

UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL

The Kent and Medway Local Enterprise Partnership: A prospectus

September 2010

1. INTRODUCTION

Britain's best opportunity for growth

Nationally, our priorities are clear. We need to reduce the deficit, rebalance the economy towards the private sector and lay the foundations for lasting prosperity.

In this context, Kent and Medway offers Britain's best opportunity for economic growth. Over the next twenty years, we have the potential to deliver 130,000 new jobs. In the Thames Gateway, Europe's largest economic development programme, and at Ashford, we have some of the country's largest sites for job creation – with planning permission and ready to go. Our geography is being transformed by High Speed One, linking our two growth areas and cutting the distance between London and East Kent. And investing in Kent is essential to the UK's future competitiveness: through Dover, the Channel Tunnel and our other ports, we are Britain's route to global markets.

We need to unlock this potential, opening up opportunities for investment, delivering the skills that employers need and helping firms to grow. In Kent and Medway, business, local government and higher and further education have the vision, the track record and the capacity to make this happen.

About this prospectus

In this prospectus, we set out our proposal for a Kent and Medway Local Enterprise Partnership. In the next section, we consider the case for Kent and Medway: why we need a Partnership, what we aim to achieve and how it fits in with wider strategy. The following section sets out what the Partnership will do, focused on the areas in which the Partnership will add the greatest value. In some cases, we need additional powers from Government; where we do, we have highlighted these. Finally, we set out how we will make it happen, based on local solutions where possible and joint working with our neighbours where it adds value.

This is a proposal based on consultation and engagement. We have consulted widely with the business community and with public sector partners, with positive responses to our early proposals endorsing the Kent and Medway geographical base and the priorities we have set out.

Request 1: Supporting the Kent & Medway Enterprise Partnership

Civic, business and educational leaders in Kent and Medway ask Government to work with us to establish the Kent and Medway Local Enterprise Partnership on the basis outlined in this prospectus, supporting the county's growth as the UK's gateway economy.

2. THE CASE FOR KENT AND MEDWAY

Potential for growth

The case for investment in Kent and Medway is strong. With the country's largest port and international rail connections, this is the gateway to Britain. The institutional infrastructure is strong. And the county is recognised both as a strong brand for investors and visitors and as a powerful source of identity for local residents. This is not an artificial region: it is a stable, organic, historic county.

We also have potential for economic growth that will benefit not just Kent, but the nation as a whole. The county contains two growth areas of national importance, in the **Thames Gateway** and at **Ashford**, as well as Growth Points at **Maidstone** and **Dover**. The country's largest passenger port at Dover, major sites for economic expansion such as **Manston** in Thanet and **Ebbsfleet Valley**, and emerging strengths in growth sectors such as renewable energy in **East and North Kent** and media industries in **Maidstone** and **Tunbridge Wells** provide a broad basis for future economic expansion. Kent's **rural economy** is one of the country's largest: rural Kent contributes £5.5 billion to the county's GVA. And with potential for 130,000 jobs and 140,000 homes over the next twenty years, the scale of this potential is among the most significant in the country.

However, although there is much potential for growth, we can only unlock it with concerted effort from the public sector and the business

community. Parts of Kent – especially, but not exclusively in the east of the county are vulnerable to the impacts of public expenditure cuts and continue to lag behind in economic output, business creation and growth and workforce skills. We need to break these barriers to unlock our growth potential.

A viable economic area

Kent and Medway is a viable economic area with the **capacity and scale** to effect positive improvements in the climate for business growth. We have a population of over 1.6 million – larger than that of four EU member states – and over 50,000 businesses. Collectively, we have a **track record** of delivery through a history of positive working between local and central government and the private sector.

Kent and Medway offers an appropriate balance between local understanding on the one hand and capacity and scale on the other. Many actions need to be locally distinctive and responsive, reflecting the market. At the same time, business does not recognise county boundaries: we will need to **work pragmatically with our neighbours in Essex, London, East Sussex and Surrey across porous boundaries**. Our case for the Kent and Medway Enterprise Partnership is based on this understanding: devolving wherever possible; working together where there are real returns to scale.

