural European programme for 2007-2013. Known as the Rural Development Programme for England, it will be operational in the South East from 18th January 2008.
41. The programme was transferred to RDAs as part of the Modernising Rural Delivery programme. SEEDA will now be responsible for the delivery of £60 million over the South East Region and the rural parts of London over the next 6 years. The programme is targeted at improving the competitiveness of farming, forestry and horticulture, addressing disadvantage in rural areas and diversifying the rural economy.
42. Specifically, SEEDA will be looking to support renewable energy, improving water management on farms, adding value to food, training and uptake of the latest technologies, farm diversification and helping rural communities help themselves, for example setting up childcare facilities in rural communities that will allow parents to return to work.
43. A substantial proportion of the South East RDPE programme will be delivered using a delegated approach. Around 18 Leader local action groups (LAGs) are

expected to apply for funding, potentially covering up to 70% of the region. LAGs will typically be made up of representatives from local authorities, parish councils, the National Farmers Union, Country Land and Business Association, Rural Community Councils, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, youth organisations and rural businesses. They will administer the funding and address local needs and opportunities within the overall framework of regional priorities. Leader groups are currently preparing their bids and the successful applicants will be operational from May 2008.

Tourism

Sporting events

44. Tourism Southeast is working with Medway on the Modern Pentathlon World Cup for 2010, and with Portsmouth, Southampton and Isle of Wight on an Americas Cup Regatta for 2008.

'Fresh Skills for Chefs'

45. Tourism South East has won a contract for 'Fresh Skills for Chefs', a SEEDA funded 'Training Pools' project. Roll out of project activity has already started through partner organisations, including the SE Food Group and "Centre of Vocational Excellence" Colleges.

Tourism ExSEllence Awards

46. The Tourism ExSEllence Awards programme 2007 culminated in a highly successful Awards Gala Dinner at the Wentworth Club, attended by 275 guests.

London 2012, Competefor, The Market Place For 2012 Business

47. Led by the LDA, the RDAs have completed the development of Competefor, the online electronic brokerage system that pre-qualifies businesses to tender for London 2012 contracts. The site is fully functional to act as the market place for the Games bringing together buyers and suppliers. There will be around 50,000 contract opportunities of which 10,000 will be contended through Competefor. A buyer engagement team is presently working with the Olympic Delivery Authority to increase the number of contracts, ensure that they are advertised on Competefor and that intelligence is fed to the regional delivery partners to target support. The South East has just completed the pilot stage and there will be a formal launch on 20th February in Reading when the site will have live contract opportunities from the main contractors following the national launch on 16th January.

Regional Business Support Strategy

48. SEEDA has developed a paper outlining the scope and principles of a new South East Business Support Strategy. The paper builds on a recommendation of the Regional Assembly Select Committee on Business Support. The landscape for publicly funded business support is changing and development of the strategy will be driven by the RES, Business Support Simplification Programme, the emerging national Enterprise Framework and the Sub-National Review. The scope and principles paper will be consulted upon widely during early 2008, and will be sent to Local Authorities, business membership and

support bodies, third sector organisations and others who have shown an interest in this agenda.

POWER & PEOPLE bids

49. Two bids for European funding are currently being put together. POWER, the successor programme of GROW, is a mini-programme of 12 sub-projects involving local and sub-regional stakeholders to provide innovative ideas and solutions to drive a Low-Carbon Economy with ways of reducing the region's ecological footprint. A South East bid will be submitted to the Commission in January. Announcements of successful bids will be in June.
50. PEOPLE is another Interreg IVC programme that is currently in the bid writing stage. The objective of the PEOPLE project is to explore the opportunities for new employments and for improving wellbeing and cohesion in the frame of the demographic and societal changes. SEEDA will lead on the ICT for Health and dependency sub theme and communication.

Local Skills for Productivity Alliance (LSPA) Updates

51. There are six Alliances operating in the South East, each comprising key local strategic partners and local businesses. Each LSPA is chaired by a business person of local standing who also attends the Regional Skills for Productivity Alliance (RSPA) meetings to represent the views of their LSPA at a regional level.

Milton Keynes/Oxfordshire/Buckinghamshire (MKOB) LSPA

52. October / November saw 32 workless adults access a retail training and work experience programme funded through the MKOB LSPA. 30 gained a qualification, 8 have already secured employment and more are successfully accessing the work experience. This project is meeting the recruitment needs of employers and helping individuals back into work.

