

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

BOARD MEETING ON 20 MARCH 2008

ITEM 15

AGENCY REPORT

Recommendation

The Board is invited to **NOTE** the Agency Activity Report for February and March 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

Visit to the South East by European Commissioner for Regional Policy

1. Danuta Hübner, EU Commissioner for Regional Policy, visited some of the most exciting regeneration projects supported by European funds in the Thames Gateway on 29th January 2008 as part of a two-day visit to the Greater South East of England.
2. Co-ordinated by SEEDA and the South East Regional Assembly, Ms Hübner's visit was a chance for the organisations to demonstrate cross-agency working and highlight key projects in the Thames Gateway with links to Europe. It was a great opportunity to demonstrate how regeneration in the Thames Gateway has moved on from being simply about physical development, and has progressed to upskilling local people and providing economic and social opportunities for communities. European funding has been used as catalyst for massive public and private sector investment creating new wealth and regenerating communities.
3. The tour included visits to Canary Wharf and the University of East London's Knowledge Dock in the London part of the Thames Gateway. In the South East the Commissioner visited the Historic Dockyard at Chatham, the Universities at Medway campus at Chatham Maritime, and Ebbsfleet. Project presentations at the Observatory in Ebbsfleet rounded the picture of the South East's engagement at European level. The day culminated in a tour on the Fastrack bus to Ebbsfleet station where the Commissioner was shown the new International Station before boarding the Eurostar back to Brussels.
4. At the Observatory in Ebbsfleet Commissioner Hübner signed the new Competitiveness and Employment Programme, which will bring £15 million of European funding into the region for schemes promoting competitiveness across the whole of the South East while contributing to the reduction of the region's ecological footprint. SEEDA secured the funding through the European Commission's European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programme. SEEDA will be match-funding the European contribution, making the programme worth more than £30 million to the South East between 2007 and 2013.

5. Beneficiaries of the funding will include local authorities and organisations in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors, which are being encouraged to apply for grants which will stimulate innovation for a sustainable economy, promote resource-efficient business practices and encourage sustainable consumption practices. SEEDA is hoping to begin approving projects from applicants in March 2008.

Thames Gateway

Economic Development Investment Plan & Strategic Economic Investment Fund

6. SEEDA continues to work closely with the East of England Development Agency (EEDA), the London Development Agency (LDA) and the Thames Gateway Executive in the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) to develop the final version of the Economic Development Investment Plan (EDIP) for Thames Gateway. Caroline Flint MP took over from Yvette Cooper as the Minister for Housing with responsibility for the Thames Gateway following the Cabinet reshuffle in late January.
7. Further consultations over EDIP have taken place with local partners and David Marlow, Chief Executive of EEDA, gave a presentation at the Thames Gateway Strategic Partnership on 4th March. It is intended that the final version of the EDIP will be completed by the end of March and submitted to the 3 RDA Boards for approval during April/ May.
8. Discussions are continuing between the RDAs and CLG over how the £275 million Strategic Investment Fund will operate and it is proposed that an annual commissioning plan will be developed to set out the contribution of the RDAs to EDIP initiatives that are to be taken forward. This will be monitored and reviewed annually with outputs and achievements identified.

Getting the region to tackle Ecological Footprint

9. SEEDA chairs the Ecological Footprint Diamonds Policy Group, which reports to the Diamonds Board of Leaders and Chief Executives. The objective of the policy group has been to devise a common approach to tackling ecological footprint, along with targets to be included in the Diamonds' Business Case.
10. As chair of the Policy Group, Oona Muirhead, SEEDA's Executive Director Sustainable Prosperity, presented to the Leaders' Board on 6th March on the work of the group. The Board endorsed the recommendations which include the overall ambition of stabilising ecological footprint in the Diamonds by 2014 (two years sooner than the RES target), and underpinning targets:
 - achieving carbon/water reductions of 20% by 2012 and 2010 respectively
 - achieving Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 by 2012, and
 - a 20% increase in renewables by 2012
11. The next step is for the targets to be negotiated with the Diamonds' partnerships. The Policy Group will in parallel work to support the Diamonds in developing action plans to achieve these targets.
12. At the community level, work is in hand through the 'Greening Campaign' to roll out a grass-roots initiative to tackle sustainability through simple measures that

a community will collectively sign up to. This campaign started in Petersfield, Hampshire last year and has proved successful in Hampshire and East Sussex. SEEDA has contracted with the campaign to roll it out across the region. Action is now to begin in Kent communities following discussions with the County Council and communities briefings supported by SEEDA.

