

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

**BOARD MEETING 27 OCTOBER 2005**

**ITEM 14**

**AGENCY REPORT**

**Recommendation**

The Board is invited to **NOTE** the agency activity report for October, which represents a cross section of reports from within SEEDA organized on the themes of SEEDA's Corporate Plan.

**A. SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH**

**WORLD CLASS INNOVATION**

**Enterprise Hubs**

1. The Enterprise Hub Network Branding Workshop was held on 19<sup>th</sup> September. Attended by all Hub Directors and the SEEDA Enterprise Team, it looked specifically at the Enterprise Hub brand, market positioning, customer/competitor intelligence and identifying who the Hubs are and should be working closely with.
2. The Food Technology Hub launch took place in Reading on 6<sup>th</sup> October. The event provided an opportunity for companies, large and small to meet with experts in the field of Health and Nutrition, representatives from various Government bodies and colleagues from industry. There were several high profile speakers including Dr Peter Read (SEEDA Board Member) and Bobby Neame (CEO of Shepherd Neame Brewery and the Food Hub Business Champion).

**International**

3. During September 2005, SEEDA secured 4 investment successes, which will result in the creation of 52 new jobs. (Details are set out in Appendix A).
4. Global Regions activities included:
  - o **Korean Mission** - SEEDA hosted a visit by 10 Korean companies in the field of video games and new media. The delegation visited the University of Portsmouth to gain an understanding of the video games sector, cutting edge research being undertaken within the University and to look at opportunities to develop their

business in the South East. The mission was arranged by UK Trade and Investment and will be followed up by SEEDA's representative in Korea.

- **UK Trade and Investment Asia Familiarisation Tour** - SEEDA hosted a visit programme by UK Trade and Investment in Tokyo and Taipei. A comprehensive programme was undertaken, incorporating a visit to the region and meetings with successful investors from Japan and Taiwan.
- **Asia Pacific Company Visits** - SEEDA hosted four individual company visits to the South East with active foreign direct investment projects, for companies from Australia, Korea and Singapore.
- **UK Trade and Investment European Conference in Barcelona** - SEEDA attended this conference to discuss best practice, future market strategies and working together across the organisations. The conference consisted of presentations from various divisional heads within UK Trade and Investment and interactive workshops sessions.
- **Norwegian Mission** - 16 Norwegian companies from the ICT sector visited the region and attended presentations by two local companies on the benefits of locating in the South East. The companies also visited the Newbury Enterprise Hub.
- **US Marine Inward Investment Seminars Seattle** – Two marine focused Inward Investment seminars organised by SEEDA have attracted approximately 200 company representatives. To highlight the opportunities for marine companies in the South East, the UK Trade and Investment Marine Sector Trade Advisor presented along side SEEDA. The intention is to organise a similar event on the East Coast of the USA.
- **Flight Safety International** – A US company that SEEDA assisted in 2004 officially opened their flight simulator training facility at Farnborough Airport. The building currently has capacity for 15 simulators, with a plan to develop the site in to a 36 simulator operation.
- **UK Company Mission to the US** – SEEDA in conjunction with UK Trade and Investment, have finalised a visit programme for a number of world class technology companies in the South East, to attend meetings with selected US companies in New York, Washington DC and Boston.

During the visit they will attend a lunch hosted at the residence of the Deputy Head of Mission, Alan Charlton, along with the SEEDA Chairman, UK Trade and Investment, senior members of Fairfax County Economic Development Agency and US corporations and institutions with whom the South East companies can interface with.

- **SEEDA Chairman's US Visit** – This programme will be centred around a reception at Capitol Hill hosted by Congressman Tom Davis and attended by the UK Ambassador to the US, Sir David Manning. During the visit, the SEEDA Chairman will meet a number of major US companies with important operation in this region as part of SEEDA's international investor development programme.

## **Collaborative R&D Nano**

5. SEEDA have called for bids for collaborative R&D projects in nano technology on 30<sup>th</sup> September. This is the first of four calls involving businesses and universities working together on mission oriented research. These calls have been developed with the advice of SESETAC.

