



SELEP Coastal Communities Working Group

Lobby. Action. Issue.

Notes collected at SEP discussion, September 2017

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1. Introduction

The Coastal Communities Working Group (CCWG) convened in September with the aim of discussing priorities and themes to be considered as contributors to the SELEP Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) refresh. The CCWG discussed a pre-prepared list of priorities and themes.

Comprising of:

The role of coastal in the South East Economy

- Still overlooked, seen as exporter of workers, importers of retired folk.
- Some serve and benefit from the link to London, some are too far
- Mini cities by the sea
- Art & Culture
- Productivity generated from improved quality of life, good light and sea air.

Funding and investment

- Fifth round of Coastal Communities Fund, £40 million to help coastal areas in England transform their economies.
- Job creation, transport and infrastructure, connectivity
- Help businesses grow - De-risk for SMEs, support and grow confidence

Kitsch or Culture, there's something for everyone

- Tourism (Staycations)
- Art & Culture
- Nightlife
- Heritage

Ports are gateways

- Brexit – Can we turn this into a European opportunity?
- Housing in Port towns
- Efficiency tech, automation, multimodal solutions

- How do we nurture and support ports?

Renewable energy

- The Offshore Wind Industry Council is in the process of preparing a Sector Deal to position offshore wind at the heart of the Government's emerging Industrial Strategy.
- Tidal energy, wind farms
- Job creation, skills to deliver – can we offer centres of excellence and support SMEs/consortia to deliver?

Future fit

- Supply of suitable, diverse, quality premises
- Preserve or develop retirement destinations?
- Link this group to the Housing Development, and the Rural themed working groups
- Med tech, working with FE, HE
- Construction SMEs to deliver housing shortage
- Excellence in Care delivery/solutions to the UK
- Spatial planning, coastline & marine space.

These were then organised into the following three categories: **lobby, action and issues** to help organise and determine a call to action:

Lobby: an item which is seen as an opportunity or responsibility of the SELEP to lobby government and collaborative partners.

Action: The SELEP can act as a catalyst for change or carry out as an action.

Issues: Items which will not necessarily be represented in the SEP but could form part of a future coastal communities issue paper.

2. Lobby

- Access/transport
- Lobby for big sustained investment
- Coastal Communities Fund is not the whole answer
- Five year plan of investment
- Thames Estuary needs to be key theme/priority in the SEP
- Infrastructure – lobby STBs
- Look at national sector deals – which can SELEP take a lead on?
- How much of the £40m CCF can we secure?

- Leverage heritage
- Coastal regeneration initiative is broader than tourism
- A fast train to Hastings!
- Heritage Lottery Fund

3. Action

- Self-employed, new market 50-70
- Bold approach, connect to regional economy
- Europe – students – joint work
- Aggregate on a theme and link with other LEPs
- Could the LEP have its own business council?
- SME & Coastal LEP Board champions – so both can build traction with SELEP Board
- Look at national sector deals – which can SELEP take a lead on?
- Storytelling – change perceptions of coastal towns and their stereotypes
- Need to create definitions of coastal
- Agree a target amount from the CCF
- Link CCWG to the housing and rural groups.
- Reflect and promote HIF bids –cumulative case on top major sites
- Promote and support SME developers/ market disruptors
- Offsite construction – skills, generate pipeline
- £2m SELEP sector funding – Learning from coastal, LEP Growing Places project: Hastings, Tendring, Thanet.

4. Issues

- Seafronts/ public realm, build a case (impact assessment) as this is a unique selling point
- Not just tourism – balance economy
- Education – access – currently a barrier
- Housing locks people in
- Regeneration vs gentrification
- Regeneration is risky, uneven playing field and expensive, working with historic infrastructure.

5. Next CCWG meeting

It was agreed that the next CCWG meeting will explore sector opportunities in South East coastal towns and ports. Group members will be set the task of presenting local opportunities based on a simple SWOT analysis. This will help to exploit existing sector opportunities as a group and develop new ideas prime for funding through the CCF and SELEP secured funding.