Equalities and Inclusion

13. February saw the completion of SEEDA's revised Gender Equality scheme. The scheme has now been expanded to include research and recommendations on the regional gender pay gap following consultation with the Regional Skills for Productivity Alliance, Unison and SERTUC. The revised scheme will be published in March and re-submitted to the Equality & Human Rights Commission for comment.

SEEDA Going Green

14. SEEDA is committed to achieving ISO14001 as part of demonstrating leadership in the region. Following good work over the last few months, independent auditors at the end of February have recommended that SEEDA should receive formal ISO14001 certification. The auditors praised the work of SEEDA's 'Green Champions' and commented that environmental management had now become part of SEEDA's core behaviour.
15. This is only the first phase of certification, covering SEEDA's own internal activities, but excluding travel (e.g. car use) and external activities in support of delivering the RES. However, it represents a major achievement for SEEDA in giving a lead to its partners, and is a significant step towards meeting the Corporate Plan target of a 30% reduction in the Agency's carbon footprint over the next three years. It is anticipated that the 2nd phase certification will be achieved in early 2009.

Business Resource Efficiency and Waste (BREW) Fund

16. SEEDA, as RDA lead on Waste issues, has been involved in extensive discussions with the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) on future funding for RDAs on Business Resource Efficiency and Waste activity, RDAs had collectively received £10.9 million in BREW funding in 2007-08.
17. On 21st February the Secretary of State announced a fundamental shift of approach about how Defra seeks to encourage business to become more resource efficient. Funding will now be focused on providing the necessary evidence to encourage businesses to change behaviour rather than funding support to individual profit-making business to take action.
18. As a result, the separate BREW fund has been discontinued and RDA earmarked funding stopped from 1st April 2008.

Ministerial visit to Oxfordshire

19. Poul Christensen, SEEDA Board member, and Oona Muirhead attended a visit on 26th February by the Minister for the South East, Jonathan Shaw, to Oxfordshire. The Minister visited Didcot before traveling to Unipart, then to the Oxfordshire Quadrant, the area in central southern Oxfordshire with significant growth plans for both housing and business. The area contains the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus (which includes the Diamond Synchrotron) and MEPC Milton Park (one of the largest technology parks in Europe). This area is fundamental to delivering the Oxfordshire Diamond for Investment & Growth and also the Transformational Action for Science & Innovation Campuses as defined in the RES 2006-16.
20. SEEDA took the opportunity to stress to the Minister the importance of the Quadrant project raising its sights to become an internationally renowned area for science and innovation coupled with environmentally friendly, high quality of life.

B. SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

WORLD CLASS INNOVATION

Innovation & Creativity

SEEDA Business Awards 2008

21. Over 300 guests attended SEEDA's Business Awards 2008, on 6th March, to celebrate innovation and excellence in the South East. The evening held at Ascot Racecourse was hosted by BBC News Presenter, Mishal Husain, and Digby, Lord Jones, Minister for Trade & Investment, gave the keynote speech. A record-breaking 300 companies entered the 2008 Awards which was opened by the SEEDA Chairman.

Science and Innovation White Paper

22. SEEDA have been heavily involved with the Department for Innovation, University and Skills (DIUS) in the development of the Science and Innovation White Paper through the Innovation Lead Role. The chapter of the White Paper on Innovative Places includes a description of RDA strategy development and support for innovation. The White Paper will commit to the development of Innovation Vouchers, which are positively viewed by the RDAs. Other commitments relate to Proof of Concept funding and Partnerships for Innovation, which will enhance the RDA role on innovation.
23. Jim Brathwaite, SEEDA Chairman, and the other RDA chairs met with Ian Pearson, Minister for Science and Innovation, to demonstrate the importance of RDAs for innovation in the UK. Pam Alexander, SEEDA's Chief Executive, attended the launch of the White Paper with the Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, John Denham.

SEED Fund

24. Finance South East will be launching the South East SEED fund on 2nd April. This £5 million equity fund will invest up to £250,000 in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which may include university spin-outs/spin-ins. Investors in the Fund are a group of South East universities (under the programme of the universities consortium known as CommercialiSE), SEEDA and ProLogis Developments Limited.

Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS)

25. Negotiations in relation to the 12 month extension of MAS from 1st April 2008 have been successfully concluded with EEF South. During this period EEF South are targeted with delivering £70 million of Value Add for the region and 1,000 Business Support outputs.

Broadband and ICT

26. SEEDA is working with the Broadband Stakeholders Group (BSG) to inform the recently announced review into how Government can help pave the way for the UK to move to next generation broadband networks, particularly in regard to the role of the public sector. The review will investigate what are considered to be the potential barriers to the mass roll-out of next generation technology as well as look at barriers to companies collaborating with those responsible for infrastructure.

National Aerospace Technology Strategy

ASTRAEA

27. ASTRAEA is a public-private sector collaborative programme to develop the technologies, systems and facilities together with the necessary regulatory environment so that unmanned aircraft can operate safely and routinely in UK civil airspace. SEEDA's investment (£2 million) is supporting a high level of R&D and knowledge transfer in the South East and a range of SMEs in working with QinetiQ, Thales, Flight Refuelling and BAE Systems.
28. Flight Refuelling held their first live flight demonstration off the South coast in February flying a small 'Gull' seaplane under pre flight programmed data for approximately 5 minutes. This was a major milestone in relation to their objective of achieving formation flight between an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) and a refuelling station. SEEDA contributes significant funding to the ASTRAEA programme and retains an influencing role in development of the ASTRAEA II

HealthMap

29. SEEDA funding (£3 million over three years) is contributing to the HealthMap, an R&D programme to develop Health Management and Prognostic methods for the aerospace industry. A meeting has been held between SEEDA and QinetiQ to explore opportunities for promotion of HealthMap; in particular, the benefits being derived by the SME partner base. QinetiQ have already produced a case study in relation to one of the SME partners for their website and the Farnborough Aerospace Consortium (FAC) are working with QinetiQ on an SME knowledge transfer event. It is also hoped that the FAC can work with QinetiQ to exploit opportunities arising from the forthcoming Farnborough Air Show in July 2008.

International

30. SEEDA has secured 17 foreign direct investments since the January which will create 593 jobs and safeguard 540 jobs over the next 3 years. Other activities included:

US Mobile Technologies Events

31. Following the successful venture capital seminars last year, two smaller events focused on mobile technologies were held in Silicon Valley and Seattle. The

events promoted the strengths of the region to a targeted audience of 20 companies. Discussions centred on the demand for technology solutions in the European mobile market and routes to market for innovative technologies.

Danish Ministry of Economic and Business Affairs

32. A delegation from the Danish Ministry of Economic and Business Affairs visited SEEDA to learn about how the organization supports entrepreneurship, innovation and infrastructure in the region.

Iberian Softlandings Mission

33. Nine ICT companies from Spain and Portugal and representatives from Science Parks in Madrid and Barcelona visited the UK as part of UKTI's Softlandings Mission programme. The purpose of the visit was to learn more about R&D collaboration, partnering opportunities and opening business operations in the UK. SEEDA obtained four leads from the event.

Governor of Wisconsin Visit

34. SEEDA are currently organizing a visit schedule for the Governor of Wisconsin and Secretary of State for Commerce. The visit will take place in March and will highlight investment opportunities in the life science, financial services and security sectors in the South East.

Solent Synergy

35. Solent Synergy (to date funded by Area Investment Frameworks (AIF) for Portsmouth & SE Hampshire and Southampton) is at the heart of the innovation agenda in South Hampshire. Chaired by VT Group's CEO, Paul Lester, it is strongly supported by the PUSH (Partnership for Urban South Hampshire) local authorities; Portsmouth, Solent and Southampton Universities; Business Link and a host of private sector companies. Key successes in working with firms and entrepreneurs at the forefront of the knowledge-intensive economy include:
 - Solent Synergy's Technology Forum, a group of major, knowledge based companies who come together to identify enabling technologies needed to implement their business strategies. It also allows them to embrace "disruptive" technologies and participate in Open Innovation.
 - The Solent Synergy Entrepreneurs' Club, which enables small businesses to network, present ideas and gain constructive feedback with the possibility of attracting investment. Club members include corporate executives, serial entrepreneurs and business owners, professionals (accountants and lawyers), plus partner organisations such as Universities.
 - Solent Synergy, in partnership with the Universities of Portsmouth, Southampton and Solent, and the AIF-funded Social Inclusion Manager for Portsmouth & SE Hampshire, have recently secured £1.1 million from HEFCE for the South East Coastal Communities. This project aims to establish a model of collaborative funding which provides additional money for strategic community knowledge exchange, with the theme of health and wellbeing.
36. Going forward, Solent Synergy is also looking at a number of collaborative events, including a Festival of Innovation for South Hampshire, and accessing EU funding for the knowledge and innovation agenda in the sub-region. Solent

