



A world-class research, innovation and enterprise cluster

Innovation-led development in the horticultural and food supply chain

Dr Nicola Harrison, Programme Director

Growing Kent & Medway



Growing Kent & Medway (GKM) is funded by the Strength in Places Fund.

Strength in Places is a UKRI programme that helps areas of the UK to build on existing strengths in research and innovation to deliver benefits for their local economy.

It aims to:

- support innovation-led regional growth
- enhance local collaborations involving research and innovation.



GKM Partners



GUSBOURNE



RH GROUP



GKM Enterprise Cluster

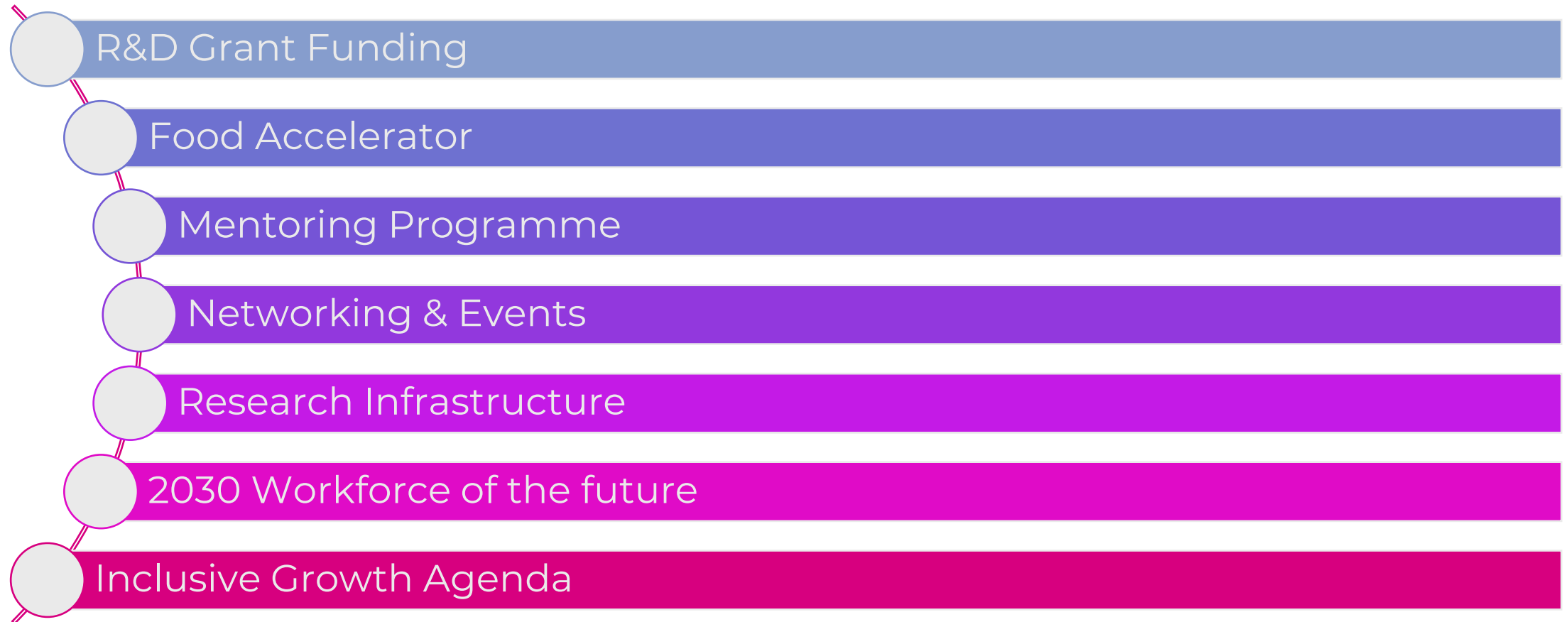
Growing Kent & Medway is a world-class research, innovation and enterprise cluster supporting growth in:

- technology-driven horticulture,
- fresh produce packaging,
- food and drink processing and its supply chains.





