

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

BOARD MEETING ON 14 MAY 2009

ITEM 14

AGENCY REPORT

Recommendation

The Board is invited to **NOTE** the Agency Activity Report for April and May which represents a cross section of reports from within SEEDA organised according to the themes of SEEDA's Corporate Plan 2008-11.

GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

Global Markets programme

Inward Investment Activity

1. The pipeline of potential investments remains strong.
- 2.

Research and Development Programme

National Aerospace Technology Strategy

HealthMap

3. SEEDA funding (£3m over three years) is contributing to HealthMap, an R&D programme to develop Health Management and Prognostic methods for the aerospace industry. GHK Consulting are undertaking an interim evaluation of the impact of the programme, with a particular focus on the eight Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) partners. Initial interviews by GHK suggest that the SME partners have derived considerable value from the programme as a result of working with QinetiQ on complementary technology areas. The structure of the programme has also raised interest with other regions and the TSB.

Innovation and Creativity Programme

Innovation and Growth

Innovation Advisory Service (IAS)

4. SEEDA's contract with Oxford Innovation, who ran the Innovation Advisory Service, has now come to an end. To ensure that best practice was shared, an event was held on 24 March in Guildford to enable business support professionals to learn from the experiences of the IAS and discuss the benefits of open innovation. IAS will be incorporated within the Innovation and Growth team services.

Enterprise Hub Network

5. The Enterprise Hub Network has continued to perform well. At the end of the financial year, the Enterprise Hubs have supported 488 portfolio clients and 3352 network clients. In addition over £37m investment has been achieved by hub clients.

Leadership and Management

6. Through SEEDA's Leadership for Global Competitiveness initiative, the Leadership Academy has brought together leading thinking from Higher Education, private providers and business advisors to develop the region's capacity to deliver world class leadership thinking to business. The Higher Education Funding Council for England has recognised the excellence of the Academy with a recent funding investment of over £300K ensuring the Academy's sustainability, generating new knowledge and delivering support in the region, in particular, to redundant managers.

Designing Demand

7. A further six Designing Demand Introduction to Design workshops were delivered in March with many oversubscribed. Over 150 businesses attended the workshops which were delivered by senior Design Council approved Designers and took companies through an intensive introductory day, designed to inspire companies into the potential impact that design can make to their business profits. During March a record number of companies took part in the full SE Designing Demand programme.
8. JS Humidifiers has won new orders worth £1m, following successful implementation of the design knowledge gained from the SEEDA Designing Demand programme. JS Humidifiers featured in a March edition of the Guardian Newspaper's Business Supplement and Peter Day's 'In Business' programme on Radio 4 on Thursday 23 April.

Sector Consortia

9. SEEDA Chairs the Global Leadership in Environmental Technologies & Services (ETS) Steering Group, with the purpose of maximising the value obtained from the programmes six projects. Delivery of this major three-year programme is being managed by Envirobusiness, the Sector Consortium for environmental technologies and services. The OJEU tendering exercise for four of the projects is complete and companies have now been appointed and are delivering the Market Intelligence, International Sales, International Innovation and Wind and Marine Energy projects.

SMART GROWTH

Enterprise Programme

Business Link – Current Contract

10. Quarter Four has seen a very successful end to the year for Business Link. As a consequence of heightened interest and awareness and of the additional effort put into front line delivery, we have reached or exceeded all Business Link targets for 2008-09.
 - Business Link has worked with over 145,750 customers in the last 12 months - 22,000 individuals thinking of starting a business and 123,750 businesses.
 - Business Link has supported almost 18,000 businesses intensively to develop plans for growth.

- Business Link has helped to create 3,105 businesses (40% of which are majority owned by women)
- Of these 94% are satisfied overall with their experience of Business Link

Business Link – Procurement (contract from April 2010)

11. Friday 24 April was the deadline for submission of full bids to SEEDA for delivery of the Business Link Service from April 2010. A total of seven bidders were shortlisted at the 'PQQ' or Expression of Interest stage and invited to full tender. Recommendations on the preferred supplier will be presented to the SEEDA Board in early summer 2009.

