

From: Mark Dance, Cabinet Member for Economic Development
Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director Growth, Environment & Transport

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee
– 9 May 2018

Subject: Revision of South East Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic
Economic Plan

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: None

Future Pathway of Paper: None

Electoral Division: All

Summary:

This paper provides a short summary of progress to date by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership in producing a refreshed Strategic Economic Plan for the South East, detailing its work to date, and outlining the next steps. The Strategic Economic Plan is expected to be launched in the summer of 2018.

Recommendation:

The Cabinet Committee is asked to note the activity underway to review and revise the South East Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan.

1. Introduction & Background

- 1.1 Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs) are partnerships between business, local government and education partners. LEPs were set up by the Government in 2011 to drive economic growth by setting priorities for investment in the area.
- 1.2 The South East Local Economic Partnership (SELEP), is one of 38 LEPs across England, covering the area of East Sussex, Essex, Kent, Medway, Southend and Thurrock.
- 1.3 A report was presented to the Cabinet Committee on 6 September 2017 explaining that the SELEP Strategic Board had taken the decision to review, refresh and revise its Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) during 2017 and 2018. The purpose of the SEP is to provide a coherent economic strategy to guide investment decisions of different public-sector bodies, and a framework for bids for finance for new projects.
- 1.4 The production of the new SELEP SEP is being led by the SELEP Strategy Manager (Georgina Button) and the SELEP Managing Director (Adam Bryan).

2. Activity to date

2.1 The SELEP Secretariat has undertaken the following activity to assist the production of a new SEP:

- An extensive consultation process using a series of stakeholder questions, which were listed in September's Cabinet Committee paper. A summary of the potential strategic ambitions for the SELEP area – which were fed back by stakeholders during the consultation - can be found in Appendix A. The Cabinet Committee is asked to note that these are draft ambitions, which have yet to be endorsed by the SELEP Strategic Board or the local federated boards.
- A series of sector-specific/thematic discussions has been carried out with SELEP's working groups. The working groups have focussed on the following sectors/themes:
 - Coastal Communities
 - Creative Economy Network
 - Enterprise Zones
 - Housing & Development
 - Rural
 - Skills (Further Education provision)
 - Social Enterprise
 - Tourism
 - Transport
 - Universities (Higher Education provision)
- An evidence-base was produced by The Service Design Company, which can be found at:
http://www.southeastlep.com/images/uploads/resources/South_East_LEP_Strategic_Economic_Plan_Evidence_Base_FINAL_v016.pdf
- A consultancy called Thinking Place has been commissioned by SELEP to facilitate the development of the vision narrative. Thinking Place led a two-day consultation session in Feb/March 2018, aimed to challenge and work through the following topics:
 - Power of the SELEP area;
 - Perceptions of the North-South divide;
 - An outsider's view of SELEP;
 - Opportunities and Challenges of the South East LEP;
 - Top 10 assets of SELEP;
 - The language and narrative of the vision statement of the SEP;
 - Harnessing the SEP's ambitions;
 - Setting out key projects;
 - Where SELEP adds value and where it doesn't;
 - Success stories and things that could be done differently.

2.2 The Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP) is the local federated board of the South East LEP. To ensure local views are incorporated into SELEP's SEP, the KMEP Strategic Programme Manager arranged the following activity:

- A consultation event between the Kent and Medway Business Advisory Board (BAB) and the SELEP Secretariat, held in mid-2017;
- A presentation by the SELEP Secretariat at the KMEP board meeting in July 2017, so the board could provide its answers to the consultation questions.
- KMEP led two workshops in August 2017, which were attended by a total of 80-100 local stakeholders. Invitations were sent to business leaders (who do not sit on BAB), university academics, further education principals, skills guild chairpersons, KCC officers, district officers, rural and environmental representatives, infrastructure leads, Education Funding Agency, social enterprises, subcounty partnership chairpersons, Locate in Kent, Whitehall liaison officers, cultural leads, developers, and port, road, rail and air operators.
- The feedback received was presented to the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee on 6 September 2017, and the Cabinet Committee's views were sought. The SELEP Managing Director was in attendance to ensure that the Committee's views were considered with a view to incorporating them into the SEP.
- A further presentation by the SELEP Secretariat to KMEP in March 2018 to inform local KMEP partners about the SELEP activity and progress to date.

