

FOR CONSULTATION



THE THAMES ESTUARY REGIONAL INNOVATION & ENTERPRISE DISTRICT

Building the UK's leading
enterprise and innovation corridor

Anchored at CEME | Connecting industry, innovation, investment and talent

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Foreword

The Thames Estuary is one of the UK's most strategically important growth corridors.

Stretching across East London, South Essex and North Kent, the region is home to world-class universities, international logistics infrastructure, major employers, thriving business communities and some of the country's largest regeneration programmes.

It possesses all the ingredients required to become a nationally significant centre for enterprise, innovation and industrial growth.

Yet, despite these strengths, too much potential remains unrealised.

Innovation assets often operate in isolation. Entrepreneurial talent struggles to connect with investment and commercial opportunities. Employers face growing skills challenges. Research excellence does not always translate into business growth and economic impact.

The Thames Estuary Regional Innovation & Enterprise District has been developed to address these challenges.

Anchored at CEME, in Rainham, the District will create a connected ecosystem that brings together industry, universities, entrepreneurs, investors and public sector partners



to accelerate productivity, enterprise creation, innovation and investment across the region.

This is not a proposal to create something entirely new. It is a proposal to connect, strengthen and scale what already exists.

Our ambition is clear: To establish the Thames Estuary as one of the UK's leading locations for enterprise, innovation and industrial growth.

Dr Noorzaman Rashid, CEME CEO



Executive summary

The Thames Estuary Regional Innovation & Enterprise District is a place-based economic development initiative designed to unlock the full potential of one of the UK's most important economic corridors.

The District will connect the following through a shared enterprise and innovation ecosystem anchored at CEME:



By aligning investment, talent, research, skills and enterprise support, the District will create new opportunities for business growth, commercialisation, innovation and inward investment.

The result will be a stronger, more productive and more competitive regional economy capable of generating long-term value for businesses, communities and investors alike.



Why the Thames Estuary?

The Thames Estuary occupies a unique position within the UK economy.

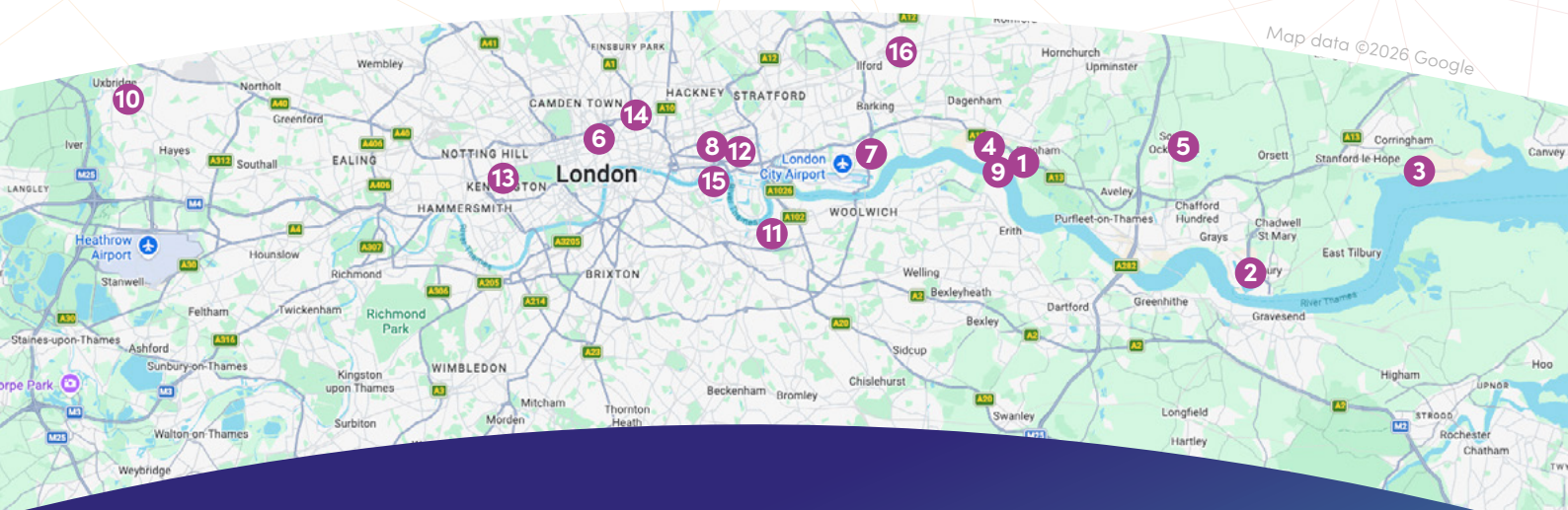
The corridor benefits from:

- ✓ Direct access to London markets
- ✓ Thames Freeport designation
- ✓ International transport and logistics infrastructure
- ✓ Significant industrial and manufacturing assets
- ✓ Major inward investment opportunities
- ✓ Rapid population growth
- ✓ A concentration of higher education institutions
- ✓ Strong public and private sector partnerships

Few regions possess such a powerful combination of assets.

The challenge is not a lack of opportunity. The challenge is creating the conditions that enable innovation, enterprise and investment to flourish at scale.

The Thames Estuary Regional Innovation & Enterprise District has been designed to provide that platform.



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|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1 CEME campus | 7 University of East London | 13 Imperial College London |
| 2 The Port of Tilbury | 8 Queen Mary University of London | 14 City St George's, University of London |
| 3 DP World London Gateway | 9 Beam Park | 15 London & Partners |
| 4 Ford Dagenham | 10 Brunel University of London | 16 Local London |
| 5 Reef Origin / East Havering Data Centre Campus | 11 University of Greenwich | |
| 6 UCL | 12 King's College London | |

Unlocking the Thames Estuary's greatest asset

The Thames Estuary contains one of the UK's largest reservoirs of underutilised entrepreneurial, technical and creative talent.

Across the region are individuals with ideas, ambition and capability who currently lack clear pathways into enterprise, innovation networks, investment and high-growth opportunities.

At the same time, employers are seeking skilled talent, investors are seeking scalable opportunities and universities are looking to maximise the impact of research and innovation.

The District exists to bring these opportunities together. By unlocking the full breadth of talent across the corridor, the District will strengthen productivity, accelerate business formation and create new pathways into economic opportunity.

In doing so, it will support both economic growth and long-term regional competitiveness.



The District will strengthen productivity, accelerate business formation and create new pathways into economic opportunity"



Why CEME?

For more than two decades, CEME has acted as a catalyst for economic development, enterprise growth and skills advancement across East London and the wider Thames Estuary.

Today CEME already delivers:

£73.4

million net additional GVA annually

2,365

net additional jobs supported

More than

100

businesses located on campus

A verified social return of

£3.54

for every £1 invested

100k

square feet of enterprise and innovation space

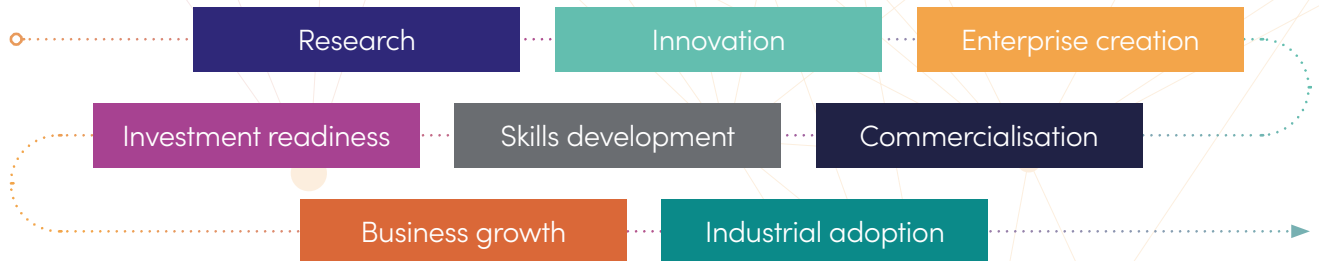
These results have been independently assessed using HM Treasury Green Book principles.