Solutions for Business

12. The Government launched its portfolio of business support on 30 March under the banner of Solutions for Business. SEEDA has worked closely with the Government and our partners in the region to make it easier for businesses to get Government-funded help by streamlining publicly-funded support schemes into one, transparent, easy to find portfolio of products to support business now and to help them to seize the opportunities of the upturn. By March 2010, all Government-funded support for business will fall within the Solutions for Business portfolio so reducing complexity and confusion. Business Link, delivered in the South East by SEEDA, will provide the prime access route for all this support.

Train to Gain

13. The Integrated Skills Brokerage service went live on 1 April 2009. Almost 200 Business Link Advisers/Skills Brokers have been trained in the different offers available and in the new customer journey. There has been input at a national level regarding the development of protocols, performance management definitions and targets, which means that we will be able to deliver a high quality service to all our customers.

Women's Enterprise Regional Activity

14. SEEDA supported a number of events to mark International Women's Day, which took place on 8 March. SEEDA highlighted its support of women's enterprise with a high profile event held at the High Commission of Canada in London, organised in partnership with EMDA and BERR, and hosted by the Women's Enterprise Task Force. Regionally SEEDA supported a networking lunch for the South East Advocates and Ambassadors, with guest speaker, Channel 4 'Secret Millionaire' Caroline Marsh, talking about her business success.
15. SEEDA achieved excellent coverage of its regional Advocates and Ambassadors in March, with a number of articles highlighting women's approach to business sustainability in the economic downturn. Ugandan-born Ida Horner appeared in the Mail on Sunday, and gave a radio interview on BBC London 94.9FM. Penny Bailey one of SEEDA's Brighton based Advocates, appeared on the BBC Politics Show in a report featuring Pam Alexander.

Enterprising Britain

16. SEEDA is looking for the most enterprising place in the South East, to enter the national competition Enterprising Britain 2009. Now in its 4th year and led by BERR and Make Your Mark, each RDA demonstrates excellent examples of regeneration through community engagement and enterprise in its regions. The South East regional winner will be entered into the national judging, with the UK winner announced in October 2009. This year's closing date for region entries was 30 April 2009.

Women's Enterprise Task Force (WETF) Research indicates positive approach amongst female entrepreneurs

17. The WETF is a national thought leadership body which is managed by SEEDA and co-Chaired by Pam Alexander. Recently, and through SEEDA, it has conducted two important pieces of research into women's enterprise in the recession, and women's access to finance. Broadly, its findings are that, although women in employment are suffering, female entrepreneurs' generally low-cost, low-debt business models are standing them in good stead. Women appear to have more positive attitudes towards the economic downturn compared to men and, female entrepreneurs are keen for policy makers not to brand them as victims in the current climate.
18. This is the message which the WETF broadcast at its high-level International Women's Day event last month. In the second piece of research it was concluded that the largest barrier for women's access to finance is lack of financial education. There is no evidence of banks discriminating against women in terms of access to finance. In fact, the research suggests that women pay slightly less for debt finance as they are generally more reliable at repaying loans.
19. Both pieces of research will be disseminated widely as part of the WETF work to continue to advise on and lobby for gender-related enterprise issues to government.

Tourism

New Management Team

20. The new senior management team for Tourism South East has been recruited. The new chair is John Williams who held substantial roles within the public and private sector. His background is brand and communications having founded Fishburn Hedges, the quoted PR and communications agency.
21. Mike Bedingfield has been appointed as Chief Executive of Tourism South East. Mike joins TSE from VisitBritain, where he has undertaken various marketing roles since 2003, latterly as the Director of Marketing.

Business Recovery Campaign

22. Business has responded well to the recovery campaign to date investing to meet matched funding to the SEEDA £200 000 to meet the campaign total £500 000. Response from the consumer is good with over 2200 vouchers downloaded. The Campaign was in the second stage Guardian Supplement 2 May 09, Magic FM 10 day promotion from 24 April supported on line with websites including South East offers specifically developed for the campaign.

Tourism Conference and Council Meeting

23. The award winning Royal Marines Museum at Southsea played host to the Tourism South East conference and Council Meeting attended by over 100 members. The theme was very much managing in the current economic climate and business recovery with presentations from industry practitioners from Crown Plaza, Howletts and Port Lympne Wild Animal Parks and Sandy Balls Holiday Park plus contributions from the Financial Times.

