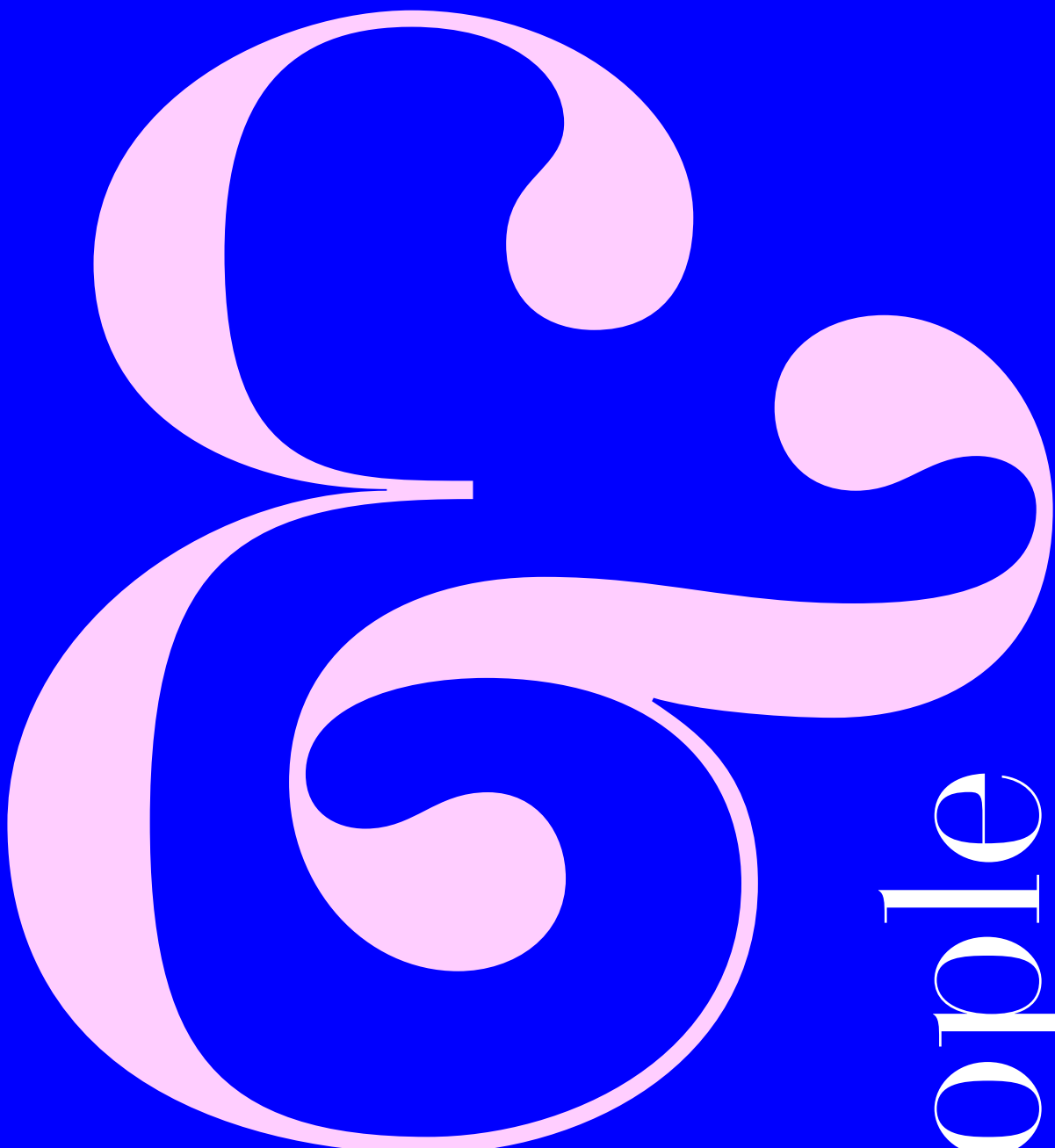


**South East Creative
Economy Network**

Supporting and growing
creative people & places
across the South East

People



Places

Supporting and growing creative people & places across the South East

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As the largest Local Enterprise Partnership in the UK, the South East region is nationally and internationally significant. Across the UK, and particularly in this region the Creative Industries (CI) are a key sector within the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) for economic growth opportunities, place making and wider social and well-being benefits.

Introduction

South East Creative Economy Network (SECEN) is an open, voluntary network and working group of SELEP. It was established in 2012 to become a coherent voice for the 15,000+ CI businesses that make up the creative industry across the geographic counties of East Sussex, Essex and Kent. The network brings together CI businesses and freelancers, with education providers, strategic organisations and local authorities. Through action and advocacy, SECEN works to create the right conditions for the sector to achieve sustainable growth and enrich the places we live in for the benefit of everyone.

The global pandemic has hit the creative industries hard, with many in the sector falling through a gap in provision for COVID 19 support and recovery funds, alongside the impact of extended periods of closure and cancellation of work. With the immediate future still uncertain, creative practitioners are increasingly forced to seek work elsewhere and venues and businesses are struggling to survive. More than ever before, it is important for the network to come together to advocate and share learning to increase investment, productivity and employment so that the Creative Industries not only survive but thrive as we emerge from this pandemic.

Since our first Prospectus was published in 2016, we have successfully launched and informed major programmes and workstreams. This Statement of Intent therefore sets out our refreshed portfolio of sector-led pledges for initiatives that can be delivered in partnership. Underpinning this Statement and across all pledged initiatives is our firm commitment to:

- Ensure the Creative Industries supports and reflects the diverse range of individuals and communities that make up the South East region, including achieving more inclusive workforces and governance, and by harnessing the ability of culture to reach across socio-economic divides.
- Build a creative economy that centres on climate action and environmental sustainability as the bedrock of our recovery and growth.

This document outlines actions and plans that will support growth, resilience and new opportunities to benefit our sector at this time of rapid change. This will in turn create great places to live, work and visit and a richer quality of life for all. It is written in awareness that we are constantly striving for a more comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the SELEP creative economies, and the need for us to actively work together to achieve our goals.

Definition of key terms:

Creativity: 'Creativity' describes the process through which people apply their knowledge, skill and intuition to imagine, conceive, express or make something that wasn't there before.

Creative Industries: the Creative Industries include a very wide range of jobs, organisations, businesses and educational institutions. These include but are not limited to: advertising and marketing; architecture; craft; design (product, graphic, fashion); film & broadcast (tv, video, animation, vfx/sfx, radio and photography); creative tech (it, video games, software and computer services); museums, galleries, library and heritage; music, dance, performing and visual arts; publishing.

