

The SEDFIG Work Programme

Successful sub-regional working will be vital to deliver future economic growth and prosperity for local communities. The SEDFIG will seek to support the key work being undertaken in the sub-regions by providing a partnership across the functional economic areas of the region, built upon the following work programme:

- **Policy Group Working** – Thematic groups focused upon Knowledge Economy, Ecological Footprint and Skills, exchanging learning and developing guidance on key areas of policy development
- **Sharing Learning and Progress** – Biennial networking and learning events allowing constructive dialogue across the full range of authorities and partners that constitute the RES 'Diamonds'
- **SEDFIG Research Programme** – Rolling programme of research into common issues/areas of work across the SEDFIG. Current priorities include skills impacts arising from the recession and drivers of the knowledge economy
- **Communication and Influence** – Responding to consultations and policy development initiatives affecting the major economic centres of the region.



How can the Regional Agencies help?

The SEDFIG have benefited from strategic support from SEEDA, SEERA and GoSE thus far. Going forward, the achievement of potential will depend upon further targeted support in the following areas:

- **Recognition and Engagement** – It is essential the Diamonds continue to be recognised as areas of great potential, and that this recognition filters through to policy, practice and funding priorities. The SEDFIG also offer an opportunity for policymakers to engage with the key functional economic areas of the south east
- **Specialist Expertise and Support** – Support would be valuable in helping to unlock funding support for projects within the Diamonds, and in analysing and mitigating the impacts of growth
- **Communication, Lobbying and Profile Raising** – Targeted support in dealing with international investors, opening up networks and developing a relationship with EU institutions and representatives.

What can Government do?

Assistance and co-operation from government will also be key in taking this agenda forward.

- **Dialogue** – The SEDFIG partnership has established a clear framework through which the eight Diamonds can work together; it now wishes to agree a progressive structure through which we can work with government
- **Supporting Innovative Funding** – Support to explore innovative and creative future funding measures to open up opportunities for new social and physical infrastructure
- **Policy Co-ordination** – Multi Area Agreements, and the new options suggested through the SNR process, will provide future options for enhanced coordination on the part of central government, which we wish to explore with policymakers.



A Prospectus for Prosperity

April 2009

A Prospectus for Prosperity

The south east of England is a world-class region, a powerhouse of the UK economy and a major contributor to the success of London as a world city. Seeking to build upon this position, the 2006 Regional Economic Strategy (RES) identified eight 'South East Diamonds for Investment and Growth'. These Diamond areas have the concentrations of people, employment, knowledge, transport, creativity, culture and diversity necessary to act as economic catalysts for the region as a whole.

Since the publication of the RES, the nine local authorities at the urban core of these Diamonds have come together, with support from SEEDA and Regional Agencies, to form the South East Diamonds for Investment and Growth (SEDfIG) partnership. The membership of this partnership is drawn from:

- Basingstoke and Deane BC
- Brighton and Hove CC
- Crawley BC
- Medway Council
- Milton Keynes Council
- Oxford City Council
- Portsmouth City Council
- Reading Borough Council
- Southampton City Council

Over the past 18 months, these authorities have been working together to develop common goals, shared priorities and an innovative programme of work across the sub-regions of the south east. This work is now brought together in the 'Prospectus for Prosperity'. Developed through a time of change and uncertainty, the document focuses upon long-term aspirations and underlying challenges, whilst not ignoring the shorter-term threats posed by the current economic climate.

Vision

The Diamond areas represent an opportunity for the south east of England, an opportunity to provide the economic growth necessary to ensure the region continues to be a major contributor to the UK economy, whilst preserving local quality of life. Working with partners, neighbours and county councils, the SEDfIG will seek to deliver sustainable economic growth and prosperity for local communities across the south east.

Strategic Objectives

Working both within and across sub-regions, the long-term aspirations of the SEDfIG are that:

- The Diamonds collectively will aim to generate 45 per cent of the south east's GVA growth to 2016 (against a RES requirement of 39.5 per cent)
- The Diamonds will deliver 50 per cent of the planned housing growth in the south east by 2026
- The Diamonds will stabilize their ecological footprint by 2014 and secure a 30 per cent reduction by 2026.



Challenges and Opportunities

In seeking to meet these objectives, the SEDfIG and their partners will need to meet the following challenges:

- **Strategic Capacity** – The Diamonds must find innovative and productive ways of delivering to functional economic areas, across boundaries and between structures
- **Population, Housing and Affordability** – The Diamonds must deliver against stretching housing targets, whilst improving local affordability
- **Physical and Social Infrastructure Pressures** – Future growth will require investment and long-term planning to offset infrastructure pressures and maximise local growth potential
- **Localised Deprivation** – Current pockets of deprivation represent a misuse of potential, but also an opportunity for future growth and development
- **Skills for Growth** – The links between a highly skilled workforce and high growth are well documented. In parts of the SEDfIG, a significant and co-ordinated programme is necessary to upskill local populations and maximise potential
- **Enterprise, Innovation and Expansion** – Within the Diamonds, there are areas with low levels of technological investment and low enterprise formation rates, again presenting a potential barrier to growth but, more importantly, an opportunity
- **Climate Change and Environmental Impact** – The south east is a major polluter within the UK, and the SEDfIG are the economic drivers of the south east. As such, we are committed to act to tackle our ecological footprint
- **Prosperity for Local Communities** – Growth must deliver prosperity and new opportunities for our local residents.