Business and the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

24. The focus of business support for 2012 is CompeteFor - the pre-qualification questionnaire system supported by the business network and supplier support delivered by Business Link. CompeteFor is unique in penetrating the supply chain and breaking contracts down to a size at which SMEs can compete. The CompeteFor programme is a partnership with all the RDAs, DAs, ODA and LOCOG.
25. The South East continues to be the most active region outside London with 12,000 businesses registered on CompeteFor, of which 5000 have qualified to tender. The South East has won over 140 contracts in total which includes 20 with CompeteFor suppliers. The latest significant contracts have been won by the Airwave of Slough providing secure Radio Communications equipment and Buckingham Construction who have won the contract to build the handball arena.
26. The Support through Business Link with events to help business become fit to tender and specialist workshops for bid writing have been oversubscribed. 1000 companies become customers for intensive assistance as result of the 2012 activity.

SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY**Low Carbon Programme****Diamonds Ecological Footprint**

27. SEEDA has helped the South East Diamonds for Investment and Growth to fully recognise that there is a 'win-win' for the Diamonds in leading the region towards meeting RES targets for stabilising the Ecological Footprint (EFp). Finding and delivering low-carbon, resource-efficient solutions will create local jobs as well as providing the platform for international exports, and will also make the Diamonds more attractive for low-carbon inward investment.
28. SEEDA, as chair of the EFp Group reporting to the Diamonds' Leaders Board, commissioned baseline assessments and guidance material to support the Diamonds and their local authorities in planning and taking action to achieve these 'win-win' benefits. The interactive, web-based, 'No-Nonsense Guide' for the Diamonds was formally launched at the Diamonds' Conference on 23rd April. The launch will be followed up by a 'marketing' campaign focussed on key Diamond Leaders and Chief Executives, as well as practitioners. It will be enhanced through feedback and additional material from users, and will be of value to communities going green, as it has a 'wiki' 'discussion page element'. The web-based guide is already recognised beyond the region as being at the cutting edge of action on these issues and – although the immediate focus will be the South East Diamonds for Investment and Growth - we expect a national roll-out of the approach to result as well as roll-out to all local authorities in the South East.

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

29. SEEDA has approved £2.9m for low carbon initiatives that will help over 3,000 South East businesses cut costs and build profits. Half the money is grant funding from the ERDF, and these programmes will support sustainable procurement, sustainable design and innovation, sustainable construction and reduction, re-use and recycling. Businesses will be supported to take advantage of new market opportunities in the growing global green economy. This is good for profit margins and employment as well as for tackling the region's ecological footprint.

Resource Efficiency

Energy 500

30. In March SEEDA launched Energy 500, a pilot scheme aimed at improving energy efficiency in businesses which can be accessed through Business Link. The pilot will enable SEEDA to gather evidence of the effectiveness of this intervention for businesses which are too small to be covered by existing Carbon Trust programmes. The evidence will help SEEDA develop a possible roll out scheme in the South East, to include water usage as well as energy.
31. The SEEDA funding will enable 320 businesses in the South East to be awarded a £500 grant to improve their energy efficiency. To qualify for the scheme the business must rent or own premises and have an annual energy spend of between £1500 and £30 000. Eligible businesses are loaned an energy meter to measure their energy consumption, complete a checklist on potential savings that can be made, and then research and apply for funding for specific measures to be implemented. Energy 500 is being promoted through Business Link, Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), Chamber of Commerce and Local Authorities.
32. Energy 500 benefits include reducing energy costs, raised awareness in the business of energy consumption, increasing demand for energy efficiency products and reducing carbon emissions in the South East.

Natural & Rural Resources

Business Collaboration

33. The Redundant Buildings programme has continued to flourish and support new workspace for enterprise, by creating 250 new local jobs and 20 new businesses in rural areas during 2008-09. The programme is now only supporting projects previously approved but no new initiatives. All redundant building support on farms has now been absorbed by the European RDPE funding but the part of the programme not involving farm buildings has been stopped.
34. The European non single pot programme, Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), continues to support major collaborative projects which encourage businesses to work together to be more effective and provide improved links along the food chain. Two major training programmes, 7 horticulture projects (an important sector in the South East), 3 grain storage

projects and a totally refurbished abattoir have been approved and are in progress. Eight of these major projects are in Kent.

