

A photograph of an offshore wind farm with several white wind turbines on yellow foundations in the sea under a clear blue sky. A large light blue diagonal shape is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.Four vertical bars of varying heights in teal and orange colors are located in the top right corner.

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



SOUTH EAST
LOCAL ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP

ECONOMIC **RECOVERY AND RENEWAL** STRATEGY
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MAY 2021

The South East economy has lost up to £10 billion GVA during 2020¹ due to the pandemic, more than 15% of our workforce were still furloughed in February 2021 and some of our more deprived coastal communities have been hit hard due to their reliance on the most impacted sectors.

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

We understand both the challenges and opportunities our economy faces and our plan is to work with our partners across the region to enable our economy to build back **FASTER**, **SMARTER** and **MORE SUSTAINABLY**.

We will support our economy to build back **FASTER** through investing £85m Getting Building Fund in shovel-ready commercial, town centre and infrastructure projects to stimulate jobs and growth; deploying an additional £2.4m COVID-19 Business Support Fund and £1m Sector Support Fund to support sectors most in need; investing a further £2m into a COVID-19 Skills Fund and £2m ESF investment to support young people; supporting the development of digital skills through our Digital Skills Partnership (DSP); and continuing to ensure that there is robust and flexible business support activity for all businesses.

To build back **SMARTER**, we will be supporting R&D and innovation activities, identifying and addressing gaps in digital infrastructure and promoting high quality digital infrastructure in all new developments, as well as helping to develop a highly skilled workforce that can meet the demands of industry.

To build back **MORE SUSTAINABLY**, we 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, promoting ground-breaking design in new communities, with the aim of supporting existing communities and new developments in becoming fit for the future and contributing to the transition to a net-zero carbon economy.

In addition, we will continue to use our convening power to bring together business leaders from across key sectors, amplifying the private sector voice of our industries to inform and influence government policy.

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





SOUTH EAST
LOCAL ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP

DRIVING SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC RENEWAL

OUR MEDIUM TO LONG-TERM RESPONSE TO
ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Our medium to longer term aims focus on four strategic priorities which reflect our unique geography, assets and opportunities:

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

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:

OBJECTIVES

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

7

Promote greater
resilience in our places

And four guiding principles:

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1

*Delivering clean growth,
through boosting local
carbon industries while
cutting carbon emissions
to move to net-zero*

2

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

3

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

4

*Addressing inequalities
to build a fairer and more
inclusive economy*



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

We want 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.

To support these ambitions, we will:

>> *Ensure robust and flexible business support for all businesses and start-ups:* Strengthening the service provided through the SELEP Growth Hub model and wider business support, helping businesses to diversify and adapt, adopt new technologies and processes to enhance productivity.

>> *Support R&D and innovation activities:* Increasing support and fostering collaborations with our nine universities and Innovate UK and championing changes to the use of R&D tax relief to encourage greater investment.

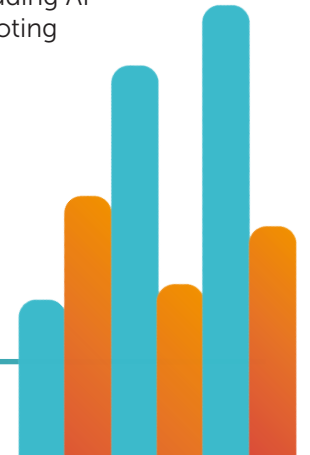
>> *Identify and address gaps in digital infrastructure:* Ensuring businesses can operate efficiently and respond to the changes in working and living patterns of their workforce and customers.

>> *Help to develop a highly skilled workforce that can meet the demands of industry:* Increasing digital and higher technical skills, including AI and automation, including supporting the bid for an Institute of Technology in logistics, automation, construction, health and life science and promoting the Government's Lifetime Skills Guarantee and Help to Grow.

>> *Support people to transition between sectors:* Supporting retraining through our own skills fund and promotion of national initiatives.

>> *Raise awareness and respond to challenges of climate change to move to a net zero economy:* Working with businesses to understand the opportunities and to implement low carbon practices.

