



SOUTH EAST  
LOCAL ENTERPRISE  
PARTNERSHIP

**ANNUAL REPORT**

April 2022 - March 2023

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**SARAH DANCE**  
CHAIR, SOUTH EAST LEP

**2022 -2023 has been a year of changing economic challenges. Rising costs have impacted on profit margins and on the deliverability of major projects. The cost-of-living crisis has reduced the spending capabilities in our communities, which has put pressure on wages, and rising energy costs have squeezed businesses across our area. I am proud of the role that SELEP has played in representing the business community throughout this period. We have continued to support our businesses, to deliver our capital programme, and to look for new ways in which we can drive our economy forward for the future.**

This is the year in which I made the step from Deputy Chair to Chair of the Partnership - and what a year it has been! I am delighted and honoured to Chair the South East Local Enterprise Partnership. Along with the Board of Directors, I will do my utmost to ensure that our partnership delivers real opportunities for the people and businesses of the South East. Over this period, successful partnerships will be at the centre of our delivery and our collective efforts to make East Sussex, Essex, Kent, Medway, Southend and Thurrock, great places to live, work and do business.

I would like to offer my thanks to Chris Brodie as the previous Chair for the incredible work he has done, and for the dedication and professionalism he has shown over the last seven years. He has steered the LEP through some very challenging times with huge skill and integrity.

We also welcomed Simon Cook as our new Deputy Chair. I know that his expertise in the Further Education sector, as well as his extremely useful experience on SELEP's Accountability Board, means that as a team, we can make a real impact for the LEP in the South East.

In this report, we look back on some of the year's accomplishments, celebrating the region's progress and our partnership's record of delivery. This Annual Review details the progress we are making, across our portfolio of work, to move our economy forward, but I wanted to note some personal highlights.

I am delighted that the South East Creative Economy Network (SECEN) has been successful in securing £1.257m of Create Growth funding for the South East. SECEN is an open network and provides a coherent voice for the creative sector in the South East. The sector is growing at a phenomenal rate and is one of the strongest working groups in our partnership. Following a competitive process, a consortium of partners working on behalf of the South East Creative, Cultural and Digital sector has secured one of only six awards across the UK to deliver the Create Growth Programme. This will be a free programme for the creative businesses which will provide the support, the networks and the investment they need – transforming their innovative creative ideas into the leading creative businesses of the future.

In addition, we have always championed the South East Growth Hub's offer and have used ongoing feedback and insights to help shape a simpler, more coordinated business support system in the region. This year we continued to work together and responded well to changing circumstances for businesses. The group diverted funds into direct delivery of business support programmes by engaging with fantastic programmes like the Rebel Business School in response to challenging economic conditions. I am really proud of the partnership that supports our Growth Hub, and of the ingenuity, flexibility and commitment they have shown to supporting our businesses.

As always, I want to thank the formidable team at the LEP – thank you for continuing to encapsulate our values by doing the right thing for our region so we truly make a difference to the communities we serve. Thank you for working together to find collaborative solutions and to strengthen delivery. I'll always be the biggest champion of their work and ethos.

In addition to a new Chair and Deputy Chair, our board has been through small changes this year. We said goodbye to Aideen Sadler from City Fibre and Councillor Graham Butland from Braintree District Council. We welcomed Councillor Stephen George from Southend City Council and Lara Fox from Objective IT. I'd like to say a huge thank you to them all for their service and commitment to the South East

I am thankful to ALL members of the South East LEP board for the support, expertise, knowledge and guidance they have provided to me as I have made the transition into my role of SELEP Chair.

In February 2023 Government announced its decision to no longer provide funding and support to Local Enterprise Partnerships in future years and instead for the Local Authorities in our area to be responsible for strategic economic planning, ensuring a strong business voice and delivering local growth schemes. This means that by March 2024 we will need to fully integrate our activity into the work of the Upper Tier local Authorities across our area. We will work closely with our partners over the coming months to ensure a smooth transition which maintains our networks and expertise. Whilst this year ahead will bring change and new challenges, I know that together, we can build on the fantastic track record of delivery and partnership to propel our region forward.