Sector Champions

35. Regarded as an exemplar programme by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), this programme is led by the land industry sector and has developed ideas to improve productivity which are currently being taken up nationally (e.g. precision farming and home grown nursery products). Following evaluation by the Farming and Rural Issues Group (FRIG) the new industry champions are being selected to meet SEEDA's refocused objectives and are supporting those businesses which will deliver the best GVA, where there is growth potential and which will create potential for new technologies.

Thriving Rural Communities

36. The two rural community programmes; Rural Access to Services (RASP) and Small Rural Towns Programme (SRT) have continued to deliver real solutions to local problems, with priorities decided and projects delivered locally. The RASP has just completed its first full year with projects now delivering against SEEDA's rural targets. A major achievement for both programmes is the engagement with and joined up working of community partnerships – for example Hampshire and Buckinghamshire partnerships will share the coordinator role.

Sustainable Communities Programme

The Creative Economy Partnership

37. On 31 March a SEEDA Team from across the Skills and Sustainability and Global Competitiveness Directorates launched the Stimulating Creative Graduates' Website and South East Media Network; which promotes opportunities for recent graduates and creative business to access talent and employment information and knowledge from a wide range of support organisations, including Universities.
38. Alongside this, SEEDA has commissioned a powerful interactive web-based knowledge management and mapping tool; that links together data sets and information across national and regional public agencies, local authorities, funding and research organisations. This tool will enable creative businesses to access data and create customised maps to assist market analysis, business planning, marketing, funding applications and investment proposals. The prototype will be completed and handed over to SEEDA at the end of April.

Corporate Cabinet

39. Despite the major impact of recession on their business, membership has remained remarkably stable. Nine corporate companies are now actively involved in projects concerned with financial and digital inclusion and work-readiness. For example SEEDA has supported Legal & General, EDF Energy, Intel and Toshiba to develop a package of support for credit unions in the South East; which includes business mentoring, advice on governance and business planning, marketing expertise and introductions to local media networks, as well

information and communication technologies (ICT) to support for improving front and backroom services. In addition credit unions have been able to access new investors through the Corporate sponsors' pay roll. Nine Youth, Community and Disability Third Sector organisations will receive individual mentoring and access to extensive international connections to develop their ideas Through the Reaching for Gold project. Corporates supporting the project are BT, Price Waterhouse Coopers, Legal & General, Intel, Honda, Cisco, Huawei and Toshiba.

Making the Most of 2012

40. During March and April; representatives from Malawi, Colombia and Barbados have visited the South East to discuss signing up to the South East Pre-Games Training Camp offer. Each Country will receive £25 000 from the London Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games to spend in the local economy on their training camp. More importantly, there is the opportunity to develop long lasting international connections. For example, the President and General Secretary of the Malawi Olympic Committee are considering one of five South East Training Camps venues but on the 6 April they signed a Memorandum of Understanding with SEEDA to work together to build business, education and cultural opportunities in their chosen location. The Colombian Paralympic Committee signed a similar undertaking on 17 April.

ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

Strategic Development Fund Programme

Newhaven Enterprise Centre

41. Newhaven Enterprise Centre has achieved a significant milestone by beating the current economic conditions, exceeding forecasts, and hitting 100% occupancy in April 2009. Just 18 months after opening, the Centre is home to 34 businesses with Business Link basing their East Sussex Enterprise Gateway service in the Centre.
42. The Centre, operated for SEEDA by private sector partners Basepoint plc, was crowned winners of the Best Business Support category in the recent Sussex Express Business Awards and is clearly having an impact on local business confidence in the Newhaven area.

The Joiners Shop, Chatham

43. Since opening in January 2009, the Joiners Shop is ahead of its forecasted occupancy with the companies being 'start up' or expanding local businesses using the Centre as the next step towards further growth. SEEDA has set up a steering group of local partners and is working with local universities to use the Joiners Shop as a link between their creative courses, networks and local businesses.
44. A series of networking events, 'The Business of Creativity', have been organised and will be held in the Joiners Shop. The events aim to establish the Joiners Shop as the hub for creative industries in the area and to create local support. The events will include galleries for local artists, hot desking and workshop space.