Surrey LSPA

53. Surrey LSPA has produced an e-bulletin entitled Skilled Surrey. The bulletin was seen as an opportunity to further develop links with employers as the LSPA prepares to develop its role as the new Employment and Skills Board for Surrey. Skilled Surrey will promote corporate social responsibility and sustainable business practices as ways of pushing skills and employability up company agendas. By encouraging a wider dialogue on skills in and around the county Skilled Surrey will also underpin national skills campaigns like the Learning and Skills Council's 'In our hands' and complement local business support available from Business Link, Train to Gain brokers and others.

Isle of Wight Employer Group Established

54. Peter Collinge, Director of Business Development at Wightcable Ltd, has been newly appointed to lead the Isle of Wight local group. This represents the creation of the third LSPA local group in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight which will form a good basis for the forthcoming Employment and Skills Boards.

Berkshire

55. The Berkshire Skills Alliance is working with Colleges, Business Link and e-skills UK to develop a series of ten bite-sized interactive workshops to increase the management and leadership skills of existing and new managers working in

the ICT sector who often have high level technical skills but lack softer business skills. 120 employers will be invited to participate.

Kent and Medway LSPA

56. Learning and Skills has been identified as a key priority for East Kent to be addressed through the new four-District Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The LSPA has been helping in the production of a Learning and Skills Action Plan for East Kent. This is the product of extensive research and consultation, aiming to set out key priorities for action for the period 2008 – 2016.
57. Action on learning and skills in East Kent reflect a number of opportunities and challenges. The main opportunities relate to anticipated growth in the economy (creating demand for around 11,000 vacancies per year), the planned regeneration of East Kent (involving major investment in a range of locations), and infrastructure developments (including high-speed rail links, improved roads and large-scale home building).
58. East Kent's key challenges are the problem of poor basic skills and low levels of qualifications in the workforce; growing demand for intermediate and higher level skills; demographic change (ageing workforce); and issues of deprivation, disadvantage and economic inactivity.
59. The Plan identifies the following six key issues:
 - Raise aspirations and change perceptions
 - Develop collaboration and coordination
 - Address poor basic skills and low levels of achievement
 - Increase employer involvement
 - Increase flexibilities
 - Focus services on economic development and regeneration opportunities.

Learning and Skills Council (LSC) Regional Commissioning Plan 2008/9

60. SEEDA has been working closely with LSC SE concerning their Regional Commissioning Plan for 2008/9. The Plan sets out the LSC's major programmes and regional priorities and details the volumes and types of training provision the LSC will commission for the 2008/09 academic year.
61. Commenting and contributing to the plan provides SEEDA with the opportunity to work with the LSC to identify how their programmes can support RES objectives and transformational actions, e.g. education-led regeneration, the skills escalator, raising skills levels and meeting employer skills needs.
62. SEEDA will work closely with the LSC over the coming year to support implementation of the Plan, particularly with respect to co-ordinating our respective investments in support of regional and local skills priorities articulated in the RES and at local level through LAAs and LSPAs and the emerging Employment and Skills Boards.

Sussex Skills Festival 2007

63. SEEDA supported the second Sussex Skills Festival that took place at Brighton Racecourse in October 2007. 5,200 students from schools across Sussex attended to get a 'hands on' experience to learn more about the skills needed to

succeed in a range of industries and to learn more about a range of vocational training opportunities available. The Festival included a series of sector based skills competitions and helped to raise awareness of WorldSkills 2011. The event also featured a teachers' zone designed to highlight a range of Continuing Professional Development opportunities and raised awareness of the new Specialised Diplomas, which are due to come on stream in Autumn 2008.

Women's Enterprise Task Force

64. On 15th January, Pam Alexander, SEEDA's Chief Executive, and three other members of the Task Force including Co-Chair, Glenda Stone, were invited to attend an Enterprise seminar at 10 Downing Street hosted by Prime Minister Gordon Brown. Pam Alexander provided opening remarks at the seminar on the role of the Task Force and priorities to drive forward the number of women starting and growing businesses in the UK. The seminar is part of the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform's (BERR) consultation on the new Government Framework for Enterprise.

