

Southend Central Area Action Plan

TOPIC PAPER 3: EMPLOYMENT, BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT

March 2017

Topic Paper 3: Employment, Business and Investment

Local Policy Approach

The adopted **Southend Core Strategy** (2007) identifies the Southend Town Centre and Central Area as the primary focus for regeneration and growth with an emphasis on refocusing retail, a major expansion of town centre housing, expansion of education/'lifelong learning', culture and leisure provision, including the strengthening of Southend's position as a 'University Town' and renaissance of the sea frontage, and integration with public transport interchanges.

The Core Strategy provides the overarching vision, strategic objectives and strategic policy for Southend-on-Sea for a period up to 2021¹. It seeks to provide 6,500 new jobs within the Town Centre and Central Area and 750 new jobs within the Seafront.²

The adopted **Development Management Document** (DMD) (2015) provides criteria based policy for managing employment development across Southend, including within the Southend Central Area. Policy DM10 – Employment Sectors seeks to direct key employment sectors to areas of the Borough to maximise sustainable development and positive impact. Policy DM11 – Employment Areas provides a detailed policy approach for managing existing employment uses, including within Employment Growth Areas³ and Industrial/ Business Estates.

Key Employment Sectors

The Southend-on-Sea Local Economic Assessment 2010 and its refresh in 2013 (LEA 2013) and the Southend-on-Sea Employment Land Review 2010 (ELR 2010) identify a number of key sectoral groups that are important to the Borough's economy and future economic growth. The Council will seek to promote these sectors and ensure that their locational requirements are supported in a sustainable manner.⁴

Employment Sectors primarily outside the SCAAP Area

The employment base of Southend as a whole has become increasingly diverse, back-office financial service jobs and public sector employment have replaced jobs lost in manufacturing and traditional tourism sectors. The creative and cultural sectors, aviation and medical technologies are all growing and offer

¹ Core Strategy Aim; Strategic Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; Policies KP1 Spatial Strategy and CP1 Employment Generating Development.

² The vast majority of the jobs allocated for the seafront would be expected to arise in the Central Seafront area, which has now been included in the Southend Central Area Action Plan (SCAAP).

³ Two Employment Growth Areas 'Grainger Road' and 'Short Street' are located within Southend Central Area and are reference in the SCAAP Policy PA9.1.a

⁴ For Southend Central Area, these following sectors are identified: business and financial services, cultural and intellectual hub and higher education centre of excellence, tourism, leisure activities, and civic and government administration, retail.

further potential for the future. The Town Centre is a sustainable location for approximately half of the employment growth for Southend.

Aviation Industries

5.3 The aviation industry is set to grow rapidly following the redevelopment of London Southend Airport and adoption of the London Southend Airport and Environs Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP). The JAAP allocates land to accommodate up to 109,000 square metres of additional floorspace, with 99,000 square metres to be located in the new Saxon Business Park and the balance on a smaller business park at Nestuda Way, which together will accommodate up to 5,450 additional jobs. Funding (£23m) has been secured by Southend Borough Council through the Local Growth Fund via the South Essex Local Enterprise Partnership to assist in the delivery of the new business park and development is now under construction.

Growth in the aviation industry is expected to support a number of complementary sectors including high-tech manufacturing and engineering. The Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) activities related to the airport are also a critical element to the Southend economy.

Health and Medical Industries

Health and medical industries are an important element of Southend's economy. Southend University Hospital is the Borough's largest employer, whilst Olympus KeyMed, which manufactures medical equipment, is also a significant employer. A number of smaller companies dealing in medical instruments have emerged in the surrounding area, either directly or indirectly linked to Olympus KeyMed. Both the LEA 2013 and the ELR 2010 have forecast these industries to grow, which will provide an opportunity for a cluster of health and medical industries that are well related to Olympus KeyMed, the Hospital and University.

Manufacturing, Construction and Warehousing

Although long term employment trends, as reported in the LEA 2013, outline a decline in the number of manufacturing and wholesale jobs in Southend, those associated with construction have remained broadly neutral, and these employment sectors continue to be an important part of the local economy.