Culture: 'Culture' means many things to many people and is often used to refer to food, religion and other forms of heritage, but here is used to broadly describe the outputs of museums, galleries, visual arts, film, music, theatre, dance and literature. We recognise that traditional boundaries between and around cultural activities are disappearing as new technologies and other societal changes alter how culture is made and shared.

Sarah Dance, Arts Consultant, Chair of Creative Estuary

Joe Hill, Director of Towner Eastbourne

Katharine Stout, Director of Focal Point Gallery –
Co-chairs of the South East Creative Economies Network (SECEN)

Executive summary

Creative practitioners, businesses and cultural organisations are vital sources of talent and enterprise for our country's creative industries, particularly across the South East, which in turn are (pre-pandemic) major drivers and the fastest growing part of the national economy. We strive to support the economic growth and inclusive sustainability of our creative, cultural and digital businesses to create tangible benefit for places and people across our region.

Creative places

Growing Creative Clusters: The South East has many unique towns and cities, rather than one primary centre. Its geography is characterised by over 745 miles of coastline, with a wide range of rural, seaside and urban communities. It has areas with high income levels, alongside areas with some of the highest socio-economic deprivation in the UK. We acknowledge that the South East has a dynamic ecosystem which develops pioneering new products and services. Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), micro economies and freelancers are prevalent in the region's creative industries and gravitate to 'Clusters'. Successful creative clusters have at least one or more of the following characteristics: distinctive sense of place coupled with quality of life – coastal and rural; affordable property prices and land values, available premises ready for occupancy or ripe for redevelopment; proximity to Higher Education Institutions and supply chains; iconic cultural institutions which act as central gathering points and visible flagships; and sympathetic local authority support. More than ever, digital connectivity has been essential during the COVID lockdown to keep businesses connected and smart and has demonstrated possible working practices for future growth and development.

Championing Placemaking: Building on the knowledge the region has gained about creating culturally vibrant places where people want to live, work, and do business, we will work with local authorities, planners and developers to support placemaking. For many, the COVID lockdown has led to a rediscovery of local areas, and the benefits of working at or closer to home, which offers opportunity to invest in evolving environments.

Increasing Workspace: The Creative Industries need easy access and fit for purpose workspaces. Delivering the SELEP endorsed Creative Workspace Masterplan, SECEN will work to ensure that supply grows to meet demand, enabling businesses to scale up and share resources in our creative clusters.

Growing Cultural Tourism: The Creative Industries can support a year-round visitor offer to create a sustainable visitor economy and attract and retain business investment. The sector enhances local distinctiveness, offering the emotional connection and immersive experiences tourists seek and the work/life balance that residents want. We will generate SELEP-wide itineraries so that visitors can experience culture in combination with all that the region has to offer, raising the creative profile of the area. We will seek to provide creative opportunities for residents to become tourists in their own towns, developing and sharing ideas and healthy choices that improve well-being and mental health.

Creative people

Driving Innovation through Creativity: The Creative and Creative Industries sector contributed a GVA of £111.7bn to the UK economy in 2018, 42.3% increase in real terms since 2010; and of that Creative Industries contributed £32.3bn to the UK economy which was a 21.9% increase in real terms since 2010. In the last 5 years, the Creative Industries GVA has grown 37%. In an average year, the number of Creative businesses introducing a new product is around 20% compared with only 9% for non-creative sector firms. Creative Industries are also adept at being flexible, collaborative and finding solutions to a wide range of challenges, which is vital for recovery. Firms that spend double the average on creative industries inputs are 25% more likely to introduce products or services that are new to the firm or market. The GVA contribution generated by a creative professional is almost double the average GVA contribution of an employee across the South East's wider economy. SECEN will pursue and facilitate opportunities that foster innovation through creativity.

Growing Creative Businesses: The South East has over 15,000 creative businesses, accounting for 9.6 percent of total businesses in the SELEP region. We offer an increasingly competitive offer to location in the Capital. SECEN will ensure that the region continues to attract, retain and grow its creative sector. In particular the contribution that freelancers and self-employed practitioners make to the creative economy, as a vital part of the region's creative eco-system.

Fostering Skills and Creating an Inclusive Workforce: 42% of creative industry employers in the UK report a skills gap issue. Research indicates that among creative businesses with more than 100 staff, 73% struggle to find people with the right skills. And yet the Creativity and the Future of Skills report by the Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC) reports that Creative Industry jobs are growing at three times the UK average. Creative Industries employ more than two million people and, pre-COVID, expected to create one million more jobs by 2030. Studies of the future of work reveal that combinations of creative and digital skills will become even more valued by employers in the future. The creative sector needs to address inequalities in its workforce. SECEN will encourage the development of the talent pipeline to meet shortages in creative skills and the creative workforce, prioritising underrepresented groups, and provide development and training opportunities throughout the lifetime of workers.

However, despite the huge social and economic benefit that the CI sector offers, we know that COVID has had a devastating impact. According to a report by Oxford Economic "CIs are projecting a 122,000 drop in employment among employees (despite the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme – JRS) and a further 287,000 job losses among self-employed workers, compared to 2019 levels. In total, 409,000 CIs jobs are considered at risk, 27% of which are in London and 20% are in the South East."



1.



2.



3.

Creative places

Supporting
creative clusters

Increasing
workspace

Growing
cultural tourism



4.

Growing creative clusters

Creative Clusters reflect that there is no primary urban centre or region within the South East LEP area. Supporting creative clusters acknowledges these characteristics, managing the South East as a polycentric economic geography in which our many hotspots: towns, rural and coastal areas come together in dynamic, place-based clusters. Clusters enable an agile and disparate workforce: individuals, organisations, start-ups and multiple sub-sectors to work together so that their diversity and synergy can drive innovation.

The creative workforce gravitates to places that have a strong local identity, demanding much more than

workspace. It looks for distinctive places to live as well as to work, places where cultural products and services are available but where there is also untapped potential. This vitality leads to the revitalisation of underused properties and areas, technical innovation, artistic creativity and business entrepreneurship, deployed to make and distribute new cultural products. Clusters support entrepreneurs to plug into new markets and supply chains.

The term 'creative cluster' is used to describe different models across the South East: creative workspaces or organisations in one building, creative quarters in urban settings and regional creative clusters sometimes brought together through shared geography. The final model, virtual clusters online, often underpin the first three but like the others, cannot thrive in isolation.

