



The South East England Development Agency is already working in a number of key coastal towns to start bringing about the renaissance of the South East.

Initiatives are already taking place with partners in key coastal areas in Kent including Ramsgate, Folkestone Margate Renewal and Dover Pride.

The coastal South East is characterised by some of the country's cleanest beaches and major environmental assets such as the Downs and the Channel Coast. A number of coastal cities and towns each have their own distinctive character and history, yet it is also an area of untapped economic potential.

If the Coastal South East was to match the average economic performance of the UK, an estimated £13 billion in GVA would be added to the national economy each year. If this untapped economic potential is to be realised, a targeted coastal strategy is necessary. However, in order to address the diverse potentials and challenges facing the Coastal South East, a variety of locally-driven approaches will be needed to achieve critical mass and local focus. These must address social and environmental frameworks as well as economic opportunities. The coastal strategy, due to be published by SEEDA in 2008, will focus on maximising economic potential and the differing opportunities presented by:

- Culture and leisure-based growth
- Skills-led growth
- Innovation and creativity-driven growth
- Economic upgrading
- Connectivity

SEEDA's priorities are to create cities and towns where people choose to live by investing in an urban renaissance. This can be achieved by redeveloping and regenerating key town centres to stimulate development of local economies, raising the quality of the offer to visitors and release the enterprise potential of the creative industries, leisure facilities and the visitor economy. SEEDA aims to expand the cultural offer, support enterprise and stimulate the creation of a wide variety of businesses.

The challenges are great and success will be measured by the evolution towards a network of vibrant, attractive towns and cities, maintaining a diversity by playing to existing or latent strengths; a set of high quality destinations that secure the benefit of increased visitor spend for local communities and contribute to wider objectives for urban renaissance; and increased business start-up, survival and growth rates.

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