>> *Support businesses to promote greater inclusion and diversity in the workforce:* Encouraging businesses to attract and retain a wide range of talent.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: UK'S GLOBAL GATEWAY

We want the South East to capitalise on new international trading relationships, and we will help strengthen our gateway locations through improved transport and digital infrastructure, innovation capabilities and local skills development.

To achieve this, we will:

>> **Support the successful implementation of our Freeports, Thames Freeport and Freeport East:** Enhancing SELEP's role as a gateway for global trade and enterprise and ensuring that this benefits the (often deprived) communities in which they are based.

>> **Lead the work of the South East Major Projects Group:** Realising the full economic and social benefits from major investments in the area through collaboration on employment and skills, research and innovation, supply chain development and equality and inclusion.

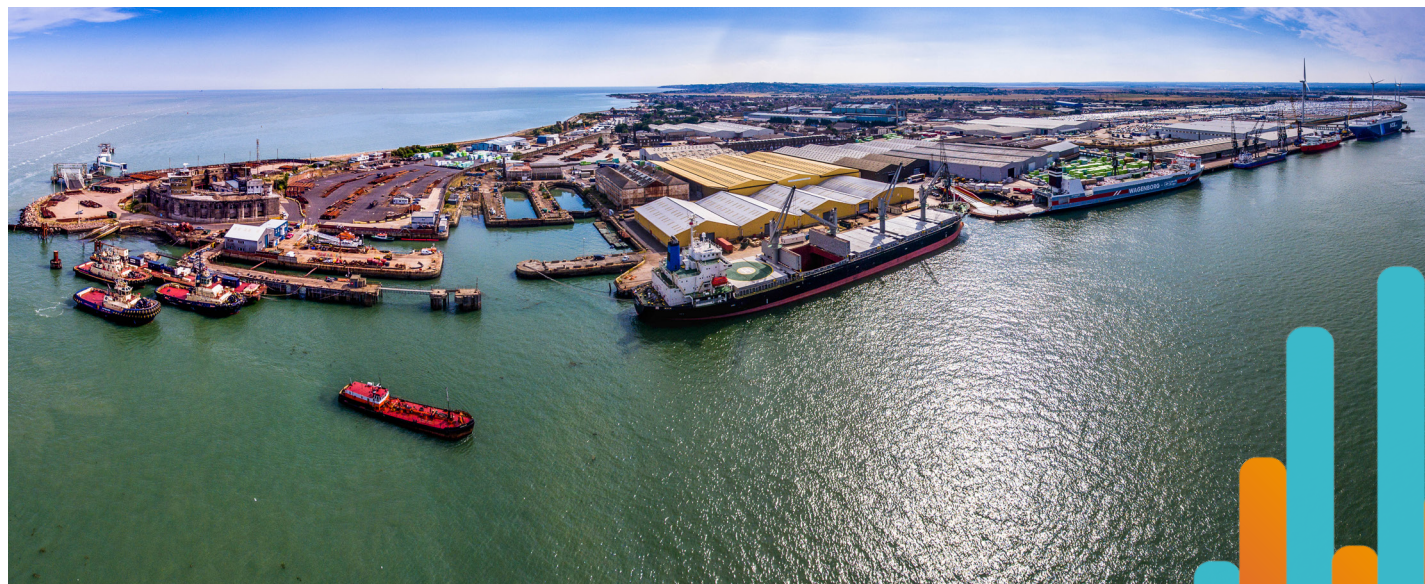
>> **Support our ports as significant employers and catalysts for growth to recruit the diverse range of skills and talent they need:** Investing in a Logistics Centre in South Essex, a Maritime and Sustainable Technology Hub in Newhaven and helping to recruit trainers in key skill areas.

>> **Build on the strong record of inward investment and maximise new trade deals:** Helping our businesses in internationalisation, investment and growth, including supporting businesses to navigate new trading arrangements to trade with Europe.

>> **Support and champion the work of the Thames Estuary Growth Board:** Backing its priorities for sustainable transport and energy, skills and enterprise.