Creative clusters within the region are at different stages on their journey – from conceptual and emerging to nationally recognised examples of growth. To nurture and grow a cluster effectively it is necessary to be able to diagnose both the key characteristics which need to be protected and the stage of its development, in other words, to work with what is happening already. From this starting point unique identities flourish, reputations are strengthened, making sense both to the businesses that the cluster hopes to attract, and to the people already there.

SECEN will build on our existing clusters and support emerging clusters. We will test a new model being piloted in London – Creative Enterprise Zones (CEZs) to establish if they can add value. We will explore whether creative opportunity zones better enable a suite of smaller clusters to fully exploit alignment of policy and investment in a geographic area defined by the zone. For example, we have already supported the development of one potential creative opportunity zone: the Thames Estuary Production Corridor, which has begun to attract significant funding. Supported by the Thames Estuary Growth Commission 2018 report, SECEN has helped establish a production corridor in London, South Essex and North Kent, to support the future development of creative and cultural infrastructure, alongside capacity building for local business and commissions of cultural products. To drive this work, Creative Estuary as a consortium of public sector and cultural organisations, is a three-year funded programme to develop the creative and economic evolution of this unique region, unlocking its potential both as an international production hub and a collaborative, inspiring place to work for a new generation of creative talent.

Pledges to support creative clusters

We will:

- Deliver interconnecting programmes that integrate the growth of creative clusters with work to boost coastal economies
- Use the Cultural Infrastructure Map to bring together new research and information that has previously not existed in one place alongside useful contextual data such as transport networks and population growth to inform planning and shared learning
- Test the concept of creative opportunity zones through research and application, exploring if they are effective in delivering both accelerated and socially inclusive growth

We will advocate for:

- Sector-friendly local planning policy



5.



6.

Place making

The South East has a world-class cultural and creative offer. Our region has demonstrated the value of culture led regeneration and planning. We've put places on the map, embedding culture into localities and achieving tangible difference. We've connected with our heritage, shifted perceptions, and brought social benefit to places such as Bexhill, Chatham, Colchester, Eastbourne, Folkestone, Hastings, Margate, Rochester and Southend.

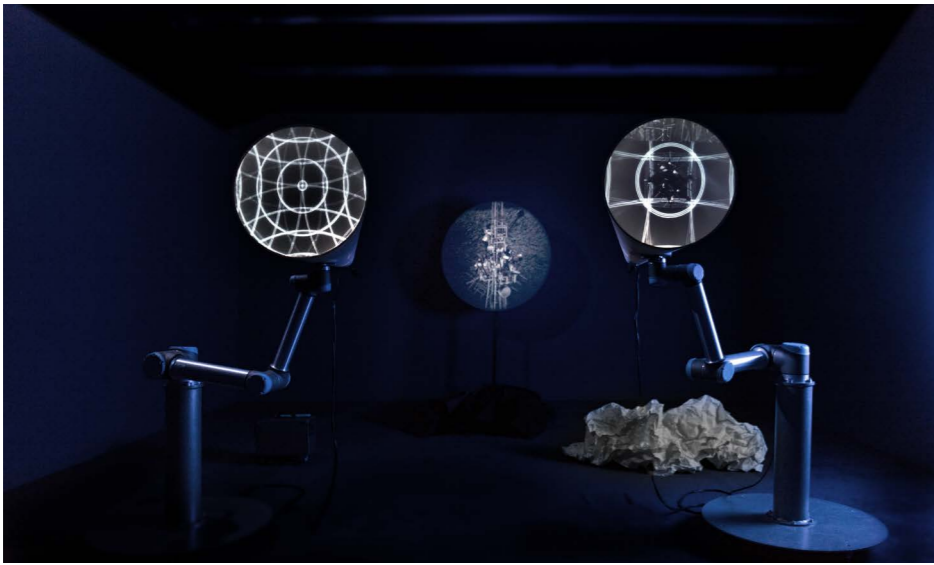
Galleries, theatres, heritage buildings, festivals, events, public art, repurposed buildings serving creative businesses – all of these done well, can create a sense of place which in turn stimulates economic growth, delivers social outcomes and attracts further investment. In fact, culture and creativity have been shown to be a critical factor in giving people a sense of identity and belonging (Warwick Commission Report). Research shows that living alongside or participating in culture and creativity helps to make communities happier, more prosperous and safer places to live. They contribute to a revitalisation of local High Streets and night-time economies. They attract both those employed in high skilled jobs and those in lower skilled roles. They have been shown to be equal in priority to schools, in the way they influence people's decision to move to or remain in an area. We need to shore up our creative businesses and organisations, otherwise the cultural loss to the region and its economy will impact current and future generations for years to come.

The prevalence of small businesses in the creative sector is also an asset to community building. Historically, places have often grown up around one key employer – a model which only works until the key employer fails. A diverse economy made up of many smaller businesses is more resilient to change, with employment not depending on one key business and able to support a wider range of communities. Creative entrepreneurs are more likely to create a job than take a job. Localised smaller businesses reduce the need for commuting so they are kinder to the environment, ensuring that workers spend what they earn locally and engage in a meaningful way with the places they live and work. This localism relieves the pressure on our transport infrastructure and improves the quality of the environment.

'Our economies, like our politics, are local. Like the seashore, the more you magnify an economy, the greater its richness, complexity, self-similarity. Like our bodies, understanding our economic health means taking readings at many resolutions. It means understanding the moving body parts, and their interactions, in microscopic detail. It calls for new data, at a higher frequency and higher resolution, and new ways of stitching it together. It means making micro-to-macro a reality.'

Andy Haldane, Chief Economist of the Bank of England and Chair of the Industrial Strategy Council

Creative entrepreneurs are more likely to create a job than take a job.



7.



8.



9.

SECEN wants to build on the knowledge the region has gained about creating culturally vibrant places where people want to live, work, and do business. We want to work with planners to ensure that we maximise future opportunities for bespoke cultural ecosystems. Rather than a one size fits all approach, we will advocate to build cultural vitality into new developments from the outset by influencing design, master planning, creation of new community facilities and complementary improvements in the transport infrastructure building on local distinctiveness and local assets in the form of people and cultural businesses.

The SELEP coast is one of the region's most valued natural assets. Many of our seaside towns have strong creative and cultural offers. Some of them are historic and have helped drive improvement, others are new and were created to help revive seaside towns. Two million people live on a coast, and population growth is anticipated at 7.5 percent per year. But many of our coastal towns rank in the lowest 10 percent of indices for UK deprivation, with underperforming economies, which have been hit hard by the impact of COVID 19. Lacking good transport connections, SELEP Coastal communities are learning to adapt to new business sectors as traditional business sectors decline. Coastal towns are seeing the benefits of supporting their local Creative Industries and creating the conditions for them to grow and attract new business.