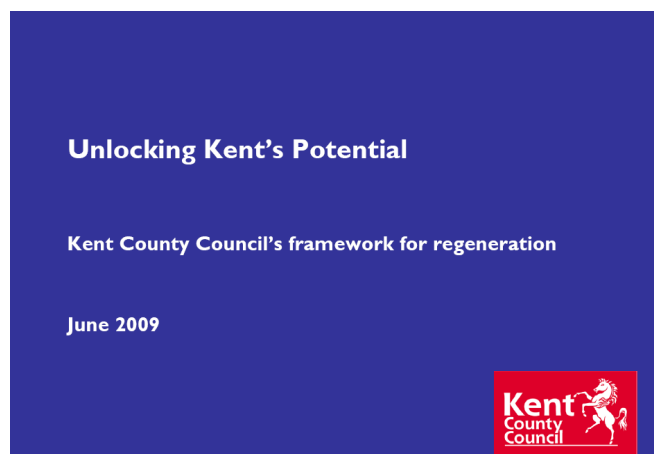
3. CLEAR STRATEGIC DIRECTION

A vision for the county

In Kent and Medway, we have a vision for the future of the county focused on growth. This is set out in the county-wide Regeneration Framework, in Medway's Economic Development Strategy and in the economic strategies and local investment plans which exist at district and sub-county level.

Unlocking Kent's Potential

In 2009, the Kent Partnership endorsed *Unlocking Kent's Potential*, a framework for regeneration in the county. *Unlocking Kent's Potential* looks ahead 20-25 years, setting out the challenges and opportunities that the county currently faces.



Unlocking Kent's Potential focused on the key opportunities presented by the Thames Gateway, Ashford and coastal East Kent and identified five key challenges for Kent:

- Building a new relationship with business
- Unlocking talent to support the Kent economy
- Embracing a growing and changing population
- Building homes and communities
- Delivering growth without transport gridlock

The first of these challenges – building a better relationship with Kent business – is central to our vision for the Kent and Medway Local Enterprise Partnership.

Following *Unlocking Kent's Potential*, we have prepared a series of action-oriented strategies and approaches which will address these challenges and which set the basis for the Local Enterprise Partnership. Built through dialogue with business, public sector partners and local communities, these include:

- The **Kent and Medway Housing Strategy**, which looks at how investment in housing can unlock sites for economic growth and how new investment tools can support delivery;

- **Growth without Gridlock**, the county's emerging Integrated Transport Strategy, which sets out the crucial transport solutions needed to unlock growth
- The new approach to **Kent's economic sectors**, focused around embedding an understanding of sector needs into the educational system and identifying the support that diverse enterprises need to grow
- **21st Century Kent: A Blueprint for the County's Future**, which sets out a high-level, long term vision for Kent and Medway, focused around the opportunities of the county's coast and rural economy, the potential of the Thames Gateway and Ashford and maximising the impact of our transport links



Clear direction locally

In Medway, at sub-county and at district level, there is also a strong strategic base, developed between business and the public sector, on which we can build to support growth.

In particular, working with the Homes and Communities Agency, we have developed four Local Investment Plans in Kent and Medway over the past year. These set out detailed priorities for investment in North Kent, East Kent, West Kent & Maidstone and Ashford, supporting this prospectus.

Turning vision into action

The Kent and Medway Local Enterprise Partnership will not reinvent the vision for Kent. But it has a central role in making it a reality. The Partnership will bring together business and government to create the right environment for jobs, business and investment, using existing institutions and increasing collaboration between them.

In the next section, we explain what we're going to do and how our strategic base translates into action.

4. A FOCUS ON GROWTH: WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO

Focus and flexibility

The Kent and Medway Local Enterprise Partnership will exist to promote long term employment through economic growth. It will do this by bringing business leaders, local government and higher and further education together to focus on providing the best environment for jobs, and investment and growth.

