



**SOUTH EAST**  
LOCAL ENTERPRISE  
PARTNERSHIP



# South East LEP (SELEP) Strategic Economic Plan Consultation Report

**September 2017**

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## 1.0 Introduction

As part of the process of preparing the next South East of England Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) Strategic Economic Plan, we have been consulting with a range of stakeholders in **East Sussex, Essex, Kent & Medway, Thurrock, Southend and the wider South-East of England** about what issues they believe are important for the future of the SELEP Economy.

The Formal Consultation has taken place through **a range of channels**, including;

- Presentations to Federated Boards and sub-regional Groups
- Web based questionnaires;
- One to One meetings; and
- Cross-sectoral workshops held in Federated Areas

Wherever we presented to partners, we used a tailored presentation, which was built around three core questions and nine supplementary questions;

### **Three Core Questions:**

1. What would we love the economy to become?
2. How will we cope with the changes/challenges we face?
3. How can we move to a more sustainable financial footing, attracting more funds to achieve better outcomes?

### **Nine Supplementary Questions:**

1. What particular evidence should we draw on to develop a compelling SEP narrative?
2. What are the main strategic assets of the SELEP economy?
3. How can we invest in these assets to achieve a source of international competitive advantage?
4. How can investment in these assets help maximise their contribution to economic growth?
5. How can we invest in our strategic assets to help reduce their long-term dependency on the public purse?
6. What can the LEP and partners do better together in the future to maximise economic growth in the SELEP area?
7. What existing and new partnerships are needed to maximise the potential of these assets?
8. How should we prioritise challenges/barriers that are holding back the local economy and what actions should be taken to overcome these?
9. Which projects do you consider to be a future priority?

In parallel with the consultation process, we have been developing an evidence base, which seeks to understand the local economy from a data-driven, evidence-led perspective. The aim is to publish this evidence base at the end of September, in order to further shape the strategy and ascertain stakeholder's views of what matters to individual localities.

As far as organising the data that has come in from partners, we have sought to utilise the exact phrases provided by partners wherever possible in the body of this report, and organised them around a logical structure, which modifies slightly the question structure above;

- **Part 1:** (based on the Three Core Questions): Objectives/Aspirations for the Economy; Threats; and Investment Model; and
- **Part 2:** (Thematic and Geographic): Setting out what each geography that responded felt about the important Productivity; Skills; Infrastructure priorities for their area.

In adopting this approach, we hope to be able to see some common strategic themes emerging, but also identify how those themes might be nuanced in different localities.

This report is an interim report, which will be built on during the second phase of consultation, after the production and publication of the evidence base.

## 2.0 Current and Planned Consultees

Prior to undertaking this exercise SELEP produced a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy, which set out the processes we would adopt to consult with a range of stakeholders. This strategy has flexed over time, to involve new audiences, as recommended by consultees.



Fig. 1: One of two stakeholder workshops organised by KMEP

Partners that have inputted into the Strategy

through presentations, face to face meetings and discussions include;

- The SELEP Board (September 2017);
- SELEP Steering Group – involving representatives from Essex CC, Medway BC, Kent CC, East Sussex CC, Thurrock BC, Southend BC and SELEP (July & September 2017);
- SELEP Officers Group – involving representatives from East Sussex CC, Essex CC, Kent CC, Southend BC, Thurrock BC, Castle Point DC, Medway BC, Thames Gateway Kent Partnership (July, September & October 2017);
- Greater Essex Business Board (August 2017);
- Team East Sussex Board (July & September 2017)
- TES Business Representatives (July 2017)
- KMEP Board Meeting (July 2017)
- Opportunity South Essex (September 2017);
- Southend Business Partnership
- The Environment Agency (September 2017);
- U9 University grouping (August 2017);
- The South East Creative Economy Network (July 2017);
- The SELEP Housing & Development Group (September and October 2017);
- The SELEP Coastal Working Group (September 2017);
- SELEP Growth Hub Meeting (August 2017);
- SELEP Skills Advisory Group (August 2017);
- SELEP Transport Officers Group (September 2017);
- Thames Gateway Kent Partnership (September 2017);
- Essex Integrated Growth Forum (September 2017);
- Haven Gateway Partnership (August 2017 and September 2017)
- Southend Business Partnership (August 2017)

- Thurrock Business Board (July 2017);
- Essex EDO's (Sept 2017)
- KCC Cabinet (Sept 2017);
- Various Local Authorities - Harlow Council (September 2017), Basildon Borough Council (September 2017);
- North Essex Garden Communities (October 2017); and
- Neighbouring LEPs – London (Sept 2017), Greater Cambridge & Peterborough (October 2017); Hertfordshire (Sept 2017); and Coast to Capital (Sept 2017); and
- CEME (September 2017)

As the Skills strategy and the Infrastructure Investment Plan are also being developed in parallel with this consultation, we have sought to draw on their consultation work as part of an integrated process, rather than double-up.



### Strategic Economic Plan Consultation

The South East LEP is currently refreshing its Strategic Economic Plan. So far we have drawn evidence from local authority economic development plans and have met with both public and private sector partners

[▶ READ MORE](#)

Fig. 2: Web article promoting the consultation process

Other organisations, individuals and interest groups will be added to the list as our consultation work continues. We have also held a number of place-based, cross sectoral working groups and sought consultation via the web.

### 3.0 Preliminary responses to the three high-level questions

Firstly, looking at the three high-level questions we posed, an analysis of the formal responses received and the relevant points from our various face to face meetings are highlighted below.

#### 3.1 What would we love the economy to become?

Perhaps not surprisingly, the majority of responses to this question focused on their desire to create a more prosperous, skilled, connected and resilient region, but many also stressed the need for the strategy to recognise the spatial differences that exist between different parts of the region.

On the whole, these spatial responses tended to focus on the characteristics of particular localities, rather than be constrained by false administrative boundaries. In a considerable number of cases, the responses addressed the importance of the location of the region within a wider geographic context (mentioning London, or transport hubs that are not necessarily in the region, but closely located).

Some other responses focussed on the processes that underpin the regeneration and economic development process and the approach adopted by officials, stressing the need for the region to have an approach which is welcoming to business. Some of these responses are captured below, to demonstrate the kind of feedback received).

## **Prosperous & globally focussed**

- *“To perform at a much higher level internationally, punching above its weight on trade and export indicators – provision of specialised assistance to ‘scale up’ companies could be helpful here. An economy that is built on high value productivity (manufacturing), providing support to ‘companies and moving some part away from a consumerism and credit economy to avoid the ‘see saw’ fluctuations of the last ten years. An economy that recognises supports already well established bespoke, high end manufacture above mass produced, lower value goods” - Thanet District Council*
- *“The SEP must show HOW we are going to GROW the economy and not just be focussed on housing. Housing isn’t the complete answer to growth” - Thames Gateway Kent Partnership*
- *“An economy where businesses can grow and thrive, with an emphasis on the sectors that will deliver real growth in the future, but which does not ignore established sectors” - Eastbourne Borough and Lewes District Councils*
- *“A focus on strategic investment in areas and sectors of potential – particularly in the infrastructure that will enable them to connect to markets, stimulate innovation and create new jobs – will turn around those areas where isolation, low jobs density and poor access to markets are disincentives for private sector investment.” – Hastings Borough Council*
- *“The SEP needs to state what our relationship with London is (are we serving London in the right way?). The SEP needs to set clear ambitions – maybe some proof points (to become the economy we would love to become, we must...1.,2.,3....). The SEP must show HOW we are going to GROW the economy and not just be focussed on housing. Housing isn’t the complete answer to growth. The SEP must state the high-level ambitions which unite the federated areas ..... and state that the gateway is delivering housing growth for London and acts as the gateway to Europe and the rest of the world. The SEP’s primary challenge is speaking to Gov as well as well as a business voice. The SEP is perhaps a business voice moderated by public sector agencies. Thames Gateway can position itself as having the biggest growth potential – in relation to the pan LEP narrative” – Thames Gateway*

## **Highly skilled**

- *“Increasingly diversified, offering greater upskilling and training opportunities” - Eastbourne Borough and Lewes District Councils*
- *“An economy that champions apprenticeships throughout skills levels and that is supported by a motivated and ever more skilled workforce, recognising a need to develop more and more people into valuable and interesting vocational careers where the learner experiences the business from the bottom up in their progression (traditional learning values). In turn, this should improve jobs density across Kent, which is currently a challenge in areas such as Thanet”- Thanet District Council*

- *“Our people are key strategic assets – but insufficient focus on education that will equip them with the skills and adaptability to meet the changing demands of a globally competitive economy. Vocational education needs to be far more tailored to the needs of industry than to the funders’ requirements. Early vocational education should encourage/facilitate workplace based learning, rather than institutional based learning, involving engagement with employers in the planning and delivery of vocational learning” – Hastings Borough Council*

### **Well Connected**

- *“Improved infrastructure and built environment where people and businesses can access the amenities and services they need” - Eastbourne Borough and Lewes District Councils*
- *“An economy that is built on a rock-solid infrastructure basis - one that aspires to broadband speeds way beyond the current offering, one where the M2 as major route towards Europe is developed into a three-lane motorway and significantly improves Brenley Corner; and one that provides significantly better capacity and more modern rail infrastructure to improve connectivity at the furthest points from London. At a basic level, visitors to the UK via Kent should experience a 'wow factor' upon arrival - that means getting the basics right, such as a step change in the quality of our motorways (currently abysmal)” - Thanet District Council*
- *“Further improvements on A21 south of Kippings Cross/Lamberhurst to reduce the bottlenecks and enable faster access to markets and employment centres. East-west improvements – road and rail. HS1 from Ashford to Hastings and potentially Bexhill and Eastbourne. A259 improvements between Folkestone (and link with M20) and Bexhill. Superfast broadband connectivity and 100% 5g enabled mobile coverage across entire travel to work area” – Hastings Borough Council.*

### **Resilient**

- *“More resilient to external threats (linked to greater diversification & rebalancing). This will be particularly important in a post-Brexit environment” - Eastbourne Borough and Lewes District Councils*
- *“an economy whose prosperity is inclusive of the entire population” - Hastings Community Network*

### **Spatially Differentiated**

- *“Better focus on both regional and local conditions, rather than a one-size fits all approach to investment or an over-concentration on existing economic powerhouses. Regional – investment in improved connections – road, rail and broadband infrastructure – across and throughout the south-east region. Local – much more of a focus on strategic interventions (larger, over a longer period) in areas where there is market failure but significant potential for growth” – Hastings Borough Council*

The responses that do mention spatial issues can be further analysed to provide a more detailed consideration of respondent’s spatial concerns. Generally speaking, these responses do not tend to focus on prioritisation of highly rigid areas (as defined by local authority boundaries), but do mention particular landscape of geographic characteristics of the region which respondents feel deserve particular consideration. In addition to focussing on these spatial issues, respondents have also focussed significantly on the need to support ‘placemaking’;

### **Prioritized on Coastal Issues**

- *“Need to consider the coastal community influence within the SELEP area given that some 25% of the population within the SELEP area reside in a coastal community” - Dover District Council*
- *“Coastal communities like Hastings benefit from an economic strategy that has targeted the potential of the young, disabled, and the long-term excluded” - Hastings Community Network*
- *“Strategic investment in the cultural sector particularly in coastal conurbations” – Hastings Borough Council*

### **The importance of the rural economy**

- *“We would ask that greater recognition is given to the vital importance of the natural environment in general and protected landscapes in particular, rather than being seen simply as a constraint these vital components should be seen as assets, a key part of the narrative of the area in which future, careful investment is vital to the A++ status of the region” - Kent Downs, High Weald and Dedham Vale AONBs*

A number of partners have identified the potential important breadth and scope of the rural economy, impacting as it does on the land based sector, businesses based in rural locations, the visitor economy etc.

### **Polycentric to London**

- *“The SEP needs to state what our relationship with London is ... and state that the gateway is delivering housing growth for London and acts as the gateway to Europe and the rest of the world” - Thames Gateway Kent Partnership*

### **The importance of placemaking**

- Capitalise on the international and national profile of many of our cultural organisations and build on this. Access Capital investment in cultural infrastructure to support tourism and, in particular cultural tourism, and change perceptions about the South East’s brand. Invest in arts and cultural projects or events that have significant impact, and that demonstrate contributions to placemaking, international reach, economic development and cultural tourism (such as the Folkestone Triennial, Estuary Festival, Whitstable Biennale, Sussex Modern) – particularly cross-region projects. Improve sustainable transport options (for visitors/freelance economy) – creative sector tends to place high value on environmentally responsible life style options. Build provision for access to arts and culture into investment plans for regeneration, particularly for children and young people. Create a culture of entrepreneurship through creativity, using for ex markets as a first step to testing products. Improve our education offer – evidence that many creatives are turning to home educating in the absence of what they consider to be a viable alternative – capture this investment for the greater good. Also promoting STEAM (science, technology, arts and manufacturing) as a key component of tomorrow’s skills need – South East Cultural Economy Network (SECEN)

### **Open for Business**

- *“Kent (and no less Thanet) is in an excellent position to be an investment relocation of choice for many London businesses, as well as FDIs. The Kent economy should be one that provides red carpet treatment to potential*



*investors, which will provide the opportunity to provide the small margin of difference” - Thanet District Council*

- *“The Kent economy should provide greater flexibilities for Local Authorities to invest and become financially self-sustaining by relaxing some of the strict financial and procurement rules post Brexit as they relate to the procurement of capital or revenue based services that can enhance the local economy” - Thanet District Council*

### **3.2 How will we cope with the changes/challenges we face?**

#### **The key changes/challenges**

In the main, respondents identified the main challenges that the SELEP Economy was facing as being attributable to the impact of Brexit (or more specifically the danger of border disruption and the potential loss of EU Funding); and the ageing population.

Generally speaking, written respondents haven't specifically referred to the need to develop a Local Industrial Strategy or the need to address the UK's 'Productivity Challenge' (the important need to increase the productivity of businesses, in order to maintain a positive growth trajectory, a strong investment environment and sustain strong public services). That said, this topic has been very actively discussed in the various meetings and face to face discussions we have had with partners.

In addition, few written responses have formally mentioned some other important emergent challenges in their written responses (including the changing nature of work; the increased mobility of young people; the impending tech-skills shortage; increasing levels of automation; tightening public sector finances; and the digital revolution) although a number of these are covered in the Essex Horizon Scan<sup>1</sup> and were referred to in some of our individual meetings with stakeholders.

#### **The strong imperative to improve business productivity**

During many of our face to face meetings, the need for the UK to stimulate business productivity to arrest our low levels of economic growth was discussed. Given the increasingly ageing population and the fairly static working age population, many we spoke to recognise the potential fiscal challenges that this presented and that stimulating increased productivity was vital, if we are to maintain current levels of public spending and/or avoid burdening the private sector with higher taxes.

That said, there appeared to be a great deal of confusion about what 'improving productivity' actually meant, with a number suggesting that merely investing in transport infrastructure, housing or improving qualification outcomes would achieve this (rather than improving multi-factor productivity in business – which is where the government's current focus on implementing the Industrial Strategy is concentrated). Once this issue was highlighted, a number of respondents recognised this was a big challenge, as it largely centred on behaviour change, 'industrial' renaissance and structural reform.

#### **Potential downside risks from Brexit**

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<sup>1</sup> Essex Horizon Scan, Briefing for Leaders

Whilst many respondents remained balanced in their discussion about whether Brexit would bring any significant positive or negative consequences, two particular issues were seen to pose significant risks to the SELEP Economy;

- *“Brexit Border Disruption” – Dover District Council*
- *“EU Funding Post Brexit - There is, of course, also an issue around the future of European funding post Brexit. While a number of localities across the SELEP area, particularly some of the coastal areas, have been successful in securing European funding, the future of such funding is very uncertain. Clearly, other parts of the UK are already staking a claim for the Government to provide compensatory funding programmes for the loss of European funding. A strong marker therefore needs to be put down to try and capture a slice of any future funding for the SELEP area, with particular emphasis on the coastal localities where needs are greatest and the opportunity and appetite for growth is evident” - Dover District Council*

### **The impact of a static working age population and an ageing society**

During the course of our discussions, a number of respondents also raised the issue of the ageing population and the potential impact of this on spiralling social care costs.

- *“Changing face of social care - there is also a need to consider the changing face of health and social care needs across the SELEP area” - Dover District Council*
- *“I need to find more staff to help support the delivery of our Social Care Services” – Kent County Council*

Whilst the issue of supporting the social sector was mentioned on a number of occasions, there generally appeared to be limited recognition that demographic changes, competition for labour from other sectors and the poor image of the sector will require the sector to find innovative ways of delivering services and improving its productivity, going forwards.

### **The changing nature of work**

Some respondents we spoke to recognised the changing nature of work, with an increasing number of people working part time, as self-employed freelancers and on zero-hour contracts.

Many recognised that this posed significant challenges for more elementary professions, with many people trapped in low-paid part time work. Similarly, at the other end of the labour market, many recognised this situation had given rise to more ‘digital nomads’ and freelancers, many of whom were looking for stimulating places in which to live with strong creative milieu’s.

### **Increased mobility of young people**

In discussing the issue of creative freelancer’s, a number of respondents also recognised the growing trend towards lifestyle migration (where people are making location decisions based on lifestyle preferences and flexible working arrangements). According to Oxford Econometrics, talent mobility has increased 25% relative to the previous decade, and is predicted to increase by 50% by 2020<sup>2</sup>. Looking further forward, Oxford Econometrics has found that many European countries are forecast to be suffering from a talent deficit by 2021, with many likely to need to

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<sup>2</sup>Global Talent 2021, How the new geography of talent will transform human resource strategies, Oxford Econometrics 2012

recruit from countries such as India, Indonesia, Colombia, South Africa and Brazil – all of whom were likely to be experiencing a talent surplus. This same study also forecasts that the most dramatic jump in future demand for workers will be in emerging Asia, where the need for new employees will rise by 22%; closely followed by Latin America (13%); the Middle East/Africa (13%); and Eastern Europe (10%). By contrast, demand for talent in North America, is forecast to rise by 6.1% over the next 10 years and Western Europe is only projected to grow by a much more modest 3.5%. By contrast, the same report suggests the greatest mismatches between supply and demand for talent in Europe in 2021 are likely to be found in various countries (including Spain, Switzerland, Austria, Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Germany, France, the UK, Greece, Italy and Poland).

### **Impending tech-skills shortage**

Countries across the globe are also under increasing pressure from global talent flows and the ‘pull’ of more glamorous cities and regions. One of the major challenges currently facing many high-technology firms is how best to win ‘the war on tech-talent’.

Demand for people with STEM skills is increasing across the Globe. Many STEM workers are approaching retirement age. Some forecasts suggest around 7million technical job openings will emerge between 2016 and 2025<sup>3</sup>. Whilst demand for technical people continues to increase, the number of people choosing to pursue technical careers continues to fall.

### **The digital revolution and the impact of automation and technology**

A number of respondents also raised the potential disruptive effect of technology, with many suggesting this was likely to have a particularly negative impact on elementary professions (i.e. autonomous vehicles, banking, fast food restaurants etc.). These findings are consistent with The World Economic Forum’s *Future of Jobs*<sup>4</sup> study which predicts that 5 million jobs will be lost before 2020 as artificial intelligence, robotics, nanotechnology and other technologies replace the need for human workers as the Fourth Industrial Revolution<sup>5</sup> gathers pace. Whilst the good news is that those same technological advances will also create 2.1 million new jobs, the skills people will need to thrive in the workplace of the future will be very different.

### **How will we deal with these changes/challenges?**

The majority of the written responses we received to this question actually covered how we might deal with the key challenges we face, rather than what the challenges were. The specific answers were;

#### **By working together**

- *“Working in partnership and across boundaries (e.g. Team East Sussex, Greater Brighton, Lewes DC & Eastbourne BC stronger together)”* - Eastbourne Borough and Lewes District Councils

#### **Ensuring greater flexibility in funding**

- *“More flexibility accessing funds from SELEP”* - Eastbourne Borough and Lewes District Councils

#### **Breaking down barriers across sectors**

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<sup>3</sup> Encouraging STEM: Comparison of Practices Targeted at Young People in Different Member States, DG for Internal Policies, March 2015

<sup>4</sup> [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_Future\\_of\\_Jobs.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/the-fourth-industrial-revolution-what-it-means-and-how-to-respond/>

- *“Being more entrepreneurial as local authorities. This means better using our capital assets to enable growth. We need to do this in partnership with the private sector, and not by crowding the private sector out”* - Eastbourne Borough and Lewes District Councils
- *“Regular communication with businesses at the local level - share information with them, keep them informed, consult them beyond the strategic board approach – tie them into the economy by making them feel valued”* - Thanet District Council

### **Enhancing business support**

- *“Lobbying call to Government for mandatory registration of businesses with accredited Chambers of Commerce – immediate provision of support via Brexit transition”* - Thanet District Council
- *“Identify those companies that may have most exposure to international trade to provide support. For companies that require overseas raw materials supply, help them to identify suppliers in alternative markets”* - Thanet District Council
- *“A programme of succession planning for businesses (obligatory in France), which will stop /slow the massive rate at which companies die with ownership retirement”* - Thanet District Council
- *“A continuation and simplification of the huge range of excellent business support initiatives that are currently available to Kent businesses, avoiding postcode lottery in some cases. Post Brexit, ensure that funds no longer going to Europe are redirected so that effective business support continues”* - Thanet District Council
- *“State Aid for social enterprise is enabled by full exploitation of the present exemption rules around mission and behaviour. If Brexit leads to permitting the development of local supply chains, this could be supported by robust Social Value outcomes accompanying funding”* - Hastings Community Network

### **Innovation in Housing**

- *“Champion and support modular manufacture of housing – make the county (through a joined-up district / borough approach to provide the necessary pipeline), an ambassador for factory produced quality housing products, additionally supporting skilled employment opportunities. (If you think in technology terms, bulk housing supply amongst major developers is the only sector that seems to promote inefficient, technological regression) – smartphones, tablets, cars and virtually any other technological product are all about continual improvement, lean efficiency in production, and sustainable development”* - Thanet District Council

### **Welfare Reform**

- *“Universal Credit allows smoother entry into the workplace without the deterring barrier of the financial stresses of collapsing and restarting claims”* - Hastings Community Network.
- *“Welfare Reform will bring many people off long-term out-of-work benefits into work readiness. The SE coastal communities have concentrations of these populations and it follows that there should be entry jobs in these areas”* - Hastings Community Network.
- *“The need for support for transition to work persists: funding, which may have come from European structural funds, will still be required to deliver adult learning, navigate child care and build development capacity in*

*social enterprise. (We have some survey results of child care providers in relation to recent changes.)” -*

Hastings Community Network

### **3.3 How can we move to a more sustainable financial footing, attracting funds to achieve better outcomes?**

Again, the general responses to this question focussed on a mix of thematic and process issues, with many responses appearing to stop short of recognising that the whole rationale the we have developed for investing public funding into projects in the UK is actually based on overcoming ‘marginal viability’ gaps, rather than investing in project which generate higher commercial returns, to reinvest in subsequent projects;

#### **Improved Partnership Working**

- *“Working together to better achieve our ambitions (e.g. Team East Sussex, Greater Brighton, Lewes DC & Eastbourne BC stronger together)” - Eastbourne Borough and Lewes District Councils*
- *“The SEP must state the high-level ambitions which unite the federated areas” - Thames Gateway Kent Partnership*

#### **Stronger cross-sectoral collaboration**

- *“Working with private developers, landowners and businesses (e.g. Newhaven Enterprise Zone, North Street Quarter and Eastbourne’s Arndale Centre)” - Eastbourne Borough and Lewes District Councils*

#### **Strengthening Inward Investment**

- *“Kent's geographic location, in spite of Brexit, should make it a continuing and growing attractive proposition for trade both East and West of its location” - Thanet District Council*
- *“A Superior Location Speaking a Global Language” - Thanet District Council*

#### **Investment in R&D**

- *“A strong academic base with world class R&D facilities across the county” - Thanet District Council*

#### **Housing Innovation**

- *“Lead on attracting a modular housing manufacturer to the county, such as Latis Homes, to provide a step change in the quality and speed of housing delivery” - Thanet District Council*

#### **Community Capacity Building**

- *“Inclusion underpins the above points and the emphasis is on developing skills, local institutions and improving procurement. While the partnerships exist to prioritise these, it does ask for a rebalancing towards bottom-up innovation. The aim is to build on the existing narrative for coastal communities and reframe the participation in prosperity” - Hastings Community Network*
- *“This evidence then should be enhanced by analysis of economic benefit along the lines of the health equalities mapping used by Hastings and Rother Clinical Commissioning Group. We also suggest drawing on more recent learning from the Future Jobs Fund and in particular the experience in Hastings. There is particular concern that there has been strategic drift on making the SE the capital of Social Enterprise and local experience should be drawn on to inform reinvigorating this aim” - Hastings Community Network*

- *“HCN is not comfortable in evidencing the need for structural resources to achieve inclusion only through negative statistics. While these facts are important, alone they risk reinforcing the exclusion. We would like to develop a narrative that builds confidence in the asset of the unused productivity of the coastal communities and that inverts the lack of connectivity between them. This requires examples of successes to date for real people and then to commit to a pipeline of successes that can testify to inclusive regeneration on an international stage” - Hastings Community Network*

#### **4.0 Preliminary responses to key themes**

In addition to the responses to the above high-level questions, respondents have also highlighted a number of other important thematic priorities.

##### **4.1 Business Productivity**

From the partner workshops, 1:1 discussions and consultee responses, the following were noted as productivity priorities;

- Incubation space to support graduates and creative start-ups and support emergent industries/grow the number of creative-tech businesses (linked to suitable skills pipelines & networks);
- Grow on space and commercial property (to provide suitable facilities for medium and larger sized businesses that might be outgrowing their current premises or moving into the area);
- Stronger applied research partnerships & collaborative programmes (both within sectors and across sectors) to strengthen and adapt key supply chains. Investment in applied research infrastructure to develop local test-bed facilities (i.e. local precision medicine facilities as a collaboration between Local Authorities, Health Trusts, Universities and the private sector, to explore the use of ‘big data’ in the health and social care sector);
- Place Marketing, Branding (which was felt need to be localised) and Inward Investment (to grow the stock of larger businesses);
- Access to Finance and new funding mechanisms (to increase business confidence and investment in capital machinery to drive productivity);
- Faster and less bureaucratic planning & regulation;
- The importance of connectivity with London;
- Improved export support, guidance and funds (more hands-on support and less strategy advice);
- Support for Growth Hubs and Enterprise Zones;
- Clusters, cross fertilisation and peer to peer mentoring;

However, much of the debate with partners over the course of the consultation also focussed on the need to move beyond ‘traditional’ business support interventions to explore how to drive an ‘industrial renaissance’ in the country, consistent with the kind of structural change that happened in the post war period or in the mid 80’s. One suggestion put forward by partners is to encourage greater collaboration between the public, academic, private and community sectors to stimulate productivity improvements in key sectors, where these partners may share common interests (i.e. construction, social care etc.).

One example of a project which was cited as a potential exemplar on this kind of strong cross sectoral collaboration is the i-construction project in the Haven Gateway, which (although still in its early formation) is bringing together SME construction companies, the University of Essex as a catalyst for innovation and the Garden Community, as a large customer, with a need to find new ways of stimulating housing growth. Another example is the shared Scientific Officer between the University of Essex and Essex County Council.

Other ideas have included reintroducing an RGF style capital grant programme, to encourage businesses to invest in technology, to address the current propensity to delay capital investment. Where this is introduced, a target on multifactor productivity, rather than more jobs would be desirable.

Encouraging the greater take up of R&D grants in the region was also considered a priority, as was investing in scale up programmes, incubation centres and initiatives to strengthen priority sectors. Grow on space and developing suitable commercial premises was also identified as a universal need across the area, with the permitted development rights which allowed office conversion to residential having eroded the availability of commercial premises.

More practical export help for businesses, links to trade missions and overseas market opportunities was seen by many as one way of improving our export performance.

As far as spatial priorities were concerned, these generally became more apparent if we were discussing key employment sectors or more specialised research opportunities which built on a particular university competence, although there has been a strong recognition that Digital, Advanced Manufacturing and Design & Creativity were actually key enabling technologies and competencies that needed to be strong across the entire region. Opportunities to increase collaboration between public authorities, the SME business base and universities were fairly consistent across the area, as these generally focussed on big societal challenges that were common for all (social care, smart infrastructure systems, digital government etc.). Similarly, a number of other sector priorities were expressed as being a common priority, including the creative and cultural industries, the visitor economy, construction and digital technologies.

## **4.2 Skills Development, Talent Retention & Attraction, Employability and 'Industrial' Competence**

From the partner workshops, 1:1 discussions and consultee responses, the following have been expressed as skills priorities;

- The need for a more holistic, joined up approach, with greater consideration from government about the targeting and funding of the skills sector (including the potential for devolved funding);
- Engagement from primary school, improved work readiness skills in the young and higher quality careers advice;
- Lifelong learning approach to training – with reskilling needing particular attention;
- Complimentary, not competitive funding regimes;
- Future proofing the curriculum (e.g. digital skills);

- Better business, community & school linkages – particularly to drive the pervasive encouragement and promotion of STEAM Skills in the young (linked particularly to extra-curricular activities);
- SME Entrepreneurial, Leadership & Management Skills;
- Placemaking – creating the kind of places in which people want to live, work and play;
- Encouraging SME investment in securing new industrial competencies - Quality apprenticeships aligned to business need and linked to investment in capital machinery;

Whilst generally less well debated by everyone, there appeared to be a general recognition in a handful of respondents that there was some benefit in trying to distinguish between skills development; talent retention & attraction; employability and growing 'industrial' competence.