## **Knowledge Transfer Partnerships**

6. A pilot project for Knowledge Transfer Partnerships has been developed by SEEDA as part of the Innovation Toolkit to support the Innovation Action Plan. It will fund a recognised and effective DTI product in areas key to SEEDA's emerging technology strategy and sector consortia, to stimulate greater business innovation through knowledge transfer from the knowledge base. It will form part of the flexible toolkit for the demand-led brokering of the Innovation Advisory Service.
7. SEEDA have agreed to extend successful pilots for the Business Fellowship scheme; Knowledge Networks and Pocket funding.(Proof of concept knowledge transfer)

## **The Redundancy Support Service (RSS)**

8. This a unique pilot project, funded by SEEDA and managed by Jobcentre Plus, established to respond to redundancy announcements in the South East Region. The RSS team comprises of seven County Brokers who are based locally in each Jobcentre Plus District throughout the South East.
9. Brokers in Kent and Hampshire are currently responding to a higher number of redundancies than brokers in other areas of the Southeast. Employees of these businesses are then offered guidance, through specially selected partner providers, in skills such as CV writing, benefit advice, interviewing techniques, job search and applications. This training provides employees with the essential skills that are needed to move forward and progress their careers.
10. Through this project SEEDA has access to real time labour market intelligence on business and skills churn.

## **COMPETITIVE ENTERPRISE**

### **Enterprise Gateways**

11. A collaboration between the Enterprise Gateway Directors, SEEDA Enterprise Team and the Princes Trust resulted in an Away Day held in September. The aim of the away day was to share best practice, identify areas where the teams can work together more effectively.
12. Romney Enterprise Gateway and Folkestone Enterprise Gateway were officially launched in September.

## **Enterprise Insight**

13. With the continued support of the Enterprise Insight 'Make Your Mark - start talking ideas' campaign, SEEDA held another 'Understanding Enterprise' event at the Hastings and Bexhill Enterprise Hub on 21st September. The event was a great success and included several local schools and students. There are four more Understanding Enterprise events taking place at the Hubs and Gateways in Folkestone, Surrey, Reading and Eastbourne, during Enterprise Week in November.

## **Grow**

14. Grow, a joint programme between SEEDA, Spain, Italy, Poland, and the Netherlands, combines 5 European High Growth areas working towards achieving a more balanced, sustainable economic growth. The programme will support multinational projects under a strategic regional framework, with the 1st call for bids ending on 30<sup>th</sup> September. This results in 23 multinational projects being submitted under the Grow fund for appraisal.

## **'Entrepreneurial Futures'**

15. Following the successful 'Entrepreneurial Futures' Seminar held in Brussels (June 2005), SEEDA was invited to make a presentation on 30 September to a delegation of 20 politicians, officers and academics from the Co-operative Forum of Central Sweden on our strategy for developing an entrepreneurial culture through the education system.

## **Project View**

16. SEEDA has launched a series of six Virtual Interactive Employer's Workplace (VIEW) applications.
17. The series of CDs, which have been developed with some of the South East's largest employers including Ford and Gatwick Airport, are aimed at providing pupils who are studying the new vocational GCSE courses with a unique insight into the working life of different organisations.
18. Additionally, six Enterprise VIEW CDs will be launched on November 15<sup>th</sup> focusing on real small businesses on the Isle of Wight and will allow young people to explore the workplace and undertake the everyday challenges faced by the businesses.
19. VIEW will be available to students in the form of supported distribution and workshops for teachers on how to best make use of the resource within the curriculum.

## **East Kent Enterprise Gateway**

20. The proposal for an East Kent Enterprise Gateway is now being finalised by BLK and partners. Kent and Medway area team is supporting the East Kent Partnership in bringing forward this exciting project which will add to the 3 operational Gateways in Kent and Medway. Discussions are continuing to progress with Swale Borough Council and Sevenoaks District Council to bring forward another 2 Gateways during 2006.