Women's Enterprise South East

65. The first series of Business Link lead 'What's Stopping You' events have been staged in the South East. Funded by SEEDA's Women's Enterprise team, these events are targeted at the pre-start and pre pre-start market, offering advice to those with a business idea who haven't yet taken it forward, in a more informal setting. Workshops offer advice on subjects like using IT in your business and the basics of finance and financial planning, as well as building confidence through listening to local women (including Ambassadors) who themselves have tackled the barriers to run a successful business. Customers are signposted to Business Link for further support after the events, and some participants have already signed onto Business Link Start Up programme. 6 out of 12 events have now taken place, and the next series are due to start in February 2008 and have already received national coverage in the Daily Telegraph in the first week of January.

Regional Customer Relationship Management and Information System Programme (RCRMIS)

66. To inform procurement of the RCRMIS, SEEDA has agreed to test the market via an Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) procurement process for an RCRMIS solution options analysis and 5 companies were short-listed and invited to participate in Dialogue with SEEDA on 17th December.
67. The RCRMIS will underpin all publicly funded business support programmes in the region and significantly enhance the quality of service and the realisation of 'a single customer journey'. It is anticipated that the system will be operational from June 2009.

Up for Enterprise

68. SEEDA funding for this innovative University of Portsmouth Enterprise Education project has now concluded and an evaluation completed. The project's impact has been significant in that teachers from 108 schools in the region covering primary and secondary sectors have now received support, training and sets of curriculum materials and posters for use in their classrooms. This has added enormous value in terms of schools' capacity, teachers' capability and student progression to the national government enterprise education strategy to 'help young people be creative and innovative, take risks, and do so with determination and drive'. The university will continue to offer support and resources, at no cost to schools in the region for the rest of this school year.

Enterprise Week

69. Enterprise Week took place in November and the figures from Enterprise Insight show that the South East has exceeded all expectations this year. The South East registered over 500 events during Enterprise Week and has seen a record increase in activities compared to the previous year.
70. Following the success of Enterprise Week 2007 Prime Minister Gordon Brown announced that the UK will play a lead role in the first ever Global Entrepreneurship Week in November 2008.

Integrating Skills and Business Brokerage

71. Following last year's announcement in the Sub National Review that responsibility for Train to Gain skills brokerage services will be transferred to RDAs from April 2009, SEEDA is developing a plan to manage the transition of skills brokerage to become fully integrated under the regional Business Link service and brand.
72. SEEDA is working with the LSC, Business Link providers and the current skills brokerage provider, Skills South East Ltd, to ensure the transition is managed effectively with no diminution of service. The new integrated service will be underpinned by the new single Regional Customer Relationship Management and Information System (RCRMIS), subject to investment approval.
73. Each plan, once agreed by the RDA Chief Executive and LSC Regional Director, will be put to the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and BERR Ministers. The South East Transition Plan is expected to be fully agreed and in place by 31st March 2008.

C. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

AREA-BASED REGENERATION

London Array Project

74. Enviro-business, the South East regional sector consortia leading on the RES Transformational Action of Environmental, Technology Services (ETS) will be

coordinating SEEDA's involvement with the London Array project, and is likely to support a post that will maximize the supply chain opportunities within the South East from this Kent based project. A workshop is planned for the 30th January with key stakeholders to enable early discussions around supply chain issues.

East Kent Local Strategic Partnership (EKLSP)

75. An event was held in December to obtain support for the concept of the new EKLSP. This will replace the former East Kent Partnership and evolve to cover a wider breadth of issues, not just economic development. It will encourage collaboration of delivery of services across the local authorities in East Kent, ensuring economies of scale and joined up approach to strategy and delivery.

Ashford Special Purpose Vehicle

76. Robyn Pyle of Land Securities has been nominated by lead partners to become Chair of the Ashford Special Purpose Vehicle being established to drive forward delivery of key projects in the Ashford growth area. With SEEDA's support, lead partners are making good progress to develop the company board, operational structure and business plan necessary to establish the vehicle by April 2008.

QUALITY PLACES

Rochester Riverside

Site Works

77. Water pumping remediation of gas works contamination is ongoing. The historic wharf crane, previously dismantled, has been re-erected at the site. The riverside walk has been constructed and the pedestrian riverside hand railing for Phases 1 and 2 is being installed.

