



Accelerating Opportunities within the Newhaven Enterprise Zone: Sector Support Fund

Progress and Evaluation Report
September 2021

This report outlines progress, outputs and achievements since the launch of the Sector Specific Fund (SSF) project, Accelerating Opportunities within the Newhaven Enterprise Zone.

The SSF project was approved in December 2019 with an award of £115,000 of Growing Places Fund (GPF) Revenue Grant devolved to East Sussex County Council for project delivery by the Newhaven Enterprise Zone (NEZ). Match funding of £82,500 has been provided. The original funding package included a commitment of £40,000 from ESCC to support delivery of proposed enhancements to the Avis Way Industrial Estate. Due to difficulties in committing and spending the ESCC allocation by 31st March 2020, the match funding has been provided through the NEZ Business Rate up-lift. In addition to the financial contributions, significant in-kind contributions have been provided through office time and resources from both NEZ and Lewes District Council

1. Background and Context

Launched in 2017 and covering approximately 79 hectares, the Newhaven Enterprise Zone is a catalyst for positive growth in Newhaven and the wider sub region. The overall objective is to deliver sustainable regeneration and a shift towards a higher value economy in Newhaven. Whilst the focus is on eight sites dispersed throughout the town, the ambition to create 70,000m² of new and refurbished employment floor-space and 2,000 FTE jobs over a 25-year timeframe will impact across the SELEP region as well as supporting enterprise growth and jobs creation in East Sussex.

dialogue with local business leaders and landowners established. The focus of the SSF project is to create and develop some quick wins to capitalise on the momentum created through NEZ designation and to leverage the investment that the EZ can generate.

The project has three core components, each directly responding to the coastal communities and growth hub agenda, but indirectly delivering against infrastructure, skills, and social enterprise.

1. **Avis Way Estates Improvement Plan.** A business led forum has already been established and estate audit and improvement plan drafted. The objective of this component is to refine the plan and design and deliver improvements to the built estate that encourage productivity, competitiveness and attract new investment to the area.
2. **Avis Way Business Improvement District.** This component aimed to test and assess options for creating an Industrial Business Improvement District to build on the business forum and create a sustainable model to continue investment in the estate and enhance the trading environment.
3. **Marketing of the Newhaven EZ.** The ambition is to develop a creative and coherent plan for delivery, targeting both the community and business. The objective is to address and overcome the town's negative perception, and simultaneously promote the town for investment.

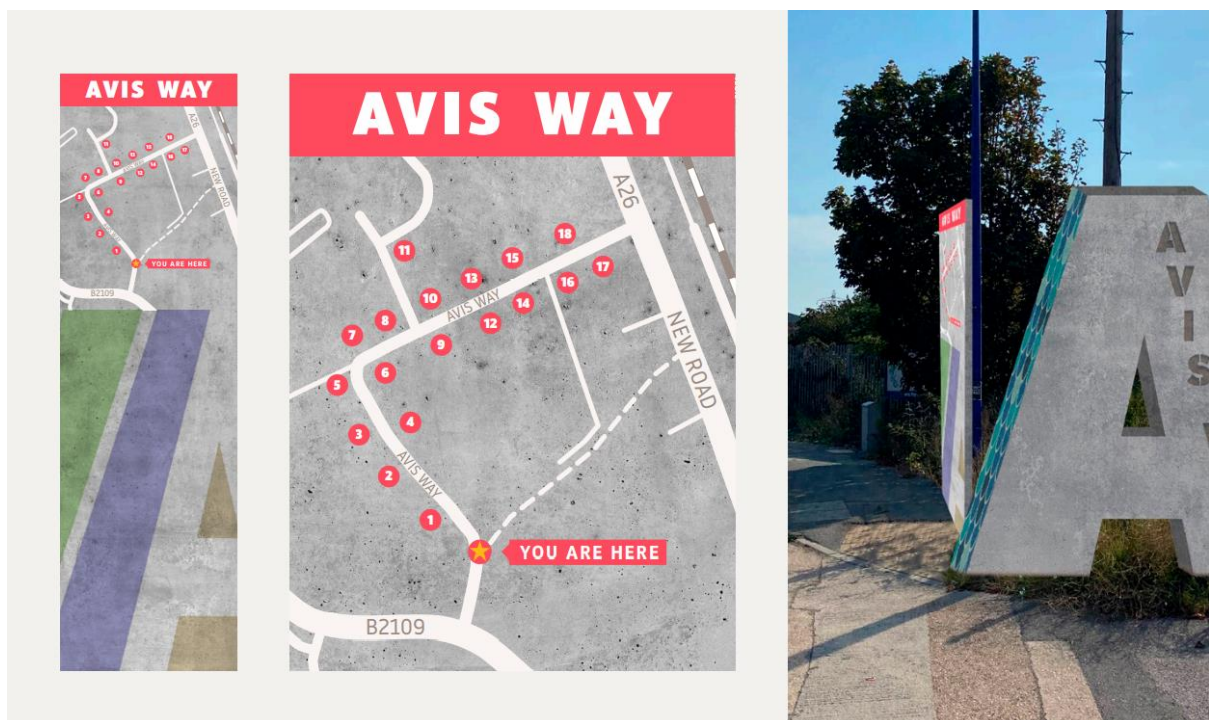
2. COVID-19

Following funding approval in late December 2019, the SSF project was launched early in 2020: the first major research and consultation commission was initiated in March 2020. Clearly, the COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on the early stages of the programme. As elsewhere in the world, COVID-19 has disrupted business, employment and economic growth. Lockdowns and other restrictions have taken the national (and Newhaven) economy into new territory but the impacts vary considerably depending on local circumstances. The town's strong transport connections means that the logistics sector is important. Anecdotal evidence indicates that the pandemic is causing staffing issues in the recruitment and retention of drivers.

