



WORKING TOGETHER FOR A **FASTER, SMARTER** AND MORE **SUSTAINABLE** **ECONOMIC RECOVERY**



SOUTH EAST
LOCAL ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP

ECONOMIC **RECOVERY AND RENEWAL** STRATEGY

MARCH 2021

“ The impact that COVID-19 has had on the global, national and regional economies and on our way of life has been profound and we will see the effects for many years to come. Alongside this, the UK’s transition from the EU has brought significant new economic challenges and opportunities, particularly for the South East business community.

In these challenging times it is crucial that businesses and the public sector work closely together to understand these impacts and how best to act, influence and invest to ensure a swift recovery. To accelerate the recovery effort, SELEP has been working collaboratively to provide a response that is shaped by local knowledge and expertise and will protect and boost our economy. It is particularly important that we also use our collective voice to inform and work with Government presenting clear plans and using the architecture we have and the lessons learned from recent experience to enable fast interventions which support the recovery of the South East economy.

There is an immediate need to support our businesses to recover and adapt, recognising the scale of the challenge that is felt by some of our largest sectors and by many of our small businesses, and we are building on the programmes of support that are currently in place at a local and national level. However, we must also look to the future and ways in which we can support future resilience and growth across the economy. As the largest LEP outside of London, both in terms of population and economic output, the scale of opportunity in the SELEP area remains significant and we have the assets, expertise and ambition to build back stronger.

This document sets out how SELEP will work with partners, across the private and public sector, to take clear and decisive action to support a path to recovery and renewal and to make clear the opportunities and needs of the SELEP area. It has been informed by ongoing engagement with partners across the LEP, a robust evidence base and ongoing intelligence gathering to understand the recent economic impacts on our economy, and by the extensive work that continues to take place in our four Federated Areas to support localised recovery planning.

SELEP and our partners are strongly committed to ensuring that as we build back, we also develop a fairer, sustainable and more resilient economy, creating places that enable all people and businesses to prosper. Therefore, through this strategy we will be particularly guided by the need to **deliver clean growth, close the digital divide, develop the skills of our workforce and residents and address inequalities.** ”

CHRISTIAN BRODIE
CHAIR



SARAH DANCE
DEPUTY CHAIR



ADAM BRYAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) area is the UK's global gateway with the business resilience and growth potential to kickstart economic recovery across the country.

Over the past decade SELEP has created a coalition for growth with our many businesses and partners, developing strong platforms to drive innovation and productivity across the whole of the South East. As we face the challenges of rebuilding and renewing our economy, we will work together to deliver a faster and more sustainable recovery for the benefit of our area and the whole of the UK.

As the Local Enterprise Partnership, we understand both the challenges and opportunities we face. Our economy has lost up to £10billion GVA during 2020¹ due to the pandemic and, as of January 2021, we have 15.4% of our workforce on the job retention scheme. Some of our more deprived coastal communities, which are among the lowest performing towns in the UK, have been hit hard due to their reliance on the most impacted sectors.

Nevertheless, as the UK's largest economic contributor outside London, with the majority of the country's key international infrastructure, a diverse and resilient economy and existing platforms to drive innovation, growth and productivity, we remain in a strong position to rebuild the economy for a better future.

Our aim is to ensure the survival and stability of our economy in the short term and to drive sustainable economic renewal and growth in the medium to long term. We will do this by focusing on four strategic priorities which reflect our unique geography, assets and opportunities:

1
**BUSINESS RESILIENCE
AND GROWTH**

2
UK'S GLOBAL GATEWAY

3
**COMMUNITIES FOR
THE FUTURE**

4
COASTAL CATALYST

These are underpinned by **seven key objectives**, which are to:

1. support business innovation;
2. drive trade and growth;
3. deliver a skilled workforce;
4. improve digital and physical connectivity;
5. put clean growth at the heart of what we do;
6. support equality; and
7. promote greater resilience in our places.



¹ Estimated based on lost labour time due to redundancy and furlough



SOUTH EAST
LOCAL ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP

OUR ECONOMY

A POPULATION OF
MORE THAN
4.2 million



OUR CONTRIBUTION TO
THE ECONOMY (GVA) IS
£94 billion
A YEAR
NEARLY 5% OF UK GVA

WE HAVE
9 UNIVERSITIES
PROVIDING KEY KNOWLEDGE AND
INNOVATION ASSETS AND SUPPORTING
139,465 STUDENTS
WITH ABOVE AVERAGE QUALIFIERS IN
MEDICINE AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

**QUALIFICATION LEVELS IN THE
SOUTH EAST ARE IMPROVING**
BUT STILL FALL BEHIND THE NATIONAL
AVERAGE WITH JUST

**34.6% QUALIFIED TO
LEVEL 4 OR ABOVE**

COMPARED TO 40% IN ENGLAND
AND 54.2% IN LONDON



MORE THAN
176,000 BUSINESSES
SPREAD ACROSS A DIVERSE MIX OF
SECTORS, AND A FURTHER
 **332,000 PEOPLE
SELF-EMPLOYED**

86,000 PEOPLE
FROM THE SELEP AREA
COMMUTED TO THE CITIES OF
LONDON AND WESTMINSTER



MEDIAN FULL-TIME WORKPLACE WAGES OF
£550 PER WEEK
IN THE SELEP AREA COMPARED
TO £586 FOR THE UK
(GVA OF £32.4 PER HOUR WORKED)



WE HAVE
**TWO OF LONDON'S AIRPORTS
STANSTED AND SOUTHEND**
MAJOR PORTS INCLUDING
DOVER
LONDON GATEWAY AND TILBURY
THE HAVEN PORTS
AND **NEWHAVEN**
TWO FREEPORTS
FREEPORT EAST
THAMES FREEPORT
AND THE UK'S
**ONLY RAIL CONNECTION
TO CONTINENTAL EUROPE**

CONSTRUCTION
AND
TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS
HAVE PARTICULARLY HIGH RELATIVE
CONCENTRATIONS OF EMPLOYMENT
WE HAVE PARTICULAR STRENGTHS IN
MANUFACTURING
AND
FOOD PRODUCTION
INCLUDING OUR EXTENSIVE AND HIGHLY
PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR



JOBS AND PEOPLE

164,800 CLAIMS

MADE FOR WAVE 3 OF THE
SELF-EMPLOYED INCOME
SUPPORT SCHEME

65% OF ELIGIBLE CLAIMANTS

284,600 PEOPLE

ON THE
JOB RETENTION SCHEME
IN JAN 2021

15.4% OF EMPLOYED RESIDENTS

VACANCIES WERE

26% LOWER

IN Q4 2020 VS Q4 2019



POTENTIALLY AN ADDITIONAL

47,000 PEOPLE

UNEMPLOYED BY END OF 2021

CLAIMANT COUNT FOR SELEP:

151,500

(6.1% OF POPULATION AGED 16-64)

IN JANUARY 2021

RATES WERE HIGHEST IN

THANET (9.8%)

HASTINGS (8.9%)

AND LOWEST IN

UTTLESFORD (3.7%)

SECTORS ACTIVELY RECRUITING:

**PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND
TECHNICAL**

AND

**INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATIONS**



SECTORS SHOWING GROWTH IN
EMPLOYMENT:

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

AND

BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES

GVA IMPACT

ESTIMATED LOSS OF

£10bn GVA DURING 2020



BUSINESS

OUR

GROWTH HUB

SUPPORTED

6,776 BUSINESSES

IN 2020 AND WAS

SIX TIMES BUSIER

IN JANUARY 2021

COMPARED TO JANUARY 2020



NEARLY

£900m in grant payments

PAID TO BUSINESSES IN THE
SELEP AREA

BUSINESSES ACROSS SELEP HAVE
RECEIVED LOANS WORTH OVER

£4.1bn

UNDER GOVT'S TWO LARGEST
COVID-19 LOAN SCHEMES

SELEP AREA

GREATEST IMPACT IN TERMS OF
ESTIMATED GVA LOSS IN 2020

>> **CONSTRUCTION (£2.1bn)**

>> **RETAIL (£1.9bn)**

>> **MANUFACTURING (£1.3bn)**

GREATEST IMPACT IN TERMS OF
ESTIMATED JOB LOSSES IN 2020

>> **HOSPITALITY (22,100)**

>> **RETAIL (9,200)**

>> **ARTS AND LEISURE (6,600)**

SELEP plays a vital role in supporting economic growth. The LEP secured £579m of Local Growth Funding, which has enabled the creation of 24,800 jobs and 25,200 homes. Alongside £45m of Growing Places Funding and £85m of Getting Building Funds, this has facilitated investment in areas such as skills (£48m), digital connectivity (£7.5m), creative and life sciences sectors (£9.4m), town centre public realm improvements (£35m) and sustainable transport projects (£145m).

Such investment remains crucial, both in the here and now — in recovering from the pandemic and the early implications of new international trading arrangements — and over the medium to longer term — in maximising international investment and trade, responding to the urgency of achieving a net-zero economy, up and reskilling our residents for an evolving labour market, securing greater equality and closing the digital divide. Securing investment in economic growth is core to SELEP's aims and we will use this strategy to continue to work with Government and other partners to ensure that the opportunities and needs of the South East are reflected in the receipt of vital investment.

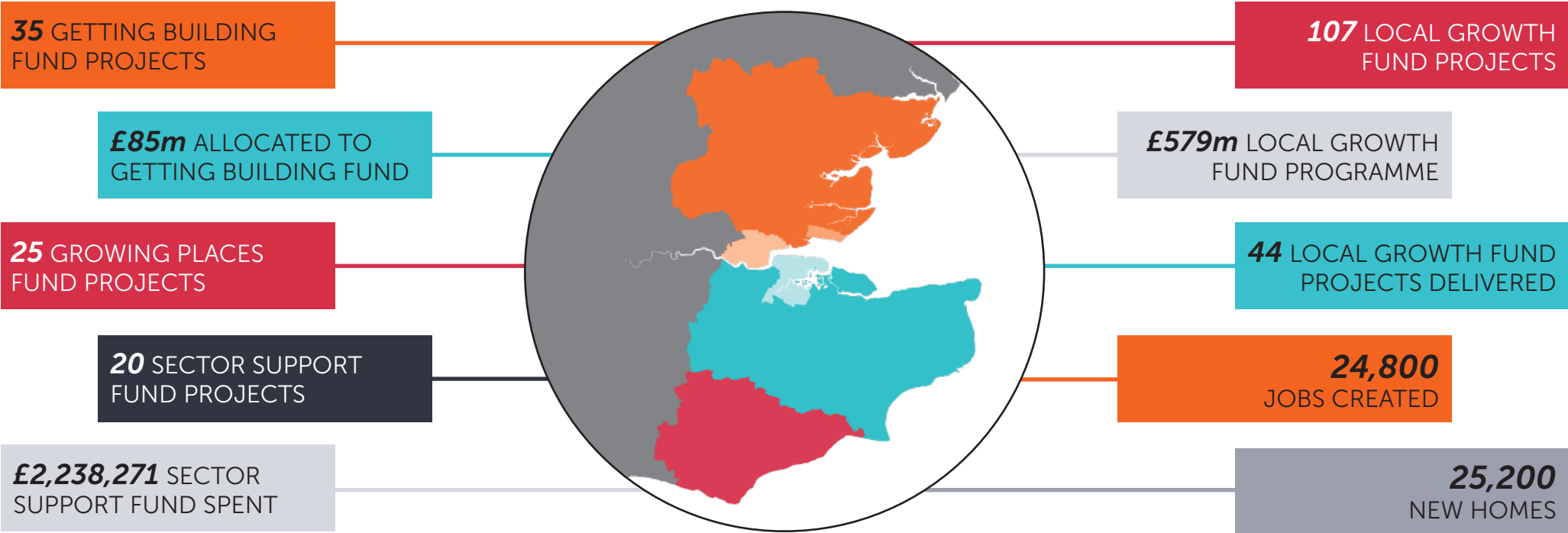
But the work of the LEP is about more than funding and infrastructure. Through our established partnership, we have a unique understanding of our economy and provide strong leadership. By working together, with a clear plan to tackle our challenges and seize opportunities, we will lead the way in ensuring that the South East is and remains a destination of choice to live, work and invest.

We do this and more through the strength of our partnership — with cross sector business leaders as Board Directors and over 60 other businesses directly represented through our Federated Boards, local authorities and the education sector, which proves the power of the collective to make things happen and ensures that the impact is greater than the sum of its parts. SELEP is also an integral part of the Greater South East economy and we work closely with our neighbours, through Catalyst South, on our shared policies, opportunities and aims and to contribute to a strong and coherent voice for the southern economy.

By understanding the impact on our economy and the opportunities that will best drive recovery and growth we can support our sectors, recognising they have been affected in quite different ways by COVID-19 and the European Union transition. We can capitalise on our gateway locations for increased trade, innovation and new business; and we can reimagine our communities, including our town centres and high streets, help reduce the significant inequalities that exist and create places and economies that are resilient and fit for the future.

By focusing this strategy on our unique strategic priorities, we aim to articulate the actions and interventions we will take and the economic and social benefits we can generate for the area and UK Plc.







SOUTH EAST
LOCAL ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In delivering against our strategic priorities and objectives, SELEP will follow clear guiding principles to ensure that we are:

Delivering clean growth, by rebuilding the economy through boosting local carbon industries while cutting carbon emissions to move to net-zero.

Climate change continues to force the urgency for real action to hit the UK's 2050 net-zero carbon target, and we will put clean growth at the heart of both our actions and our investments. We will work to raise awareness, influence, and champion this agenda to positively affect change, and will stimulate and promote opportunities that contribute to a zero-carbon society as well as offer significant potential for growth and new employment. Examples are increasing renewable energy clusters, adapting to resource efficient ways of operating and encouraging the transport revolution. These activities will help to deliver our Tri-LEP South2East Local Energy Strategy, encourage the growth of the low carbon sector for jobs, skills and prosperity, and help to deliver on the Government's Ten Point Plan for a green industrial revolution.

Closing the digital divide to build a smart connected South East.

The immediate shift for millions to home working has largely been a success but it has also highlighted where our connectivity is poor and is hindering business and productivity. It is a challenge across our area but is felt particularly in many of our rural and coastal areas. We will work with the private sector to identify weak spots and develop solutions, models and pilots to improve grid capacity and 5G digital connectivity. In addition, our Skills Plan and the work of our Digital Skills Partnership will continue to support individuals in gaining and developing vital digital skills.