Region-wide, we continue to attract strategic investment in placemaking to build sustainable communities. Examples include the Creative People and Places Scheme, where people choose, create and enjoy cultural experiences. Ideas Test in Swale and Medway empowers local communities to live more creative lives. More recently the Basildon consortium secured £1.2M and, led by creative practice Things Made Public, Basildon residents are engaged in this inspiring town centre programme. Newhaven, Clacton, Dover, Grays, Dartford, Harlow and Ramsgate, have each secured Future High Street Funds from the government to develop plans to reinvent their high streets with culture and creativity vital to these plans. Chatham, Hastings and Ramsgate have each received Heritage Action Zones funding, a fund designed to stimulate economic growth, improve quality of life, and engage locals with the heritage on their high street.

Pledges to support place making

We will:

- Facilitate strategic planning of built cultural infrastructure by ongoing mapping of cultural assets and existing creative workspace to encourage increased inward investment and ensure best use of existing facilities
- Make the case for asset transfer, demonstrating how redundant properties in public ownership can support the localised economy, and a sustainable cultural infrastructure, generating data to evidence growth, impact and future needs
- Review the data to evidence growth, impact and future needs to support our advocacy role

We will advocate for:

- The national planning framework to support the development of the right infrastructure for sector growth via local planning policies and S106 and CIL
- Digital connectivity which supports creative businesses and cultural tourism
- Embedding cultural developments and CIs into the regeneration plans for local High Streets
- Support post COVID investment in supporting venues and developing creative product that meets the demand of communities and visitors alike for a revitalised and diverse nightlife economy

89%

89% of creative businesses employ fewer than five people

47%

47% of all creative workers are freelance


15%

compared with 15% across the workforce as a whole

Increasing workspace

To understand the particular nature of the demand for workspace in the Creative, Cultural and Digital sector it is necessary to understand the characteristics of the workforce. 89% of creative businesses employ fewer than five people. 47% of all creative workers are freelance compared with 15% across the workforce as a whole. Many creative workers are too specialist to work for one company full-time or choose a freelance career to maintain creative control of their output. With most creative businesses' core teams being relatively small, it is necessary to hire specific skills for certain projects. Others need freelancers to increase capacity for peak periods. Hiring freelancers enables companies to access a wider range of creative talent and access up-to-date industry knowledge.

As a consequence, the sector has a high prevalence of companies who expand and contract on a regular basis and require their working premises to accommodate this. Many freelancers want to work in a shared space to combat isolation and facilitate the networking necessary to generate contracts and keep knowledge up to date, essential to their viability. The creative sector needs access to specialist equipment and scalable workplaces. The range of companies is broad, encompassing everything from architecture and fashion, to publishing, ceramics and photography, from festival producers and jewellery makers to theatre companies and games designers. The types of space that such a range of companies require is varied and at times is highly specialised – a jewellery maker may need a workbench or a 3D printer for example, a festival producer may need a warehouse to create signature parade features or a theatre company may need a maker space large enough to design a full stage set.

For the Creative Industries to thrive in the South East, the sector needs easy access to fit for purpose workspaces that facilitate new and future ways of working. This can also contribute to regeneration plans to repurpose privately or publicly owned buildings that are no longer occupied or viable for the traditional businesses or retail. Delivering the SE  endorsed Creative Workspace Masterplan, SECEN is working to ensure that workspace supply grows in line with demand, enabling businesses to scale up and fostering the creative clusters which the sector thrives on.



10.

Pledges to increase workspace

We will:

- Seek funding and investment opportunities to prioritise the growth of creative workspace in the region and align with the Cultural Infrastructure map and toolkit
- Provide fully developed Workspace Toolkits to influence governance, planning policy, investment, property development and public asset transfer linked to the Cultural Infrastructure Map
- Utilise the Cultural Infrastructure Map and Toolkits, support cultural workspace development which aligns with funding and investment opportunities

We will advocate for:

- Appropriate workspace development and investment.
- Business rate relief for creative industries
- Sympathetic planning Policy and public asset transfer to support the development of creative workspace



139m visitors

The South East welcomes up to 139m visitors annually

spend £8.7bn

These visitors spend £8.7 billion per year

177,000 jobs

These visitors support more than 177,000 jobs in the SELEP region.

745 miles

The region has over 745 miles of coastline and a landscape which is 72 percent rural

Growing cultural tourism

According to Visit Britain research, visitors want to be moved and inspired, astonished and amazed. Research shows that visitors seek authentic one-off experiences which feed the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) culture and create emotional connections.

Tourism is a critical part of the SELEP economy, essential to many of our towns as well as our coastal and rural communities. The South East welcomes up to 139m visitors annually and these visitors spend £8.7 billion per year supporting more than 177,000 jobs in the SELEP region. The region has over 745 miles of coastline and a landscape which is 72 percent rural – but enjoying these attractions is weather dependent. Visitor numbers peak during the summer and drop-off during the winter which makes the visitor economy vulnerable to seasonal highs and lows.

The Creative Industries can support a year-round visitor offer to create a sustainable and diverse visitor economy. The sector enhances local distinctiveness, offering the emotional connection tourists seek. Workspace development reclaims buildings that have fallen into disuse, enhancing the public realm and reinvigorates high streets. The sector generates unique experiential products such as festivals and exhibitions that generate unforgettable moments. They manufacture artisan objects such as bespoke furniture and ceramics, which all help to support year-round visitor numbers. Those same inspirational experiences also improve the quality of life for those who live in the region and attract newcomers.

Visit England research suggests that barriers that might deter visitors include, lack of knowledge, the all-encompassing London offer overshadowing the South East, transport concerns and a perceived lack of one-off 'experiences'. We will continue to seek out partnership which will help us to address these barriers. We will encourage participation in national initiatives such as Year of the English Coast 2021 and the development of Tourism Zones. We will generate SELEP-wide itineraries so that visitors can experience culture in combination with all that the region has to offer, raising the profile of the area. We shall also work to pro-actively market the region to the film industry, encouraging direct investment through location filming.

England's Creative Coast is a new immersive visitor experience driven by the region's exceptional art and culture, comprising seven site-specific commissioned artworks to connect this distinct coastline, linked by the first art GeoTour digital trail in the world. The partnership enabled by SECEN, led by Turner Contemporary and Visit Kent (Go to Places), aims to increase domestic and international tourism to coastal Essex, Kent and East Sussex.