3. Next steps

3.1 The next steps in the production of the SEP by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership include:

- a) Thinking Place to present results of the "facilitated vision shaping and action setting activities" to SELEP secretariat, which will then be shared more widely;
- b) Specific economic data to support the challenges and opportunities for each of the ambitions and actions set out in the draft will be extracted from the consultation responses, evidence base, or via direct request to stakeholders;
- c) The draft SEP will be presented to the SELEP Strategic Board and to GEDCCC
- d) The SEP will be finalised and launched in summer 2018.

3.2 Locally, the following engagement will take place:

- a) A business engagement session will take at the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce in May 2018 (exact date TBC).
- b) The KMEP board will have a specially convened board meeting to examine the first draft of the SEP once it is available to view.

3.3 At KMEP on 26 March, KMEP board members requested more extensive and frequent engagement with the federated boards and particularly with the local authority leaders and officers, and for there to be ample time to review and influence the draft plan. A further request was made for an evidence-based assessment of the growth sectors in the South East. A written request has been sent to the SELEP Secretariat requesting more engagement events than those outlined above, and a response is awaited from SELEP.

4. Recommendation:

4.1 The Cabinet Committee is asked to note the activity underway to review and revise the South East Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan.

5. Appendix

Appendix A: A summary of the potential strategic ambitions – which were fed back by stakeholders during the consultation.

6. Report Authors

Sarah Nurden

KMEP Strategic Programme Manager

03000 416518

Sarah.nurden@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director

David Smith

Director of Economic Development

03000 417176

David.Smith2@kent.gov.uk

The draft SEP strategic ambitions (yet to be formally endorsed by SELEP and local federated boards)

1. Taking into account the comments captured throughout the consultation and the conclusions from the evidence base, the following draft SEP ambitions have been formed:
2. Supported by the South East LEP, the area will have:
 - A business infrastructure fit to drive UK plc
 - A digital DNA connecting and energising communities
 - Resilient places embracing inclusive growth
 - An influential collective voice leading change
 - Increased productivity driven by innovative businesses and people skilled for the future.
3. The draft SEP strategic ambitions are underpinned by SELEP’s areas for action. Using the list of important areas where SELEP is identified as being able to provide additionality, they are currently organised in the following way:

A business infrastructure fit to drive UK plc.	A digital DNA connecting and energising communities.	An influential collective voice leading change.	Resilient places embracing inclusive growth.	Increased productivity driven by innovative businesses and people skilled for the future.
Lower Thames Crossing	Science and innovation	Tools provided by government	Thames Estuary	Skills and reskilling adults
Workspace supporting creatives and freelancers	Coastal	Energy and utilities	Growth Hubs	Conditions for entrepreneurs
Supporting Port Development	Rural growth and natural capital		Accelerating Housing	
Promote value of economic assets	Digital Infrastructure		Impact of visitor economy	
International routes	Supporting Social Enterprise		London relationship	

