

South East LEP Key Messages

Please find below information, sets of wording and headlines which can be used when talking about South East LEP to provide some additional information to ambassadors and consistency across our messaging.

If you would like additional information about any particular area of SELEP's work or would like to feedback please email zoe.gordon@southeastlep.com or eleanor.clow@southeastlep.com

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1. About SELEP

The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) is a genuine partnership for growth between business, government, and education. We work together with all sectors of business, all levels of government and in partnership with key agencies to pursue and attract investment into the South East which will deliver significant economic growth.

One of 38 LEPs established by the government, our role is to fully understand the economic challenges and opportunities of our area, and encourage an environment which delivers prosperity, in an equal and sustainable way across the South East. LEPs set the direction and influence the future priorities for investment in the area as part of an integrated approach to skills, business and developing our future communities.

We represent the largest LEP area in England outside London, in terms of population and economic output, and cover an area encompassing the local authority areas of East Sussex, Essex, Kent, Medway, Southend and Thurrock.

Find out more at southeastlep.com

1.2 Digital skills

The government is working with LEPs and Combined Authorities to help establish Local Digital Skills Partnerships (Local DSPs) across the country to tackle local digital skills challenges and build thriving and inclusive local economies. The [South East Digital Skills Partnership](#) brings together businesses with education, public sector organisations and the charitable sector with the aim of creating a world leading digital economy that ensures the need for these vital skills is met across the South East.

1.3 COVID Recovery Funds

As part of SELEP's focus to support businesses and skills in 2021, the LEP will be making available £4.4m for new **COVID-19 Recovery Funds**, namely the £2.4m [COVID-19 Business Support Fund](#) and the £2m [Skills COVID-19 Recovery Fund](#). These will focus on support for businesses recovering from the impacts of the pandemic at a time of unprecedented challenge, and support investment in skills in response to the employment crisis experienced in 2020-21 as a result of COVID-19.

1.4 Business Support

Our [Growth Hubs](#) have been offering frontline support to South East businesses throughout the pandemic, providing advice on finance and funding options, as well as programmes and schemes that businesses can benefit from. They are also providing businesses with local advice to help them deal with the changes to trading, which came into force from the 1 January 2021.

2. SELEP Narrative and how we work

2.1 What is SELEP?

South East LEP brings together businesses, councils, universities, educators and other industry players to set the priorities for investment in activities like skills, business support, transport links, business facilities, housing and other support mechanisms to encourage growth. SELEP strives to put collaboration and engagement at the heart of its activity.

The South East LEP works with its partners to pursue and attract major investment in to the SELEP area to deliver significant economic growth, working in partnership with central government and its key agencies and other local partners, we will use the scale of our LEP to maximise private, public and community investment. In doing so, we will build strongly on plans developed with local business experience and market knowledge across our functional economic areas to deliver and target growth.

2.2 Federated Boards

The LEP operates on the principle of subsidiarity. This means that decisions should be taken at the practical level closest to the communities and businesses affected by those decisions.

The LEP's federal model of operation provides a clear structure for this approach. This allows for local decision making around individual projects and for decision-making of a more crosscutting nature at the LEP Strategic Board.

We work with and are supported by:

- Success Essex Business Board
- Kent and Medway Economic Partnership
- Opportunity South Essex
- Team East Sussex

Local businesses can bring their knowledge and expertise to the fore in assisting local authorities and others in determining the right investments for the area. Business membership organisations such as the Chambers of Commerce, the Institute of Directors and the Federation of Small Businesses are represented at this level as are District and Borough authorities, significantly enhancing the reach and inclusivity of the conversations.

2.3 Working Groups

The LEP's working agenda is supported by a range of advisory, working and interest groups. The membership, aims and top-level purposes for the groups varies, more information on each group is available on the SELEP website.

The groups include:

Clean Growth

Clean growth, to reduce carbon emissions whilst enabling economic growth, is the primary driver for our South2East Local Energy Strategy (produced together with Coast to Capital and Enterprise M3 LEPs) and is a cross-cutting theme in SELEP's emerging recovery and renewal strategy.

Coastal Communities

Given the length of coastline in the SELEP area, stretching from Harwich in north through Thanet and Folkestone to Newhaven in the South, the SELEP area is faced with huge opportunities and challenges and with strong interest and representation at local level. The LEP Coastal Communities Working Group is working hard with partners to close the gap between coastal and regional economy.

Enterprise Zones

The South East LEP has four Enterprise Zones:

Harlow Enterprise Zone (Harlow, Essex)
Discovery Park Enterprise Zone (Sandwich, Kent)
North Kent Enterprise Zone (Kent)
Newhaven Enterprise Zone (Lewes)

The group provides peer networking and support for the Enterprise Zones.

Housing

Communities for the future is a key priority in the South East Recovery and Renewal Strategy. Supporting the delivery of the government's Garden Communities housing programme as well as wider housing developments across existing communities and also driving design and innovation to support the future of living and working.