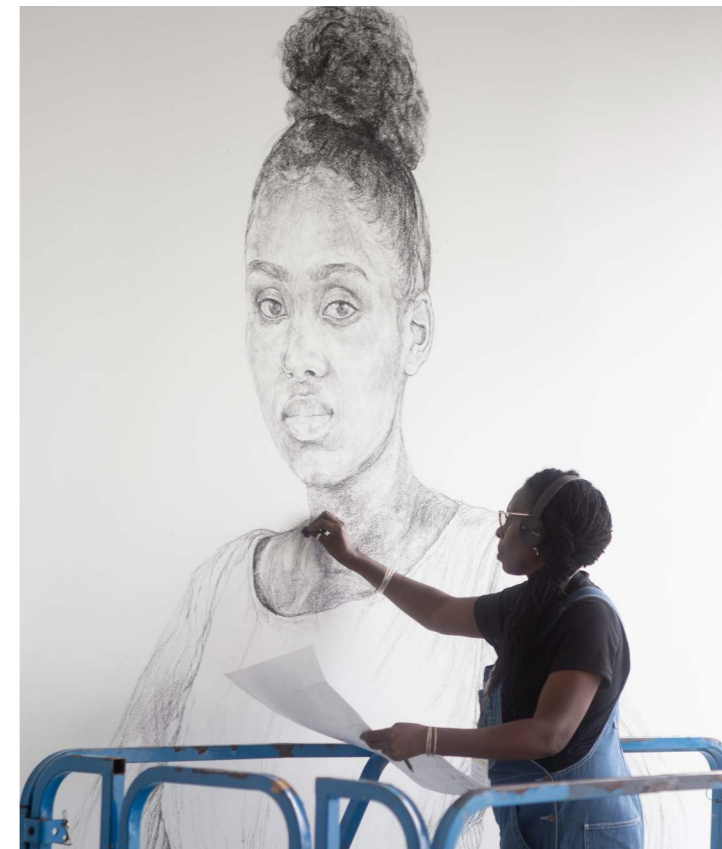


12.

'Britain is recognised as a world class destination for culture and heritage and these aspects of the British holiday offer are repeatedly identified as major draws for overseas visitors in our research.'

Visit Britain

13.



Pledges to grow cultural tourism

We will:

- Create great cultural experiences offering a dynamic shifting seasonal South East cultural calendar which extends our appeal to visitors beyond the summer months, supporting a sustainable visitor economy for the future
- Deliver new interconnected tourism packages with full integration of the rural and coastal offer, inspired by existing viticulture, gardens and food collaborations
- Gather and publish robust data for evidencing growth and impact of cultural tourism in the SELEP area
- Proactively market the region as a film-friendly environment
- Transfer knowledge between the Creative and Tourism Sectors together to better share the story of South East culture with the rest of the world
- Deliver T levels in Culture and Heritage Visitor Attractions

We will advocate for:

- Transport links which support sustainable and accessible tourism



FOMO

Research shows that visitors seek authentic one-off experiences which feed the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) culture and create emotional connections.

14.



15.



16.



17.

Creative people

Creativity driving innovation

Growing creative businesses

Fostering creative skills



18.

Creativity driving innovation

Creative talent and innovation that originates in this sector has become indispensable to other sectors. In order to communicate and reach their markets, most businesses now require at the very least, a brand, a website and social media presence. Collaborations in sectors such as health, ICT and the services economy have become essential to keep pace with changes in behaviour and market demand, achieving new products and greater efficiency, shoring up businesses models across the economy. 53% of creative professionals in the Greater South East now work in a creative capacity outside the CI sector.



19.

Business leaders in the creative economy are natural innovators. Embracing and improving upon new technologies, they are constantly developing new products. Creative industries in the South East, along with other business sectors, acknowledge a need to do more to become a more innovative economy, with a stronger local innovation culture, and more commercial growth-driving products. When creatives, academics and tech professionals collaborate, new products and services develop. SECEN will work to create the conditions to foster these collaborations.

Creotech is where Creative and Tech expertise combine to transform products, services, and experiences. In their 'Ones to Watch Report' the Creative Industries Council identifies key trends in Creotech with growth potential including: user experience opportunities, immersive entertainment, transformational experiences, seamless service and personalised tools. Innovators will bridge technology with creative industry subsectors including, advertising, architecture, crafts, TV and film, all forms of design, music, the performing arts, photography, publishing, and the visual arts. We see huge growth opportunities where creative skills interact with AI, mixed reality and other forms of technology. SECEN will pursue and facilitate opportunities that support activities around creative technology such as piloting, test-beds, validation of business models, pre-normative research, and standard-setting.

The creative sector is naturally innovative, new ideas are the product of creativity.

Research and Development

The SELEP area performs well for business-related innovation. In fact, a higher than average proportion of firms engage in product and process innovation. Business investment in R&D was at 90% pre-COVID, 2nd place behind London. But we fall behind other parts of the country across other key innovation metrics. HEI spend on R&D is just 25%, and graduate start-ups were at 29% of national average pre-COVID. There are also regional differences: Innovate UK reveals that SELEP Coastal communities receive just over 10% of innovation and research funding accessed by the SELEP region as a whole.

The creative sector is naturally innovative, new ideas are the product of creativity. To foster research and development which can support businesses to turn ideas into new products and services, SECEN will work to create an environment that supports the R&D process. Through our workspace development we will strive to ensure that businesses can access the equipment they need, the incubator labs, maker spaces and co-working spaces which encourage R&D. Through business support we will seek access to the funding that enables businesses to take risks and the business support training which helps them make informed decisions about product development.

SELEP share of Innovate UK investment is just 1.5% of total investment nationally, much lower than its share of population or business stock. Overall R&D expenditure by the HE sector is amongst the nation's lowest and graduate start-ups are relatively weak in the SELEP area. SECEN will identify opportunities to share information and mobilise expertise to support innovation in our region. The South East has the potential to deliver large scale collaborative R&D programmes, collaborations between University research programmes and the Creative Industries sector, to strengthen business productivity.



20.

Pledges to drive Innovation:

We will:

- Seek investment opportunities for businesses with R&D and growth ambitions.
- Create the conditions to encourage collaborations between creative and tech companies.
- Create access to R&D investment and spaces to innovate.
- Map the intellectual and physical supply chains generated by the creative industries as a tool for illustrating the interdependencies and synergies within the sector and with other industry sectors.
- Utilise collective knowledge to gather and review data to evidence growth, impact and future needs to enable innovation.