Developing the skills of our workforce and residents to retain and build a labour market needed in a post-pandemic and post-EU economy.

Sectors of the economy will see varied impacts in job losses, but overall the jobs market is likely to see a contraction in the short term. This will particularly impact those with lower skills and less experience, such as young people. The demand forecast has long been for a higher, more technically skilled workforce and through strong intelligence and the Skills Advisory Panel, we will help create programmes that reskill and upskill individuals to take advantage of skills shortages and growing occupations, mitigating the impact of job losses and providing the skills needed by businesses to recover and grow.

Addressing inequalities to build a fairer and more inclusive economy.

While the South East is home to some of the country's most affluent areas, it is also home to some of the most deprived; it is vitally important that as we work to build back stronger, we do so for all. We will seek to tackle the social, economic and infrastructure deficits that exist in our less affluent areas and to increase the attractiveness of these communities as excellent locations to live, work and invest. We will also promote equality and diversity in the workplace, supporting businesses in attracting and retaining a wide range of talent and in embedding working practices that provide equality of opportunity for all.

SURVIVAL AND STABILITY

OUR IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO ECONOMIC RECOVERY

The impact of the pandemic has been severe for many businesses and individuals. Jobs and businesses have already been lost up and down the country and some businesses and sectors remain concerned about their future and ability to recover. For many, the uncertainty of the fiscal environment and the additional impact of changes to trading rules and processes as a result of leaving the European Union is a continued worry.

The nationwide package of support which the UK Government put in place has helped thousands of our businesses and remains the primary source of financial support. However, as a Local Enterprise Partnership, we also moved quickly to redeploy resources at our disposal to provide additional support for our residents and businesses. These included:

- investing our **£85m Getting Building Fund** in shovel-ready commercial, town centre and infrastructure projects to stimulate job creation, growth in new places and coastal regeneration across the South East;
- deploying an **additional £2.4m COVID-19 Business Support Fund** to help businesses impacted by the pandemic, providing advice and small grants to pre-starts and start-ups, digitising businesses, and supporting the visitor economy. In addition, we continue to provide our Growth Hub business support service and regular business communications;
- investing a further **£2m into a COVID-19 Skills Fund** helping to upskill and re-skill individuals to enable them to transfer to recruiting sectors as well as supporting digital skills, kit and connectivity and developing innovative solutions to skills barriers accelerated by the transition to digital markets and workplaces;
- securing **£2m ESF investment in pathways to opportunity** to deliver a programme to support young people in response to the disproportionate impact that the pandemic has had on this group;
- utilising our **extended £1m Sector Support Fund** with an additional focus on COVID-19 recovery and helping to support those sectors most in need;
- supporting the development of digital skills across businesses and for those out of work and in colleges and schools through our **Digital Skills Partnership (DSP)** and promotion of **online learning opportunities**;
- using our convening power to **bring together businesses leaders from across key sectors** — amplifying the private sector voice in informing and influencing government policy; and
- developing our **data and intelligence repository** to continue to understand our economy and the impact that the pandemic and EU transition has had on businesses, sectors and residents, to inform our decisions and our continued dialogue with Government.





SOUTH EAST LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

Partners within the LEP have also committed new and additional resources to support the recovery, including:

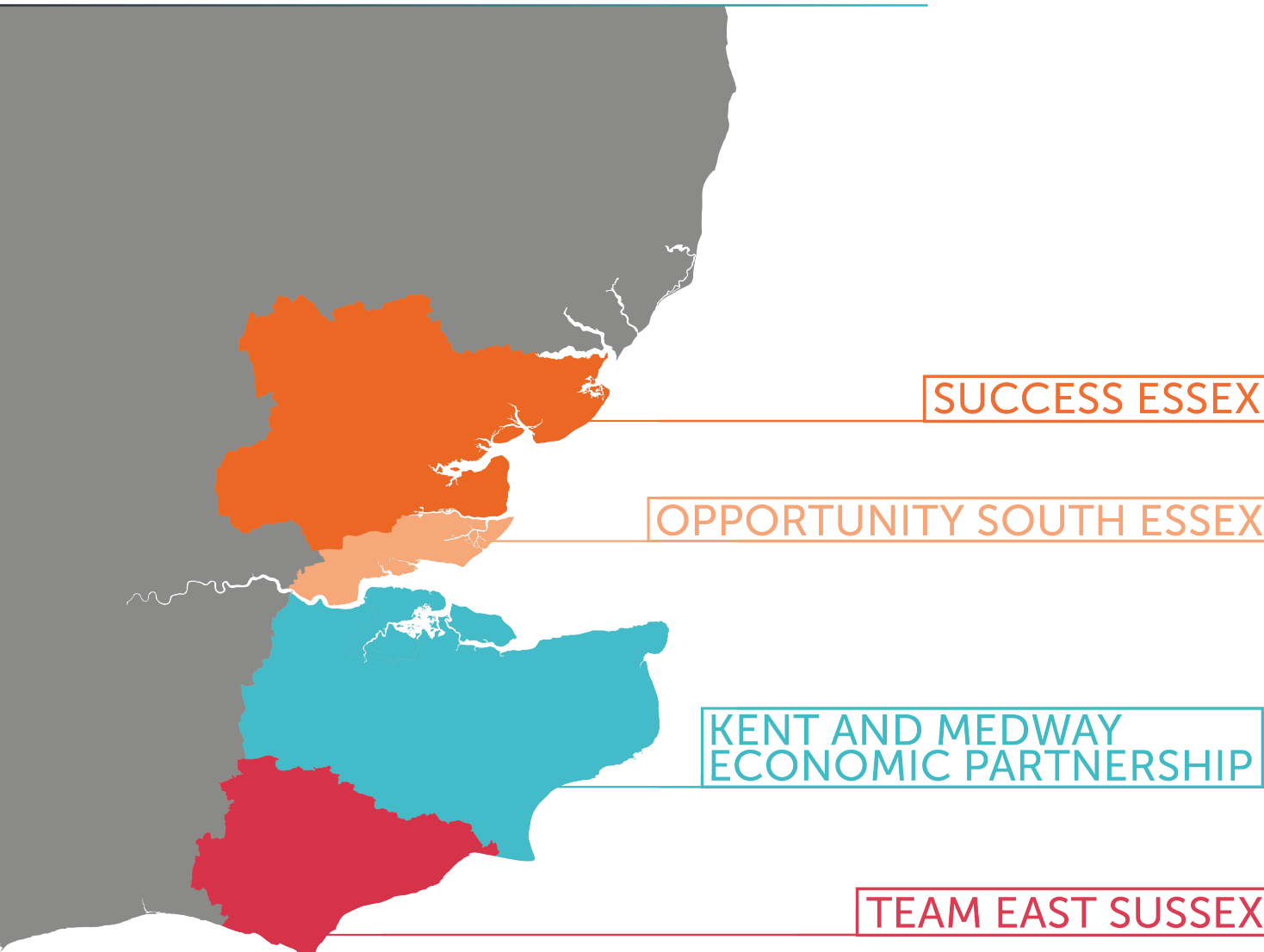
>> The refocus and relaunch of the Kent and Medway Business Fund, making £6 million available in loan support

>> A joint Taskforce in South Essex to use the best of the local resources available through Local Authorities, Opportunity South Essex and BEST Growth Hub to support businesses and add value to joined up Inward Investment activity

>> Direct engagement with major employers in Essex to share experiences in similar business across Essex and to act as a vehicle for information back to government

>> Launch of a 'Business Hothouse' programme in East Sussex to provide support to entrepreneurs looking to start a business during the COVID-19 crisis, including specialised support for 18-30 year olds

The situation is evolving and the support and resource that businesses and individuals need will change as we emerge from restrictions and Government support reduces. We will continue to analyse all available intelligence to inform the next steps we need to take to aid as swift a recovery as possible.