**HELEN RUSSELL**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE,  
SOUTH EAST LEP

# A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

**The 2022-23 year has been a mixed experience for the South East. As the previous year represented a transition from impacts of the pandemic, a new set of challenges emerged for our economies; rising costs of materials, staff and particularly energy, impacting some of our industries more acutely than others.**

As a partnership, we know our strengths lie in our knowledge, expertise, network and in our robust relationships. The South East LEP has a unique role as an intermediary and convenor, between organisations enabling them all to come together and find solutions to shared challenges.

One of the best ways this role manifests itself is in our working groups and SELEP's Major Projects Group (MPG) is a great example of this. The MPG was formed in 2020 and prioritised skills and employment as a substantive area of work. Alongside the MPG skills subgroup and SELEP's Skills Advisory Panel, the group commissioned a report in 2021, undertaken by Mace Group, into the collective skills needs of key major projects in the South East. We hosted a webinar this year, providing an opportunity for projects to share their updates on work to support this plan and the emerging action plan of the MPG Skills Group itself - which facilitates collaborative activity across the area, as well as from the projects directly. We heard from fantastic speakers from the Lower Thames Crossing, Ebbsfleet Garden City, Thames Freeport, Bradwell B, the Construction Industry Training Board and the UK Health Security Agency, a video of the session is available to [watch here](#).

In addition, this year we had some exciting milestones in our capital programme, we saw the start of a project to build the first new mainline station on the Great Eastern Mainline in 100 years, at Beaulieu Station in Chelmsford. This station is part of a connected transport package that will serve the new Garden Community to the North East of the city and is expected to be open and operational early in December 2025.

We also saw the evolution of the successful 'no use empty' scheme, which expanded from Kent into South Essex with the project starting in Southend. The goal of 'No Use Empty South Essex' is to turn between 10 and 15 empty buildings back into occupation across South Essex by offering interest-free secured loans to owners and developers to support the development of alternative commercial uses or create mixed-use commercial and residential properties. This supports wider goals and further activity and investments happening in the high street which is an important part of the local economy.

One of the highlights of the year for the LEP was, undoubtedly the success of our Building Garden Communities conference, which came together for the first time in person at RIBA in London. The event brings together experts, opinion formers, leaders in the field who are driving forward the Garden Communities agenda on a national scale. Watch the [post event video here](#).

We were joined by Levelling- Up Minister Dehenna Davison MP for the opening of a brand new Performing Arts and Digital Creative Centre in Dartford, North Kent. The state-of-the-art project was the largest value project in the Getting Building Fund programme and contains 2,836 sq m of educational floorspace, including a performance venue, dance studios, music performance spaces, digital design classrooms and workshops and aims to expand learning provision to meet growing student demand and contribute to the long-term growth of the creative and cultural sector, recognising the importance of the sector to the Thames Estuary economy.

We also saw three of our most significant future projects take major steps forward this year, with the submission for the Lower Thames Crossing being taken to the planning inspectorate. This is an 18 month to 2 year process to secure planning permission for a project which will have an exponential impact on the economy of our area. The new tunnel and associated road infrastructure will create new travel to work and study areas, create job opportunities and open up new spaces for development and growth. In

addition, we saw the approval of Freeport East in the north of our region, which will attract new investment to create a hotbed for trade, innovation and green energy driving growth in both the regional and national economies. The Freeport is expected to create up to 13,500 new jobs and will be boosted by £25 million in Government funding to support infrastructure enhancement. Thames Freeport has also gained approval from Government. Thames Freeport is an economic zone located in the Thames Estuary and UK's largest port – the Port of London. With 1,700 acres of development land, and unrivalled connections for access to Europe's largest consumer market and its excellent connectivity to 18 million people. A partnership between Ford, Forth Ports Limited and DP World, Thames Freeport will see over £4.6 billion in new public and private investment, and the creation of over 21,000 new jobs and many more across supply chains. Significant investment in training and skills will contribute to the 'levelling-up' of the communities and businesses in East London and South Essex.