We will advocate for:

- A broader definition of Research and Development in order to increase Creative Industry R&D eligible for tax relief.
- Investment for pioneering collaborations between creative and tech companies.
- Recognition of creativity as a key capability and driver of innovation across all business sectors and encourage increased workforce development of this core skill.



53%

53% of creative professionals in the Greater South East now work in a creative capacity outside the CI sector.

90% R&D

Business investment in R&D was at 90% pre-COVID, 2nd place behind London.

skills interact

We see huge growth opportunities where creative skills interact with AI, mixed reality and other forms of technology.

30%

30% of business support required should be bespoke in order to be effective.



22.



23.



34

Growing creative businesses

SECEN will ensure that the region continues to attract, retain and grow its creative sector by attracting new creative businesses to locate here, supporting talent and start-ups and helping our existing businesses to grow. As major clusters on our doorstep, particularly London and Brighton, encounter limited headroom for growth, establishing a mutually beneficial talent pipeline relationship is an opportunity for our region. While the greater South East has the nation's highest share of Creative Industries jobs outside of London, its rate of Creative Industries job creation is growing at the second slowest rate. These figures demonstrate the need to invest in the businesses to help them grow their capacity to create more employment opportunities both for FTE and freelancers.

Our other priorities all work to achieve the right environment to grow creative businesses in this sector: supporting the talent pipeline to foster future entrepreneurs and ensure a qualified workforce is available; creating clusters to enable networking, upskilling and cross-over which leads to new products and services; creating sector-appropriate workspace for businesses to operate in, and creating a cultural offer which will attract and retain our creative businesses whilst growing our visitor economy. We recognise that business support requirements often need to be bespoke for CIs in order to be effective, and go beyond a traditional package of training, advice and grants.



25.

96%

96% of creative businesses are microbusinesses

In 2019 SECEN launched South East Creatives, a business support programme led by Thurrock Council. This programme worked with existing creative clusters and coordinators who are embedded in the sector and flagship cultural organisations. The offer has included specialist training, networking events, mentoring and a grants programme and HEI internship opportunities led by the University of Essex. It recognises that 96% of creative businesses are microbusinesses (48% of applicants to SEC are freelancers) who are unlikely to access mainstream business support. SECEN will seek to resource further delivery of South East Creatives, adapting the model as we learn from it.

Creative businesses thrive at a local level when a sustainable eco-system is created through clusters, local and regional networks, and integrated holistic business support is on offer which includes peer led approaches, hyper local delivery and access to HEI expertise and facilities. This creates an environment that enables risk taking and R&D activity, essential for the sustainable growth of the sector.

Connectivity

To support sector business growth SECEN will continue to advocate for good connectivity including efficient and sustainable transport links and superfast digital infrastructure – essential to the greater productivity within a sector characterised by its agile SME's, significant freelance economy, international working and our polycentric region.

Freelance friendly

The self-employed or 'gig' economy is rising across the economy and policymakers, influencers and funders need to better understand the distinctive needs of this growing workforce. The creative sector has always had a high percentage of freelancers because creative workers cover a breadth of market specialisms. The sector is therefore ahead of the curve in understanding how to support this way of working which represents an opportunity for the South East. SECEN would like to see the SELEP area become the most freelance-friendly region in the UK.



26.



27.



28.



29.

Pledges to grow creative business

We will:

→ Deliver sector-led business support programmes building on the South East Creatives brand, delivered at a hyper local level and reflecting the diversity of needs

→ Support and grow networks

We will advocate for:

→ Bespoke business support programmes including advice and investment designed to meet the needs of the sector

→ Business investment programmes that recognise the value of the sector and adapt criteria and processes to make investment available to the sector

→ Access to sector-friendly finance

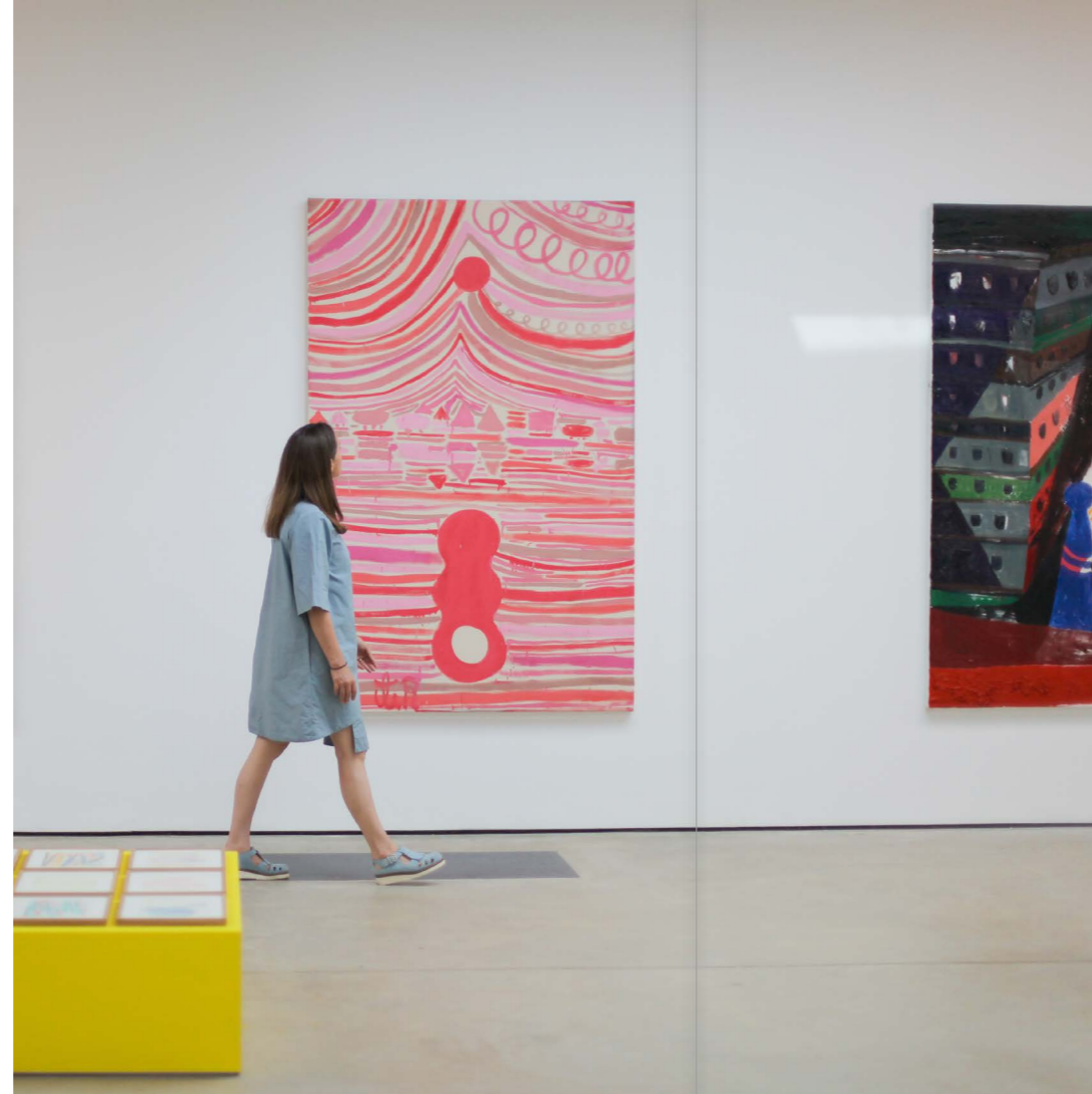
→ Superfast broadband, digital and mobile connectivity across the South East

