



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:

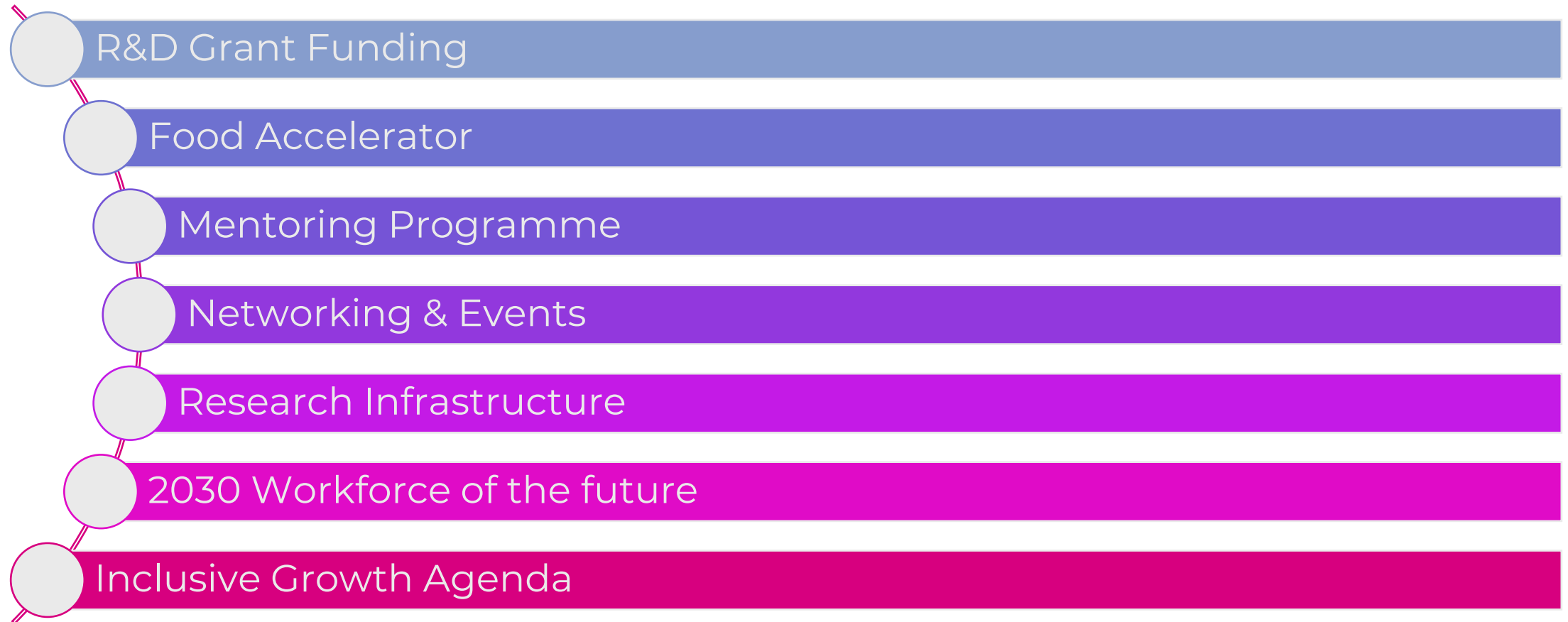
- technology-driven horticulture,
- fresh produce packaging,
- food and drink processing and its supply chains.







# 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

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





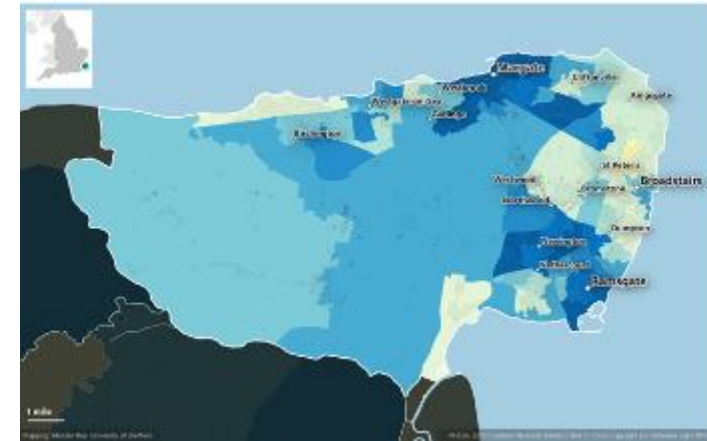
# Inclusive growth

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

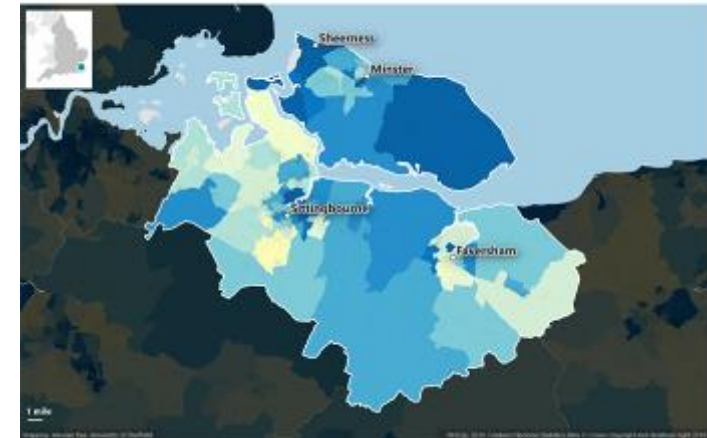
GKM is supporting groups that are under-represented in enterprise and business innovation activity:

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

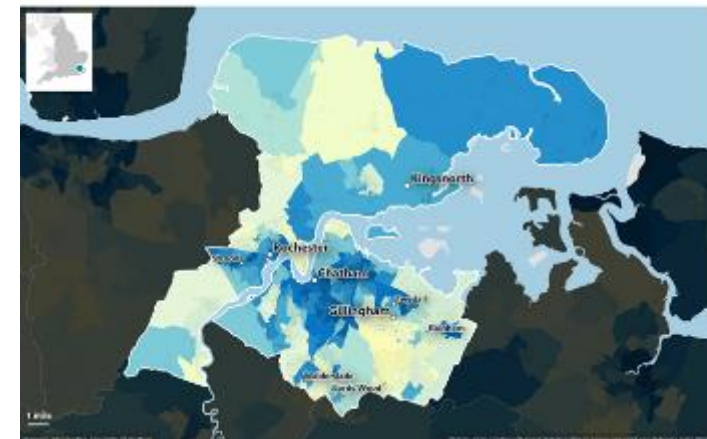
THANET



SWALE



MEDWAY



# New Activities and Collaborations

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

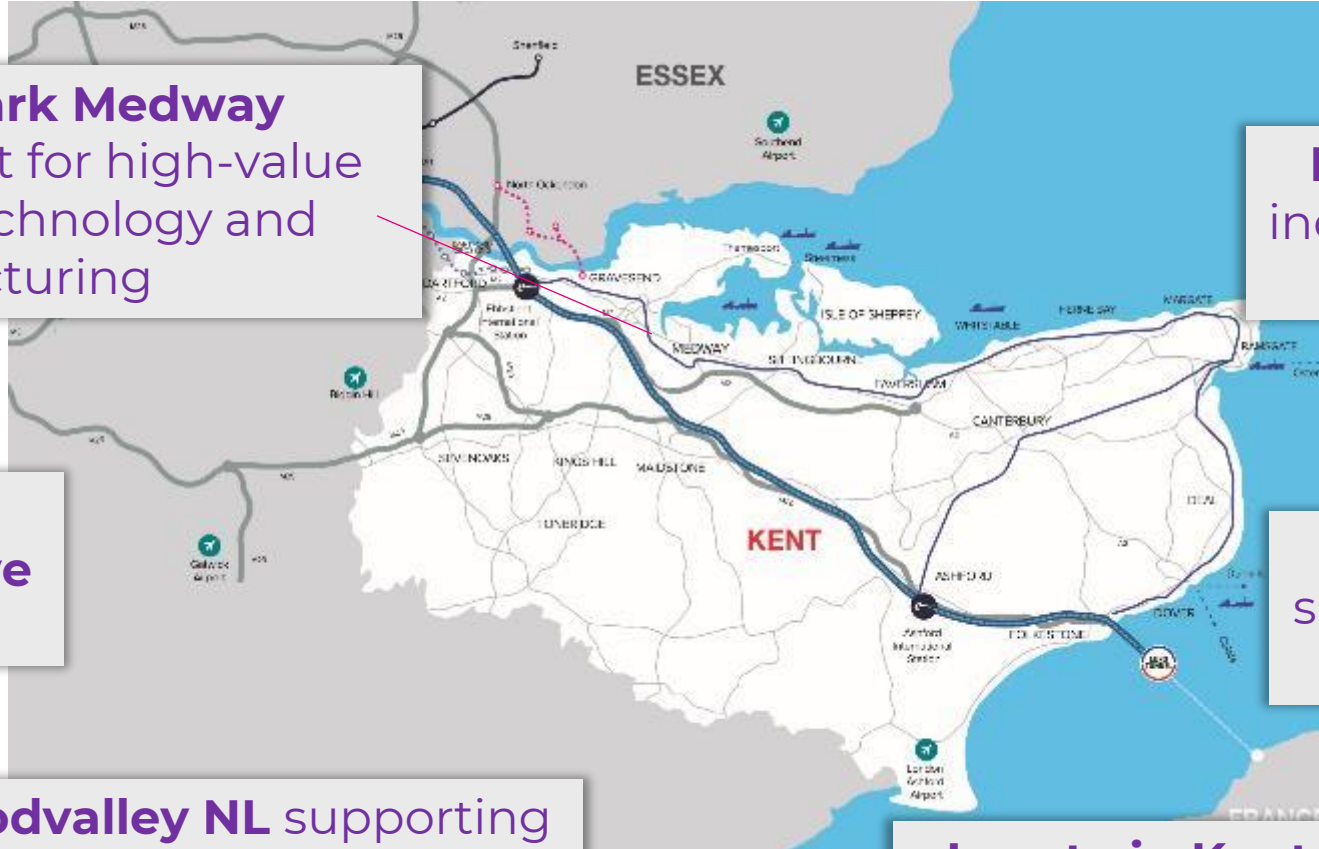
**EDGE Hub** supporting industry 4.0 and 5.0 in the South East

**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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