

# INVESTING IN BUSINESS



## WHAT CHALLENGES DOES THE SOUTH EAST FACE?

One of the South East's key challenges is maintaining its competitiveness in the face of intensifying international competition. The emergence of new global economic powerhouses offers opportunities to build on existing concentrations of excellence in the South East by becoming more enterprising, innovative and skilled.

Another key challenge is the smart growth of the region – achieving higher levels of prosperity per head without increasing the ecological footprint. This will only be delivered through higher productivity, bringing more of the population into economic activity. This will be achieved by raising levels of enterprise via investing in potential to lift underperforming areas, communities and individuals.

The success and prosperity of the South East depends on the performance of its businesses, as prosperous businesses help to create thriving communities and healthy economies. One of the South East's biggest challenges is accommodating new business enterprises. The region has the highest number of start-ups in the UK and a vital component to their survival, success and competitiveness is finding suitable premises.

## HOW CAN WE MEET THESE CHALLENGES?

In order to encourage the start-up, survival and growth rates of small businesses, we need to raise awareness of and build an enterprise culture, and ensure the supply of suitable flexible and affordable workspace for it. We need to boost the capability of the region's knowledge-base to generate new business, using new technologies and ideas, and increase the proportion of businesses reporting research and development links with universities.



*The objective at Betteshanger is to create long-term, independent and sustainable economic prosperity, enabling all economically active people from the community to participate fully in the expanding local economy.*

To ensure that the South East remains a top performing region for business competitiveness, we need to encourage an increase in new business while adhering to the principles of sustainable development. Pursuing growth within environmental limits can create new opportunities for innovation and competitiveness, while investing in the quality of life which is a strong aspect of the South East's competitive advantage.

Part of delivering smart growth is making effective and efficient use of existing land resources. One method of doing this is by re-using previously developed land. The South East contains 16 per cent of all brownfield land in the UK, and making the best use of this is critical to sustainable development. The public sector is in a strong position to lead by example.



*The University of Kent, Medway Building is part of the expanding local economy at Chatham Maritime, Kent, 20 years after the closure of Chatham Dockyard.*

## WHAT IS SEEDA'S ROLE?

The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) has many roles, one of which is providing the necessary infrastructure to support business growth and development.

- Development must be accompanied by the necessary services for it to be a sustainable, well-designed success.

*For example, comprehensive redevelopment is underway in the Thames Gateway at Northfleet, Ebbsfleet, Dartford, Gravesend and Queenborough and Rushenden on the Isle of Sheppey. SEEDA aims to ensure that the planned new homes are accompanied by targeted business and employment creation, community, leisure and retail facilities and schools.*

- The reinvigoration of town centres, a focus for employment creation, is another important aspect of the sustainable development of the region, especially where centres are in competition with out of town retail facilities and in decline. SEEDA advises partners in order that they can formulate development strategies for sites in declining town centres.

*At Oxford West End, SEEDA is working in partnership with the City and County Councils to establish a regeneration framework, enabling a series of sites to be developed in a co-ordinated approach to revitalise an underperforming quarter of the City.*

- Employment prospects are enhanced by providing new, mixed-use employment opportunities to replace previous large scale loss of employment due to economic decline.

*Chatham Maritime and the Kent Coalfield Regeneration Programme are good examples, where the closure of the Dockyard and four former colliery sites at Betteshanger, Snowdown, Tilmanstone and Chislet had a significant economic impact on the surrounding communities.*

*The objective now is to create sustainable prosperity by enabling all economically active people from these communities to participate fully in an expanding local economy. Twenty years after the closure of Chatham Dockyard, the area is thriving with new homes, dozens of companies and key infrastructure such as a primary school, shops and a doctor's surgery all in place.*

- SEEDA also identifies areas of the South East where business creation and growth are limited by the absence of appropriate accommodation. In targeted locations, in the absence of private sector



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*The Chilterns Enterprise Gateway, Buckinghamshire, is aligned to Buckingham Chiltern University College and open for business providing much needed accommodation for contemporary and traditional bespoke furniture makers.*

investment, SEEDA provides accommodation to meet the needs of small local businesses and to support entrepreneurs in the early years of their operations.

*SEEDA's Hubs and Gateways initiatives align each business centre to other business support provision or higher education institutes, encouraging the commercial realisation of business opportunities.*

*SEEDA is rolling out 20 such managed business centres over the next 10 years. Gosport, Adur and Faringdon Business Centres are open for business, development has started on site at Newhaven with more schemes in the pipeline at Medway, Canterbury, Princes Risborough and on the Isle of Wight.*

Elsewhere in the Solent area SEEDA is bringing forward brownfield sites to support the growth and expansion of businesses, investing in roads and services to meet business needs. Developments include the Harbourgate Business Park in Portsmouth, Frater Gate in Gosport and Southmoor Park in Havant.

- SEEDA has a role supporting key business sectors with high growth potential. At Woolston Riverside, Southampton, SEEDA is creating a marine-related employment quarter with boatsheds, yard, workshops and studios alongside residential, community and retail facilities in order to support the growth of this sector.



SEEDA works to prioritise investment and develop innovative funding packages for transport infrastructure to improve hinterland freight access to our ports.



At East Cowes on the Isle of Wight, a new quarter is being developed on the waterfront with buildings and facilities to support the growth of the sustainable energy industry and maritime business.

- SEEDA also works with the South East England Regional Assembly, the Government Office for the South East, delivery agencies, a large number of sub-regional stakeholders and the private sector to prioritise investment and develop innovative funding packages for transport infrastructure which is of regional economic significance.

SEEDA has levered funding into transport projects to connect the region to the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) and to improve hinterland freight access to our ports. With the British Airports Authority (BAA), SEEDA is moving forward the delivery of rail access to Heathrow Terminal 5, and in Southampton SEEDA is working with various stakeholders on the regional transport hub.

**SEEDA** SOUTH EAST  
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DEVELOPMENT  
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Working for England's World Class Region

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