Synergy is working closely with enterprise hubs and is helping scope the place-based innovation team in South Hampshire

COMPETITIVE ENTERPRISE

Enterprise

Business Support Simplification Programme (BSSP)

37. SEEDA is leading the development of the South East Transition Management Plan, which will set out how the South East business support portfolio will be simplified and aligned with the new national BSSP framework. Business representative organisations and public sector funders have come together to form the South East Business Support Advisory Board, with the first meeting on 12th March, to oversee the development and delivery of the Transition Management Plan and the development of a wider regional business support strategy.

Enterprise Strategy

38. SEEDA's Chairman and Chief Executive met Baroness Vadera on 29th February to discuss the proposed Enterprise White Paper, due to be published alongside the Budget. Although key announcements are not yet known, SEEDA has played an influential role, particularly in ensuring that there is strong focus on women's enterprise to help close the gap between levels of women's enterprise in the UK compared with the US which is recognised as an important contributor to the productivity gap between the two countries.

Local Produce

39. The South East Food Group Partnership Ltd (SEFGP), which is funded by SEEDA, held an Open Day at New Covent Garden on 6th February. The day marked the start of a three-year long project with the London Wholesale Market aimed at closing the gap between producers, farmers and growers and the wholesale market. Over 45 companies from the South East showcased their fresh food at the Open Day to encourage business from traders, restaurants and retailers across the country.

Pathway to Zero Waste Region

40. SEEDA, together with the Environment Agency (Southern Region), the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), and the National Industrial Symbiosis Programme (NISP), is developing a pathfinder project for the South East targeting significant material streams like wood, food and residual wastes from construction sites to demonstrate how the region can achieve zero waste to landfill in the medium term and turn waste products into a commodity, thereby saving on some of the cost and environmental degradation from use of virgin materials.

Making the Most of 2012

London 2012 Business Network

41. Over 400 businesses from the South East attended the regional launch of the London 2012 Business Network on 20th February 2008

42. This new online service which includes a groundbreaking 'business dating agency' called CompeteFor aims to help companies to compete for business opportunities which will help deliver the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games.
43. Co-hosted by SEEDA and Business Link, the launch took place at the Reading Madejski Stadium on 20th February. The event included a panel discussion featuring specialist speakers advising South East firms from a wide range of sectors on how they can boost their performance and maximise their chance of gaining access to contract opportunities worth an estimated £6 billion.

Pre-Games Training Camps

44. The London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) has recently announced the venues that were successful in their application to be included in the LOCOG Guide to Pre-Games Training Camps. The Guide will be distributed at the Beijing Games to National Olympic Committees and National Paralympic Committees, in order to encourage them to train in Britain before the 2012 Games.
45. Each camp will be worth at least £25,000 to the local economy - some will be substantially larger. The 130 venues in the South East were announced at Stoke Mandeville Stadium on 3rd March. The venues to be included for Paralympic teams are yet to be announced.
46. 130 represents the most venues in any Nation or Region, and 20% of all venues in the Guide. As the South East has 13% of Britain's population this is the best result, proportionally, for any Nation or Region, and South East venues are now keen to maximise the economic and social benefits that will be associated with securing Pre Games Training Camps. SEEDA contributed to this successful outcome by employing consultants to help local areas to make applications, and then by working with Sport England in the region to persuade LOCOG to include the large number of high quality facilities from the region.
47. Perhaps the most prestigious Pre Games Training Camp for 2012 is the Team GB camp, and the South East has secured this camp with the announcement that Team GB will train at Aldershot Garrison. SEEDA helped to secure this Camp by highlighting to the British Olympic Association the regeneration benefits that would be created in Aldershot from the presence of the Training Camp.

