

10 November 2010

Our ref: R251

RE: Freedom of Information Request

Thank you for your request dated 6th October 2010 made under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. You provided subsequent clarification of your request, via Yorkshire Forward, on the 14th October 2010.

1. Please provide me with a copy of the introductory note submission your organisation made to its lead Government Minister since the Coalition Government took office on 12th May;

Sir Harry Studholme, Chair of SWRDA and Chair of Chair's for the Regional Development Agency (RDA) Network wrote introductory letters on behalf of all RDAs. Please find attached copies of letters sent to the Rt Hon Dr Vince Cable, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills; and Mark Prisk, Minister of State.

SEEDA is the lead RDA for the Network's policy and relationship with Government departments in three key areas - innovation, skills and employment. SEEDA's Chairman, Rob Douglas, wrote to the Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions; and to David Willetts, Minister of State for Universities and Science; to congratulate them on their appointment and welcome them on behalf of the RDA Network.

Copies of these letters are attached at Appendix 1 to this response.

2. Please confirm the number of staff employed by your organisation on 12th May.

In the clarification you supplied on the 14th October 2010 you confirmed that you would accept full time equivalent (FTE) figures to the nearest available date. On the 30th April 2010 SEEDA employed the equivalent of 244 full time staff.

3. Please confirm the number of staff employed by your organisation on 6th October.

On the 30th September 2010 SEEDA employed the equivalent of 227 full time staff.

4. Please provide me with a copy of any submissions made to government departments on the effects of budget cuts on your organisation since 12th May 2010.



No formal submissions relating to the effects of budget cuts on our organisation have been made to Government departments by SEEDA since the 12th May 2010

However, we hold a copy of a letter sent from Jane Henderson, lead Chief Executive for the RDA Network at the time, sent to Philippa Lloyd, Department for Business Innovation and Skills dated 8th June 2010. This encloses a consolidated spreadsheet of proposed budgets cuts for all RDAs. We are still consulting with 3rd parties referred to in this letter with regard to its disclosure and we will respond to you within 20 working days concerning this part of your request.

5. Please provide me with a copy of any notices given to trade union, or employee representatives, regarding staffing cuts to your organisation since 12th May 2010;

An Agency wide communication was sent on the 16th June 2010 to make staff aware that, as a result of SEEDA having to make 10% efficiencies in administration costs within this financial year, a review of the extended workforce was being undertaken and a recruitment freeze was being implemented. On the 23rd July 2010 all staff members were notified of the launch of a Voluntary Early Release Scheme.

Copies of these emails are attached to this response at Appendix 2. Please note that the names of two junior staff members have been redacted in the copies released, as this is personal information that is exempt from disclosure under Section 40 (2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

6. Please provide me with a copy of any notices of re-arranged pension arrangements for staff issued since 12th May 2010;

SEEDA's People & Organisational Development Team issued a notification to staff on behalf of the Cabinet Office on the 15th July 2010. This related to changing the up-rating that is applied to public sector pensions, from the Retail Prices Index (RPI) model to the Consumer Prices Index (CPI).

Copies of the notice and covering email are attached to this response at Appendix 3. Please note that the names of two junior staff members have been redacted from the copy of the covering email, as this is personal information that is exempt from disclosure under Section 40 (2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

7. Please provide me with a complete list of subscriptions to online news outlets such as Politics Home, The Times, The Sun, News of the World etc.

Please find below a list of all subscriptions currently in place:

Financial Times Online	www.ft.com
Local Government Chronicle	www.lgcplus.com
Regeneration & Renewal	www.regen.net
Business Desk	www.thebusinessdesk.com
Dods Monitoring Service	www.dods.co.uk
Dehavilland Political Monitoring	www.dehavilland.co.uk
PR Week	www.prweek.co.uk

8. Please provide me with a copy of any submissions made by your organisation in the run up to the Comprehensive Spending Review.

From the clarification you supplied SEEDA understands that you require copies of any formal submissions to Government, made to inform the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review, since the 12th May 2010.

No formal written submissions to the CSR were made by SEEDA in the run up to the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review.

9. How many times the Chief Executive of your organisation has met with a Government Minister since 12 May? Please tell me the nature and location for any such meetings.

From the clarification received we understand that you require information relating to meetings specifically organised by SEEDA. You have confirmed that you require details of the time, date, location and purpose of any such meetings.

SEEDA's Chairman, Rob Douglas, and Chief Executive, Pam Alexander, met with David Willetts, Minister of State for Universities and Science at 17:15 on the 26th July 2010. The meeting took place at the offices of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, Victoria, London. This was an introductory meeting to discuss the contribution of RDAs in relation to delivering Government policy on innovation and skills.

Rob Douglas and Pam Alexander also met with Robert Neill, Minister for the Thames Gateway, to discuss the Thames Gateway Programme and economic development priorities for the Greater South East area. The meeting took place at 14:30 on the 12th October 2010 at the Department for Communities and Local Government's offices in Bressenden Place, London.

10. Please provide me with a copy of your organisation's travel policy - in particular in respect of planes, trains and cars.

Please find attached at Appendix 4 the following documents, which we have identified as being relevant to this element of your request:

- SEEDA's travel policy which has been extracted from our Financial Procedures Manual;
- SEEDA's Environmental Policy, re-issued annually (2010 version attached);
- Green Office Tips guidance document issued to staff.

11. The number of properties (a) owned, and (b) leased by your organisation.

(a) SEEDA currently has a portfolio of investment and development assets which includes 68 properties (including land and buildings) owned by the Agency. (b) We lease three office premises for our operational use.

Appendices:

1. Introductory Letters
2. Notices to Staff
3. Cabinet Office notice regarding change from RPI to CPI
4. Travel Policies