→ Central government investment definitions and frameworks to be adapted to support rather than hinder the sector, addressing for example, the concept of FTE job creation

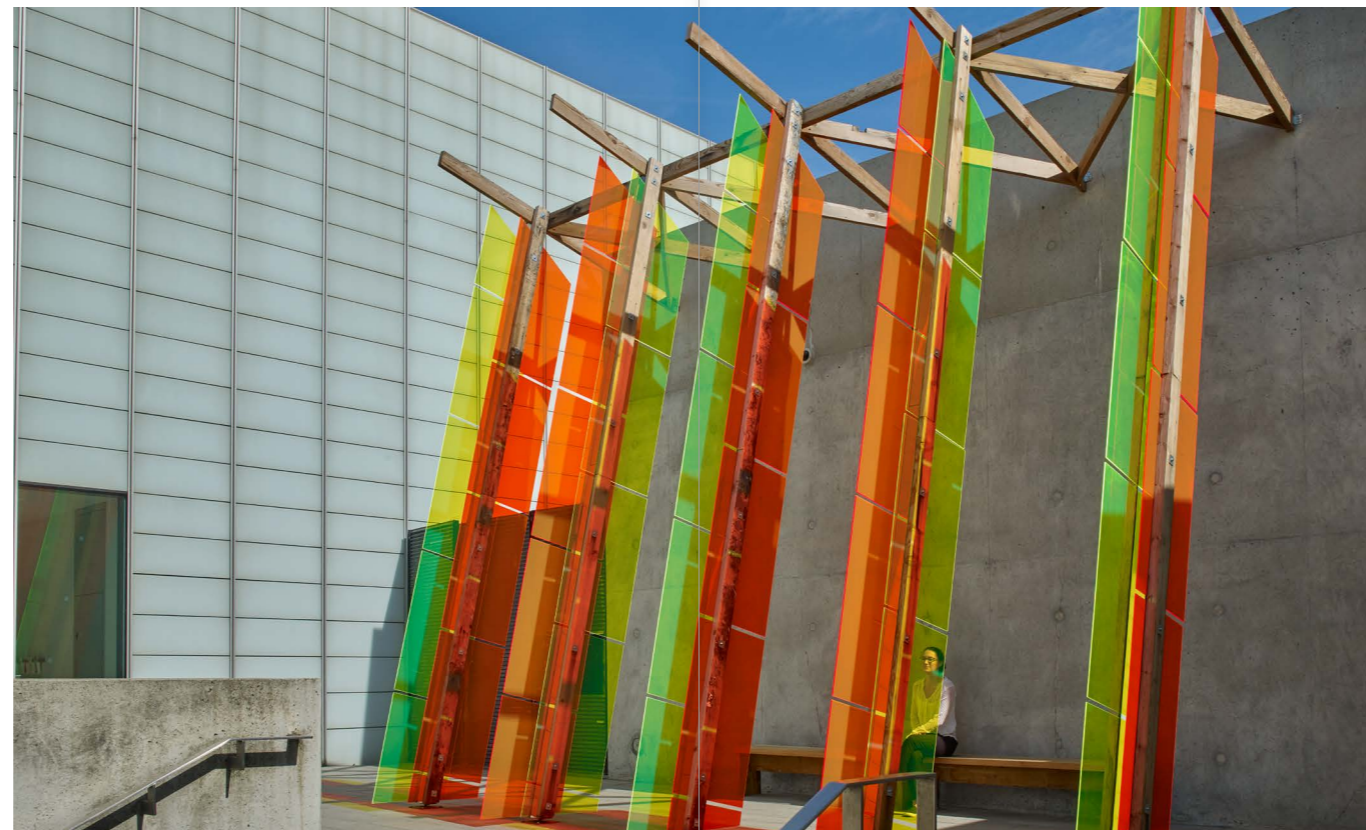
→ Greater freelancer representation on the SELEP Board to ensure this growing work status is better understood in future planning for economic growth

→ **SELEP** to become the best location for freelancers in the UK (across all sectors)

→ Interventions that support and protect freelancers, e.g. addressing late payment culture



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31.

Fostering creative skills

SECEN will encourage the development of the talent pipeline to meet shortages in creative skills and the creative workforce, providing development and training opportunities throughout the lifetime of workers. With COVID 19 creating unprecedented levels of unemployment and lack of opportunity for an emerging workforce, it is vital that dedicated support is given to skills development and training to create clear and inclusive career paths into the creative sector, whilst also providing opportunities for retraining. SECEN has been working with Creative and Cultural Skills, the National Academy for Skills and Training for the UK's Creative and Cultural Industries. SECEN partners now provide careers advice, promote apprenticeships and enhance vocational learning opportunities across the South East area.

Jobs in the sector are often part-time, freelance, and multi-faceted, therefore a nuanced understanding of creatives' needs is required. The region lacks a clear 'elevator of opportunities' for young people interested in working in the creative sector. Those with creative skills, who might want to apply them in other sectors (e.g. engineering and tourism), would also benefit from professional development. That's why SECEN's focus is to address the low take up of apprenticeships and lack of awareness around breadth of roles and opportunities, which a career in the Creative Industries can offer. We work to create the conditions for mutual support between creative entrepreneurs and the self-employed: provision of training and upskilling; provision of opportunities to be an apprentice and self-employed at the same time. We will share best practice and take positive action to support inclusive recruitment and opportunities within the creative industries, to ensure we remain relevant for the entire working population.

STEAM not STEM

'Employability of students who study arts subjects is higher, and they are more likely to stay in employment.'