The District builds on this proven platform. Rather than creating a new institution, the proposal scales an established ecosystem with a 20-year track record of delivery and partnership working.

A district built for enterprise

Many innovation districts focus primarily on research and technology development.

The Thames Estuary model goes further. The District has been designed around the complete innovation journey:



The objective is simple: to ensure that innovation translates into real businesses, real jobs, real investment and measurable economic value.

Strategic growth sectors

The District will focus on sectors that align with regional strengths and national priorities:

MARITIME AND RIVER-BASED INNOVATION

Unlocking opportunities linked to the Thames Estuary and maritime economy.



ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

Supporting productivity, innovation and supply-chain competitiveness.



CONSTRUCTION, RETROFIT AND SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

Supporting innovation in housing, infrastructure and the built environment.



CLEAN ENERGY AND HYDROGEN

Accelerating the development and deployment of future energy technologies.



FUTURE MOBILITY

Supporting innovation in transport, logistics and connected mobility systems.



DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND DATA CENTRES

Supporting emerging opportunities linked to AI, data infrastructure and digital transformation.



A partnership for growth

The District has been designed as a collaborative platform rather than a standalone programme. Success depends on strong partnerships across sectors.

Potential partners include:

- > Universities
- > Further education providers
- > Corporate employers
- > Investors
- > Innovation agencies
- > Local authorities
- > Business networks
- > Research organisations

Each partner brings unique capabilities while benefiting from access to a broader innovation and enterprise ecosystem.

Ecosystem of partners to involve



Industry and innovation stakeholders



Strategic stakeholders



Universities



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Benefits for partners

Employers and industry



- Access to future talent pipelines
- New supplier and innovation opportunities
- Collaboration with universities and researchers
- Participation in innovation programmes
- Enhanced regional competitiveness.

Universities



- Research commercialisation opportunities
- Industry engagement
- Student enterprise pathways
- Innovation testbeds
- Collaborative funding opportunities.

Investors



- Access to emerging growth businesses
- Strong deal-flow opportunities
- Sector-focused innovation pipeline
- Long-term regional growth proposition.

Local authorities



- Increased productivity
- Business growth
- Job creation
- Skills development
- Inward investment attraction.

Innovation organisations



- Demonstration of innovation at scale
- Place-based innovation models
- National learning opportunities
- Economic impact creation.

Projected impact

Over its first 10 years, the District aims to deliver:

1,170
additional jobs

£68
million additional
cumulative GVA

20
ventures reaching
commercial scale

Significant
private sector
investment
leverage

100
new ventures
created

Benefit-Cost
Ratio of
4.3:1

Social Return on
Investment of
6.8:1

These outcomes
are in addition to
the impact already
generated by CEME.

National and regional significance

The district directly supports:

- The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy
- Thames Freeport objectives
- Local London priorities
- London Growth Plan
- Advanced manufacturing growth
- Innovation commercialisation
- Skills development
- Future workforce development
- Clean energy transition
- Inward investment attraction.

The initiative therefore provides a practical delivery mechanism for both national and regional economic ambitions.

Our ambition

The Thames Estuary possesses the assets, infrastructure, institutions and talent required to become one of the UK's leading centres of enterprise and innovation.

What is needed now is a platform capable of connecting these strengths and converting potential into productivity, investment and long-term economic growth.

The Thames Estuary Regional Innovation & Enterprise District provides that opportunity.

Working together, we can create a nationally significant innovation ecosystem that strengthens competitiveness, attracts investment, develops talent and drives sustainable economic growth for decades to come.