Welcoming Sarah Dance as our new Chair and Simon Cook as Deputy Chair, was another highpoint of the year. The experience and knowledge which both bring to the partnership is unparalleled and their unwavering commitment to the relationships with SELEP's business partners, neighbouring LEPs and other key stakeholders, will stand us good stead for the year ahead.

I would like to give a note of thanks to my predecessor, Adam Bryan who admirably led our partnership during 2022/23 and for six previous years. His strong leadership and commitment to the partnership has steered us through notable achievements and accomplishments during that time.

Our track record of delivery and performance provides a firm foundation upon which our Local Authorities can build in future years. Despite the challenging fiscal environment we face, we have the right people and partnerships to achieve economic growth and future investment and, despite the very real challenges facing businesses and communities, we can be positive about the long-term future of our area.

# STRATEGY UPDATE



# STRATEGY UPDATE

**I**n March 2021, the SELEP Board approved its Economic Recovery and Renewal Strategy which responded to the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy, but also the implications of Brexit on supply chain issues and the labour market and the need to level up within the South East. These issues continue to have implications and more recent ones are adding further pressure, such as high inflation, tax rises, all putting additional strain on already stretched businesses and individuals. Our strategy aims to build on the unique opportunities and challenges that our area possesses and highlights four priority areas that have been identified as the unique driving forces behind the South East economy. These are:

- Business Resilience and Growth
- UK's Global Gateway
- Communities for the Future
- Coastal Catalyst

The Strategy set out a clear path and set of priorities to improve the economic performance of the south east for the future, recognising that despite the changing contexts within which we are operating, our identified strengths and opportunities remain.

Throughout 2022/23 we have continued to keep these priorities under review, considered the governance structures needed to deliver, and evolved our partnership and the relationships that exist within this, to meet the new operating context and support future transitions.

In line with Government policies for levelling up and economic growth, and expectations of LEPs within this, we also set out our **three core functions** - the provision of strategic planning and intelligence to provide a clear regional strategy for growth, underpinned by a robust live evidence base; communicating, collaborating and convening across our network of businesses, academia and public sector to provide a business voice and joint activity around key strategic objectives; and delivering strategic economic projects to seize opportunities to accelerate growth.

SELEP's GVA is  
**£101.6bn**  
representing a 5% share of  
the national economy.

SELEP's population of  
**4.268 million**  
is 6.4% of the total UK population,  
making SELEP the largest LEP  
outside London in terms of  
population size, and larger in  
population than Wales

The area has seen  
**strong growth**  
in sectors such as manufacture  
of clothing and beverages,  
warehousing and support for  
activities for transportation,  
film and tv production,  
specialised construction  
activities and civil engineering.

## BUSINESS RESILIENCE AND GROWTH

To support BUSINESS RESILIENCE AND GROWTH we have:

- Continued to deliver Growth Hub services across the SELEP region and to evolve the Growth Hub delivery model
- Completed the COVID-19 Recovery Fund programme, including support activities for businesses, 100% business grants, 100% grants and re-boot campaigns for the Visitor Economy, skills training, and access to digital skills, kit and connectivity.
- Delivered a range of skills activities, working with the Skills Advisory Panel to deliver against the Skills Strategy and Skills Report, aligning this work to Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) and providing economic and skills data to support the LSIPs.
- Overseen future plans and priorities for the Digital Skills Partnership (DSP), which has now been rolled out to Catalyst South, led by Solent LEP, and supported by a new DSP Coordinator.
- Implemented the Strategy Network approach to strengthen two-way communication between SELEP and businesses and stakeholders. This includes a monthly newsletter circulated to almost 900 stakeholders.
- Held SELEP's Annual Conference 'South East Futures: Our Evolving Economy' in October 2023, focusing on what the changing economic conditions mean for businesses and how we are encouraging growth and investment.