But it will not be a rigid model, because the economy is dynamic: businesses' skills needs might change rapidly; new partners will want to get involved; new opportunities become available. Within the focus on jobs and business growth, the Kent and Medway Enterprise Partnership will be a flexible model, responding to new ideas and potential.

Priority areas of focus

At the outset, the Kent and Medway Enterprise Partnership will develop a business plan or tasking framework setting out the activities on which it will focus. This will concentrate on five areas:

- **Infrastructure** for business growth
- New **investment** for job creation
- Unlocking **skills** for the economy
- **Innovation** and business support
- **Championing** Kent and Medway

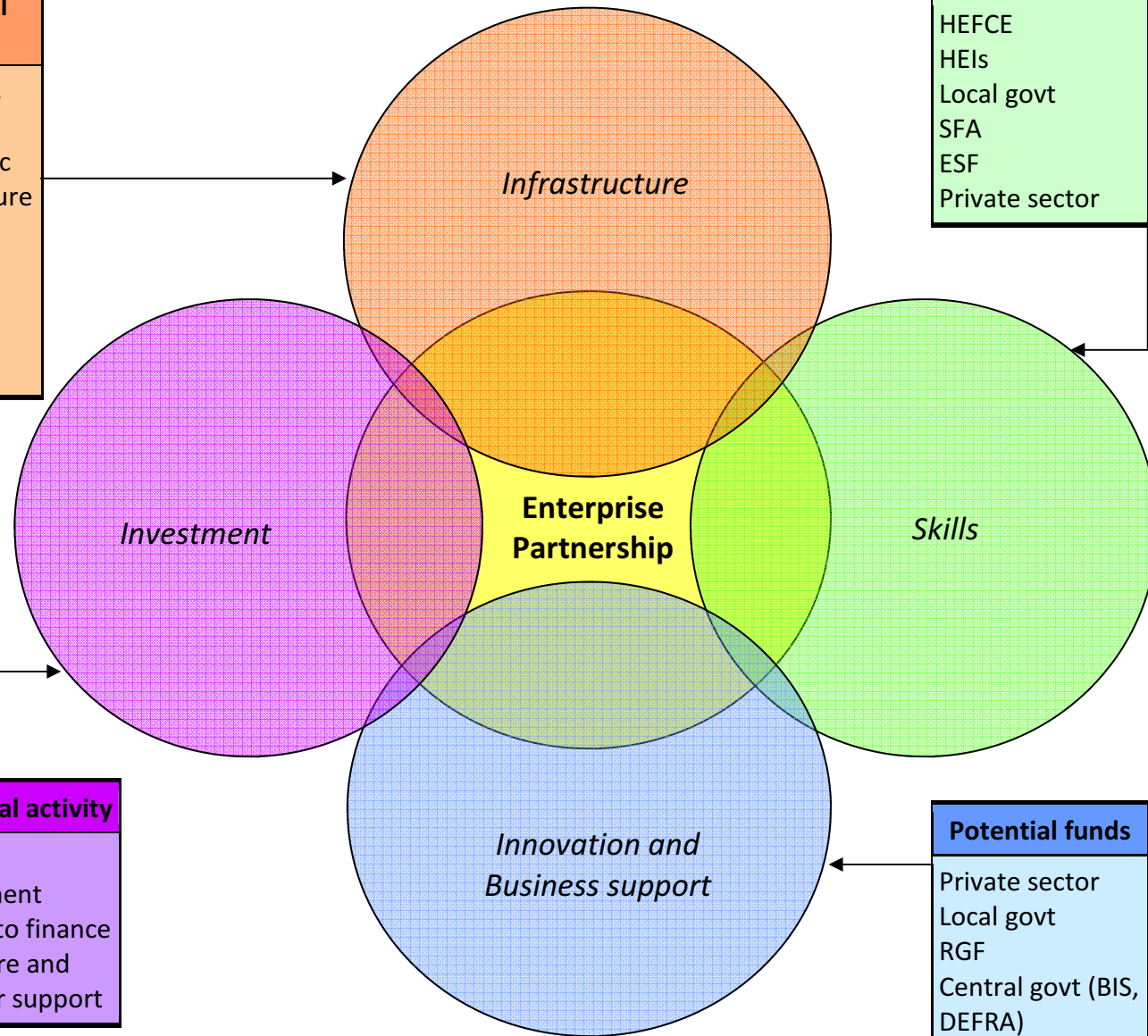
Linking action with strategy

The areas on which the Local Enterprise Partnership will focus will put into action our strategic base. As well as *Unlocking Kent's Potential* and Medway's Economic Development Strategy, these include the following existing and emerging strategies

Priority	Strategy
Infrastructure	Growth without Gridlock , Kent's integrated transport strategy Kent & Medway Housing Strategy Local Investment Plans What Price Growth 2 , planning Kent's future community infrastructure needs
Investment	Sector Strategies
Skills	Skills for the 21st Century Sector skills strategies
Innovation and business support	Kent Innovation Strategy Sector strategies
Championing Kent and Medway	21st Century Kent Unlocking Kent's Potential

Potential funds	Potential activity
Private investment RGF Public assets ERDF HCA DfT Developer contributions	Major sites Broadband Site-specific infrastructure

Potential funds	Potential activity
HEFCE HEIs Local govt SFA ESF Private sector	Employer-education links Careers service Adult/ workforce skills



Potential funds	Potential activity
Private sector UKTI RGF Local Govt	Inward investment Access to finance Aftercare and investor support

Potential funds	Potential activity
Private sector Local govt RGF Central govt (BIS, DEFRA)	Business support Innovation Tourism Sector support Low carbon transition

4.1. Infrastructure for business growth

The right conditions for growth

Through the Kent and Medway Enterprise Partnership, we will ensure that the infrastructure is in place to enable key sites to come forward for economic use. In Kent and Medway, we already have a track record of innovative solutions to bring forward infrastructure, for example in the East Kent Spatial Development Company, investing public and private funds in areas of market failure, capturing yield and reinvesting.

