

Thames Estuary Production Corridor



An Industrial Vision
To Create A World-Class Location
For The Creative Industries

Front cover image: ©Based Upon

Based Upon is a high-end artist studio in Charlton made up of skilled craftsmen. The organisation refers to itself as 'an artist' that creates luxury bespoke editions that blur the boundaries of art, design, industrial innovation and craft. Each finished piece is a highly personal story representing the client's life or the studio's experience.

Music Performing Arts Visual Arts Advertising
Architecture Crafts Design Fashion Film TV
Video Radio Photography Publishing Software
Museums Galleries Libraries Music Performing
Arts Visual Arts Advertising Architecture Crafts
Design Fashion Film TV Video Radio Photography
Publishing Software Museums Galleries Libraries
Music Performing Arts Visual Arts Advertising
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“If we want to increase our overall prosperity, if we want more people to share in that prosperity, if we want higher real wages, and if we want more opportunities for young people to get on – we have to raise our productivity.”

Prime Minister Theresa May

Building Our Industrial Strategy Green Paper, January 2017

Foreword

Mayor of London

London is open to business, to talent and to creativity. The Thames Estuary has historically been our gateway to the world and the heart of London’s manufacturing industry.

Our vision for the world’s largest creative production corridor is bold. It will position London and the South East as a world leader for the creative industries on a scale never seen before, creating a landmark corridor along the estuary, powering skills opportunities and new jobs.

It will pioneer innovation and support growth in productivity, building on our investment in transport and housing in the area. I invite investors to seize the opportunity to work with us and re-energise the Thames Estuary as a global centre for the creatives industries.

Chairman, South East Local Enterprise Partnership

The creative industries are one of the South East’s biggest success stories. As the UK competes on the world stage, we must harness the innovation and entrepreneurial spirit of the creative sector - enabling its growth and extending its global reach. Our vision is that the Thames Estuary Production Corridor becomes a centre of excellence, providing great links with London, whilst building a unique, self-sustaining, infrastructure to support creative businesses in a way that has not been seen before.

To realise this vision, we must recognise the unique needs of the creative sector in the policies we shape and the investments we make. The South East LEP has identified a thriving regional freelance economy and developed a portfolio of sector-led initiatives. The UK’s success in the global economy is rooted in the quality of our ideas and in our ability to innovate. The South East’s thriving creative sector provides a platform for continued success throughout the 21st century.



A handwritten signature of Sadiq Khan in black ink.

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London



A handwritten signature of Christian Brodie in black ink.

Christian Brodie
South East LEP Chairman

Vision

Thames Estuary Production Corridor

A world class centre for production – leading global innovation, developing talent and cultivating world changing ideas



Growing the Thames Estuary

The Thames Estuary is on the up. Once the heart of Britain’s trading and manufacturing industries, recent investment is triggering a revival. New communities are rising across the region making a sustainable, future-proofed economic plan critical. The Thames Estuary is perfectly poised to become the epicentre of the government’s new Industrial Strategy, a key ingredient of which is becoming home to a globally competitive Production Corridor uniquely focused on creativity. A collaboration between London and South East Local Enterprise Partnerships is crucial to deliver this ambitious vision.

Untapped Potential

Exciting initiatives like Purfleet’s High House Production Park and the potential of places like Chatham Historic Dockyard and the Royal Docks are leading the way as centres for creative production and innovation. London’s first ever Cultural Infrastructure Plan and the South East’s ‘Towards A National Prospectus for the Creative Economy’ identify future needs. Further investment in large-scale production centres will support growth, create jobs and unleash the region’s potential.

Excellent Connectivity

The corridor has seen significant investment in transport infrastructure during recent years. New DLR links and HS1 have supported thousands of new jobs, whilst City and Southend airports and major ports have expanded rapidly, opening up export markets. But there is potential to do much more - the opening of the Elizabeth Line and proposed river crossings, as well as the latest ultrafast broadband will continue to power the region’s economic growth. With the right investment, this corridor could become one of the most connected regions in Europe.