45. SEEDA is working with Business Link Kent to increase the take up of their services by businesses in the Joiners Shop and the surrounding Dockyard. Enterprise First is holding regular seminars and clinics for local businesses in the Joiners Shop.
46. The Joiners Shop has been shortlisted by the Royal Institute of British Architects award for architecture in the south east and will be part of the Festival of Architecture.

Queenborough & Rushenden

47. SEEDA has completed the acquisition of the compensatory land which is required to proceed with the enabling works for Phase 1 of the Neats Court employment development. Work should be completed by October 2009. The acquisition of this land also discharged the final planning condition required for the contract with Aldi to complete. This released private sector funding of nearly £8m necessary not only to complete the enabling works but also for Section 1 of the new Rushenden Link Road. The completion of the enabling works will allow Aldi to start work on their new 53,000 square metres regional Headquarters and distribution centre which should generate around 250 jobs and secure a further £30m of private sector investment.
48. The project to acquire the compensatory land involved working with both private and public sector partners, including The Crown Estate, Goodman, a large Australian based multi-national developer, and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.
49. Goodman's involvement was significant as it provided private sector funding and with SEEDA's intervention it allowed Goodman to proceed with a planning application at Kingsnorth in Medway. The application is for almost 3m square foot of new employment space which will create up to 4,500 jobs and generate around £180m of investment.

East Cowes

50. SEEDA continue to progress negotiations associated with developments in the town centre site – including Waitrose and the medical centre. Once these have been completed, relevant planning applications will be submitted to the Isle of Wight Council.
51. Clancy Docwra is continuing to make good progress with the Phase 1 infrastructure works. It is anticipated these will be completed by the end of July 2009.

Cowes Outer Harbour

52. All outstanding issues associated with the proposed development have now been resolved. It is intended that a planning application and the marine consents will be submitted to the Isle of Wight Council by early summer 2009.

Woolston

53. Commercial negotiations with both Crest Nicholson Regeneration and Palmer Johnson continue to progress. It is anticipated that the remediation of the area designated for residential development will be completed by mid 2009.

Daedalus

54. Following the formal consultation of the Visionary Framework by all relevant stakeholders, including the Local Authorities, the Project Team is progressing with the drafting of two Supplementary Planning Documents. These will set out the planning policy for the site and form the basis against which future planning applications are determined.

Infrastructure Programme

South East Excellence – responding to the credit crunch

55. CB Richard Ellis were commissioned to (a) consider the current economic conditions and the prospects for the regional property market; (b) debate whether the mechanisms for delivering regeneration and development will still work as the economy comes out of recession; and (c) to consider whether the current recession provides us with a one-off opportunity to fundamentally reappraise the way in which the public and the private sector engage, and to move away from the traditional adversarial relationships upon which so much development activity is founded. The research also addressed the implications of the current downturn for delivery skills and capacity.
56. In March 2009, the emerging recommendations were tested with over 200 senior regional stakeholders from across the public and private sector and we are hearing of authorities who are seeking to engage more positively with the industry as a result.

South East Excellence – skills for a low carbon and resource efficient economy

57. Climate change will be a key driver for the future economy, both in terms of the development of new environmental technologies, and the increase in demand for those technologies through new build and retrofit of existing buildings. The role of the client (investors, developers and public sector clients) is critical to tackling climate change.
58. SEEDA carried out research to identify the range of higher skills implications that arise from this and feed through the supply chain. The research also sought to understand the scale of demand and the extent to which the training and advice available to the region could respond to this.
59. The research will be disseminated to a range of agencies including Sector Skills Councils, Professional Institutes and Universities with the objective of informing curriculum development across the region.

South East Excellence – supporting young career entrants into the workplace

60. Prior to the current market conditions, the South East faced the greatest skills shortages of the English regions. The development industry has seen substantial losses more recently amongst their professional teams. Senior industry figures and education providers have expressed real concerns about the industry's capacity to respond to an upturn in the market.
61. With an ageing workforce one concern is that those graduating now may not be able to take up careers in the industry, bringing real problems for future years.

62. In response, SEEDA has been working to support early career entrants in the built environment sector. With advice from the professional institutes, SEEDA commissioned a targeted guide for the sector on the business benefits of internships and work placements, together with practical advice on how to get the most from the experience.
63. A demonstration programme to encourage collaboration between local authorities and Universities also had the objective of supporting emerging graduates.

