

SOUTH EAST STRATEGY BOARD

Purpose

This paper provides a steer for Board members in advance of the Strategy Board, and the associated workshop for all SEEDA Board members and South East England Council Leaders, on 26 November 2009. SEEDA has four representatives on the Strategy Board.

Recommendation

The Board is invited to **AGREE** that:

At the morning workshop on 26 November SEEDA Board members should promote the eight Diamonds for Investment and Growth, and the four areas of SEEDA's ongoing programmes of regeneration (Margate, Dover, Hastings and Bexhill) and growth (Ashford), as the foci for place-based interventions in the region.

Reputational implications

The effective involvement of SEEDA Board members in developing the Regional Strategy is important for SEEDA's reputation.

Financial and resource implications

SEEDA part funds work on the Regional Strategy, with the balance coming from CLG funding for Regional Planning.

Timescale

Producing the single regional strategy is a long term project. The aim is to produce the Regional Strategy by end of 2011, for consideration at a Public Examination.

Justification for recommendation

The forward programme contains the following items for 26 November meeting:

- Regional Strategy – draft project plan and timetable
- Regional Delivery Plan progress
- New working arrangements for learning and skills
- South East Plan partial review, Gypsies and Travellers – transit site provision

A full briefing for Board members will be issued nearer the time of the meeting.

A workshop will be held in the morning for all South East England Leaders Board and SEEDA Board members. This will look at options for sub regional working and Greater South East working, and will also provide an update on the think-pieces.

Author

Signed off-by

Paul Lovejoy, Executive Director (Strategy and Communications), 28 October 2009

To be published

Annex – Background to the Strategy Board and SEEDA Objectives

1. The purpose of the South East England Strategy Board is to steer the preparation of the Regional Strategy and ensure it meets the overarching outcome of sustainable economic growth. The Board also has responsibility for aligning the investment programmes of the three Delivery Boards and ensuring there is alignment between strategy and delivery. As a result each Strategy Board meeting can be expected to take decisions relating to the Regional Strategy itself and to aspects of the Implementation Plan and delivery programmes.

2. The Strategy Board reports to the South East England Partnership Board. The Board is made up of eight representatives of South East England Councils and four SEEDA Board members. Decisions have to be made by consensus. SEEDA members of the Strategy Board are Pamela Charlwood, Les Dawson, Keith Mitchell and Alex Pratt.

3. The Strategy Board is currently operating in advance of the legislation to introduce Regional Strategies being put in place. This Bill, the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill, is currently in the final stages of its passage through parliament, with Royal Assent expected by the end of November. The Government envisages that the Regional Strategy will consist of a 15-20 year Strategy and a 3-5 year Implementation Plan. The indicative timetable considered by the Strategy Board divides the work of preparing the Strategy and Implementation Plan into three phases:

Phase 1: Establishing and Evidencing the Big Issues	July 2009 to May 2010
Phase 2: Developing and Agreeing the Strategy	June 2010 to Dec 2011
Phase 3: Public Examination and Government Approval	Jan 2012 to June 2013

4. We are currently in the first phase – establishing and evidencing the big issues. The Partnership Board agreed a set of six big issues, which will be the subject of think-pieces. These think-pieces are currently being prepared, to include contributions from a range of external experts. They will be the subject of two major workshops for delivery agencies, stakeholders, local authorities and SEEDA in February 2010. The think-piece topics are as follows:

- Climate change and the low-carbon society
- Dealing with economic disadvantage
- Demographic change and the ageing population
- Funding for infrastructure and investment
- Making housing more affordable
- Technological innovation and economic growth

5. In this first phase the role of the Strategy Board will be to agree the work plan, and to steer production of the think-pieces. Consideration of the issues themselves will take place in a wider forum at the workshops in February, with a report to the March 2010 Strategy Board.

6. Alongside making progress on the new Regional Strategy the Board has responsibility for steering the completion of two partial reviews of the South East plan, the first covering Minerals – setting levels of mineral extraction which each County and Unitary authority must plan for, and the second covering sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show-people – setting the number of additional pitches each District Council must plan for. It

also has responsibility for approving a Delivery Plan to bring together the delivery of the South East Plan and Regional Economic Strategy. These issues are likely to dominate the agenda at the Nov 09 and Jan 2010 Strategy Board meetings.

7. In order to enable SEEDA Board members and Local Authority Leaders to develop a working relationship, it is our intention to use private workshops as well as the formal meetings to develop the Board's thinking. The next workshop is to be held on the morning of the 26 November, prior to the formal Strategy Board in the afternoon. The September meeting of the Strategy Board decided that they would like this workshop to explore how the strategy should be developed for sub-regions and for issues which transcend regional boundaries.

8. This is an important practical issue for SEEDA and for local authorities. SEEDA has worked increasingly closely with EEDA and LDA on developing a joined up approach to delivering the sustainable economic development of the Greater South East, particularly in Thames Gateway and the Milton Keynes / South Midlands Growth Area. We have also developed a clear spatial priority for investment in the eight Diamonds for Investment and Growth and the four other areas of ongoing SEEDA investment to support regeneration and growth.

9. The eight Diamonds for Investment and growth are:

- Basingstoke
- Brighton and Hove
- Gatwick Diamond
- Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale
- Oxford / Central Oxfordshire
- Reading
- Thames Gateway Kent
- Urban South Hampshire

10. These are the major urban areas where the concentration of people, employment, built assets, knowledge, transport, networking, creativity, leisure, culture and diversity give the potential to be economic catalysts for the region as a whole. The diamonds cross local authority boundaries at District and Unitary level, but generally only cover parts of County Council areas. This can be a barrier to effective take up of the concept by local authorities.

11. SEEDA's four other priority areas for investment are Hastings and Bexhill, Margate and Dover (Regeneration) and Ashford (Growth).

12. SEEDA Board members have an excellent opportunity at the 26 November workshop to champion the Diamonds and the other areas for investment in regeneration and growth as the key basis for place based interventions, and the Greater South East as a valid spatial level to decide on strategic economic interventions.