Bringing forward priority sites for business development

Building on the success of East Kent Spatial Development Company in opening up new business opportunities in Thanet, Dover and Canterbury, the Kent and Medway Enterprise Partnership will seek to **combine public and private investment to facilitate delivery of new sites for commercial development**. In some cases this may involve public/ private sector joint ventures, making best use of former RDA and other public sector land holdings, but in others it may simply involve a proactive and co-operative approach from public planning and other regulatory bodies, which the Partnership will support and facilitate.

As part of this proactive role, Kent and Medway is keen to act as a pilot for new ways to facilitate critical infrastructure, including:

- **Tax increment financing:** Widely used in the United States, tax increment financing uses future gains in taxes to fund current infrastructure improvements. Government is interested in exploring the potential of TIF mechanisms and we are aware that other prospective Local Enterprise Partnerships are keen to use them to bring forward infrastructure. In Kent and Medway, we have investigated the potential in North Kent, and we are keen to work as a pilot, although proceeding is dependent on legislation

Request 2: Tax Increment Financing

We ask Government to enact legislation to make it possible for tax increment financing to be used to bring forward the infrastructure needed to make development possible, and to back Kent and Medway in acting as a pilot for the TIF approach.

- **New business growth incentives:** The Government is developing new schemes to encourage business expansion, replacing the former LABGI arrangements. Previous schemes have only provided weak incentives to support closer working between local authorities and the development industry. We are keen to improve these and will develop proposals through the Enterprise Partnership to pilot new incentives.

- **Incentives for the operation of the private rented sector:** Improved incentives for the operation of the private rented sector could provide new housing options and support delivery on major sites. This would require tax incentives and legal changes to encourage investment by pension funds and other investors in the private rented sector: while we are unable to deliver these on our own, we will work with developers through the Kent and Medway Enterprise Partnership.

