

## Welcome and Introduction

**JIM BRATHWAITE CBE**, Chairman  
South East England Development Agency

SEEDA Annual Public Open Meeting  
Thursday 25 October 2007 in Milton Keynes

*[check against delivery]*

I would like to welcome you to our Annual Public Open Meeting in Milton Keynes.

Today we will launch the RES Implementation Plan, an important next step in delivering the Regional Economic Strategy. A first Annual Monitoring Report will be published today measuring progress towards the objectives and targets as set out in the RES. Since its publication in autumn 2006 neither the region's strategy nor the region's economy have stood still – the RES is a living strategy to be reviewed and adjusted as it develops.

- Following my short introduction highlighting some key achievements Pam will talk in more detail about our activities throughout the past 18 months as well as outlining our plans for the future.
- Ian Chisnall, Deputy Chair of the Regional Assembly, will deliver a report from the South East England Regional Assembly and John Best, Chief Executive of MK Council – our host town today – will provide the local perspective.
- This will be followed by the official launch of the RES Implementation Plan and Paul Lovejoy will introduce this exciting and challenging document.
- After that you will have the opportunity to ask questions. SEEDA Board Members will join the panel to respond to your ideas and concerns.
- This morning will close with a networking lunch and another opportunity to visit the South East Marketplace.

## **THE SOUTH EAST: A DIVERSE SET OF PLACES**

We all know the scale and complexity of the economic development job we are involved in the South East:

- More than 8 million people
- 74 Local Authorities
- Our economy of £160 billion is larger than that of Ireland, Switzerland or Norway
- We are one of the only three regions making a net contribution to the Treasury - £11bn in 2006-7

## **What does this mean for our work in the region?**

- First and foremost it means that we all need to work together in partnership.
- The Regional Economic Strategy and its Implementation Plan, which will be launched today, set out clear targets and transformational actions responding to the challenges we all face in this region. And the economic contours and spatial priorities, aligned with the Regional Spatial Strategy which has now completed its Enquiry in Public, will help to focus our work on places.
- The Diamonds for Investment and Growth are a mechanism for translating the cross-boundary nature of city-regions into the very particular economic areas of the South East around our key cities and towns. They are taking the first steps to developing multi stakeholder agreements - particularly Urban South Hampshire, the Thames Gateway and Milton Keynes /S. Mids. But the real win is to focus on more effective ways of delivering investment in the infrastructure needed to support growth, whatever the increases in houses and jobs.
- Our important work with the Regional Assembly to create a Joint Delivery Framework for the RES and the RSS – the South East Plan – and to create a Regional Infrastructure Fund to bring forward infrastructure schemes more quickly and effectively will be key to responding to the Government's Sub-National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR).
- Enhanced roles for local authorities in promoting local prosperity in line with the objectives of the RES will help the region to achieve its vision. Our new approach to sub-regional partnerships has been to engage SEEDA and the business community in Local Area Agreements and align regional and local goals and I believe we have a firm foundation on which to build.

## **INVESTING IN SUCCESS: THE GREATER SOUTH EAST**

One of the things we at SEEDA have spent more time on this year is working with London and the East of England on the case for investing in success as well as in underperformance

- We think government should have a strategy for its world-beating economy in the South to match its strategy for the potential growth pole in the North
- We have set out a manifesto for action which aligns very well with our RES and shows how we could act strategically together across the RDAs to add value. For example we propose working together with national government on Technology Roadmapping to establish science and technology priorities in the Greater South East for the next 10-20 years – as some of the strongest US-regions already do very successfully.
- We have put the case to Treasury and other government departments, we know we have support from business and universities – we hope the CSR will give us the flexibility and support to move forward, particularly on the Regional Infrastructure Fund as a means to fund agreed priorities more effectively

Two major projects we have been working on this year will both increase the economic success of the South East:

- the Thames Gateway Economic Statement has convinced CLG that this is an economic development project, not just a housing regeneration one. We think we can generate an extra £12bn GVA if we get development there right and ensure that these are revitalised communities not commuter towns. And Ebbsfleet as one of the agreed four top priorities for the whole TG is a good example of bringing together a £120m funding package for infrastructure to unlock development which isn't just about dormitory housing for London but real economic development for local communities; and
- the Alphasat project building on our world lead in satellite technology in Portsmouth. Co-funded by the European Space Agency it will secure 530 highly skilled jobs in Portsmouth, London & in the East of England [roughly 315 for SE, 115 for EEDA and 100 for LDA]; a total £250m worth of business for the Greater South East, as well as maintaining our global lead in the technology, so crucial to the lead London now has as global financial centre, and securing around £350m of investment from the EU and from the companies involved.

## **OUR YEAR IN REVIEW**

SEEDA performed really well in 2006/7. Highlights for me were:

Independent Performance Assessment result

- Really pleased with the Independent Performance Assessment result, 21 out of 24 points in the top, performing strongly band especially on ambitions and achievements.
- Partners supportive and constructive comments during the NAO's scrutiny suggest that they understand SEEDA's added value to the region.
- We need to build on that goodwill and support in delivering the RES Implementation Plan alongside the development of our new Corporate Plan.

Budget outturn was right on the target of £179m and output targets mostly well ahead of schedule, although Pam will report on that in more detail,

We have made great progress on projects to secure our global competitiveness in leading edge innovation.

- Diamond Synchrotron at Harwell gives us a real centre of world class research and innovation – it is now open for business and the first projects are with the universities of Durham, Oxford, Leicester and the Natural History Museum – working on everything from high performance computing and data storage, to cancer research and the origins of the universe
- Our support to the aerospace industry is building a world class centre of excellence around Farnborough through the aerospace consortium – Boeing has brought R+D facilities in over the last year with 300 hi-tech jobs
- And we have a 'space corridor' developing stretching from Portsmouth through EADS-Astrium Innovation Centre right through Guildford up into London and the East of England through Inmarsat

And I can't finish without mentioning the visit of Gordon Brown in March 2007 when he was Chancellor – it was a real opportunity for SE business to give their views straight to the heart of Government – and we have many regional friends on the new Business Council he has set up in his first days as PM

I firmly believe that the South East is geared up to be a world class region achieving sustainable prosperity.

- Our three values of building on excellence for global competitiveness, investing in potential to lift underperformance and safeguarding quality of life as a competitive advantage will guide investment and activities across the region
- And we will get on with delivery of the RES and the RSS as we have already planned to produce a Single Delivery Plan together with the Assembly and regional stakeholders.

So, these are some of the headlines of our year – I'll hand over to Pam now to report back to you in more detail

**THANK YOU.**