SOUTH EAST
LOCAL ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP

SOUTH EAST
MAJOR PROJECTS
GROUP

Skills and Employment Report:
Summary
March 2022

Contents

Background

In 2020, the South East LEP (SELEP) formed a Major Projects Group (MPG), bringing together large projects from across the SELEP geography. One of the first priority areas agreed by this group was skills and employment given the large scale of opportunities and skills shortages already in the landscape in sectors such as construction and engineering.

To this end, a Skills Sub-Group to the MPG was established in 2021 to bring together skills leads from the various projects. This group also works in conjunction with the SELEP Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) and the SAP Chair, Helen Clements of Morgan Sindall is a member of the group.

Action focused

Since formation, the MPG has collaborated on a number of areas, which form a strong basis for future action planning, including:

- A webinar was held in May 2021 to set out the key aspects of the projects and which over 230 people attended.
- A major projects web page has been added to the SELEP Skills site.
- A virtual careers fair was held in October 2021, with projects having exhibition stands and giving presentations (which are on the SELEP Skills site).
- A Careers magazine was produced in collaboration with Career Map and which includes a 2 page spread on the major projects.
- Shared promotion of activity during National Apprenticeship Week (February 2022).
- Sharing and signing up to existing resources such as talentview.org/construction.
- Inviting external organisations to MPG Skills Group meetings, such as Career Ready and the Careers and Enterprise Company to ensure effective working with the existing landscape.

Report and Action Plan

In order to inform future direction and priorities, the MPG, Skills sub-group and SAP also commissioned a report, undertaken by Mace Group, into the collective skills needs of the projects and which will form part of the SAP evidence base submitted to the Department for Education in support of its Skills Report.

The report explores the projects and the demands they create, considered within the context of the current skills supply position and sets out a series of recommendations to be taken to maximise growth benefits to the area. The report headlines and recommendations are captured below and form the basis for an action plan which is being developed by the MPG Skills sub-group.

The scope of the projects included in the Mace report were slightly broader than the original MPG grouping in order to consider examples in the wider landscape. These are outlined below. It is important to note that the nature and scale of these projects means that they are subject to change and delay so the report was intended as a starting point only.
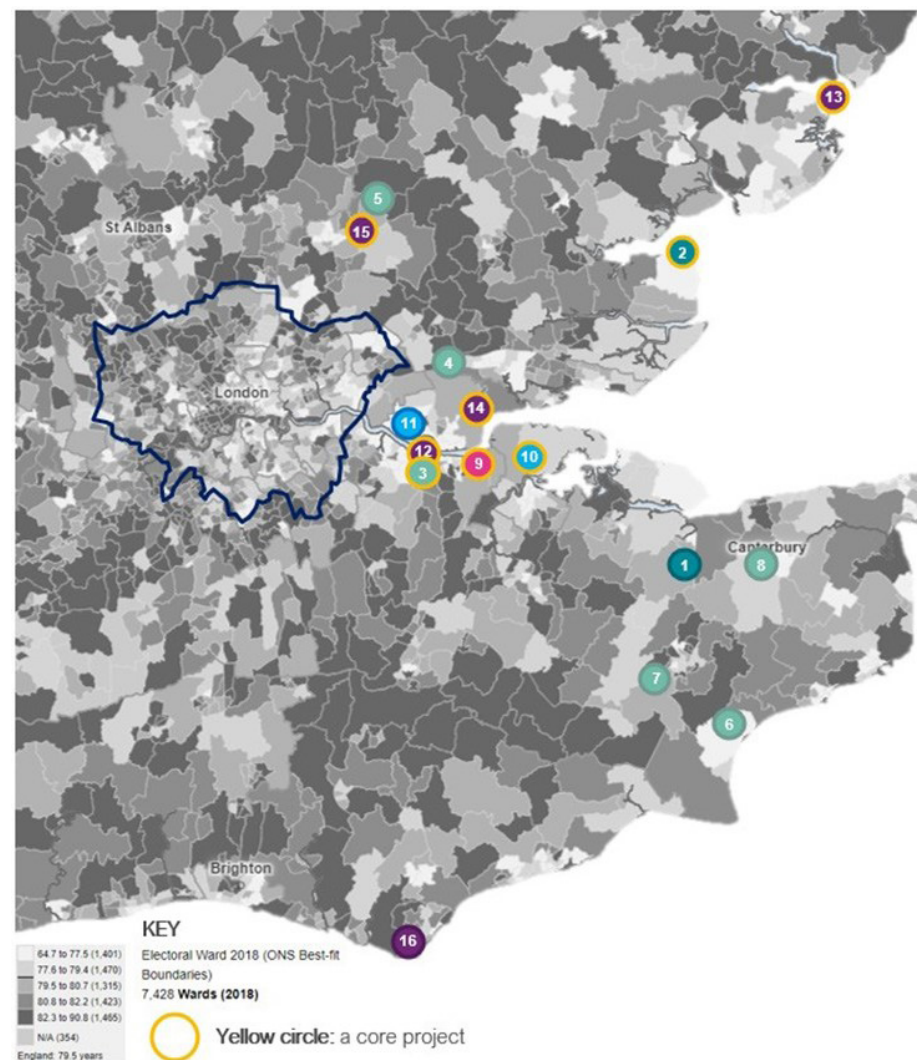
CORE PROJECTS ENGAGED WITH THE MPG SKILLS GROUP	ADDITIONAL EIGHT SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS PROGRESSING WITHIN A SIMILAR TIMEFRAME
The London Resort, Swanscombe Peninsula, Kent	Cleve Hill Solar Farm, North Kent Coast
The Lower Thames Crossing, Kent, Thurrock and London	Otterpool Park Garden Town, Folkestone and Hythe, Kent
Hoo Peninsula developments, Medway	Chilmington Garden Village, Ashford, Kent
Ebbsfleet Garden City, Kent	Mountfield Park, Canterbury, Kent
Bradwell B, Maldon, Essex	Dunton Hills Garden Village, Brentwood, Essex
UK Health Security Agency, Harlow, Essex	Gilston Park Estate, Harlow, Essex
Thames Freeport, Thurrock	Purfleet on Thames Regeneration, Thurrock
Freeport East, Felixstowe, Suffolk and Harwich, Essex	Newhaven Enterprise Zone, East Sussex

