# Essex Growth Programme

- **Project manager**: Nwes
- **Total project value**: £2,760,857 comprising £1,360,262 ERDF and the residuum in the form of private sector match against a delegated capital grant scheme
- **Key dates**: Start date – immediate; activity end date – 31 August 2018
- **Eligibility**: pre-start individuals and new (<36 months-old) eligible SMEs within the local authority areas of Essex County Council, Thurrock Council or Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
- **Key project elements**:

    1. Intensive start-up support service for individuals seeking to unlock their enterprise potential, by direct engagement or via local authorities, community outreach and the BEST Growth Hub. Three dedicated peripatetic Start-Up Advisers will provide the essential business infrastructure to deliver 250 sustainable start-ups, including business/strategy planning, marketing/finance advice and post-start support. This will be available to all start-ups in both urban and rural areas, with a specific focus on women. It will also increase uptake of third-party schemes by providing referrals at the pre-start stage, including local authority support, where it exists.
    2. A smaller element providing free/confidential/impartial SFEDI-accredited support for nearly 50 SMEs – beyond the start-up stage and up to typically 36-months old – best-placed to unlock growth and investment – referencing but not restricted to LEP priority sectors, such as advanced manufacturing and the visitor economy, complementing/referring to local authority support and new ERDF-funded activity, where it exists. It will integrate support for business owners reviewing their processes, business model and efficiency to enable them to adapt and grow. Intervention with this group is required to address mortality in early-stage businesses. Beneficiaries may also include more established eligible SMEs that can benefit from intervention. Specialist technical consultants – contractors to this project – will also be made available to SMEs, where more in-depth intervention is required to realise growth, e.g. feasibility work around extending/refining production facilities.
    3. An innovative package of discretionary capital grant-based support for 70+ SMEs to enable SMEs to realise increased competitiveness, transformative growth, quantifiable efficiency savings and resilience. Grants will be in the range of £1,000-£10,000 (an average value of £5,000 and intervention rate of 20%) – corresponding to the known aid intensity required to catalyse action, de-risking diversification and investment in new product development, accessing new markets or installing new production capacity.

| What the capital Grant **can** support | What the capital Grant **cannot** support |
| --- | --- |
| <ul><li>investment in the purchase and installation of equipment, machinery, technology or processes that facilitates business growth, improves resilience or creates jobs</li><li>investment in efficiency initiatives in the form of equipment to realise materials/utilities optimisation, recovery or reduction</li></ul> | <ul><li>paying-off debts or refinancing</li><li>the purchase of stock, land, buildings or vehicles</li><li>financial investments</li><li>salaries, travel or subsistence</li><li>ongoing normal business costs (i.e. business rates, overheads etc.)</li><li>costs associated with a statutory or legislative requirement for the organisation</li></ul> |

The Project will use Nwes-employed staff across the target area to provide one-to-one business support/facilitation and will seek assistance from LAs to increase coverage further, as well as delivering peripatetically to ensure local access.

**Key deliverables**: (C1) Number of enterprises receiving support: 368; (C2) Number of enterprises receiving grants: 70; (C4) Number of enterprises receiving non–financial support: 298; (C5) Number of new enterprises supported: 250; (C6) Private investment matching public support to enterprises (grants): £1,400,000; (C8) Employment increase in supported enterprises: 306; (C29) Number of enterprises supported to introduce new products to the firm: 21; (P11) Number of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready: 300