Artswork, STEAM Toolkit, 2019

Jobs in this industry are resilient and future proof in terms of risk of automation, with 87% of those employed considered at low to no risk. This compares with 35% of all occupations expected to be vulnerable to automation within the next two decades (particularly transport, logistics, manufacturing, production and construction).

We have a mission to convince the government that creativity has a positive impact on product, in all sectors of business. Creative skills development should begin at school, so SECEN lobbies for STEAM in education so that arts and other creative subjects are encouraged in our school curriculums. Currently arts education in England's schools is falling fast as funding is redirected in favour

of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects. STEAM is used to define a method of teaching that sees five subject areas: Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths join together to deliver a more holistic approach to learning.

Artswork is a South East based agency and leading advocate for the importance of arts and cultural practice as a catalyst for developing young people's skills and employability. It has inspired the creation of seven STEAM Networks across the Greater South East, and has established new working relationships between education, cultural and STEM partners.

We inspire all this through collaborative working with South East Creatives, Cultural Skills partnership and Digital Skills partnership. Our networked approach crosses geographic boundaries in the region. We work closely with all kinds of Creative businesses, and cultural organisations, education and Local Authorities, to understand the skill gaps.



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42.

Pledges to support skills

We will:

- Develop a South East 'Attraction Strategy' for talent development which addresses lack of knowledge in sectoral career guidance to help young people, teachers and parents make informed choices, fully aware of the breadth of careers in the creative industries.
- Deliver Creative Industry apprenticeships through a pan-SELEP sector-led network of brokers with expert knowledge of the sector and HR requirements.
- Deliver a pilot scheme for modular and rotational apprenticeships; investigating more flexible apprenticeship models, we will work in collaboration with independent bodies to develop best practice schemes: manageable for micros, SMEs and the freelance economy.
- Learn from best practice from other sectors e.g. Construction industry models
- Develop collaborations between Creative Industries employers and businesses to deliver FE and T Levels.
- Build stronger relationships between the Creative Industries and HEIs, for more dynamic, localised and investment ready routes to developing innovation.
- Take positive action to create a more inclusive workforce within the Creative Industries.

We will advocate for:

- Creative Skills
- Greater awareness of the breadth of careers in the creative industries.
- A sector-focused brokerage resource to increase apprenticeship take up.
- A nationwide Apprenticeships Training Agency for the sector.
- Creative Enterprise Training and Retraining opportunities
- Investment in education partnerships such as FE and T Levels with Industry employers.
- Investment in a comprehensive evidence and data review to identify current skills gaps and address sector-specific skills shortage in the SELEP area using data source appropriate for Creative Industries.

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SECEN membership

South East Creative Economies Network is made up of the following organisations across East Sussex, Essex, and Kent. New members – individuals, organisations and businesses – are always welcome. To join please contact Alexander Riley, Programme Manager, South East Local Enterprise Partnership. Alexander.Riley@Southeastlep.com

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Acava | Hastings Borough Council |
| Activate Learning | Ideas Test |
| Always Possible Ltd | Jasmin Vardimon |
| Applause | Hastings Contemporary |
| Arts Council England | Kent & Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP) |
| Artwork South East Bridge | Kent County Council |
| Basildon Council | Kent Music |
| Canterbury Christ Church University | Kinetika |
| CCSkills | Marlowe Theatre |
| Charleston Trust | Medway City of Culture 2025 Bid |
| Chatham Historic Dockyard | Medway Council |
| Chelmsford City Council | Mercury Theatre |
| Chelmsford Cultural Development Trust | Metal |
| Cohesion Plus | National College Creative Industries |
| Colchester Arts Centre | Opportunity South Essex |
| Colchester BC / Colchester Amphora | People Dem Collective |
| Creating Cultural Capacities | Rother District Council |
| Creative Estuary | Royal Opera House, Purfleet |
| Creative Foundation | Sarah Dance Associates |
| De La Warr Pavilion | Screen South |
| Devonshire Collective | South East LEP |
| Ditchling Museum of Art and Craft | South Essex College |
| East Sussex County Council | Southend Borough Council |
| Eastbourne BC / Lewes DC | Space Studios London |
| Eastbourne Creative Network | Tendering District Council |
| Essex Book Festival | Thames Gateway Kent |
| Essex County Council | The Hub, Colchester |
| Essex Cultural Diversity Project | Thurrock Council |
| Faith in Strangers | Towner Eastbourne |
| Firstsite Gallery | Turner Contemporary |
| Focal Point Gallery | University of Essex |
| Folkestone & Hythe District Council | University of Kent |
| GFE South | Wealden District Council |
| Gulbenkian Theatre Canterbury | Wise Birds Network |
| Harlow Art Trust | |

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- 5 England's Creative Coast
- 6 England's Creative Coast, Rob Harris
- 7 Lindsay Seers 'Every Thought There Ever Was'. Courtesy the artist, Matt's Gallery and Focal Point Gallery
- 8 Paul Tait Photography
- 9 De La Warr Pavilion
- 10 Andy Matthews/HAT Projects
- 11 Creaking Breeze Trio, Slack Fulcrum Twelfths (Green Vitriol), Whitstable Biennale 2018. Photo: Rosie Lonsdale
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- 23 OUTLANDS: Yunohana Variations: Yoshimio / Susie Ibarra / Robert Aiki Aubrey Low. Artist unknown
- 24 England's Creative Coast, Manu Palomeque
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- 28 Lubaina Himid, Jelly Mould Pavilion, commissioned by Creative Folkestone for Folkestone Triennial 2017. Photograph by Thierry Bal
- 29 Burst Studios
- 30 England's Creative Coast, Hastings Contemporary
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- 32 School's START workshop in Mark Fell's 'The Concept of Time is Intrinsically Incoherent'. Courtesy the artist and Focal Point Gallery.
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Funded by South East Local Enterprise Partnership

(SELEP):

East Sussex County Council
Essex County Council
Kent County Council

Thanks to:

South East Creative Economy Network
South East Creative Economy Prospectus working group:
Colette Bailey, Sarah Dance, Stewart Drew, Joe Hill, Lorna Fox O'Mahony, Sally Staples, Katharine Stout, Lindsey Strange, Sarah Wren
Project Manager: Marina Norris
Consultant: Celia Davies
Copywriter: Mark Sheerin
Design: Playne Design
Print: Pureprint, Uckfield

The figures and statistics included in this document are based on data from 2019/2020 from a range of external sources.

South East Local Enterprise Partners (SELEP):
East Sussex County Council Essex County Council
Kent County Council

