

21<sup>st</sup> October 2008

Our ref: R00067

## **Freedom of Information request – Party conferences**

Your request to SEEDA is:

- 1) A figure for the total amount paid by South East England Development Agency to enable its employees to attend and participate in:
  - a. Liberal Democrat Party Conference.
  - b. Labour Party Conference.
  - c. Conservative Party Conference.
  
- 2) For a. b. c. of part 1), a breakdown of the total figure, indicating how much was spent on:
  - a. Hotel rooms.
  - b. Conference passes.
  - c. Sponsorship and hosting of events and exhibitor stands.
  - d. Expense claims (taxis, meals, etc).
  
- 3) The number of people sent by South East England Development Agency to:
  - a. Liberal Democrat Party Conference.
  - b. Labour Party Conference.
  - c. Conservative Party Conference.

Your preferred format to receive this information is electronically.

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## **Background**

SEEDA held fringe events at each of the main party conferences in September 2008. The aim of these events was to put politicians in touch with business and to enable greater links between enterprise and government.

Leading politicians from the South East, key party spokespeople, policy makers and business representatives were invited. It would have been impossible to bring together such a wide range of people for such a short time if the events had been held within the region. SEEDA representatives were able to have short meetings/introductions with politicians from all parties.

Given the strong competition for attendance at fringe events, SEEDA advertised its events in 'The House' (the weekly parliamentary magazine) and issued personal invitations.

Each event was chaired by a SEEDA Board Member. Speakers were invited who could speak from experience of working with SEEDA and who would not incur high appearance fees. SEEDA paid speakers' expenses (travel, accommodation and registration, where necessary). The events were as follows:

- Liberal Democrat Party Conference: Jo Fairley, Co-founder of Green & Black's spoke about her experience as a successful woman entrepreneur founding and running a pioneering business.
- Labour Party Conference: Pooran Desai, Co-founder of BioRegional Quintain, talked about the innovative work of his company in producing low and zero emission developments.
- Conservative Party Conference: Chris McLaughlin, Director, Inmarsat, spoke about the future of satellite communications in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **Information requested**

Some costs are estimates as SEEDA is awaiting final invoices and receipts. Where this is the case, the estimates are likely to be over rather than under the final figures.

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	<b>Liberal Democrat Party Conference</b>	<b>Labour Party Conference</b>	<b>Conservative Party Conference</b>
	£	£	£
Total amount spent by SEEDA	<b>13,316.17</b>	<b>15,878</b>	<b>17,864.96</b>
Breakdown of costs:			
Hotel rooms	649.18	2,330	7,860.50
Conference passes	1,349.80	2,766	3,404
Sponsorship & hosting of events & exhibitor stands	10,100.8	9,624.27	5,435.76
Expense claims	1,216.39	1,157.44	1,164.70

	<b>Liberal Democrat Party Conference</b>	<b>Labour Party Conference</b>	<b>Conservative Party Conference</b>
Number of people from SEEDA attending:	9	7	10