In terms of the study, the major impact has been on business engagement and consultation, specifically the delivery of a comprehensive business survey on Avis Way and North Quay industrial estates. This was deemed as being essential to ensure that the needs of the business community are taken into account in the preparation and delivery of an estate improvement plan for the area. The pandemic meant that the survey was not undertaken until September / October 2020.

Clearly, the focus of businesses in the area continues to be on recovery and building resilience in response to the pandemic, which has led to some challenges in terms of engaging in discussions about physical estate improvements and BID development.

In light of the pandemic, it was agreed with SELEP that the SSF project would be extended until September 2021 to ensure maximum impact of the delivery phase of the project.



3. Progress and Outputs

The Accelerating Opportunities project has been progressing across all work streams.

Avis Way Improvement Plan

- Design and implementation of a detailed engagement programme including two meetings with the Avis Way North Quay Forum
- Comprehensive business survey to involve businesses in the development, delivery and monitoring of the Avis Way Improvement Plan: over 50 businesses took part in the survey
- Detailed report to assess transport, access and movement issues facing the estate (undertaken by WSP)
- Preparation and launch of the Avis Way Industrial Estate Improvement Plan (Appendix 1), which sets out a practical phased programme of actions to enhance the business environment with a focus on
 - Public realm and environmental improvements
 - Signage
 - Traffic movement and parking
- Commissioning and delivery of Phase 1 capital improvements, including:
 - Design and install new gateway supergraphics (part sculpture part information) at key arrival points into Avis Way
 - Develop a series of pocket parks in Avis Way (initially off Avis Way) providing seating and relaxation space to better utilise green spaces around the estate
 - Design and implement a directory gateway panel at the entrance to Avis Way industrial estate
 - Implement a series of public realm improvements
- Commissioning and delivery of a deep-clean of the estate



Significant progress has been made although there has been a slight delay in undertaking some of the capital works (specifically the new gateway supergraphics) due to planning although this is expected to be resolved in the coming months.



Avis Way Business Improvement District

- Comprehensive business survey to assess the businesses appetite for the introduction of a Business Improvement District: in addition to one-to-one meetings, over 50 businesses took part in the survey

The consultations with businesses on Avis Way and North Quay confirmed a willingness to support and contribute to the general up-keep to the estate and support the delivery of the Estates Improvement Plan. However, it soon became apparent that the formal introduction of a BID via a formal ballot was unlikely at this stage to be an appropriate way forward. The impact of COVID has meant that businesses at present are more concerned about their own future as opposed to contributing investment to improve their environment.

Further work will be commissioned to see whether there is an appetite from businesses towards an Enterprise Zone-wide BID. In the meantime, the business community in Avis Way will continue to be involved through the Avis Way and North Quay Business Forum including securing support – both in-kind and private sector funding – for estate renewal activities.

The remaining funding allocated for this area of work has been committed to delivery of the estate improvement works.

Marketing of the Newhaven EZ

- Design and development of Strategic Marketing and Communications Plan
- Contributing to visual identity and refining and refreshing marketing activities in line with the Newhaven place 'narrative' prepared by *thinking places*
- Developing inward investment marketing collateral prepared by Larking

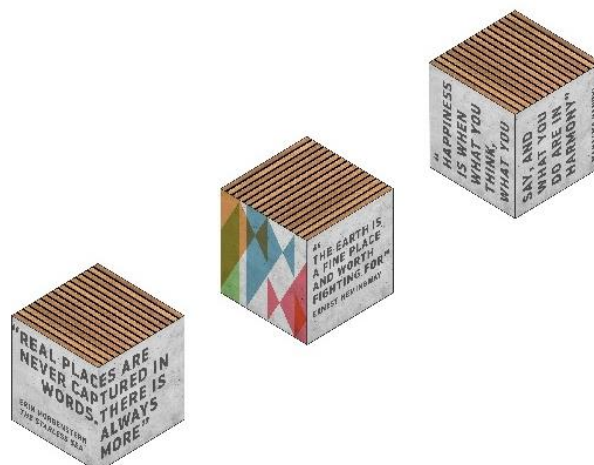
- Refresh of the EZ website including site-based maps and ownership details, and a business directory, including Avis Way
- Design and development of the Newhaven visual language and its application to physical gateways on the estate, including Gateway Hoarding on Avis Way
- Newhaven story campaign to create awareness of the new identity and place-based proposition through audience focused bus stop and till roll campaigns
- Establishing a Newhaven Champions group, who meet bi-monthly to celebrate Newhaven's wins and promote development and investment coming forwards
- Developing and further refining of the social media activity through targeted channels to promote confidence and investment into Newhaven

The intention is to develop and implement a clear and coherent plan targeted at both the community and business to address and overcome the town's negative perception and promote the town for investment.