>> **Work to enhance port connectivity:**
Helping to identify and prioritise transport improvements that will support sustainable movement of goods from our ports as well as championing significant infrastructure projects such as the Lower Thames Crossing.

>> **Work with Maritime UK and other organisations to bring together the diverse range of industries in the maritime sector:**
Tackling shared issues across the LEP enabling our maritime businesses to benefit from national and international opportunities.



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

Accelerating housing delivery remains a key ambition for SELEP, with plans to lead the country in delivering 25% (87,100 homes) of the government's Garden Communities programme.

We are committed to creating attractive and aspirational places that also bring greater equity in terms of quality of life and economic opportunities across all our cities, towns and villages.

To support these ambitions, we 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: Promoting new thinking and research across the SELEP area.

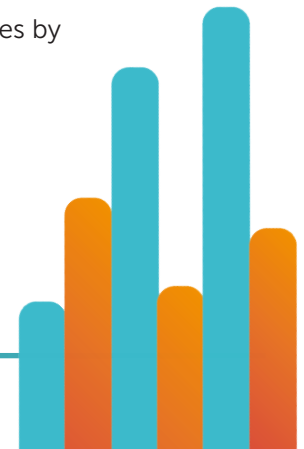
>> Promote ground-breaking design in new communities by sharing learning and innovation: Supporting healthy living, age-appropriate homes, zero carbon, affordable housing, cultural vitality, retro-fit and levelling up across all communities within SELEP; and supporting the future design of work and cultural space as a means of reinvigorating town centres and high streets.

>> Support and strengthen links with the private sector: Enabling small and medium sized builders to play a full part in accelerating housing delivery and promoting innovation and funding sources for specific interventions such as construction methods and smart building approaches.

>> Work to support inclusive business development: Maximising impact through social enterprises, start-ups and sustainable new enterprises by expanding on the work of our Building Back Better sector support fund project.

>> Provide strategic support to our Towns Boards, Future High Streets and Heritage Action Zone areas: Improving the retail, cultural and business offer, boosting the local economies and increasing the attractiveness of our towns.

>> Ensure that new developments protect and enhance our natural resources to deliver social and environmental benefit: Supporting partners to secure investment and planning reforms, ensuring that the necessary tools and policies are in place to support and encourage the transition to net-zero.



We aim to improve the economic prosperity of our coastal and rural communities through sector adaptation and growth that will improve productivity and create high value job opportunities.

To do this we must also address the core barriers to creating highly attractive and well connected places where people want to live, work and invest. To achieve this, we will:

>> **Identify and address gaps in digital infrastructure and facilitate greater connectivity:** Exploring models and pilots for delivering improved digital infrastructure, particularly in our rural areas and working with providers on a strategic approach to infrastructure investment; including upgrades to the grid, low carbon energy and electric vehicles charging.

>> **Support coastal and rural businesses to innovate and grow:** Bringing together our universities, coastal communities and rural working groups to explore opportunities for business growth and innovation and facilitate greater collaboration in R&D.



>> **Maximise the economic and social benefits generated from infrastructure projects:** Deliver local benefits for the coastal areas in which many are based.

>> **Address the impacts of poorer physical connectivity on coastal and rural economies:** Working in collaboration with Transport for the South East and Transport East on strategic transport planning, including improving walking and cycling routes.

>> **Help to increase access to learning, at all levels,** for our coastal and rural communities and supporting greater availability of digital learning models and apprenticeships.

>> **Support the recovery, adaptation, and growth of our visitor economy:** Delivering targeted priorities and projects through our working groups and championing investments.

>> **Support and champion the work of the Thames Estuary Production Corridor:** Promoting its vision to create a world-class centre for creative and cultural production.

>> **Increase our understanding of our natural resources and assets** and how they can act as a driver for net zero initiatives and productivity improvements.

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MAY 2021

Further information on SELEP, including our partners, working groups, economic evidence base and the full **Economic Recovery and Renewal Strategy** can be found on our website: **southeastlep.com**

If you want to get involved with the work of the LEP or keep up to date on the next steps, you can contact us directly at **hello@southeastlep.com**

You can also **[sign up to our newsletter](#)**