Employment Sectors particularly relevant to the SCAAP Area

Business and Financial Services

The business and financial services sector is well represented in Southend and currently accounts for 23% of the Borough's workforce (ELR 2010). Both the LEA 2013 and the ELR 2010 indicate that whilst there is limited scope for large scale 'back-office' relocations of the scale once seen in Southend, there may be scope for medium sized operations. These documents also indicate that this sector has important indirect influence over other sectors in the Borough such as restaurants, bars and shops and will continue to be a key economic driver within the economy.

Evidence suggests⁵ that there is a significant oversupply of cheaper second-hand office space of generally low quality along Victoria Avenue within the SCAAP area. This existing vacant office space contributes to an oversupply in the market, and especially with outdated stock, much of which is too large and unlikely to meet the requirements of small to medium sized occupiers; the focus of demand for provision in Southend.

Indeed, the SCAAP seeks to bring about the transformation of the traditional Victoria Avenue office area to provide for a vibrant residential led mixed use community which is integrated with the surrounding neighbourhood and set within a remodelled built form of a quality that befits this significant gateway to the Town Centre. This is well underway with some schemes completed and a number of larger schemes under construction and being marketed and sold.

Culture and Intellectual Hub

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport defines the creative industries sector as those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent which have the potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property. Significant investment has already taken place in the form of the new University of Essex Campus and Forum in the town centre and further development is planned, including Opportunity Site (PA3.1): Elmer Square Phase 2, as set out in the SCAAP. The creative and educational sectors represent a good opportunity for Southend to expand its economic diversity and skills. The LEA 2013 identifies Southend Central as the main cultural centre within the South Essex sub-region and the best location in which to develop this industry.

Tourism

Southend, unlike many other traditional seaside locations, was quick to supplement its major industry as a tourist destination with other sectors following the increased accessibility of overseas travel and a decline in the tourism industry in the 1960s and 1970s. However, while the employment base of Southend as a whole has become increasingly diverse, tourism remains important to Southend's regeneration objectives and local employment base.

Southend's distinctive visitor offer, with the iconic pleasure pier at its heart, draws close to 6 million day visitors a year. The tourism sector accounts for 12.3% of the Borough's economy (LEA 2013) and has a wider positive impact upon retailing, catering, entertainment and transport industries.

The SCAAP recognises that the range of visitor offers needs to be expanded, including a greater number of overnight stays building on the success of the day visitor market to encourage a higher level of visitor spend within the Borough. Capturing greater visitor spend by diversifying the tourism and leisure offer and increasing the number of overnight stays will raise income across the economy (see also Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, November 2010).

⁵ Office Sector Analysis contained within the Retail and Town Centre Study 2011.

Investment in high end accommodation such as the Park Inn and the Roslin Beach Hotel on the seafront and Holiday Inn at Southend Airport, has helped to attract higher spending visitors. The Park Inn hotel has also allowed Southend to attract business and conference visitors. The planned future development of Southend-on-Sea suggests good prospects for growth in demand for hotel accommodation (see Hotel Futures 2010).

Significant public investments have been made in recent years in improving the tourism facilities, public realm and accessibility in the central seafront area. These have included:

- Provision of pedestrian lift access, improved public realm and landscaping to improve connectivity between the town centre and central seafront and upgrade visual amenity;
- Phase 1 of the 'City Beach Scheme', a £25m investment package, which has significantly improved the public realm and provided state of the art lighting and improved tourism facilities;
- Improving the Pier entrance and providing for a £3m Cultural Centre (Royal Pavilion) at the seaward end of the Pier providing for a variety of events, concerts and exhibitions including music, theatre, art and photography;
- Continuing investment in the Pier to provide for essential maintenance works and improvements taking total investment in the Pier from 2016 to 2021 to over £17m;
- New seafront lagoon to provide for all day bathing facilities, a private/public initiative.

These combined with the significant private investment in the tourism facilities of the town have enhanced Southend's status as a major resort destination.