Invitation to partner

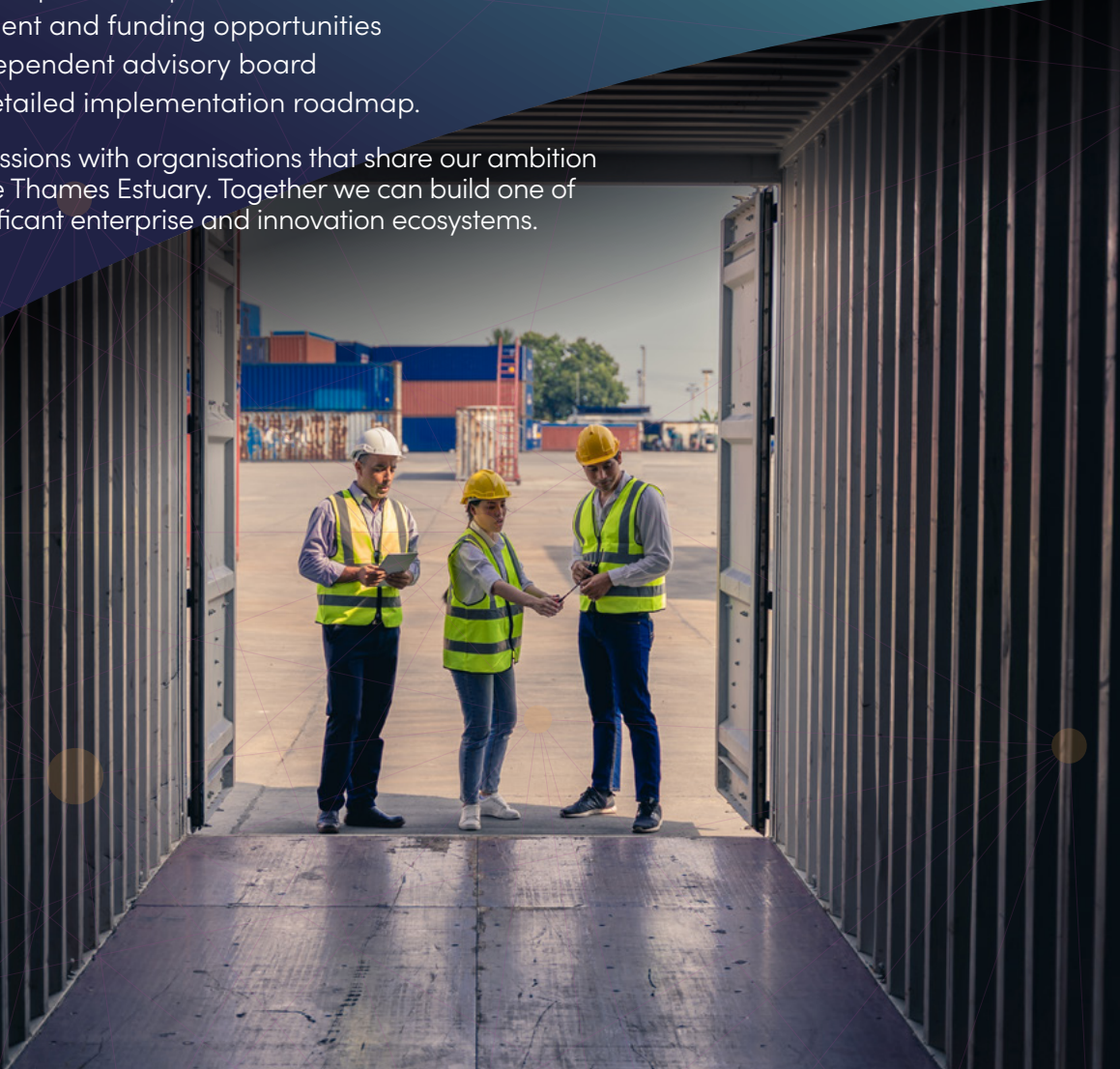
We are now seeking strategic partners to help shape the next phase of development.

Initial priorities include:

- Establishing governance arrangements
- Securing founding partner commitments
- Developing university collaborations
- Building corporate partnerships
- Aligning investment and funding opportunities
- Creating an independent advisory board
- Developing a detailed implementation roadmap.

We welcome discussions with organisations that share our ambition for the future of the Thames Estuary. Together we can build one of the UK's most significant enterprise and innovation ecosystems.

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Get in touch

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