Business Link – Preparing SME for Changes to Regulations

48. With changes to employment regulations imminent, such as increases in statutory holidays and the minimum wage, Business Link is providing regulation updates and practical guides on new and changing legislation to SMEs across the region.
49. According to new research undertaken by Business Link in the South East, businesses in this region take changes to legislation in their stride but awareness and preparation are key to minimising disruption. The quarterly South East Business Monitor found that recent changes to regulations such as the smoking ban, paternity and maternity rights and age discrimination are perceived by business owners to have had little impact on their companies.
50. Although more than one third (35%) of South East companies identify red tape as a constraint on their business, the majority have a good understanding of the

latest regulations. Most small and medium sized businesses that are aware of and understand the requirements of the smoke free workplace (83%), age discrimination (85%) and maternity and paternity rights (77%) legislation identified no impact on their business. Overall, companies in the South East are more likely to foresee positive rather than negative impacts.

SEEDA Flood Fund

51. In July 2007 SEEDA launched a Flood Relief Fund to provide grants of up to £2,500 to SMEs that had been directly affected by the floods. Business Link in Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire is administering the grant scheme for SEEDA. As at 28th February 2008, 79 applications had been received. SEEDA has commissioned an independent evaluation of the scheme which will report in the new financial year.

Women's Enterprise South East

52. SEEDA participated in the annual PROWESS conference in February, hosted by EEDA. Pam Alexander delivered a keynote speech to update attendees on the progress and work of the Women's Enterprise Task Force; and Julie Kapsalis, SEEDA's Business Support and Enterprise Director, participated in a debate on women friendly business support.
53. SEEDA held its first Women's Enterprise Ambassadors Network lunch in February. Business leaders and policy makers met at Fetcham Park House in Leatherhead to hear about the progress being made on women's enterprise in the region. It was a valuable opportunity for Ambassadors to connect with fellow members of the network. Further events are planned to maximise the network's profile and share good practice to engage and inspire women to consider the option of enterprise.
54. The Women's Enterprise Task Force has been working closely with the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) as the Government's White Paper on Enterprise takes shape. In particular, they have advocated the development of a women only Venture Capital fund, support for investment readiness and gender disaggregated data to provide an accurate evidence base for policy making.
55. The pilot procurement readiness road show event "Equality in Business – Bidding to Win" is to take place on 11th March in Bristol. The event aims to inform diverse business owners on how to become "procurement ready" and access the opportunities presented by 2012, and other public sector supply chains. The event is jointly endorsed by the Women's Enterprise Task Force and the Ethnic Minority Business Task Force, and delivered by Business Link in conjunction with South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) and BERR. Further events are planned for other regions throughout 2008 with the next scheduled for April in the West Midlands.
56. The WEConnect programme to connect women owned business to corporate supply chain contracts, part funded by SEEDA and a key deliverable in the Task Force action plan, was launched on 19th February in the House of Commons. Founding members include large corporates such as Accenture, Pzifer, Bank of America and Hewlett Packard.

Make a Difference Ideas competition 2007/08

57. In its second stage the competition will be holding a one day boot camp at the Institute of Directors (IOD) South Headquarters in Reading. The aim of the camp is to offer University students who have made the cut, a learning opportunity which will help take their idea closer to action.
58. The boot camp will develop the enterprising skills of the 50+ participating students and introduce entrants to their mentors (all drawn from businesses and Universities across the region). Some of the skills being taught include;
 - articulating a vision / an idea
 - presenting and pitching an idea
 - feasibility and action planning
 - understanding intellectual property
59. The programme is also designed to help students identify their market and their customers and prepare them for the grand final which will be held in Portsmouth on 23rd April 2008 where they will be asked to put their learning from the boot camp into practice.

Business Southampton Annual Conference

60. Business Southampton held its first Annual Conference in February with 200 of the sub region's business people attending, 88 of whom have signed up and pledged financial commitment to support Business Southampton as Business Champions. The event featured a review of the year and a call to action to raise aspirations and drive up skills levels in the city.
61. Speakers included John Denham MP and Alan Whitehead MP. John Denham recognised the contribution that SEEDA had made to Business Southampton.
62. Business Southampton was formed to help drive Southampton to live up to its billing '*the best place on the south coast to do business*'. Innovation Awards sponsored by leading companies were given to five local businesses recognising the importance of Global Competitiveness.
63. Business Southampton announced a work programme over the next four years under six key priorities, selling and promoting the city, Southampton port city futures, tourism and visitor economy, business leadership, city centre management and city champions. Alan Whitehead MP concluded the conference by praising the contribution PUSH is starting to make across the region.

C. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

AREA-BASED REGENERATION

London Array Project

64. EnviroBusiness, the South East regional sector consortia leading on the RES and co-ordinating agent for SEEDA input to London Array held a successful workshop on 30th January which enabled early discussions on developing supply chain opportunities. The workshop saw strong private sector attendance generating feedback which is helping to shape SEEDA's support for maximizing the regional economic benefit of the project.

Margate

Margate and Cliftonville Research

65. SEEDA is an active member of the steering group for this CLG funded research which aims to identify drivers of deprivation in Margate Central and Cliftonville wards and make recommendations for sustainable regeneration solutions to address it. The draft findings are due to be reported to the Margate Renewal Board in April, which will be considered in the context of the economic and physical development works being led by the partnership.

Margate Cultural Vision and Framework

66. SEEDA is contributing financially and supporting the development of a Cultural Vision and Framework for Margate. Tom Fleming Associates have been appointed to lead on this work. The Framework will provide the context for any future developments which have a cultural objective/focus and help to provide a spatial plan for the town. On 22nd February, Pam Alexander, in her role as Margate Renewal Partnership (MRP) chair, introduced an Open Space event which sought to engage the local community, businesses and other public sector partners in identifying their vision for a Cultural Framework for Margate. The successful event was attended by over 100 people who all contributed their ideas which will now be taken on board in the next phase of the research. Draft findings of the report will be presented to the MRP board in April for discussion.

North Kent Direct Investment Programme

67. SEEDA is continuing to support 7 legacy projects that address the employability and skills agenda in North Kent for an additional 3 months until the end of June 2008. An independent evaluation of these projects has now been commissioned which will help inform future SEEDA policy with regard to this type of project and suggest clear exit strategies. REIGNITE, one of the projects delivered by Medway Council, held a celebratory event in February to highlight achievements to date with clear evidence that the project has transformed the lives of many beneficiaries through helping them to raise their aspirations, up-skill and access opportunities for employment.

QUALITY PLACES

Incubation Physical Infrastructure

Joiners Shop Business Centre (Chatham)

68. SEEDA have now completed the funding agreement with Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust, and have also completed a funding agreement with Medway Council to secure up to £1 million of CLG grant funding. Building contracts are now being signed with a projected start on site of March 2008. This will deliver a new Business Centre providing 45 new studio units - much needed new space for SME's, focusing on the Arts and Creative design sectors.

Adur Business Centre (Ropetackle)

69. This Business Centre provides small starter units for SME's in Shoreham. There has been no new commercial development in Shoreham by Sea for sometime, so the new building has been well received. Lettings continue to exceed expectations and the Centre is now over 80% let.

Urban Renaissance

Design Champions Club

70. As part of the South East Excellence initiative, SEEDA has appointed a consortium comprising the Kent Architecture Centre (KAC), the Urban Renaissance Institute (URI) and Waterloo Brown Events and Conference Management to deliver a regional programme of events and support for Design Champions in the South East over the next fifteen months.
71. The proposed programme from March 2008 to March 2009 includes workshops and study tours and the opportunity for an international study tour to Freiburg, Germany. The visit will involve talks and local visits with the Freiburg City Council's planning department as well as self guided group tours in the new neighbourhoods. The rest of the programme explores issues such as design at appeal, managing growth and the links between design and sustainability. The first event, '*How developers work: negotiating for quality*', is taking place on 4th March 2008 at The Lightbox in Woking.
72. The consortium is also in the process of arranging a South East Design Champions monthly e-mail news alert to help champions stay in touch with the latest news and information on design.

South East Excellence

South East Excellence Website

73. The South East Excellence website is undergoing a transformation. With a new look, new information, and new sub-sites focusing on what it means to be truly sustainable within the built environment and what good urban design means, and inspiring podcasts from individuals working in the built environment, including Wayne Hemmingway (Chairman of Building for Life and the South Coast Design Forum), the new South East Excellence website will be online in the Spring.
74. Brand new case studies will be uploaded onto the website from the end of March 2008 as part of the Learning Resources project. GHK Consulting are working with South East Excellence to develop a set of in depth case studies that draw out the learning points associated with the components, skills, attitudes and behaviours needed to deliver sustainable communities.

