

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
PLENARY MEETING**

Date: 4 March 2009

Subject: **Report on Scrutiny**

Report of: Assembly Vice-Chair leading on Scrutiny

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 October 2008.

Key Issues:

Two select committees have been held since my last report. In October 2008 we considered the South East England Development Agency's (SEEDA) approach to labour force and employment. The Assembly's Executive Committee in December agreed the recommendations of this select committee and SEEDA's response to our recommendations is included as agenda item 3c. In January 2009 we met to consider SEEDA's approach to sub-regional working. The final report of the select committee is included as agenda item 3b and we seek the Assembly's endorsement of the recommendations. SEEDA's response to the recommendations of our first select committee of 2008-09 on SEEDA's strategy and activity in the coastal South East was brought to the Assembly Executive Committee on 12 December.

Following the SNR, with the imminent move to new working arrangements and the introduction of Parliamentary Regional Select Committees, the Assembly will no longer undertake activity on the regional scrutiny of the Regional Development Agency.

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

- 1.1 SEEDA's response to the recommendations of our first select committee of 2008-09 on SEEDA's strategy and activity in the coastal South East (held in June 2008) was brought to the Assembly Executive Committee on 12 December. SEEDA welcomed the recommendations and its response is available on our website¹.

2. Select Committee on SEEDA's Approach to Labour Force and Employment

- 2.1 Our second select committee of 2008-09 (held on 24 October 2008) considered the appropriateness of SEEDA's approach to labour force and employment and assessed the extent to which SEEDA's activities are addressing the challenges and opportunities.
- 2.2 The committee identified a good range of support for SEEDA's approach to labour force and employment, but identified that further improvements and actions are required. SEEDA is not the biggest player in this agenda and has a relatively small budget compared to other key agencies such as the Learning and Skills Council. There was agreement that SEEDA needs to do more to effectively co-ordinate, lead, influence and work with partners, at all levels and sectors, to address employment and labour force issues.
- 2.3 The committee's report and recommendations were agreed by our Executive Committee on 12 December 2008. Our final report and supporting documentation are available on our website². SEEDA's response to the select committee recommendations is included as agenda item 3c.

3. Select Committee on SEEDA and Sub-Regional Working

- 3.1 The last select committee of 2008-09 (held on 16 January 2009) considered how effectively SEEDA's approach to sub-regional working helps both to deliver the Regional Economy Strategy 2006-16 and to address local needs and priorities.
- 3.2 The committee's report and recommendations are included as agenda item 3b for the Assembly's endorsement.

4. Update on Select Committee on Reducing the South East's Ecological Footprint

- 4.1 At the Assembly's January Executive Committee, members received an update on progress implementing the recommendations arising from our select committee on reducing the ecological footprint (held in November 2007). In its recommendations the committee endeavoured to identify those organisations

¹ http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/committees_executives2008.html

² http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/committees_select_2008-02.html

that it felt were best placed to take particular actions forward. Members were pleased with the progress being made by these organisations against our recommendations. The progress update is available on our website³.

5. Future Scrutiny Work and Parliamentary Regional Select Committees

- 5.1 Following the SNR, with the imminent move to new working arrangements and the introduction of Parliamentary Regional Select Committees, the Assembly will no longer undertake activity on the regional scrutiny of the Regional Development Agency.

Ian Chisnall
Lead Member for Scrutiny

16 February 2009

³ http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/committees_executives2009.html