World Class Clusters

Creative clusters have been transforming East London and the South East for the past few decades, with a new Creative Enterprise Zone pathfinder being tested in London. Regional higher education institutions are centres for digital, creative and cultural research and will support business development to ensure the sector is ready for growth. The approach complements London’s new Skills For Londoners strategy and the South East Talent Accelerator.

A Local Talent Pool

The Estuary’s manufacturing legacy provides a unique opportunity for new industry. A skilled local workforce – from fabricators to metalworkers - already exists. The Estuary is at the forefront of the skills agenda with the National College Creative Industries based in Purfleet. Core to this vision will be the creation of pathways into long-term employment through schools, further and higher education (FE & HE), skills training, apprenticeships and careers advice.

Placemaking

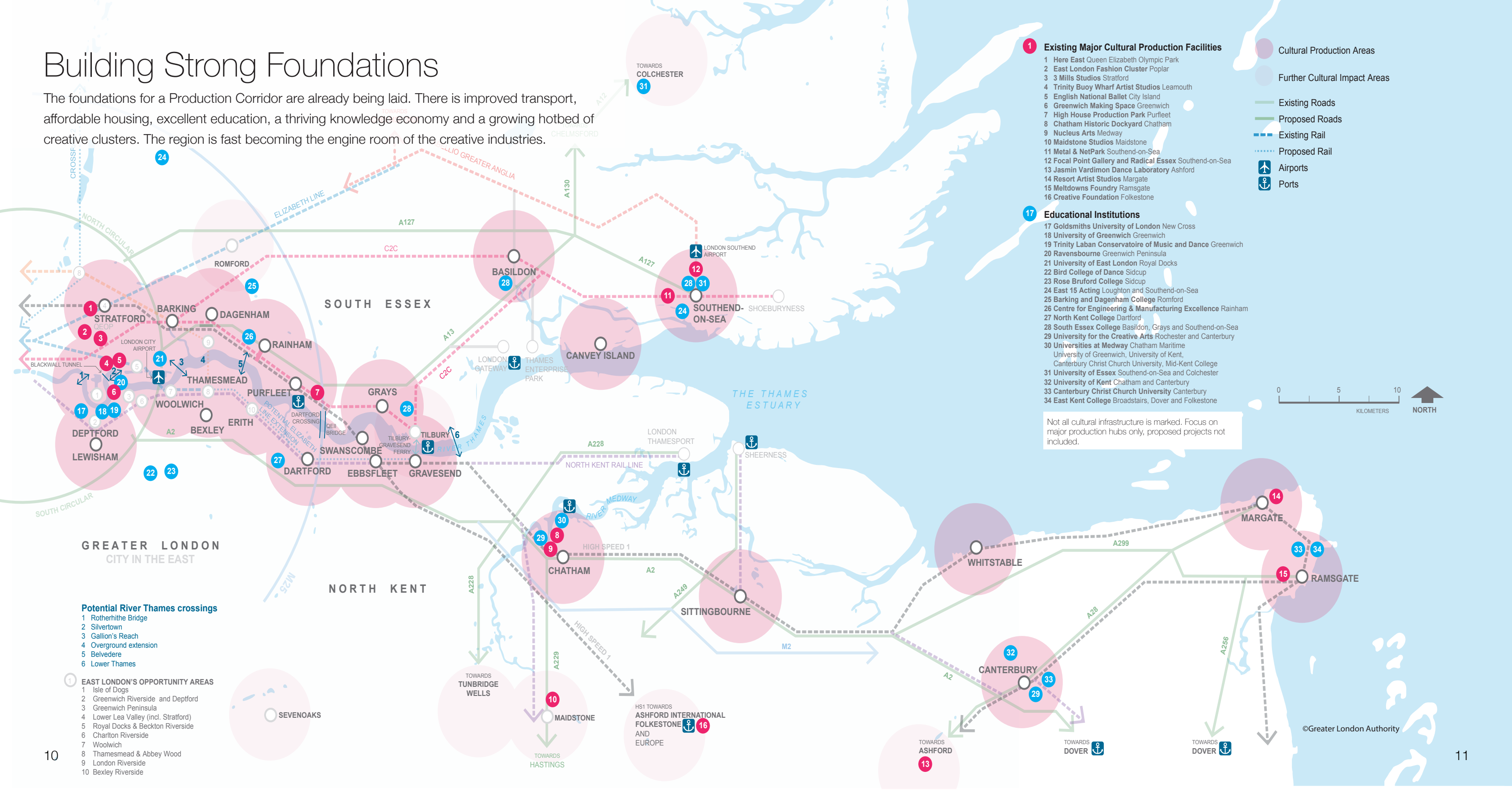
Over recent years culture-led regeneration leading to economic diversification has made a tangible difference. Building the profile of the Thames Estuary to increase its competitive advantage is essential. Inward investment will also be crucial to improve the quality of the physical environment. Through partnership working and collaboration, the Vision for the Production Corridor will provoke imaginative solutions to placeshaping, working with our diverse communities.