4. Project Budget

The project budget commitment allocation across each of the three project components is set out below.

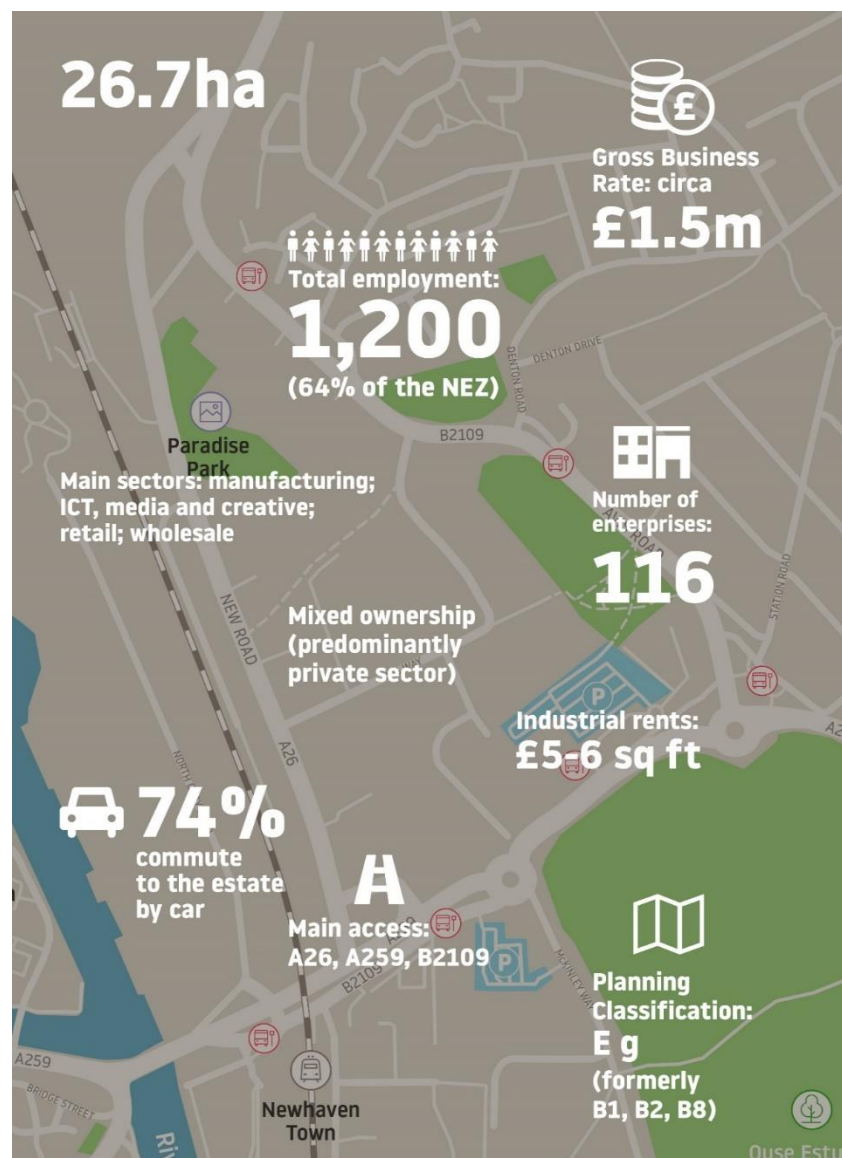
		Avis Way Estates Improvement Plan	BID	Marketing of the Newhaven NEZ	Programme Management
SSF allocation	£115,000	80,000	6,000	15,000	14,000
NEZ	£82,500	7,500		75,000	
		87,500	6,000	90,000	14,000
Total project cost	£197,500				



5. Project Outcomes

Delay in project implementation is impacting on the delivery of benefits; however, much has been achieved since the project was launched, which is summarised below:

- (1) Help to refurbish 1,006 sqm space at Avis Way: Total Refurbished in Avis Way 20,900sqm
- (2) Help to deliver up to 1,500 sqm of vacant space across the NEZ: This will be achieved by developing the old LDC Depot on Avis Way.
- (3) Move to pre-BID status assumes contribution of £500 per business for future public realm improvements
- (4) Help to generate/identify opportunities for 116 jobs for Avis Way. To date, total jobs created is 133



6. Legacy and Next Steps

The focus of the project has always been on designing and delivering actions that will encourage productivity, competitiveness and attract new investment into the area. The impact of COVID-19 has implications on project delivery but we are confident in delivering significant benefits over the next 12-24 months.

The project has been used as a test-bed in terms of changing perceptions through curating a strong and positive story about the area as an investment location and in undertaking small scale estate enhancement works to the estate. These will be rolled out to the rest of the sites within the Newhaven Enterprise Zone portfolio.