4. The following topics have been identified by SELEP as the basis of conversations with officers and stakeholders over the past months and, *when finalised*, will form the basis of the refreshed SEP.
- 4.1 Maximise the economic benefit of the **Lower Thames Crossing**:
 - Ensure commitment and support for ancillary routes and wider network improvements
 - Engage with business to help understand local impacts
 - Alert businesses to potential growth impact, (diversification, increase fleet, impact on supply chain).
- 4.2 Bring the **Thames Estuary** to national and international prominence as an area for growth investment:
 - Support the Thames Estuary Growth Commission and ensure that it aligns with local ambitions in the near term.
 - Support the lobby for extension of Crossrail to Ebbsfleet as minimum, preferably Gravesend.
 - Continue to work with the Mayor of London and partners to promote the Thames Estuary Production corridor.
- 4.3 Building on the outputs of the two **Science and Innovation Audits** pursuant to the SELEP and utilising the collective might of our universities, raise economic productivity through:
 - Supporting the creation of a localised innovation support service.
 - Developing place-based innovation programmes, promoting collaboration across public, private & academic sectors.
 - Strengthening the area's capabilities in medical and digital health and care tech.
 - Strengthening collaborative research activities.
 - Identifying funding to assist smart infrastructure test-bed.
- 4.4 Improve SELEP's support offer to start-up businesses by "iterating" the current **Growth Hubs**:
 - Ensure more support is available to businesses
 - Develop a grant programme to encourage businesses to renew their capital asset base, and reskill to develop competencies where there are obvious gaps
 - Embed business support into other programmes and delivery.
- 4.5 Establish the SELEP area as the **creative freelance capital** of the country, maximising the advantage of geography and the beauty of our inspirational places:
 - Develop a capital grant programme to support creation of 'third spaces' for creative professionals, supporting the regeneration of towns and cities across SELEP.
 - Develop bespoke business support programme for creative professionals.
- 4.6 Create the conditions to allow our **ports** and associated industries to thrive in **post-Brexit Britain** and to continue to drive prosperity throughout the country:

- Lobby for investment in connectivity to ports.
- Invest in skills, e.g. an academy of logistics.
- Support public, private collaboration to develop skills and capabilities in innovation, autonomy and efficiencies tech.
- Strengthen the 'ports are gateways' proposition and lobby ports' priorities.

4.7 **Accelerate housing** and commercial development:

- Improve SME build confidence.
- Support offsite build.
- Support HIF bids.
- Garden Communities act as test-bed for actions from Housing working group.

4.8 Enable equity of engagement with the economy across all **rural** and **natural capital** areas:

- Lobby provision of connectivity in rural areas.
- Support for rural businesses.
- Optimise the growth and development of the agri-tech, agri-food, and forestry-tech sectors.
- Support the development of sustainable rural tourism.
- Develop skills of the rural workforce.
- Build community capital in villages and rural towns.
- Attract investment in heritage, natural assets and quality of life.

4.9 Enhance the area's **digital infrastructure**:

- Champion the work of local bodies in continuing superfast programmes in central government.
- Develop ultrafast broadband, 5G pilots in the LEP area.
- Secure co-investment and implement.

4.10 Promote our **principal economic assets** through all available means, and launch an international approach to selling investment opportunities and attracting new businesses to the area.

4.11 Change the dialogue around **infrastructure** in our LEP. Seek recognition that our infrastructure are international routes and launch lobbying campaign to support them.

- Dualling of A2 to Dover
- Investment in A120 east of Braintree
- A27 improvements

4.12 Promote the role of the **visitor economy** in underpinning holistic economic growth.

- Elevate and improve quality of the overall offer.
- Tourism as a catalyst for regeneration, and our role to describe this.

4.13 To be the capital of **social enterprise**, creating jobs, social value and healthy communities.

- Build on mapping work across LEP area to develop a wider view of social enterprise assets.
- Leverage networks; bring partners together through Government links, SELEP partners.
- Provide start-up support and knowledge sharing through growth hubs.
- Align private sector involved in SELEP to add social value by opening opportunities within supply chains.
- Present opportunities and successful enterprise best practice initiatives to local authorities.
- Explore funding opportunities for social enterprises.

4.14 Maximise the size and frequency of **tools afforded to SELEP by Government** by finally securing settlements which reflect our size, impact and the importance of the SELEP economy to the nation.

- Assert the LEP's position vis-à-vis Shared Prosperity Fund.
- Campaign around a fair settlement for the area overall and SELEP in itself.

4.15 Develop localised **energy** solutions that can stimulate growth in this sector and help reduce energy costs of business.

- Work smartly with neighbours to develop energy strategy.
- Develop clean energy pilots.
- Establish energy working group and energy hub and build local partnerships.
- Link these to coastal, rural and housing working groups.