## **B. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES**

### **QUALITY PLACES**

#### **East Kent**

21. A report into the feasibility of creating an “East Kent Natural Park” has been completed by the East Kent Partnership. A consultant is now being employed to prepare a bid to the Living Landmarks lottery fund to finance the recommendations in the report.

#### **Ashford**

22. The Kent and Medway area team continues to provide support and resource to the Ashford’s Future Economic Sub Group, working with partners to catalyse identified priorities. In September we finalised a public version of the Priorities for Growth document and recruited 3 new private sector members to broaden representation and expertise on the group. A baseline of primary and secondary indicators to measure strategic impact of the economic programme is being prepared.

#### **Queenborough and Rushenden**

23. In conjunction with Swale PCT, the Kent and Medway area team undertook a ‘Health Impact Assessment’ workshop in which local stakeholders helped to assess the wide ranging health implications of the draft masterplan. A summary report will be produced by PCT to inform the final materplan.
24. The area team continues to support the Arts @ The Centre project to embed arts into the masterplan process. September saw a collaborative project based upon local interpretations of the Channel 4 Time Team dig at the Queenborough castle and events to support local involvement in the Sea Sheppey celebrations. Local PR coverage was positive and Susan Priest conveyed SEEDA’s role in the project to BBC Radio Kent listeners.
25. In association with Design Excellence in North Kent, the area team funded and organised 2 study trips to exemplar housing developments in the South East (Lacuna, Whitstable, Greenwich Millennium Village, Chatham Maritime) to enable a group of local stakeholders and residents to broaden their understanding of design issues and widen aspirations for incorporating quality design within the project.
26. A programme of presentations detailing the “Vision” key partners see as the starting point of the masterplan has been given by Rummey Design Associates to members of the public, businesses and stakeholders. The next stage of the public consultation on the masterplan will be during November, with adoption by Swale Borough Council to be achieved by the end of 2005/early 2006.

#### **Folkestone**

27. In October the Kent and Medway area team bought together a focus group of key stakeholders to progress a Folkestone application to the Big Lottery Living Landmarks Scheme. The Folkestone proposal will be made under stage 1 of the scheme which is

targeted to support projects between a value of £10-£25 million. The Kent and Medway Area Team are continuing to lead the application on behalf of all stakeholders involved and, SEEDA resources are being used to commission consultants to shape the funding proposition to the Big Lottery before the 6 January deadline. Initial community consultation is being planned with key stakeholder groups between now and Christmas with more detailed and substantive engagement planned for the next phase of the project in 2006.

### **No Barriers Project, East Cowes**

28. SEEDA is funding Island 2000 in the development of an arts based project related to the East Cowes project. It is seeking to utilise the hoardings as an arts medium for the local community. It will involve all members of the community especially schools in developing art representation to be displayed on the hoardings. This will help engage the community, provide local ownership and reduce the perceived physical barrier of the hoardings.

### **Chatham Maritime – Universities at Medway**

29. The former Naval Drill Hall, which has been transformed into a £12 million Learning Resource Centre, opened to students at the Universities of Medway in mid September.
30. The centre is being used by students from the University of Greenwich, University of Kent, Canterbury Christ Church University and Mid-Kent College, who all now have a presence on the campus.
31. The Learning Resource Centre is now home to more hundreds of thousands of books as well as offering students the use of the internet and other computer technology.
32. It is expected that student numbers at the Universities at Medway will rise from 2,700 to 6,000 by the year 2007 – three years ahead of programme.
33. The University of Kent's new teaching building is now open to students. Among the courses available are sports therapy and music technology.
34. Construction has started on the Universities at Medway's second new teaching facility. This 3,000 sq m building is due to be completed by September 2006.

### **Visit by the ODPM Thames Gateway Delivery Unit**

35. Head of the ODPM's Thames Gateway Delivery Unit Mitesh Dhanak and officers Andy De Lord and Ben Stoneman toured the renovated Drill Hall and new University of Kent building at Chatham Maritime on 19<sup>th</sup> September. They were shown around the site by University of Kent representative Juliet Thomas and SEEDA Project Director, Chatham Maritime, Jonathan Sadler. Pro Vice-Chancellor of the University of Greenwich, David Wills, also took part in the tour of the Drill Hall.