Brokering business critical infrastructure

We will seek to secure the right infrastructure for business, prioritising investment with the most significant business impacts and working to secure funding. We already have a strong strategic base through the Local Investment Plans and county-wide strategies, including the emerging *What Price Growth 2* that set out priorities for infrastructure requirements.

Building on these, we will seek to secure:

- Widespread **broadband connectivity** both to rural Kent and to key investment centres such as Kings Hill;
- Targeted investments in transport infrastructure essential to opening up economic growth, such as the **'Homes and Roads'** package of transport investment in Kent Thameside to facilitate the delivery of major employment and housing schemes across Dartford and Gravesham (including Ebbsfleet Valley).

Working in partnership with the Homes and Communities Agency

Through the development of Local Investment Plans for North Kent, East Kent, Ashford and West Kent and Maidstone and through the development of the Kent and Medway Housing Strategy, local partners in Kent and Medway have a strong relationship with the Homes and Communities Agency.

Although the Kent and Medway Enterprise Partnership will not have a core role in relation to housing provision, we will seek to ensure that HCA investment supports the delivery of economic outcomes in priority locations as identified through the Local Investment Plan process.



New business premises at Eureka Park, Ashford

Regional Development Agency assets

SEEDA currently has ownership of a number of key regeneration assets. These include a number of strategic sites in Dartford and Ashford town centres, major mixed use development schemes such as Northfleet Embankment, Queenborough and Rushenden and Rochester Riverside and continuing interests in the former East Kent coalfield in Dover. In addition, SEEDA maintains a key interest in East Kent Spatial Development Company.



Britain's gateway: Port of Dover

With the abolition of the Regional Development Agency, these assets will need to be vested elsewhere. We are looking for the best options which maximise ensure local control together with maximising the attractiveness of the property portfolio to the market. In parallel with the development of this prospectus, we have commissioned an initial analysis of options, including the potential for the creation of a recyclable fund, and we are working openly and transparently with SEEDA to establish the best way forward.

Request 3: Transfer of SEEDA assets to local partners

We ask Government to support the transfer of SEEDA's assets to appropriate local vehicles, to ensure that they continue to support local economic development aspirations.

As well as powers to acquire and develop land for regeneration purposes, the Regional Development Agencies enjoy specific compulsory purchase powers not currently available to local partners. To maximise our ability to bring sites forward, it is important that these additional powers are transferred to the local authorities.

Request 4: Compulsory purchase powers

We ask Government to take measures to ensure that the Compulsory Purchase Order powers currently held by SEEDA are retained through the conveying of similar powers to local authorities.

4.2. New investment for job creation

Selling Kent to the world

As well as ensuring that the infrastructure is in place to ensure that key developments can proceed, the Kent and Medway Enterprise Partnership will set the framework through which inward investment will be attracted to and retained in the county.

Since 1997, Locate in Kent has provided a successful inward investment service in Kent and Medway, helping 636 companies to invest in the county, creating 25,000 jobs. Given the scale of new investment opportunities in Kent, maintaining the county's inward investment service is a high priority.

With the demise of SEEDA, there is now a new opportunity to streamline the delivery of inward investment in Kent. Locate in Kent has for many years had a positive relationship with UK Trade and Investment (UKTI), the national inward investment body, although the system established by the previous Government also funded the Regional Development Agencies to promote the region in overseas markets and to support potential investors entering via UKTI. We will seek to make inward investment simpler, through a direct relationship between Locate in Kent and UKTI.

Request 5: Locate in Kent and UKTI

As inward investment is a priority for the Kent and Medway Enterprise Partnership, we request that Government transfer to Locate in Kent the role previously held by SEEDA in managing inward investment in Kent, creating a direct relationship between Locate in Kent and UKTI.

Supporting continued investment

Much of the inward investment that lands in Kent comes from firms that are already based here. They know that this is a great place to invest – but we need to make sure that the conditions remain right for them to stay, reinvest and employ. Through the Kent and Medway Local Enterprise Partnership, we will seek to provide excellent aftercare and support, linked with our new approach to business support set out on page 14.