As far as Skills Development was concerned, a big debate in various groups and meetings throughout the consultation period has been the need to;

- Invest at the base of the education system, to both inspire young people into higher value careers and improve their knowledge of different career options;
- Work with businesses to develop a demand led careers advice service and a programme of inspiration (focussed on promoting STEAM skills, digital and creative thinking to try and embed innovation from early on in the school system);
- Find new ways to encourage greater levels of reskilling and upskilling, to move people up to higher value employment opportunities;
- Investment in SME Leadership and Management Skills;

At the heart of this debate was the strong belief that government should devolve adult education budgets to local areas to ensure that skills funding is working for the needs of the local economy. Remove limitations to current growth – lack of access to skilled workforce, awareness of finance available not the amount / access to it; training existing workforce.

In addition to this debate, faced with some of the socio-demographic changes envisaged, a number of respondents also cited the importance of placemaking (creating attractive, 'sticky' places in which people want to live) to talent retention and attraction. Affordable housing, good-quality transit systems and a strong creative/cultural sector were seen as being important to address this.

As far as addressing employability was concerned, many recognised this was a structural issue in some parts of the region, which necessitated the strong integration of business support; social welfare; skills; and investment in regeneration if the situation was to be improved. The issue of reskilling was also felt to be important to many, given the potential risk of technology displacing some of the more elementary jobs in the local economy.

Lastly, as far as developing and advancing industrial competence was concerned, a number of respondents remarked that we need to be careful not to consider the Apprenticeship Levy as the only solution in building new industrial competencies, given the small number of large employers in the region. Indeed, a number of respondents felt that apprenticeships needed greater flexibility to support the transition to new economy jobs.



### 4.3 Housing & Infrastructure

From the partner workshops, 1:1 discussions and consultee responses, the following were expressed as housing and infrastructure priorities;

- A strong emphasis on the gateway nature of the region and the need to ensure frictionless borders, post Brexit;
- The need to support the emerging garden settlements, linked to SME development programmes, off-site construction and modular build programmes and the promotion of innovative smart technologies & multi-functional infrastructure;
- Strategies to target stalled development and unimplemented consents;
- The need to encourage new institutional investors, including retail investment;
- Enhancements to our road network through investment in the strategic road network (SRN) and emerging major road network (MRN) concept as part of the Government's new Transport Investment Strategy (TIS);
- Placemaking & town centre regeneration – linking to physical and cultural assets;
- Closer collaboration and engagement with utilities providers to ensure the network is suitably equipped to cope with the transition to a low carbon economy;
- Investment in new and improved rail solutions in the next investment round and sustainable transport solutions – in order to try and improve overall network capacity;
- Investment in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Digital infrastructure - Superfast broadband connectivity and 100% 5g enabled mobile coverage across entire travel to work area;

As far as transport connectivity is concerned, one major theme that should strengthen our case for investment is the importance of the region as a gateway to major regional, national and international markets.

This issue should lend weight to the importance of the Lower Thames Crossing (including M2 Junction 3 and M20 Junction 6 via A229) and wider network improvements (M2 Junction 7 Brenley Corner); the dualling of the A2 from Lydden to Dover; and the A21; and the A27/M27 South Coast Corridor.

### 4.4 A resilient and inclusive economy

In addition to the three core priorities set out above, a number of partners have emphasised the importance of ensuring we develop a resilient and inclusive economy, which everybody can participate fully in. Specific feedback received from partners to date has included;

- *“Embedding the innovation of job-carving as a practice in both the public and private sectors that create opportunities for those with disabilities to develop skills and gain work experience”* - Hastings Community Network
- *“More successful social enterprises providing a wider scope of intermediate labour markets that have learnt from models whose activities deliver direct local benefit”* - Hastings Community Network

- *“A fresh approach that trusts the community itself to overcome stalled regeneration programmes (e.g. Ore Valley Millennium Community) that results in workshops, self-build schemes, housing whose tenure is inclusive of supportive housing”* - Hastings Community Network
- *“The required guidance and support is in place for successful transitions from benefits to work including navigating affordable child care opportunities”* - Hastings Community Network

In addition to the above points, additional thoughts and opportunities may emerge from the Social Enterprise working group.

#### **4.5 Maintaining, protecting and preserving the natural environment**

Similarly, a number of partners have recognised the importance of quality of life and the natural assets to the regional economy, including Special Protection Areas (SPA's), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), National Park and three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the region. The big question remains whether LEPs will be supported to invest in these assets, or merely be focussed on protecting and preserving them, as the wider policy direction for central government appears to be to try and divest themselves of having to continue to support these facilities in difficult financial times, in favour of encouraging them to establish themselves as Charitable Incorporated Organisations.

#### **5.0 What is the role that partners see for themselves in delivering this strategy?**

One fundamental question which largely remains unanswered from the consultation is the role that partners foresee for themselves in delivering the new SELEP strategic economic priorities going forward.

One of the key pillars contained in the government's Industrial Strategy is the suggestion that localities might want to establish suitable local institutions, where they don't already exist to help them deliver an 'industrial renaissance', but we are not sure we have collated a strong consensus about the desire for new organisations. This situation probably needs to be considered alongside the potential risks associated with the loss of EU funding – something that might pose a significant threat to some of the existing organisations.

In some of their consultation responses, some partners have eluded to their desire to want to make a stronger case to Government and respective departments about the value proposition that sits at the heart of the localism agenda and encourage government to start to take it more seriously (rather than operating on a somewhat 'initiative' based approach as it does now). For example;

*“SE LEP partners need to continue to look at further models of integration of services, activities, devolution of powers and responsibilities from central government across many funded programmes to enable more local flexibility to focus the resources on the priority requirements of the areas”* – East Sussex County Council.

Similarly, the skills advisory group is keen to push for the devolution of skills funding, to enable it to be better targeted on employer needs.

However, before the scale and potential impact of any interventions can be established, we need to establish partners levels of ambition and appetite for taking a stronger control of the delivery arrangements of a range of agendas, programmes and projects.

Only by understanding these issues, will we be able to structure compelling propositions that encourage the government to invest in the SELEP region and its federated areas.

## 6.0 Conclusions

The consultation process has shown that partners major strategic aspiration – perhaps rather unsurprisingly – is **to create a more prosperous, skilled, connected and resilient region.**

Whilst this may not come as such a massive surprise to many, there was a sense in much of the feedback that we received from partners that people recognised the current socio-economic conditions were such that many partners felt that actually achieving this goal was likely to be a significant challenge.

Many of the responses to the SEP consultation contained many of the usual references to phrases like **‘highly skilled’**; **‘well connected’**; and **‘open for, and welcoming to, business’** – broadly indicating that partners felt that a focus on the three ‘factors of production’ of **Skills, Infrastructure and Business** should continue to be a major focus of the next Strategic Economic Plan.

However, a considerable number of respondents also referred to the need to be **‘more resilient to external threats’**.

On the whole, during the consultation process partners also felt it was important for the new SELEP Strategic Economic Plan to recognise the **spatial differences that exist between distinct parts of the region** whether it be in terms of prosperity (for example, as in East and West Kent) or spatial characteristics (for example, between coastal, urban and rural) and for localities to be empowered to be able to **deliver placemaking initiatives at the local level.**

In a number of our face to face meetings, partners highlighted concerns about some of the future macro-economic ‘challenges’ that will impact on the UK over the next economic cycle and stressed **the vital need to improve business productivity if we are to maintain and/or increase prosperity and retain a strong public-sector investment model.**

A number of organisations we spoke to also articulated a desire to want to see **various national bodies adopt a slightly different approach to trying to deliver local growth** (for example, the Higher Education sector suggested the targeting of local growth initiatives needed further examination, as they felt the current process actually acted against universities developing a stronger role as an anchor institution). Linked to this discussion, a number of partners also expressed a desire to want to see much **stronger cross sector (public-private-academic-community) collaborations emerge at the local level to drive growth and productivity improvement in key sectors, supply chains and localities** (echoing the comments in Volume 2 of the Essex Horizon Scan<sup>6</sup>, which makes the case for *“Using the purchasing power of the major public employers and the university to foster a more stable*

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<sup>6</sup> [Essex Horizon Scan: Volume 2, Framing an Essex Response](#), August 2016

*eco-system of local small business and working with business organisations, networks, and university to heavily support the spread of business skills throughout the county”.*

As far as SELEPs perception was concerned, numerous respondents suggested they felt it was important to; **Dispel the myth of SELEP being a highly prosperous area** – i.e. to emphasise that ‘we have prosperity, with challenges’. This is an approach which is consistent with the strategies cited previously; and

**Strengthen the narrative around investing in the South for the benefit of London, the North and Midlands.** This is also an approach which is consistent with the business case for investing in the [Lower Thames Crossing](#), the [Freight Action Plan for Kent](#), the [Essex Local Transport Plan](#) (Freight Policy) and the [Kent Transport Plan](#). It is an approach which is also widely supported by the private sector transport and logistics sector (including the ports). Through the consultation process, at a more operational level, respondents have generally stressed the need to prioritise;

- **Skills: Investing in young people’s career aspirations; and re-training and re-skilling adults;**
- **Broadband: Delivering 100% broadband and mobile coverage;**
- **Transport: Investing in better road and rail links with future use in mind (growth corridors);**
- **Innovation: Science, Research and Innovation hubs, clusters and centres of sector excellence** – in creative industries, construction, social and medical care, manufacturing and engineering and digital;
- **Commercial Property: More employment and grow-on space for businesses to land, grow and work together;**
- **Housebuilding: Building homes faster, utilising innovative building techniques** and linking housing growth areas to job creation opportunities;
- **Spatial: Investing in coastal and rural economies;**
- **Energy: Investing in energy solutions to improve the efficiency, resilience and use of resources;** and
- **Improving business support and cross sector working** (public-private-academic-community) to support business productivity improvements;

In some cases, partners also felt that – given the wider socio-economic challenges that currently exists (which we will set out in the next section of this evidence base) – there was a need for the partnership to discuss how it was going to work together more effectively to address some of the big looming challenges that presently exist.

## Appendices

### Individual consultation Responses

1. KMEP Board Presentation – 20/07/17
2. Feedback from a Senior KCC Officer – 24/07/17
3. Feedback from SOG Meeting – 25/07/17
4. Feedback from Rother District Council – 27/07/17
5. Feedback from Hastings Community Network – 28/07/17
6. Feedback from Eastbourne and Lewes District Council's 28/7/17
7. Meeting with Thames Gateway Kent Partnership - 31/07/17
8. East Sussex County Council Officer Response – 28/07/17
9. Response from Dover District Council - 03/08/17
10. Response from Hastings Borough Council – 08/08/17
11. South East Creative Economy Network Response - August 2017
12. Sussex Community Development Association – 21 August 2017
13. SELEP Housing & Development Group – 30/08/2017
14. North Downs Way National Trail Response – 31/08/17
15. Kent Downs AONB – 01/09/2017
16. Kent Downs, High Weald and Dedham Vale AONBs – Officer Level – 6/09/17
17. Kent Nature Partnership – 08/09/17
18. Feedback from Team East Sussex Presentation – 17/07/17
19. Thanet DC Feedback 16/09/17
20. Notes from meeting with David Smith, Director of Economic Development, Kent CC - 04/07/17
21. Notes from meeting with Steve Cox, Anne Ostler & Tim Rignall – Thurrock Council – 13/07/17
22. Notes from Greater Essex Business Board Meeting – 15/08/17
23. Feedback from KMEP Workshops - 15/08/17
24. Meeting with Graeme Raisey - East Kent College - 29/08/17
25. Meeting with Southend Business Partnership - 29/08/17
26. Essex IGF Meeting - 5/09/17
27. Meeting with GPGC LEP - 03/10/17
28. Feedback from Basildon Borough Council - 6/10/17
29. Meeting with London Economic Action Partnership - 14/09/17

## 1. KMEP Board Presentation – 20<sup>th</sup> July 2017 – from [minutes](#)

The Partnership received a presentation from Jim Sims (from The Service Design Company) and Georgina Button (SELEP Strategy Manager) on the South East LEP's Strategic Economic Plan. The new Plan will be a 5-year action plan which recognises the importance of the federated model. It will touch upon the opportunities and challenges of Brexit, the distinction of the South East LEP from London and the north. It will be supported by a Skills Strategy and an Infrastructure Investment Strategy.

In response, the Partnership made the following comments:

- Andrew Metcalf welcomed the timing of the refresh, and the onus on bringing additional clarity to the SEP. He urged the SELEP team to identify the strengths of the SELEP area, such as Turner Contemporary, and to remember the wide target audience, i.e. business, communities, government, etc.
- Jo James welcomed the announcement that the SEP would be more concise.
- A business leader queried if national interest in the industrial strategy was waning. Paul Carter and Peter Fleming had attended a conference with Greg Clark that day, 5 and he had spoken passionately about the industrial strategy. A white paper will be issued in the autumn.
- Douglas Horner asked the SELEP team to emphasise the evolution of the economic strategy. The new SEP should have a longer timeframe, be innovative and hardworking. The barrier posed by the lack of global business headquarters in Kent and Medway, and their associated supply chains, needs addressing. Increasing the interface between businesses and universities is imperative, and Douglas Horner would be keen to see how the SEP proposes to achieve this.
- Miranda Chapman emphasised a 'macro' perspective is required. There is a need for a place identity that marks SELEP/KMEP out as different to the remainder of the UK. We have been known as the Garden of England and the Gateway to Europe. Branding is important. Miranda Chapman was keen on Douglas Horner's idea to have an innovation corridor from Cambridge University to Discovery Park, and asked the consultant to research this further.
- Paul Winter spoke of the challenges that arise from working in silos, particularly in the national skills arena. It is a barrier to productivity and a detractor to business. He spoke of the Department for International Trade that produce brochures of projects for foreign investors to consider investing in. He hoped that the SEP may include a list of schemes that could be shown to private investors, to help decrease reliance on the public purse, and allow projects to be delivered at a more accelerated rate. He requested a positive tone is used in the narrative, and queried if the focus would be on prosperity and productivity or on regeneration. There is a disparity between London and the prosperous South East, and Kent and Medway. This issue needs to be addressed.
- Jim Sims spoke of the lower incidents of patent registrations in this county.
- A KMEP board member asked the SELEP team to look at the shared agenda across all federated areas, and consider the interaction with London. Businesses do not focus on the geographical boundaries. There was a

request to include economic baseline data from across the SELEP region: with the data shown for SELEP, and then each federated board area alongside.

- Graham Razey proposed the SEP should inspire the next generation to live, work and be prosperous. He urged the SELEP team to ask the next generation about the outcomes they seek. A better understanding is needed as to why talented people will stay within a locality after graduation.
- Jim Sims spoke of the Youthful Cities report that looked at what young people wanted in several large cities across the globe. The report describes the next generation as digital nomads, who use easy jets to reach work, as previous generations would have used a bus. The issue of affordability was a significant issue for young people. There are more young people unemployed now on a global scale than during the depression. There is an 'information elite' focussed on creativity and technology. The creative sector should be fostered as they are more resilient to automation.
- Graham Razey spoke of the need to align the national skills agenda around digital skills.
- Paul Winter mentioned that Kent and Medway have an above average level of 'lifestyle' companies, and also SME industries. The fractured business landscape makes it more difficult to have the economic infrastructure to support them. The EDGE Hub has been a very positive step forward, and would be an excellent concept to roll out in the future. Peer to peer knowledge transfer could produce more resilient sectors. • Paul Winter and Graham Razey both urged SELEP to look to a longer timeframe as changes to the skills landscape take time to show results.
- Fran Wilson represents one of the most deprived Maidstone wards. The young people in her ward want a decent job, but transport reliability (in terms of journey times) and high fares can act as a barrier. She urged the SELEP team to use positive, upbeat, language about the additional benefits that can be realised. Expand on the excellent position we are in to unlock the barriers. Her priorities were improvements to highways infrastructure, and supporting small industries that have nowhere to go. The document should be similar to a sales document which a business would use to sell itself. Tell the government what SELEP can achieve.
- Paul Carter recalled Greg Clark's phrase from about 6 years ago, when he said, 'we cannot create economic growth but we can create the environment and conditions that are conducive to growth'. He urged the SELEP team to consider the inhibitors to growth, one of which is the availability of commercial space. One local developer had commented that there is little profit in building speculative commercial space, and so there may need to be a public subsidy to lubricate this. Also, recruitment of the right staff in the right place is an issue – particularly in the health and social care arena.
- Paul Carter referred to the Localis 'making of an industrial strategy' report. The report highlights a number of 'stuck places' across England, particularly in coastal regions. This idea could be built upon in the SELEP report. He spoke of the sectors that had a strong foothold on Kent: creative and bioscience. He asked the SELEP team to look at the past successful RGF grants to businesses, and use this as an indicator in the design of future

proposals. One proposal that could be included in the SEP is to have a RGF scheme to increase the number of businesses exporting goods to Europe.

- Douglas Horner asked the team to consider why local science parks are succeeding. Is it the impact of clustering like-minded businesses, and if so should clustering be rolled out? He urged SELEP to develop proposals that would increase the scale of economic growth and accelerate the pace of change. He agreed there should be list of prospective schemes which KMEP want the private and public sector to invest in.
- Sarah Dance thought there should be two timelines within the document. Each section should give the short-term wins that will bring instant results, and also explore the longer-term changes that will yield future economic growth.
- She encouraged SELEP to read its competitors' SEPs, and see what SELEP can offer over and above their prospectuses. She felt that the SEP should speak of our prosperity, but also the real challenges we have, and the diversity in the county. She agreed that there should be consultation with young people, as their views about work can differ significantly. She mentioned SELEP need not be reliant on attracting large companies – if SELEP were to encourage business clusters, then the cluster itself can be greater than the sum of its parts. The SEP should focus on how to attract businesses to cluster here, using Kent's unique selling points, which are the costal location, the good school system, and the connection to the world through Europe.
- Mike Cosgrove spoke about how Kent's economic landscape has changed beyond all recognition since the 1970s. The Government is keen to back winners, so it is the right time to put in a well thought through proposal. The SME nature of KMEP brings advantages and disadvantages as these businesses must focus on the day job. Assets 7 in Kent and Medway are its decent education and healthcare system, and its transport connectivity.
- Mike Cosgrove urged KMEP to consider the bold future-thinking interventions that will make a step change ('the Star Trek vision of the future'). He was eager for the SEP to provide greater transparency about the activities of the universities. Swale is within 10 miles of two Kent universities, but as a local Councillor, he is not aware of how their activities impact Swale. He concluded by asking the SELEP team to: a) show success, b) act with fluidity and pace, and c) centre the SEP around 2 or 3 key proposals that the government would warmly welcome.
- Andrew Metcalf said the planning system brought challenges. The lack of commercial property is a great concern. The SEP should set out a strategic planning vision, identifying how housing and commercial space will be built out, and how it can be made to happen quicker.
- Jo James encouraged the consultants to use language aimed at a target audience of central government and private inward investment bodies. She encouraged SELEP to consider the basic interventions that would make a difference, such as growing exports. In the last 9 months, there has been a growth in exports, with many more SME exploring this option.



- Paul Thomas asked for consideration of the procurement rules and other regulation that can be a barrier to starting up a business. Making quicker government decisions is a key issue for businesses, e.g. when hearing planning appeals etc.
- Paul Watkins mentioned the EU funding which KMEP has benefited from. SMEs are the major businesses in KMEP, and to support these firms to grow, KMEP needs to ensure there is transitional businesses accommodation with more flexible lease terms. He also pointed out that all SELEP regions have a coastline, so coastal regeneration could be a shared priority. He concluded by mentioning the shortfall in skilled people, and that upskilling the populous would increase productivity.

KMEP thanked the SELEP Strategy Manager and Consultant for their presentation, and asked them to circulate their questions for written responses.

## **2. Feedback from a Senior KCC Officer**

**Industrial Strategy:** The work already underway for your SEP refresh really important here, but the Industrial Strategy will hopefully also define the LEP role much more clearly post-LGF. Might also be worth just keeping an eye out for the recommendation about modern Aldermen bring business expertise into councils.

**Housing:** Very much the priority of DCLG and for the Secretary of State. Work around the White Paper and wider reform to accelerate and deliver housing will soon come back to the fore. You may have picked up Sajid's reference at the LGA Conference to the review of Objectively Assessed Need and its link to prices which could add further pressure on local delivery. Sajid's mention of SE LEP at the earlier LEP Network Conference as an example of best practice through the work with HFI and broader prioritisation of housing is all positive and something that I would also like to link to with any work on housing here in Kent.

**Skills:** I think the principle of trying to secure as much of the new Apprenticeship Levy as possible for Kent/Medway, Essex/Thurrock/Southend and East Sussex, working through the LEP seems very sound indeed. Could be a very positive message for local employers. Could also be one for the Skills Group to support.

**"Left behind" places:** As mentioned, a continuing interest centrally in what works and what does not in these areas, many of which will be coastal. Some of the EU ESIF work could be helpful here, as well as investment through LGF, by way of example of what is being invested and what is working.

**High Streets:** Links to the above, but remains a workstream at DCLG and conscious particularly of the LGF investment in Tonbridge and Folkestone which I have oft cited.

**Thames Estuary:** The commitment remains and the Department are keen to ensure it is delivered and continues to see the opportunity the area presents for growth and jobs. Recognition in the renewed SEP and work with the renewed London LEP could be quite influential.

## **3. Feedback from Senior Officers Group – 27/7/2017**

### **Trade/inward investment**

- Connectivity opportunity an aspiration for this. Being bold in our wants for this. Flexibility for further home working needs

- What opportunities some will see after Brexit / skills etc.
- Mentoring and shared knowledge for new SME's
- Opportunity to become a centre of excellence, i.e., 3d printing metal.
- Paul - a digital test bed came out of the Science and Innovation audit; how can this be embedded? I.e. Can this be tied into agri-tech research
- How does the infrastructure tie in with the smart city initiative?
- How to promote buying locally and support businesses in the area

### **Skills**

- Target our efforts to specific events, i.e., PHE / Bradwell
- Challenge around adaptive skills in adults. How do we support adults to re-skill? Links to industrial competencies.
- Do we throw our hat at leading on care initiative / digital care?
- Need to continually spell facts out to central government.
- If our net export is skills to London then we should use that to our advantage.
- Andrew Wood – Coding is a skill to be mindful of.
- This must feel owned by people and businesses locally, in addition to local schools. What are the consequences to the local area and impact on you if the skills are not there?
- Creating shared facilities for businesses and universities

### **Research and Innovation**

- How do you harness the need and enable businesses to have access to the correct resource?
- Manufacturing - the knowledge base is needed for growth, not just places to manufacture but ability to develop.
- Accessing support for innovation is poor in the region - although it is there, i.e., through innovate UK. We need to support businesses to have knowledge of this.
- Do we need to look at clusters and themes across the regions?
- How do we put together the story of R&D as it is a fragmented approach through the whole area?
- What is the unique opportunity in the LEP we can take the opportunity of? Differentiate us from all other LEP's.
- Ensuring business developments are in hand in addition to housing needs.
- If you want to make money in the South East you make houses - how do we solve this?

### **Supporting Businesses to start and grow**

- Growth Hubs are the way to do this and they are getting impressive results. How do we get forward thinking / innovative companies?
- Do LA's offer themselves as test beds for these? With the top 5-10 issues for the area.
- Touched on LTC - can we go for local funding approach and lock the funding of asset into the locality?

- Paul Dodson - Local solutions and investment, get jobs and location of businesses as a result for LA's. Can this be made a larger issue across SELEP?
- AB - the issue of workspace should be in the SEP.
- LTC is huge for the area, how we want areas to grow and future investment and further infrastructure needs to meet our requirements.

### **Skills Strategy**

- Lou is working with Georgina and Jim to ensure it sits well as two documents.
- There is a consultation out at the moment on our website, only 10 questions. This will inform strategies priorities
- Will be a 10-15-page document, backed up by an evidence base.
- The evidence base will support us with future calls for funding etc.
- Quantifying future events makes the doc more tangible.
- There will be a piece on both Brexit and digital as they have cross cutting impact on skills.
- Core thing for document is inclusive growth of the area.
- Draft will be going to SAG 22nd August. It will be shared with SOG. Want to focus on 3/4 areas where we can have a meaningful impact and be drivers in the UK.

### **Infrastructure and Investment**

- Have a more geographical focus.
- Looking at what we have done so far and have they driven economy how we expected.
- GPF priorities will be identified.
- LTC will be mentioned to ensure this is driven by the South East and pushed up government's agenda.
- What are the investment & Infrastructure needs within the SEP and how they will be supported?
- Each area will offer high level info on pipeline of projects. How do we identify this, short term or longer-term needs? \*\*thoughts from SOG
- Confirmed this will not be a top down approach.
- Sarah Nurden - on the scope of this - will there be a clear marker for where projects will fit in? Where are the boundaries? Rhiannon Mort will give the headers themes, wide scoping.
- AB - part of the reason for this document is that the LEP is ready to go when future funding opportunities are available from Government.
- Tim Rignall - can we think about how we might find other investment opportunities in this doc too? It should be a strategy not a shopping list.
- Sarah - there should be pragmatic short term plus longer-term vision and ambition
- Matt Norwell - don't use time frames use local and national importance.
- Chris B - will it cover healthcare and skills? Rhi - healthcare, we don't have a huge amount of sway? CB - danger of a dissociation of road and health care infrastructure.

#### **4. Feedback from Rother DC – 27/07/17**

##### **1. What particular evidence should we draw on to develop a compelling SEP narrative?**

Evidence of business growth & exports outside UK – net wealth generation contribution to the UK economy

Evidence of successful project delivery – e.g. Bexhill/ Hastings Link Road, NE Bexhill infrastructure and sites

##### **2. What are the main strategic assets of the SELEP economy?**

(For E Sussex)

Geography – i.e. proximity to London, Gatwick, Channel Tunnel & ports whilst at the same time offering a sense of seclusion

Attractive environment allied with world class cultural assets drawing international visitors

Innovative and competitive small enterprises trading internationally in niche markets

##### **3. How can we invest in these assets to achieve a source of international competitive advantage?**

Invest in communications infrastructure – broadband + 4G/5G to enable flexible working

Invest in public realm & town centres and ‘place shaping’ to enhance coastal towns competitiveness as attractive, affordable and viable places to live, work and invest

Invest in Culture led regeneration – based around increasing audiences, venue capacity and support for artists – as highlighted in the Creative Economy Prospectus (‘Towards a National Prospectus for the Creative Economy in the South East’) High Speed rail link - improve connectivity to London & Europe

Strategic South coast road improvements

Invest in developing skills base and in developing innovation in SME’s - supply chain development, knowledge transfer

Investment and support for existing and emerging clusters of businesses, eg high tech, creative

Invest in commercial site development to facilitate SME needs and growth

##### **4. How can investment in these assets help maximise their contribution to economic growth?**

A sizable proportion of the working population of the SELEP area live in underperforming local economies, most of which are coastal towns affected by long-term economic decline (evidenced by Prof. Fothergill research and others). Coastal towns are now re-positioning their economies by building on their USP, i.e. environment /quality of life coupled with affordability relative to London, to convert these into competitive advantage and stimulate economic growth.

In Bexhill, investment in the Bexhill/Hastings Link Road is now facilitating housing and commercial development and growth. Alongside this, and equally important, significant investment has taken place in its major cultural asset (the De La Warr Pavilion) supported by investment in the surrounding public realm, which has acted as a catalyst for private sector investment in the town. The Council is also looking to invest significantly in upgrading its leisure facilities.

Investing in the areas listed under Q3 will enable Bexhill and other coastal economies them to continue to build on their economic assets to improve performance.

**5. How can we invest in our strategic assets to help reduce their long-term dependency on the public purse?**

Enhance Partnership Delivery

**6. What can the LEP and partners do better together in the future to maximise economic growth in the SELEP area?**

Better engagement / co-operation with communications infrastructure providers – Broadband and 4G/5G services to improve coverage

Likewise, with utilities providers who can often delay or inhibit development

Continue to develop working partnerships between employers and education / skills providers to align workforce skills development with business requirements. Working through existing networks including HAREN (Hastings and Rother Education Network)

**7. What existing and new partnerships are needed to maximise the potential of these assets?**

Continue to develop partnership between employers and education & skills providers, (Skills East Sussex, HAREN) to stimulate change in working arrangements and encourage flexible approaches to delivery.

Continue to promote Developers East Sussex partnership to engage with utilities and hold them to account.

Ensure that SELEP board takes note and acts on issues raised.

Continue to support the Coastal Communities Partnership as a vehicle for collaborative working and lobbying for common interests.

Support for the delivery of the Creative Economy Prospectus

Ensure SELEP has effective communication and influence with Openreach and other comms providers to develop communications networks, especially in rural areas

**8. How should we prioritise challenges/barriers that are holding back the local economy and what actions should be taken to overcome these?**

See answer to 7 above; also

Address marginal viability of commercial development by supporting local scheme infrastructure projects

Resist loss of employment sites to housing use

Support development of SME's in high value-added sectors, including supply chain development, innovation support and knowledge transfer

**9. What projects do you consider to be a future priority?**

Development of BX3 land at NE Bexhill

Public realm investment and place-shaping projects (culture & leisure focus, e.g. Bexhill Leisure Centre; public realm in town centre and seafront, other capital assets; commercial and public investment at Camber) to enhance the attraction and appeal of coastal towns as viable locations to live, work and invest.

Coastal towns are prioritising these areas to invest in order to develop their own competitive advantage as a catalyst for change. This does not seem to be understood fully by SELEP and should be reflected in the economic plan.