SUCCESS ESSEX

OPPORTUNITY SOUTH ESSEX

KENT AND MEDWAY
ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

TEAM EAST SUSSEX



RENEWAL AND GROWTH

OUR LONGER-TERM RESPONSE TO DRIVING ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

There is no doubt that the economy will look different post-pandemic and following our exit from the European Union. This will present us with many challenges and many opportunities for economic recovery and renewal. Our medium to longer term response to economic growth is focused on seizing and maximising opportunities that our unique geography and assets afford and tackling barriers and inequality within the LEP.





SOUTH EAST
LOCAL ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP

STRATEGIC PRIORITY **1**: **BUSINESS RESILIENCE AND GROWTH**

KENT AND MEDWAY ENGINEERING AND DESIGN GROWTH AND ENTERPRISE (EDGE) HUB

£6.12m Local Growth Fund investment to support the delivery of a new skills facility in Canterbury which will support high value employment, growth and investment in Engineering and Technology.

The Hub creates the opportunity to unlock economic growth and employment in engineering and technology through an expansion of specialist education, research and innovation support services and will unlock growth of existing businesses and make the area more attractive to inward investors by addressing the challenge of engineering and technology skills shortages, which local companies have identified as a key barrier to future success.



Our Sector Support Fund is already helping to deliver much needed help to the most affected areas of the SELEP economy. Investment has been made in programmes to help re-build confidence and demand in the visitor economy, support local businesses in adopting new technologies to promote their goods and services to a local market, increase the role of social enterprises and support the arts through enabling creation of socially distanced performances.

We are ambitious to grow back stronger, increase productivity and innovation and become the UK's most successful location for inward investment. To do so we must ensure that industry has the right environment to support future growth, including a highly skilled workforce, resilient supply chains, greater investment in R&D, improved digital and physical connectivity and targeted support where it is most needed.

The South East is one of the UK's leading locations for attracting inward investment and is home to 6.4% of the UK's enterprises. Our large and diverse business base offers opportunity for innovation and growth and over the last year has provided a degree of resilience for the SELEP economy, with employment in the public sector, agriculture, knowledge intensive and business support services remaining fairly stable during 2020. However, we also continue to see severe impacts with over 30,000 enterprises across retail, accommodation and food services, arts, entertainment and recreation, and as home to two of London's airports at Southend and Stansted, the ongoing uncertainty around the future of the aviation industry and the wider visitor economy is also a key concern. Over 90% of our businesses are micro and these along with our large proportion of self-employed and freelance workers are all facing a disproportionate impact. In addition, our businesses are having to adapt to the UK's new relationship with the EU which has brought both challenges and opportunities in relation to international trade and exports.



BUSINESS RESILIENCE AND GROWTH

To support these ambitions, we will:

>> Ensure robust and flexible business support activity for all businesses and start-ups.

We will work to evolve and strengthen the service provided through the SELEP Growth Hub model and the wider business support landscape, helping businesses to diversify and adapt to changing consumer patterns, adopt new technologies and processes to enhance productivity, understand the new trading rules and exploit the opportunities from new international trade deals;

>> Support R&D and innovation activities.

With our Universities we have invested £27m in projects and we will continue to promote knowledge exchange and partnerships with businesses, and support the adoption of new models, technologies and processes. We will work with partners, including our nine universities, Innovate UK, and Catapult Centres to increase outreach and support and foster collaborations to attract greater investment into the area. We will also champion changes to the use of R&D tax relief to encourage greater investment and drive jobs, particularly in areas of economic disadvantage, and will actively participate in Government consultation;

>> Identify and address gaps in digital infrastructure and promote high quality digital infrastructure in all new developments to ensure that businesses can operate efficiently and respond to the changes in working and living patterns of their workforce and customers, especially those in more rural and remote areas;

>> Help to develop a highly skilled workforce that can meet the demands of industry. Through the Skills Advisory Panel and the Digital Skills Partnership we will work to increase digital and higher technical skills, including AI and automation. We will promote and support participation in the Government's new Help to Grow programmes and identify other opportunities to further support leadership and digital skills, particularly amongst our small businesses, as a critical element of business growth. We also support the bid for a SELEP wide Institute of Technology in logistics, automation, construction, health and life science to provide a leading technical learning facility and will promote the Governments' Lifetime Skills Guarantee as a means to grow our higher technical skills base;

SUPPORTING AN INNOVATIVE AND PRODUCTIVE ECONOMY SELEP GROWTH HUB

Growth Hubs are a free and impartial business support service provided by LEPs, which help businesses navigate the national and local business support landscape, so it is easier for businesses to access the help and advice they need to thrive and grow. The South East Business Hub (SEBH) helps businesses on the path to become established, to grow, scale-up and prosper. SEBH can connect businesses with the support schemes and programmes that match their needs, to help companies make their mark in England's most enterprising economy. The Growth Hub has played a critical role in supporting businesses through the economic crisis and we are working to ensure that it remains focused and flexible and responds to business needs across the area.





SOUTH EAST
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STRATEGIC PRIORITY **1**: **BUSINESS RESILIENCE AND GROWTH**

>> Support people to transition between and across sectors.

We recognise that employment has declined in many sectors but risen in others, and while some impacts may be short term, others reflect longer term trends for declining and emerging industries. We will support retraining through our own Skills Fund and national initiatives, such as the National Retraining Scheme, to help some of the most impacted groups into meaningful and long-term employment;

>> Raise awareness of and respond to the challenges of climate change and moving to a net zero economy.

We will work with businesses to understand the barriers and emerging opportunities that the shift to a net-zero carbon economy presents. Working with partners we will seek to support businesses in implementing low carbon practices and taking advantage of green opportunities for longer term prosperity;

>> Facilitate business collaborations.

We will promote opportunities to enable businesses to come together around R&D, product innovation and to strengthen links with universities and skills providers, including networking, shared practice, learning from our four established Enterprise Zones, promoting international business collaborations and trade opportunities and supporting the creation of economically significant clusters; and

>> Support businesses to promote greater inclusion and diversity in the workforce.

We will encourage businesses to attract and retain a wide range of talent and to embed working practices that provide equality of opportunity for all, including working through the Digital Skills Partnership to promote take up of the Tech Talent Charter.