### **Trafalgar Day Anniversary**

36. As part of the celebrations surrounding the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar, much attention has been focused on Chatham Historic Dockyard where HMS Victory was built. More recently, the whole regeneration programme of Chatham Maritime has

been highlighted as an example of the response to the widespread industrial restructuring of the 1980's.

37. BBC One's Inside Out programme has filmed an item about the closure of Chatham Dockyard in 1984. SEEDA Director of Development and Infrastructure Paul Hudson took part in the interview programme which is due to be screened on BBC One at 7.30am on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> October.

### **Northfleet Embankment**

38. Masterplanning for the whole of Northfleet Embankment in conjunction with public and private sector partners should be complete by November. The masterplan will then be taken through public consultation, leading to its adoption as Supplementary Planning Guidance. The TT Electronics site has been acquired and the lease-back completed with the rent received covering the holding costs. In the meantime a planning brief and planning application will be undertaken with an estimate submission date of Spring 2006. It is likely that a design competition will be held to attract the most appropriate development partner.

### **BLAT company**

39. The structure for the proposed company is as a company limited by guarantee and the business plan has been finalized. Prospective partners who have previously registered their interest in becoming members have been asked to confirm this, without legal commitment, so that the proposal can be considered by the SEEDA Board in December. Subject to SEEDA approval, a formal application will be made to DTI before incorporation.

## **AREA-BASED REGENERATION**

### **Milton Keynes**

40. The Inter-Regional Board for Milton Keynes South Midlands growth area met on 4 October chaired by the new Minister, Yvette Cooper. SEEDA led a presentation on the progress of delivering business-led development in the area.

### **Reading**

41. The Reading Property Conference held every three years, showcased the next phase of growth for the town centre. Pam Alexander spoke at the conference to an audience of 500-600 built environment professionals.

### **Andover**

42. SEEDA's work with Test Valley Borough Council has now stimulated the Chamber of Commerce to take a key role in the Andover visioning work. The council is also pursuing with SEEDA options for improving business space in the town.

## **Rowner**

43. Panorama are due to screen a programme on the 31 October on the problems facing families on the Rowner estate. The programme questions Government's efforts to break the cycle of deprivation. The SRB projects at Rowner are highlighted as some of the key successes but they are due to end at the end of the year. Yvette Cooper has agreed to be interviewed for the programme.
44. SEEDA is working with partners on a possible solution, which is complex because the appalling block of flats highlighted is owned by a private landlord.

## **Basingstoke**

45. There are plans for a major new town redevelopment at Basingstoke. This is a multi-million-pound masterplan to create a new-look flagship quarter in a key part of central Basingstoke is in the pipeline. Borough council chiefs want to rebuild much of Basing View with shops, offices, restaurants and leisure facilities, and link it to Festival Place. They also want to see some of the remaining open areas of South View used for housing as part of the same ambitious scheme. The project - which sources say might cost as much as the £300million Festival Place development - could involve the creation of a new town square along with a remodeling of roads and paths.
46. Efforts are being made to persuade Network Rail to join the scheme and release some of its land for building.
47. Council-owned land at Gresley Road could also be part of a blueprint which is set to be drawn up by developers Berkeley Group Plc.

## **East Kent Communities Coalfields**

48. The annual East Kent Communities Coalfields Conference will be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2005. The East Kent Partnership has carefully set the agenda which will give an update on the current activities and progress of the Coalfields Regeneration Programme and other broader regeneration activity in East Kent. The conference will start with a DVD showcasing the exciting projects and investments being made by partners across East Kent. The area team will be strengthened in January by the arrival of a East Kent Sustainability Officer who will work alongside the coalfields and sustainability teams within SEEDA to embed these issues in projects across East Kent.

## **Margate Renewal**

49. The next Board meeting is taking place on the 31<sup>st</sup> October followed by a walking tour of the town centre. The Board will be considering the regeneration strategy for Margate, the dynamics of the Neighbourhood Renewal Area, strategic involvement and interest of HLF, English Heritage, and the Arts Council as well as receiving a critical projects update.