## **5. Feedback from Hastings Community Network – 28/07/17**

Hastings Community Network brings together the views of the voluntary sector organisations in Hastings. For this consultation we have drawn upon conversations with those involved in delivering services in economic inclusion, community development and social enterprises working with disadvantaged communities. The feedback puts the case for inclusion as a core priority of the plan. It is hoped that this will lead to more detailed face to face consultation with SELEP to unpack the necessarily brief bullets made below.

### **Vision: what we would love the economy to become.**

Hastings Community Network envisage an economy whose prosperity is inclusive of the entire population. Coastal communities like Hastings benefit from an economic strategy that has targeted the potential of the young, disabled, and the long-term excluded.

Examples that would manifest this would include:

- Embedding the innovation of job-carving as a practice in both the public and private sectors that create opportunities for those with disabilities to develop skills and gain work experience.
- More successful social enterprises providing a wider scope of intermediate labour markets that have learnt from models whose activities deliver direct local benefit.
- A fresh approach that trusts the community itself to overcome stalled regeneration programmes (e.g. Ore Valley Millennium Community) that results in workshops, self-build schemes, housing whose tenure is inclusive of supportive housing.
- The required guidance and support is in place for successful transitions from benefits to work including navigating affordable child care opportunities.

### **Changes & Challenges**

HCN feel the approach to inclusion should be reassessed to capture the opportunities in the present context of change. The agenda of Brexit, Localism, Social Value Act and Welfare Reform together open up potential for rethinking how people can enter the workplace in a more sustainable way and how this can be supported by the potential relaxing of procurement rules. For example:

- Universal Credit allows smoother entry into the workplace without the deterring barrier of the financial stresses of collapsing and restarting claims.
- Welfare Reform will bring many people off long-term out-of-work benefits into work readiness. The SE coastal communities have concentrations of these populations and it follows that there should be entry jobs in these areas.
- State Aid for social enterprise is enabled by full exploitation of the present exemption rules around mission and behaviour. If Brexit leads to permitting the development of local supply chains, this could be supported by robust Social Value outcomes accompanying funding.
- This could lead to the innovative thinking that challenges the traditional inward investment that builds infrastructure (with outside jobs) on the premise that employment will follow. The challenge is to unite the

aims of ERDF and ESF streams and involve the local community itself in building and developing the opportunities. This requires prioritising social value to create a level playing field for such proposals.

- The need for support for transition to work persists: funding, which may have come from European structural funds, will still be required to deliver adult learning, navigate child care and build development capacity in social enterprise. (We have some survey results of child care providers in relation to recent changes.)

### **Firmer Financial Footing to Attract Funding**

Inclusion underpins the above points and the emphasis is on developing skills, local institutions and improving procurement. While the partnerships exist to prioritise these, it does ask for a rebalancing towards bottom-up innovation. The aim is to build on the existing narrative for coastal communities and reframe the participation in prosperity.

There has been much research that has analysed the challenges in coastal communities and used to support inclusive approaches in previous plans at various levels. Much of the evidence demonstrates need by statistics of localised deprivation but has perhaps failed to convey insights such as the support cliff edge experienced by those with disabilities on turning 19.

This evidence then should be enhanced by analysis of economic benefit along the lines of the health equalities mapping used by Hastings and Rother Clinical Commissioning Group. We also suggest drawing on more recent learning from the Future Jobs Fund and in particular the experience in Hastings. There is particular concern that there has been strategic drift on making the SE the capital of Social Enterprise and local experience should be drawn on to inform reinvigorating this aim.

HCN is not comfortable in evidencing the need for structural resources to achieve inclusion only through negative statistics. While these facts are important, alone they risk reinforcing the exclusion. We would like to develop a narrative that builds confidence in the asset of the unused productivity of the coastal communities and that inverts the lack of connectivity between them. This requires examples of successes to date for real people and then to commit to a pipeline of successes that can testify to inclusive regeneration on an international stage.

## **6. Feedback from Eastbourne and Lewes District Councils – 28/7/17**

### **1. What would we love the economy to become?**

- Increasingly diversified, offering greater upskilling and training opportunities.
- More resilient to external threats (linked to greater diversification & rebalancing). This will be particularly important in a post-Brexit environment.
- Improved infrastructure and built environment where people and businesses can access the amenities and services they need
- An economy where businesses can grow and thrive, with an emphasis on the sectors that will deliver real growth in the future, but which does not ignore established sectors.

### **2. How will we cope with the changes/challenges we face?**

- Working in partnership and across boundaries (e.g. Team East Sussex, Greater Brighton, Lewes DC & Eastbourne BC stronger together)
- More flexibility accessing funds from SELEP
- Being more entrepreneurial as local authorities. This means better using our capital assets to enable growth. We need to do this in partnership with the private sector, and not by crowding the private sector out.

**3. How can we move to a more sustainable financial footing, attracting more funds to achieve better outcomes?**

- Overcoming the infrastructure challenges that face the region – particularly around rail, road and broadband.
- Working together to better achieve our ambitions (e.g. Team East Sussex, Greater Brighton, Lewes DC & Eastbourne BC stronger together).
- Working with private developers, landowners and businesses (e.g. Newhaven Enterprise Zone, North Street Quarter and Eastbourne’s Arndale Centre)

**1. What particular evidence should we draw on to develop a compelling SEP narrative?**

- Some parish / ward level data which shows where pockets of deprivation exist in generally affluent areas – need to emphasise disparities within areas to encourage inclusive growth.
- Business survey – what do our businesses want and need in terms of support? What are their biggest challenges & threats? How can we address these? Specifically
- Business demographics and niche markets, with a focus on smart specialisation: i.e. focusing on the sectors that will deliver growth. There is a role for the universities of Brighton and Sussex (who have a presence in both Lewes and Eastbourne) in this.
- Strengths and opportunities in exports and inward investment need looking at in particular in the post-Brexit environment.

**2. What are the main strategic assets of the SELEP economy?**

- Quality of life – the coast and the South Downs are a compelling offer (for East Sussex at least)
- Proximity to London, and our location as a key land and sea gateway to Europe & beyond, as well as major airports (e.g. Gatwick & Stansted)
- High % of micro and small businesses point to a culture of entrepreneurialism.
- Newhaven Port and Enterprise Zone
- Tourism, Arts, heritage & culture – including Devonshire Quarter, Glyndebourne and South Downs

**3. How can we invest in these assets to achieve a source of international competitive advantage?**

- Work with private land owners (e.g. Newhaven Port & Properties) to maximise economic benefit derived from activities. This includes working collaboratively with French owners of the port.
- Invest indirectly in infrastructure improvements that support growth of key strategic assets (e.g. improvements to A27, A26 & A259 supporting Newhaven Port).



- Create the right conditions to enable growth of small businesses, through support and grants and loans – particularly those with exporting potential.
- We need to develop a clear inward investment and export strategy that crystalizes the clear offer the region has to foreign investors and consumers.

**4. How can investment in these assets help maximise their contribution to economic growth?**

- Through creating new investment opportunities for existing and external businesses, creating jobs and direct, indirect and induced expenditure in the local economy.
- By investing in the region’s strained infrastructure that threatens the economic growth potential of our assets. For example, the asset that is the region’s proximity to London is being eroded by the lack of capacity on the Brighton Mainline and the poor service being offered by Southern Rail. New and improved rail solutions need to be delivered in the next investment round.
- All of the sites in the Newhaven Enterprise Zone have significant potential as a key growth location in the SELEP region.

**5. How can we invest in our strategic assets to help reduce their long-term dependency on the public purse?**

- Local Authorities can work to actively unlock and enable private sector investment. Examples in our area include Eastbourne Arndale Centre, the Devonshire Quarter and the Newhaven Enterprise Zone.
- Joint Venture collaboration between the private and public sectors can deliver growth, for example the North Street Quarter in Lewes.
- All of these investments can help to build the business rates base of the two councils. The Newhaven EZ shows what councils can do with enhanced freedoms on business rates.
- Lewes and Eastbourne have an Energy and Sustainability Joint Venture – Procurement and investment tool for EBC and LDC. This is a long-term partnership to deliver capital projects with energy and sustainability objectives and shows how local authorities can act innovatively to deliver growth potential in a way reduces cost to the public purse.

**6. What can the LEP and partners do better together in the future to maximise economic growth in the SELEP area?**

- By Offering strategic locations for business and housing centres with the connectivity and infrastructure needed to support the growth of these centres. Examples include the Newhaven Enterprise Zone where we have identified an area for employment in the Greater Brighton region, and (outside of our area) we have other very strong examples to emulate like the Midlands Engine structure which offers strategic direction. We need to enable these by maximising funding opportunities.
- The LEP is critical to encouraging working across boundaries. The goal is to create a strong Southern brand similar to the Midlands Engine or Northern Powerhouse that makes the most of what we have. The LEP needs to be part of this.

- More flexibility accessing funds from SELEP would be good. In particular, LGF (or similar) funding calls with much longer periods of being open so there is not a rush to put forward projects that are not completely ready. A longer call would lead to a steadier pipeline of well-developed projects.

#### **7. What existing and new partnerships are needed to maximise the potential of these assets?**

- As above, the goal is to create a strong Southern brand similar to the Midlands Engine or Northern Powerhouse that makes the most of what we have.

#### **8. How should we prioritise challenges/barriers that are holding back the local economy and what actions should be taken to overcome these?**

- It is clear that the SELEP area has plenty of entrepreneurial spirit, but this needs investment in infrastructure to unlock it and maximise it's potential. Investing (or lobbying government to invest) in this infrastructure should help with this. In particular, SELEP needs to take a robust role within Transport for the South East to ensure the SNTB does not invest in areas outside of SELEP.
- Through identifying those projects where intervention will either generate the greatest benefit or where it plays a critical role in rebalancing local economies and addresses wealth inequality within a local area.
- Through identifying the key growth sectors to target ('Smart Specialisation')

#### **9. What projects do you consider to be a future priority?**

- Newhaven Enterprise Zone – 25-year plan to 2042
- As set out above, Infrastructure and connectivity is key. This means investment in the A27 east of Lewes, the A259 coast road, the rail link to London and the broadband infrastructure in the region. These are the fundamental priorities for both Lewes and Eastbourne.
- Securing sites for employment use in particular those that generate higher value jobs and businesses to deliver long term growth to rebalance economies, example Sovereign Harbour Innovation Park in Eastbourne.

#### **7. Meeting with Thames Gateway Kent Partnership – 31/07/17**

- The SEP needs to state what our relationship with London is (are we serving London in the right way?)
- The SEP needs to set clear ambitions – maybe some proof points (to become the economy we would love to become, we must...1.,2.,3....)
- The SEP must show HOW we are going to GROW the economy and not just be focussed on housing. Housing isn't the complete answer to growth.
- The SEP must state the high-level ambitions which unite the federated areas.
- And state that the gateway is delivering housing growth for London and acts as the gateway to Europe and the rest of the world.
- The SEP's primary challenge is speaking to Gov as well as well as a business voice. The SEP is perhaps a business voice moderated by public sector agencies.
- Thames Gateway can position itself as having the biggest growth potential – in relation to the pan LEP narrative.

- The SEP could cite local plans to overcome the spatial/evidence base/bidding doc of old issue and entail link back to federated model.

**“A reflection on achievements and developments in the past ten years”**

**Key message: *Much has been achieved over the past ten years but much more could have been done with sustained, consistent and timely Government intervention, investment and commitment to the Gateway in Kent.***

There has been tangible, significant and wide-ranging achievement in the Thames Gateway in Kent over the past ten years. The “Gateway” has provided a regional focus, a means of engaging with central Government and has, at least partially, injected momentum into growth and development. The “Gateway” concept has the potential in the future to ensure that a set of issues, which may at first seem local, are in fact a fundamental part of delivering national housing and employment objectives.

Achievements include:

1. Ebbsfleet Garden City – with well over 500 new homes completed by the end of 2017/18 and a commitment to deliver 5,100 homes by 2021.
2. Chatham Maritime – the transformation of the former naval dockyards into thriving business, education, leisure and residential community: 12,000 square metres of office space, 7,000 residents and 10,000 students.
3. High Speed rail services and other rail improvements– New stations have opened at Dartford and Rochester. High speed services have transformed connectivity with London, making Ebbsfleet 17 minutes from central London and massively cutting journey times from other North Kent stations. These services are now however operating at – or over – capacity.
4. Improvements to the road network that have helped to promote growth and support development: the widening and realignment of the A2 to four lanes (2007-2009); Northern Relief Road, Sittingbourne (2011); Rushenden Relief Road on the Isle of Sheppey (2011), Gravesend transport quarter first phase (2011); Sheppey Crossing (2006). But: the strategic road network in North Kent remains under significant strain. Kent’s major routes are a key part of the national road network, as the gateway to continental Europe and this increases this strain significantly.
5. Successful business parks have grown in North Kent to be major employers, e.g. Eurolink, Sittingbourne (6,000 jobs: 3 million square feet of new commercial development in Swale since 2008), and Crossways, Dartford (6,000 jobs). Good infrastructure and connectivity has been fundamental to these successes, but improvements are now needed to unlock further growth.
6. New centres for innovative businesses – e.g. the Nucleus at Dartford, Innovation Centre in Medway, as well as further growth of the successful Kent Science Park near Sittingbourne.
7. New, major development sites along North Kent – e.g. Ingress Park, The Bridge, Waterstone Park and Rochester Riverside.
8. The tourism and cultural offer in Medway, investment at the Medway Park centre of sporting excellence and across the suite of Chatham Dockyard and other attractions.
9. New further education college buildings at Dartford, Gravesham and Medway catering for more than 12,000 students. New university technical colleges at the Bridge, Dartford (800+ students) and at Medway.

**However,** changing priorities, slow decision-making and shifts in Government emphasis have all reduced the scale, scope and impact of these achievements:

1. Transport: there have been delays and a lack of urgency in transport infrastructure decision making. This, when combined with the recession, has frustrated development. For example, the Lower Thames Crossing has been mooted since 2006, the first consultation exercise ran in 2013, but only in 2017 did Government announce its preferred route, with the crossing opening at the earliest in 2025. Similar delays have affected proposed improvements to junctions on the A2 and further east on the M2. This also has a national impact. In

terms of the rail network, current forward planning work appears inadequate to meet future (or even present) needs.

2. There is a significant “infrastructure gap” across North Kent which is stymying and slowing the pace of development. Kent County Council’s Growth and Infrastructure Framework identifies a funding gap of over £1.1 billion up to 2031 for infrastructure (not just transport) in the Kent Thames Estuary area.
3. Individual local authorities are under increasing pressure to deliver the housing targets in their local plans, without acknowledgement from Government of the importance of infrastructure to achieving this. This is also driving a focus on quantity over quality, with the result that some new housing in the region is unimaginative and unsustainable.
4. Understanding “the Gateway”. Government has tried to make sense of the Gateway as a single entity and has considered the introduction of new governance arrangements to facilitate this. Government should acknowledge and engage with the complexity of institutions, partners and governance arrangements in the Gateway. Effort and energy should be focused on practical interventions, rather than introducing new bureaucratic structures.

### “The present situation”

**Key message: Much is already in place to deliver more significant housing, commercial and employment growth in the Gateway in Kent. Large-scale improvements to Infrastructure, and to transport infrastructure in particular, are key to unlocking this potential and realising these opportunities.**

The Industrial Strategy Green Paper showed that North Kent is not well understood by Government. The area does not enjoy the economic prosperity and benefit of other parts of the South East. The aggregating of economic data for the area with London and the south-east masks the real, challenging picture (Gross Value Added per head for North Kent is £21k, compared with £26k nationally and £44k in London). At the same time, this presents opportunities for growth and development unique in the South of England. The Gateway concept can help Government to recognise the real potential of the North Kent and to enable it to understand the investment, interventions and commitment needed to realise this.

Nowhere are investment, interventions and commitment more fundamentally and urgently needed than in transport infrastructure. Improvements are already needed to respond to demand created from historic growth. The role that Kent plays as the transport gateway to continental Europe creates additional pressure, as will future growth. There are a number of critical examples where intervention is urgently needed:

- Delivery of the Lower Thames Crossing, at pace, in a way that minimises community and environmental impacts, takes account of the wider knock-on effects elsewhere in the strategic road network in Kent and provides opportunities for growth, investment and development.
- Improvements to the A2/M2 – to prevent the dispersal of traffic problems from Lower Thames Crossing: the £100m commitment to improve junction 5 should be actioned; delays to the A2 Bean junction improvement work need to be resolved; junction 7 – Brenley Corner – also needs to be upgraded.
- M20/M2 links, and more generally, north-south road connectivity in Kent. Roads such as the A249 and A229 are critical to traffic movements both within the county but also as part of regional and national journeys.
- Rail capacity: Immediate capacity improvements are needed across the whole rail network in North Kent, but most pressingly on the High Speed 1 network from Ebbsfleet. Failure to address this rapidly will start to impede growth in North Kent. Creative, innovative and fast solutions are required to deliver additional high-speed rolling stock rapidly and to introduce shuttle services between Ebbsfleet and London St Pancras.
- Crossrail to Ebbsfleet: Extending Crossrail from Abbey Wood to Ebbsfleet can help to deliver the required uplift in system capacity, connectivity and resilience to the rail network in North Kent, supporting forecast growth and providing a crucial building-block for long-term ambitions for the Thames Estuary region.
- Better co-ordination of rail and road strategic planning. Recent consultations concerning the rail network in Kent have highlighted an absence of co-ordination with work to improve the strategic road network in the

region. Put simply: if more journeys – both commuter and freight – are shifted to the railways, this will massively reduce pressure on the county’s roads.

Infrastructure does not just mean transport. Kent’s Growth and Infrastructure Framework has identified a funding gap of over £1.1billion up to 2031 for wider infrastructure requirements in the Kent Thames Estuary area.

Absence of commercial space is also a critical challenge for the Gateway in Kent. The Government’s sustained push for new housing, particularly on brownfield sites, is crowding out commercial development opportunities. Returns on residential developments tend to beat commercial developments and militate against speculative development. The granting of permitted development rights for the conversion of offices to residential use has reduced the supply of town centre commercial premises across the Gateway in Kent. The Thames Estuary has 20% of the south east’s brownfield sites in 3% of the geographic area – there is therefore massive potential for commercial development and increased employment. This is an issue across the wider Gateway area. A sustainable balance needs to be found between encouraging residential development and creating communities that are economically viable.

#### **“Potential opportunities to 2030 and to 2050”**

***Key message: With the right support, commitment and investment from Government, the Thames Gateway in Kent has the potential to become a cluster of sustainable, balanced and thriving places that are fully benefiting from – but not reliant on – their proximity to London.***

**Thames Gateway Kent is an area going for growth:** with, in the period 2011-31 a projected population increase of 115,400 (+19%), supported by 58,600 new homes (+23%) and 59,100 new jobs (+24%). Raising the economic performance of Thames Gateway Kent to the South-East average would increase GVA by over £4 billion.

The ambition for the areas in the Gateway in Kent is to create thriving, prosperous places which are able to take full advantage of their excellent links to London, to the rest of the UK and to continental Europe. The post-industrial and post-mass tourism nature of the geography here presents real challenges, but equally provides an unparalleled set of opportunities extremely close to London. The overall objective is to create places that are attractive in their own right – for a host of reasons – and not simply seen as a cheaper alternative to London. This is already an area rich in a sense of place, local culture, heritage and pride. These foundations can and are being built on.

Government has a critical role to play in helping the Gateway realise this vision. Giving the Thames Estuary growth area the same priority as the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine would help to change the mindset, to raise expectations and to create momentum for further achievement.

This is one of the fastest-growing parts of the UK – Ebbsfleet is just one of many significant developments across the region. Increasing population numbers need to be complemented by sustainable local economies, supported by an appropriately trained and skilled workforce. The current skills gap in the Gateway in Kent – only 29% are trained to level four or higher, compared with 36% nationally – will need to be tackled as part of this.

The aim is for the Gateway area in Kent to be recognised as:

- An area of exciting towns and cities complemented by an outstanding natural environment, providing an exemplar of urban regeneration;

- A thriving business centre attracting leading investors and businesses through its diverse and skilled workforce, high-quality commercial sites and local services, and accessibility to transport links and strategic routes to UK and continental markets.
- An area of strong, integrated communities with harmony between new and existing business and residents – where the benefits of development and investment are shared by the whole community
- A vibrant cultural hub with a thriving social scene and civic pride – attracting a growing student population, bringing youth and vigour to the community.

Looking to the future, and building on these foundations, there is real potential over the next 30 years to develop a number of high productivity clusters in North Kent including:

- **medical, healthcare, life and bio-sciences** at Ebbsfleet, Medway, Maidstone and Kent Science Park;
- **advanced manufacturing and engineering** at Rochester, Gillingham and Sittingbourne;
- **cultural and creative industries and entertainment** hub in Dartford, Swanscombe (London Paramount), Medway and across the whole of the North Kent coast;
- the potential for **a connected, high-tech industries cluster or ‘arc’ running from Cambridge down to King’s Cross and through to South Essex and the Kent Innovation Corridor**. The Lower Thames Crossing, once completed, would serve to strengthen the connectivity of that arc.

Over the next 20 to 30 years the Gateway in Kent can enhance its national and international reputation further, becoming known as the best place in the country live, to invest, to visit and to work. The region can build on the excellent foundations achieved over the past ten years, generating the momentum to make an even bigger contribution to the national economy. And it can be flexible and agile enough to respond to and take advantage of future opportunities.

#### “Potential impacts if key priorities were not delivered”

**Key message: Not delivering key priorities in the Thames Gateway in Kent would have a significant impact not just on the region, but on the UK as a whole. Regionally, this could mean unsustainable, unbalanced dormitory towns, dependent on London for employment with only low paid, low skilled jobs available locally. Nationally, Kent is the UK’s principal transport gateway to continental Europe and the rest of the world. Investment in transport infrastructure in Kent already lags behind demand and this gap will get wider. Without a co-ordinated focus on and investment in transport infrastructure in Kent, the economic impact will be felt across the whole country.**

If the potential opportunities across the Thames Gateway in Kent were not realised, the impacts would be long-term and far-reaching – and have a significantly negative effect on the UK as a whole.

This starts with the region’s identity and sense of place. The Thames Gateway in Kent needs a stronger, more assertive, reputation: to become better known for its potential, for the opportunities in the area and for the advantages it possesses. Without this, the process of generating the momentum to unlock the wider, longer-term benefits – not just in terms of jobs and housing – would be far harder to achieve. Quality and distinctiveness of place are critical drivers for business and individual investment.

If investment and improvements to transport infrastructure were not delivered, the region would quickly become known as somewhere difficult to get to, and difficult to get around. An over-reliance on the private car would change the focus, scale and pace of development, increase pressure on the strategic road network and negatively affect health. Good connectivity, ease of access and convenient public transport enhance a place’s attractiveness and improve its quality of life. Poor transport infrastructure affects an area’s appeal as well as its ability to function.

The transport impacts do not just affect Kent: the region's strategic road network acts as the gateway to and from continental Europe. A failure to improve infrastructure – and to reduce reliance on the road network for commuter and freight journeys – would frustrate economic growth across the whole of the UK.

If the focus on delivering housing was solely driven by the need to achieve high volumes of new residential units, this would risk creating poor-quality, unimaginative homes without a sense of place. There needs to be a diversity of housing offer, catering to a range of needs – not just affordable housing whose sole advantage is that it is cheaper than London. Additional housing should be complemented by employment and commercial activity to support economic growth, and well-planned enhancements to infrastructure and amenities of all kinds to ensure that development is sustainable and builds communities rather than simply housing estates. In many places, a simple focus on housing numbers at all costs is limiting the opportunities to encourage commercial development.

The region needs to raise skill levels to create a diverse workforce able to support a sustainable, vibrant, broad-based economy. Failure to achieve this would perpetuate a post-industrial legacy of low-skills, where higher-skilled workers have to travel to London to work and businesses struggle to attract the brightest and best to enable them to grow. Combined with a poor housing offer, this would risk the emergence of indistinguishable dormitory towns, over-reliant on London for employment, further increasing the pressure on transport infrastructure and undermining the area's distinctiveness and attractiveness. It would also limit the region's contribution to the national economy.

Not realising the potential of the Thames Gateway in Kent could see businesses struggling to compete, hampered by local infrastructure, unable to recruit appropriately qualified staff locally and facing real challenges to find good-quality premises that would allow them to grow.

None of these challenges is insurmountable. Public and private sectors partners across the Thames Gateway in Kent need to work together, to promote the region's potential and to encourage the support, investment and commitment needed from government.

## **8. East Sussex County Council Officers Response – 28/07/17**

### **1. What particular evidence should we draw on to develop a compelling SEP narrative?**

#### **A) Economic Development and Business**

See response and documents already provided for SEP Engagement plan and subsequent e-mail attachments which have included:

- East Sussex in Figures (ESiF) website for data and analysis of datasets provided nationally, regionally and locally for comparisons etc. Also see Nomis and national statistics websites for key data on East Sussex.
- East Sussex County Council – Council plan 2017-18 and our 4 x key priorities for growing and supporting the East Sussex economy, residents and place. One of the 4 key priorities are 'driving economic growth'.  
<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/about/keydocuments/councilplan/>
- East Sussex Growth Strategy 2014
- ES Growth Strategy and Implementation Action plan  
<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/environment/planning/regeneration/growthstrategy/>
- Annual Business Surveys 2014 (last produced)-  
<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/community/local/factsandfigures/download>

- Our collective response to the Industrial Strategy (both the initial call for evidence and the subsequent Green Paper consultation)
- Three Southern Counties Devolution bid  
<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/about/keydocuments/devolution/>

## **B) Transport and Infrastructure**

- Our response to the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) call for evidence;
- Innovate East Sussex Strategy (plus technical annex).
- Local Transport Plan and implementation plan

<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/localtransportplan/ltp3/downloadltp3>

- Sub National transport body - ES Rail Strategy –  
<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/media/2384/railstrategyandactionplan.pdf>
- High Speed Rail economic case study -  
<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/roads/roadschemes/bexhill-hastings-high-speed-rail/>
- Transport for the South East (TfSE) priorities for Roads Investment Strategy 2

We can provide upon request more details on those 'key strategic priorities' as contained in publications / recent consultation responses including business cases on HS1, A27, A21, and consultations responses submitted on the SE rail franchise and Kent route study.

## **C) Environment**

- Environment Strategy for East Sussex  
<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/environment/priorities/environmentstrategy>
- Flood risk management strategy - 2016  
<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/environment/flooding/localfloodriskmanagementstrategy/>
- High Weald AONB Management Plan  
<http://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html>

## **D) Local Plans**

- x B/DC Local Plans and Infrastructure Development Plans IDP's
- Eastbourne - <http://www.eastbourne.gov.uk/about-the-council/council-policies-plans-and-strategies/planning-policy/development-plan/eastbourne-core-strategy-local-plan/>
- Lewes District - <http://www.lewes.gov.uk/planning/3498.asp>
- Wealden District -  
[http://www.wealden.gov.uk/Wealden/Planning\\_Policy/Local\\_Plan/CoreStrategy/Planning\\_Core\\_Strategy\\_Local\\_Plan.aspx](http://www.wealden.gov.uk/Wealden/Planning_Policy/Local_Plan/CoreStrategy/Planning_Core_Strategy_Local_Plan.aspx)
- Rother District - <http://www.rother.gov.uk/localplan>
- Hastings Borough - <https://www.hastings.gov.uk/planning/policy/>
- ESCC Waste and Minerals Plan



<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/environment/planning/development/mineralsandwaste/>

- Emerging Local Plan for the South Downs National Park Authority -

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/national-park-local-plan/>

#### **E) Skills and Employability:**

- Employability & Skills Strategy + Skills East Sussex (SES) Statement of Priorities:

<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/business/eastsussex/selep/ses/ses/>

- SES sector skills reports on each of the 9-x high growth, innovation and skills sectors – Already sent e-mail and weblink to our East Sussex in Figures (ESIF) website which contains these documents.
- SES action plan and key notional KPI's

#### **F) Culture and Tourism:**

- ES Cultural Strategy: <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/arts/development>

- Shared Intelligence report on creative economy in the SELEP area commissioned by South East Creative Economy Network (SECEN) (already supplied)

- SECEN Prospectus (already supplied)

- Geography of Creativity (NESTA): <http://www.nesta.org.uk/publications/geography-creativity-uk>

- Brighton Fuse report: <http://www.brightonfuse.com/the-brighton-fuse-final-report/>

(whilst not specific to East Sussex, the report nonetheless highlights a number of surprising and informative insights that advance our understanding of the processes of collective innovation in a modern, dynamic industrial cluster)

- Creative Industries Federation Freelance Report: <https://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/publications>

- National figures on growth of the creative economy – DCMS <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/creative-industries-worth-almost-10-million-an-hour-to-economy>

- Creative Industries Federation

<http://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/assets/userfiles/files/Industrial%20Strategy.pdf>

- CASE: DCMS, ACE and Sport England <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/case-programme> Benefits of taking part in culture and sport quantified.

