

£34.2m cash injection into the Kent and Medway will boost the local economy, create jobs and accelerate housing delivery

Kent & Medway is to receive a further £34.2m of government cash to help create jobs, support businesses and create new growth opportunities.

Local Growth Minister, Andrew Percy, today announced a government cash injection of £102 million for capital projects for the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), which covers East Sussex, Essex, Kent, Medway, Southend and Thurrock, with a number of projects in Kent and Medway set to benefit.

The package of projects to be funded through this round of Local Growth Fund will improve educational attainment, create new jobs and provide the enabling infrastructure to support the delivery of new homes and employment, and will leverage an additional £112m in private sector funding.

The Kent and Medway projects* to receive funding are:

- Dartford Town Centre Transformation (£4.3m)
- Ashford International Rail Connectivity Project (£4.8m)
- Fort Halstead redevelopment, Sevenoaks (£1.53m)
- Rochester Airport Technology Park, Medway (£3.7m)
- Strood Civic Centre Flood Mitigation Works (£3.5m)
- A2500 Lower Road Improvement (£1.26m)
- Kent and Medway Engineering, Design, Growth & Enterprise Hub, Canterbury (£6.12m)
- Leigh Flood Storage Area, Tonbridge (£4.635m)
- A2 off-slip at Canterbury (£4.4m)

This latest award of Local Growth Funding is on top of £488 million of Growth Deals monies already awarded to the SELEP. This latest investment of £102m will deliver an additional 6,129 new homes, create or safeguard 30,785 jobs and secure a further £141 million of private sector investment across the region.

In total the SELEP Growth Deal from 2014 - 2020 now stands at £590.8m which is set to deliver 78,000 jobs, 29,000 homes in total and attract a further £960 million extra investment into the South East over the next five years.

Projects in Kent and Medway that have previously received funding have included the Kent and Medway Growth Hub, Tonbridge Town Centre regeneration, Sittingbourne Town Centre regeneration, M20 jn 4 improvements, Maidstone gyratory improvements and the Rathmore Road Link, Gravesend.

Geoff Miles, Chair of Kent & Medway Economic Partnership and SELEP Vice-Chair, said: "This investment enables us to drive forward our shared growth agenda delivering economic

growth, new jobs, facilitating housing, improving connectivity and boosting skills.

“The additional funding that will be leveraged into the South East as a result of these investments is testament to the continued success of our area.”

SELEP Chairman Christian Brodie said: “This Growth Deal settlement is a huge boost for the economy in Kent and Medway.

“We have secured funding to channel significant investment into the projects, which are of highest priority to our businesses and local areas.”

Details of the Kent and Medway projects are shown below:

Dartford Town Centre Transformation – generating economic growth and jobs
<p>Dartford town centre is one of Britain’s largest growth locations, and sits at the gateway to the Thames Estuary. However transport constraints have impeded development and limit the town’s ability to fulfil its significant economic potential. With major development in adjacent locations such as Ebbsfleet Garden City with its 15,000 new homes, it is vital that Dartford develops as a distinctive and vibrant retail location.</p> <p>This scheme incentivises private sector investment in major stalled development sites and improves the economic performance of Dartford Town Centre by at least 25% through transportation and public realm improvements. These improvements include the reconfiguration and optimisation of traffic and pedestrian flow; increased accessibility through new cycle and pedestrian routes; increased road user safety; and the creation of a market square.</p>
<p>OUTCOME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generates 3,516 homes, 1,811 permanent jobs and 5,274 construction jobs. • Delivers circa 25% increase in footfall and in town centre expenditure - with £150,981,230 of additional consumer expenditure per annum. • Delivers critical infrastructure for area taking a disproportionately high level of growth.
<p>LGF TOTAL - £4,300,000</p>
<p>LEVERAGE - £7,700,000 (fully secured and ready for investment)</p>