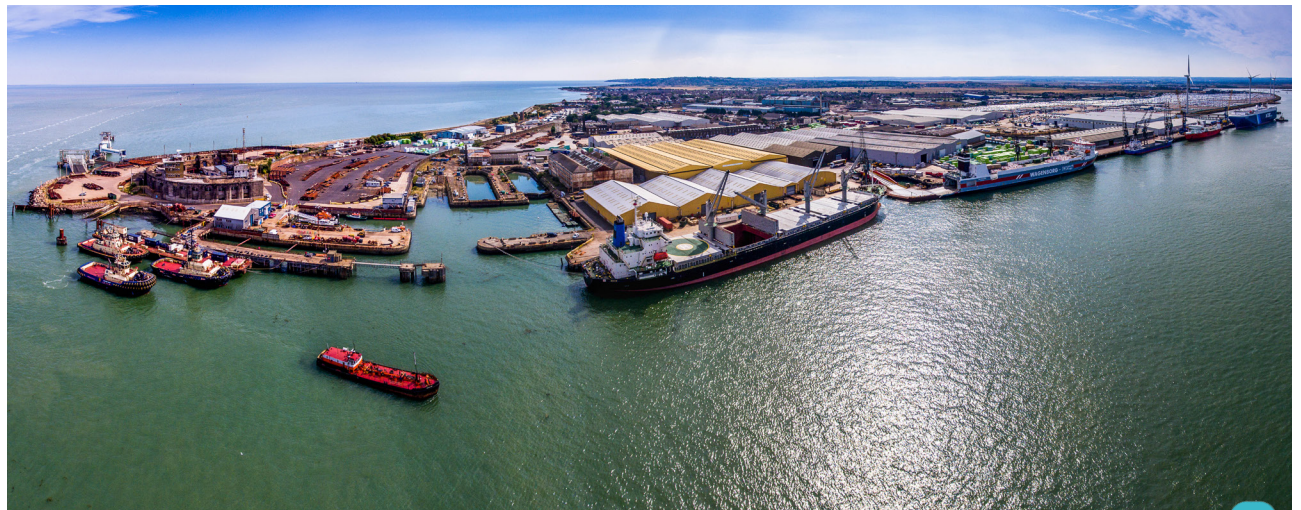
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: UK'S GLOBAL GATEWAY

SELEP is home to the nation's largest concentrations of ports, transport and logistics firms and advanced manufacturing companies with strong clusters of companies in life sciences, creative and cultural industries, health, land-based industries and tourism. Our area is highly significant in terms of national infrastructure, with all the UK's infrastructure to the east and south east of London and planned large scale investments, such as the Lower Thames Crossing, which will transform regional connectivity.

The South East has a critical role as a global gateway and creates a leading location for inward investment, linking the UK with international markets that yield significant benefits to the SELEP area and the UK as a whole. Usual activity sees around 14 million passengers and 85 million tonnes of freight moving through SELEP's ports each year — over half of England's international sea passenger population and a quarter of its sea freight. The pandemic has caused a dramatic reduction in footfall through our ports, along with a reduction in some exports, however freight movement overall has remained strong.

Our ports and their supply chain also have significant opportunity to innovate, from driving new design and technologies in pursuit of net-zero, for example sustainable road freight, renewables and hydrogen development, to the application of 'smart borders' and the role of data and automation in transport, logistics and supply chain optimisation, to the development and clustering of leading-edge technology based industries.

We want the South East to lead the UK in capitalising on our new trading relationship with the EU and rest of the world, and we will help strengthen these locations through increased capacity and reliability associated with transport and digital infrastructure, local skills development, innovation capabilities and supporting the success of our Freeports which have the potential to **unlock up to 38,500 jobs** and together contribute nearly **£10bn GVA** to the area.



SOUTHEND AIRPORT BUSINESS PARK

£23.09m Local Growth Fund awarded to support project delivery. The business park will support the continued growth of the Airport and its associated activities as a key economic asset and provide high quality employment land and premises in the area. The 55 acre greenfield site is adjacent to the Airport operations and an existing industrial estate, home to a number of aviation supply chain related businesses. The project includes the construction of an Innovation Centre as well as road and cycleway infrastructure.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: UK'S GLOBAL GATEWAY

To achieve this, we will:

>> Support the successful implementation of our Freeports, Thames Freeport and Freeport East, which will enhance SELEP's role as a gateway for global trade and enterprise and ensure that this benefits the (often deprived) communities in which they are based. We will work closely with our Freeports to create a catalyst for greater inward investment and international trade, provide greater focus on innovation, particularly in green energy and technologies and bring wider economic and social benefits to the area;

>> Build on the strong record of inward investment and maximise new trade deals to increase international trade. We will work with the Department for International Trade and through our Growth Hub and business support providers to help our businesses in internationalisation, investment and business growth, better positioning them to trade outside the UK and build on the strengths that make us an attractive location for investment;

>> Support our businesses to understand and navigate new trading arrangements.

Through our Growth Hub we are providing specialist advice to enable businesses to continue trading with Europe and to help them take advantage of the business opportunities that new international trade deals present;

>> Support our ports as significant employers and catalysts for growth to recruit the diverse range of skills and talent they need.

We are investing in a Logistics Centre in South Essex and a Maritime and Sustainable Technology Hub in Newhaven, in addition to our investment in the Stansted Airport Training Centre. Our pioneering **tutor bursary scheme** is also supporting colleges and providers to recruit trainers in some of these hard to recruit skill areas, such as digital, construction, engineering and logistics;





SOUTH EAST
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CEMENTING SELEP'S ROLE AS A GLOBAL GATEWAY THROUGH OUR TWO NEW FREEPORTS

The allocation of two new Freeports in the SELEP area will have a transformative effect on the economies of the local areas, as well as across SELEP as a whole. They will make a significant contribution to headline national policies such as decarbonisation and levelling up, along with increased opportunities for inward investment, international trade and innovation.

Freeport East – centred around Felixstowe and Harwich Ports – will use its new status to harness local clean energy from offshore and other carbon-free sources to drive good green growth. The Freeport's long-term, sustainable focuses for growth include maritime technology, offshore wind energy and other renewables-related technology. As well as its innovation in agri-tech, it also has ambitions to be the country's primary green hydrogen power hub. Thanks to its new status Freeport East will contribute £5 billion to GVA over five years, and will see up to 13,500 new jobs created as a result of increased trade.



Thames Freeport is a digitally linked economic zone connecting Ford's world-class Dagenham engine plant, the global ports at London Gateway and Tilbury, and many communities in urgent need of 'levelling-up'. It will bring more than £4.5 billion in new public and private investment to the area as well as more than 25,000 new jobs plus more across supply chains. This will provide an opportunity for significant investment in training and skills, bolstering the local workforce. Key programmes will also include the proposed hydrogen fuel production, storage and fuelling project.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: **UK'S GLOBAL GATEWAY**

>> **Lead the work of the South East Major Projects Group** to realise the full economic and social benefits from major project investments in the area. Established in May 2020, the group is and will continue to collaborate on common aims including employment and skills, research and innovation, supply chain development and equality and inclusion;

>> **Work through Catalyst South to promote investment in the wider South East** aligned to our shared economic opportunities, including our global gateways, the collective research strengths in satellites, robotics, energy, big data/AI, photonics and marine/maritime and our proximity to London and the benefits and issues this presents;

>> **Support and champion the work of the Thames Estuary Growth Board** and its priorities for sustainable transport and energy, skills and enterprise. With its proximity to London, transport links, and the River Thames, the Thames Estuary is a thriving hub for import and export. We are working with the Growth Board to support and back sustainability developments that aim to utilise the river for freight and passenger transport and spearhead decarbonisation technologies;

>> **Work to enhance port connectivity**, in partnership with Transport for the South East and Transport for the East, both of which have identified port connectivity as a key priority. The South East radial study and freight workstreams will help to identify and prioritise transport improvements that will support sustainable movement of goods from our port. We also continue to champion significant infrastructure projects such as the Lower Thames Crossing;

>> **Work with Maritime UK to bring together the diverse range of industries in the maritime sector** to tackle shared issues across the LEP, facilitating stronger connections between businesses, our Universities, Maritime UK and other supporting organisations. This will enable our maritime businesses to benefit from national and international opportunities e.g. the Maritime Decarbonisation Fund, in line with the aims of Maritime 2050 and the Clean Maritime Plan.