## UK'S GLOBAL GATEWAY

To support our ambition to be the UK'S GLOBAL GATEWAY we have:

- Supported the establishment of two new Freeports - Freeport East and Thames Freeport, including supporting the development of business cases and plans. Freeport East received final Government approval on 10/01/23. Thames Freeport is fully operational after final government sign off 20/03/23.
- Led ongoing work through Major Projects Group on skills, supply chain engagement and low carbon/ sustainability including the implementation of skills action plan to support Major Projects Group Skills sub-group, and specific work to tackle tutor shortages.
- Worked with the DIT ERDF Internationalisation project supporting businesses looking to trade abroad, ensuring promotion and referrals through the Growth Hub.
- Supported the South East Export Development (SEED) SSF project, working with DIT to address known export barriers in three priority sectors. The project completed in October 2022, 61 businesses expressed an interest and 70% were actively engaged through one to ones, market briefings and virtual trade mission meetings.
- Worked with the Maritime sector and Maritime UK (MUK), to promote regional activities and collaboration across the SELEP area and explore the potential for a regional cluster.

**122** business support grants amounting to **£196,088** and **157** Adapting with Digital grants totalling **£258,894** were funded by SELEP in the COVID-19 recovery period.

Freeport East and Thames Freeport will together unlock up to **38,500** jobs and together contribute **£10.1bn** GVA to the SELEP area.



## COMMUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

To create attractive and aspirational COMMUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE we have:

- Facilitated ongoing strategic engagement through the Housing and Development Group (HDG), including responses to the Levelling Up White Paper and other policies to highlight their impact on the housing agenda in the South East.
- Supported the implementation of the DCMS Create Growth Programme, led by KCC and SECEN. The £1.275m Create Growth Programme launched in November 2022.
- Completed the Sector Support Fund Project - Accelerating climate-based solutions, to better understand demand for carbon sequestration projects and resources to support the emerging market.
- Produced the Town Centre footfall report in May 2022 to help understand changing patterns of footfall in SELEP's town and city centres.

## COASTAL CATALYST

To deliver against our COASTAL CATALYST priority we have:

- Delivered the COVID-19 Recovery Fund project supporting the South East Visitor Economy, including 166 Revi-VE grants awarded to businesses, totalling £438,145; development of place based networks; and place re-boot campaigns run in each of the federated areas of SELEP during 2022/23.
- Supported partners to address key issues impacting our coastal communities, including investment to tackle delays approaching Folkestone and the Port of Dover, and to reduce the negative impact on local residents, businesses and communities.
- Published the SELEP Levelling Up Index, highlighting the need to level up across our coastal and Thames estuary communities.
- Brought partners together through the SELEP Coastal Communities Group to advance the growth and prosperity of the SELEP coast.

Businesses based in the SELEP area exported goods to the value of **£9.6 billion** in 2021, of which **£4.9 billion (51%)** was to the EU. This accounted for **3.1%** of total UK exports in goods in 2021.

**178,305**  
businesses as of  
March 2022

**22,090**  
new businesses in 2021

From 19/20 to 21/22, the number of apprenticeship starts has increased by **2,650** or **12%**

Dwelling stock **increased** by **8.4%** in the most recent ten-year period. This growth represented **146,200** net new dwellings for SELEP.



# CAPITAL PROGRAMME

# CAPITAL PROGRAMME

## LOCAL GROWTH FUND

The Local Growth Deal is a £579m capital investment programme that has supported 107 projects to deliver 25,600 jobs and 25,200 homes to date.

## GETTING BUILDING FUND

The £85m Getting Building Fund has supported 40 projects that can progress quickly and that will stimulate and better integrate economies in some of the most economically-impacted and COVID-affected parts of the South East.

## GROWING PLACES FUND

The Growing Places Fund provides loans to unlock economic growth, create jobs and 'kick-start' building at stalled development sites. In round one, £47.459m was awarded to 13 capital infrastructure projects. Repayments from these awards has allowed funding totalling £26.604m to be allocated to a further 17 projects.

# LOCAL GROWTH FUND



CASE STUDY

# **EAST MALLING ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY HORTICULTURAL ZONE**

**SELEP GRANT FUNDING**

£1,998,600

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The Project will generate upwards of £570,000 per annum in additional research and development spend in the region.