Shortlisted Developers, Residential Quarter

78. The appointment of Crest/Bio Regional JVCo as Preferred Developer for Phase I of Rochester Riverside was ratified by Medway Council at a full council meeting on 18th January. The scheme is to provide a very high quality mixed use scheme of some 600 units with Code Level 6 and 'One Planet Living Brand' over part, around 100 extra or close care units, a hotel and 2366 sq m of restaurants and a similar area of offices.

Ashford

79. Expressions of interest have now been sought from developers and investors to bring forward the comprehensive redevelopment of SEEDA's Elwick Road site of 6.65 acres in Ashford Town Centre. It offers the potential for up to 500,000 sq ft of new floorspace for a substantial mixed-use development comprising retail, leisure facilities, offices and residential accommodation. A decision on a developer will be made by SEEDA in consultation with its partners.

Queenborough and Rushenden, Isle of Sheppey

80. A full-page piece on the Queenborough and Rushenden scheme appeared in Regeneration and Renewal Magazine's "Second Opinion" analysis on 4th January. It praised the scheme for its lengthy and detailed community involvement and consultation. The masterplan is now with Swale Borough Council and adoption is anticipated in the spring.

EuroKent Business Park, Ramsgate

81. Work on a new business park which will create up to 150 jobs in Thanet is about to start as a result of a joint venture between SEEDA and Thanet District Council. SEEDA has agreed to put more than £3.5 million towards developing the two hectare Eurokent Business Park in Ramsgate, which will lead to the development of 10 units at the site, which is owned by Thanet District Council and close to Manston Airport. A further £1.2 million of European funding has also been secured for the project. Once complete, the project will have generated an estimated £5 million of private sector investment into the area.

Shoreham Harbour Project

82. The scheme, which could feature up to 10,000 homes and 7,750 new jobs, went before SEEDA board in December. Provisional funding of up to £2.95 million was allocated, which will initially be used on scoping studies looking at the viability of the project. It is anticipated that SEEDA and partners will discover whether the scheme has been given New Growth Point Status sometime in the spring.

Daedalus

83. SEEDA and the Project Team invited the public to comment on the five masterplan concepts at the Daedalus Exhibition held on 7th and 8th December 2007. It was very successful with approximately 900 people attending over the two days. The concepts continue to be exhibited on static displays at four libraries in the area. Further consultation is being undertaken this month in conjunction with Marine South East and the Chamber of Commerce. All comments received during this phase will be compiled into a report and will inform the next phase of the masterplan development. It is anticipated that following the result of work undertaken by the Project Team, the final masterplan will be available for comments in late spring 2008.

Woolston Riverside

84. SEEDA is awaiting the signing of the Section 106 by Southampton City Council in relation to the outline planning application for which consent was given in Summer 2006. Preferred developers Crest Nicholson are currently preparing a detailed planning application which is due to be submitted to the council at the end of January 2008. Discussions with Crest Nicholson in relation to their Development Agreement are progressing.

East Cowes

85. Selected foodstore developer, Waitrose, is holding an exhibition about its development proposals in advance of a planning application being submitted in

the spring. Stage two of the selection process for a housing developer, on which English Partnerships is leading, will commence mid February. It is anticipated that the phase 1 infrastructure works will be tendered during early 2008.

West Medina Mills

86. Work on site investigations, environmental studies and the masterplan for the site continues to progress. SEEDA is continuing to work with solicitors to resolve the issue around the ownership of the approach road – Stag Lane.

Harts Farm Way - Teardrop Junction and Bedhampton Roundabout

87. S106 and S278 Agreements have been completed by SEEDA, Dwyer, Havant Borough Council and Hampshire County Council, allowing achievement of outline planning approval for the former depot site. The outline consent provides for 16,275 sq m (175,000 sq ft) for office, industrial and warehouse uses.

Three Gates Road, Isle of Wight

88. Contracts have been exchanged for the last two plots of land at Three Gates Road, Isle of Wight. The plots are being acquired by, and will be developed to accommodate, expansion by Isle of Wight companies.

Newhaven Business Centre

89. The Newhaven Business Centre opened its doors in November 2007 and has been very well received. The Business Centre provides a range of high quality office and workshop units suitable for SME's. Lettings are well ahead of expectations at this early stage - the Centre is already some 35% let. The project has also been delivered substantially below budget despite some significant difficulties with the foundations on site.

Joiners Shop Business Centre (Medway)

90. Terms have now been provisionally agreed with the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust for a grant funding agreement to convert this historic naval building into a new Business Centre focused on the Arts and Creative Businesses sector. In addition, £1 million of grant aid funding has been secured from CLG.