SOUTH EAST
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STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: COMMUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

The South East continues to see significant growth and accelerating housing delivery remains a key ambition for SELEP. We have an excellent track record in delivery, outperforming all LEPs outside London for both housing starts and completions, with plans to lead the country in delivering **25% (87,100 homes)** of the government's **Garden Communities** programme. Alongside wider housing developments across existing communities this will significantly boost employment and growth, with the development of our garden communities alone generating over 270,000 jobs. We can promote innovation in design across our 9 Garden Cities, Towns and Villages, which will be applied at scale to share the benefits of this investment with wider housing developments across our existing communities.

To ensure that the SELEP area remains a destination of choice we must respond to the dramatic shift in behaviours that we have seen since the pandemic and consider what this means for the future of our communities, both in terms of housing design and the acceleration of housing delivery, particularly affordable housing, but also the reshaping and transitioning of our towns and high streets. There is significant opportunity through c£250 million of potential investment in our town and high streets and it is vital this and our community developments reflect the shift in working patterns has led people to re-evaluate how they use their home, as well as the amenities in their local communities. This shift has also highlighted the need for the right infrastructure, both physical and digital, to be in place to enable people to work productively.

We have already invested in projects that will play their part in the success of future communities, including the roll-out of full-fibre broadband to hard-to-reach areas and infrastructure projects that will unlock future development such as Thanet Parkway railway station, which will unlock future development.

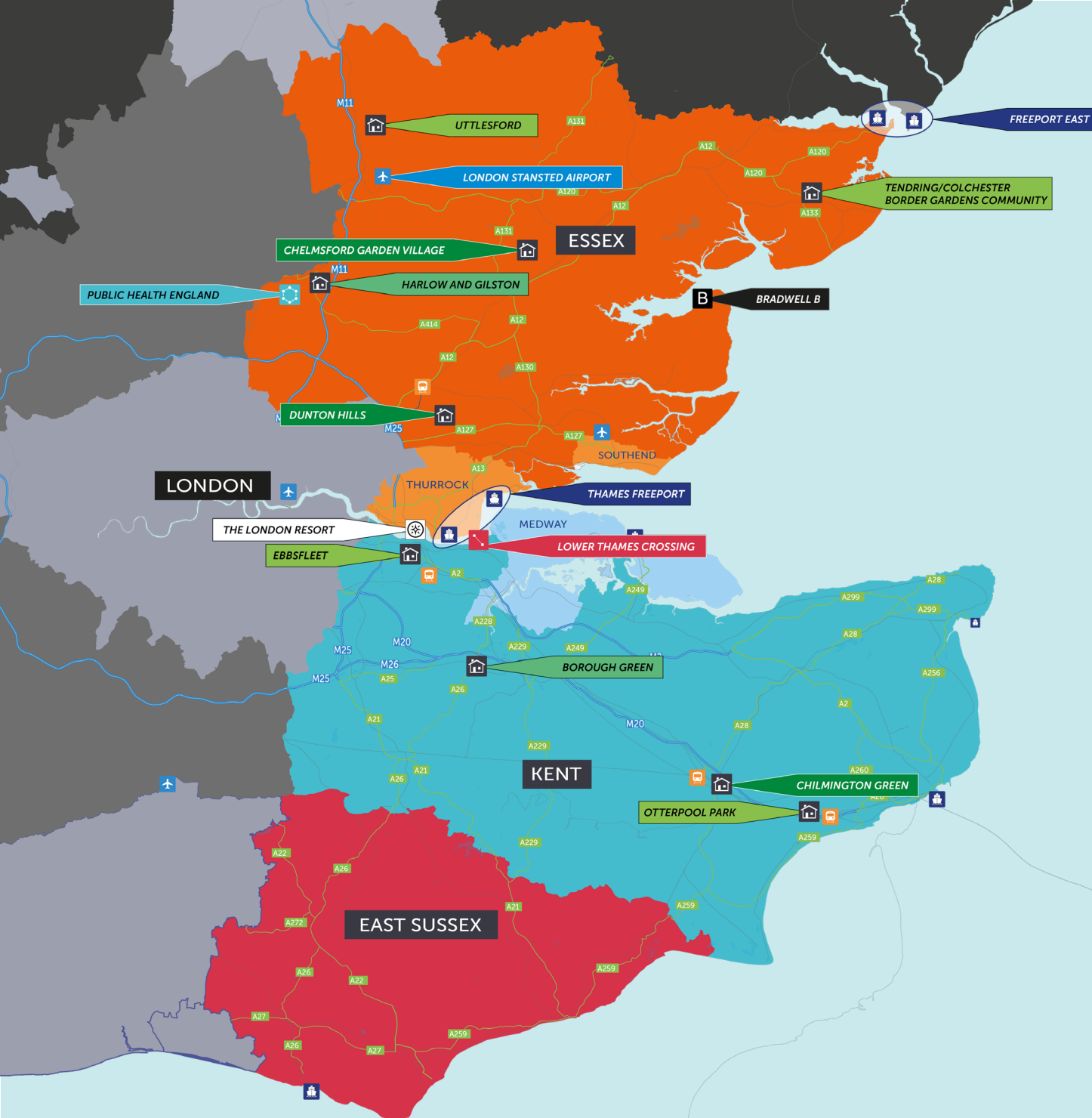
We are committed to creating attractive and aspirational places that also bring greater equality in terms of quality of life and economic opportunities across all our cities, towns and villages. The future design of shared spaces and commercial workspaces will be particularly important for our many micro-businesses, self-employed and freelance workers and so understanding the needs of these communities will be integral to this work.





SOUTH EAST

LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP



GENERATING MAXIMUM COMMUNITY IMPACT FROM MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE

The South East Major Projects Group has been established to ensure that the full range of benefits from proposed major projects are realised and the possible disbenefits are identified and mitigated as far as possible.

