

3rd June 2008

Our ref: R00044

Freedom of Information request – SEEDA Chairman

Your request is:

- 1. I want to find out how much the Chairman of SEEDA, James Brathwaite, has spent on taxis and chauffeur driven cars in: 07/08, 06/07, 05/06, 04/05, and 03/04, and,*
- 2. how many days a week he is contracted to work.*

The detailed responses to your queries are set out below:

1. Spend on Taxis and Executive Cars

Jim Brathwaite has always believed that the role of a Regional Development Agency Chairman is to get out and meet business people, local authorities and delivery partners face to face. In order to accomplish this, our Chairman typically travels over 35,000 miles per year on SEEDA Business across the length and breadth of the SEEDA region. We have a large region of 90,000 square kilometres that stretches from Milton Keynes in the North to the Isle of Wight in the South and to Margate in the East. Getting around the region is not easy as the public transport infrastructure tends towards a hub and spoke model with London at the centre.

Our Chairman routinely travels directly from meeting to meeting across the region, frequently attending several meetings in different parts of the region during the course of a day. The most cost effective use of his working time is to use a car with driver which also allows for the Chairman to work while travelling, conducting telephone conference calls and completing paperwork. This arrangement is regularly market tested to ensure value for money.

The following table shows expenditure for the past three financial years:

Mode of Transport	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Taxi	£4,107	£4,512	£4,032
Car with Driver	£35,708	£46,922	£49,276
Total	£39,815	£51,434	£53,308

The major component of the increase in cost over this period is due to the principal supplier becoming registered for VAT at 17.5% during the course of 2005-06. SEEDA introduced a new electronic financial accounting system during 2004/05. Expenses figures in the requested categories prior to this date are only available in hard copy. The individual expense claims will therefore need to be separately retrieved and manually totalled. We cannot do this within the appropriate limit, however SEEDA can issue a fees notice for the cost of retrieving this information, for 2003/04 and 2004/05, if you confirm that it is needed.

2. Chairman's Contract

The Chairman is appointed by the Minister at the Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR). The contract is for a fixed term of three years and specifies that the Chairman works a minimum of three days per week on behalf of the Agency. In practice the Chairman regularly exceeds this minimum and is likely to be involved in meetings for SEEDA on most working days.