MPG Skills Sub-Group Membership

Current members are as follows with additional members to be added as per the project list above and to algin with the main MPG Group. Colleagues from organisations such as the Careers Enterprise Company, Career Ready and IoD are also invited to attend as apt:

PROJECT/ORGANISATION	MEMBER OF SKILLS GROUP
Lower Thames Crossing (Highways England)	Lauren Edmunds / Jessica Power
Bradwell B / Sizewell*	Olivia White (GCN) / Guy Hazlehurst (EDF)
Ebbsfleet Garden City	Lara Pool
The London Resort	Elizabeth Bamford / Ellie Evans
UK Health Security Agency (previously Public Health England)	Zoe Robinson / Nadia Shivji-Brown / Mark Beaver
Thames Freeport (represented by Thurrock Council)	Karen Wheeler
Hoo Peninsular (represented by Medway Council)	Daniel Ratcliffe / Melanie Phelps
SELEP Skills Advisory Panel / Morgan Sindall	Helen Clements
Construction and Industry Training Board	Celine McGeown
South East LEP	Louise Aitken / Helen Russell / Sharon Spicer

*Sizewell C, although based in Suffolk, just across the border of Essex will have a significant draw of resources from a much wider geography and particularly Essex; and as such have joined the MPG and their information including labour demand will feed into this action plan.

KEY

64.7 to 77.5 (1,401)	Electoral Ward 2018 (ONS Best-fit Boundaries)
77.6 to 79.4 (1,470)	7,428 **Wards** (2018)
79.5 to 80.7 (1,315)	
80.8 to 82.2 (1,423)	
82.3 to 90.8 (1,465)	
N/A (354)	
England: 79.5 years	