STRATEGIC INFLUENCE

Area Teams

Surrey and Berkshire Area Team

Monitoring the Economic Downturn

64. Working with both the economic and sub regional partnerships in Surrey and Berkshire, SEEDA is helping to develop a co-ordinated response to the economic downturn. For example, Surrey Economic Partnership is specifically developing an executive job club to support executives especially those made redundant in London but living in Surrey.

Capacity Building / Sub-Regional Partnerships

65. SEEDA has briefed and supported the Berkshire Economic Strategy Board Interim Chief Executive, including work on its performance report, evaluation with partners and its end of year review. Further work continues with the Board to develop its governance and operation models to accommodate both the public sector via the Board and the private sector via Thames Valley Economic Partnership.

Shaping Delivery

66. Local Authority Leaders and Chief Executives (24 March) in Berkshire received a briefing on Western Access to Heathrow study priorities. SEEDA is also monitoring local concerns over AirTrack affecting level crossing down times in Runnymede and impact of scheme on Staines Town Centre – so far this is being managed without holding up the Transport and Works Act application by BAA.
67. A meeting has been held with the University of Reading (27 March) to discuss the new Science Park Proposal which secured ongoing involvement in planning the scheme including representation on the project steering group to ensure right type of companies (sectors and functions) are attracted to the Park.
68. SEEDA is actively supporting the British Science Association in its planning for the Festival of Science to be held at University of Surrey in September. It attended the evening reception and address (9 March) by Lord May of Oxford on managing creativity and its application to science, technology and engineering. A briefing by the British Science Association was also arranged (17 March) for SEEDA Investor Developer Managers to increase awareness and understanding and generate links to knowledge driven and innovative businesses in order that they can showcase themselves at the event.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Area Team

Vestas Blades announcement

69. On 29th April, Vestas announced that a 90 day consultation will start on the future of their factory which manufactures blades on the Isle of Wight. Around 530 people are employed at their Isle of Wight plant. The announcement also affects around 85 staff employed at Vestas manufacturing, painting and pre-export storage operation in Southampton.
70. In response, SEEDA has set up a new Rapid Response Taskforce. The group, led by Kathy Slack, SEEDA's Hampshire and Isle of Wight Area Director, brings together key organisations that can provide support in case of redundancies. Members include the Isle of Wight Council, Southampton City Council, Learning and Skills Council, Jobcentre Plus, Business Link and SEEDA. Jonathan Shaw, Regional Minister for the South East attended the first meeting. Our response to the Vestas consultation is based on our approach to Ford's redundancy programme in February.
71. The Taskforce will help affected staff retrain, start businesses or find alternative jobs. Support for affected staff will be provided on-site at Vestas' Newport and Woolston plants and could include workshops, 1-2-1 advice sessions and opportunities for personal development and training.

Action on marine skills

72. As part of our commitment to deliver the priorities of the Solent Waterfront Strategy, SEEDA is working closely with partners to address skills gaps and shortages facing the marine sector. At the request of partners, SEEDA is leading work to:
- Increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities for the marine sector. The LSC SE submitted an employer backed bid in January to National LSC to expand the number of marine apprenticeships from this September and we are waiting to hear back from National LSC.
 - Launch a new aluminium welding course, particularly aimed at welders being made redundant from other manufacturing sectors so they can retrain for opportunities in the marine sector. The workshop has been built at Southampton City College and a new aluminium welding qualification is in development with SEMTA and QCA.
73. A dedicated Marine Skills Broker has also been appointed to work with Solent marine firms on resolving skills issues.

Basingstoke Learning Campus update

74. SEEDA is working in partnership with a wide range of partners in the Basingstoke Diamond to support the creation of the 'Basingstoke Learning Campus'. The plan is to create a new Campus close to the town centre that brings together a new home for Basingstoke College of Technology with HE and incubation space. The project is critical to future growth of the town and in fulfilling growth point and diamond ambitions.
75. The £100m proposal to re-site and provide new premises for Basingstoke College of Technology is one of many schemes that is being reviewed following the LSC halting their national capital programme in March. SEEDA is working with partners to agree interim innovation and HE solutions for Basingstoke in case LSC funding is delayed or not secured. It is envisaged the new innovation centre will be in operation by the end of this year and SEEDA is currently working with Winchester University to develop a 'HE Action Plan' for Basingstoke.

