



## ***Unlocking the Potential***

A strategic Local Enterprise Partnership for  
Greater Essex, Kent and Medway and East  
Sussex

**Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP**

Secretary of State  
Communities & Local  
Government  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London SW1 5DU

**Rt Hon Vince Cable MP**

Secretary of State  
Department for Business,  
Innovation & Skills  
1 Victoria Street  
London SW1 0ET

Dear Secretaries of State,

**Unlocking the Potential: A strategic Local Enterprise Partnership for  
Greater Essex, Kent & Medway and East Sussex**

We strongly welcome the Government's swift moves to transfer power to local business and local government working together. At a time when generating private sector growth is a top priority, our focus is solidly on unlocking jobs and opportunities for business growth.

We know that we will only fulfil our economic potential if we work strategically across established boundaries, recognising the great opportunities that we have in common and addressing the challenges that we all face. That is why we have decided to come together to combine our current LEP proposals in support of a strategic Local Enterprise Partnership for Greater Essex, Kent and Medway and East Sussex.

Our vision of a strategic LEP combines the best of our earlier proposals. Together, our three areas have a population of 3.9 million – larger than any UK city region outside London – and are home to over 130,000 businesses. Our ports are critical to the nation and our strategic location between London and the markets of Europe is of national importance. We have huge potential to harness the opportunities presented by the Thames Gateway, coastal renewal, Britain's largest rural economy and our major growth points.

Combined, East Sussex, Greater Essex and Kent and Medway will be England's largest LEP. We will use this scale to secure maximum private sector leverage, provide capacity for devolution of powers and public funding and generate real impetus for economic growth. In particular, we will focus on the Thames Gateway and Growth Areas, coastal regeneration and rural Essex, Kent and East Sussex to:

- Bring forward key locations for job creation (including in areas of high public sector dependency) developing new innovative solutions for infrastructure financing and physical development;
- Support the critical transport links we need to support national growth – including a Lower Thames Crossing and investment in the A2/M2/M20 corridors, improving Junctions 30 and 31 of the M25 and the A12 and opening up opportunity along the A21 Corridor, including the Hastings-Bexhill Link Road;

- Promote investment in our cities, towns, Growth Areas and rural communities (including rural broadband), supporting inward investment and job creation;
- Ensure that businesses have the skilled workforces that they need to compete, building a new relationship between our seven universities, colleges, businesses and local authorities;
- Set a new, streamlined framework for business support, together with a positive approach to business development

We believe that the case for a strategic Local Enterprise Partnership is compelling.

Business support for the LEP proposal has been strong to date. However, we are mindful that businesses are looking for arrangements to be put in place swiftly as they are anxious to have clarity and stability in order to make investment decisions, and to be reassured that the public sector is responding with appropriate urgency to create conditions for business growth. It is essential that we move ahead quickly with the minimum of bureaucracy.

We would therefore welcome formal Government support for the East Sussex, Essex and Kent strategic Local Enterprise Partnership within the first round of LEPs to be announced shortly. In the meantime, we are working together to develop detailed governance arrangements for this, and we would be happy to discuss these with your officials.

Our ambitious proposals have wide business and general District support. We are also having positive conversations with our unitary colleagues and we are aware that Ministers are also in discussion with a number of authorities to explore their views. We very much hope that you will support our bold new Partnership as one of the first LEPs to be approved, and we look forward to working with you in achieving our growth potential.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Jones  
East Sussex  
County Council



Peter Martin  
Essex County Council



Paul Carter  
Kent County Council



Geoff Miles  
Kent Economic Board



Sir Mike Hodgkinson  
Essex Business Consortium

Jeremy Leggett  
East Sussex Strategic  
Partnership