

SEEDA INCLUSION COMMITTEE 12 December 2005

1. The Social Inclusion Committee provides advice to the SEEDA Board on all aspects of the delivery of its Regional Economic Strategy commitment to achieve social progress that recognises the needs of everyone.
2. The Committee debated the proposed policy objectives and measures contained in the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) consultation document and the accompanying evidence base, particularly in relation to the issue of economic inclusion. The main themes of the consultation document were identified as:
 - The transformation of the global economy
 - Increasing productivity through smart growth
 - Tough choices within the context and sustainable development
3. In terms of economic inclusion, the debate focussed on the current indicators of deprivation and the trends that are likely to have a significant impact over the next ten years. From that analysis, there would be a clearer understanding of any market failures and where interventions were needed. It was suggested that the productivity agenda would benefit through a focus on the healthy workforce. Business should be engaged in this agenda, with SEEDA and partners demonstrating the considerable economic benefits to be derived from investment in human resources. And, continuing the theme, health and social care should be considered a growing element of the region's economy where there was a significant need for quality services. Finally, the Committee discussed the need for investment in education and the benefits of skill development in the workplace for many of the most excluded communities in the region. There was debate on the objective to lift barriers and increase incentives to work and support for the ambitious target to increase the economic activity rate from 82% to 85% by 2016.
4. Over the coming three months SEEDA will be conducting a series of focussed meetings with partners and stakeholders, to identify objectives, targets and measures and the contribution each organisation can make to the proposed tasks. The closing date for comments on the consultation document is 17 February 2006.

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