○ Yellow circle: a core project
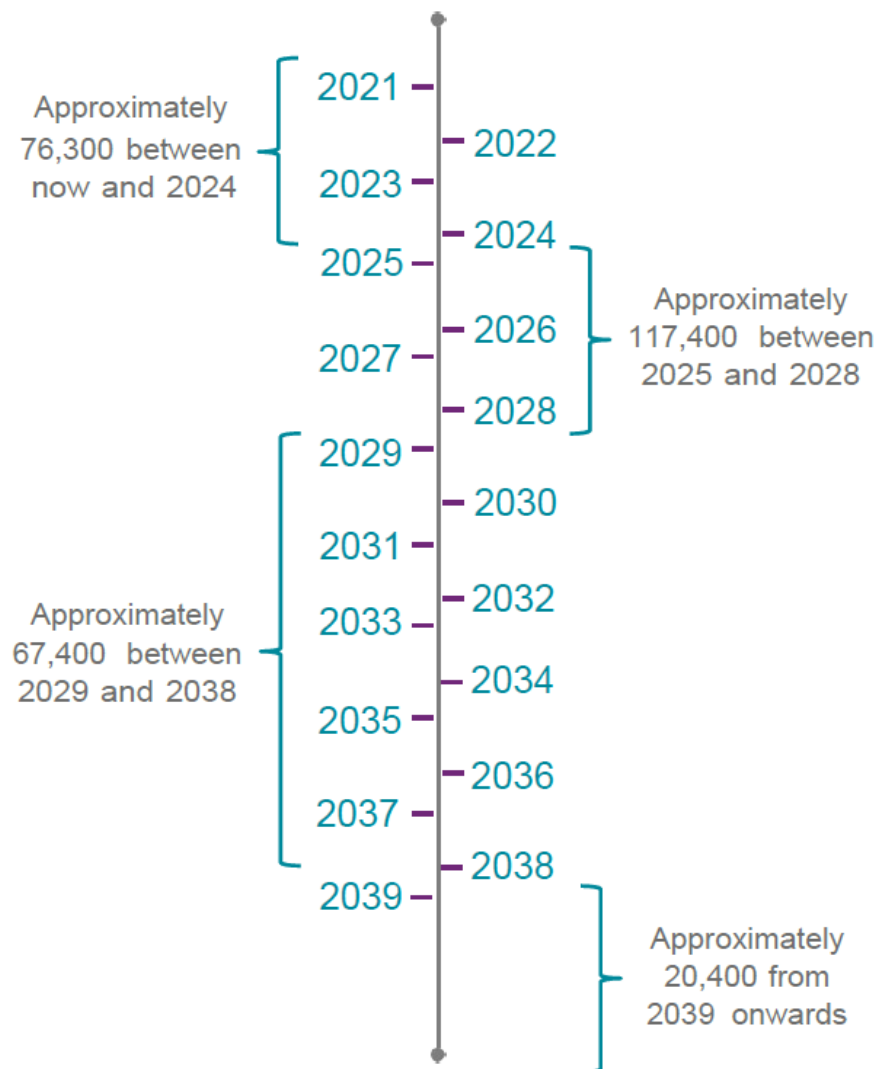
MACE Report Headlines

- The pipeline of major projects in the SELEP area represents an extraordinary amount of growth and a huge economic opportunity. The SELEP MPG provides a strategic channel of engagement across major infrastructure projects, ensuring greater collaboration, benefits realisation and the mitigation of potential risks.

- Conservative estimates put the combined construction value at around £28.5bn (noting that costs are not yet defined for all projects).

- However, there are also significant challenges in meeting the skills/labour demands of these projects and ensuring that the local workforce and businesses are able to benefit.

- The SELEP geography has existing skills gaps, with barriers of above-average rates of unemployment, poor education attainment and high levels of deprivation in many of the areas where projects reside.

- By building our understanding of the skills needs and timelines of these projects, the MPG and the SAP have an opportunity to develop a skills response that benefits the local labour market and is based on collaboration rather than competition.

- Projects are at varying stages of development and therefore the availability of data will vary, with figures also subject to change as projects progress.

- However it is estimated that a workforce of 76,300 is needed by 2024 with a peak demand of 117,400 in the period between 2025 and 2028.

- High overall levels of job vacancies and the need for an upskilled workforce base in technological advancement industries makes this a challenging employability environment with many employers competing for labour.

- The construction sector for example employs around 112,000 people across the SELEP area but is already facing acute shortages both locally and nationally. Demand is also surging in niche skills, such as nuclear engineering.

- To help meet industry needs and provide a talent pipeline for the future, action needs to be taken at a range of levels. This includes attracting workers into training and industry, harnessing transferable skills, increasing the availability of training programmes and aligning these to sector needs (current and future).

The report highlights the range of jobs and skills required, with many of those in sectors already experiencing shortages:

ROLES LIKELY TO FACE PARTICULAR SKILLS SHORTAGES	OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE IN LOWER SKILLED JOBS	AREAS IN WHICH FUTURE SKILLS WILL EVOLVE
Engineers	Ground workers	Robotics and visual simulation
Many construction trades	Labourers	E-sports
Project managers	Plant operators	Artifical Intelligence
Architects	Drivers	Computer Aided Manufacturing
Logistics	Landscape gardeners	3D printing
Teachers and support staff	Hospitality and shop workers	Off-site fabrication techniques
Manufacturing	Security	Modular construction
Healthcare workers	Seasonal theme park staff (from 2025)	

Forecast Total Workforce of the Combined 16 Projects

We have estimated the total required workforce of the 16 projects will be:

Approximately 76,300 between now and 2024

Approximately 117,400 between 2025 and 2028

Approximately 67,400 between 2029 and 2038

Approximately 20,400 from 2039 onwards

Localised Forecast Summary

To provide some granularity in terms of the location of those jobs (to inform local workforce planning) these are shown below:

NB. The figures have been rounded in the summary to illustrate the imprecise nature of the forecasting due to the many variables involved.