Rural

SELEP's rural economy is a rich mosaic of traditional and innovative land-based businesses, including farming, horticulture, viticulture, forestry and rural tourism. These sit alongside a broad range of non-rural businesses, the group seeks to identify, prioritise and promote the needs of these varying rural economies.

South East Creative Economy Network (SECEN)

The South East Creative Economy Network (SECEN) works to accelerate growth in the digital, creative and cultural sector. It is a working partnership between local authorities, creative businesses and education bodies across the South East LEP area.

Skills

The SELEP Skills working group aims to provide a strategic, joined up, holistic LEP view and input to skills issues and to deliver solutions where possible, as well as explore and inform funding opportunities, new projects and government priorities, such as apprenticeship reforms and T-levels.

Skills Advisory Panel

The LEP Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) is an employer-led local partnership, established in October 2019 to strengthen the link between public and private sector employers, local authorities, colleges and universities and to pool knowledge on skills and labour market needs.

Social Enterprise

With Ministerial and Cabinet Office encouragement and the support of social enterprises from across the South East, the group has worked hard to develop a South East Social Enterprise Strategy and the group is working on identified areas for action within this.

Tourism

The visitor economy is critically important to the growth and sustainability of many of our coastal and rural communities. The group is considering best ways to support this sector.

U9 (Universities)

The membership of U9 is formed of nine higher education institutes within the South East Local Enterprise Partnership area. The network exists to build regional university capacity by providing a platform to promote the higher education sector across the SELEP region.

South East (SELEP region) Narrative

3.1 The South East Economy

The scale of our economy

The South East LEP area is a key driver of the UK's economic growth with an annual economic output of £87 billion. With a population of more than 4.25 million, the South East is by some margin the largest LEP area in England outside London, both in terms of population and economic output. It brings together four established and distinct economic areas in East Sussex, Essex, Kent and Medway, and South Essex.

A network of connected places

The area is highly diverse: although it contains large urban areas (particularly Medway and Southend), no single centre dominates. Instead, it contains a wide range of settlement types, including county towns, university cities, ports, seaside towns and industrial centres, in addition to an extensive network of market towns, local villages and rural communities. It also boasts a superb natural environment, including much of the South Downs National Park and substantial areas of outstanding natural beauty.

The South East is a growing, dynamic network of growth corridors. Its economic standing combined with its proximity to London and international connectivity make it a gateway to enterprise, innovation and trade for UK and Europe.

The UK's Global Gateway

We have one of Britain's most important concentrations of vital infrastructure assets, including some of its largest ports, its only international rail link and two of London's airports; in addition to nine universities, some 170,000 businesses and a significant share of the country's energy generating capacity. In addition, our population is growing much faster than the UK average with rapid growth in both, existing towns, cities and rural communities as well as emerging garden settlements.

Our challenges and opportunities

We face some specific challenges; our productivity is lower than it should be; rapid population and housing growth is putting greater pressure on infrastructure – and the costs associated with this are substantial. And while new technology presents major opportunities for innovation and business growth, it also 'disrupts' and presents challenges in building a workforce and a business base that is fully equipped to respond.

Nevertheless, the scale and diversity of our economy, as well as our infrastructure and knowledge 'assets' mean we are well placed to seize the opportunities for growth and employment over the next decade, driving the prosperity which will benefit the people and businesses in our area.

3.2 South East Economic Measures

Economy: The South East is a UK economic asset. Its annual economic output is £94 billion, representing nearly 5% of the total UK, and its economy grew by nearly 12% in the five years from 2013 to 2018.

A high value, knowledge-based economy: The region's key sectors are: Construction, Education and Health, Life Sciences, Manufacturing, Low Carbon and Environmental, Creative and Digital, Food Production, Transport and Logistics.

Population: The South East's population is 4.2 million and is facing increased population growth. In the 20 years to 2019, the South East's population increased by 16.8% (an additional 614,100 residents) and is expected to increase by a further 456,000 residents by 2039 (equivalent to nearly 4 towns the size of Chelmsford or Maidstone). This has an impact on infrastructure and housing where demand is exceeding delivery.

Housing: The South East is in the forefront of plans to develop a new generation of garden communities, responding to population growth and changing housing demand through sustainable new developments. New housing at Ebbsfleet Garden City is underway, and plans advanced for the Tendring/Colchester Borders, Harlow/Gilston, Dunton Hills and Otterpool Park.

Connectivity: The South East is the international gateway to the UK – it has eight ports, the UK's only international rail link and two of London's airports (Stansted and Southend).

Skills and Employment: The region contains nine Universities supporting 139,000 students. There are 16 further education colleges. Between 2014 and 2019 the number of jobs in the area grew by 162,800 (an increase of 9.4%) and 34.6% of its working age population are qualified to level 4 or higher.

If you would like more information, have an opportunity for South East LEP to be represented or included at events or in briefings or for media queries please get in touch

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