Access to finance

Ensuring that business has access to capital to grow, innovate and create jobs is essential, especially in credit-constrained times. In Kent and Medway, business consortia such as Kent Corporate Finance Hub and Kent Investment Club provide a route to venture capital, which the Kent and Medway Local Enterprise Hub will support.

4.3. Unlocking skills for the economy

The Kent and Medway Local Enterprise Partnership will have a leading role in ensuring that businesses in Kent have the skilled workforce they need.

In Kent and Medway, we have a great track record of investing in skills. Our network of **vocational skills** centres have been an outstanding success in equipping young people with the skills they need for work, with over 7,000 students enrolled on vocational courses. We have been in the vanguard of meeting the apprenticeship challenge, both in the public and the private sectors. And we are also developing a strong understanding of the skills needs of Kent and Medway's diverse **sector base**.

Nevertheless, although school results in the vocational offer have improved consistently, **skills shortfalls** remain a challenge in a changing and developing workforce. Many employers still report having existing staff not fully proficient in their jobs, and as well as specific technical skill shortfalls, employers regularly report persistent problems in generic employability skills. Dealing with these effectively will make a critical contribution to Kent and Medway's future competitiveness.

Bringing together providers at levels 3 and 4 in further and higher education with employers, local authorities and funding bodies, the

Enterprise Partnership presents a new opportunity to align employer needs with the skills offer. We can also build on the successful experience of the Kent and Medway Employment and Skills Board, which has successfully advised training providers and key agencies on employer demand.

Skills Commission

We will integrate the Employment and Skills Board within the Kent and Medway Enterprise Partnership, working with sub-county skills partnerships to making skills planning with employers a central part of the Partnership's role. To inform the Partnership's campaigning role, we may however look to establish a time-limited, employer-led Skills Commission to analyse current and future skills demands and set out the Partnership's future strategic role in skills planning.

Working with colleges and universities

For the first time, the Kent and Medway Enterprise Partnership will bring further education colleges and universities together with business on an integrated basis across the county. Working together, colleges, universities, businesses and local authorities in Kent will identify through the Partnership areas in which they can support each other to benefit the

economy, drawing on knowledge of business demand to inform provision and providing better information and choice to learners.

Skills funding

Funding to support access by employers to the skills they need remains complex. T. Based on an understanding of employer demand and an analysis of the barriers to locally responsive provision, the Kent and Medway Enterprise Partnership will seek to influence the use of funding streams so that they can best meet local demand.

Better information, better guidance

70% of the workforce in twenty years' time are already in employment. But the demands of the economy change fast and it will be increasingly important for people to change career during their working lives. Through the Enterprise Partnership, we will seek to establish a lifelong careers service for Kent and Medway when the national service is re-tendered, linked with the further and higher education sectors.



University of Kent at Medway

4.4. Innovation and business support

The Kent and Medway Local Enterprise Partnership will have a critical role in supporting business growth by setting a framework for business support provision in the county and by enabling a positive approach to business development.

A streamlined approach to business support

With employers in the lead, we set a new approach to business support in the county. We will seek to manage the budgets for innovation and sector development previously held by SEEDA, matching them with European funding and contributions from local authorities and the private sector so that the framework for support for innovation, growth and business starts best meets business needs. By bringing our four universities into the heart of the Partnership, we will also seek to increase commercial access to university expertise and innovation.

Supporting key sectors

As part of this new approach to business support, we will place further emphasis on the county's sectoral needs. We already support the development of Kent as a visitor destination through **Visit Kent**; we will develop this along with new approaches to the needs of business in other leading economic sectors.

Request 6: Support for innovation and growth

We recognise that Government intends to operate a core Business Link service at national level. However, we ask that Government devolves all business support responsibilities and funding currently held by SEEDA – including that for the Kent and Medway Innovation and Growth Team – to the Kent and Medway Enterprise Partnership. In some cases, this will mean that we will need to work with neighbouring counties.