- Tourism Data Warehouse:

<http://www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk/webview/index.jsp?catalog=http%3A%2F%2F10.128.25.249%3A80%2Fobj%2Fcatalog%2FCatalog29&submode=catalog&mode=documentation&top=yes>

#### **2. What are the main strategic assets of the SELEP economy?**

- Proximity to major regional, national and international markets
- Proximity and gateways to London and rest of wider South East and gateway to the Midlands Engine and Northern Powerhouse
- Proximity to Europe (via Newhaven, Dover/Channel Tunnel etc)

- International Gateways to rest of the globe via Heathrow and Gatwick, natural Capital assets, with internationally and nationally recognised assets and features, including Special Protection Areas (SPA's), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), a National Park and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- Largest population outside London –main asset is a higher skilled set of professionals than across rest of UK although skill levels vary across the SELEP area
- We have major assets in terms of energy and power across the SE LEP region (reservoirs, lakes, power stations, wind farms and so on
- A varied Housing mix and significant planned housing growth developments
- World class/national companies in a range of sectors
- A vibrant micro and small business community with significant higher levels of start-up and entrepreneurial activity than compared with other regions in UK.
- SE LEP businesses and households are net contributors to the UK treasury income
- High performing and specialist skills and education providers from the University 9 (U9) to acclaimed colleges, UTC's, academies, secondary and primary schools
- Strong pipeline of new flexible and open business workspaces
- Business friendly area that includes:
  - Enterprise Zones & Assisted Areas
  - Growth Hubs that offer extended, enhanced business support services to SELEP businesses
  - Clear Inward Investment offers that have been further enhanced with more support services to attract, retain and grow companies in the region
- Excellent superfast broadband coverage with more investment being made
- Strong networks, e.g. skills networks, Growth Hub business support networks
- An outstanding urban and rural environment
- A rich a varied cultural offer including growing cultural clusters
- A thriving and diverse range of assets across the visitor economy from historic castles to theme parks to major events/shows all year round surrounded by excellent coastlines, urban and rural centres.
- There is data to back up the following statements:
  - Relatively crime, violence and disorder is lower in the SELEP region so our communities are perceived to be safer, resilient and are supportive environments
  - Healthier lifestyles and longer life expectancy in the South East LEP area.
  - Some of the wealthiest areas in the country and influential / leading people enabling / stimulating growth in the SE LEP area.

**3. How can we invest in these assets to achieve a source of international competitive advantage?**

- Investment in our 'strategic infrastructure assets' can / will yield greater benefits for not just SE LEP but the wider UK plc e.g. investment in our Road / Rail / Airports, Ports facilities will then be able to increase trading activity as gateway routes for businesses and visitors. We will then be internationally competitive for business investment and trading compared with other countries and enable the movement of visitors who can then stay in the UK longer
- Investment is needed in energy/power and utilities to ensure the growth envisaged/expected in the south east can be accommodated and sustained. New green technologies need to be brought to the fore and implemented across our region.
- Other utilities also need investment, especially water (SELEP is classified as "water stressed") and timely investment in sewerage infrastructure as this has, in the past, held back growth in some localities
- Identify interventions and areas of support around innovation and growth to increase the number of high value businesses and support all businesses to move up the value chain and make further business connections across their supply chains.
- Capitalise on sector opportunities, such as: the freelance sector by developing appropriate open work space; developing supply chains, for example, in the high-tech manufacturing sector and growing viticulture industry; invest in environmental technologies
- Devolve full powers/flexibilities and funding for skills and educations for schools, CEIAG and adults to local boards to determine priorities and spend.
- Provision of high level skills training to meet the needs of our local employers and address sector skills gaps
- Investing and equipping training providers and existing teachers to deliver high level skills, especially the new 15 x technical skills (T-skills) levels
- Our universities as research institutions need to work even closer with business to rise to the productivity challenge to bring closer links and benefits from research to application in the real world, alongside ensuring more intellectual property is protected in the UK and patents are filed and received.
- Improve our education offer – evidence that many creatives are turning to home educating
- Improve sustainable transport options (for visitors/freelance economy) – creative sector tends to place high value on environmentally responsible life style options
- Business support and inward investment activities need significant investment in order to support international competitive advantage – this is critical in light of Brexit and trade barriers/reliefs/customs exercise/deals all needing additional resource to enable the UK but especially the South east due to its significant strategic assets of global and international importance to have strong propositions on inward investment and business support service operations, including effective place marketing of areas to the global markets for businesses and visitors
- Investment in natural assets which benefit the economy are key – for example, river diversions to prevent flooding, improving sustainable access to our environmental assets etc. In particular investment should be

made where environmental assets are “at risk” and/or in an unfavourable condition (the Ashdown Forest in East Sussex, for example, is subject to increasing levels of nitrogen deposition). Investment in improving conditions would help to support growth potential in the wider area

#### 4. **How can investment in these assets help maximise their contribution to economic growth?**

- Need to invest in improving connectivity between key gateways (e.g. our ports, airports) and key economic centres at national (London) and sub national corridors (e.g. from our perspective, Bexhill/Hastings; Eastbourne/Newhaven).
- Enhance our road network with investment in strategic road network and emerging major road network (MRN) concept as in the Government’s new Transport Investment Strategy (TIS), termed a sister document to the Industrial Strategy. Improve journey time reliability, resilience of the network and give business confidence that people and goods will get to/from their destination (e.g. A27, A21). This should be accompanied alongside further investment in digital infrastructure (broadband and mobile) in all its forms. Therefore, businesses more likely to continue to locate in East Sussex or invest in existing business or potentially relocate to the county.
- Improve rail connectivity to London and Gatwick as well as Heathrow (via Cross Rail) as well as High Speed Rail into East Sussex - £354m benefits to local Hastings and Bexhill economy; £123m to national economy
- Second runway at Gatwick – supports local business in East Sussex in terms of international connectivity but also benefits accrued from additional jobs created directly or indirectly from additional runway – currently 6% of Gatwick workforce resides in East Sussex.
- Investment in STEM, digital and creative thinking to provide innovation embedded from early on in the school’s system
- Devolve adult education budgets to local areas to ensure that skills funding is working for the needs of the local economy
- Remove limitations to current growth – lack of access to skilled workforce, awareness of finance available not the amount / access to it; training existing workforce
- Investments in areas / corridors of growth will not only enable growth outside of London but support the key economic, social and environmental regenerative benefits to the local economies and drive forward the key priority sectors of growth within both federated areas and across the SE LEP as a whole creating a more balanced economy with access to jobs more locally.
- Co-design infrastructure with the sectors who we want to attract – and capture headlines as an innovative, forward thinking area.
- Investment in our natural capital and environmental assets we hold will complement the drive towards further economic growth and create the place and environments that residents, visitors and businesses want to be living, working and playing in.

**5. How can we invest in our strategic assets to help reduce their long-term dependency on the public purse?**

- Public investment needs to be made in infrastructure and skills otherwise it will compromise the ongoing significant contribution made from this area to the UK economy. If investment is not forthcoming, it risks creating a legacy that will stifle growth and productivity.
- However, there is recognition that the public sector does not have the capital to provide the infrastructure all of the area's needs. The private sector will want to be clear on their return on investment.
- There are examples of infrastructure investment taking place using slightly different methods, for example, Chiltern Railways were able to upgrade their London to Oxford route as Network Rail provided the capital for the upgrade and they will recover the costs via a facility charge from the current and any subsequent franchises.
- Aware that the new Department for International Trade (DIT) is, post Brexit, raising the profile of Britain and exploring the opportunities for major financial investment from overseas investors and countries. In East Sussex we have already submitted an application that is now being assessed at the final stage for 5 x commercial development sites across Bexhill.
- Establish further public / private regeneration and / or property arms operating within federated areas / across SE LEP that will invest in assets by acquiring and/or developing new that will lead to future returns in investment and/or to be sold on for profit that can then be re-invested back into the priorities of the area – all leading to reducing dependency upon public purse.
- Increase joint working with Higher Education and Further Education (HE) / (FE) to improve innovation and product development and take up on intellectual property rights and patent protection thus securing further income back to HE/FE from supporting local businesses.
- Encouraging co-design of physical infrastructure and the systems and processes to release investment
- Seek digital and/or renewable solutions
- Business engagement in the long-term sustainability of specialist training facilities
- Shaping the curriculum in schools, FE and HE to create ladders of opportunities, grow our own, and creating opportunities for business to engage and influence this.
- Providing opportunities to upskill unemployed and those furthest from the labour market thus reducing dependency on state unemployment and housing benefits etc

**6. What can the LEP and partners do better together in the future to maximise economic growth in the SELEP area?**

- Need to make a stronger case to Government and respective departments about the value propositions that this LEP has compared to others and what we can offer back to central Government more than others. As such a stronger lobbying input, statement responses, accompanied with a more powerful voice and presence is

required from the SE LEP team / SE LEP Chair and Vice Chairs in positioning the SE LEP as the LEP to be consulted with / spoken with first by Government.

- SE LEP partners need to continue to look at further models of integration of services, activities, devolution of powers and responsibilities from central government across many funded programmes to enable more local flexibility to focus the resources on the priority requirements of the areas.
- Whilst there continues to be a need for flagship and transformational projects there should also be clear recognition of the value and importance of maintaining and improving what we have today as strategic assets, along with a greater focus on place making and clusters as has been expressed in the Government's Industrial Strategy.
- Recognise skills as one of 3 core pillars of economic growth – infrastructure and supporting business growth and we would probably add here PLACE shaping too.
- Work with funding bodies to co-commission skills related funding to meet local priorities
- Co-ordinated use of funding streams to maximise benefits (e.g. GPF/LGF or future equivalents (i.e. Housing Infrastructure Fund and UK Prosperity Fund) used to fund a multitude of areas including site infrastructure, delivery of sites and current EU funded programmes around Business support/inward investment, skills and rural economy support
- Better blending of funding sources between LEP and partners (public and private)
- The creative sector and the freelance economy require smaller scale infrastructure – the partnership would benefit from thinking small, believing that this investment will be greater than the sum of the parts and will represent less stress on infrastructure (e.g.: less commuter journeys)

#### **7. What existing and new partnerships are needed to maximise the potential of these assets?**

- Partnerships that join up better economic priorities with linked social, environmental, cultural and health priorities – understanding the wider social context that economic growth takes place within
- Establish better partnership working with neighbouring LEPS
- Transport for the South East (TfSE) the sub national transport body will support growth and their work will ultimately lead to productivity improvements especially with Highways England and Network Rail present.
- This LEP has struggled to grapple with the energy / utility companies / Mobile Network operator's firms responsible for both delivering on current programmes effectively but also joining up on their future plans/priorities compared with our agreed plans on economic growth and local development plans etc... If there was a TSAR or forum in which utility firms could be held to statutory account this would create the conditions for accelerated economic growth.
- Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) need revitalising with the appropriate resourcing in place. Need to be represented on LEPS to ensure the environment is built into growth plans and is seen as an opportunity to support growth rather than a block to it.
- Continue with the 'South East 7' and enhance and expand remit of operations and partners involved.

- A louder voice for the digital sector – either by developing SECEN or creating an additional sub group
- Similar to above a greater voice for commercial developers – which are currently supported under the SE LEP Housing group and more so in the federated board areas i.e. Developers East Sussex.
- A visitor economy group is required which is led by visitor economy businesses rather than by Destination Management Organisations
- Build on existing Skills East Sussex work with sector task groups, and supporting infrastructure e.g. Apprenticeships East Sussex

**8. How should we prioritise challenges/barriers that are holding back the local economy and what actions should be taken to overcome these?**

- Prioritise interventions that are likely to reduce any possible negative effect of Brexit
- Consider productivity in balance with burden on existing infrastructure (less focus on FTEs and more focus on individuals being economically active)
- Challenge centralised policies about what constitutes economic resilience
- Understand the value of our natural assets and protect/enhance them by considering them from the start in plans for growth.
- Main barriers holding back the local economy are lack of skills, transport infrastructure, lack of appropriate housing (particularly affordable), lack of appropriate and affordable workspaces. Difficult to prioritise these as all are important and need addressing (are mutually inclusive) in order for a successful economy in East Sussex.
- Need to invest in our future ‘connectivity’ - transport and digital infrastructure
- Need co-ordinated skills strategy linked to needs of business and then the funding to be aligned and distributed accordingly to educational establishments/providers to deliver on priority sectors / curriculums required in the local / regional areas.
- Delivery of housing linked to viability or delivery of infrastructure – therefore enabling off site or site enabling infrastructure to be delivered in order to encourage housing delivery faster. Funding streams such as the £2.3 billion Housing Infrastructure Fund (10% of the overall fund) to assist and others to come forward under the Government’s £23billion - Home Building Fund (HBF). To push for a reform of the CIL arrangements to ensure that infrastructure necessary to unlock development is delivered in a timely manner.
- Delivery of housing in East Sussex also will be influenced by availability of suitable land and environmental impacts (nitrogen deposition on Ashdown Forest) – could influence future housing growth in the county and wider area not just in East Sussex.
- Changes to planning legislation (much of which has been identified in the Housing White Paper) to ensure up to date and robust Local Plans are in place to provide more certainty to the development industry to build and invest sooner.

**9. What projects do you consider to be a future priority?**

- Projects to improve connectivity in its widest sense (transport and digital infrastructure)
- Main strategic priorities:
- Strategic Road
- A27 Corridor - Lewes – Polegate off-line dual carriageway and associated improvements to A27 junctions west of Lewes
- A21 Corridor - Kippings Cross to Lamberhurst dual carriageway; Flimwell and Hurst Green localised improvements
- Rail
- High Speed Rail to Rye, Hastings, Bexhill and Eastbourne - infrastructure investment via Kent Route Study and rolling stock via the South-Eastern franchise
- Brighton mainline capacity improvements
- Electrification of Uckfield line
- Digital Infrastructure:
- Digital and mobile infrastructure capacity and coverage
- Other projects of future priority:
- Additional aviation capacity in the south east
- Investment in our Port infrastructure
- Major Road Network (MRN) concept which sits between strategic roads (Highways England responsibility) and our local road network
- Sustainable forms of transport infrastructure and new transport technology (electric vehicles, smartcard travel, semi-automated/automated vehicles)
- Others for consideration:
- Clusters of open workspace for principally creative and freelance economy
- Ever closer relationship between education and industry: preparation for the future workplace and of course innovation and development of business ideas to ensure the continued growth of our companies in the markets they serve.
- Every business to understand the value of existing digital tools and maximising them (e.g.: TripAdvisor, Google Maps)
- Properly equipped and world leading training facilities and resources for our top priority sectors – Construction, Engineering, Health and Social Care, Digital and Creative, Land based, Visitor economy (food production), Finance and business.
- Creating technical expertise through Continual Professional Development (CPD) for Further Education staff with support of business and industry engagement
- Projects and interventions that stimulate learning pathways into priority sectors from schools, unemployed, through FE and HE.



## 9. Response from Dover District Council – 03/08/17

Having listened to your recent presentation at KMEP, we at Dover welcome the opportunity to respond to you from a number of different perspectives.

At a strategic level, we are very conscious of how the geographic foundation of the SELEP area was established and how this has helped to foster the process for comprehensive decision making on strategic matters such as the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC). DDC, along with the Port of Dover and others has long advocated the need for joined-up thinking on such infrastructure. While the recent decision by the Secretary of State in respect of the LTC is to be most welcomed, it is, of course, only part of the picture.

The five East Kent Districts, along with KCC, are also currently refreshing the East Kent Growth Framework. It should be noted that the following four key objectives have been identified in the draft Growth Framework and will help to define the place that we wish East Kent and our respective districts to be:

- **Unlocking development through infrastructure** – identified sites for growth need supporting transport and digital infrastructure, particularly upgrading and making better use of our road and rail networks (particularly High Speed 1) to enhance international connectivity while enabling local accessibility;
- **Delivery of business space** – we want to deliver the next-generation of modern commercial space for our business start-ups, encouraging existing businesses to scale-up, and to help attract new mobile investment into the area while driving forward the development of our brownfield sites;
- **Supporting productivity within business** – creating an environment for innovation in productivity improvements, supporting businesses to grow and move up the value chain, encouraging faster broadband, ensuring that businesses have the skills to grow and that our skills base continues to improve and is linked to the success of our higher education and further education sectors creating talent; and
- **Place making and shaping** – East Kent is a fabulous place to live, work, holiday and invest. We want to improve the perception of people's idea of East Kent and make it a location of first choice that retains and attracts young people, families and entrepreneurs, while at the same time maximising the potential of the natural assets we hold, enhancing our town centres and ensuring a high quality built environment.

It should be noted that the scale of ambition, potential and opportunity across East Kent, has the ability to deliver some 37,400 jobs and 84,600 dwellings at a strategic and local level across the area.

This opportunity will, however, only be realised if the necessary supporting infrastructure is put in place.

Consequently, it has been suggested that, subject to formal approval by each district and EKRB, priority should be afforded to the following three key strategic priorities which partners recognise as being crucially important for the future of East Kent and therefore prioritise these above all others:

1. Strategic network improvements to A2/M2 required to support the new Lower Thames Crossing, the growth of Canterbury and the Port of Dover;
2. M20/A20 improvements including junction 10a, the proposed lorry holding area, HGV overnight parking and access to Dover; and

3. Improvements to rail capacity, speeds, frequency and associated infrastructure including Ashford SPURS, Westenhanger Station enhancement, and Thanet Parkway.

On the matter of the need for strategic infrastructure, events of the past weekend as articulated by the attached tweeted articles help define the urgent need for resolution of and delivery of key infrastructure. Adding in the potential 'Brexit' dimension raises the spectre of a tsunami of possible disruption heading our way which could very easily see an Operation Stack situation become the norm (which, from the experiences in 2015, would very quickly start to paralyse UK Plc)!

At this point, I also enclose a paper prepared by Charlie Elphicke, MP, on the issue of Brexit, entitled Ready on day One – Meeting the Brexit Borders Challenge. This provides further narrative on the matter. I also enclose a further tweet from earlier in the week which highlights the possibility that free movement across borders may be restricted.

Clearly, this ever-changing scenario will have significant implications for the SELEP area. At a local level, we, aside from bearing the brunt of possible huge disruption to the business community, residents and the like, also face another challenge. I enclose a briefing paper on the issue of Port Health. This will inevitably affect all Port Health Authorities across the SELEP area to a greater or lesser degree and therefore needs urgent consideration.

Changing subjects, but returning to the theme of what we wish the area to look like, we also aware of the need to consider the coastal community influence within the SELEP area given that some 25% of the population within the SELEP area reside in a coastal community. While a Coastal Community Group has been established, this needs to be reinvigorated with a champion at SELEP and greater recognition of the role that these areas can play in supporting the SELEP economy moving forward.

There is, of course, also an issue around the future of European funding post Brexit. While a number of localities across the SELEP area, particularly some of the coastal areas, have been successful in securing European funding, the future of such funding is very uncertain. Clearly, other parts of the UK are already staking a claim for the Government to provide compensatory funding programmes for the loss of European funding. A strong marker therefore needs to be put down to try and capture a slice of any future funding for the SELEP area, with particular emphasis on the coastal localities where needs are greatest and the opportunity and appetite for growth is evident.

In recognising the need to support productivity in business, there are a number of key sectors within Dover that have impact and reach beyond our administrative boundary. These include science and pharma at Discovery Park, the emerging land management and food security/technology hub with Hadlow at Betteshanger and Viking Maritime at Dover who are majoring on the marine sector. Discovery Park and Viking Maritime are both engaging with higher and further education providers while Hadlow are already established in this field. More resilience needs to be put in place such that the skills sectors can grow to meet the needs of current and future business across East Kent while providing comprehensive opportunities for the communities in the area.

Lastly, there is also a need to consider the changing face of health and social care needs across the SELEP area. To this end, I also enclose a paper and supporting documents prepared by Dr Robert Stewart which respond to your

questions and provide a framework based on how future health and social care could be delivered more effectively across the area and which is capable of being scaled-up accordingly.

#### **10. Response from Hastings Borough Council – 08/08/17**

Hastings Borough Council would like to request a specific meeting to discuss these issues going forward as we believe our position and that of the coast in general needs to play a far more significant role in the future.

1. Hastings Council is fully engaged in the Federated LEP (TES) structure in East Sussex and aware that partners will be submitting responses following the recent discussion at the TES Board. We are also committed to meeting with our partners in the Coastal Group and the LEP to bring financial approaches, which will enable the coast to increase its contributions to the regional and national economy.
2. However, the council wishes to add a perspective of its own. We intend this to focus on the opportunities and potential of the Hastings travel to work area which includes much of the surrounding area, but the links to Bexhill (as a co-terminus urban area) and the wider area in terms of an attractive offer to incoming residents, investors and visitors are clear. We also believe there is an agenda of relevance to coastal communities in all 3 counties within SELEP where a number of these like Hastings, Margate, Ramsgate and Clacton, but also Dover and Folkestone have distinctly urban agendas and can help transform the region's economy.
3. Historically governments at all levels have regarded the coast as peripheral. There are a number of reasons for this but since the decline of the traditional tourism market in the 1960s substantial towns have struggled for an economic and social reason to exist. Unfortunately, bad transport links and vacant housing produced a new economy of benefit dependence and low skills.
4. However, this period ended some time ago and there is a pace and vigour in many coastal towns that has not been seen before in living memory (yes this is really true). To some extent the change is not understood nationally or within parts of local communities – yet.
5. In reviewing the position in Hastings, it is apparent that transformation has begun. Significant sums have been and are being invested:
  - 3 new town centre offices focused on employment
  - An enviro corridor of business buildings
  - A new College premises built on 2 sites
  - A new Academy school constructed
  - Refurbished station
  - Construction of the Bexhill/Hastings link road
  - Construction of University buildings (this not successfully sustained)
  - Re-opening/refurbishment of Hastings Pier
  - Conversion of derelict underground complex into Europe's largest BMX/skateboarding underground venue – The Source

- Winning the Jerwood Gallery for Hastings and the development of the Gallery and accompanying performance and visitor area
  - Interventions in the private sector housing market to stimulate improvement, particularly in St Leonards which like Cliftonville in Margate suffered acutely from the impact of the benefit economy
  - This capital led work was accompanied by a plethora of initiatives to improve the economy and tackle issues that impacted upon it.
  - The generation of an extensive and exciting cultural programme to stimulate both tourism and the perception of the area
  - Bespoke schemes with other coastal communities to stimulate the creative economy
  - Support to the crucial fishing industry and to aid its diversification and sustainability
  - Joint work to ensure Hastings sea water met or exceeded European standards – resulting in a good score
  - Reductions in crime sustained over a long period have begun to dispel negative areas of town, particularly in the sub region.
  - The future includes a raft of new developments including:
    - The development of housing and employment at North Bexhill just outside the Hastings Council area, but of immense potential benefit to it
    - A successful community led Local Development Fund bid to develop economic and social inclusion in the hardest pressed parts of Hastings and Bexhill
    - We are developing a masterplan to create a new cultural and leisure destination between Hastings and St Leonards at White Rock. The White Rock area, currently ill-defined and underutilised offers some 20Ha over which new opportunities for the town, local businesses, residents and visitors can be developed. The overall objective is to generate a critical mass of activity creating a high quality cultural and leisure destination, with a strong sense of place and good connections with the wider area. The area will potentially feature a variety of new sports, leisure, performance and art facilities, together with new employment and business space and new high-quality housing. The positive benefits of regeneration will be made possible through a comprehensive and coordinated approach to the use of public sector land and assets
    - The potential delivery of new sports centre and football ground on the Hastings/Bexhill border together with 400 new homes
6. However, the evidence on the ground is very much that the effort to address 50 years of decline is a long term one:
- The failure of the University of Brighton campus illustrated the challenge of opening new HE provisions outside a major centre in the current HE environment. This was and is a substantial blow to regeneration. We understand there are issues around the future of the Christchurch Campus in Thanet
  - Wage rates have begun to increase but remain dramatically wide of regional or national levels

- Job density remains critically low – a key indicator of economic health and employment potential
  - Unemployment remains double the national average and the number of those outside the economy through ill health (including mental ill health) remains extremely high
  - Child poverty remains nearly twice the regional average and 7.7% above the England figure
  - The town still has the highest numbers of people without qualifications
  - Despite very high prices in the hotspot Old Town Hastings median house price was c£171k in 2015 against £272k for the South East and £212k for England
7. Government policy has focused on spreading funding over areas like culture, using vehicles like the Coastal Communities Fund to distribute relatively small sums of finance over a relatively wide area. SELEP has supported the development of employment space. Certain key factors need to be addressed:
- Transport links between Hastings/Bexhill and both London/M25 and East/West to Brighton, Ashford and Dover remain dreadful. Train times to London remain at over 1 hour 40 minutes for many rush hour services and the Tunbridge Wells improvements on the A21 will have only a marginal impact on coastal journey times if further work is not undertaken
  - Education and skills remain at very low levels
  - Lack of a sufficiently large visitor/tourism product to impact on the economy of the area
  - House building market remains sluggish despite the council’s support for quality development
  - The economy has not been properly “connected” into the regional and national growth agenda
8. Significant opportunity is potentially available if sufficient support is available to facilitate private sector investment if sufficient focus is given to connecting Hastings and other coastal towns to opportunity.

Strategic priorities for Hastings travel to work area

9. Integration into the mainstream of the regional economy. The proposal transformational developments below need to connect (for example to the growth of leisure, business and housing at North Kent and Ashford).
10. Transformational developments that will move Hastings TTWA from an area requiring continual public-sector interventions to one that will play its full part in the south-east economy fuelled by local economic production and ongoing private investment.

Investment priorities-

- White Rock – enabling infrastructure works and match funding for private sector investment in leisure and residential developments offering the opportunity to develop a new housing, leisure and cultural quarter on Hastings seafront joining Hastings and St. Leonards.
- Hastings Harbour Quarter – pre-development works/investigations and enabling infrastructure works to create a new marina, 1,000+ homes and 500-1,000 new jobs.

11. Connectivity improvements to guarantee new and ongoing private investment in jobs, skills and business growth, enabling the area to compete in national and global economies and connecting local people to jobs and business opportunities.
  - Government investment in HS1 – high-speed rail connection from Hastings and Warrior Square St Leonards to St Pancras International via Ashford. This increase in capacity would increase services to North Kent and connect Hastings as a leisure resort and supply its workers to a dramatically growing area of the economy.
  - A21 improvements south of Kippings Cross/Lamberhurst to remove bottlenecks and free up the primary road link between London and employment centres in the travel to work area.
  - Improved digital infrastructure – superfast broadband connectivity and 100% 5G- enabled mobile coverage across entire travel to work area
12. Education and skills provision that will equip an adaptable and capable workforce able to meet the changing demands of a globally competitive economy
  - Flexible skills funding to enable HE and FE providers to tailor curriculum to the needs of the workplace and to stimulate lifelong learning geared to economic activity
  - Reformed technical education – investment in a long-term partnership between secondary schools and FE/HE providers to establish technical education (alongside academic subjects) that will equip learners with specialised vocational/technical skills that will boost their earning power and their value to local industry
  - Primary and secondary educational provision that equips every school leaver with the skills to become economically active
  - Incentives to build ongoing active and productive links between business and schools

### **11. South East Creative Economy Network Response - August 2017**

1. What particular evidence should we draw on to develop a compelling SEP narrative?
  - East Sussex Growth Strategy 2014
  - East Sussex Cultural Strategy
  - Colchester Economic Growth Strategy: <http://www.colchester.gov.uk/economicstrategy>
  - Essex County Council - Grow on Space Feasibility Study (attached)
  - Kent Cultural and Creative Strategy (draft available)
  - Skills East Sussex sector skills reports (provided with SES submission)
  - Shared Intelligence report on creative economy in the SELEP area commissioned by South East Creative Economy Network (SECEN) (already supplied)
  - SECEN Prospectus (already supplied)
  - Geography of Creativity (NESTA): <http://www.nesta.org.uk/publications/geography-creativity-uk>
  - Brighton Fuse report: <http://www.brightonfuse.com/the-brighton-fuse-final-report/>

- Creative Industries Federation Freelance Report: <https://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/publications>
- National figures on growth of the creative economy – DCMS <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/creative-industries-worth-almost-10-million-an-hour-to-economy>
- Creative Industries Federation  
<http://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/assets/userfiles/files/Industrial%20Strategy.pdf>
- CASE: DCMS, ACE and Sport England <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/case-programme> Benefits of taking part in culture and sport quantified.
- Tourism Data Warehouse:  
<http://www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk/webview/index.jsp?catalog=http%3A%2F%2F10.128.25.249%3A80%2Fobj%2Fcatalog%2FCatalog29&submode=catalog&mode=documentation&top=yes>
- From Ebb to Flow: How entrepreneurs can turn the tide for Britain’s seaside towns. Hastings is a case study.  
<https://centreforentrepreneurs.org/cfe-research/from-ebb-to-flow-how-entrepreneurs-can-turn-the-tide-for-seaside-towns/>
- RSA Heritage Index, data set plus report. Coastal areas highlighted as doing well and Hastings features very strongly. <https://www.thersa.org/action-and-research/rsa-projects/public-services-and-communities-folder/heritage-and-place>
- Heritage Works, a toolkit for heritage led regeneration. RSA Heritage Index, data set plus report. Coastal areas highlighted as doing well and Hastings features very strongly. <https://www.thersa.org/action-and-research/rsa-projects/public-services-and-communities-folder/heritage-and-place>
- LGA: People, Culture, Place – the role of culture in placemaking. Margate is a case study.  
<https://www.local.gov.uk/people-culture-place-role-culture-placemaking>
- Various reports from the National Coastal Tourism Academy - <https://coastaltourismacademy.co.uk/resource-hub>
- Cultural Education partnerships in East Sussex/ Hastings and Rother/ East Kent, Swale and Medway
- Artsworld Cultural Education Profiles which collate relevant data  
<http://www.artsworld.org.uk/programmes/south-east-bridge/cultural-education-partnerships-201518/cultural-education-profiles/> plus Joint Strategic Needs Assessments

## 2. What are the main strategic assets of the SELEP economy?

Cultural and tourism specific:

- An outstanding environment
- Cultural assets unique to SELEP include world class cultural infrastructure
- A rich and varied cultural offer including growing cultural clusters
- A thriving visitor economy
- New and emerging cultural infrastructure and events are driving cultural tourism and contributing to regeneration aspirations within towns

- Coastal towns and landscape – inspiring, unique cultural activity in response to place
- Significant cultural assets, including flagship organisations such as Turner Contemporary, Firstsite, Chatham Historic Dockyard, and De La Warr Pavilion, among others
- Significant cultural events, such as the Folkestone Triennial, Whitstable Biennale, Estuary Festival, Sussex bonfire societies and numerous others
- A vibrant small creative industries community
- Creative and Cultural Hubs, quarters and clusters – Colchester, Margate, High House Production Park, Folkestone, Southend, Tunbridge Wells, Eastbourne and Hastings
- Outstanding Higher Education Institutions / pioneering research /global links
- Strong, visionary leadership within the arts and cultural sector is generating increased collaboration across sectors

General:

- Superfast broadband coverage with more investment being made
- Proximity to major regional, national and international markets
- Enterprise Zones
- Growth Hubs and their networks that offer extended, enhanced business support services to SELEP businesses
- Enhanced Inward Investment offer
- Pipeline of new business space
- World class companies in a range of sectors
- Skills networks
- Specialist education providers

### **3. How can we invest in these assets to achieve a source of international competitive advantage?**

Invest in placemaking:

- Capitalise on the international and national profile of many of our cultural organisations and build on this
- Access Capital investment in cultural infrastructure to support tourism and, in particular cultural tourism, and change perceptions about the South East’s brand
- Invest in arts and cultural projects or events that have significant impact, and that demonstrate contributions to placemaking, international reach, economic development and cultural tourism (such as the Folkestone Triennial, Estuary Festival, Whitstable Biennale, Sussex Modern) – particularly cross-region projects
- Improve sustainable transport options (for visitors/freelance economy) – creative sector tends to place high value on environmentally responsible life style options
- Build provision for access to arts and culture into investment plans for regeneration, particularly for children and young people
- Improve our education offer – evidence that many creatives are turning to home educating in the absence of what they consider to be a viable alternative – capture this investment for the greater good



## Workspace and Clusters

- Invest in the 'creative hubs' where such investment would be transformational/maximum impact - Create Arts Innovation Park or Creative Enterprise Zones
- Develop appropriate open work space
- Develop supply chains
- Capitalise on the migration of creative professionals from London
- Provide capital investment in workspace that attracts creatives to live and work, and retains talent, in the regions (including creative industry/SMOs/freelance creatives moving from London, which is a big factor)
- Support long-term space availability so that arts and cultural organisations don't get priced out by gentrification or new development
- Support start-up businesses and incubation space – NALEP has a good creative enterprise programme <http://www.newanglia.co.uk/our-priorities/sector-groups-and-contacts/digital-cultural-and-creative/>

## Skills development

- Identify interventions to increase the number of high value businesses and support all businesses to move up the value chain
- Provision of high level skills training to meet the needs of our local employers and address sector skills gaps, including developing apprenticeships and other programmes that work for the micro business environment
- Invest and equip training providers to deliver high level skills, especially technical skills
- Investment in access, and then talent development for children and young people, contributes to the creation of a talent pipeline for the creative economy
- Talent retention and attraction contributes to local creative economies
- Understand where the gaps are in skills particular in Creative Industries- digital/animation/virtual reality

### **4. How can investment in these assets help maximise their contribution to economic growth?**

- Investment in a STEAM education, digital and creative thinking to provide innovation embedded from early on in the schools' system, - "innovation is born when arts and science meet" John Maeda
- Co-design infrastructure with the sectors who we want to attract – and capture headlines as an innovative, forward thinking area
- Increase joint working with HE / FE to improve innovation and product development
- Remove limitations to current growth – lack of access, skilled workforce
- Apply Creative Enterprise Zone concept to definable creative clusters.