Business Innovation and Growing Kent & Medway Cluster



Collaborative Research & Innovation

- Raising investment for industry-driven research and innovation
- Accelerating the commercialisation of new technology
- Awarding grants for research, development and innovation:
 - Large-scale collaborative R&D grants
 - Small-scale innovation & prototyping fund for early-stage R&D or feasibility studies
 - Technology demonstrator fund for showcasing emerging agrifood tech innovations in practice





Grant funding trailblazers

GKM is making up to £5 million available to support research, development and business innovation.

First round of the **GKM Large-scale collaborative R&D grant competition** opened in September 2021. Successful projects will be announced in Spring 2022.

There is more to come....

Funding competition

Growing Kent and Medway Development

UK registered businesses can apply for funding to support their food supply chain.

Competition opens: Monday 6

Competition closes: Wednesday



This competition is now closed

Start new application

Summary

Eligibility

Investment in flagship infrastructure

Green Tech Hub for Advanced Horticulture

- Plant growth rooms, wine innovation centre, research glasshouse & meeting space
- NIAB EMR, East Malling
- Completion March 2022



Medway Food Innovation Centre

- Food processing, product development & packaging
- University of Greenwich

Biotechnology Hub for Sustainable Food & Drink

- High-value compounds from plant materials, controlling pathogens and improving quality, flavour & aroma
- University of Kent



Food Accelerator & Mentoring

- For start-ups and all stages of businesses in plant-based food & drink space
- Connect with industry leading experts
- Access to state-of-the-art facilities and technical expertise
- Mentorship
- Helping to raise investment and grant funding
- Guidance on leadership, strategy & market development
- **Launching Spring '22**



Events

Business Innovation Masterclasses

Overcoming barriers to accessing new technology and funding innovation

- Providing tools & knowledge to implement change
- Hosted by business support organisations in region, e.g. legal firms, banks, investors
- Example topics;
 - Tax credits and R&D
 - Protecting intellectual property
 - How to write an innovation strategy
- Monthly virtual meetings



Free GKM Membership Network

- Connect with specialists & businesses
- Find funding opportunities
- Industry and sustainability insights
- Access facilities and experts
- Discover new markets
- Book on to events & courses
- Launched late autumn '21



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Growing Kent & Medway

A world-class research, innovation and enterprise cluster supporting growth in technology-driven horticulture, fresh produce packaging, food and drink processing and its supply chains.



Growing the GKM cluster

- **181** signed up members
- **Newsletters.** Average open rate of **49%**.
- **229** Twitter followers. **7.1k** tweet impressions in last 28 days
- **100** LinkedIn followers. 761 post impressions in last 30 days



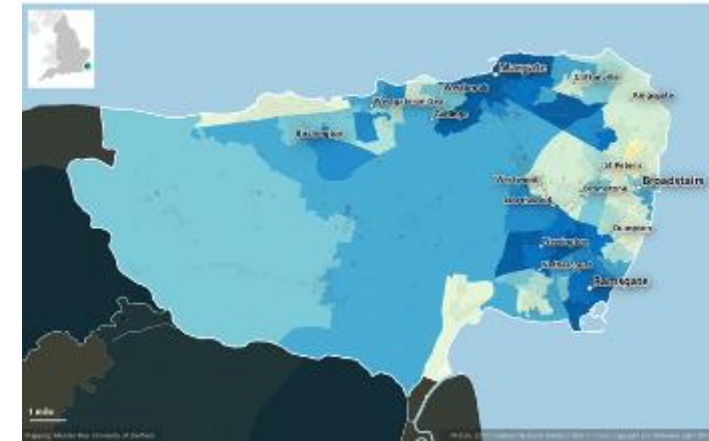
Inclusive growth

Kent & Medway has some of the widest social inequalities in the UK. This is a barrier to achieving prosperity and well-being