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**LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA**

Kent County Council

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**14**

new knowledge-based and highly skilled jobs

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**40**

jobs safeguarded at NIAB EMR

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The project is the first step towards a cutting-edge innovation campus for horticulture in Kent that secures the long-term delivery of world-class research, innovation and knowledge exchange for the UK horticultural industry.

Developed by horticultural and agricultural research institution NIAB EMR in partnership with the East Malling Trust, the project creates infrastructure, services and high-tech plant growing facilities.

SELEP's investment was used to build the first of several new state-of-the-art glasshouses, as well as a new energy centre to meet the needs of the horticultural zone - known as the Green Tech Hub. The project uses advanced greenhouse designs to host high-tech imaging, robotics, precision irrigation rigs, LED lighting and CO2 systems with the purpose of advancing horticultural agronomy in the region.



**Tom Tugendhat MP  
opens GreenTech Hub for  
Advanced Horticulture**



### CASE STUDY

# SOUTHEND CENTRAL AREA ACTION PLAN (SCAAP)

#### SELEP GRANT FUNDING

£7,000,000

#### LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA

Southend-on-Sea City Council

Southend Central Area Transport Scheme (S-CATS) is SCAAP's delivery mechanism and supports continued growth and regeneration, strengthening and transforming Southend town centre's sub-regional role as a successful commercial and retail destination, cultural hub, educational centre of excellence, leisure and tourism attraction.

The transport scheme had three phases:

- 1** Junction improvements to support the wider objective of delivering an improved and appealing gateway to the centre of Southend-on-Sea for residents and tourists; to unlock a housing site at the former South East Essex College Site, and for the expansion of the library car park.
- 2** Improvements to the streetscape, public realm and walking/cycling facilities along the segment of London Road, College Way, Queens Road and Elmer Avenue that provide access to the high street, the main library (The Forum), College, University and other key destinations in the town centre.
- 3** Maximising benefits from the overall scheme and delivering public realm improvements and place making measures, developed through a co-creation process, in the heart of the town centre (Victoria Circus and stub end of London Road).





### CASE STUDY

# **SKILLS AND BUSINESS SUPPORT FOR RURAL BUSINESSES**

#### **SELEP GRANT FUNDING**

£4,413,000

#### **LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA**

East Sussex County Council

#### **MORE THAN 5000 EACH YEAR**

The additional number of learner engagements arising from activities ranging from taster courses to demonstrations

#### **650,000**

national land-based technical vacancies the centre hopes to fill through its training (150,000 of these are in the South East)

#### **MORE THAN 2,500 A YEAR**

non-financial business support interventions arising from activities such as events, mentoring and peer exchange

The two-storey AgriFood centre of excellence at Plumpton College, Lewes, provides knowledge transfer, business improvement and skills training to secure better AgriFood business productivity and efficiency post-Brexit.

Alongside the centre, the project has delivered redeveloped pig production and beef and sheep handling facilities, including automated milking stations.

Infrastructure upgrades include improved pedestrian and road user access to the new facilities along with the development of a village green.





### CASE STUDY

# CHELMSFORD COLLEGE CONSTRUCTION CENTRE

#### **SELEP GRANT FUNDING**

£1,295,200

#### **LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA**

Essex County Council

#### **1,000 HOMES AND 700 JOBS PER YEAR UNTIL 2036**

the level of development in Chelmsford that the construction centre could support

The new Construction Centre at Chelmsford College provides resources and equipment to educate and train students and apprentices to become skilled tradespeople for the construction industry.

This purpose-built, two-storey, modern facility provides cutting-edge workshops to meet the growing demand in construction, trades, heating ventilation and air conditioning engineers, plumbing and renewables. T Levels and level 4 and 5 qualifications within the industry are also offered.

Increasing the number of construction apprenticeships and industry-relevant qualifications is one of SELEP's key priorities. This will enable the local workforce to learn new skills, reskill and upskill to obtain jobs in major construction projects in the area, housing and associated infrastructure, the development of garden communities and the Lower Thames Crossing.