Farnborough Airport consultation

76. SEEDA has recently responded to two recent consultations concerning the expansion of Farnborough Airport by Rushmoor Borough Council and the airport operator TAG. The airport is restricted to 28,000 movements per annum. In 2008, there were 25,504 aircraft movements in Farnborough Airport and TAG estimate that demand will exceed their permitted capacity in 2011 unless planning permission allowing expansion is granted. SEEDA's supportive response acknowledges Farnborough Airport as a major economic asset and that aviation is a key part of Farnborough's image and inward investment 'offer'. The response also states the need to manage the impact of airport expansion on local air quality and the contribution of increased movements to climate change.

Kent and Medway

Employer Skills Event

77. The Thames Gateway Chamber of Commerce hosted an Employment Engagement Breakfast on Friday 27 March. SEEDA Board member Les Dawson attended the event, along with representatives from SEEDA's Kent and Medway Area Team.
78. The event was for employers to learn more about Train to Gain and the North Kent Multi Area Agreement and for the public sector to hear from businesses about how well current provision meets their skills and training needs.
79. A key point that emerged from the discussion was the need for clearer information and for a single clear access point through which businesses can learn how to access funding and training to meet their skills needs.

North Kent Multi Area Agreement (MAA)

80. SEEDA continues to work the partners on the North Kent MAA, despite a recent Government announcement to delay signing the 'third wave' MAAs from April until July 2009.
81. Partners are finalising the 'freedoms and flexibilities' to be sought through the MAA, which focuses in the first instance on skills/employability, housing and transport. Dialogue is due to take place with Whitehall departments during May to discuss these proposals.

Ashford Learning Campus

82. Ministerial approval has been given for the proposed merger of South Kent College and West Kent College to proceed. SEEDA and other partners had written in support to ministers, emphasising the strategic economic case for this merger.
83. This is a critical step towards achieving a new learning campus in Ashford, which is an integral part of the town's growth plans and will help to ensure that the business-related skills needs of south and east Kent are met. SEEDA will continue to work with the Learning and Skills Council and Ashford partners to address the capital funding requirement for building the learning campus on a SEEDA-owned site in Ashford.

Sussex Area Team

Gatwick Diamond

84. The Gatwick Diamond is a business-led public private partnership. SEEDA, through the Area Teams, are well represented across the governance

- arrangements and partners are now developing a work plan and joint investment plan to support the delivery of the Gatwick Diamond Future Plan.
85. An enhanced strategic alliance continues to develop between Gatwick Airport and SEEDA as the Airport moves to divest itself from BAA and prepares for the sale. SEEDA is working closely with the airport management team to ensure that airport plays a full role in the economic development opportunities for the Gatwick, Diamond. A key priority is environmental sustainability and 'green airports' agenda, and a joint Gatwick Airport/SEEDA working group is being set up to take this forward.
 86. The University of Brighton, in partnership with SEEDA, Crawley BC and Central Sussex College are taking a lead role in the creation of a University Centre in the heart of Crawley to support educational attainment and progression across the Gatwick Diamond. The Steering group partners are managing the final stage of demand and options analysis required to support the application to Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) for University challenge funding. SEEDA funded the early stage work and has secured commitment from partners to fund the final stage of work.

Shoreham Harbour Project

87. SEEDA's re-planning and re-focusing means we are scaling back our investment in the Shoreham Harbour project masterplanning work. SEEDA originally approved £3.4m for the completion of all enabling project policy development work and to secure the award of Growth Point Status. SEEDA has scaled back its funding commitment to £2.7m (of which approximately £2.2m has been spent) which leaves a significant shortfall when compared with total preliminary project delivery costs. Following a recent review, it is now estimated that the total costs to complete the critical tasks necessary to put in place the key project components identified above is approximately £5m which generates an immediate shortfall position of approximately £2.5m over the next two financial years. SEEDA, through the Project lead and the Area Team, is currently working with partners to scrutinise all project costs to reduce critical cost headings wherever possible, and has secured agreement with DCLG and partners to use the £3m Growth Point funding to plug this gap. Whilst, work continues to complete the technical planning and viability studies, SEEDA is working closely with the 3 Local Authority partners, and Shoreham Port to look at options for establishing a special purpose vehicle for delivering the long term project of up to 10,000 homes and 7,000+ jobs.