### **5. How can we invest in our strategic assets to help reduce their long-term dependency on the public purse?**

- Encourage co-design of physical infrastructure and the systems and processes to release investment
- Provide opportunities for the cultural sector and creative industries to thrive e.g. asset transfer

- Explore cross-sector commissioning opportunities, e.g. the role of arts and culture in health and wellbeing; the role of digital interventions to support independent living and health care
- Seek digital and/or renewable solutions
- Business engagement in the long-term sustainability of specialist training facilities
- Shaping the curriculum in schools, FE and HE to create ladders of opportunities, grow our own, and creating opportunities for business to engage and influence this.
- Increase joint working with HE/FE to improve innovation and product development: Creative industry partners in the delivery of innovative, world class conferences, symposia and Citizenship events will boost income opportunities for individuals and organisations, opening up new avenues and new relationships across sectors – C21st infrastructure
- Support opportunities to upskill unemployed and those furthest from the labour market
- Signpost business and charitable models appropriate to different creative enterprises.
- Provide support that encourages greater resilience and partnership working from organisations to access funding and finance not available to LAs
- Investment in infrastructure, events and creative enterprise will leverage additional funding to the region, and support long-term financial self-sufficiency of organisations

**6. What can the LEP and partners do better together in the future to maximise economic growth in the SELEP area?**

- Develop a regional profile (brand) around which creatives can grow
- Continue to invest in world-class flagship projects – they deliver on place making, tourism and create clusters
- Recognise the place making role which culture can play, and use it to address inequalities: access to education, skills, employment.
- Become a national trailblazer in creative economy support and development, raising profile and attracting more inward investment: the creative sector and the freelance economy require smaller scale infrastructure – the partnership would benefit from thinking small, believing that this investment will be greater than the sum of the parts and will represent less stress on infrastructure (e.g.: less commuter journeys).
- Ensure that the strategy supports micro businesses, the clusters they are dependent on and offers infrastructure for dissemination, selling and the generation of social media that those businesses often rely on
- Build and/or sustain EU partnerships beyond Brexit (alongside other overseas networking) so that collaborative/subcontracting/ networking opportunities can remain open.
- Prioritise social value, use cultural approaches to develop new approaches to the development of land: housing, workspace, shared community space.
- Support partnerships that join up better economic priorities with linked social, cultural and health priorities – understanding the wider social context economic growth takes place within

- State Aid for social enterprise
- Less focus on flagship projects and more focus on place making and clusters.
- Link clusters of creative industries to raise profile of the sector for the SELEP area.
- Develop a digital engagement strategy for young people in collaboration with arts and cultural organisations (particularly Bridges), education, HE/FE, and creative industries to develop skills and creative talent that will address the digital skills agenda
- Continue to build on the partnerships with HE and FE, to explore new opportunities and build on the existing contributions they are making to the region
- Support and develop projects that connect existing activity, thinking and expertise – already some notable talent accelerator and skills initiatives taking place in each of the counties
- Support and promote apprenticeships (CC Skills located at HHPP a significant provider of apprenticeships for arts and culture nationally)
- Creative, Commercial Business & Education Exchange – turn existing infrastructure towards applied skills and encourage an increase in the exchange of expertise and ideas that increase opportunities and resilience:
  - Creative business support
  - Active exchanges between business and creative sectors (advice, mentoring, a board bank) to increase capacity, encourage strategic partnerships and organisational resilience
  - Greater knowledge of creative assets available to business in the region
  - Cross-sector leadership development
- Continue to make use of international networks and partnerships post-Brexit, and lobby for continued UK involvement in key programmes like Creative Europe and COSME.

**7. What existing and new partnerships are needed to maximise the potential of these assets?**

- Coordinated cultural tourism and visitor economy group for entire SELEP area
- A visitor economy group is required which is led by visitor economy businesses rather than by Destination Management Organisations
- Partnerships that join up better economic priorities with linked social, cultural and health priorities – understanding the wider social context economic growth takes place within
- Develop a way to enable innovators and creative community to engage with bigger non- creative businesses – facilitating innovation exchanges across sectors.
- Louder voice for the cultural sector. Create more opportunities for artists
- Support Cultural Education partnerships
- A louder voice for the digital sector – either by developing SECEN or creating an additional sub group
- Look at benefits of working with Coast to Capital

**8. How should we prioritise challenges/barriers that are holding back the local economy and what actions should be taken to overcome these?**

- Prioritise economic resilience over growth
- Challenge centralised policies about what constitutes economic resilience
- Consider productivity in balance with burden on existing infrastructure (less focus on FTEs and more focus on individuals being economically active): Reducing emphasis on FTE's in favour of recognising and supporting individual economic activity – re-defining what jobs within the creative industries mean (portfolio, mixed economy, freelance, contractual) to unlock and develop partnerships.
- Understand the value of our natural assets and protect and plan for them
- Support regeneration of coastal communities and help sustain their future success.
- Prioritise interventions that are likely to reduce any possible negative effect of Brexit

#### **9. What projects do you consider to be a future priority?**

Projects that will reposition the SELEP area as a leader and recognised innovator in the Creative Industries

- Support for STEAM not STEM
- Events and infrastructure that make a significant contribution to placemaking, talent development, business growth, cultural tourism and the broader economy
- Partnerships that coordinate talent development and a cultural and creative industries skills pipeline
- Clusters of open workspace for freelance economy
- Projects to improve connectivity in its widest sense
- Develop business/fundraising/bidding skills for micro/freelance communities and support micro businesses to navigate funding opps in a way that engages the creative community (i.e. different from the engagement of regular small businesses – not “grey suits”!)
- Consider introducing some subsidies for work spaces in order to retain accessibility to creative/cultural/innovators
- Ever closer relationship between education and industry: preparation for the future workplace
- Sustainable transport infrastructure
- Every business to understand the value of existing digital tools and maximising them (e.g.: TripAdvisor, Google Maps)
- Properly equipped training facilities and resources for our top priority sectors
- Projects and interventions that stimulate learning pathways in to priority sectors from schools, unemployed, through FE and HE.
- Creating technical expertise through CPD for FE staff with support of business and industry engagement
- Promotion of innovative practice across clusters and more widely (nationally/internationally).
- Projects and interventions that stimulate learning pathways in to priority sectors from schools, unemployed, through FE and HE, realising the ambitions of Talent Accelerator, set out in the SE prospectus
- Accommodating creative migration from London through support for creative clusters and cultural hubs to harness potential of the SELEP creative economy

## **12. Sussex Community Development Association – 21 August 2017**

### **1. Context**

Fully appreciate the need to position SELEP area's own case for economic investment for growth and jobs. As a persuasive need- and opportunity-based case in its own right but also in competition with the North and Midlands and separate to London.

This feedback is from the perspective of the 3rd sector- as significant employers & businesses, as organisations supporting the most vulnerable in the community & promoting inclusion and in supporting social enterprise as a means to build sustainable community assets and deliver economic growth and jobs.

### **2. 3 core questions**

#### **2.1 What we would love the economy to become?**

So, we would love the economy to become:

- Inclusive of those who are disadvantaged in the labour market
- Addresses the issues of the low waged economy in East Sussex
- Supports vibrant and inclusive local communities.

#### **2.2 How will we cope with the changes/challenges we face?**

East Sussex is a low waged economy and significant pockets of deprivation (especially in coastal communities). From this sector's perspective with need to invest in:

- Short and medium-term skills development to meet current and future employer needs moving to long term sustained joint working
- Long term addressing poverty of aspiration through initiatives across generations with the aim of enhancing educational attainment and skills development
- Addressing rural and urban access to jobs and training
- Supporting an entrepreneurial culture which builds on the small business economy of East Sussex
- Building social and community enterprise as a sustainable business model to meet local needs and provide sustainable jobs and growth
- Supports the local 3rd sector as an employer and as an essential provider of local services in partnership with the statutory sector in the context of tighter public finances with implications for commissioning processes.

#### **2.3 How can we move to a more sustainable financial footing, attracting more funds to achieve better outcomes?**

Balance between improving local infrastructure (available business space, transport, IT connectivity) and preserving the lifestyle and quality of life aspects which make East Sussex an attractive place to live and work.

Analysis which demonstrates that this area is 'not just London' but is ready for and requires investment and is not an area requiring on-going investment but has sustainable initiatives and an opportunity area which need the 'kick start' to fly. Clearly differentiating SELEP area from other LEP areas competing for investment.

Development of skills and addressing poverty of aspiration.

Building community assets: local business and the local 3rd sector as employers and providers of services. The people, employers and businesses with long term commitment to the economic and social well-being of their local communities.

Demonstration and modelling of effective cross sector partnership working delivering results.

## **13. SELEP Housing & Development Group – 30/08/2017**

### **Market Disruptors**

- SME Developers - Joint promotion/Funding/Support Procurement/Enabling (KDG/EDG/DES) - HCA

- BuildOffsite - Support Growth of Network of local Factories in SE - link to Accelerated Housing and Commercial Delivery - Assist in brokering pipeline of orders to facilitate factory formation - Increase pace and quality of development (Developers/LA's/RP's/HCA)
- HFi Housing Infrastructure Pilot - Roll out and campaign outputs from the Pilot when available

### **Funding**

- Encourage New Institutional Investors - wider definition and blend of tenure
- Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Debt Cap - Deal based approach for those with ambition and capability to deliver more housing
- Freedoms and Flexibilities - Deal based approach RPs and LAs
- Housing Infrastructure Fund - HCA

### **Enablers**

- Unimplemented Planning Consents - Joint piece of work on unused consents? (KDG/EDG/DES)(KPOG/EPOA/ES Planners) (HCA) - Link to work on Planning Protocols - Mythbust on this! (NPPF - Gladman?)
- London Growth/FALP (Further Additions London Plan) (Wider SE Summit) - Shared piece responding to London - Deal based offer and ask with GLA

### **Opportunity Knocks**

- Coastal Opportunity - Link to Coastal Theme Group
- Estate Regeneration/Renewal
- Commercial Development

### **Future Fit**

- New Garden Settlements - Ebbsfleet, North Essex and Otterpool Park - more?
- Thames Estuary Commission
- Sustainable Green Technologies/Green Infrastructure - New and existing home
- Ageing Population

## **14. North Downs Way National Trail Response – 31/08/17**

### **1. What particular evidence should we draw on to develop a compelling SEP narrative?**

The SE LEP area hosts two well-established National Trails; The North Downs Way and the South Downs Way. The creation of the England Coast Path will provide the 16th and longest coastal trail in the world once completed in 2020. Sections of the England Coast Path in Kent are already open with others nearing completion. These trails provide the best routes through the best landscapes in SE LEP territory and are heavily used by domestic and overseas visitors. <http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/the-trails>

National Trails are managed locally but within a national framework of guidance and support. Central government support is provided through Natural England, which is which is responsible for setting standards and investing in trail maintenance, while trail partnerships take collective responsibility for local delivery.

National Trails have been created over the last sixty years to provide access to our most special places. Three factors set these routes apart from other long distance promoted trails:

- They have national quality standards;
- They are created using statutory powers set out in an Act of Parliament
- Their upkeep is partly paid for by central government through grants made by Natural England.

Collectively, 16 routes across England and Wales are promoted as the family of National Trails and identified by the acorn symbol.

Using the evidence gathered by other domestic National Trails we have learned that the South West Coast Path increased web traffic to its website from targeted markets in Germany and Holland by 100% over a 3-month pilot period.

The National Trails experience over 86 million visitors/yr and generate £533m direct spend to rural economies. Using the example of the South Downs Way, our nearest “neighbouring” National Trail we know this is the most heavily used National Trail in the UK not least for the following factors:

- Proximity to large urban populations (as with the North Downs Way)
- Easily accessible by rail network (even better on the North Downs Way)
- Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding routes along the entire route (not currently available on the North Downs Way)

Through participation as lead partner in the Interreg Europe Green Pilgrimage project we have learned that:

- 1/3 of worldwide tourism (over 330 million people) is driven by pilgrimage on long distance cultural routes
- This is reflected in Tuscany where 33% of tourism is driven by the Via Francigena European Cultural pilgrims route (starting at Canterbury Cathedral)
- On the St James Way to Santiago in Galicia a €56m investment by the local authority has generated an estimated €655m return.

From the Business Provider Workshop, we carried out in partnership with Visit Kent in May 2017 business owners felt that improved co-ordination and understanding of user needs from the various services would have an overall positive impact on all services along the trail. We were encouraged by the co-operative suggestion that cross referring trusted businesses along the trail would create a network of suppliers everyone could rely on.

From Visit Kent “Insights into Active Tourism” (2015) we know that in Kent:

- We have 60m visitors/ yr
- Generating £3.6bn
- Supporting 72,000 jobs

People visit Kent because:

- It is “quintessentially English” with traditional countryside and buildings
- Natural Heritage/ Garden of England
- Countryside & Coastline

- Cultural & Heritage Assets
- Overseas visitors felt these perceptions stronger than domestic visitors

Of these visitors:

- 55% of overseas visitors had been on walking holiday in last 3 years- typically aged between 55- 65+ with disposable income
- 83% walk in countryside/ coastline
- 14.1 million Domestic day trips involving walking

## **2. What are the main strategic assets of the SELEP economy?**

The North Downs Way National Trail passes through Surrey Hills and Kent Downs AONB's taking in outstanding landscapes, along with a plethora of points of interest including military history, cultural heritage, ancient sites and modern architecture. The route largely mirrors "The Pilgrims Way" between Winchester and Canterbury Cathedrals and is one of (if not the only) National Trail to have legitimate claims to follow pilgrims' routes.

The trail also shares a 20-mile section between Canterbury and Dover with the Via Francigena European Cultural route to Rome and is experiencing a steady increase in visitors exploring this trail.

The trail has the opportunity to celebrate and promote local produce, crafts and customs, growing the green tourist economy and utilising local services such as accommodation providers and food & drink outlets.

## **3. How can we invest in these assets to achieve a source of international competitive advantage?**

Currently there is a disconnect between the largely private sector business community and the largely public-sector management and promotion trail resource. No doubt opportunities are being lost on both sides of where better connection and understanding would lead to a raised the profile of the route and improved facilities and services to support this activity.

Using examples from the previously referenced domestic and European routes we would aim to bring business providers and the trail management groups closer together to generate more visits and increased spend along the trail and rural communities. Typically, business providers are SME's, small and independent with limited resource & capacity. Investment in these assets at a local level would improve trail infrastructure.

## **4. How can investment in these assets help maximise their contribution to economic growth?**

As outlined above one of the key targets of the National Trails is to extend the traditional tourist periods into the shoulder and off-peak periods, and to avoid over-crowding both on the trail and in local services. A year-round seasonal offering would encourage visits year-round to experience the best of the trail during the different seasons.

Feedback from the National Trails website and received directly from users of the trail has identified a number of gaps in provision.

- Lack of budget accommodation in the South East generally, more pronounced in Surrey than in Kent ☐ Lack of affordable baggage transfer options to encourage multiple stop over nights
- Cycling and Horse riding options a limited and not easy to navigate



- Improved “selling” of the trail; bookable either in its entirety or via off-the peg itineraries for the various sections for self-lead tours To Consider the use of 3rd party operators to conduct more lead walks to provide greater context and confidence

From the Business Provider Workshop, we carried out in partnership with Visit Kent in May 2017 business owners felt that improved co-ordination and understanding of user needs from the various services would have an overall positive impact on all services along the trail. We were encouraged by the co-operative suggestion that cross referring trusted businesses along the trail would create a network of suppliers everyone could rely on.

**5. How can we invest in our strategic assets to help reduce their long-term dependency on the public purse?**

Currently the trail is funded via an annual grant award from Natural England with match funding from local highway authorities and the 2 AONB units the trail runs through. Essentially the trail is 100% funded by the public purse in one form or another.

By demonstrating the economic value of the trail and growing walking tourism & pilgrimages we aim to generate income streams to help maintain and develop the trail through the National Trails website and local community trusts.

As an example of how this concept may develop we have approached the major event organisers operating along the trail to make a nominal £1/ head donation to the upkeep of the trail. Without exception or question this request was followed leading to an annual income of circa £2k/ year from events who obviously see the benefit of a well-maintained asset.

We also receive smaller (and less frequent) donations from members of the public who have enjoyed the trail.

As referenced in the previous question the development of a network of trusted business partners could lead to a business membership scheme which would require payment of annual subscription fees as is the case on the South West Coast Path who currently has in excess of 300 business partners and growing.

<https://www.southwestcoastpath.org.uk/love-the-coast-path/join>

Investment in a similar scheme in the SE LEP region could reduce the reliance of public funding.

**6. What can the LEP and partners do better together in the future to maximise economic growth in the SELEP area?**

Where relevant it would be helpful if the LEP and partners could work in a more co-ordinated fashion to:

- Provide multi-user routes to attract wider markets
- Raise profile and awareness of opportunities as a consequence of National Trails running through SELEP areas
- Encourage “best practice” in business partners and for businesses to join any membership organisation
- Recognise the economic benefit of National Trails/ Pilgrimage routes
- Support businesses to provide facilities and services to meet the requirements of walkers/ Pilgrims

**7. What existing and new partnerships are needed to maximise the potential of these assets?**

All National Trails are managed via a “Trail Partnership” group which directs operational delivery and strategic management of trail. The North Downs Way trail partnership is well established and has been effective in delivering the Natural England quality standards (funding criteria) over a sustained period.

New partnerships such as the Via Francigena working group dealing with the interests of the Canterbury & Dover sections of the trail are newly formed and are generating new plans to improve and promote this section.

Similarly, the newly formed Dover “Walkers are Welcome” group has made rapid progress engaging traditional tourist service providers with the growing walking/ Pilgrim market.

New partnerships would involve local businesses, tourism bodies and transport services alongside the countryside groups and National Trail.

### **8. How should we prioritise challenges/barriers that are holding back the local economy and what actions should be taken to overcome these?**

We should continue to understand the lessons learned and best practice from successful domestic and international routes. Integrate these actions into our strategy. Currently the key challenges are:

- Connection between business operators, trail management and trail users.
- Lack of cycling/ horse riding options
- Provision of lower end accommodation options & baggage transfer services
- Availability of bookable products to generate income via digital platforms

The actions required are:

- Continued promotion of the trail as a viable year-round tourist destination
- Development of Multi-user routes (NDW Cycle trail)
- Investment in SME’s to better serve walking/ cycling green tourism & The Pilgrim markets
- Measure & demonstrate the economic benefit of the trail (and comparable route) to local authorities and private sector business to encourage further investment
- Work with partner organisations to produce a range of bookable products

### **9. Which projects do you consider to be a future priority?**

- Budget accommodation ☒ Baggage transfer services
- Multi User Routes (example: North Downs Cycle Way)
- Walker/ pilgrim friendly services
- Bookable product
- Digital product
- Promote local produce & traditional crafts
- Improved ability to measure & demonstrate economic impact/ benefits of trail

### **15. Kent Downs AONB – 01/09/2017**

I am responding to the Strategic Economic Plan Consultation. I work for Kent County Council, Kent Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, covering a quarter Kent. I am responsible for European and Project Development

that benefits rural landscape and economy. I am currently managing a European wide policy based project, Green Pilgrimage, which aims to influence policies that impact on sustainable rural development.

The Green Pilgrimage Project is a Europe wide project that examines sustainable development opportunities through long distance walking, European cultural routes and pilgrimage routes. As part of this project we have researched the economic benefits of long distance routes in various countries across Europe including Norway, Sweden, Romania, Italy and Spain. This response highlights the evidence from our project to date of how the active economy supports sustainable economic growth.

What particular evidence should we draw on to develop a compelling SEP narrative?

Kent's visitor economy brings:

- 60 million annual visitors
- £3.6 billion revenue
- 72,000 jobs.

Surveys show that these visitors predominantly value the natural beauty of the Kent countryside. This is the main asset for the visitor economy. (Visit Kent Research)

Relating this to national visitor analysis:

- 55% of overseas visitors engaged in a walk or hiking themed holiday during the last 3-5 years.
- 14 million domestic activity trips involved a walk or hiking activity (Sport England Research).

Looking at walking and pilgrimage in more detail, pilgrimage to major religious sites is the fastest growing sector of the tourism industry, accounting for over 330 million people every year or 1/3 of all tourism worldwide. (United Nations World Tourism Organisation).

Learning from other European destinations more specifically. The Camino (St James Way) to Santiago de Compostela in northern Spain is one of Europe's most popular tourism sites. The Cathedral at Santiago de Compostela is a World Heritage Site (like Canterbury Cathedral) and allegedly has the remains of a major religious figure (St James) as Canterbury Cathedral does with Thomas a Beckett. Both cathedrals receive millions of visitors every year. The difference is in the walking and cycling pilgrimage route to get there and the public investment in these major cultural assets.

The Camino has received concerted but modest public investment over the last 20 years (€120 million) and the transformation of the visitor numbers is astounding. In 1986 the number of long distance walkers (at least 100km) was less than 3000 per year, by 2016 this had risen to 300,000 walking at least 100km of the route. Millions more walk or cycle shorter sections, and the route and the cathedral received 10 million visitors in 2010. The most recent investment the St James' Way master plan the route involves a €65 million investment plan with an economic return forecast of €650,000 (Xunta de Galicia Tourism Agency Research).

- St James Way Investment €120 million over 20 years = 300% rise in visitors
- St James Way 25-year investment plan to 2020 = €65 million with €650million return forecast

What are the main strategic assets of the SELEP economy?

Research clearly shows the value of Kent's natural assets to the visitor economy and yet the current SELEP Economic plan barely mentions these assets or the visitor economy and doesn't mention the active economy at all.

Kent is richer in all the assets that have seen major investments in other European countries' active and walking economies. Kent has more than 6000km of public rights of way, four times denser than the national average. Kent have several ancient pilgrimage routes, the Pilgrims way from Winchester to Rochester to Canterbury, the Vie Francigena from Canterbury to Rome and St Augustine's Way. Canterbury Cathedral is a World Heritage site and destination for many of the celebrated pilgrimage routes. We also have the North Downs Way National Trail which can be cycled in parts.

The public rights of way network also links hundreds of medieval rural churches that are ripe to offer basic services to the visitor economy and thus supporting the rural communities around them. Discover England has identified Kent as uniquely rich in walking opportunities that are both offer a high-quality countryside but are close to visitor services such as accommodation and restaurants. They have allocated modest funding towards overseas market itineraries following research on the South West Coastal path which saw over 90% increase in German and Dutch market interest following modest itinerary investments. This indicates a strong return response to even modest investments.

The public rights of way network offers access to Kent's countryside which Kent's 60 million visitors predominantly value according to tourism research cited above. And yet these natural assets are mentioned in passing in SELEP documents. These assets can be exploited further in a sustainable manner to generate income and job opportunities for the rural economy and SME sector of Kent.

How can we invest in these assets to achieve a source of international competitive advantage?

The following investments have been proven to boost active visitor markets in England (South West Coastal Path pilots) and overseas in Spain, Italy, and Norway for example:

- Range of accommodation investments for walkers such as hostels and bunk houses and champing (camping in rural churches)
- Route Cycle upgrades
- Cycle cafes
- Pilgrimage centres for accommodation and information
- Itinerary packages
- Online pilgrimage planner tools
- Baggage transfer services
- Pilgrimage festivals
- Basic walking services in rural hubs
- Pilgrimage branding
- Cultural promotion of long distance services and opportunities

- Business training for walking services

How can investment in these assets help maximise their contribution to economic growth?

Business training in walking/cycling and active economy. A recent workshop led by Kent Downs AONB Unit attracted maximum capacity for 20 businesses wishing to learn more about the walking/cycling and active economy. Despite being located in rural locations most of the businesses were unaware of how to attract or provide services to this growing market.

Website promotion of routes and services, improved accommodation – recent economic strategies such as LEADER/EAFRD funding have emphasised high end or more than 4\* accommodations as a target for new investment but our research shows a complete shortage of low end accommodation close to national and international long-distance walking routes such as the North Downs Way National Trail and the Vie Francigena. Rural low-end accommodation is in demand but rarely available.

How can we invest in our strategic assets to help reduce their long-term dependency on the public purse?

Evidence from the Camino saw that initial public investments in the long-distance route kick started private investments. After initial public investment in hostel accommodation, now the amount of private accommodations greatly outnumbers public provision.

There are some basic barriers to private investment and service provision for cycling and walking that if overcome will follow and support the growing and important walking/cycling and active economy. Some of these barriers are:

- Lack of low end accommodation for long distance walkers and cyclists.
- Poor SME understanding of the opportunities for long distance walking and cycling economy
- Inability of SMEs to access public funding available for capital investments. I contacted several tourism and active economy businesses to EAFRD/LEADER funding opportunities who have shown immense interest, however, the complexity of the paperwork and criteria and the poor availability of facilitators has put them all off applying.

What can the LEP and partners do better together in the future to maximise economic growth in the SELEP area?

Provision of better support to SMEs to access public funding. Fund facilitators who can operate and monitor grant systems to SMES who struggle to negotiate paperwork and criteria. More than 75% of jobs in Kent are with SMEs and these smaller businesses struggle to access complex public funding. Public bodies specialising in sector specific economies such as the Kent Downs AONB, Explore Kent etc. are well placed to work with small businesses who are ripe for growth if given targeted support.

Anecdotal evidence to support this case includes the following example. CanoeWild is an enterprising and busy business offering river based activities in Kent. They are operating out of metal and wooden storage containers and would benefit from capital investments for more permanent and professional visitor welcome facilities. They are currently operating at capacity and cannot negotiate the complex paper work and criteria of the EAFRD/LEADER application system.

What existing and new partnerships are needed to maximise the potential of these assets?

Visit Kent, Explore Kent, North Downs Way National Trails, Kent Downs AONB Unit – all specialise in the tourism and visitor economy and can facilitate improved investment in the sector.

How should we prioritise challenges/barriers that are holding back the local economy and what actions should be taken to overcome these?

There are plenty of landowners and small businesses interested in investing in the visitor economy but need assistance to access funding. Improved facilitation either by providing existing bodies with grant mechanisms or providing more central facilitators.

Which projects do you consider to be a future priority?