# GETTING BUILDING FUND



### CASE STUDY

# **NORTH KENT COLLEGE PERFORMING AND PRODUCTION DIGITAL ARTS FACILITY**

#### **SELEP GRANT FUNDING**

£12,301,796

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#### **LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA**

Kent County Council

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**264**

net new enrolments per year by 2026/27

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**2,836 SQM**

of new/improved learning and training floorspace

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This project represents the highest value investment from the Getting Building Fund and provides outstanding industry leading training facilities in the heart of the Thames Gateway.

This newly-constructed facility at North Kent College's Dartford campus, enables the college to maintain and develop its established strengths in performing arts and digital design, as well as responding to growing student demand and contributing to the long-term growth of the creative and cultural sector.

The high-quality, two-storey building's floorspace includes a performance venue, dance studios, music performance spaces, digital design classrooms and workshops, and a new food court and social zone serving the whole college campus.





## GETTING BUILDING FUND

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### CASE STUDY

# THE MEETING POINT IN SWANLEY

#### SELEP GRANT FUNDING

£1,490,000

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#### LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA

Kent County Council

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#### 250 SQM

commercial space delivered

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#### 17

new homes

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#### 20 JOBS

supported through the work hub

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The Meeting Point in Swanley town centre is a new and innovative work hub alongside new homes. It was achieved through the redevelopment of a prominent site, under Sevenoaks District Council ownership, which had been redundant for several years.

The project aims to bring new activity and footfall to a part of the town centre. The housing element of the scheme responded to the identified need for smaller units, especially for younger workers. The work hub element is aimed at start-ups, home workers and people who might otherwise have had to commute for work.

Credit: Kilian O'Sullivan





CASE STUDY

**ENTERPRISE CENTRE FOR HORIZON**  
**120 BUSINESS AND INNOVATION PARK**

**SELEP GRANT FUNDING**

£7,641,924

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**LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA**

Essex County Council

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**160 JOBS**

created and safeguarded

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**3,100 M<sup>2</sup> FLOORSPACE**

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The new three-storey enterprise centre – The Plaza – is the focal point for the Horizon 120 Business Park, Braintree. It offers 42 private offices for small businesses, a co-working space with dedicated desks and hot desks, shared meeting and seminar rooms with roof terrace, conference and event spaces, and the Café Plaza.

The purpose-built physical and virtual environment is designed to drive collaboration, encourage idea generation and underpin problem solving.





# GROWING PLACES FUND

CASE STUDY

# **OBSERVER BUILDING, HASTINGS**

## **PHASE 1B**

**SELEP LOAN FUNDING**

£3,366,500

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**SELEP GRANT FUNDING**

£2.028m

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**LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA**

East Sussex County Council

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**16 HOMES**

to be delivered

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**2,202 M<sup>2</sup>**

of commercial space

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After lying empty for 35 years and falling into dereliction, the 4,000 sqm Observer Building in Hastings is being transformed into a highly productive mixed-use building.

Leisure and retail, including a fitness centre and cafe/bar, is spread across the lower three floors and there is a wide range of workspaces including studios, offices and open space. The project also includes 16 capped-rent flats and a public roof terrace and bar with sea, castle and town views is in the pipeline.





CASE STUDY

# CHATHAM WATERFRONT

**SELEP LOAN FUNDING**

£2,999,042

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**LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA**

Medway Council

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**175 NUMBER OF HOMES**

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**211 NEW JOBS**

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**3,381 SQM**

of commercial space

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The 175 homes of Chatham Waterfront are spread over five buildings varying in height from six to 10 stories with ground floor commercial space. The mixed-use scheme is key to revitalising the area and also includes co-working spaces, places to eat and drink, shops, new public realm and market space.

Sustainable transport has received a boost through the replacement of the Sun Pier Pontoon to provide a river taxi service.

Improved flood defences, including the integrated river wall, have significantly reduced flood risk.



# GROWTH HUB



# GROWTH HUB UPDATE

**T**he SELEP Growth Hub is part of the Government-funded network of 38 Hubs, with one in each LEP area. It is a fully funded, impartial service for businesses and entrepreneurs across the South East area, helping business leaders achieve their growth ambitions.

