



South East
Centre for the
Built Environment

6 July 2005

Press Release

New Consortium for the Construction and Built Environment Sector Aims to Improve Business Performance

A new business consortium has been formed in South East England to improve the performance of the region's £18 billion construction and built environment industry.

One of the most important economic sectors in the area, the construction industry employs nearly a quarter of a million people in the South East – 27 percent of the nation's firms.

The new consortium will operate under the name of *the **South East Centre for the Built Environment (SECBE)*** and will be governed by the industry and its customers. With core capital investment from the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) the consortium will help the industry meet the demands of current and future customers and provide an arena for consultation, and two-way communication between business and policy makers, on local, regional and national strategies.

The mission of SECBE is to improve the business performance of the built environment sector to deliver world-class buildings and infrastructure to its customers and end users. Under the Chairmanship of Bob Heathfield and a Board of business leaders, SECBE will develop programmes to help its members make improvements in their processes and performance. SECBE will work closely with key stakeholders to ensure that support for the construction business is integrated and easy to access.

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SECBE Chief Executive, Derek Rees, commented, "This sector has a profound effect on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the region and underpins many other business sectors. The built environment sector is huge and complex. It is much broader than construction and has many different elements that need to be better connected with clear strategy and communication. It is our intention to provide the strategic leadership so that our industry can meet its customers' needs.

All businesses seeking improved performance in procurement, delivery or end usage of the built environment are invited to become members of SECBE's wider consultation group. Our target is membership of over 1,000 companies within three years, spanning the whole supply chain from clients to consultants to manufacturers.

SEEDA Chairman, James E Brathwaite, said, "SEEDA takes the national role as the lead regional development agency for construction, co-ordinating policy and representing all the regions' views across government. We are proud of this new approach to planning, design, training and building which companies and projects adopt."

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For further information, please contact, Tina McGeachan, Marketing Manager, South East Centre for the Built Environment, tel: 0118 967 5540, email Tina@SECBE.org.uk

South East Centre for the Built Environment, Chief Executive, Derek Rees is available for interview. If you would like to arrange an interview please call Tina McGeachan.

Picture available:

The Centre's new Chairman, Bob Heathfield and Chief Executive Derek Rees joined SEEDA Chairman, James E Brathwaite to mark the establishment of SECBE as the new Built Environment Sector Consortium.

Notes for Editors:

About SECBE

SECBE, formerly The Thames Valley Centre for the Built Environment in Construction, was launched by Sir Nigel Mobbs in December 1996. As its remit grew it evolved into SECBE taking on the South East government footprint of Kent to Hants to Bucks. In recent years, SECBE's mission was to drive collaborative action between industry, education and government to create a sustainable built environment. Because of existing networks, the Centre was uniquely placed to take on the new role of the business consortium.

Four areas of priority have been identified:

- The planning process
- Client leadership
- Skills and people performance
- Business performance

SECBE's role will involve:

- Strategic Leadership e.g. bringing all parts of the industry together with its clients to identify the priorities for the region.
- Policy Influence e.g. working with local government to improve the way planning law is implemented at the local level.
- Information and Advice e.g. help SEEDA better understand the sector to inform regional policy development and to help it fulfil its national role as lead Regional Development Agency for construction
- Coordination e.g. working with other agencies to ensure that support for construction businesses in the region is integrated and easy for them to access
- Facilitation e.g. helping local business clubs establish/grow and connecting them with each other to form a powerful regional network
- Delivery e.g. working with national strategic bodies such as Constructing Excellence in the Built Environment to deliver regional programmes

Membership is a commitment to active involvement in SECBE's activity and offers:

- ▶ Direct influence on local, regional and national government policies
- ▶ Strategic influence on business improvement support

- ▶ Direct access to enlightened/successful businesses – best practice, market intelligence, potential joint ventures
- ▶ Advanced insight into emerging technologies/innovation
- ▶ Sector/customer recognition
- ▶ Participation in SECBE governance – board and working groups

About SEEDA

SEEDA is the Government funded agency responsible for the sustainable economic development and regeneration of the South East of England - the driving force of the UK's economy. Our aim is to create a prosperous, dynamic and inspirational region by helping businesses compete more effectively, training a highly skilled workforce, supporting and enabling our communities while safeguarding our natural resources and cherishing our rich cultural heritage.

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