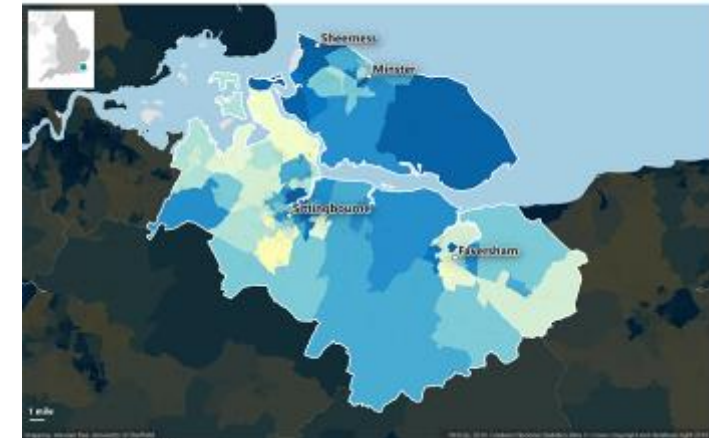
GKM is supporting groups that are under-represented in enterprise and business innovation activity:

- Young people (18-30 years), including young parents
- Women
- Areas with significant prosperity gaps or particular vulnerabilities to the economic impacts of Covid 19.

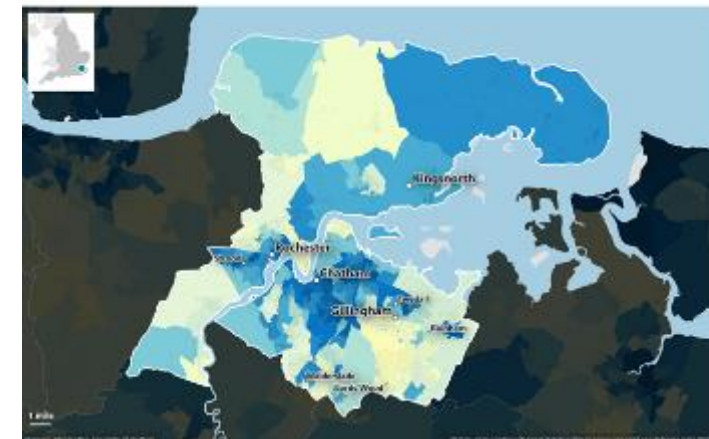
THANET



SWALE



MEDWAY



New Activities and Collaborations

Innovation Park Medway
incubator support for high-value engineering, technology and manufacturing