In recognition of the improvements in night-time management and its contribution to the town's expanding post-6pm economy, the Purple Flag accreditation was awarded for Southend-on-Sea's High Street and sea front in 2012. This has been recently re-accredited and the 'Purple Festival' is now an annual event celebrating and promoting the town's night time economy.

Building on the success of these schemes and initiatives, a number of tourism, leisure and cultural developments are currently being progressed, which will further stimulate economic growth in the Borough. In addition there is potential to launch Southend as a key conference destination. As per education and cultural employment growth, the growth in tourism and associated leisure activities will enhance the reputation of Southend as a vibrant cosmopolitan urban centre.

Civic and Government Administration

The LEA 2013 reports that approximately a third of all jobs in Southend are in the public sector. An important public sector hub in the central area is centred along Victoria Avenue and contains the Borough Council offices and HM Revenue and Customs.

Retail

The Retail and Town Centre Study (Retail Study 2011) predicts growth in retail floorspace for Southend-on-Sea and recommends that this should be directed to the Town Centre in the first instance in accordance with the Southend Core Strategy.

Delivering all identified retail growth within the SCAAP plan period by 2021 is considered challenging. The Retail Study suggests a diminishing demand for retail units within Southend Town Centre⁶ and that, in delivering growth, consideration should be given to the considerable number of vacant units in the town centre, which can and should be reoccupied, in the first instance. The estimated vacant shop floor space within the town centre was measured at approximately 10,000 sqm⁷.

The SCAAP therefore takes a pragmatic approach to delivering retail growth during its plan period to 2021. Opportunities for additional retail floorspace will be expected to arise from some incremental increases in existing floorspace through extending shop units or creating larger trading areas through internal unit reconfiguration. Additionally, consideration and use of vacant floorspace, particularly in The Victoria Shopping Centre should be made. The Victoria Shopping Centre was extensively refurbished creating a number of new units and additional floorspace in 2008, the year which marked the onset of economic recession in the UK, and a number of the units have never been let⁸.

The SCAAP identifies the following Policy Areas and Opportunity Sites as being located/partly located within the Town Centre Primary Shopping Area and having the potential to deliver additional retail floorspace where opportunities arise:

- PA1 High Street;
- PA2 London Road;
- PA4 Queensway and Opportunity Site PA4.1 along Southchurch Road;
- PA6 Clifftown (for small scale niche retail);
- PA7 Tylers, including Opportunity Site PA7.1.

Public realm enhancements throughout the town centre, particularly within areas that have existing poor quality environments, would be expected to increase footfall and assist with letting vacant units. A schedule of access and public realm improvements is set out within the development principles of each Policy Area within the SCAAP.

It should be noted that the Council is jointly⁹ preparing a new Strategic Retail Needs Study that will be used to inform the preparation of a new Southend Local Plan, providing an early review of the SCAAP.

⁶ Town Centre and Retail Study (2011) Para. 2.21. Early preparation of a Strategic Retail Needs Study suggests retail demand requirements is generally low in the Southend town centre, however, this is not considered a comprehensive picture and has not yet been finalised or published.

⁷ As per Technical Report – Management of Town Centre Shopping Frontage, November 2016 – estimated vacant floorspace was 10,406 sqm.

⁸ Approximately 2,000 sqm of floorspace - as per Technical Report – Management of Town Centre Shopping Frontage, November 2016.

⁹ Southend Council, Castle Point Council, Basildon Council, Rochford Council, Thurrock Council.

Southend Central Area Action Plan (SCAAP)

SCAAP Job numbers

The SCAAP reflects the vision, strategic objectives and spatial strategy of the Southend Core Strategy (2007). It is recognised that delivery of the Core Strategy employment target (7,250 additional jobs to be delivered in the Town Centre and Central Area between 2001– 2021¹⁰) is challenging, particularly following the impacts of the global economic downturn commencing in 2008.