Urban Renaissance

91. SEEDA's work to promote an understanding of design quality through supporting a range of advice and guidance services has progressed this month.

Tall Buildings Masterclass

92. Another in the series of masterclasses from South East Excellence, this event was held on 5th December at the Lightbox, Woking's new gallery and museum. The masterclass looked at the environmental and design issues associated with

delivering tall buildings and debated the arguments around tall buildings as a regeneration tool.

Thematic Urban Dictionary

93. The Solent Centre for Architecture + Design and Deer Park Alpha have been appointed to develop a clear, concise and engaging dictionary to explain the language of urban design and the built environment. The dictionary will be for community groups, local residents, Councillors and lay people who want to understand and influence change to their built environment. The dictionary could also benefit planners who have received no formal design training and architectures and urban designers in their conversations with lay people. It will be completed by March 2008.

Urban Design E-Learning

94. Working with Urban Design London (UDL), SEEDA is part funding the development of a built environment e-learning resource. This resource will support design professionals, public sector officers, Councillors and engage a broader audience in the issues surrounding urban design. The resource is designed to provide users with access to high quality built environment e-learning materials and other documentation that can be easily navigated and used flexibly by all.

South East Excellence

95. At the end of November, a pilot training programme on 'Leading Sustainable Communities' began in the PUSH area. 'Raising our Game' is being delivered through the Academy for Sustainable Communities' and funded through SEEDA's South East Excellence programme, to target middle / senior managers aiming to deliver Sustainable Communities. Twenty Local Authority officers predominantly from the PUSH area, but also from neighbouring authorities, have signed up to a seven month ILM Level 7 (post graduate level) training programme, where they will learn about leadership, decision making and partnership working. This is particularly apt as the area is facing significant economic and housing growth over the next ten years, and in order to be successful in the delivery of this change, the Local Authorities will need to be equipped with the necessary skills.
96. Alongside this training programme, a diagnostic tool and training network is developing into a robust model in the '5 Towns Network' in Coastal West Sussex. The network is currently a Learning Laboratory for South East Excellence, as part of a national training programme supported by the Academy for Sustainable Communities. A comprehensive training programme in Sustainable Communities, developed in line with the particular needs of the Local Authorities, is being rolled out. During quarter three of 2007/2008, 74 individuals received training in urban design and Section 106 negotiations. Further training in sustainability appraisal, strategic leadership, coastal economies and effective democracy will be delivered during quarter four. The success of this model is being recognised by other Local Authorities in the South East, particularly other coastal areas, as well as by the Improvement & Development Agency and the British Urban Regeneration Association's (BURA) Seaside Towns Network.

Housing

Private Sector Renewal

97. The Regional Housing Board has secured £80 million from Government over three years (2008 -11) for private sector housing renewal in the South East. Groups of Local Authorities were invited to submit proposals for addressing non-decent housing and as a result most of the region, covered by nine partnership groupings, will receive funding. A key focus of the work will be to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty for the most vulnerable households, as well as tackle poor conditions in the private rented sector, particularly Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). The proposals will also increase the proportion of funding that is recycled through loans, thus making the funding go further, and will contribute to reducing CO₂ emissions, contributing to RES targets.

Retrofitting for Energy Efficiency

98. SEEDA has put out an invitation to tender for a piece of work which will help inform what action is needed to catalyse a step change in the energy efficiency of private sector housing in the region. The study will look at what is being done elsewhere in the UK and beyond, what works, including the most cost effective technologies, review the funding that is available and identify potential new funding sources, and examine how to impact on behavioural change. The brief was put together by Enabling Infrastructure Directorate and Sustainable Prosperity with input from the Government Office for the South East and the South East Regional Assembly, who will also be on the steering group for the work.

The Callcutt Review of House Building Delivery

99. The Callcutt review, an independent report commissioned by Government, was published in December. The report highlights the issues and barriers to delivery from the house builders' perspective. This report will form one of a number of reports commissioned by Government to look at ways to speed up house building delivery. A SEEDA member of staff was seconded to the Review Team to ensure input from the RDA/regional perspective. Although the Government has yet to respond, many of the issues raised such as skills deficits, capacity and leadership of local authorities and design quality will be addressed through the South East Excellence forward programme.