Through delivery of our garden communities and other significant infrastructure projects we will work to generate lasting economic and social benefits.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY **3**: **COMMUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE**

To support these ambitions SELEP will:

>> *Lead the UK in reimagining, designing and creating communities* that are fit for the accelerated changes in the way that people live and work. We will promote new thinking and research across the SELEP area, drawing on the learning from global concepts such as the 15-minute city and 20-minute neighbourhood and working with national organisations, like the Institute of Place Management, to better understand the implications for place shaping across the range of settlements that exist in SELEP;

>> *Work with partners across the SELEP area to share the learning and innovation that will promote ground-breaking design in new communities.*

With the aim of supporting healthy living, age-appropriate homes, zero carbon, affordable housing, cultural vitality, retro-fit and levelling up across all communities within SELEP. We will also support the future design of work and cultural space as a means of reinvigorating town centres and high streets alongside the creation of shared workspaces and cluster environments to enable business collaboration, innovation, and strengthened supply chains;

>> *Work through our Housing and Development Group to support and strengthen links with the private sector,* for example to enable the conditions for small and medium sized builders to play a full part in accelerating housing delivery and contributing to economic recovery, and to promote innovation and identify future funding sources for specific interventions such as construction methods and smart building approaches, including through the Modern Methods of Construction Taskforce;

>> *Work through our Social Enterprise Group to support inclusive business development* that maximises impact through social enterprises, start-ups and sustainable new enterprises. We will do this by expanding on the work of our Building Back Better sector support fund project which will establish a navigator model across SELEP to support social enterprises in financing, networking, training and support, and information and data sharing;



MERCURY THEATRE, COLCHESTER

£1m Local Growth Fund investment to support the expansion and redevelopment of the theatre. The project will create world class facilities for artists and audience alike improving the audience experience — thereby increasing future capacity and attracting more visitors, provide a new hub housing 10 new creative businesses, improve rehearsal and production facilities to support high quality production and will open up new routes for digital presentation.



SOUTH EAST
LOCAL ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP

STRATEGIC PRIORITY **3**: **COMMUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE**

>> ***Provide strategic support to our Towns Boards, Future High Streets and Heritage Action Zone areas*** as an important aspect of future community development that will improve the retail, cultural and business offer, boosting the local economies and increasing the attractiveness of our towns. We will share the learning, including work we are leading with Arts Council England to explore how the cultural and creative offer in high streets can be more effectively embedded, to maximise outcomes and to support the case for investment in other towns across SELEP;



>> ***Work with partners to ensure that new developments protect and enhance our natural resources*** to deliver social and environmental benefit. We will review criteria for future SELEP investment decisions to ensure that our values around environmental sustainability and climate change are appropriately reflected. We will also support partners to lobby for investment and planning, reforms, ensuring that the necessary tools and policies are in place to support and encourage the transition to net-zero;

>> ***Work through the Major Projects Group for a strategic approach to the successful delivery and impact of major investments.***

These projects are expected to generate thousands of jobs in construction, and through the Group we will work to ensure the benefits are felt by their communities. We will achieve this by understanding collective labour demand, developing skills and employment activity to address existing construction skills deficits, and to meet future demand, including the sustainable construction and renewable energy sectors; and

>> ***Support the development of renewable energy infrastructure and low carbon technologies and behaviours,*** to ensure that place-making and co-location principles contribute to the transition to a net-zero carbon economy. We will work with partners and through our Clean Growth Working Group to develop and influence projects and interventions that will deliver these aims.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: **COASTAL CATALYST**

RIDING SUNBEAMS SOLAR RAILWAYS

£2.53m Getting Building Fund investment to support the build and connection of the world's first megawatt scale community renewable solar energy plant directly powering the direct current railways located in the heart of East Sussex. The project will be delivered through an innovation collaboration between green technology start-up Riding Sunbeams and Network Rail and will develop the route to market for subsidy free renewable energy generators to directly supply the UK's largest energy user.



SELEP has the largest stretch of coastline of any LEP in the country at over 375 miles, and out of a population of over four million, just over two million of the population live in coastal districts which have a rich diversity of towns, outstanding rural areas and a plethora of natural assets.

However, taken as a whole, this coastline under-performs against inland SELEP as well as regional and national economic and social indicators, including productivity where we generally see much lower GVA per hour than in inland areas. Some of the UK's most intense deprivation is found in parts of our coastal communities and the challenges they face are complex, but the opportunities are also plentiful. SELEP has published its Coastal Economic Prospectus which brings together common strategic issues and opportunities, which with the right action and investment will enable the South East Coast to transform its economic performance.

We aim to improve the economic fabric of our coastal and rural communities through sector adaptation and growth, including the significantly impacted tourism and retail sectors. As well as supporting growing sectors such as energy, the green economy, maritime and agri-tech to improve productivity capacity and generate high value job opportunities, new patterns of work, bringing greater flexibilities and less reliance on commuting, also present opportunity for coastal and rural areas to attract greater talent and job opportunities and support the creation of more prosperous communities.

There are core barriers to address however, and by tackling some of these we can start developing and realising an ambition for a smart and connected coast comprised of highly attractive places to live, work and invest.



SOUTH EAST
LOCAL ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: **COASTAL CATALYST**

To achieve this, we will:

>> Identify and address gaps in digital infrastructure.

We will facilitate discussions with providers, to explore models and pilots for delivering digital infrastructure in places where there is currently poorer supporting infrastructure, particularly in our rural areas, where 58% of premises are not commercially viable for the market to deliver;

>> Facilitate greater connectivity.

We will work with providers to secure a strategic approach to investment in infrastructure that will enable greater connectivity and support the shift to low carbon in our coastal areas, including up-grades to the grid, low carbon energy and electric vehicles charging infrastructure;

>> Support coastal and rural businesses to innovate and grow.

We will work to understand the recent economic impacts on established and emerging sectors and bring together our universities, coastal communities and rural working groups to explore opportunities for business growth and innovation and facilitate greater collaboration in R&D, for example in agri-food, agri-tech, and agri-forestry. We will also work to support local supply chains, including food and drink production, building on the success of projects such as Buy Local South East;

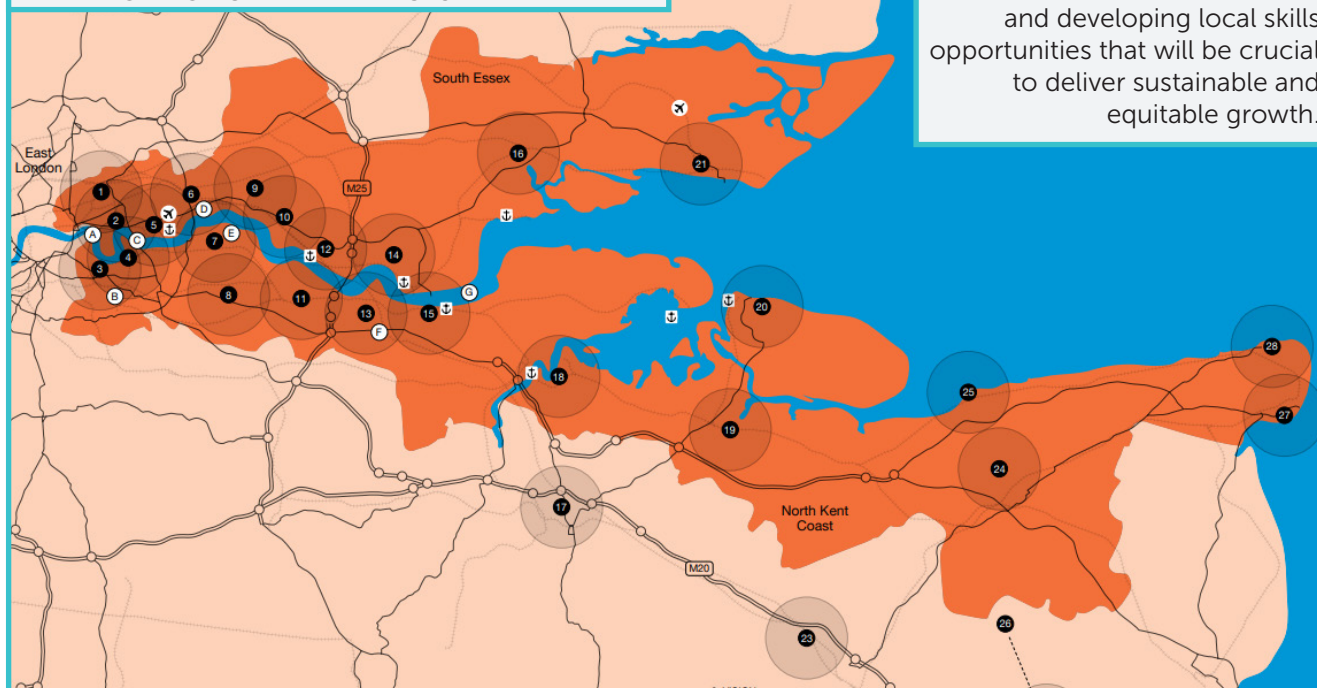
>> Support and champion the work of the *Thames Estuary Production Corridor*.

