

Delivering an Urban Renaissance through Physical and Community Regeneration

1999-2001

Introduction

Over the last two years, SEEDA has been working with partners across the region in support of a wide range of activities. These aim to tackle social exclusion and deprivation through improving the physical environment, supporting community development and providing new opportunities for employment. Our activities have focused on delivering the priorities outlined in the World Class Communities and Urban Renaissance chapter in the Regional Economic Strategy (RES):

- strategic regeneration of deprived parts of the region
- disseminating best practice
- promoting social inclusion
- encouraging community development
- stimulating urban renaissance

Key Facts

- With a population of over 8 million, the South East is the largest region. While it has the lowest level of unemployment in the UK, the absolute number of unemployed stands 6th highest out of the 12 UK regions
- There are 119 wards in the South East do which fall within the 20% most deprived wards in the country
- 600,000 adults in the South East do not have the basic literacy and numeracy skills of an 11 year old
- The South East has the second highest amount of 'poor housing' of any region in the UK

Outputs

Since SEEDA commenced operations in April 1999, the following has directly resulted from SEEDA's investments:

- 450 hectares of land reclaimed
- 320,000m² of employment space created providing quality accommodation to support around 100,000 jobs
- £100 million of assistance provided in community regeneration
- Established, at Chatham Maritime, one of only three schemes in the UK with over 100 homes with a BREEAM EcoHomes rating of environmental excellence
- Attracted more than £250 million in private sector investment into regeneration schemes across the region

Some of SEEDA's specific initiatives to support a Physical and Community Renaissance are:

◆ Sustainable Development

Informed by SEEDA's Sustainable Development Board Committee and Regional Sustainable Development Framework, SEEDA has committed itself to structure, appraise and undertake all its projects building on national best practice.

10 conferences have been held to promote sustainable development across the region, working closely with the Regional Assembly and the Government Office for the South East.

SEEDA acquired and developed the 10 hectare Shearway Business Park site, Folkestone, to address business space needs in East Kent.



◆ Area Investment Frameworks (AIFs)

SEEDA has built on past national best practice to establish AIFs. This novel approach ensures that all the potential plans for investment from the public, private, academic and voluntary sectors are taken into account when creating and delivering the comprehensive regeneration of a large urban area. A pilot programme has been completed in Southampton. Further AIFs are being undertaken in north Kent; south Sussex Coast; east Kent and Thanet; the Hastings and Rother area and the Isle of Wight. AIFs will be completed for all priority regeneration areas and inform and enable the prioritisation of future spend by SEEDA and its local partners.



Mary Seacole Nursery, a SEEDA funded rebuild of an established facility using brownfield land in a deprived area of Reading, which will also serve other local groups.

◆ Community Regeneration

Over the past two years, SEEDA has doubled the amount of funding directed to community regeneration through local SRB partnerships to tackle social inclusion. In Southampton, Portsmouth and Brighton comprehensive neighbourhood investment programmes are underway. Other key locations around the region, east Oxford, Slough, Reading, Woking, High Wycombe, the south coast towns, east Kent and Thames Gateway, are also in receipt of SEEDA funding. The result is an urban renaissance, equipping local communities to improve their skills, prospects, and environment and to create jobs to enable economic inclusion.

◆ Land Reclamation & Heritage Investment

SEEDA, as the principal public sector provider of funding for the reclamation of brownfield sites, has undertaken record levels of land remediation both directly and through its SRB partners. SEEDA has led the way nationally, appointing a Biodiversity Advisor to assist in both the cleaning up of despoiled land and buildings and in improving the surrounding environment. SEEDA's activities have included acquiring two of the largest industrial sites in the Solent Gateway (which had lain vacant for years); acquiring the derelict Broomgrove power station in Hastings for remediation and mixed use development; substantial work on the Kent Coalfields (see below) and numerous community based projects.

SEEDA is also undertaking a number of significant investments saving some of the region's significant cultural heritage. These include: the reclamation of a large contaminated site at Priddy's Hard in Gosport and the restoration of the Fort at Newhaven.