South East Excellence Equality and Diversity Research

75. South East Excellence is currently working with Annmarie Consulting to carry out a piece of research to enable an understanding and provide a background evidence base to support Equality Impact Assessments within the built environment field. The research will also provide diversity profiles for the South East Excellence target audience (councillors, built environment professionals and young people).

Evaluation

76. In addition to the work above, South East Excellence has recently appointed SWQ to develop an evaluation framework and baseline report by June 2008. Following on from this, South East Excellence will commission a longitudinal evaluation to assess the impact that the programme has had in the South East and how far South East Excellence has begun to reach its wider aim of increasing the skills of those people influencing the built environment and in what ways.

Making Places

77. Under the banner of South East Excellence SEEDA has taken another step forward in bringing together the national agencies delivering the sustainable communities agenda.
78. In early February, English Partnerships, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), Advisory Team for Large Applications (ATLAS), Planning Advisory Service (PAS), SEEDA and the Government Office joined forces to discuss areas for future collaboration in the South East. Going forward, these organisations are committed to ensuring that there is no duplication in the work that they carry out with local partners and to use distinctive regional intelligence to target support most effectively. One of the areas being explored is how to develop a model that can then be used to take forward a comprehensive and systematic process for diagnosing local barriers to delivery, develop the skills and capacity amongst local authorities and other stakeholders to achieve sustainable communities, and explore the potential for collaborative delivery.

Daedalus

79. Following the consultation held over December and January in relation to the five masterplan concepts, SEEDA and the Project Team are progressing well with the development of a core masterplan option. It is anticipated that stakeholders will be consulted on the option and one or two variances of this in summer 2008.

East Cowes

80. Selected foodstore developer, Waitrose, held an exhibition about its development proposals at the end of February 2008 in advance of a planning application being submitted. It is hoped that Heads of Terms will be agreed between the Agency and Waitrose by spring 2008 after which a Development Agreement will be entered into.
81. Stage two of the selection process for a housing developer, which English Partnerships is leading on, is progressing following interviews which were held in mid February. It is anticipated that a developer will be appointed in April

2008. Work in relation to phase 1 infrastructure works is ongoing and it is envisaged that the works will be tendered during early summer 2008.

Harts Farm Way - Teardrop Junction and Bedhampton Roundabout

82. The Stage 3 Safety Audit has been issued and SEEDA is now in the process of agreeing the additional minor works required to fully satisfy the study.
83. The detailed design check in relation to Bedhampton Roundabout is awaiting approval by Hampshire County Council.

Transport and Infrastructure

HST (High Speed Trains) Projects

84. The HST projects have a new element - a feasibility study looking at utilising High Speed Rail links to improve socio-economic connections between South East England and Nord Pas De Calais. The study will have three phases addressing commercial, technical and socio-economic elements and will contribute to the initial phase of a bigger project, to develop the business case for initiating a potential "Transmanche metro" service, complementary to Eurostar services between Kent and Calais.
85. In February 2008, the HST projects supported a high profile day at the Eurorail 2008 conference in Milan. Jim Brathwaite, SEEDA's Chairman, chaired sessions and panel discussions with industry leaders.
86. Preparations are underway to develop a programme for the HST projects final conference in London on the 22nd May 2008. To coincide with the final event, research will be published on the impact of High Speed Rail, connectivity issues and the policy dimension across North-West Europe.

Queenborough and Rushenden, Isle of Sheppey

Visit by the Earl of Wessex

87. His Royal Highness the Earl of Wessex visited the SEEDA-led Queenborough and Rushenden Regeneration scheme on 20th February meeting a range of local stakeholders at the SEEDA- funded Gateway centre in the heart of the regeneration area.
88. During his visit to the temporary facility (a former warehouse leased free to the community by SEEDA to generate community capacity and deliver skills training) the Prince was able to meet local residents and hear about the ambitious regeneration plans for the area. The visit follows formal submission of the masterplan earlier this year (decision on adoption expected later this spring) and generated significant interest in the scheme and the community engagement principles applied.

Link Road

89. Work is continuing on the package of land acquisitions required to deliver the new Rushenden Link Road and these are programmed to exchange by the end of March 2008. Contracts for the construction of the road should be awarded around May/June 2008.