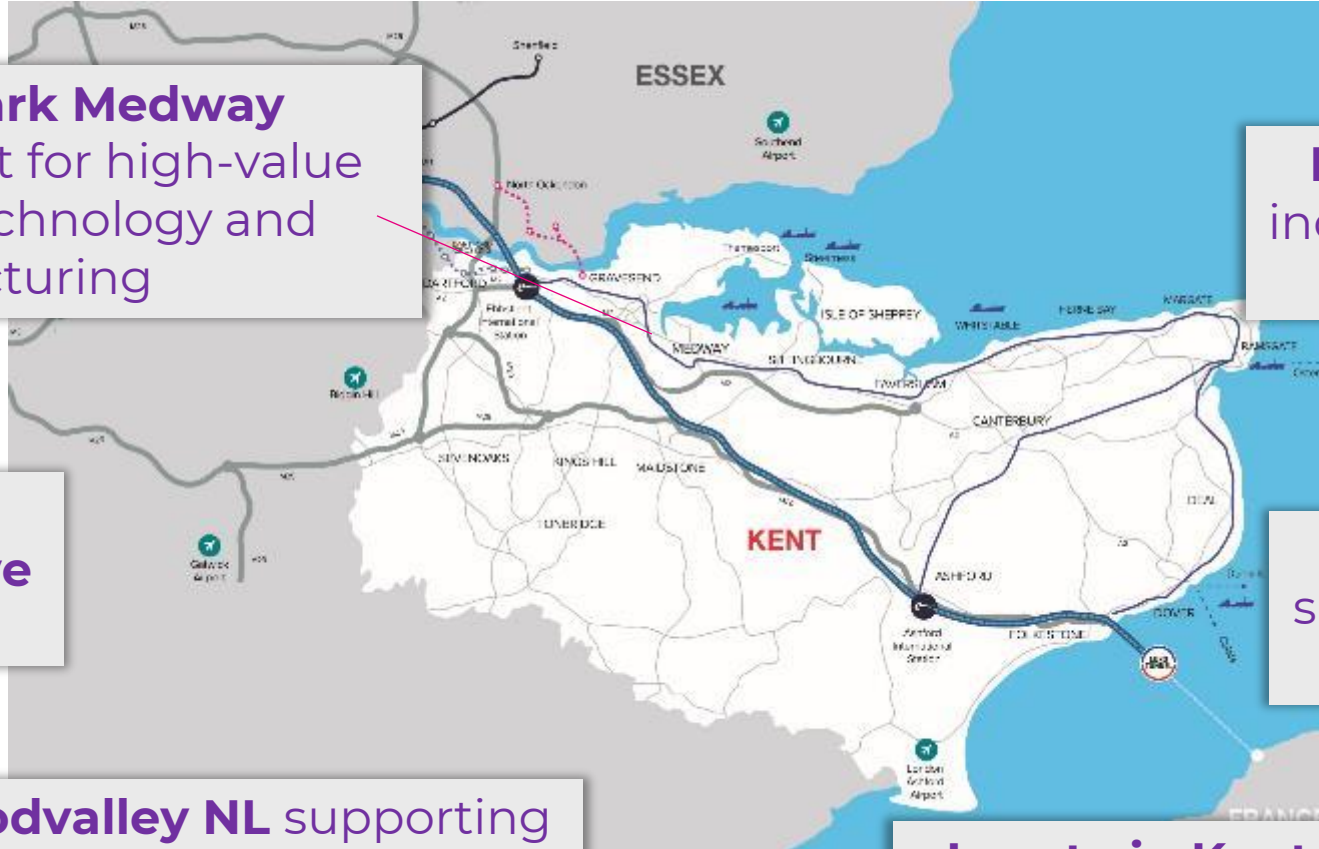
EDGE Hub supporting industry 4.0 and 5.0 in the South East

GKM Special Focus: Alternative Proteins

Produced in Kent supporting local food and drink industry

Foodvalley NL supporting innovation and transition in the global food system

Locate in Kent supporting inward investment activity e.g. Israel, Canada.



Adding value

GKM is raising the profile of the region as a powerhouse in its sector.

Greater levels of collaboration between partners are helping to attract or add impact to other regional investments:

- **Local Growth Fund** and **Growing Places** success at NIAB EMR (e.g. Wine Innovation Centre, Advanced Technology Horticultural Zone)
- **South Coast Biosciences DTP** (UoK and NIAB EMR)
- **UK Food Systems DTP** (UoG and NIAB EMR)





Attracting investment

Community Renewal Fund success:

Community Kent and Medway Partnership for Enterprise, Food and Health.

Building partnerships to grow, process and use healthy food at affordable prices.

Medway Together. Developing people, businesses and organisations to improve opportunity for persistently unemployed niche groups.

Growing Green. Upskilling and enabling micro- and SME businesses to innovate and respond to the economic and commercial opportunities of a net-zero economy.





Stimulating growth

GKM is investing in:

State of the art infrastructure and expertise to increase access to research and demonstration facilities to support business innovation.

Collaborative research and innovation to stimulate technology commercialisation, new product development and business growth.

Enterprise support to foster a vibrant, supportive environment for business innovation and growth.

Developing a **strategic framework for upskilling and professionalising** the future work force of the sector.



Achieving critical mass

- Spring 2022 launch of the full range of GKM services (e.g. Mentoring, Accelerator, Events, Innovation Growth Managers)
- Develop and open new GKM funding competitions
- Continue to build the team across the region
- Complete our baselining and start to measure impact
- Exploit new opportunities (e.g. alternative proteins, levelling up and sustainability agendas, investment, BREXIT challenges)



Get in touch

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