Ashford International Rail Connectivity Project (Ashford Spurs)
<p>Retention of international rail services is an unequivocal ambition of SELEP, and business and civic stakeholders in Kent and Medway.</p> <p>The existing international train service will be lost without the investment in new signalling infrastructure required by the new rolling stock, disrupting the lives of 196,560 passengers per year, hindering growth in the Mid-Kent and East-Kent sub economic regions, and putting jobs and livelihoods at risk.</p>
<p>OUTCOME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The retention of international train services to Europe, used by 196,560 passengers every year. • At least 2,000 jobs will be safeguarded and created (previously counted in earlier LGF round). • At least 350 dwellings constructed. • Helps safeguard up to 32% of the 3,882 jobs in the local tourism economy (with 84,000 overnight trips made by overseas visitors p.a.). • Makes efficient use of the public purse (Significant funding was invested to establish Ashford International Station in 1996); • Supports and safeguards growth by international companies located near Ashford (including those at Discovery Park’s Enterprise Zone). • Supports the creation of a further education hub adjacent to the station.
<p>LGF TOTAL £4,800,000</p>
<p>LEVERAGE £5,700,000</p>

Fort Halstead, Sevenoaks

This project will create a new business park at Fort Halstead, an ex-MOD research and development site adjoining the M25, that will become Sevenoaks District Council's largest new employment site, unlocking 1,100 new high-tech jobs and 450 residential units.

Much of the Fort Halstead site is vacant, because DSTL is relocating operations to Portsmouth and Wiltshire. QinetiQ, a private sector defence research organisation, now owns the land and employs 200 people at the site.

LGF investment will enable Sevenoaks District Council to purchase part of the site to secure it for commercial use. This is important as demand for commercial premises is currently very strong and availability very limited but, left to market conditions, the site is likely to be used solely for residential development. The majority of Sevenoaks' residents commute outside of the district for employment so local job creation at Fort Halstead is a priority.

OUTCOME

- Establish a new business park, unlocking 1,100 high-tech jobs, 450 dwellings (of which 30% will be affordable), an 80 bed hotel and a new village centre.
- The employment site is anticipated to deliver 9290 sq m of A-grade HQ style offices, 3019 sq m of light industrial floorspace, as well as laboratories and precision-engineering employment space.

LGF TOTAL £1,530,000

LEVERAGE £32,030,000

Rochester Airport Technology Park - Zone A

Provision of onsite infrastructure to enable SME's and private sector developers to invest in construction on the land, unlocking the land for commercial use. The site, and those who use it, will benefit from being within an Enterprise Zone. The intention is to attract high quality commercial development to complement the adjacent sites used by Innovation Centre Medway and BAE Systems.

Building on the LFG Round 1 Expansion project to free up development land at Rochester Airport, this project is the first phase of enabling infrastructure at the Rochester Airport Technology Park site.

This will encourage private sector developers to invest in construction on the land (benefiting from Enterprise Zone tax discounts), unlocking the land for commercial use. The scheme will also lead to a quicker realisation of business rate yields.

OUTCOME

- Enables the delivery of 57,450 m2 of new commercial space at this newly designated Enterprise Zone will help safeguard and create a total of 1,544 jobs.

LGF TOTAL £3,700,000

LEVERAGE £49,000,000

Strood Civic Centre Flood Mitigation Works

The brownfield Civic Centre site has been identified as a mixed use regeneration site to meet the high demand for housing in Medway, and contribute towards aspirations to become a Waterfront City by 2035. This site is within the emerging Medway Local Plan. The site is at considerable risk of flooding and requires protection works before it can be redeveloped; once protected it will be an area of prime, high quality residential land with potential for premium housing, offering fantastic un-interrupted views of Rochester Castle and Cathedral.

Development of the site will also provide employment land, targeted at SMEs, encouraging local cafes, restaurants and independent retailers, enabling job creation.

OUTCOME

- The mixed use development is expected to create a total of 479 new jobs and 325 new homes.

LGF TOTAL £3,500,000

LEVERAGE £36,300,000 (Of which £32m is private sector investment in the mixed use development of the Civic Centre site)

A2500 Lower Road Improvements, Isle of Sheppey

Accelerating housing delivery on the Isle of Sheppey in the Thames Estuary can deliver a quick win for the Government's growth ambitions and help accommodate Kent and London's rising populations.

To do this, LGF investment in the A2500 is essential. The A2500 experiences unacceptable levels of congestion on a daily basis because it is one of only two roads leading to the mainland; it is the key transport corridor for the Island's tourism-related economy; it experiences heavy usage by employees accessing the 3 HM Prison clustered around the A2500 (HM Prison Service is the Isle's largest employer).