Only tentative conclusions can be drawn from monitoring employment change at the local authority level. The national Census often provides the most comprehensive analysis of employment change every 10 years. Table 1 outlines that the census recorded a 8,900 increase in jobs in Southend between 2001 and 2011, which is in excess of the phased Core Strategy target for Southend as a whole (13,000 jobs 2001-2021; therefore ten years equates to 7,500 jobs). However, data for the SCAAP area¹¹ suggests a job decline over this period.¹²

Table 1: Net change in workplace jobs in Southend (Census)

Workplace Jobs	2001	2011	Change
Southend-on-Sea	63,200	72,100	8,900
Central Area ¹³	22,198	20,717	-1,481
Rest of Borough	41,262	51,357	10,095

Data from Census Table T101 - UK Travel Flows; 2011 data from Census Table WU02UK - Location of usual residence and place of work by age

The Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR), produced by the Office for National Statistics, provides an alternative dataset for measuring employment at a district level and is produced on an annual basis. However, IDBR data from 2007 onwards is not directly comparable to past releases (i.e. pre 2007).

Table 2 sets out the employment totals for Southend and the Central Area and suggests that there has been an increase in employment across the Borough, although jobs within the Central Area have broadly remained neutral or declined. However, more recently, since 2012, job numbers have increased year on year in the Central Area and efforts to boost job creation are underway, including through implementation of the SCAAP.

¹⁰ Core Strategy CP1: Town Centre (6,500), plus Seafront (750) = 7,250

¹¹ Victoria and Milton Wards of Southend broadly cover the SCAAP area

¹² The inter-censal growth in jobs recorded for Southend must be treated with caution. Southend-on-Sea's population was subject to a significant upward adjustment as a result of the 2011 Census count. The scale of this adjustment suggests that there may have been a population undercount in the 2001 Census, although this is difficult to verify. Indeed the 2001 mid-year estimate was significantly revised downwards following release of the 2001 Census results. The uncertainty of the Census results for Southend places some doubt regarding trends derived from the 2001 and 2011 Census, including measuring employment change.

¹³ Comprising Victoria and Milton Wards

Table 2: Net change in workplace jobs in Southend (IDBR)

Employment in Southend	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Central Area*		21,600	23,000	25,100	25,500	25,200	23,800	23,700	23,700	22,000	20,900	19,700	20,000	20,800	21,200	21,200
%		36%	37%	39%	39%	38%	37%	37%	38%	36%	35%	32%	33%	33%	33%	33%
Rest of Borough**		38,800	38,500	39,700	40,000	40,200	39,800	40,400	39,300	38,700	39,900	40,900	42,300	42,700	43,200	43,300
%		64%	63%	61%	61%	62%	63%	64%	62%	64%	66%	68%	70%	67%	67%	67%
Total	60,900	60,400	61,600	64,800	65,500	65,300	63,500	64,000	63,000	60,700	60,800	60,500	62,200	63,500	64,400	64,500

* Milton and Victoria Wards

** Southend minus Milton and Victoria Wards

SCAAP Employment Floorspace

The Southend Employment Land Review (2010) translates the Core Strategy job target into an indicative floorspace requirement per employment sector. It suggests that in order to deliver the Core Strategy employment target for the Town Centre and Central Area around 120,000 sqm of employment floorspace is required within the area by 2021.

Monitoring of employment floorspace suggests a net decline across the Borough and Town Centre between 2004 and 2016.

Table 3 sets out an indicative total number/ floorspace of new development to be delivered within the Opportunity Sites by 2021. The figures provided will be subject to variation when each Opportunity Site comes forward and do not account for other development proposals that may come forward within the SCAAP area outside the identified Opportunity Sites.