◆ The Kent Coalfields

Few people are aware that there was a former coalfield in East Kent which closed 10 years ago. The three sites at Tilmanstone, Betteshanger and Snowdown had lain derelict since closure until SEEDA took an ownership position in 2000. In the past two years, Tilmanstone has been fully remediated and regenerated. 15 hectares of land were sold to GEEST and a 15,000m² factory has been built, providing 50 new jobs and safeguarding another 250 in salad preparation and food production. A 10,000m² expansion is already planned. Land has also been sold to develop 2,500m² of new manufacturing units and to allow the expansion of a local steel fabrication business.

At Betteshanger, contractors are now on site. After extensive local consultation, the development masterplan is due in January 2002. Unsafe, derelict buildings have been demolished and the reclamation of the extensive pit site is getting underway. Office buildings are being refurbished to provide 'incubator' space for new and expanding local businesses. In Snowdown, a Regeneration Forum has been established, galvanising the community and SEEDA is preparing to compulsory purchase the site to enable works to commence.

◆ Space for Business and Employment

SEEDA has undertaken a number of developments in deprived areas, providing the necessary appropriate space for individuals to start and grow their businesses. Examples include:

- In the Isle of Wight, SEEDA has developed the St Cross Business Park with local partners to provide a business centre, incubation space and production facilities to support local businesses and inward investment from world leaders in lamination technology
- SEEDA's Shearway Business Park in Folkestone involved the acquisition, remediation and servicing of 10 hectares of derelict land adjacent to the M20
- At Broadmarsh Business Centre in Havant, working with private sector developers, SEEDA has provided almost 3,000m² of managed workspace (53 units) on a derelict former landfill site, providing new local employment opportunities



SEEDA's community regeneration projects, such as the playgroup at Aylesham Community Centre, help to provide a new focus for local people and can be a catalyst for community revival.

◆ Chatham Maritime

One of the largest Government supported projects outside London, Chatham Maritime is SEEDA's flagship project.

Our investment over the last two years exceeds that put in by the public sector over the past ten years.

The project is hailed by the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions as a national best practice example in mixed use development. Over the past two years SEEDA has:

- Built over 400 homes in joint venture with Countryside Properties as part of a future 1700 home development on St Mary's Island. The most recent 'Fishing Village' phase of the scheme received various design awards
- Held the most successful international housing design competition in the UK for the next phase of the housing project
- Negotiated and contracted for a 15,000m² factory outlet shopping scheme expecting 2-3 million visitors per year
- Constructed a 300 berth marina
- Undertaken a successful public/private venture to build 8,500m² of speculative office accommodation

◆ Shoreham

A new centre is planned for Shoreham, with SEEDA assembling the derelict Ropetackle site using its compulsory purchase powers. The innovative 'excellent' Eco-Home rated scheme will provide up to 220 new homes, shops, cafés, workspaces and a new Town Square. The scheme, a joint venture between SEEDA and Berkeley Homes, will also include riverside walks, home zones and purpose built community facilities.



Chatham Maritime, SEEDA's flagship regeneration project, is one of only three schemes in the UK comprising of over 100 houses with 'BREEAM Eco-Homes rating.'

◆ Urban Design

In line with the RES, SEEDA has focused on creating a radical shift in the quality of urban planning and the design of the built form across the South East. SEEDA has been pursuing a five point plan to bring this about:

- pressing for changes in the planning framework at regional and local level
- establishing a network of Architecture Centres across the region
- creating a virtual Centre of Excellence for skills and training in Urban Renaissance (across the London, South East and Eastern regions)
- scoping the establishment of a Regional Design Panel in co-operation with the Centre for Architecture & the Built Environment
- setting a benchmark standard through design competitions

Conservation students and New Deal trainees are learning new skills and improving their environment in this 'Island 2000' project, Isle of Wight, funded by SEEDA's Rural Development Programme.



Brighton Seafront - SEEDA's Fund for Regeneration provided £714,000 towards a £2.4 million project providing public arts, play facilities and walkways to extend business reach from the new pier out to Hove.



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