Ideally LGF would be invested to widen the entire length of the A2500. However we've taken a pragmatic approach given the urgency to address the congestion and the finite pot of funding available. LGF is thus sought for a smaller scheme to replace the existing signal controlled arrangement at the A2500 Lower Road/Barton Hill Drive junction with a roundabout.

OUTCOME

- Unlocks the delivery of 892 houses by 2025, and 1,519 houses by 2031.
- This scheme has the associated benefit of producing 216 jobs each year during construction.
- Investment in transport infrastructure to support economic and housing growth on the Isle, which is one of the most deprived 10 per cent of areas nationally based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

LGF TOTAL £1,264,930

LEVERAGE £1,804,930

Kent and Medway Engineering, Design, Growth and Enterprise (EDGE) Hub

Working with Canterbury Christ Church University, the Kent and Medway EDGE Hub is an industry-led initiative to drive economic growth in the engineering and technology industry through the establishment of a transformative 3,588m² teaching and research centre, with satellite facilities at the Discovery Park (Dover), CCCU's Medway Campus, and other parts of Kent.

The Hub will add a suite of new technical and professional education opportunities (from degree apprenticeships to doctoral programmes) in Engineering, Product Design and Technology, and provide support to businesses with research projects, prototype development and commercialisation, and CPD opportunities.

This project is urgently needed in Kent and Medway, where fewer young people enter higher-level engineering and technology courses, and where businesses are held back by skills shortages and the lack of infrastructure to support innovation and research.

OUTCOME

- Worth £9.5m to £11m per year to Kent and Medway's economy.
- Creates 67 direct new highly-skilled jobs and 56 indirect new jobs.
- 1250 additional student enrolments by July 2024.
- Supports 420 company research projects & 375 CPD learners.
- Delivers new research and consultancy worth £1.8m.
- Delivers 12,900 student visits to Engineering and Technology-themed careers events to build a passion in young people.

LGF TOTAL £6,120,000

LEVERAGE £14,880,000

Leigh Flood Storage Area & East Peckham - unlocking growth

Tonbridge and Malling is working to identify new housing and employment sites in its emerging Local Plan, however their availability is severely constrained by the significant threat of flooding.

LGF would fund a 30% capacity increase in the Flood Storage Area and the construction of local embankments to facilitate 2,100 housing starts (out of the 7,000 required in the local plan), and over 13 hectares of new employment land.

The need for flood defences is acute: Tonbridge and East Peckham suffered serious flooding in the winter of 2013/14 (with the former Prime Minister visiting nearby Yalding) and on 7 other occasions in the last 60 years.

The wider economic benefits are defending 283 existing businesses, 2,308 homes, and making Tonbridge and land along the River Medway a more attractive location for potential investors.

OUTCOME

- Unlocks new Local Plan locations – enabling 2,100 housing starts by 2031 and unlocking over 13 hectares of employment land.
- Generates 570 jobs by 2021.
- Protects 283 businesses and 2,308 businesses

LGF TOTAL £4,635,900

LEVERAGE £20,055,000

A2 off-slip at Wincheap, Canterbury

Canterbury is the third largest housing growth location in Kent. A significant portion of the district's Draft Local Plan sites are situated in Thanington and Wincheap where 4 commercial and residential sites will deliver 1,150 new homes, 1,685 new jobs and support the delivery of 68,333m² of new office, retail and leisure floor space. All 4 sites are directly dependent on a new A2 Coastbound off-slip road being constructed.

The benefits of the scheme will extend beyond the immediate area. Through creating improved access to Wincheap and Thanington, this will reduce vehicle trips from the city centre's congested ring road and inner radial routes.

The new slip road will provide more direct access to the well-utilised Park and Ride site at Wincheap (which is being expanded), encouraging more sustainable journeys into the city centre.

OUTCOME

- 1,150 new houses and 1,685 new jobs generated
- Supports the delivery of up to 68,333m² of commercial floorspace at Wincheap and Thanington.
- Supports sustainable access to Canterbury City Centre.

LGF TOTAL £4,400,000

LEVERAGE £4,400,000