Table 3: Indicative Scale of Development (Gross) within Opportunity Sites (2016 – 2021)

Commercial, including eating and leisure	Retail	Community	Total
17,500 m ²	5,500 m ²	18,500 m ²	41,500m ²

As highlighted above, it is recognised that the employment targets set out in the Core Strategy and ELR are very challenging following the impacts of the global economic recession. The jobs target of the Core Strategy was based on the East of England Forecasting Model by Cambridge Econometrics, which was produced prior to the global economic recession that hit the UK in 2008 and 2009. Clearly the impact of the economic recession restrained economic growth and resulted in a reduction in the number of jobs in Southend and the Central Area from 2009 (see table 2 above) and can be characterised by the increasing number of vacant office blocks along Victoria Avenue. This has made the achievement of the Core Strategy jobs target to 2021 all the more challenging.

Indeed the latest East of England Forecasting Model (2016)¹⁴ suggests job growth in Southend will be around 1,800 between 2016 (78,600) and 2021 (80,400), much lower than the remaining Core Strategy and SCAAP employment target.

However, building on the more recent resurgence and growth (Table 2) in employment in the Town Centre and Central Area (Table 2), the SCAAP seeks to maximise employment opportunities and act as an important catalyst and driver

¹⁴ http://atlas.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/EEFM/LA_forecasts_baseline_EEFM_2016.zip

Note- The emerging South Essex Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) interrogates EEFM to forecast employment growth, which will inform the preparation of the Southend New Local Plan, which provides a review the SCAAP.

for inward investment and assist towards delivering sustainable development within the Central Area.

Maintaining a diverse and balanced economy which is healthy and sustainable will contribute to a strong Town Centre. The SCAAP seeks to encourage the establishment and expansion of businesses in the central area by encouraging and supporting economic development within defined Policy Areas and by identifying, promoting and actively bringing forward suitable sites for development to meet modern user and investor requirements.

Indeed, Southend Borough Council has been an active partner in seeking to achieve economic growth and investment and is open for business and keen to ensure that across the town and further afield Southend has a reputation as a place to do business and where businesses are supported and enabled to flourish – be that start-up, expansion or relocation. A list of projects and investments programmes that aim to bring about economic growth and job creation within the Borough and the Central Area is provided in **Appendix A**.

Appendix 1: Projects and Investments

1. Projects and Investments:

The Borough Council actively pursues a range of routes to seek investment, profile and support for the local economy including:

1.1 Partnerships

- **Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP)**

The Council is an active participant, contributor and advocate of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). It is a member of the strategic board and accountability board as well as being represented on working groups including tourism, senior officer group, transport officer group, coastal communities group, skills group and programme consideration group. Understanding LEPs to be the channel by which Government wishes to engage with local areas – public and private sectors alike, a funding route, a mechanism for lobbying and profile, and the geography for the growth hub, Southend Council has sought to maximise the benefits to Southend of this partnership and encouraged business participation too – resulting in Ministerial visits, funding allocations and new delivery mechanisms. The Council is also represented on the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) committee, connected with the LEP, in relation to the administration of European Structural Funds which Southend has also benefitted from.

- **Opportunity South Essex (OSE)**

OSE is the federated board and economic partnership for South Essex within SELEP and again the Borough Council is represented on the board as well as providing officer support and encouraging business participation. Ensuring a robust strategy and project pipeline for OSE ensures that Southend is best placed to access funding, support and profile available.

- **Southend Business Partnership**

While the partnership is business chaired and led, the secretariat and funding is provided by the Borough Council. It is a forum for businesses to come together to network, learn, question, share, challenge and support. The quarterly business briefings bring some 120 businesses together while the monthly newsletter reaches 2,000 local businesses. All enabled by the Council's Economic Development team.

- **Business Improvement District (BID)**

After many years of supporting the Town Centre Partnership the Council is now a supporter and active participant in the BID. Launched April 2013 it will be looking to re-ballot for its second term in November 2017. The Council is not only a levy payer but a committee member and enabler to the point that Southend BID is held up as a good example of BIDs and Councils working together nationally. The BID seeks to deliver interventions and activities which increase footfall, attract more businesses, improve the visitor experience and maximize the resources available to partners – all to benefit the local economy.