Driving Growth

Research commissioned by Greater London Authority (GLA) and South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) indicates the potential for 290,000 new homes to be built along the Thames Estuary by 2050, including a new Garden City at Ebbsfleet. A Production Corridor, similar to the London-Brighton corridor investment programme, could provide a thriving economic infrastructure.

Building Strong Foundations

The foundations for a Production Corridor are already being laid. There is improved transport, affordable housing, excellent education, a thriving knowledge economy and a growing hotbed of creative clusters. The region is fast becoming the engine room of the creative industries.



Creative Industries: Maximising the potential

The Creative Industries is the UK's biggest growth sector and will feature prominently alongside other sectors in the new Production Corridor. The Creative Industries **generates £8.8m per hour. 1.3m people work in the creative economy** across the South East alone. The UK Commission for Employment and Skills predicts **1.2 million new workers** will be needed in the sector over the next decade. Yet there are significant risks to creative infrastructure posed by rising land values, rents, business rates and skills shortages.

The Need for Growth

Creatives are our contemporary conceptualisers, prototypers and manufacturers binding engineering, science, and technology. Our industry creates brand GB - innovating across fashion, film, performing and visual arts. However, we don't often know the complex production processes that go into the plays we see, the films we watch or the clothes we wear. World class pieces for the Fourth Plinth often have to be built elsewhere in Europe, because more space is given to consuming products and not enough to making them.

The South East's preeminent position as a world capital of creativity is under threat as creatives, artists and entrepreneurs lack appropriate infrastructure for expansion. From a lack of film studios, fashion manufacturing hubs and music production centres, there is a need for large, state of the art facilities with high speed digital connectivity and a strategic approach to skills development.

This is further compounded by the UK's imminent exit from the European Union and the potential loss of creative businesses to European towns and cities. The Creative Industries is **25% more productive** than other sectors and **87% of highly creative workers are at low to no risk of automation** (NESTA), but productivity per head is 30% lower than France and Germany.

Right now, we are losing out. We are losing jobs and a specialist trained work force. We need to urgently enhance our infrastructure so we can make creative products on a grand scale.

This vision will catalyse the sector by building on the strong existing network of creative organisations, FE/HE institutions and repurposing great swathes of industrial land and expertise. It will make the South East and the UK an epicentre of international excellence not just to see great art, but to make great art.

Case Study: International Art Foundry



©Katalin Deér, Kunstgiesserei St. Gallen AG

The Kunstgiesserei, Switzerland

This Swiss art foundry is an example of a large-scale craft facility and has 40-50 employees. International artists are attracted to this European centre for research and experimentation to develop ideas using the latest equipment and technologies. State-of-the-art facilities offer art casting, milling, scanning, digital mould-building and 3D printing.