## **Kent Coalfields**

50. BBC Radio Kent broadcast an interview with Gordon Harris during September regarding progress being made with the development.

51. The Kent and Medway area team is managing the preparation of an interim evaluation study of the Kent Coalfields Regeneration programme. A final report is expected on 1<sup>st</sup> December with results feeding into SEEDA's ongoing programme commitments.

### **North Kent Investment**

52. The area team is working closely with the Thames Gateway Kent Partnership (TGKP) and the three ODPM funded Delivery Vehicles (Kent Thameside, Medway Renaissance, Swale Forward) and the North Kent Community Forum to prepare an Investment Plan for SEEDA funding for the next 2 years. Three key themes will be developed: community regeneration, skills and learning and enterprise. Joint working across North Kent on catalytic projects will be encouraged.

### **Westergate House, Brighton**

53. Westergate House was a derelict building comprising 50% light industrial space and 50% office space. A £3.3m SRB and SEEDA supported project will redevelop this site into 10 flexible light industrial units to act as second stage workspace for businesses in the East Brighton area.
54. The construction of the new Westergate House has been subject to a number of delays over the last 18 months. These have been due to a shortfall in funding as a result of higher construction costs than expected, problems with underpinning one of the boundary walls, and the delay in recruiting developers. All these issues have now been resolved and building works is nearing completion.
55. Westergate House is currently on line to achieve an excellent BREEAM rating and has a number of innovative sustainability measures in place. These include geothermal energy, sun pipes, carbon balancing, bird boxes, growing walls, local sourced sweet chestnut cladding, recycled newspaper insulation, solar water heating and the first wind turbine in the City of Brighton and Hove. The Westergate Business Centre is looking to be open later on this year with a formal launch in the New Year. There are currently a number of small businesses interested in renting the units and it is expected that the building will be fully occupied by the end of the first year at the latest.

### **Oxford's West End**

56. On 30 September, the Leaders and Chief Executives of Oxford City and County Councils, the Principal of Oxford and Cherwell Valley College, and SEEDA represented by Paul Hudson, signed a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the renaissance of Oxford's West End. The partnership has been in being for the last three years, stimulated very much by the success of Oxford Castle and Prison project which SEEDA has supported through a grant of over £5m, and which will open later this year.
57. The area between Oxford railway station and the Castle, the West End of Oxford, does not match the reputation the city has as offering an urban experience of the highest quality. Much of the land is owned by the City and County Councils and the FE college, and the tasks the partnership have are to achieve a comprehensive renaissance of the West End. An action plan was commissioned last year from David Lock and Associates, and is now being taken forward as part of the City's Local Development Framework. The local authorities have an ambition to establish joint civic offices in the Oxpens area, so releasing substantial properties they occupy in the centre of Oxford

other purposes. SEEDA's role is to advise the partners especially about the land development opportunities, together with major public realm environmental improvement, and the opportunities provided by the redevelopment of the Westgate Shopping Centre over the next few years.

### **Dartford Town Centre/Northern Gateway**

58. Detailed proposals for the revamp of the main shopping centre, a cultural quarter and river improvements are now being taken forward with public and private sector partners.
59. Stage 2 of the masterplan is underway and will focus on transport issues, building design guides and the progression of development strategies for five key areas of the town. This will lead to further land acquisitions in 2005/06. Public consultation on the proposals is now underway, with significant local interest.

