

5th August 2009

Your ref: Email dated 07.07.09
Our ref: R00140

Freedom of Information Request – Subsidised Air Travel

Thank you for your Freedom of Information Request, dated 7th July 2009 concerning subsidised air travel.

Your request to SEEDA is:

*“I understand from The Guardian
www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2009/jul/07/airports
that SEEDA have spent £400,000 on subsidising air travel.*

My questions are:

- 1) When and on what exactly was this amount of public money spent?*
- 2) How much money was spent in the same period on subsidising rail travel, cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable transport?”*

Information Requested

SEEDA does not provide direct subsidies for any form of transport, whether of air transport, or sustainable transport. SEEDA has provided, or managed funds, related to different forms of transport and these are described overleaf.

SEEDA's involvement in other forms of transport greatly exceeds its involvement in air transport.

Air Transport

The £400,000 figure referred to in the newspaper article was not a direct subsidy of air transport, it was a grant budget, and the amount actually spent was £250,000. It also covered the ten year period, since SEEDA was formed in 1999, and concerns two projects involving Manston Airport in Kent:

- 1) A business grant of £300,000 was awarded to Planestation (the owner of Kent International Airport) to set up a Border Inspection Post, truck park and warehousing. £150,000 of this grant was paid in December 2004. The project was completed, but Planestation went into administration in July 2005, and therefore the remainder of the grant was not made.
- 2) A tourism grant of £100,000 was awarded to Kent County Council in 2006 to partially fund an initiative to encourage US visitors to come to Kent from Norfolk Virginia.

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) - Rail Projects Funding

SEEDA has supported key infrastructure improvements in South East England through the High Speed Trains (HST) projects, HST Connect and HST Integration. Led by SEEDA, with partners across five countries in North West Europe, SEEDA secured ERDF INTERREG IIIB funding which was used to lever further support. HST Integration sought to maximize the economic potential offered by the emerging High Speed Rail network in North West Europe, while HST Connect focussed on improvements to secondary connections into the High Speed Network.

Both projects focused on strategic policy integration at regional, national and European levels and supported best practice investments projects associated with the High Speed Rail network. ERDF funding was provided for projects at the following locations:

- Ashford €960k - Access improvements and creation of shared public space from Ashford International to the town centre.
- Ebbsfleet €3 million - funding of Fastrack bus rapid transport linking local towns and communities and Ebbsfleet International station.
- Dover €343k - Refurbishment of Dover Priory station and public realm around the station to provide improved facilities for passengers and better connection to the town centre.
- Reading €2.1 million - Improvement of interchange functions at Reading station between rail and bus services.
- Hastings €810k - Improvement of key connections between rail stations, town centre and new developments.

Disclosure Log

This information will also be made available on SEEDA's Freedom of Information Disclosure Log on the SEEDA website (www.seeda.co.uk/About_SEEDA/Freedom_of_Information_disclosure_log/). Personal details and other information that could identify requesters is redacted (removed) from the disclosure log version.

Conclusion

If you are not satisfied with the way we have handled your request, or if you are unhappy with our response, you can appeal using our Complaints Procedure as follows:

A request for a review should be addressed to Robert Crawford, Chief Operating Officer, and sent by email to: robertcrawford@seeda.co.uk or by post to SEEDA, Cross Lanes, Guildford, GU1 1YA. You will be notified of the outcome within 20 working days.

If you are still dissatisfied after pursuing our Complaints Procedure, then under Section 50 of the Act, you are entitled to appeal to the Information Commissioner (Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF, telephone: 01625 545700, fax: 01625 524510).

Please contact me if you have any other queries.

Yours sincerely

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