Exemplary Creative Hubs in the Thames Estuary

High House Production Park and Here East represent two exemplary ideas that have already been developed in the Estuary. The Thames Estuary partnership is hugely ambitious, but recognises that any new infrastructure must support and feed smaller clusters of businesses who share common supply chains, skilled labour and complementary technologies. Both of the examples demonstrate strong vision, leadership and important key anchor tenants, within a solid business model.

High House Production Park, Thurrock

High House Production Park is a collaboration between Royal Opera House, National College Creative Industries, Acme Studios, Thurrock Council and Arts Council England. It was established as an international centre of excellence for the Creative Industries. The Park provides large-scale creative workshops, which are in short supply in the region, and state-of-the-art studios. The centre also offers professional skills training, qualifications and routes into employment for the next generation.



14 acre creative production park occupied by multiple partners



The Bob and Tamar Manoukian Production Workshop, home to the Royal Opera House's set building facility



The National College Creative Industries, including the Backstage Centre



ACME's 43 artists' studios



Centre for technical training including a focus on apprenticeships for the creative industries



Employing 150 people in creative production

Here East, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Stratford

Here East is a dedicated place for individuals and companies who pioneer technology to share expertise and create the products of tomorrow. Offering unrivalled space, connectivity and collaboration, it will be complimented by the Plexal innovation centre in June 2017 with a suite of services to accelerate growth and empower businesses. Here East is Phase 1 of a world-class Cultural and Education District that will showcase exceptional art, dance, craft, technology and design.



1.2 million square foot campus.



Innovation accelerators in sport, health, fashion, Smart Cities and the Internet of Things



Home to Studio Wayne McGregor, offering a world-class arts space for professional artists and learning programmes.



Education institutions and creative organisations work together with established businesses to share expertise with start-ups.



Tenants already include BT Sport, Loughborough University, UCL and Signal Noise.



The 950-seat auditorium and cultural event space is available to Here East and the local community.

Six Principles of Industrial Success

This Vision will be led by a dynamic cross-sector partnership across London, Kent and Essex. Additionally it presents an opportunity for leaders in the creative industries to work alongside other proposed priority sectors (Life Sciences, Low Emission Vehicle Manufacturing, Industrial Digitalisation and Nuclear), referenced in the Government’s Industrial Strategy Green Paper. It will also support delivery of ambitions outlined in SELEP’s prospectus ‘Towards a National Prospectus for the Creative Economy’. The Thames Estuary partnership will pioneer new ideas whilst revitalising and rebranding the region over the next 30 years.

Promoting Innovation

The Thames Estuary Production Corridor will span almost 80 miles and house the world’s largest innovation district. It will be the engine room that feeds stages, screens, design centres and exhibition spaces around the world.

Building Big

Big, creative ideas need big spaces to be built. Investment in new large-scale infrastructure will stimulate cluster growth and connect businesses, leading to new entrepreneurial innovation.

A Creative Business Destination

Industry professionals from across the UK and the world will be attracted by state-of-the-art facilities and opportunities to collaborate with industry pioneers, served by excellent transport links and digital connectivity.

Growing Talent

The Production Corridor will forge a skills pipeline from local schools and colleges to jobs for life, laying the foundations for a skilled workforce of tomorrow.

A Digital Highway

Building on existing ultrafast digital connectivity in locations like Colchester, a new regional digital highway will ensure businesses can compete with global rivals.

Low Carbon Industry

The region will capitalise on existing exemplary zero carbon development and infrastructure such as the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and the UK’s biggest wind farm in Kent. Low carbon communities and sustainable growth will make this Production Corridor cleaner, more efficient and affordable.

Case Study: Creative Hub



©Jo Bridges

Resort Studios, Margate

Resort Studios in Margate, provides workspace and support for 40+ full time members from a broad range of creative practice – visual arts, printing, photography, architecture, fashion, digital design, jewellery and arts production. Founded in 2013, it sits at the heart of an emerging creative economy and provides a replicable model for sector-led workspace as the key to cluster-focused development. A key ambition was to champion investment and infrastructure in the area, where vibrant diversity now attracts an exciting mix of talented sole traders and independent business owners from across the creative industries. Resort and other providers thrive in an atmosphere of experimentation, a strong local culture of creativity, and collaborative development. Resort thus plays to Kent’s key strengths of affordability, proximity to London, natural beauty and a strong creative community.