- Low end accommodation provision
- Pilgrimage Centres – two sites identified Charing and Eythorne
- Interactive planning websites (such as exists for Visit Surrey)
- Overseas and domestic market itineraries
- Route investment such as signage, surface improvements and basic walking services en route
- Route improvements for cyclists
- Business training for servicing the active economy
- Action plan for building the walking/cycling and active economy in Kent

The active economy supports rural businesses and service providers. The nature of walking and cycling mean that users also support the countryside and landscape that attracts 60 million visitors to Kent every year. Public investment in the St James Way national trail in Spain boosted visitor numbers by 300% and kick started a natural growth in private investment in user services such as restaurants, accommodations, baggage transfers and holiday companies. Kent has arguably better facilities around its long distance national trail and yet we are not capitalising on this and its surrounding natural assets. There is no reason, with the correct investment that the North Downs Way national trail could not increase its popularity by 300% with Kent benefiting from the accompanying economic growth that such numbers would bring.

## **16. Kent Downs, High Weald and Dedham Vale AONBs – Officer Level – 6/09/17**

This response is at an Officer level from the three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Kent Downs, High Weald and Dedham Vale) which lie within the SELEP area.

We hope that these comments are helpful to you and we would be delighted to provide further information should that be helpful.

Please take these comments in combination with responses from colleagues responding on behalf of the North Downs Way National Trail and Green Pilgrimage Project.

### **1. What particular evidence should we draw on to develop a compelling SEP narrative?**

#### **Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks are key assets.**

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks cover 34% of the SE LEP area; they are landscapes of such importance that the Government has designated them to be protected, conserved and enhanced for the

benefit of current and future generations. The legislative background for AONBs and National Parks can be found in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act and for AONBs in particular, in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) CRoW Act, both the AONBs and National Parks are key assets to the SELEP area.

S85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act AONB places a statutory duty for public bodies (such as the SELEP or at least its public-sector partners) to have regard to the purposes of AONBs. Helpful guidance can be found here <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130402204840/http://archive.defra.gov.uk/rural/documents/protected/npaonb-duties-guide.pdf>

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans are a key evidence base.

The CRoW Act required Local Authorities with AONBs in their jurisdiction to act jointly to prepare and review Management Plans for the landscape. AONB Management Plans are prepared in a detailed and thorough manner, are subject to strategic, statutory assessments, wide public engagement and consultation and involvement of the public, private and third sector stakeholder organisations. The Management Plans provide a sound, evidence based prospectus for sustainable development in the context of an internationally protected landscapes and we believe that AONB Management Plans should be a key evidence base that the SELEP draws on in developing its 'compelling narrative'. We would be delighted to provide you with printed copies of the plan and to discuss with your key findings and priorities of the Action Plan. Examples of AONB Management Plan can be found here [http://www.kentdowns.org.uk/uploads/documents/KD\\_AONB\\_final\\_plan\\_09.09.14.compressed.pdf](http://www.kentdowns.org.uk/uploads/documents/KD_AONB_final_plan_09.09.14.compressed.pdf) :

<http://www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/assets/About-Us/Man-Plan-consultation/AONB-Management-Plan-web.pdf>

<http://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html>

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal**

We assume that the SELEP will be taking forward both Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisals as part of the process of developing a Strategic Economic Plan – we look forward to seeing the scoping documents and will be happy to provide input and evidence. Of course, the process of developing SEAs and SAs is a good way to gather evidence and we would be delighted to feed into that process if that would be helpful.

### **SELEP rural strategy**

The SELEP has prepared its own rural strategy, which clearly identifies the AONBs and National Parks as key assets, several of the strategic objectives of the strategy support sustainable development and tourism in rural areas, as mentioned above, the management plans of AONBs provide an evidence based approach to meeting and delivering those strategic objectives on the ground.

[http://www.southeastlep.com/images/uploads/resources/South\\_East\\_Local\\_Enterprise\\_Partnership\\_Rural\\_Strategy.pdf](http://www.southeastlep.com/images/uploads/resources/South_East_Local_Enterprise_Partnership_Rural_Strategy.pdf)

### **Tourism economy research**

Evidence developed by Visit Kent shows that the rural offer is a key component of the visitor economy, key drivers for visitors showed that attractive countryside was a key motivator for nearly half of all visitors (second to historic aspects and heritage, much of which is also located in the rural areas), walking was a key motivator for

32% of visitors (5th ranking) and local produce was important too (14th). This is based on evidence which is around 6 years old now but is unlikely to have changed substantively; no doubt Visit Kent and other SELEP DMOs could provide you with updated information.

More recent research from Visit Kent shows that in perception surveys Kent is 'predominantly associated with natural aspects' by visitors and in spontaneous perception surveys the most commonly used words about Kent were 'gardens', 'countryside', 'hops' and 'coast'.

The Dedham Vale AONB commissioned a study to find the value and volume of tourism activity within the nationally designated landscape using the 'Cambridge' model. The headline figures record the value of tourism in the Dedham Vale AONB to be worth £55M pa, attracts 844,000 visits per year and supports 1,201 jobs based on 2015 figures. The full report is available from the Dedham Vale AONB team

The High Weald AONB partnership also undertook a study to understand the role and value of tourism within the AONB and the findings are available here: <https://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/1056-high-weald-tourism-report/file.html>

#### **Benefits of walking and sustainable access.**

Colleagues in the North Downs Way National Trail and the Green Pilgrimage Project will provide detailed input to the SELEP process outlining the benefits to a sustainable rural economy of walking tourism. It is also worth the SELEP being aware of the new England Coast Path, sections of which have been opened recently.

#### **Natural Capital approach**

The SEP narrative should draw on natural capital evidence which has been developed by the Natural Capital Committee and Natural Capital knowledge network. By developing its economic plan with a view to natural capital approach the SELEP could properly invest public funds in a way that both supports economic growth and the goods and services that the market does not provide a value for (market failure) but which underpin the economy and quality of life of the SELEP area.

The Kent Nature Partnership has prepared a natural capital asset check for Kent which provides some high-level information for the county which can be accessed here <http://www.kentnature.org.uk/natural-capital-asset-check-for-kent.html>

Professor Andrew Lovett is collaborating with Essex County Council using an innovative approach to GIS data by merging satellite, Ordnance Survey and existing data from the Essex Natural Capital Asset Check to build models showing the value of natural assets in the rural Essex landscape.

Traditionally used to identify natural assets in an urban setting Professor Lovett will generate a GIS database of current accessible greenspace in Essex with a focus on the rural environment.

A number of value indicators will be developed allowing a comparison of Essex metrics of provisions with those from the OS planned national methodology. The results will be used to assess variations in provision, identifying areas that can targeted for initiatives to maximise the value of all open spaces in Essex.

We would be happy to work with the SELEP to develop the economic strategy in a way which supports natural capital.



## **Land-based sector**

The LEP narrative should ensure a strong emphasis on the need for a thriving land-based sector (predominately agriculture, forestry and woodland management) and its importance to the rural economy. A working countryside supporting environmentally responsible land-based activities is vital for the continued management and evolution of the countryside, for the sustainable provision of our essential needs - food, water, energy, employment, residential and business development - and for the long-term vibrancy of rural economies and rural communities. The LEP narrative should ensure it emphasises the importance of a working countryside supporting environmentally responsible land-based activities (primarily agriculture, forestry, and woodland management) and that it recognises that this is vital for the continued management and evolution of our rural areas, for the sustainable provision of our essential needs - food, water, energy, employment, residential and business development - and for the long-term vibrancy of rural economies and rural communities.

A productive and resilient land-based sector is essential if the region is to support and maintain the necessary pool of agricultural and forestry skills, direct and indirect rural employment, agricultural and forestry infrastructure, and provide the motivation, the funds and the means for the continued conservation and enhancement of the area's much-loved countryside.

Evidence in support of this can be found here:

<http://www.highweald.org/look-after/restocking-the-weald/2275-restocking-background.html>

Supporting the sustainable future of our most valued landscapes should be a key part of the narrative of the SELEP economic strategy, at the same time, it is vital that investment choices of the SELEP support the future sustainable development of the designated landscapes, if they are to remain key assets to the economy and society of the SELEP region.

### **2. What are the main strategic assets of the SELEP economy?**

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks are key strategic assets of the SELEP economy.

The Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Kent Downs, High Weald and Dedham Vale) and the South Downs National Park cover around a third of the SELEP area. These designated landscapes Areas are key strategic assets for SELEP area, providing a substantial visitor economy, vibrant rural businesses and land based sector and benefitting health and well-being. These landscapes are important motivators for location of high value businesses and are greatly valued by residents and visitors alike. The AONBs and National Park of the SELEP contain some of the most iconic, recognised and valued landscapes of Britain.

These landscapes not only provide inspiration and enjoyment their 'services' to the economy include key ecosystems services such as the supply of water, flood attenuation, the sequestration of carbon, the provision of food and fuel and a reduction in pollution. There has been limited research into the role of designated landscapes in providing wider 'ecosystems services' but Defra carried forward some research which will assist in understanding the important role they have

<http://sciencesearch.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&Completed=0&ProjectID=19271>

### **3. How can we invest in these assets to achieve a source of international competitive advantage?**

The Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty have clear and widely supported plans for their future management – these plans provide evidence based integrated plan for sustainable development in the context of a protected landscape – they are plans which are arrived at through a thorough and careful research and stakeholder participation.

The AONB Management Plans provide a strategic framework for the investment in the landscapes which should be reflected in the strategy. At a practical level the AONB management teams provide an experienced vehicle to manage new investment in the places.

An important point to make is that many of the businesses in the rural parts of the SELEP area are small and micro business – this is a key economic characteristic of the area. We are aware that it is very difficult for the SELEP to administer small funds, and that LEADER meets some of these needs but, with Brexit, will not be available for much longer and is complex for small businesses to apply to and quite restrictive. We would propose a new approach to support small business through place based organisations like the AONBs and National Parks. All of the protected landscapes teams have managed Sustainable Development Funds (previously supported by Defra) which can support businesses to grow and diversify in the context of an internationally designated landscape – it would be an exciting and innovative approach for the SE LEP to support a similar approach through the AONBs and National Parks as part of the new economic strategy.

The Kent Downs Sustainable Development Fund invested £375K generating projects worth £1.6m and the Dedham Vale Sustainable Development Fund invested £180K generating projects worth £643K

We would be delighted to provide further evidence about the management and achievement of protected landscapes Sustainable Development Funds.

### **4. How can investment in these assets help maximise their contribution to economic growth?**

Please see note above our concern is about supporting small business/ rural business and sustainable economic futures to support the AONBs and National Parks as key assets in the SELEP area. We promote the approach of the Sustainable Development Fund as a light touch, innovative approach which can achieve small business development.

### **5. How can we invest in our strategic assets to help reduce their long-term dependency on the public purse?**

It is our view that carefully focused investments in the small businesses of rural areas of the SELEP in general and the designated landscapes in particular is an important way to ensure future dependency on the public purse – experience from both LEADER and the Sustainable Development Fund can show how such investments provide the platform for long term, sustainable growth in businesses.

### **6. What can the LEP and partners do better together in the future to maximise economic growth in the SELEP area?**

We are grateful for the opportunity to comment on the SELEP economic plan – it is our view that there is greater opportunity for collaboration between the LEP and both the Protected Landscapes organisations and the Nature

Partnerships also. So far collaboration has been limited and the LEP priorities have been elsewhere, particularly on strategic infrastructure. We would urge a more rounded view of the economic narrative and the role natural environment organisations in taking forward public investments to enhance sustainable development.

More specifically, the LEP needs to ensure there is a strong emphasis on the issues facing the land-based sector (predominately agriculture, forestry and woodland management) of the rural economy. There needs to be a greater recognition that a working countryside supporting environmentally responsible land-based activities is vital for the continued management and evolution of the countryside, for the sustainable provision of our essential needs - food, water, energy, employment and development - and for the long-term vibrancy of rural economies and rural communities.

**7. What existing and new partnerships are needed to maximise the potential of these assets?**

The Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnerships are existing partnerships well placed to maximise the potential of the asset. The AONB Partnerships include all relevant Local Authorities, the land owning and land management sector and the statutory agencies as well as business representatives such as – as described above this is achieved through careful research and evidence gathering; wide community and stakeholder participation and engagement – we are keen to collaborate with the SELEP to take forward joint objectives and projects.

At the same time a key existing partnership is the Kent Nature Partnerships

**8. How should we prioritise challenges/barriers that are holding back the local economy and what actions should be taken to overcome these?**

We would ask that greater recognition is given to the vital importance of the natural environment in general and protected landscapes in particular, rather than being seen simply as a constraint these vital components should be seen as assets, a key part of the narrative of the area in which future, careful investment is vital to the A++ status of the region.

**9. Which projects do you consider to be a future priority?**

Sustainable Development Funding; support for small and micro rural business

As per our responses to the questions above we think that taking forward a Sustainable Development Fund approach would be an important and innovative approach for the future in the SE LEP area.

Sustainable Transport options which reduce congestion and support the visitor economy

We note that the SELEP has focused investments on transport infrastructure in the past, the Kent Downs AONB and Dedham Vale AONB Management Plan promotes sustainable access to the landscape and there are well developed proposals for multiuser routes (walkers, cyclists, disabled access) in the three main valleys of the AONB (Darent, Medway, Stour) and along the North Downs Way National Trail and Stour Valley Path. These include feasibility studies, proposed routes and in some cases costed proposals – we would urge the SELEP to consider investing in such approaches which could not only provide helpful modal shift in transport choices (thereby reducing congestion) but could provide health and visitor economy benefits also.

Investment in Green Infrastructure.

Investment in high quality green infrastructure should be a key priority of the SELEP, the Protected Landscapes form a key component of the SELEP Green Infrastructure provision. Evidence provided by the Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework identifies a considerable gap in funding and also recognises the importance of the Kent Downs AONB and the need for investment to conserve and enhance this important landscape.

Other key opportunities include:

- Investment in making the growing viticulture economy a sustainable source of rural income.
- A focus on the enhancement of Kent's two Heritage Coasts (Dover – Folkestone and Dover to Kingsdown) as key natural assets and to support the regeneration of the towns of Dover and Folkestone
- Investment in providing the infrastructure to support Green Pilgrimage as a key new sustainable tourism opportunity – please see separate input from our Green Pilgrimage Project.
- Investment in design guidance for new development – to create high quality new housing of appropriate scale and impact – this could be taken forward for the protected landscapes and at a county level
- Investment to support the sustainable management of woodlands, particularly in response to the substantial new demand point at Sandwich.
- Investment in the enhancement of key landscape sites and parts of the natural environment / natural capital – this could support the provision of key ecosystems services important to the economy of the SE.
- Provide strategic investments to support the rural tourism infrastructure such as natural sites, promoted and national routes, the England Coast Path, interpretation and information (web, published and on site)
- Investment into support for sustainable access to the landscape (for instance Dedham Vale Hopper Bus) to provide access for residents and visitors to services and attractions.
- Investment into the Stour Valley Path and North Downs Way National Trail to support aspiration to make them stile free walking routes.
- Investment in protected landscape Tourism Strategies to formerly co-ordinate sustainable tourism development in partnership with the DMOs.

## **17. Kent Nature Partnership – 08/09/17**

### **General comments**

The Kent Nature Partnership (KNP) welcomes the opportunity to comment at this early stage of the South East Strategic Economic Plan. Our comments are founded on the opinion that the natural environment has a key role to play in the economic growth of the region and should feature more strongly in this new plan. The Kent Nature Partnership offers its ongoing support in the development of the plan and hopes that the SELEP will consider them an integral partner in its future work.

### **1. What particular evidence should we draw on to develop a compelling Strategic Economic Plan narrative?**

Kent is well known as the "Garden of England" and the quality of the natural environment in the county underpins this prestigious title. It is Kent's environmental assets that makes Kent such an attractive place to new residents, businesses (and employees) and visitors; and the value of the natural environment to the county's

economy should not be ignored nor underestimated and should feature strongly in any SE Strategic Economic Plan.

The natural environment has a wider economic value in its natural capital (ecosystem services). Evidence on the value of the natural environment (UK) can be found at the UK National Ecosystem Assessment <http://uknea.unep-wcmc.org/Resources/tabid/82/Default.aspx> and Natural Capital Committee

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/natural-capital-committee-documents>

Kent's natural environment provides goods, such as food and timber, as well as space for recreation, supporting health and wellbeing. It helps to improve the quality of water and reduce air pollution; and it can help protect from heavy rainfall and flooding, high winds and rising temperatures. As mentioned, the way in which Kent's natural assets are arranged across the landscape creates an attractive, characterful identity that draws in residents, employers and visitors. The supply of these goods, regulating and cultural services is highly valuable, and the ability of the natural environment to perform well will have a direct impact on Kent's long-term prosperity and wellbeing. It therefore stands to reason that these should be referred to and considered within the Strategic Plan. The Kent Nature Partnership can provide supporting evidence on the value of our environmental assets, some of which is summarised in the following reports:

- Business innovation in the land-based sector report  
<http://www.kentnature.org.uk/assets/files/GreenEconomy/KNP-Business-Innov-28-03-14.pdf>
- Natural Capital Asset Check for Kent [http://www.kentnature.org.uk/assets/files/Green-Economy/Final\\_Kent-Natural-Capital-Checklist-Report.pdf](http://www.kentnature.org.uk/assets/files/Green-Economy/Final_Kent-Natural-Capital-Checklist-Report.pdf)
- Making a case for Natural Capital Accounting in Kent  
<http://www.kentnature.org.uk/assets/files/GreenEconomy/Final-Making-the-case-for-NCA-in-Kent.pdf>

Kent's natural environment includes the following valuable resources:

- 13,000 rare and threatened species (Kent Red Data Book 2000).
- 28 UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats and more than 85 UK BAP priority species.
- 40% of the UK's coastal vegetated shingle at Dungeness.
- 90% of the national population of Lizard Orchid at Sandwich Bay.
- 35% of the UK's coastal chalk.
- 70% of the south east's ancient woodland resource.
- 11% of England's ancient semi-natural woodland.
- 16% of England's saline lagoons.
- 5% of the UK's chalk grassland (the UK is thought to hold half the world's chalk grassland)
- 22 internationally designated sites, comprising 13 Special Areas of Conservation, 6 Special Protection Areas and 6 Ramsar Sites.
- 101 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), covering 8.5% of the county.
- Over 440 Local Wildlife Sites, covering 7% of the county.

- 2 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the High Weald and Kent Downs, covering 32% of the county.
- The country's best example of vegetated chalk along the undefended coastline between Dover and Kingsdown.
- The Late Spider Orchid in East Kent, found nowhere else in Britain.
- Almost a third (28%) of the county is semi-natural habitat.
- 4,400 miles of Public Rights of Way

## **2. What are the main strategic assets of the SELEP economy?**

A selection of Kent's key environmental assets are listed in response to question one – in particular the two AONBs, 22 internationally important designated sites and network of SSSIs and Local Wildlife Sites which comprise some of the county's finest wildlife resources.

The natural environment is arguably the most significant asset of the south east as it provides goods and regulating and cultural services (ecosystem services), which are strategically important to the economy, including:

- Provisioning – for example food (terrestrial and marine), raw materials (such as timber), fresh water and medicinal resources.
- Regulating services – for example air quality, climate control, carbon sequestration and storage, water storage (such as flood waters), water quality, soil fertility and pollination
- Cultural services – recreation, mental and physical health, tourism, sense of place and cultural inspiration.

The natural and cultural heritage of Kent provides an attractive landscape for visitors - tourists say the countryside and landscape are the main reasons they come to Kent, bringing £3.6bn annually to the Kent economy.

In addition, Kent (with the longest coastline and notable hours of sun) is well placed to benefit from increased investment in solar, wind and marine renewable energy.

The environment sector is a major employer in the county and brings in substantial funding which is spent in the local economy.

## **3. How can we invest in these assets to achieve a source of international competitive advantage?**

In order that we can fully benefit from the region's environmental assets, the Strategic Economic Plan should support an integrated approach, working with all sectors to ensure that the true value of these assets are understood, considered and their full economic potential is realised (including investment in research and marketing). This will involve a local and international approach to partnership working.

The Strategic Economic Plan should also promote an approach whereby the various strands of economic activity are not at odds with one another and do not adversely affect the long-term sustainability of our environmental assets and the unique appeal of Kent as a place to live, work, operate from and visit. Opportunities to gain environmental benefits from investment in other assets should also be an aspiration – clever design and early consideration of the natural environment can deliver environmental benefits with

minimal or no additional cost and can actually add value to investment. And, ideally, any major infrastructure projects in the south east should routinely include a significant element of green infrastructure as part of the investment.

Direct investment in the natural environment to enhance and improve the region's assets, and the services they provide, is also important. For instance, investment that helps to restore hedgerows, other wildlife corridors and specific habitat types can support the declining bee population, which in turn supports pollination and the productivity of agricultural and horticultural industry. Investment in improving soil quality will improve agricultural productivity while benefitting biodiversity and increasing carbon sequestration. Investment in renewable energy will improve air quality and reduce risks from flooding and other climate related events. The Kent Nature Partnership would like to see the natural environment considered as underpinning our economic wellbeing as well as maintaining our health.

In addition, there is notable benefit in investing in Kent's (and the south east's) land-based SME business to strengthen our competitive advantage; in particular, investment in new technology and modernising workplaces. For instance, a recent European Coppice study found high levels of skill in the UK compared with other areas but antiquated working environments resulting in a high level of ill-health and early retirement.

#### **4. How can investment in these assets help maximise their contribution to economic growth?**

The contribution to the economy from the natural environment has been outlined in answer to previous questions. The value of the high quality natural environment in the south east, and especially Kent, to the tourism offer should also not be undervalued.

Well placed and informed investment can enable and encourage a multitude of benefits that will contribute to economic growth – for instance, investment in woodlands and their management can develop new business and markets in timber and biofuel, whilst providing additional benefits and value in terms of recreational opportunities and biodiversity enhancement. This is just one example; investment in any of the areas described above will bring economic returns if well planned and delivered.

Investment in the establishment and management of Marine Conservation Zones, allowing fish and seafood stocks to recover, will contribute to the long-term security of the fishing industry.

#### **5. How can we invest in our strategic assets to help reduce their long-term dependency on the public purse?**

Investment in the natural environment can offset future demands on infrastructure that is generally funded by the public purse.

For instance, it is well evidenced that access to green space, recreational opportunities and even simply a view of trees can improve physical and mental health. The Kent Nature Partnership is strongly engaged with Sustainability and Transformation plans for health and social care, which puts greater emphasis on the environmental determinants of health as a cost-effective way of improving outcomes. By ensuring these opportunities are available to all, particularly the most vulnerable, through investment, the need for more costly health services can be reduced.

Likewise, flood management and recovery, which is predominantly publicly funded, can be mitigated by sustainable drainage schemes, good land management and the provision of natural flood storage areas. Investment in a project to develop innovative sustainable (low-cost or cost-neutral) management of natural environment assets, including urban greenspaces, would assist growth and provide employment in the environment sector as well as reducing the burden on public finances.

#### **6. What can the LEP and partners do better together in the future to maximise economic growth in the SELEP area?**

We would encourage the LEP to adopt an ecosystems approach to its decision making; an approach promoted by government and, as such, likely to be looked on favourably in bids to central government. An ecosystems approach is a way of looking at the natural environment throughout your decision-making process that helps you to think about the way that the natural environment works as a system and considering the economic value of the services involved. Taking this approach, and considering alongside this what benefits can be derived from environmental enhancements as part of a wider project and/or agenda, will maximise ecosystem service value.

#### **7. What existing and new partnerships are needed to maximise the potential of these assets?**

Local Nature Partnerships were established in 2012; an aspiration of Government was that Local Nature Partnerships would have strong links with Local Enterprise Partnerships. Although the Kent Nature Partnership has a relationship with the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership, this interaction has been limited and there has been no partnership working as such and, we believe, opportunities have been missed. We therefore would like to take this opportunity to request a formal partner arrangement with either (or both) the SELEP and KMEP and bring some added value to the work of the LEP which has not been realised previously.

The Kent Nature Partnership is wide ranging, including representation on the Board and Management Working Group from:

- Canterbury City Council & Country Land & Business Association
- Environment Agency
- High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Unit
- Kent County Council
- Kent Countryside Management Partnerships
- Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Unit
- Kent & Medway Biological Records Centre
- Kent Public Health
- Kent Wildlife Trust
- Medway Council
- Minerals Producers Association
- National Farmers Union
- Natural England



- RSPB
- Shepway District Council
- Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
- University of Kent

**8. How should we prioritise challenges/barriers that are holding back the local economy and what actions should be taken to overcome these?**

Often environmental matters are viewed as a barrier to growth. Instead the natural environment should be seen as an asset that has a key role to play in furthering the local economy. The KNP would like to work with SELEP to assist partners fully understand the natural environment’s true economic value to the region and therefore realise the potential it has to contribute to economic growth. The KNP believes this is a high priority as the evidence demonstrates steady deterioration in a number of indicators: biodiversity, bio abundance, greenhouse gas emissions, air quality and water contamination. The risks of inaction are great but the opportunities if incorporated at all levels into the strategy are considerable.

**9. Which projects do you consider to be a future priority?**

The Kent & Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework identified a significant gap in funding for green infrastructure (GI) in the county. Whilst the Kent Nature Partnership does not expect GI projects to take priority over all other infrastructure, it does at least need to be considered as important as other requirements. In fact, investment in GI can reduce future burdens on other infrastructure such as flood defences, by providing natural water storage and retention areas; and healthcare, by providing space for preventative health and wellbeing activities.

We therefore would like to see some investment in the provision and management of natural environment and green infrastructure included in the suite of priorities identified for the south east. The KNP is well placed to advise the SELEP to identify where this investment should be focussed, where improvements are most urgent and where the benefits are greatest; and would be a very willing partner in such work.

Projects and investment that assist in the delivery of the Kent Biodiversity Strategy and Kent Environment Strategy would also be considered a priority by the Kent Nature Partnership.

**18. Feedback from Team East Sussex Presentation - 17/07/17**

GB and JS presented an item on the SELEP SEP, providing some background to the original SEP, reasons for its 'refresh' and what it is hoped the refresh will achieve, details of the stakeholder consultation method and an overall timeline for the whole process.

The key points from the group's discussion were as follows:

- It's important to be clear on who we're pitching this new SEP to. We know the Government is very focussed on Brexit, but also on the north of England - we need to make it clear that the SELEP area is crucial to the continued stability and success of the whole country.

- Whilst the SEP covers the SELEP geography it will need to acknowledge, and where applicable demonstrate parity with, our contiguous Devolution Deals (Three Southern Counties, 3SC) and Sub-National Transport Boards (Transport for the South East, TfSE).
- We should use this as an opportunity for us to put more challenging and exciting questions to Government.
- Whilst other federated areas of the LEP have occasionally had to contend with infighting or division, TES has always been the 'free-thinking' partner; maybe we should now be leading the way in coming up with new innovative ideas.
- There was some debate on whether TES should try to come up with a few things that the whole LEP area can get behind rather than just individual federated areas (in order to avoid competing for 'more-than-our-fair-share'), or if we're better off not concerning ourselves with what the rest of SELEP thinks and should simply focus on getting a good fix on our own ideas.
- The SEP should include more joined up thinking/working between businesses and education providers (not just universities) on the skills agenda.
- GB and JS asked the group to consider the nine key questions given in the presentation and provide feedback. RD advised that he and JH are on the SEP Steering Group, so will help to coordinate the responses and ensure the East Sussex opinions across all our TES partners are considered.

