



**SEEDA's Strategy and Activity in the Coastal South East:  
A Context and Issues Paper for the SEERA Select Committee**

**Consultation Response from the  
Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH)**

**Q1: Is it helpful that SEEDA defines the coastal South East as a contour in the Regional Economic Strategy (RES)? How effectively does this capture the variety and commonality in the coastal strip? How should SEEDA use the classification in its work?**

The Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) believes it is helpful as part of the Regional Economy Strategy (RES) to define the Coastal South East as a contour. There are clearly economic issues around underperformance, transportation infrastructure and demography issues in common because of a coastal location. However, the contour needs to recognise the different economic roles of the larger urban areas e.g. Southampton and Portsmouth and their wider contribution to the regional economy, e.g. a South East Diamond for Growth and Investment as well as a city regional and sub-regional role.

Across the contour, the larger urban areas have experienced similar problems to coastal "towns" with regard to economic and social decline but for different reasons such as poverty, unemployment, etc.

The South Hampshire Sub-region is recognised as a growth area and through PUSH has an Economic Development Strategy. This provides a coherence and context to this part of the Coastal South East which should be supported by SEEDA in more detailed policy documents and supporting structures and arrangements.

The Coastal South East contour is therefore too broad a classification for use by SEEDA in its work without qualification.

The data analysis in Appendix B of the consultation documents does not specify the criteria used in selecting the coastal resort towns mentioned, for example, Hayling Island could have been listed.

**Q2: Is there an appropriate balance between SEEDA's focus, activities and resources in coastal areas and the rest of the South East?**

This is difficult to assess however, the goal of £13 billion per annum being added to the value of the regions economy merits that an appropriate balance between the coastal contour and the rest of the South East is achieved.

The target for South Hampshire is to achieve economic growth of almost £13 billion per annum by 2026, reinforcing the need for SEEDA's focus, activities and resources to be differentiated within the contour.

**Q3: How effective has SEEDA been at working in coastal parts of the South East? Examples from your experience would be helpful to this investigation. What examples do you have of SEEDA's strengths and limitations? How effective is SEEDA in choosing the correct interventions in different areas and situations, and is it applying resources appropriately to these?**

Examples of effective working by SEEDA in coastal parts of the South East:

1. **Portsmouth Naval Base:** Although mentioned already in the context and issues paper, this was not only about the Naval Base itself and direct employment but also the defence industry associated with it. The Naval Base accounted for a total of just under 35,000 jobs within South Hampshire consisting of 13,300 Service jobs and 21,600 Civilian jobs. This employment and the spending of defence firms generate an income of £680m for the local economy. The impact of these job losses upon local income could have been in the region of £350m across the PUSH sub-region. The loss of income would have been the result of lost household spending, reduced demand for the output of firms in the defence supply chain and reduced tourist numbers. The SEEDA intervention was a significant factor with regard to avoiding a major setback to the sub-regional growth plans.
2. **The Solent Waterfront Strategy:** As referred to in the context and issues paper, was commissioned by SEEDA and has highlighted the critical importance of the marine industry to the economy of the Solent and South Hampshire: contributing up to 27% of the total value of the Solent Economy. It has also highlighted the need to provide affordable waterfront sites and to develop spatial, economic and land use planning policies that support the growth of the marine sector. SEEDA's initiative in commissioning this work has been a clarion call regarding the importance of the marine industry to the sub region.
3. **Former Woolston Shipyard:** When Vosper Thornycroft moved from Southampton to a larger shipyard in Portsmouth SEEDA intervened to purchase the former shipyard site at Woolston. The agency have played a critical role in master planning the site, procuring development interest and acquiring Foreign Direct Investment to provide high quality skilled marine employment. SEEDA acting as master developer have tipped the development economics of a contaminated brownfield site in favour of providing substantive marine employment land. Private developers would have had to provide mostly residential development to achieve a viable scheme.
4. **SMART Project:** SEEDA was the catalyst in working with partners to leverage £42.83m from the Department for Transport (DfT) for the Solent to Midlands Advancement of Rail Transport (SMART) project to enable a crucial programme to widen the gauge on rail track between South Hampshire and the Midlands providing the opportunity to reduce HGV traffic on main motorways and roads and reducing carbon emissions. SEEDA played a leadership role in developing third party and private sector funding contributions.



**Q4: Is SEEDA's approach to how it takes decisions about its operations, investments and priorities in the coastal South East clear? Do you agree with what it decides and how it reaches its decisions?**

There is a close working relationship with SEEDA at a number of levels within the South Hampshire Sub-region. Consequently there is an understanding on how SEEDA arrives at its decisions about operations, investments and priorities. However, the key issue in the light of the recent Review of Sub National Economic Development and Regeneration is the degree to which SEEDA are prepared to delegate spend to sub regional partnerships such as PUSH, particularly in the light of the demise of devolved funding through Area Investment Frameworks. This issue does not just relate to the South Hampshire Coastal Contour although it may be indicative of how SEEDA wishes to operate and meet the particular challenges faced by the Coastal South East.

**Q5: How effectively do SEEDA's local area teams work with partners in the coastal South East? Do they add value to the 'central' teams at SEEDA, and vice versa, and how well do they work together? What could SEEDA do to improve its operations at the local level?**

Generally the experiences of PUSH are that the local area team operates effectively with partners in South Hampshire. In our experience the local SEEDA team acts as a sign post to the "central" teams within SEEDA. In light of the ambitious growth plans of the sub region there is a degree of uncertainty as to how exactly SEEDA teams will relate to the PUSH working arrangements; again this is a challenge to SEEDA as to how they wish to operate within the sub-region and the contour.

**Q6: How effectively does SEEDA engage in broader strategic issues which affect the economy of the coast, such as improving transport links? Do you have examples of where they have worked effectively to this end, or where they could have done more?**

Examples of engagement by SEEDA in broader strategic issues which affect the economy of the coast are given in the response to question 3. The rail gauge enhancement is a significant achievement but there is little further evidence with regard to involvement in improving transport links or direct action regarding key elements of the South Hampshire economy, for example, the Port of Southampton. They have also worked effectively to bring forward the implementation of Hind Head Tunnel linking London to the Portsmouth City region.

**Q7: Is the role of the 'Coastal South East: A Framework for Action' and its link to other strategies, at local, regional and national level, clear and beneficial? What should SEEDA now do with the Framework for Action?**

The role, purpose and added value of "Coastal South East: A Framework for Action" is far from clear in the light of the South East Plan, RES and the extensive sub regional work carried out in South Hampshire and reflected in the South Hampshire Economic Development Strategy.



The evidence base arising from the work on the Framework for Action could however, provide additional justification for resources and is therefore welcomed. However, it is noted that the framework promises no new resources.

The description of the framework for action as a mezzanine strategy however, could be unhelpful as it may not end up being owned by any particular agency or organisation.

The framework appears to have no measures of success. However, key criteria as to its effectiveness could be related to its achievements under four Transformational Action Areas.

There is little evidence that the Framework for Action will result in any increased clarity from SEEDA over the allocation of resources and priorities.

**Q8: How should SEEDA measure success in coastal areas? How could SEEDA measure the impact of its activities? Do you have views on how effectively this is being done at present?**

The South Hampshire Sub-region has clear targets (annual GVA growth of up to 3.5%, 59,000 new jobs and productivity of up to 2.4% by 2026) in relation to growing the economy as set out in the PUSH Business Plan and Economic Development Strategy. This links in with the outputs of the RES and therefore implementation of the PUSH Business Plan is key to achieving the RES. Through the PUSH targets and indicators, SEEDA needs to measure its success in how it has assisted towards meeting these targets.