Kent and Medway – eight projects
- Approximately 51,300 between now and 2024
- Approximately 66,500 between 2025 and 2028
- Approximately 48,600 between 2029 and 2038
- Approximately 17,300 from 2039 onwards.

East Sussex – one project
- Approximately 400 between now and 2024
- Approximately 1,600 between 2025 and 2028
- Approximately 2,000 between 2029 and 2038
- Approximately 2,500 from 2039 onwards.

South Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock – three projects
- Approximately 2,700 between now and 2024
- Approximately 23,600 between 2025 and 2028
- Approximately 11,300 between 2029 and 2038
- Approximately 600 from 2039 onwards.

North Essex – three projects
- Approximately 21,800 between now and 2024
- Approximately 25,700 between 2025 and 2028
- Approximately 5,500 between 2029 and 2038
- Approximately 20 from 2039 onwards.

Emerging Actions

Recommendation 1

That Higher Education and Further Education Providers collaborate together and with industry to align their work to the pipeline of job opportunities, building a total talent pipeline from secondary age through master's degree.

ACTIONS
SELEP Skills Working Group to consider collective sector needs, provision and gaps to help develop a strategic talent pipeline.
Hold another webinar with the Skills Advisory Panel to share the report headlines and proposed actions for stakeholders to feedback on.
Work with the new Institute of Technology to ensure alignment and to utilise the IoT fully in addressing skills needs identified.
Undertake activity to advise about and promote careers and opportunities across the projects.
Agree joint projects with organisations and resources such as Career Ready, Go Construct, Construction Youth Trust and Class of Your Own.
Work with programmes supporting adults into employment (such as DWP Restart) and those in employment to upskill (e.g., Skills Bootcamps).
Explore the roll out of CITB National Skills Academies across SELEP, ensuring existing provision and facilities are utilised where apt.
MPG Skills Group to work with SELEP/SWG to refresh skills needs data and information to present a 'real time' picture (volume and occupations/skill).

Recommendation 2

That the larger long-term employers (such as Bradwell B, the London Resort, Freeports, Lower Thames Crossing) engage with schools (including University Technical Colleges).

ACTIONS
As per actions in R1– e.g. Enterprise Advisers, STEM Ambassadors and Governors.
Projects/SELEP to produce materials for schools (including Primary) to better understand the projects and job roles attached.
Showcase existing resources to schools (e.g., Lower Thames Crossing Minecraft, Ebbsfleet Garden City apprenticeships and work experience) and share learning in relation to school engagement activity.
Explore a major projects showcase event/series of events.
Showcase and coordinate activities taking place with schools and projects in their vicinity.

Recommendation 3

That consideration is given to expanding use of advanced design and manufacturing techniques to help alleviate forecast skills shortages.

ACTIONS
Ensure knowledge and awareness of new skills needs such as on-site assembly and the changing nature of digital skills/BIM. Capture in materials and videos for schools.
NB: It has been agreed that this is also appropriate for the main MPG Group to consider.

Recommendation 4

That the tutor shortage issue is addressed collectively, and that teacher and tutor recruitment and training plans align to industry needs.

ACTIONS
Agree a collaborative approach to tutor shortage issue to explore barriers and solutions more fully.
Build upon (and promote) existing SELEP project and website becomealecturer.org and maximise the current government campaign promoting teaching in FE through promotion by projects.
Explore benefits of bursaries (as per previous SELEP programmes), sponsorship and/or financial incentives to encourage people into teaching.
Explore a major projects showcase event/series of events.
Provide CPD and support for existing tutors and teachers to increase and update knowledge of projects and new techniques etc.

Recommendation 5

That an effective Supply Chain Strategy is developed that aligns to skills availability.

ACTIONS
Agree skills related targets for supply chain – e.g. apprenticeship, traineeship, work experience, unemployment support KPIs.
Utilise and ensure take up of existing tools – such as talentview.org/construction.
Work with I-Construct / Haven Gateway partners to explore skills aspects of digital platform for Major Projects (utilising existing ERDF funding).
Work with Planning Authorities to ensure skills and employment outcomes and built into S106 were possible.
Help to facilitate a collaborative approach with Tier 1s, building on the Sizewell civils alliance.
Work with LSIPs to ensure alignment with plans/activities to support SMEs.

Recommendation 6

That the untapped workforce in the region is harnessed as much as possible in the development of lower skilled jobs.

ACTIONS
Work with major unemployment programmes (such as Restart, ESF Programmes) to ensure they are supporting recruitment to the major projects.
Provide opportunities and pathways for all including ex-offenders, carers, homeless, migrant and refugee communities.
All projects to sign up to Disability Confident.
Ensure training relevant to the projects needs (e.g. construction, engineering) is readily accessible to take up opportunities.

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