**19. Thanet DC – 06/09/2017**

Proposed additional information.	Our initial response
<b>What would we love the economy to become?</b>	
<p>Our vision is that Thanet is a great place to live, work and invest, rivalling its counterparts across the UK.</p> <p>Thanet has a distinctive local economy with substantial opportunities for sustainable and high quality economic growth.</p> <p>With HS1 in place, Thanet now has significant locational advantages deriving from its proximity to both London and continental Europe. The aim from further improvements are East Kent to central London in 1 hour.</p> <p>Upgraded and extended motorway provision into Thanet improving links to the Port of Ramsgate still further.</p> <p>Operational Port of Ramsgate driving economic development in Thanet. A thriving Port at</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To perform at a much higher level internationally, punching above its weight on trade and export indicators – provision of specialised assistance to ‘scale up’ companies could be helpful here</li> <li>• An economy that is built on high value productivity (manufacturing), providing support to ‘companies and moving some part away from a consumerism and credit economy to avoid the ‘see saw’ fluctuations of the last ten years</li> <li>• An economy that recognises supports already well established bespoke, high end manufacture above mass produced, lower value goods</li> <li>• An economy that champions apprenticeships throughout skills levels and that is supported by a motivated and ever more skilled workforce, recognising a need to develop more and more people into valuable and interesting vocational careers where the learner experiences the business from the bottom up in their progression (traditional learning values) ... In turn this should improve jobs</li> </ul>

<p>Ramsgate providing resilience to UK plc for freight travel.</p> <p>It has outstanding cultural assets, epitomised particularly through the Turner Contemporary and Dreamland. It has a very high quality natural environment, especially its SSSI coastline, and 10 award winning beaches. Looking ahead, there is real potential linked to the Port and historic marina at Ramsgate and emerging opportunities in the fields of advanced manufacturing, agri-tech and the creative sector.</p> <p>Have a high value skills base focusing on the key areas of our economic strategy – new off-site manufacturing provision, a world leading agri-tech sector, world class higher education provision, a broad employment base without reliance on one key employer, a comprehensive business support and development offering, integrated infrastructure network considered in light of commercial and residential development proposals (Local Plan).</p>	<p>density across Kent, which is currently a challenge in areas such as Thanet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An economy that is built on a rock-solid infrastructure basis – one that aspires to broadband speeds way beyond the current offering, one where the M2 as major route towards Europe is developed into three lane motorway and significantly improves Brenley Corner; and one that provides significantly better capacity and more modern rail infrastructure to improve connectivity at the furthest points from London. At a basic level, visitors to the UK via Kent should experience a ‘wow factor’ upon arrival – that means getting the basics right, such as a step change in the quality of our motorways</li> <li>• Kent (and no less Thanet) is in an excellent position to be an investment relocation of choice for many London businesses, as well as FDIs. The Kent economy should be one that provides red carpet treatment to potential investors, which will provide the opportunity to provide the small margin of difference</li> <li>• The Kent economy should provide greater flexibilities for Local Authorities to invest and become financially self-sustaining by relaxing some of the strict financial and procurement rules post Brexit as they relate to the procurement of capital or revenue based services that can enhance the local economy</li> </ul>
<p><b>How will we cope with the changes/challenges we face?</b></p>	
<p>Business needs certainty, confidence, and clarity. We need to make sure that we can provide the 3C wherever possible.</p> <p><b>Certainty</b> There is over 56ha of employment land identified in the draft local plan and similar to the UK average a number of residents looking for work. We are working closely with our education providers to boost our NVQ level 4 residents to provide highly skilled workforce.</p> <p><b>Confidence</b> Thanet continues to demonstrate excellent growth on many metrics, unlike other parts of the County. Reach out to businesses to provide sector specific support such as exporters, migrant population heavy businesses etc and work to provide them immediate access to Brexit related advice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular communication with businesses at the local level - share information with them, keep them informed, consult them beyond the strategic board approach – tie them into the economy by making them feel valued.</li> <li>• Lobbying call to Government for mandatory registration of businesses with accredited Chambers of Commerce – immediate provision of support via Brexit transition</li> <li>• Identify those companies that may have most exposure to international trade to provide support. For companies that require overseas raw materials supply, help them to identify suppliers in alternative markets</li> <li>• A programme of succession planning for businesses (obligatory in France), which will stop /slow the massive rate at which companies die with ownership retirement</li> <li>• A continuation and simplification of the huge range of excellent business support initiatives that are currently available to Kent businesses, avoiding</li> </ul>

<p>Clarity Businesses that are thinking of moving to Thanet (Kent) can immediately see who to approach, where the pipeline for staff is, the growth potential and have the support networks in place to make that happen. Locate in Kent offer some of that with the IDP programme but that is only for our largest firms.</p> <p>Thanet needs to be seen by others as constantly pushing the boundaries and innovating such as off-site manufacturing housing production and trying to influence the Kent supply chain.</p>	<p>postcode lottery in some cases. Post Brexit, ensure that funds no longer going to Europe are redirected so that effective business support continues (re-establishing the excellent Business Link concept might be a good idea!)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Champion and support modular manufacture of housing – make the county (through a joined-up district / borough approach to provide the necessary pipeline), an ambassador for factory produced quality housing products, additionally supporting skilled employment opportunities. <i>(If you think in technology terms, bulk housing supply amongst major developers is the only sector that seems to promote inefficient, technological regression in development) – smartphones, tablets, cars and virtually any other technological product are all about continual improvement, lean efficiency in production, and sustainable development</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>What is our core proposition for attracting more funds to deliver better productivity/prosperity outcomes?</b></p>	
<p>Having an ambassadorial approach to lobbying outside of Kent. Trusting our EK partners to talk with one voice when appropriate seeking improvement for Kent. This would mean we can target our efforts much more proactively and rather than all needing to attend the same meeting we could attend 8/9 meetings with the same use of resource. This constant and sustained self-promotion would put us ahead of other areas.</p> <p>Look beyond the obvious for funding.</p> <p>Have sector specific prospectus's that showcase the offer in terms of skills, land, lifestyle etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kent's geographic location, in spite of Brexit, should make it a continuing and growing attractive proposition for trade both East and West of its location. <b>A Superior Location Speaking a Global Language</b></li> <li>• A strong academic base with world class R&amp;D facilities across the county.</li> <li>• Lead on attracting a modular housing manufacturer to the county, such as Latis Homes, to provide a step change in the quality and speed of housing delivery</li> </ul>
<p><b>What particular evidence should we draw on to develop a compelling SEP narrative?</b></p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Economic Growth Strategy Nov 2016</li> <li>2. KCC GIF</li> <li>3. Local Plan provisions</li> <li>4. Availability of employment land</li> <li>5. Collective Local Plan information on house building need and employment land.</li> <li>6. Root our story in the UK context and ensure that our message fits – such as how can we support the Northern Powerhouse and where is the evidence. Share success of HS1 with</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thanet Economic Growth Strategy</li> <li>• East Kent Growth Strategy</li> <li>• KCC is developing the Growth Infrastructure Framework.</li> </ul>

<p>developers of HS2 to learn from the Kent experience.</p> <p>7. Agree on the areas of focus from the Industrial Strategy and draw our evidence to support our capability to deliver such Creative being a pillar and South Kent (Thanet in particular) being a magnet for cultural and creative led regeneration.</p> <p>8. Drawer on the Housing White Paper and consider how we would deliver our part such as offsite manufacturing for quick and relatively cheap manufacturing, overflow for London (be realistic and upfront about some areas being a realistic solution to their affordability crisis)</p>	
<p><b>What are the main strategic assets of the SELEP economy?</b></p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Coastline</li> <li>2. Proximity to Europe for passenger and freight transport from Port of Ramsgate.</li> <li>3. HS1 rail infrastructure</li> <li>4. Direct and easily accessible road links from Europe to Central London (almost entirely duelled)</li> <li>5. Volume grade A agricultural land</li> <li>6. Availability and affordability of land for development.</li> <li>7. Broadband connectivity</li> <li>8. Renewable (self-sufficient) sources of energy</li> <li>9. Market leading and world beating businesses ranging from horticulture to advanced engineering (including Cummins, Fuji, Thanet Earth etc.).</li> <li>10. Depth and Breadth of Heritage and Cultural facilities and history.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HS1</li> <li>• Thanet Parkway (still in development)</li> <li>• M2, Brenley Corner, and Thanet Way</li> <li>• M20</li> <li>• Port of Ramsgate</li> </ul>
<p><b>How can we invest in these assets to achieve a source of international competitive advantage?</b></p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Marketing and advertising such as Kent Contemporary funded by the SELEP to give each area their part in the story leading to London.</li> <li>2. Reinforce the messaging that Thanet is the start of the production corridor and leads to London.</li> <li>3. Help support our businesses with international export capabilities with more funding/business support to expand, diversify and understand the new market place.</li> </ol>	<p>In addition to investment and infrastructure bids, we need to improve our lobbying position in Westminster. The impression is that we punch below our weight in this regard, compared to Northern authorities who are constantly 'in Westminster's ear'</p>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Heavy investment in international marketing and PR led both by experts embedded in organisations working with and through groups such as Locate in Kent, Export.gov.uk, VisitKent etc rather than creating a different group.</li> <li>5. Make better use of the conversational style of social media and soft selling such as seen in Thanet tourism teams to reach international community.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>How can investment in these assets help maximise their contribution to economic growth?</b></p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. People want to live, work and invest in areas that they can see the potential in. Our Coastline needs protecting, but this does not mean standing still. A considered and holistic view on coastal development and investment from central government would boost tourism worth over £293m (2015 data) in Thanet alone significantly. The range of offers along the coast – wilderness, beach huts, bathing pools etc. Thanet also has significant architectural delights along the coast that need investment to reach their potential, many listed. Redeveloping these sites would provide jobs for heritage construction firms local to Kent and Essex.</li> <li>2. Infrastructure investment in the Port of Ramsgate to access European markets, resilience for Dover and compliments Lower Thames Crossing.</li> <li>3. Faster rail links to London will make Thanet an increasingly popular commuter choice, hence the support for Thanet Parkway to take capacity and improve journey times. This opens Thanet to markets and innovation.</li> <li>4. Forward fund infrastructure to bring diggers on site for housing development driving further economic growth in the construction industry.</li> </ol>	<p>Asset investment should strive for future proofing – providing a level of resilience in terms of design that takes them beyond previous lifetime timescales.</p>
<p><b>How can we invest in our strategic assets to help reduce their long-term dependency on the public purse?</b></p>	
<p>The public purse has an ongoing and vital role to play in delivering major infrastructure projects such as the New Lower Thames Crossing. It is unlikely this would be brought forward with only</p>	<p>Needs more thinking about at this stage</p>

<p>private investor funds as we do not have sovereign wealth funds of our own.</p> <p>Build the long term (15 years) sustainability into the project plan from the start. Capitalise this cost upfront to fix it up front. Revenue budgets are easier to restrict in later years.</p> <p>Lobby for greater revenue raising capabilities local authority or LEP level.</p> <p>Make better use of our procurement capabilities to deliver more cost effectively.</p> <p>Package assets across boundaries better de-risking further a developer's exposure particularly in uncertain economic climate.</p>	
<p><b>What can the LEP and partners do better together in the future to maximise economic growth in the SELEP area?</b></p>	
<p>Talk about their issues and establish if there is a common solution.</p> <p>Speak with one voice at the top table. Rather than be the opposing voice to for example developer groups, find the common ground and speak at the same podium wherever possible – it is very likely that that which divides us is smaller than that which brings us together. Thanet demonstrated this at the house builders conference.</p> <p>In order to deliver the economy, we want Thanet District Council will work closely with key partners and stakeholders, both within the district and more broadly; and crucially including the business community.</p>	<p>Increased lobbying, building relationships with our local MPs to effect change and influence in Westminster.</p>
<p><b>What existing and new partnerships are needed to maximise the potential of these assets?</b></p>	
<p>Invest Thanet.</p> <p>One obvious route to the top with groups set up, designed and driven by subject experts with different members.</p> <p>Stopping groups when they have met their objectives quickly so they don't drift.</p>	<p>Comments to follow</p>

<p>Community groups and investors meeting together than fearing the different perspectives.</p>	
<p><b>How should we prioritise challenges/barriers that are holding back the local economy and what actions should be taken to overcome these?</b></p>	
<p>These are our challenges:  The skills profile could be strengthened; too many jobs are “low wage” and part time in character; and the number of jobs within the District needs to grow. There is also a need to diversify the business base so it is less reliant on ‘public sector’ type roles (36% in health, education and public administration).</p> <p>Overcoming these barriers:  Continue to engage and grow our engagement with local education establishment. We have over 40,000 students on our doorstep and we need them to see and want to be a part of, a future in Thanet.  Drive forward our Invest Thanet board to raise the awareness across the District and beyond of what Thanet has to offer.  Work to minimise the impact that Universal Credit could have the on the social mobility of our young people to find work and gain experience.  Take forward our feasibility modelling to provide investor confidence on our development proposals.</p>	<p>These should be prioritised on the effectiveness and appraisal (Green Book) of their respective business cases. This appraisal process should be sacrosanct and unaffected by the potential for political horse trading of schemes that may happen after professional economic appraisal has occurred.</p>
<p><b>What projects do you consider to be a future priority?</b></p>	
<p>Transformational Initiatives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Developing the Port at Ramsgate</li> <li>2. Investing in high value manufacturing and engineering across Thanet and East Kent</li> <li>3. Positioning Thanet as a global agritech hub</li> <li>4. Promoting Thanet’s broader cultural/leisure offer</li> <li>5. Cultivating the creative industries across Thanet</li> <li>6. Designing enterprise into communities</li> <li>7. Long term feasibility modelling for Margate and Ramsgate</li> </ol> <p>Foundational Priorities:</p>	<p>The original comments have been superseded by the text on the left and we would ask that they are not used in any SEP work.</p>



<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Working with businesses, schools and FE/HE providers to improve workforce skills</li> <li>2. Developing and implementing measures to support new and small businesses in the District, particularly the provision of managed workspace and focused business support</li> <li>3. Ensuring major employment sites in Thanet are managed and promoted effectively</li> <li>4. Working with local partners to ensure that the visitor economy continues to evolve, reflecting fast-changing patterns of demand.</li> </ol> <p>I think we also copy all of the projects that sit on the East Kent Growth Framework that relate to Thanet (to follow as I don't have the latest version on this device)</p>	
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## 20. Notes from meeting with David Smith, Director of Economic Development, Kent CC – 04/07/17

- Would like the SEP to be Imaginative, practical and grounded in the needs of localities
- Does it make sense for us?
- Need to avoid a tick a box approach. Need to use SEP to secure investment.
- What's right with Kent. Potential strengths
- What would make that flourish work.
- Countryside is important to Quality of Life.
- Some of things you might want to do in Kent, we might not want to do. When we say please don't do this – we mean it
- East London. Potential all in the East.
- Kent and Medway. Strategic Assets.
  
- Rural Kent, Smart Kent & Coastal Communities. (Joke)
- 1.3m people - What do they do & where do they live
- We need infrastructure ahead of need.
- Not just investing. What are all the things you have to deliver it?
- Need to think through every element of strategy. Pragmatic
  - Productivity
  - Placemaking
  - Skills
  - Access to Finance (Investment Readiness & atmosphere of ideas)
- KMEP
- Handful of achievable goals.
- The glue to hold each other together. What happens if we go through depression.
- Negative growth scenario's
- Not set ourselves up to fail
- What did you do with the money? Use Maintenance on new projects.
- European money – scale (£100m to disappear).
- Changing International Environment
- Investment should not be grant based - Commercial
- Innovation to do stuff.
- Strategic Way of working.
  - Political - 12 districts + Medway. North Kent, East Kent, West Kent and Maidstone.

- Process and bureaucracy
- Integration with Local Plans
- Delivery failure – Here is the issue & here is the approach. Commercial. How will the economy deliver?
- Coastal towns – Margate seafront task force.
- Dover barracks acquisition has potential risks for local economy

## **21. Notes from meeting with Steve Cox, Anne Ostler & Tim Rignall – Thurrock Council – 13/07/17**

- UKs International Gateway
- Net contributors.
- Business activities that go on in the region
- Silk Road
- Invest in Success
- 18 miles of River Front – Housing and Infrastructure investment vital.
- Employability support - 12,000 claiming JSA
- Ports are important
- Elementary Jobs – need to get them up the value chain (reskilling).
- Centre of Excellence Construction
- Why do we want growth?
- Logistics/Transport/Congestion Busters.
- Place shaping
- Town Centres
- Croydon Growth Zone. Local Authority Finance

## **22. Notes from Greater Essex Business Board Meeting – 15/08/17**

Important the SEP links to Local Plan and housing development.

Needs to focus on developing communities.

Links to Garden Communities (North Essex Garden Communities Ltd.) important.

- Haven Gateway.
- Braintree.
- Innovation Centre in Whittam.

Lag in Productivity needs addressing.

- Sector focussed OR geography focussed?
- SELEP is a big area - important to grasp the differences!

## **23. Feedback from KMEP Workshops – 15/08/17**

Attendees:

Allan Baillie	Skills - Kent County Council
Andrew Bull	Medway Council
Andrew Scott-Clark	Public Health - Kent County Council
Andrew Stirling	Sevenoaks District Council
Anette Hufnagel	Locate In Kent
Ann Komzolik	North Kent College
Anne Knight	Medway Council
Carole Barron	University of Kent
Caroline Jessel	Kent Nature Partnership
Catherine Herbert	Whitstable Biennale - Deputy Director
Charles Tassel	Rural Plc
Christian Turner	CEFEUS Research Assistant
Christine Wissink	Kent County Council
David Foley	Thanet and Dover Chambers
David Smith	Kent County Council
Dawn Hudd	Maidstone BC
Douglas Horner	Trenport Investments
Emily Haswell	Sevenoaks District Council
George Jessel	Kent Rural PLC
Hilary Smith	TWBC
Hugh Edeleanu	H.E. Group Limited
Iain HAWTHORN	HSBC
Jenny Dixon-Sherrard	Kent County Council
Jim Lumstrum	Arts Council England
Jo James	Invicta Chamber of Commerce
Joe Ratcliffe	Kent County Council
John Bennett	Kent Wildlife Trust
Jon Reagan	Rural lead
Julian Kirkness	Kent Foundation
Karla Phillips	Policy - Kent County Council
Katharine Harvey	Shepway District Council & East Kent Regen. Officers Group
Katie Stewart	Kent County Council
Liam Behn	Kent Foundation
Linda Bennett	Enterprise Europe Network @ University of Greenwich
Liz Moran	Arts and Culture @ University of Kent
Lucy Druesne	Kent Innovation & Enterprise @ University of Kent
Madeline Homer	Thanet District Council
Mark Heeley	Tarmac
Mark Raymond	TMBC
Mat McLoughlin	West Kent & Ashford College (Hadlow Group)
Max Tant	Flooding - Kent County Council
Michael Bax	Rural Plc
Cllr Mike Cosgrove	Swale BC
Mike Westby	Centauri Therapeutics Limited
Nicholas Churchill	Canterbury City Council
Nick Abrahams	Development - Kent County Council

Nick Fenton	SELEP Housing Group, Kent Developers Group, etc
Nick Johannsen	Kent Downs AONB and the Kent Nature Partnership
Nick Sandford	SELEP Rural Group
Nikki Greig	MEP Ltd
Nola Cooper	Kent County Council
Noora Virtanen	CEFEUS Research Assistant
Paul Sayers	East Kent College
Paul Spooner	Ebbsfleet Development Corporation
Paul Thomas	Development Land Services
Paul Winter	Wirebelt
Paul Wookey	Locate in Kent
Richard Fitzgerald	Kent County Council
Richard Longman	Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
Richard Penn	Environment Agency
Stephanie Durling	Produced in Kent – Kent County Council
Stephanie Holt	Kent County Council
Steve Matthews	Locate in Kent
Stuart Tanton	Kent Foundation
Theresa Bruton	Visit Kent (consultant)
Tim Ingleton	Dover District Council

**The following notes represent the output from the KMED workshops, which were structured around three themes (Skills, Productivity and Infrastructure) and presented as flip-charts and summarised into three key priorities.**

#### **SKILLS – GROUP 1:**

- Expand the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) approach to education to incorporate the arts (becoming STEAM). This would help embed creativity.
- Focus on improving the skills of the existing workforce – especially important to raising productivity.
- Support development of entrepreneurial skills and attitudes.
- Change attitudes/perceptions of some sectors (especially in tourism, hospitality, manufacturing and construction). Use a co-ordinated approach.
- Place importance on quality careers advice and guidance.
- Build aspiration among young people – how?
  - o There is a role for businesses to do that in schools...
  - o But engagement of businesses is not seen as a priority
  - o Changing the funding mechanism of education.
- Develop awareness of total economy and business attitudes among young people and schools.
- Flexibility in careers advice and support:
  - o Including academic qualifications (it's not just that)
  - o Balanced approach to education important.
- Prioritising and developing leadership and management.
- Looking to the future – what will it look like?
- Lack of technical skills (cyber security point).

#### **PRIORITIES:**

1. Better formed / more joined-up approach to careers guidance.
2. STEAM – developing a wide range of skills and aptitudes (including entrepreneurialism).

3. Skills of existing workforce, especially leadership and management
4. Address funding support mechanisms.

#### **SKILLS: GROUP 2**

- Disconnect between providers and business:
- Understanding and raising aspirations among young people
- Understanding where the gaps are and how to respond
- Specific e.g. of mental health / developing potential.
- Is selective education system right for all people? Effect on people at an early age (addressing inequalities).
- Greater fluidity and flexibility needed in school education (irrespective of system)
- Education system is too demand-led
- Mismatch between demand and need
- Raising awareness and aspiration among young people (and younger) about different opportunities (e.g. D.P.)
- What skills are required in the future? Especially in post-Brexit economy
- Stakeholder outputs are rooted in the present day
- Addressing needs of existing workforce (upskilling, retraining) – e.g. of health service.
- Importance of quality of careers advice and guidance.
- Learning from examples of other countries (education and vocational systems).
- Driving people towards level 3 as a minimum (60%+) – but is that too specific?

#### **PRIORITIES:**

1. Start younger (e.g. very young)
2. Employability skills – aligning to need
3. Reskilling / lifelong.

#### **SKILLS: GROUP 3**

- Importance of apprenticeships and mentoring
- Business has taken 3 apprentices on, but only one has completed. Issues with apprenticeships are:
- Time restraints on employer. Company feedback is larger companies cannot release senior staff for weekly training meetings.
- Volume of paperwork
- Quality of training
- Interest of young people in completing apprenticeship
- Do we need a local ATA (ATA employs apprentice and organises training arrangements)? What about education business partnerships?
- Needed smoother transition for young people into work place, so they have appropriate work attitude and expectations. Need exposure to workplace and employers before apprenticeship at 16.
- East Malling Research Centre – excellent case study.
- London effect – must be considered.
- Place to be proud of.
- Attractive to skilled people to live and work here;
- Broadband really important on train and in rural areas
- Quality of design infrastructure
- Need affordable houses and wages
- North Kent – cultural attractiveness
- Need to develop community spirit if to attract skilled people
- Physical property required – where is property? Start up space?
- Need pump priming on large scale. University of Kent had start-up idea.
- Universities reach out to private investors.
- National government require LEP to commit funding.
- How to bring blue-chip companies to Kent and Medway.

- Science and innovation Audits – what do they say?
- Crowd-funding
- Locate in Kent and districts – need to showcase what already exists – companies and their skills.
- Be clear we are not part of prosperous South East – brand us as East of England.
- Use data to see companies that stand out and contact them.
- More emphasis on practical training required.
- What makes Kent different?
- Question about apprenticeships – needs to be pitched right.
- Making training/education fit for purpose, e.g. of IT – seen as critical
- Future of economy in Kent:
- What skills required to be competitive?
- Focus on core technical skills at young age (STEM)
- Ability to think and problem-solve
- People skills necessary
- Difficulties in recruitment of good people and retention
- How promote and develop entrepreneurial attitudes?
- Changes in working practices – how inculcate flexibility?
- But address immediate needs as well (e.g. specific sector)
- Make conditions more suited to risk and entrepreneurship
- Inspire young people to opportunities that exist
- Careers advice
- Getting businesses involved in schools (e.g. young enterprise, Kent Foundation)
- Should there be a focus on particular issues (e.g. Bristol entr.)
- Importance of exemplars from business.
- Tapping into what young people want?

#### **PRIORITIES**

- Making Kent synonymous with entrepreneurialism
- Having the best quality/most inspiring careers advice
- Skills for the future – look forward / future proofing.
- Importance of work-readiness skills – particularly important to construction => flexibility of provision necessary.

#### **SKILLS: GROUP 4**

- Making system clearer and easier to navigate
- Importance of quality careers advice and guidance at early years.
- Making transition easier between academic and technical
- Make it easier to work in schools and helping businesses navigate what's out there
- Education versus competitive – reality
- Combining careers guidance in education hub.
- How clear are employers about skills they require?
- Difficult for small businesses (especially in Kent).
- Need more flexibility to allow people to move around and change
- Skills levels in Kent and Medway are below national level – what would reverse that?
- Guilds, but are they enough?
- View that quality careers advice would improve
- Consolidate existing infrastructure rather than new investment
- Why are other countries more entrepreneurial? (e.g. USA, Germany)
- Have those entrepreneurial attitudes in education/training providers

- Example of industrial challenges in schools, but insufficient engagement in businesses
- What would make the difference in Kent and Medway?
- We don't have many big companies
- Promote and develop aspirations / entrepreneurial attitudes much earlier
- Promoting STEAM skills (and embedding creativity), e.g. East Kent College at Folkestone.
- Requires recognition from employers that this needs funding
- Using Education Business Partnerships

#### **PRIORITIES:**

1. Careers advice and guidance from early years.
2. Raising awareness through skills hubs and exemplar initiatives (e.g. Visit Kent).
3. Not just academic skills but also people skills and work readiness

#### **SKILLS: GROUP 5**

- Apprenticeship levy – more straight forward for levy payer – there is a long way to go. Early days yet.
- Kent has large percentage of small businesses and few large – so difficulties in communication about the levy.
- Requires quality careers advice and guidance
- Get schools and FE colleges to resolve their difference – important role for central government (they have the funding)
- Have better administrative guidance for businesses
- Important to depoliticise skills in the UK (like in Germany)
- Role of parents in making decisions
- Degrees are not the only answer
- Roll out Careers Enterprise Company concept? Intention to grow in Kent.
- But make sure their volunteers are well-trained and effective
- Promoting work readiness and experience among young people
- Understanding imperative of make-up businesses succeed
- Encouraging peer to peer activities
- Using recently qualified people as exemplars / mentors for young people
- Encourage cross-sector interaction
- Importance of universities in promoting entrepreneurial attitudes and adaptability
- Opportunity to create clusters around universities?
- How got small business to switch onto this/
- Does Canterbury have a particular opportunity given 3 universities?
- Opportunity to develop guild system in Kent and Medway?
- Virtual skills hubs?
- Importance of making teaching an attractive profession.
- Campaign about value
- Giving schools more flexibility

#### **PRIORITIES:**

1. Linking business and education, especially from an early age
2. Raising and promoting awareness of skills learning / best practice among small businesses.
3. Creating centres of excellence in skills development
4. Importance of skills of existing workforce (especially Leadership and Management).

#### **SKILLS GROUP 6**

- Aligning apprenticeships with business needs – making it more workable for both young people and employers
- Having the right people coming through from an early age
- Is there any link between what schools teach and the needs of the local economy?
- Fundamental skills perhaps

- Specialist skills – difficult because technologies change quickly.
- Education and training providers need to engage more with businesses.
- Importance of striking right balance between knowledge and skills
- Shortage of STEM teaching skills in schools – how attract the right people?
- Particularly skills that Kent and Medway is short of – e.g. social care, construction and IT
- Is selective education delivering right outcomes for Kent and Medway?
- What practical measures can we influence deliver of?
- Finding the right apprentices
- Quality careers advice and guidance
- Developing skills of existing workforce – retraining and upskilling
- How can we attract the right jobs – do we know what this might look like?
- Importance of IT and changing technology on future make-up of local economy
- Difficult to predict though (e.g. look at least 30 years). Investment and funding issue.
- Focus on transferrable skills? And on other skills?
- Need to ask young people what they want?
- Should we take on wider view (i.e. beyond Kent and Medway) when assessing skills requirements?
- Providing training / education provision so that all areas should benefit.

#### **PRIORITIES:**

1. Need to develop sector-based strategy (crystal ball) to get a fix on skills
2. Providing young people with a wide range of knowledge and skills (wider than careers advice and guidance)
3. Addressing the skills needs of existing workforce
4. Making apprenticeships more fit for purpose for both employers (especially small), providers and people.

#### **SKILLS: GROUP 7**

- Confidence that the changes will be delivered. Reputation of local authority
- Lack of joined-up thinking. Competition for resources acting as a barrier.
- Businesses don't recognise geographical LA boundaries
- One public estate – training for GPs
- Locally accountable funding – local funding pot → devolve funds
- Grant for SMEs make difference
- Gov. saying employers should drive skills – bug gap with training is funded.
- E.g. retail apprenticeships want employability skills of people together
- 45000 with 18 years
- Gov. misinterpret what employers want
- GCSE maths & English
- Move rules around to meet employer need
- May not have volume so link with other colleges
- Generic engineering/retail/etc. skills & Gov. hope that employers will provide that specialist knowledge on top.
- North Kent – largest provider of maritime – but only 30.
- Probably less apprentices – due to admin
- Employer like to deal with local provider, e.g. College
- Sector/Cluster approach.
- Leakage into London – but does bring money if resident here.
- SME economy
- University students from UK – no summer job
- European counterparts – often do
- Global economy. Fluid workforce.
- Retrain → attitude to allow people to retrain. Piecemeal.
- Do exams and then spend time afterwards. Go back & be taught a skill.



- Really expert careers advisors – Recent graduates or apprentices saying what happened to them.
- Go in early – at least 14 years max – careers advice
- Lack of guidance – co-ordinate
- Not stereotypical careers. Must have experience of what outside world is.
- One graduate to ask for work – MEP Ltd.
- Gap in adults retraining ☒ have to take a loan to undertake training

### **PRIORITIES**

1. Confidence on delivery
2. Locally accountable funding
3. No summer jobs

### **SKILLS: GROUP 8**

- Not reinvert
- Join-up/collaborate skills advantages
- Enhance
- Raise awareness
- Impactful
- STEAM importance
- Are we making a difference?
- Skills shortages with businesses – outcomes
- Retention of graduates and teachers
- Increase quality of apprenticeships
- Progression into sustained employment (following apprenticeship)
- Lack of information for young person
- What looks like
- Career destination
- Way to incentivise company to keep on apprentices
- Focussed apprenticeships?
- Lack of planners
- Nick – Private sector put money into planning apprentices
- 6 districts engaged
- Grow your own
- Importance of work place training
- If recruit graduate may not stay – more retention with apprenticeships
- Careers advice
- Techares or NQT being asked
- Private sector led
  - Schools working with industrial partners
  - Lack of stability
  - Funding for schools – perverse results for post 16.
  - Heathrow (careers information)
  - Live broadcast of all occupations
  - Past messages
  - Live situ
  - Interactive – every Friday of last month
  - Partnerships with schools & employers
  - STEM – insight
  - Real understanding of cluster of companies
  - Taking teacher out – cost issue
  - Webinars, videos – careers advice

- Farming video underway
- Mapping of careers advice
- Leaders to perform enterprise advisers
- Lack of CEOs & senior
- Not a governor
- Employers may be all doing their own things
- Encourage guilds
- Encourage businesses to offer work experience
- Industry changing – need to keep pace with careers advice
- Primary schools are key ☑ what jobs are out there
- ‘Jobs’ – terminology importance (rather than career)
- Key Stage 2 – Year 6 ☑ make noise about opportunities
- Supporting teachers
- Future-proof ☑ enabling creative hubs/innovation
- Turn learning into real projects – run a proper business
- Give people challenges
- Transferrable skills
- E.g. ex-MOD in construction
- Foundation courses – people choose what they don’t want to do
- People cutting back on cost – no courses for career progression
- Worry can’t back fill if promote someone
- SMEs worried about employing too many
- Information on courses available
- Bring SMEs in – to see the collective benefits

#### **PRIORITIES**

1. Better partnerships – clusters of schools with employers
2. Publicity of what is happening
3. 75% have to redo English + Maths at Mid-Kent College
4. Getting kids ready for workplace
5. leadership
6. business acumen
7. management skills
8. Basic – English + Maths

#### **PRIORITIES RECAP IN PLENARY**

1. Work attitude of young
2. Careers advice from early years
3. Raising awareness of new careers & opportunities (skills hubs)
4. Present exemplar initiatives to young people
5. Not only academic skills – be work ready
6. Business & education link
7. Raise awareness with SMEs
8. Existing workforce
9. Transferrable skills/upskill for new jobs (leadership & management)
10. Future vision – 20/30 years
11. Wide range of skills – especially people skills
12. Apprenticeships

#### **PRODUCTIVITY: GROUP 1**

- Keep it simple
- How to back winners

- Small grants, e.g. RGF
- Regulations....
- SME-dominated economy
- Grants for sustainable development
- Renewables
- “Ballsy” on creative industries.
- Dominant growing elderly population
- Short technology lifecycles
- Maker space
- Middlestand => Medium-sized businesses
- Public funds, to what purpose? Creation of environment “little moments”.
- Low tax economy = Low wage economy.
- Too much of a focus on big infrastructure.
- Focus on attracting, developing and retaining the young.
- M&D – Tech
- Technology making sectors attractive.