West Sussex

88. The economic climate is starting to have a significant effect on West Sussex. The numbers of redundancies and job losses are slowly climbing albeit in line with projected figures of the South East as whole. Through the Area Team we have been in regular contact with partners from the region to identify a way forward in helping stem the tide of job losses and facilitate the stability of the West Sussex Economy. The Area Team, together with the Investor Development Managers is leading work with Local Authorities, Job Centre Plus and other stakeholders to ensure West Sussex is in a position to respond effectively when dealing with large scale redundancies and be proactive in offering a range of support packages available to both individuals and businesses affected by the current economic climate.
89. The Area Team is working with partners across Coastal West Sussex to ensure that the investments being made into education are able to maximise the impact of education as a driver for economic development. An event in March

galvanised political and institutional support to a range of actions that will deliver education led regeneration across Coastal West Sussex.

90. SEEDA is working closely with the University of Chichester to realise the economic impact that the redevelopment of their Bognor Regis campus could have for the coastal strip. The redevelopment will support business creation, innovation and opportunities for engendering an entrepreneurial spirit within the community.

Innovation and Growth Teams (IGT)

91. Two IGTs, East Surrey and West Sussex and Brighton and Hove and East Sussex are developing their business plans. The Area Teams continue to support the Partnerships to resolve issues and to develop creative, business focused plans that meet the requirements set by SEEDA and benefit businesses across the areas.

Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Area Team

Science Vale UK

92. SEEDA has contributed £100K to support Science Vale UK (SVUK) in Southern Oxfordshire. This will support the marketing activity for inward investment and develop a learning plan to ensure local business receive the skills support they need. As part of SVUK, SEEDA meet quarterly with partners at Harwell Science and Innovation Campus to support their joint venture expansion plans for Harwell. The SEEDA funded voucher scheme for businesses to use the facilities at Harwell will help 20 businesses access the technology at Harwell. Each voucher is worth up to £4K.

BMW

93. The taskforce set up and led by SEEDA has been meeting frequently since the announcement by BMW in February. At the last meeting, Jobcentre Plus reported that a total of 220 claims had been taken from affected agency workers in Oxfordshire and currently there are very few telephone calls to the dedicated helpline set up especially for the BMW workers. SEEDA is meeting regularly with BMW and the taskforce continues to meet to monitor the situation and share intelligence about any other local redundancies, providing collective support.

South East Delivery Council (SEEDC) and Lending Roadshow

94. On the 21 April the South East Delivery Council (SEEDC), chaired by Jonathan Shaw and Jim Brathwaite, met in Milton Keynes in a combined event with the government regional roadshow; the Regional Lending Seminar. The event was run in conjunction with BERR and attended by Gareth Thomas, Minister for Trade, Development and Consumer Affairs.
95. SEEDC discussed how best to offer solutions in terms of support from banks and access to funding, housing and regeneration. Members were also keen to share lessons and best practice from across the South East. The Milton Keynes Economic and Learning partnership (MKELP), Chamber of Commerce and Milton Keynes Council jointly presented to the meeting outlining their initiatives and support packages for local businesses that came out of a local economic summit which SEEDA supported.
96. The Lending Roadshow event attracted over 100 attendees, over 40 of which were from local businesses, who heard how business support and bank finance are helping South East companies, and were asked about any additional support needed. The feedback from attendees is being turned into a short report to be submitted to BERR for follow up.

Visit to Buckinghamshire

97. On the 23 March Jim Brathwaite and Pam Alexander spent the day in Buckinghamshire. The visit started with an informative discussion on the Aylesbury Vale Growth Area (as part of Milton Keynes South Midlands) with a tour of town centre developments. Jim and Pam visited a local training organisation to see first hand how apprenticeships are trained and NVQs delivered. SEEDA has followed up points raised about funding, apprenticeships and Train to Gain with DIUS.
98. A discussion was also held with SEEDA and the Local Authorities in Buckinghamshire about collectively working to prioritise activity across the County that will most impact on the economy. The SEEDA funded sub regional partnership (Buckinghamshire Economic and Learning Partnership) will lead on taking action forward.