- **Southend Tourism Partnership (STP)**

Chaired by a hotel GM, the partnership is facilitated by the Borough Council and, while relatively new in its existence, it has delivered a conference in Tourism week, a new look website – www.visitsouthend.co.uk in partnership with the BID, worked with the Council to commission new marketing collateral including photos, films and printed media and has applied for funding from sources such as Visit Britain.

- **London Southend Airport and Environs Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP)**

Partnership working between multiple councils was required to establish and agree the JAAP which is now adopted as the strategic planning framework for the airport and its environs. Recognising the opportunity for economic growth through the airport's expansion and desire to unlock land for development, a framework was put in place to enable the airport's growth and to give a balance of confidence and protection for commercial activity in the area.

- **Coastal Community Teams**

Following the announcement of the opportunity to bid for Coastal Community Teams (CCTS) – local community led groups seeking to support and enable economic growth in a local area – the Council, with its partners, bid for three teams in Southend: Shoebury, Central and Leigh, and was successful with all three, each being awarded £10,000 to develop its economic plan and the status to progress to pursue other funding streams and activities.

- **Virtual Skills Academy (VSA)**

Recognising the planned changes and growth in Southend over the coming years, the Council is keen to ensure that local residents and businesses gain maximum benefit from the development process as well as the end result so has established the Virtual Skills Academy with its education partners. The Academy works with developers to open up opportunities for on-site, real-time, business-relevant training, upskilling and experience as well as understanding and anticipating the skills needs of these developments to equip residents with those required to support the construction and implementation.

- **Purple Flag**

The visitor economy is vital to Southend so the Council established a night time economy group to apply for Purple Flag status, which it secured in 2012 (and was the first town in Essex to receive it) and has recently been re-accredited. The Purple Festival is now an annual event celebrating and promoting the fact that Southend is recognised as having a safe and vibrant night time economy and seeking to attract more people to the town to enjoy all that it offers of an evening.

1.2 Infrastructure

- **Airport Business Park Southend** (www.abp-southend.co.uk) is a Council led project on 55 acres of land to the north west of the airport which is seeking to deliver some 99000sqm of employment space to address the lack of quality employment space driving quality, well-paid jobs locally. Having secured Henry Boot Development Ltd as its development partner, the project is now underway with work having commenced on site in November 2016, supported by a £23.09m Local Growth Fund (LGF) allocation from the LEP in round 2 and round 3 to deliver a new innovation centre as well as enabling works and transport. A range of local businesses have already expressed an interest in expanding / relocating there with active marketing only just starting. A key facet of the business park will be the innovation centre which will provide flexible space for entrepreneurs and small businesses to enable them to benefit from targeted support, funding, networks and the opportunity to build relationships with other occupiers with a view to growth.

- **Better Queensway**

A major and significant regeneration project transforming the town centre with new transport layouts, improved and increased residential accommodation, commercial premises and community space which will, inter alia, address housing needs, reinforce the High Street with additional local shoppers, improve outcomes for residents.

- **Coastal Community Fund (CCF)**

£1.25m secured from Government and matched by public and private sector funding to deliver a new lagoon on the seafront to sustain year-round water based activities regardless of the tide supporting the tourism offer of the town.

- **Local Growth Fund (LGF)**
Southend Council has been successful in securing LGF funding in rounds 1 and 2 for a range of transport and non-transport interventions including Kent Elms and the Bell junctions on the A127, essential bridge and highways maintenance, Victoria Avenue and central area road enhancements, and the Hive enterprise centre.
- **The Forum**
A £27m project to deliver the UK's first fully integrated public and academic library combined with HE and FE teaching space and Focal Point Gallery putting education and learning at the heart of the town at Elmer Square.
- **Garon Park Diving Centre**
A world class facility putting Southend on a world stage when it comes to diving facilities. Used by Team GB ahead of London 2012, it not only gives rise to civic pride but also profile and prestige not previously secured.
- **Better Southend**
A package of transport and public realm measures delivered on time and on budget to deliver vital enhancements to the main routes into the town, to the benefit of businesses, residents and visitors alike, and public realm, such as City Beach, which gives visitors greater reasons to dwell longer and therefore opportunity for businesses to generate greater income. *Topic Paper 2: Strategic Highway Network* sets out a more definitive list of transport, public realm and access improvement projects.