## **C. STRATEGIC INFLUENCING**

### **RES events**

60. Since the last report several more consultation events have taken place. The MKOBB area team organised two RES events, in Oxford and Heathrow. The first event, for stakeholders in the MKOBB area, focussed on transport and skills. The Heathrow event focussed on research, funded and facilitated by SEEDA and commissioned by two Economic Partnerships, Surrey and Thames Valley - 'Strategies and Solutions for Successful Economies'.
61. On 7<sup>th</sup> October over 200 delegates attended a Kent and Medway consultation event at the Ashford International Hotel. After a series of presentations from Pam Alexander and the Kent and Medway Economic Board, delegates were encouraged to participate in table discussions to identify future economic priorities for Kent and Medway. Key themes arising included support for infrastructure (especially road networks to unblock congestion), maintaining an emphasis on growth areas and encouraging further investment in coastal areas as spatial priorities.
62. Susan Priest presented emerging messages from the RES review to the Kent Public Service Board in September, identifying and encouraging linkages between the RES, the Kent LAA and other strategic reviews currently taking place in Kent (i.e. Kent Prospects, Vision for Kent, KMEB's economic priorities). This was warmly welcomed by the Kent Partnership and further updates have been requested, indeed, the area team has already presented to, Maidstone Borough Council's Cabinet Committee as a result of this.
63. Working with Surrey and Thames Valley Economic Partnerships, Deloitte and the MKOBB team, a joint study has been commissioned on Smart Growth and the implications for growth in these two areas in the future. The report has been completed and formed the basis of a sub regional RES events. It is currently being put to the economic partnership boards and we will be working with partners to explore how to take this important work forward. One suggestion is to concentrate on the looks at the possibilities of Heathrow and looking at forming working relationships with West London to complete a 360 degree coverage of the area.

## **Local Area Agreements (LAAs)**

64. Nine new LAAs are being drawn up and the first submissions to GOSE were completed at the end of September. SEEDA guidance to partnership groups assisted with economic data for base-lining. Transport issues feature strongly in all the LAAs.
65. On the Isle of Wight SEEDA has formed part of the Group that has helped shape the document, which focuses on wealth creation, education and skills development and building up aspiration. This is very much in line with the existing AIF activity on the Island.
66. The leader of Isle of Wight County Council has sought the advice of SEEDA and Business Link Wessex on the delivery of business support on the Island. The Council is in the process of considering the results of a number of Select Committees into delivery of council services. Consideration is being given to outsourcing a number of areas of work. This is likely to result in redundancies. This may impact on the role of the Economic Partnership.
67. Progress on the LAA for Hampshire has been slower. SEEDA has helped set out a governance position that incorporates the PUSH area. The LAA cuts through South Hants with Eastleigh, Fareham, Gosport and Havant being parts of Hants and going forward in 2006 with Southampton and Portsmouth following the year after.
68. The Surrey & Sussex team has been continuing to work with partners on LAA's. They have also spent time working with GOSE's locality managers to ensure that they are influencing their thinking on the economic block. The current focus is on giving feedback on the early drafts (which were submitted at the end of September), and taking an active role in the round table cross departmental meetings that have been set up in each area.
69. The Kent and Medway Team are also continuing to work with the Kent Partnership in ensuring future work plans of the Kent Area Partnerships in contributing towards Outcome 8 of the LAA (Economic Prosperity) are aligned where possible. Discussions are taking place throughout October.

## **New Forest National Park Liaison Group**

70. This group met in September to discuss aspirations and concerns regarding the development of the New Forest National Park. There were several aspirations for the Park that included;
  - Driving forward a quality sustainable tourism destination, within existing structures and new ones, to ensure harmony & balance
  - Contributing to the financial sustainability of rural businesses
  - Securing a distinctive long term vision for the NFNP to be a model for European NPs in denser urban regions
  - To look to the future and to become a role model for innovation in environmental management
  - To maintain the fine balance between people and landscape – respect the balance but seek integration without compromising NP purposes.
71. SEEDA is represented through the Area team, who were able to help partners focus on the economic development issues facing the Park. The New Forest is considered a “lagging” rural area i.e. it is not performing well economically and has a steadily increasing older age profile and fragile business base.