We will share and promote the Creative Estuary's vision to create a world-class centre for creative and cultural production; securing investment in new production facilities, workspaces and infrastructure and supporting stronger creative networks, clusters and places to deliver the next generation of talent and leadership;

**CREATING A SMART
CREATIVE COAST AS A
CATALYST FOR GROWTH**

The Thames Estuary Production Corridor will contribute to longer-term growth through forward-thinking investment in culture and the creative industries, helping create thousands of jobs in a time of need, building world-class cultural infrastructure and developing local skills opportunities that will be crucial to deliver sustainable and equitable growth.

**THE THAMES ESTUARY PRODUCTION CORRIDOR:
A NETWORK OF CREATIVE PLACES**



[VIEW THE FULL MAP HERE](#)

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: **COASTAL CATALYST**

>> **Maximise the economic and social benefits generated from infrastructure projects**, many of which are based in deprived coastal communities. Through the Major Projects Group, these projects, with the addition of our Freeports, are committed to delivering real local benefit; currently undertaking work to understand the demand, pinch points, provision of training, to facilitate employment between projects, and to raise awareness of the scale of opportunity through employment and talent events;

>> **Address the impacts of poorer physical connectivity on coastal and rural economies** by working in collaboration with Transport for the South East and Transport East, and by supporting work such as the outer orbital study and work with Sustrans to improve walking and cycling routes, we can articulate and address these impacts;

>> **Help to increase access to learning, at all levels, for our coastal and rural communities**, supporting greater availability of digital learning models and apprenticeships. The pandemic has accelerated a shift towards online learning and we will work through our Skills Advisory Panel to capitalise on this to support greater access for all who have physical barriers to accessing learning and job opportunities;

>> **Support the recovery, adaptation and growth of our visitor economy**, through understanding the impacts and changes caused by the pandemic and delivering projects through our Rural Group, such as in Rebuilding Confidence and Demand in the Visitor Economy and Gourmet Garden Trails. We will also champion large investments, such as the London Resort Theme Park in Thurrock, which will bring thousands of new jobs and a significant boost to the whole visitor economy in the area; and

>> **Increase our understanding of our natural resources and assets** and how they can act as a driver for net zero initiatives and productivity improvements, working with our local nature partnerships, and spearheaded by our existing strengths in nuclear and offshore wind, including through engagement with the ongoing sector deals.

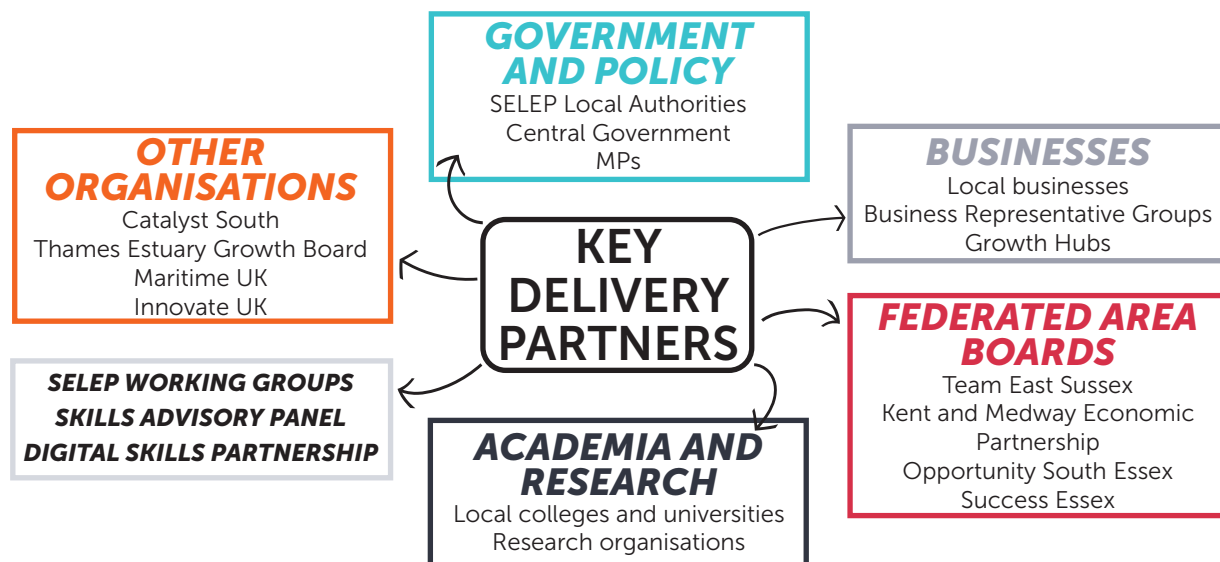




SOUTH EAST LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

DELIVERY

Throughout this strategy we have set out the significant challenges and opportunities facing the SELEP economy and the key priorities that we will focus on to support our economic recovery and a return to growth and productivity. Our strong collaboration of public and private sector partners will support the delivery of this strategy.



It has been developed in line with our role as strategic leaders of economic growth and will guide any future investment decisions made by SELEP in line with our Assurance Framework, crucially it provides a robust basis for our ongoing dialogue with Government, building the case for action, interventions and investment on the issues of most importance to SELEP. Crucially it also provides a robust basis for our ongoing dialogue with Government, building the case for action, interventions and investment on the issues of most importance to SELEP.

The priorities set out in this strategy are focused on the short to medium term, recognising the uncertainty that remains regarding the full economic implications of the pandemic, the UK's exit from the European Union, and the emerging national policy and funding environment.

We will set out further details within our Recovery and Renewal Delivery Plan which will be produced during 2021, allowing us to set a clear roadmap for action, which can be refined and adapted as further information becomes available. We will also continue to monitor the economic situation and emerging impacts locally, building our local intelligence to inform the development and review of the Delivery Plan.