A positive approach to business development

In Kent and Medway, we are open for business. Across the public and private sectors, we want to make this England's best county in which to do business. However, many businesses still report difficulties in working with the wide range of regulatory agencies based in central and local government. Some of this is due to duplication or poor communication, which needs to be resolved. But it is also often due to a lack of mutual understanding.

The Kent and Medway Enterprise Partnership presents an opportunity to build on a strong relationship between the public and private sectors. We will identify the blockages to business development in the county and work with developers and local authorities to secure workable solutions.

4.5. Championing Kent and Medway

A coalition for growth

The Kent and Medway Enterprise Partnership will be a powerful **coalition for growth**. At the centre of the Partnership's role, it will champion Kent and Medway's priorities.

A voice for change

Where business and local government can jointly campaign to reduce unnecessary red tape and develop alternative propositions that can support business development and job creation in Kent, we will do so. Where there are **critical long term investments** that need support from Government (such as a Lower Thames Crossing) or the private sector (such as rural broadband provision), the Kent and Medway Enterprise Partnership will campaign for them;

Leveraging credibility

Our top priority is to ensure that we achieve our goals of delivering infrastructure, supporting investment, investing in skills and developing business. Success in these areas, combined with the Partnership's genuine business leadership, mean that we will have the credibility that we need to act as a voice for the county on a national stage.

Regional Growth Fund

We will progress a proposal to the new Regional Growth Fund based on the priority areas outlined in this prospectus. Our proposals for the Fund will aim to achieve a balance between long term employment impact, private leverage and wider economic development outcomes and we will seek to support a programme bid, containing a number of individual projects based on the priorities set out in county-wide and local strategies.

We see potential in developing a recyclable **infrastructure fund** matching Regional Growth Fund money with private sector investment and reinvesting in Kent and Medway. We are exploring options to establish how this can be best constructed. On the principle of subsidiarity, where there are specific thematic or area-based funds (such as coalfields funding in Dover), these will remain under local control.

Understanding the economy

We will maintain a solid **understanding of the needs of the county's economy**, based on real business experience and building on the excellent platform provided by the Business Advisory Board, local forums such as Canterbury for Business (C4B) and thematic bodies such as Kent Rural Board.

5. A PARTNERSHIP FOR GROWTH: HOW WE'RE GOING TO WORK

Working together

In Kent and Medway, we have a great history of working together, both across the county and at local level. We now have an opportunity to build on this: by focusing on the areas of activity set out in the previous section, we aim to build a powerful coalition for growth, reducing duplication and maximising contributions from all sectors.

This section sets out:

- The organisational model that we propose for the Kent and Medway Local Enterprise Partnership;
- How the Partnership will link with other partnership arrangements;
- How we will work with neighbouring counties to achieve the best results for Kent.

Organisational structure

The detailed organisational structure will be developed over the coming month. However, the Kent and Medway Local Enterprise Partnership will have a transparent governance model, based on three building blocks:

Business Advisory Board

The first 'building block' will be an Economic Board and its Business Advisory Board, made up of businesses and business representative

organisations (such as the Chambers of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, Institute of Directors and the CBI). A successful Business Advisory Board already exists with membership entirely from the private sector: within the Enterprise Partnership model, we will seek to expand its membership and its role.

Part of the success of the Business Advisory Board is in the links that its members have to the business community at local level, including to locally-based partnerships and specific business-interest bodies, such as Kent Developers' Group. We will build on these, harnessing business expertise and local understanding.

Kent and Medway Leaders

Secondly, the elected Kent and Medway Leaders, including the Leaders of Kent County Council, Medway Council and the Kent Districts will provide a democratic local government voice. Including all local authorities, the Leaders will also provide a link with well-established partnerships at sub-county level.

Higher and Further Education

Thirdly, the university and further education sectors will provide a key component of the Enterprise Partnership. In Kent and Medway, we already have an established representative organisations (Higher Education Kent and Medway (HEKAM) and Kent Association of Further Education Colleges (KAFEC)) which can undertake this role.

