

Strategic Director

The Rt Hon John Healey MP
Department for Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

Our Ref: SH/PW/CW

Your Ref:

Date: 10 July 2009

Dear Secretary of State

Shoreham Harbour Regeneration Project

You will be aware that Shoreham Harbour was granted provisional second round growth point status in September 2008, leading to an award of £3.23m from your department.

This was achieved largely as a result of work initiated by SEEDA, who in 2007 had approved £2.95m to fund studies and technical work required to progress a Joint Area Action Plan. £1m has been paid to Adur District Council as accountable body with the remainder being spent by SEEDA in preparing the case for Growth Point and the JAAP.

In December 08 the Homes and Communities Agency agreed to match SEEDA's initial contribution with a further £2.95m. This regrettably has never materialised.

It has been known for some time that in order for the work to be driven forward at the pace required and thoroughness needed, that further funding would be necessary in these early years. There were strong expectations that further SEEDA funding would have been forthcoming and the project in fact has always proceeded on the basis that both this and the HCA funding were promised.

The recession and consequent effect upon government funding streams has of course changed that picture. Whilst we understand this, our own local authorities have been operating under financial restraints for a number of years. What is not acceptable is the speed with which SEEDA is effectively stepping back from the partnership table and the fact that the HCA has, from a financial point of view, failed to take its seat at the table.

You will forgive us for thinking that we, together with our partner, Shoreham Port Authority, have been left high and dry at this crucial time, just when we are so close to completing the initial work, which of course may mean that we are not able to fully benefit from the millions of pounds of public money and much expert officer time already invested in the project.

The purpose of this letter is manifold. The first is to request from you a clear indication of the importance of the project to the government and its agencies in order for us to understand and so inform our project in terms of financial and business planning, timetabling and resource allocation. This is directly relevant to our Local Development Framework and all that flows from that, as well as impacting upon Shoreham Port's ability to develop its own business plans. An early response on this point would be appreciated, as it will prove vital in determining our own level of commitment.

There are other messages we wish to convey, which you will be pleased to hear are in the main very positive ones. The 3 local authorities and the Port have achieved levels of collaboration and partnership not previously enjoyed. This has been achieved through joint meetings, shared workloads bringing together of agendas and the building of trust and confidence to work together.

We remain fully committed to developing a Joint Area Action Plan to benefit our communities and for there to be strong, clear leadership of that process by the local authorities in partnership with the Port. We will build upon the considerable work and studies undertaken to date and draw from it as many positives and as much information as possible. We also need to test thoroughly the assumptions made so far. To that end, we fully intend to draw down and spend the full growth point allocation.

There remains much that needs to be done and there are a number of technical studies to be completed. However, funding of these remains a problem and your officials will brief you upon the issues and difficulties presented by strict rules on capital/revenue demarcation. We would urge you to bring clarity and common sense to that debate.

We are bringing forward proposals to set up a formal Joint Committee to streamline decision making ahead of any Special Purpose Delivery Vehicle that may be set up.

Together with the Shoreham Port, we will be re-examining the proposed Joint Venture agreement as the positions of SEEDA and the HCA need to be clearly understood before this can be advanced.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely

Three handwritten signatures in blue ink. The first signature is 'N. Parkin', the second is 'Mary Mears', and the third is 'Henry Smith'.

Neil Parkin
Leader
Adur
District Council

Mary Mears
Leader
Brighton & Hove
City Council

Henry Smith
Leader
West Sussex
County Council

c.c. David Edwards, Homes & Communities Agency
Pam Alexander, SEEDA
Rod Johnstone, Shoreham Port Authority
Richard Emmens, Government Office for the South East