### **PRODUCTIVITY: GROUP 2**

- Viability of commercial property
- Digital nomads
- Cultural coast: Quality of place.
- Leadership: Need act-tank, not think-tank. Need to reinvigorate institutions.
- Creating great places at connection points.
- Does Kent project itself as a ‘can-do place’?? For business?
- Good connections to London and the global
- Attitude, endeavour and collaboration essential.
- Place-making impacted by quality of place, and planning, procurement.
- Shortage of space. Innovation Space.
- A single Kent Economic Development Corporation – joining up Locate in Kent, Universities, Local authorities and delivery organisations. This could consider Social, Physical and environmental factors.
- Environmental plan
- Not enough collaboration

### **PRODUCTIVITY: GROUP 3**

- Risk-taking: More attractive in Kent than London (land cheaper etc).
- Support healthy stable economy. Environment.
- Economic Plan should link to health sector and STPs (Sustainability and Transformation Plans), e.g. don’t damage air quality.
- Issue – character comes from local plans – inform how Kent and Medway are distinctive.
- Branding:
- Natural environment importance.
- Balance natural environment with housing – how.... A different approach to housing and higher housing standards. Housing developments need:
  - Good design
  - Green spaces
- If designed well using land for housing can be better for wildlife and nature, than using land for agricultural purposes.
- Housing developments need to produce living landscapes with connectivity. Species need to be able to move.
- How to brand Kent and Medway as unique:
- Green energy (solar, tidal, wind energy opportunities. Kent has highest annual sunshine hours)
- Coastal and maritime

- Brand based on sectors with critical mass – Need to examine data for Kent and Medway (and rest of UK), but already have science hubs and creative industries – Could these assist with branding?
- Need to badge our differences from other areas.
- Need funds to pump prime, e.g. we require innovation and commercial space, could a fund be set up?
- Wi-fi needed.
- Need to move at pace. Business work quickly.
- Have a 30-year economic plan.

#### **PRODUCTIVITY: GROUP 4**

- Need a wider / broader focus than simply driving up GDP.
- UKTI produce data on what makes the UK attractive. Need to understand who are audience is, and how we can best engage with them.
- Need an economic plan that is specific about Kent and Medway strengths – what are our sector strengths, what are our assets (sunshine, international gateway, Garden of England, cultural heritage, diverse natural resources).
- Need to brand that can attract foreign investment – Key strength is the connectivity in the county, high-quality schools and universities, the quality of the environment).
- Branding a location for business investment is not that different from branding a location for tourism – Liaise with Visit Kent and Locate in Kent to shape this.
- Economic Plans should last 30 years – Need to think skills in primary school that will deliver the vision in 30 years' time.
- How to take innovative ideas to commercial success? Example of good practice is the Madrid google campus – this space encourages the cross-fertilisation of ideas. Another possibility is an innovation hub at the Discovery Park.
- The SME issue is significant.
- Young people previously knew what their parents did (e.g. doctor, teacher, policeman, blacksmith), now less understanding of careers.
- There is a silo issue.
- Badge differences: proper integration on specific things that matter.
- Agreed protocols for KMEP members on how they'll work together and share resources.
- Issue of pace in decision-making and delivery. How will people contribute?

#### **PRODUCTIVITY: GROUP 5**

- Raise Productivity
- (STEAM) Creativity and Young People
- Give businesses a better profile
- The right environment for young people. Infrastructure.
- Stronger partnerships.
- Macro, Micro, Individual – why not in Kent.
- Low take-up in export
- Repositioning Kent – quirky / great place
- Leith Report Skills
- Silos – National/Competing targets
- Enable young people to share the strategy
- Environment
- Planning – faster. Less bureaucracy.
- Access to funding. RGF. Productivity investment fund?
- New technology – benchmarking – management and leadership.

## **PRODUCTIVITY: GROUP 6**

- Support breadth.
- Creative Coast
- Pump Prime Facilities to build.
- Invest in the base of the skills pyramid
- Pension Fund investment
- Shortage of easy-in, easy-out. Lack of commercial space.
- Digital
- Self-Identity
- Kent and Medway Business Fund
- Learn lessons, don't reinvent the wheel.
- Sectors!
- Access to finance, business support, risk.
- Cultural (embedded).

## **PRODUCTIVITY: GROUP 7**

- Skills and employability => Apprenticeships = 17-24 quality
- Staff Retention £
- Agri-tech
- Start earlier (skills at the base of the pyramid)
- Brain drain.
- Lost engineering
- Productivity investment
- "pick off big companies" – Build, grow, invest
- Existing economy => what's new?
- Attract companies?
- Exclusion

## **PRODUCTIVITY: GROUP 8**

- Peer-to-Peer mentoring
- Crack markets: difficult
- High-performing economy
- Agri-tech: Hadlow College
- Connectivity
- Current and Future industrial Base
- Science parks
- Branch economy? Supply Chains?
- Alumni networks?
- Edge Hub Christchurch
- Skills at base of pyramid

## **PRODUCTIVITY: GROUP 9**

- No meaningful statistics on performance income per head is higher – GVA is an indicator, how do we measure.
- Why do we want to be innovative – innovation = value, where are the gaps that can be filled?
- Unique Selling Points – future-proofing – regulatory changes / resource gaps

- Space – Commercial space both start-up and move on – new space not retro-fit to existing centres. Utilising existing assets – regulation for new buildings too high. Commercial to residential (GLA).
- Planning – some local authorities better than other, accessibility, clusters not too tight – speed of decision-making and flexibility.
- Infrastructure – future horizon encourage inward investment
- Business deaths – learning from failure, not a bad thing, inflexible businesses
- Businesses need to cope with change
- How do you find new markets?
- Gatwick – Buyers group pre-qualify 80% of suppliers get a contract – something similar at SELEP?

#### **PRODUCTIVITY: GROUP 10**

- West Kent Officer Space – Losing to Housing (the whole of Kent)
- Foundation of growth – total commercial space
- Losing space for town centres
- Repurposing of space – small creatives amassed
- Impact of R&D moving
- Private owners sitting on space / no strategy – young businesses no capital
- Match-up tech with education
- Build on existing clusters/new clusters at key transport modes
- High-value sectors – industrial strategy and on model of RGF
- Key nodes/clusters
- High Speed 1 – to North London (key advantage) – USD more accessible than ox – lam corridor [??]
- R & D – Innovation under the radar – don't realise they are doing
- Lack of skills, lack of funding – start-up funding, mentoring, coaching
- Complications of apprenticeships
- HEI – internationally focussed
- Compete on international basis – prevent outflow
- Bureaucracy – performance measurement
- Stop permitted development rights
- Develop plan for comm [Community/communications?]
- Central government focus on housing.
- Innovation and Growth Hub
- Navigation, complicated offer
- Congestion
- Broadband speed
- Recruitment / infrastructure / skills
- Incentives to focus
- Balance the support for housing
- Place-making / cultural – Protecting the offer as it stands.

#### **PRODUCTIVITY: GROUP 11**

- Commercial space required – all types
- Planning & regulation framework – too strict
- Planning delays on development – variance in approach
- Inward & investment & open markets (business to business network – Heathrow)
- Clusters & transport nodes
- Sweat High Speed 1
- Place-making – encourage people to come & live & work
- Align natural & local priorities – devolution

- Shortage of easy - in commercial space
- Viability issues
- Aspiration for science parks – on which to build industrial base
- Graduate retention – Structure?
- Investment at level of form – Kent & Medway business fund
- Recognise digital technologies
- Crosscutting – advanced manufacturing
- Agri-tech

#### **PRIORITIES RECAP IN PLENARY**

- Collaborate between sectors for innovation investment
- International trade – grow enthusiasm
- Peer to peer mentoring

#### **Housing and Infrastructure: Group 1**

- Time to deliver infrastructure.
- People:
  - attracting
  - skills
- creating places people want to live
- Background economy:
  - how do we sell?
    - Arts
    - Culture
    - Tourism
    - Visitor economy
- Linked to quality of life
- Cost of transport
- Joint ventures (Local authorities and developers)
- Rural connectivity:
  - Digital
  - Transport
- Digital connectivity: 4th utility – incorporate as part of development.
- Other utilities: water!
- Maximising existing investment through creative design (recruitment in local authorities, local plans):
  - cross-sector
  - Infrastructure having more than one use.
- Transport:
  - Not just roads
  - Ports
  - Rail (using off-peak capacity)
  - Travel-demand management
  - Airports
- Aging population:
  - Social aspect => social inclusion
  - Reliance on car
  - Place-making: Connectivity to and from London and Europe:
  - How do we retain young people?
  - Business location in Kent
  - Need to sell this as unique point to investors

- International investors
- Maximising ports and existing assets
- Economic resilience:
  - Ensuring variety
  - Steady growth across the economy
  - Cross-sector
  - Diversity in the economy:
    - Skills
    - Digital technology
    - Cross-cutting
- Housing:
  - Cost of rent and mortgage
  - Better choice to manage existing housing stock
  - Housing for local people
  - Employing local people
  - Different types of houses
  - More creativity (rather than maximising profit)
  - Helping young people to buy
  - Developers' social responsibility
  - Can we link infrastructure investment to university skills?
- Planning:
  - Objection to development
  - Freedom and flexibilities – as short-term option rather than amend planning system completely
  - Faster system
  - Creating the type of accommodation people (including young people) want.
  - Local authority planning capability – more engagement
- Natural capital assets – building links to nature partnerships
- Quality of the environment – not taking it for granted.
- Water supply – flood strategy
- Why is public intervention required – addressing market failure
- Using infrastructure for multiple purposes or achieving same outcome through different means.
- Mixed-use development – place-making.
- What do we mean by place-making:
- Creating places to live and work
- Cultural infrastructure
- Community infrastructure
- Will increasing road capacity just increase travel demand?
- How do we achieve place-making?
  - Need new design approaches (Ebbsfleet – constrained by developed way of delivery).
  - Accommodation for different life stages
- Design:
  - Market failure
  - Developers looking to maximise profit, not encouraging creative design.
    - => All districts / boroughs being more pro-active.
- How do we get community on side with place-making agenda.
- Broadband
- Commercial space:
  - mapping out availability or commercial space.
  - particularly supporting SMEs
- Rail infrastructure – rail freight – need to think strategically.
- Lower Thames Crossing – connectivity across strategic road network
  - 4th crossing?



- o Delivery of infrastructure at a faster pace?
- o Role of digital technology (electric vehicle infrastructure, air-quality, future-proof)
- o Change from historic travel patterns or will it increase travel demand/ -
  - o Should we challenge existing trends?
  - o Need investment in South East to maximise opportunity for the rest of the country.
- o Rail connectivity – rail freight?
- o Expansion of ports – increasing traffic, impact of Brexit (e.g. customs and operation stack).
- o Digital infrastructure:
  - o Faster speeds
  - o Mobile technology / network? – Have one network with different suppliers?
  - o 5G
- o Planning; need to become forward thinking:
  - o Always playing catch-up
  - o Strategic planning – more assertive
  - o International development and infrastructure built much faster – how do we compete?
  - o More devolution? Joint-up working within government departments.
- o Housing versus commercial space
- o Reducing traffic
  - o Mixed-use developments
  - o Better design
  - o More flexibility in planning system
  - o Financing from banks for commercial development
  - o Financing for housing is available more readily.
  - o Local authority-led development
  - ☒ Forward funding of infrastructure by local authorities and making profit from sale of land/assets.
  - ☒ Focus on town centre
  - ☒ Include mix of residential above retail units.
  - ☒ Could use Housing Infrastructure Fund, but don't have time to work up proposals.
- o Housing
  - ☒ Design
  - ☒ Renewable energy
  - ☒ Sustainable design
  - ☒ Sell Kent in terms of green energy
  - ☒ Rental market unaffordable:
- Retaining skills and attracting labour
- Need mix of rental and owning own home

### **Housing and Infrastructure: Group 2**

- o High-speed broadband of at least 100MB in every building – both commercial and residential
- o Place-making – Attractive to entrepreneurs and residents
- o Government is likely to give Housing and infrastructure fund to about 6 to 12 projects around the country. Thus, need to prioritise areas of focus in Kent and Area – New towns and regeneration. Focus on fewer locations.
  - o Need mix-use developments
  - o Require seed funding for infrastructure.
  - o Cannot see more huge estates built on the edge of towns without infrastructure.
  - o Suggest a Kent Development Company/Group to work with local integrated communities. This KDC could work with regulators, have public sector investment up front, and use best practice to problem solve.
  - o Should prevent conversion of employment land for housing use.
  - o Need to build commercial space where employers want to work
  - o Transport barrier can prevent workforce reaching jobs – this is both connections and price.

- o Need 'can-do' attitude locally.
- o Understand why development is now happening privately, e.g. why is Chatham waterfront not being developed?
- o Take a wider view, make future-proof and build diverse developments.
- o Need neighbourhood plans, but not driven by public sector.
- o Delivery of projects and their marketing. Need more than Locate in Kent.
- o Church and pubs have been community hubs, what is the future hub.
- o Future proof planning – we have a catch-up approach.
- o Road schemes need to incorporate the next generation technology.
- o Cycle hire and electrical charging points in new developments.
- o Utility providers need long-term plans. Prevented from forward funding under current rules. Reverse this.
- o High Speed 1 – capacity, frequency and pricing
- o Remove reliance on car
- o Resilience of network / Accident-incident
- o Lower Thames Crossing – stick to timeframe. Explore using prudential borrowing and private sector funding.
- o There is a transport connectivity issue in South West Kent.
- o Living landscape
- o Leisure, place-making, making use of waterfront.
- o Need all voices in one room – quality place

### **Housing and Infrastructure: Group 3**

- o Housing developments' infrastructure not keeping pace – connections between rural communities
- o Proper planning – HCA forward funding, sustainability (not just roads)
- o Utilities – water, electricity: can't rely on developers
- o Piecemeal approach to smaller developments
- o Sustainable communities – right type of houses. Also, people moving out from London / impact of London.
- o Broadband / digital infrastructure – future of digital.
- o Houses are work places – fuzzy borders between residential / commercial / retail.
- o Barriers: utilities, water, electricity.
- o Focus on housing by central government.
- o Brexit – Frictionless borders, primary for national infrastructure.
- o Trading with rest of the world – airports becoming more important
- o London Ashford at Lydd
- o Enabling technologies
- o Ports – Ramsgate more resilience
- o Trains from China – Need capacity on railroads
- o Smarter use of infrastructure
- o What is the future? Vision for the future? With young people – what's the legacy.
- o Resourcing / sustainability?
- o 3D printing.

### **Housing and Infrastructure: Group 4**

- o Connectivity to/from London
- o Journey time to be 1 hour to London
- o Is rail just encouraging commuting to London?
- o Commercial hubs within an hour of London
- o Residential connectivity to hubs?
- o High Speed 1 – maximising opportunity from connectivity to Europe.
- o Ports – impact post-Brexit

- o Infrastructure to support the Port falling between different funding pots.
- o How do we capture the benefits locally / added value
- o Detracting inward investment during operation stack.

#### Strategic Planning

- o County level
- o Travel to work area
- o Needing to think beyond the boundaries
- o Lower Thames Crossing – faster decisions
- o Lorry parking facilities – pace of delivery!

#### Digital technology

- Working from home
- What will the impact be
- Should be more ambitious on broadband speeds to compete globally

#### Housing

- Call for sites – helpful process
- Sustainable and future proof – have unique design to Kent – Garden of England
- Needs to be linked to commercial sites

#### Funding – also private sector

- Issues between local plan housing numbers and utilities: how do we provide the infrastructure  
Signing utilities up at the point of the local plan being agreed.

### **Housing and Infrastructure: Group 5**

- Long term planning
- Achieved to date section
- More housing in Kent than in other areas
- Need more infrastructure to deliver housing
- Out-of-date housing assessments - lack of stability in plans
- Lost regional plans – prefer Kent & Medway plan
- o These result in housing without infrastructure
- Local community, business facilities & mixture
- Profit-driven housing development by PLCs
- Kings Hill
- o Commuters to London
- o Is it wrong to have a large % commuting population?
- Need for phone signals let alone broadband
- Limits on capital expenditure by utilities (self-imposed). Back-end expenditure
- Have right to raise borrowing levels & then charge back.
- Stop waiting game
- o Wait for someone else to go first
- o Spread cost
- Need to make decisions quicker. New LTC already too late.
- Lack of business input – Chinese airport approach held back by small groups
- Self-privatise some of our projects ☒ procurement rules don't allow this
- Can promote environment alongside growth
- Productive space
- o land used for farming
- o water resources
- Biodiversity alongside housing
- Cost benefit analysis approach
- Gov. close down conversations – options A, B, C
- o “Done to” not with

- Importance of rail for students ☑ price
- Colleges can't afford to put on transport
- Need cluster & hub approach to get critical mass

#### **PRIORITIES**

1. Kent & Medway Plan – bringing parties together
2. Identified barriers
  - a. Public transport
  - b. Environment
  - c. Need to sell benefits
3. Housing, infrastructure not incompatible
  - a. Mechanism to make it work
  - b. Still retain Garden of England
4. Longer-term planning
5. Investing in biodiversity etc. ☑ Need balanced community
6. Change culture from planning to place-making
  - Do things thematically not piecemeal
  - Deliver the promised – town maps

#### **Housing and Infrastructure: Group 6**

##### Infrastructure & Skills

- How do we link

##### Enabling infrastructure

- Are the services there?
- Need to be on the front foot

##### Housing

- How do we supply social housing – one policy doesn't fit all
- Too much dependence on a few major house builders – control of the market
  - o Diversifying the market ☑ SME
  - o How do we do this without controlling the market?
- Affordable housing needed to support lower paid sectors

##### Transport

- No just car
- Rail – HS1
  - o Resilient
  - o Affordable (Access to employment)
- Tram system
- Alternatives to motorway
- Lorry parking

##### Spatial Planning

- Planning & delivery of community facilities, health care etc., crime
- Public health
- Otterpool Park & Ebbsfleet

##### Broadband & Mobile Technology

- Inconsistent

#### **Housing and Infrastructure: Group 7**

##### Housing

- Changes to planning system
- Structure plan?
  - o Co-operation with districts and County Council

- Loss of commercial space to residential
- Pace of building following planning approval
- o Pace of determining sites & local planning application process
- o Utilities – pace of supporting development
- Location of housing
- Assessing housing need more strategically
- o Not just on district level
- Ebbsfleet DC
- o How is it working from developer's perspective
- Forward funding support by Gov for major infrastructure

#### Transport

- Rapid transit
- o Ebbsfleet example
- o Communicating information about public transport
- Access to transport during off-peak
- o Early in the morning and late in the evening
- o Arriva click – could it be rolled out on larger scale
- Flexible working
- Ports → lobby to Government to ensure smooth transition post-Brexit
- o Potential to pilot new technology – pioneer for new innovation
- River – leisure, but option if disruption on road/rail

#### Place-making

- Building on existing assets
- o Natural assets
- o Cultural assets
- Delivering community & cultural facilities
- How is the delivery of infrastructure phased
- Maintenance & renewables
- Road pricing?
- Resources to deliver
- o Aggregates → larger scale planning
- o Skills → transport & accommodation

#### Mobile & Digital Technology

- Broadband

#### **PRIORITIES RECAP IN PLENARY**

- Connectivity to & from London – bring businesses to Kent.
- o Is it a bad thing to have residential commuters?
- Ports, airports – Operation Stack constraint (not selling point)
- Pioneer new technologies
- Inappropriate lorry parking
- Invest in sustainable transport – future need
- Be ambitious – exceed national approach (digital)
- Engage with utilities earlier in planning
- Think about larger scale – not existing boundaries
- Focus on SME builders? Major companies preventing attractive communities & design
- Community facilities – public wealth etc.
- Affordable accommodation
- Not only focus on high-end
- Future vision
- o Longer term strategic
- o Involve young people
- Proper planning

- o 2-tier approach
- o Large developments thought-through
  - Space perception
- o 3D-printing
- o How infrastructure changing
  - Airport provision
- o Easy to get to international markets

#### **24. Meeting with Graeme Vasey – East Kent College – 29/08/17**

- Over specialisation potentially poses risks for FE
- Possible opportunities to work with the freelancer community to support their growth
- Strong linkages to construction industry
- Delivering on employer premises
- Utilisation of space measure adopted by central government is a flawed measure of college efficiency
- Potentially need more interventions to bring employers and FE colleges together
- Hours changing is a good thing
- However, 19 – 21year olds are constrained by the current model (for many its unaffordable – GR suggests delivery on the same money, but limit places). Put an incentive in for employer.
- 16-19 works. Hours and rates not working, most colleges are underspending on adult funding, as the current rules don't allow it.
- Three priorities.
  - o Helping people make the right decisions.
  - o Industrial needs of locality
  - o Social needs of the area.

Role of FE in Employer delivery

#### **25. Meeting with Southend Business Partnership – 29/08/17**

- Businesses will adapt
- Important government supports changes
- Businesses will find a way.
- Confidence is needed – uncertainty at the moment not helpful. Strong leadership
- Young people – put in a place to think creatively and adapt. Education and primary schools.
- More micro-businesses here ....
- 'Part of the prosperous South East' versus 'not part of the South East'
- A127. Transport connectivity.

#### **26. Essex IGF Meeting – 5/09/17**

Significant work ongoing on School Careers Engagement by Essex

## Targets (Y7-9)

- 4500 students over 30+ events
- 75% reporting better understanding of sector
- 30% referring on to Yr 10-13 Programme

Medical Mavericks, Learn by Design, the Brittan Partnership all delivering successful projects

## Targets Yr 10-13

- 1660 students to over 16 events

## Discussion about SELEP Strategy ....

- Manufacturing/Productivity.
- Can you buck the trend of the rise of India & China?
- Technology .... Making and programming robots. Supporting the manufacturing sector, rather than making.
- High Performing Technology
- Young People. STEM Skills ...
- Mid-career – reskilling .... Returnships.
- Go with the grain of the economy ...
- Construction - Offsite Manufacturing
- Sectors – Should we have Network Navigators?
- Vertical Sectors important. (Enabling Technologies)
- Lobbying: Energy sector
- Growth nodes at either end of the A120
- Adding value – near port manufacturing.
- Public Health England .... Strategic Account.
- Grow on space. Direct delivery ...
- Patient Finance .... (Intervention, de-risking).
- Economic Strategy is fractured ....
- Innovation Team in Essex (expert form filling ....)
- Links to private sector.

## **27. Meeting with GPGC LEP – 03/10/17**

### Themes:

- London Stansted Cambridge corridor, what it should and could deliver from a LEP endorsement and alignment to LEP strategy.
- Energy – Grid connection and development of supply (battery storage)
- Inclusive growth
- Migrant labour – where will we will get skilled people from

- AI and Robotics – centres of excellence.
- Haven't tackled housing growth figures – due to Mayor. Local Gov issue to resolve.

The SEP will articulate the need for LEP to focus on additionality

Plans to produce an investment prospectus – covers off broad investment approach and how much we have to spend, not a comprehensive infrastructure list.

Inward investment – businesses do not recognise local authority boundaries.

## **28. Feedback from Basildon Borough Council – 6/10/17**

### **1. What particular evidence should we draw on to develop a compelling SEP narrative?**

- Statistical evidence
- Government policies such as the Industrial strategy
- Localis response to Industrial Strategy
- Centre for Cities research
- RSA Inclusive Growth Commission
- Local ED Policies and Local Plans
- Glennys Data Book

### **2. What are the main strategic assets of the SELEP economy?**

- The Gateways to the rest of the UK i.e. airports and ports
- Strong technology heritage especially manufacturing
- History of innovative urban developments and forward looking
- Large corporate R&D investments

### **3. How can we invest in these assets to achieve a source of international competitive advantage?**

- Improve the access of local people to high skilled jobs in order to reduce the demand to import skills and develop a local pipeline of a skilled workforce.
- Support and invest in innovative urban development and smart technologies
- Invest in supporting local SMEs to take advantage of technological innovations and creating corporate spin offs.
- Ensuring employment land and quality facilities are available especially grow-on space.
- Attract world class HE offer aligned to industrial strengths
- Invest in infrastructure both transport links and superfast broad band.

### **4. How can investment in these assets help maximise their contribution to economic growth?**

- Increasing GVA through creation of higher skilled jobs.
- Increase inward investment through existence of a skilled workforce, employment land/space, and clustering.
- Reduce the reliance on low skilled jobs threatened by automation.
- Enabling further growth of both large corporates and indigenous SMEs



- Able to attract high value employment through the existence of superfast broadband.
- Increasing the growth of existing companies through the existence of an upgraded transport network and digital infrastructure.

**5. How can we invest in our strategic assets to help reduce their long-term dependency on the public purse?**

- Through planning and to ensure there is employment land available for growth.
- Provide the future workforce
- Invest in addressing barriers before they arise – long term planning rather than quick fixes.

**6. What can the LEP and partners do better together in the future to maximise economic growth in the SELEP area?**

- Improved engagement with areas of economic growth rather than focussing on political boundaries.
- Reduce the political influence on the Board and provide a transparent decision process.
- Improve linkages with London and recognise the opportunities (and challenges) coming from future London growth.

**7. What existing and new partnerships are needed to maximise the potential of these assets?**

Working groups focussing on the real strengths of the area i.e.

- Advanced and Smart Future Technologies
- Urban/Key towns

**8. How should we prioritise challenges/barriers that are holding back the local economy and what actions should be taken to overcome these?**

- Improve the housing offer and in particular affordable housing
- Release further land for employment
- Develop growth on space for existing start ups
- Regulate permitted development to protect employment land
- Raising aspiration and demand from SMEs to innovate and trade in order to increase high quality jobs and reduce low skilled jobs.
- Raising demand and aspirations from local residents to access skills, also offering accessible and up to date career advice.
- Ensuring low skilled jobs offers structured career paths in order to offer low skilled workers the opportunity to access better paid employment and reduce the threat of automation.
- Ensuring FE and HE providers' offer is in line with the requirement of the economy rather than responding to the demand of students i.e. offering skills for jobs which has few employment opportunities such in the cultural sector, gaming etc.
- Creating community hubs for ex improve the attractiveness of town centres and develop a new town centre offer.

- Improve the road and transport links and infrastructure, particularly the A127.
- Ensure Superfast Broad band for all businesses.

**9. Which projects do you consider to be a future priority?**

Projects to consider supporting:

- Innovation and Advanced Technologies such as the Thames Estuary Innovation Warehouse.
- Key Town Centre and Urban developments to strengthen their completeness
- Ford Motor Co further expansion and investment in autonomous vehicles and the establishment of an Advanced Technology Park.
- PROCAT's further expansion and development of a Institute of Technologies
- Developing Basildon Town Centre as a Digital Hub rivalling London and Cambridge and taking some of their growth within the sector and taking opportunity of London growth.
- Trade and internationalisation of SMEs
- Roll out of Superfast Broadband to all businesses.
- Upgrade of key transport links particularly A127 and A13
- Upgrade and improvement of industrial areas

**29. Meeting with London Economic Action Partnership – 14/09/17**

London Poly-centricity important

- Economic Development Strategy being refreshed
- Environment important
- London Plan being developed at present
- Health and Equalities, Culture and Skills an important focus

London Plan

- Employment land requirement up
- Housing flows – more people moving to the regions
- Transport Strategy – modal shift. Public Transport. Healthy Streets
- LEAP engaged in a dialogue with EELGA and SEEC on housing growth issues
- 13 initial strategic infrastructure priorities – including some major SELEP projects.
- Industrial Policy. Protect Strategic Employment Land.
- B1, C, B2, B8. Servicing. Bus Garages. Logistics ... will likely need to find a new home for some businesses
- Industrial Space Demand.
- London – Stansted – Cambridge axis becoming important.
- Thames Estuary – London Plan as a growth corridor. Thames Estuary Production Corridor.