A Partnership Board structure

From this broad base, we envisage that the Kent and Medway Enterprise Partnership will require a core Board structure. We have yet to determine the full terms of reference for this, but it will be important that the Board contains a broad representation from Kent and Medway's business community and from across the county. We anticipate that Board membership will consist of:

- Business Advisory Board representatives (selected by the Advisory Board itself)
- HEKAM/ KAFEC representatives
- Elected Leaders
- The Board will be chaired by a leading member of the Kent and Medway business community and have at least 50% representation from the private sector.



The role of the Board and delivery agents

The Board will not be directly responsible for delivery. Instead, it will focus on designing the actions that are needed in relation to the areas of activity outlined in the previous chapter, bringing together the right partners, expertise and funding to make them happen, making sure they are delivered and overseeing a longer term strategy.

This will mean that delivery will take place through a range of agents, working with the Kent and Medway Enterprise Partnership. In some cases, delivery agents operate at county-wide level – for example, Locate in Kent in relation to inward investment. In others, the Partnership will work through local vehicles, reflecting local priorities. Where possible however, we will seek to minimise the creation of new bodies.

The Kent and Medway Enterprise Partnership will require a small secretariat function. We will support this through existing resources.

Working with others

Although we have an excellent record of partnership working in Kent and Medway, in recent years, the partnership landscape has become complex. We will seek to rationalise this where possible.

However, **sub-county partnership** arrangements are essential to the effectiveness of the Kent and Medway Enterprise Partnership. In particular, where sub-county partnerships (and individual districts) have adopted economic development strategies and Local Investment Plans,

these will inform the Enterprise Partnership’s tasking framework in relation to its core activities.

There will be many areas on which decisions should be made at local level. The Partnership will operate on the principle of subsidiarity: where decisions and actions can be taken at district or sub-county level, they should be.

Working with neighbours

The real economy doesn’t recognise county boundaries. On many issues, we will need to work with neighbouring LEPs (and equivalent organisations) to achieve solutions where we have issues in common.

In Kent and Medway, we have a unique relationship with **continental Europe**, based on our role as Britain’s gateway. In particular, there are strong economic links between the Channel ports and neighbours in France and Belgium. We will seek to build on existing economic relationships.

We are also committed to working with partners in neighbouring counties. In particular, we will work together with:

- **Essex** and **Greater London** in respect of the **Thames Gateway**, recognising its national importance as a cross-regional growth area.
- **East Sussex** in relation to the common issues facing our **coastal communities**, especially in Shepway, Dover and Thanet; and

- **East Sussex** and **Surrey** in relation to the cross-border economic footprint of Tunbridge Wells and the rural agenda

There are also issues which require regional or sub-regional solutions. We will continue to work with neighbours in the former South East region in relation to **European Union** funding, with Local Enterprise Partnerships taking over the role formerly held by SEEDA. However, we will press for a more informed analysis of local need in the future, in the context of the strong business voice that the Kent and Medway Enterprise Partnership will provide



6. MOVING FORWARD: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

There is a powerful case for a Kent and Medway Local Enterprise Partnership. We have an identifiable, credible and functional economic area. We have a strong track record both in delivery of economic development and in developing robust partnerships with the private sector. And we have a strong strategic base from which to work: we don't need to start afresh.

Following the submission of this prospectus to Government, we will build on the extensive consultation we have already undertaken, working with business and the public sector to develop the Partnership's organisational structure and way of working. We will also undertake further work to set out our priorities and governance arrangements, with a view to

establishing a 'shadow' Board by November. Meanwhile, further detail of the roles and status of Local Enterprise Partnerships is anticipated in the Localism White Paper, to be published in the autumn.

We expect that the full Local Enterprise Partnership Board will be up and running by 1 April. Where the Partnership takes over responsibility from SEEDA in relation to certain priorities, we will seek to ensure a smooth transition.

Within this prospectus, we have signalled our intention to make a submission to the Regional Growth Fund. A first-round call for proposals is likely in November/ December, with decisions made before the start of the next financial year.