The SELEP Growth Hub operates under the umbrella of South East Business Hub with three very distinctive delivery arms: Business Essex, Southend and Thurrock (BEST) Growth Hub, Kent & Medway Growth Hub and Business East Sussex Growth Hub.

In 2022-23, Growth Hub funding was reduced by 50% from previous years so the delivery model was significantly re-designed and streamlined, at pace, to ensure no break in service. It was recognised – following growth hubs’ engagement with their clients - that businesses were tackling combined crises including cost of living, cost of doing business and rising energy costs. Proactive engagement helped growth hubs to actively seek out businesses requiring support.

As well as business engagement offering general advice, signposting and referrals to relevant schemes, targeted support was also provided to improve business resilience. This included specialist advisors for export support, investment for growth wraparound support, trading standards advice and net zero audits, as well as 1:1 support to grow provided by Digital Islands, and a Rebel business school programme for start-ups.

The SELEP Growth Hub has worked closely with Hertfordshire and London Growth Hubs, as the South East Cluster, to share good practice and identify efficient practices. Knowledge sharing and information sessions were run across the cluster, building relationships with national and regional providers such as Innovate UK Edge, British Business Bank, the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, and local library services. This programme provided upskilling within the growth hubs themselves and across their network of providers, further strengthening the network and the business support ecosystem.

## SOUTH EAST BUSINESS HUB IN NUMBERS

SERVICE	IMPACT
<p><b>2,335</b></p> <p><b>Businesses helped in 2022-23</b></p>	<p><b>85%</b></p> <p><b>Overall satisfaction rating across the growth hubs</b></p>
<p><b>40,392</b></p> <p><b>Unique visitors to the growth hub website</b></p>	<p><b>1,301</b></p> <p><b>Referrals were made to other provisions such as mentoring, training, finance and funding, innovation, importing and exporting</b></p>



**BEST**  
FOR BUSINESS SOLUTIONS  
Business Essex, Southend and Thurrock



**Business**  
East Sussex  
Supporting better business



**KENT & MEDWAY**  
Growth Hub  
Your gateway to business growth

# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

**E**sex County Council (ECC) is the Accountable Body for SELEP; in this capacity it manages all financial transactions on behalf of SELEP, including receipt and payments of grants, overseeing contract management with suppliers and ensures that the Partnership has sufficient cash flow.

The SELEP Accountability Board agrees an annual operational spend each year which covers the running costs of the LEP's Executive Team and Boards, including staff salaries, office expenses, publicity and marketing, and professional fees.

The operational spend is funded through core funding from the DLUHC, match funding contributions from partners and interest received on cash balances invested by the Accountable Body on behalf of SELEP. Any surplus or deficit held at the end of the financial year is managed through the operational reserve.

ECC administers the capital and revenue grants that have been received from Government, on behalf of SELEP, in accordance with the agreed decision making and governance arrangements of the LEP.

## OPERATIONAL INCOME & EXPENDITURE IN 2022/23

Summary of funding held by Accountable Body on behalf of SELEP	£'000
Staffing	829
Meetings, admin and other operational costs	3
Chair and Deputy Chair allowance with on-costs	30
Consultancy and project work	146
COVID-19 Support Programmes	1,681
Grants and contributions to Third Parties	544
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>3,233</b>

Income	£'000
Revenue Grant Funding	(1,380)
Contribution from Partners	(146)
Interest receivable on capital balances	(285)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(1,811)</b>
COVID-19 Support Fund (Earmarked Reserve Contribution)	(1,681)
<b>Total Income and Contributions</b>	<b>(3,492)</b>
<b>Net contribution to the Operational Reserve</b>	<b>(259)</b>