## **Regional Skills for Productivity Alliance (RSPA)**

72. The paper, which was sent to the Minister for Skills Philip Hope and the Department for Education and Skills on 30<sup>th</sup> September, provided an update on progress on the work of the South East RSPA, and detailed proposals that will take forward the new areas of responsibility suggested by Ivan Lewis in April 2005 (see Task & Finish Groups below). This response aimed to demonstrate the breadth and extent of activity facilitated, and driven by the RSPA.
73. In April 2005 the RSPA produced a delivery framework detailing the key areas of activity that the Regional Alliance will take forward over the period April 2005 to April 2007.
74. In June 2005, the RSPA established five Task Groups to each focus on, and consider how best the RSPA can genuinely add value in the new areas of responsibility. The 5 Task Groups examined were - Supporting 14-19 reform; Skills Brokerage; Higher Education engagement with businesses; Working with Local Authorities; NETP (National Employer Training Programme)
75. The response was discussed at length at the most recent RSPA meeting that took place on 12<sup>th</sup> October in Guildford. The key issues from the Task and Finish Groups were reviewed and the next steps in taking forward the key recommendations from the groups were outlined.

## **Kent County Council**

76. Jim Brathwaite has written to Paul Carter, newly elected leader of KCC congratulating him on his new position and requesting a meeting with his newly appointed Regeneration Portfolio holder, Graham Gibbens. Alex King, former Regeneration Portfolio holder is now Deputy Leader with responsibility for Policy and International Affairs.

## **Party Conferences**

77. To launch the Greater South East, a collaboration between SEEDA, EEDA and the LDA, SEEDA arranged a Breakfast Reception at each of the three recent Party Conferences. These events were jointly hosted by the three RDAs and were attended by more than 120 guests. A new leaflet was produced specifically for these events presenting key facts and messages about the Greater South East which is now being revised for wider use. A review of our activities at the Party Conferences is now underway in the context of our overall Parliamentary Strategy. Dates for the Conferences in 2006 are:
  - Lib Dem - 17 - 21 Sept, Brighton
  - Labour - 24 - 28 Sept, Manchester
  - Conservative - 1 - 5 Oct, Bournemouth
78. The Greater South East collaboration is likely to feature in our presence at a number of high profile events next year, including the LGA 'Delivering Sustainable Communities' Conference in Feb. and MIPIM in March.

79. SEEDA is also having a modest presence at the two SE Regional Party Conferences, Lib Dem - 29th Oct in Canterbury and Labour - 4 -5 March 2006 in Eastbourne (Conservatives are not holding a SE Regional Conference).

### **Annual Open Public Meeting**

80. SEEDA's Annual Open Public Meeting takes place on Thursday 8th December, Corn Exchange Brighton 10.30 - 13.00. Invitations have been sent out to key stakeholder groups and responses are already being received. To encourage attendance from the general public, advertisements have been taken out in 11 regional/local newspapers and details of the event are on the SEEDA website and in the next issue of SE View which is due to be published shortly. As with last year's event, we are arranging for a webcast to be available immediately after the Meeting for the convenience of those who cannot attend in person.

## *Appendix A*

- **Microtech** – SEEDA assisted Microtech, a low volume contract assembly house based in High Wycombe to find substitute funding through Finance South East when a member of the management buy out team removed their support. This safeguarded 60 jobs.
- **Menard Engineering** - Formerly TWR, Menard have sites in Oxfordshire and Worthing conducting automotive research and development. The headcount of the company has reduced over the last 3 years from 49 to 8, due to difficult market conditions. SEEDA provided support, advice and links to other automotive companies to help with business development. The company are now recruiting 12 people.
- **Simtel** – SEEDA have assisted Irish company Simtel, who supply hardware and software to the telecoms industry, in setting up a sales office in Leatherhead employing 20 people.
- **Sugatsune** – This Japanese company set up a distribution centre to supply industrial construction components in Henley on Thames creating 10 jobs. The company were assisted by SEEDA's Japanese representative Hitoshi Nishikawa. SEEDA also assisted the company by presenting property information relating to office and warehouse options for their future investment. Key contacts within the fields of construction, electronics and life sciences (3 fields which are most relevant to Sugatsunes future business development) were also provided along with specific information on service providers and business support mechanisms within the region.
- **Amoi** – This Chinese telecoms company, set up an R&D and distribution centre in Maidenhead. SEEDA assisted the company by finding commercial and residential property and introducing the company to professional service providers. The company created 10 jobs.