1.3 Employment, Skills and Business Support

- **ABSS**
£40m Big Lottery funding over 10 years. One of only 5 projects nationally. Seeking to improve the outcomes for 0-3 year olds and recognising that to do so the wider family, community and role-model base must raise its aspirations for children so includes a skills and employment programme for residents in target wards
- **GREAT**
£50k Government funding secured to develop an international presence and relationships relating to trade, tourism and education. As one of the routes from London Southend Airport, Groningen was selected and deliverables included production of a short promotional film which was aired on Dutch TV alongside a facebook and Booking.com campaign which exceeded its targets
- **City Deal & The Hive**
In 2014 Southend negotiated its City Deal with Government, which resulted in £2.4m investment in the town. £1.8m was to establish the Growth Hub, as government's preferred channel for business support, and a £1.2m business grant programme creating and securing employment in the town. £650k was used to create flexible workspace on Victoria Avenue in a centre now called The Hive and is home to a range of small businesses and entrepreneurs including international businesses looking for a foothold in Southend. The Hive is also home to the BEST Growth Hub and a range of business support activity.
- **Airport / CONNECT / Easyjet advertising**
Supporting the expansion of London Southend Airport required bold political decisions and close partnership working. Since its expansion, the Council has continued to support the airport in promotional activity, funding bids and developing projects such as CONNECT with its University of the Skies, which is seeking to connect local residents with skills and employment opportunities linked to the airport and aviation industry.

- **South East Business Boost (SEBB)**
A £13m programme part funded by ERDF to expand and enhance the Growth Hub across the South East which the Council is taking the lead on. It will provide a range of business support, including grants, to businesses across the SELEP area.
- **ERDF funding – partner**
Southend Council has also partnered a number of other ERDF funding bids to secure additional business support funding for the town including the Low Carbon Business programme, which concluded in 2014, and the new LoCase, Cultural Industries and Inward Investment programmes.
- **Mentoring Fund**
Responding to the business voice that school leavers do not have the requisite skills to secure employment the Council established a 60 Minute Mentor programme creating a bank of business volunteers willing to engage with classes around their career, expectations as an employer, mock interviews etc. Following its success this has recently secured £88k for a 2 year roll-out across South Essex.
- **Careers and Enterprise Company**
A part funded programme, match funded by the Council, to match schools with a business leader to help the school grow in its commercial outlook and synergies with the local employment base.

1.4 **Schedule of planned projects and investment programmes:**

Despite facing at least another 3 years of austerity and budget cuts in its 2017/18 budget, the Council is proposing to invest an additional £52.9m in capital projects, in addition to the £125.4m already approved for 2017/18-2020/21. Those investments directly relating to the economic health of the town centre and central seafront include:

- £500k smart cities
- £50k – additional resort assets
This scheme is to provide commercial space in the form of ‘beach hut’ buildings on Southend Pier, rickshaw type bikes for the visitor offer and a shelter on City Beach. The other element is a contemporary shelter to offer summer shade and rain protection on City beach responding to business and visitor requests.
- £250k – detailed design for a new facility on the pier pavilion deck. This scheme is to progress a preferred option for developing the Pavilion Deck of the Pier including detailed design and submission of planning and listed building consents.
- £11m on a range of interventions to protect and maintain the iconic Southend pier.
- £250k on energy projects
- £420k CCTV renewal
- £485k on car park signage and guidance systems
- £5m town centre and central seafront parking
- £250k improving the resilience of the borough to flooding in extreme weather events
- £320k external cladding of Cliff’s Pavilion
- £3m New Museum Gateway Review (2016 – 2019) - This scheme is to progress the project to completion of the technical design and procurement stage.

The Council also continues to bid for funding from external sources to support and grow its activities, and is awaiting the outcome of further LGF funding, which included three Southend projects on the prioritised list submitted to Government.