## SUMMARY OF THE FUNDING HELD BY THE ACCOUNTABLE BODY ON BEHALF OF SELEP AS AT 31ST MARCH 2023

	Opening Balance April 2022 £000	Funding received in Year £000	Funding applied in Year £000	Funding repurposed to reserves £000	Closing balance March 2023 £000
<b>Capital Grants</b>					
Local Growth Fund	-	-	-	-	-
Local Growth Fund (Retained Schemes)	-	-	-	-	-
Growing Places Fund (Loan Fund)	(13,040)	(1,220)	1,900	-	(12,360)
Getting Build Fund	-	(7,848)	4,057	-	(3,791)
<b>Total Capital Grants</b>	<b>(13,040)</b>	<b>(9,068)</b>	<b>5,957</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(16,151)</b>
<b>Revenue Grants</b>					
Growing Places Fund/ Sector Support Fund	(303)	-	78	226	-
Growth Hub - Core Funding Grant	-	(445)	445	-	-
Growth Hub - Peer Networks Grant	-	(112)	112	-	-
Skills Analysis Panels (SAP) Grant	-	(55)	55	-	-
Local Digital Skills Partnership Catalyst Grant	(29)	(60)	89	-	-
Energy Strategy Grant	(1)	-	1	-	-
Core Funding	-	(375)	375	-	-
<b>Total Revenue Grants</b>	<b>(333)</b>	<b>(1,047)</b>	<b>1,154</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Grants</b>	<b>(13,373)</b>	<b>(10,115)</b>	<b>7,111</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>(16,151)</b>
SELEP Creditors	(16,776)	0	16,279	-	(497)
SELEP Short Term Debtors	71	(71)	0	-	0
SELEP Payments in Advance	0	0	7	-	7
SELEP COVID-19 Reserves*	(1,861)	0	1,681	46	(134)
SELEP Redundancy Reserve	(163)	(47)	0	-	(210)
SELEP Future Commitments Reserve	(423)	0	0	-	(423)
SELEP Risk Reserve	(975)	0	0	-	(975)
SELEP Operational Reserves	(1,302)	(272)	13	-	(1,561)
<b>Total Funding held at 31st March 2021</b>	<b>(34,801)</b>	<b>(10,504)</b>	<b>25,091</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>(19,943)</b>





# A MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY CHAIR



**SIMON COOK**  
DEPUTY CHAIR,  
SOUTH EAST LEP

## LOOKING AHEAD

**It is wonderful to have joined SELEP at such an important, and equally unusual time. The outstanding work of SELEP on the skills agenda and major projects across our coastal and rural communities has helped to shape the business, education and training landscape in the South East at such a crucial time for us all.**

It has been a real testament to the work of the LEP to see the meaningful and productive partnerships that are essential to our work. I have the privilege of working with many of those partners, with Sarah our Chair, our Board members, Federated boards, the amazing SELEP team and the wider partnership to deliver the LEP's strategic vision, utilising its vast network to convene and collaborate with organisations with the shared goal of a better economy for the South East and its residents.

Our work is evolving, but at its core remains the driving force of partnership that guides everything we do—lifting the voice of businesses in the South East, collaborating across public and private sectors and working to ensure that our businesses and our communities are able to thrive.

We have some exciting milestones on the horizon over the next year as several projects in our capital programme reach their conclusion. We look forward to seeing the results of the hard work of all our partners and delivery organisations and celebrating the impact

our investments have made. We will be evaluating the impact of the work of the LEP across our region, sharing our lessons learnt for future delivery agents.

We are at a unique moment in time for our partnership. Government has reinforced its commitment to local decision making and made clear that in future the activities of LEPs will be integrated into the Local Authorities in our area. This means from April 2024 onwards the work of our partnership will be the responsibility of the Local Authorities. It is for all of us to determine locally how this will look and will be different in each of our federated areas. We are committed to developing comprehensive plans to ensure a swift and smooth transition to these new ways of working over the next year and will share updates.

During our 11 years as the South East LEP, we have benefited from the relationships built with businesses; local authorities; educational institutions; and community organisations. All of our partners are united by a commitment to build a stronger, more prosperous future for our region. Through our extensive network expertise and knowledge, we have laid strong foundations for ambitious growth and sustainable development.

We look forward to working closely with upper tier local authority partners to ensure this spirit of partnership, strong business voice and capability and experience are embedded into future arrangements across our region.



# CONTACT DETAILS

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