



Mr Geoff Miles
Chair of Accountability Board
c/o Secretariat
South East Local Enterprise Partnership
County Hall
Market Road
Chelmsford
CM1 1QH

Richard Longman
Head of Policy
Room F34, Innovation Centre Medway
Maidstone Road, Chatham
KENT, ME5 9FD

Tel: 01634 337270

richard.longman@thamesgateway-kent.org.uk

www.tgkp.org

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Dear Geoff

I was an observer at the 31 January SELEP Strategic Board meeting, during which the Board considered whether to confirm Local Growth Fund allocations for Innovation Park Medway. As you know, the Board agreed to defer a decision until the 20 March meeting of the newly constituted Board, noting that the Accountability Board meeting on 14 February would have an opportunity to review the position.

My purpose in writing, in my capacity as Coordinator for the North Kent Enterprise Zone, is to remind the Accountability Board that Innovation Park Medway is an integral part of the North Kent Enterprise Zone (NKEZ). NKEZ is one of four Enterprise Zones in the SELEP area, and these are identified in SELEP's draft Local Industrial Strategy as key 'innovation assets' offering potential to drive commercialisation of innovation and to attract inward investment into the South East economy.

The 2016 Memorandum of Understanding with Government relating to establishment of NKEZ, to which SELEP is a signatory, does not commit the LEP to any particular investment in NKEZ. But subject to due diligence etc, it does commit the LEP to use all reasonable endeavours to support delivery of the enterprise zone. SELEP's positive support for NKEZ, and for Innovation Park Medway in particular, has been reflected in allocations of Growing Places Fund and Local Growth Fund for enabling infrastructure and Sector Support Funding for the preparation of Local Development Orders to assist with streamlined planning for occupiers investing in the site.

Clearly the Accountability Board will consider the further LGF commitments to Innovation Park Medway very carefully and objectively. But I trust that the implications for delivery of the enterprise zone, and the message it sends in the context of the emerging Local Industrial Strategy, will be borne in mind.

Kind regards

Richard Longman
Head of Policy
Thames Gateway Kent Partnership