



SOUTH EAST
LOCAL ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP

NEWS BULLETIN

Your Local Enterprise Partnership, working for you



Letter from South East LEP Chair Christian Brodie:

Welcome to the South East LEP's fortnightly news bulletin, created to keep you up to date with what we have been doing to help the Government deliver on its growth agenda and support our businesses and communities. We will be sharing updates of the hard work and great things happening across the region to enable you to pass on the key growth messages for your area when speaking with your constituents and others.

"While the uncertainty over what Brexit might look like continues, we have been focused on working closely with our local federal partners across East Sussex, Essex, Kent, Medway, Southend and Thurrock and the core issues of improving productivity, skills, development and infrastructure. We have been implementing recommendations following the Government's LEP review, to ensure we are best placed to attract investment, to support our businesses and the economy to thrive in these changing economic times."

Growth Hubs:

The three Growth Hubs operating across the South East LEP area under the South East Business Hub support initiative have helped to create close to 1,000 new jobs by helping more than 4,400 firms, recent figures have shown.

A report into the project – which comprises Business Essex, Southend and Thurrock (BEST); Business East Sussex; and the Kent & Medway Growth Hub – estimated that for every £1 spend on the programme, a further £13.20 has been generated in return, creating 994 jobs.

Businesses and entrepreneurs can use the Growth Hub to access a range of support, with close to 60% of those who have worked with their local Growth Hub reporting an increase in turnover.

READ MORE:

southeastlep.com/business-support-project-delivers-nearly-1000-new-jobs



Brexit:

A range of events designed to help companies prepare for the UK's exit from the EU are being held across the South East, supported by the South East LEP's three Growth Hubs: Business Essex, Southend and Thurrock (BEST); Business East Sussex; and the Kent & Medway Growth Hub.

As part of the Government's Get Ready for Brexit campaign, the LEP has been encouraging businesses in its area to sign up for local workshops – which are signposted on the SELEP website – as well as the national webinars and weekly bulletins provided by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.



There have been more than 60 Brexit readiness events scheduled across the South East LEP – to find out how we're supporting businesses in preparing for Brexit, head to southeastlep.com/brexit



Brexit support for Ports and infrastructure links:

The specific challenges that our busy ports and key road links could face in the wake of the UK's departure from the EU have been recognised by the Government, which provided local authorities in Kent with a collective £2.6m in recognition of the county being home to a number of busy ports and infrastructure links to the continent, including the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel.

Kent County Council received £1m, and £1.6m was shared between a further 13 local authorities in the county. The Government also provided Tendring Council with £150,000 to help support the development of Brexit plans, in particular in recognition of the importance of Harwich International Port.

The funding was granted to recognise that local authorities with ports will be more affected than the majority of councils, meaning increased capacity and specialist capacity will need to be implemented to manage changes, including additional staffing.

Growing Places Fund: reviving our area

The South East LEP recently held a call for businesses, Local Authorities and other partners to tap into the Growing Places Fund loan. To date, a total of £54.4m has been invested in 21 projects across East Sussex, Kent, Medway, Essex, Southend and Thurrock from an original pot of £49.2m, which has grown thanks to the fund's structure as a recycled capital loan scheme.

In October, the LEP called on partners across the South East to bid for between £250,000 and £3.5m for their projects. The total amount of funding currently available for reinvestment through the fund – which aims to unlock economic growth and help kick start development at stalled sites – is £20.724m, of which £15.595m will be available in 2020/21 and a further £5.129m in 2021/22.

FIND OUT MORE:

southeastlep.com/opportunities/growing-places-fund-open-call-for-projects



Driving the area's productivity is key mission for SELEP:

The South East LEP is currently in the process of developing our Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) to set out the long-term ambitions for our area, based on clear evidence and aligned to the National Industrial Strategy put forward by central government.

Following our summer engagement plan, the success of our recent AGM and other ongoing meetings with our working groups, we recently held a LIS stakeholder engagement event to hear from more businesses and partner organisations about how we can improve productivity in the South East. We had more than 50 key partners joining us at Farmers and Fletchers in the City in mid-October.

In November, we will be holding four further workshops that will examine the key themes emerging from our draft evidence base, namely accelerating business productivity and growth; maximising natural assets; building new communities; and modelling future connectivity. The draft strategy will be considered by our Strategic board in January 2020 before final agreement with Government by March 2020.

READ MORE:

southeastlep.com/our-strategy/local-industrial-strategy



Our Digital Skills Partnership:

Businesses across the area have been asked to help identify their priorities when it comes to the digital skills needed in their workforces, both now and in the future. The Digital Skills Survey will assess the current level of digital skills in the South East and identify training gaps to help businesses be more productive. This partnership covers everything from the basic digital skills needed to search and apply for jobs, through to those required in the workplace including higher-level, technical skills such as web development and coding.

The results will be used by the LEP's recently created Digital Skills Partnership – one of only six areas identified by DCMS to deliver a local DSP programme – to ensure colleges, universities and training providers in the area are delivering the right courses and opportunities regarding digital skills to support businesses and their needs.

FIND OUT MORE:

southeastlep.com/our-delivery/digital-skills-partnership



Follow us and be part of the journey: SMARTER, FASTER, TOGETHER

We have included links where you can find more details on some of these updates. If you have any queries or would like specific details, please get in touch:

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