Big Ideas: The Creative Corridor

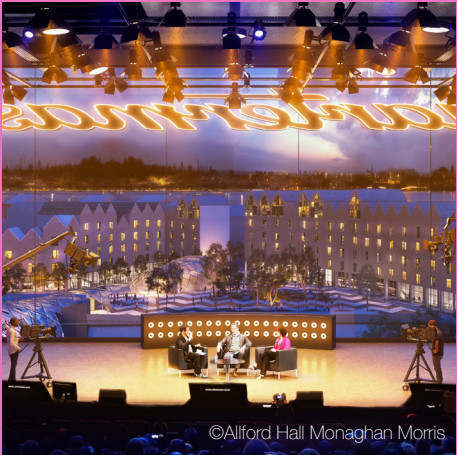
Since 2010, a number of multi-million pound iconic projects have already been realised across the region. Others are in the pipeline or being imagined, part of a strategy that will take us to 2050. Strategic investment is needed to create centres with the space to manufacture large-scale products – so that our stage industry can remain technically competitive, our growing East London fashion cluster can meet its potential and so we can make more feature films. The following ideas identify major innovation hubs that could create a unique creative Production Corridor.



Dagenham
London's **largest film studio for 25 years** will create space for increased major feature film production.



Bexley
The first and largest **theatre-making centre** dedicated to national touring companies.



Purfleet
Quartermaster Studios, the UK's leading proposed independant **media production facility**.



Colchester
University of Essex **Knowledge Gateway**, home of digital and gaming.



Silvertown
A new **art foundry** for manufacturing large scale artworks and sculptures, including the biggest 3D printing centre in the country.



Woolwich
A new **national hub for experiential arts** will enable the South East to capitalise on being a global centre for immersive performance.



Margate
A **creative and digital hub** at Turner Contemporary will offer digital knowledge sharing, skills, training and studios.



Kent Creative-lab
A new industrial **research laboratory** for prototyping, skills development and production across multiple creative disciplines.

Vision 2050: It's Time to Build

Why We Need To Act Now

It's time for the industrial revolution to get creative.

Case Study: Creative Laboratory



Metal Culture, Southend-on-Sea

Metal is an artist-led creative laboratory in Southend-on-Sea, championing investment in artistic innovation and new technology. The organisation transformed the unused historic building Chalkwell Hall into a vibrant cultural community hub. Including beautifully designed studios, IT suite and bedrooms, the building provides a low carbon creative space for over 1200 artists annually and acts as a catalyst for collaboration and networking.

Case Study: Creative Production District



Île De Nantes, France

Since 2003, Samoa (West Atlantic Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency) has directed the Île de Nantes urban project. The project regenerated derelict manufacturing infrastructures and brownfield sites to build a Creative Arts District. 90,000m² has been dedicated to communication, design, performing arts, architecture, visual arts production and research centres. As a result, the creative industries sector grew by 63%, exceeding all other sectors. More than 9,000 businesses and 90,000 jobs now exist. The Creative Arts District focuses on researching, testing and making new creative products. La Machine are one of their most pioneering creatives, attracting international artists to work with them in the city and the neighbouring Loire Valley.

Prepared by officers from the Greater London Authority in consultation with the South East LEP's Creative Economy Network (SECEN) and local authorities in East London. Big Ideas stated in this document are examples for the vision and subject to change.

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Designed by Gianmaria Givanni

“The Thames Estuary offers an exciting opportunity to ensure that the creative industries remain the fastest growing part of the UK’s economy. Backing creative districts through wise investment and improvements to infrastructure will be fundamental to securing the productive workforce the UK needs. And this scheme offers communities in this area a chance to share in the prosperity the creative sector generates.”

Sir John Sorrell

Founder and Chairman of the Creative Industries Federation