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Romney Marsh Delivery Plan,
2014-2017

A Final Report by
Regeneris Consulting

The Romney Marsh Partnership

Romney Marsh Delivery Plan, 2014-2017

June 2014

Regeneris Consulting Ltd
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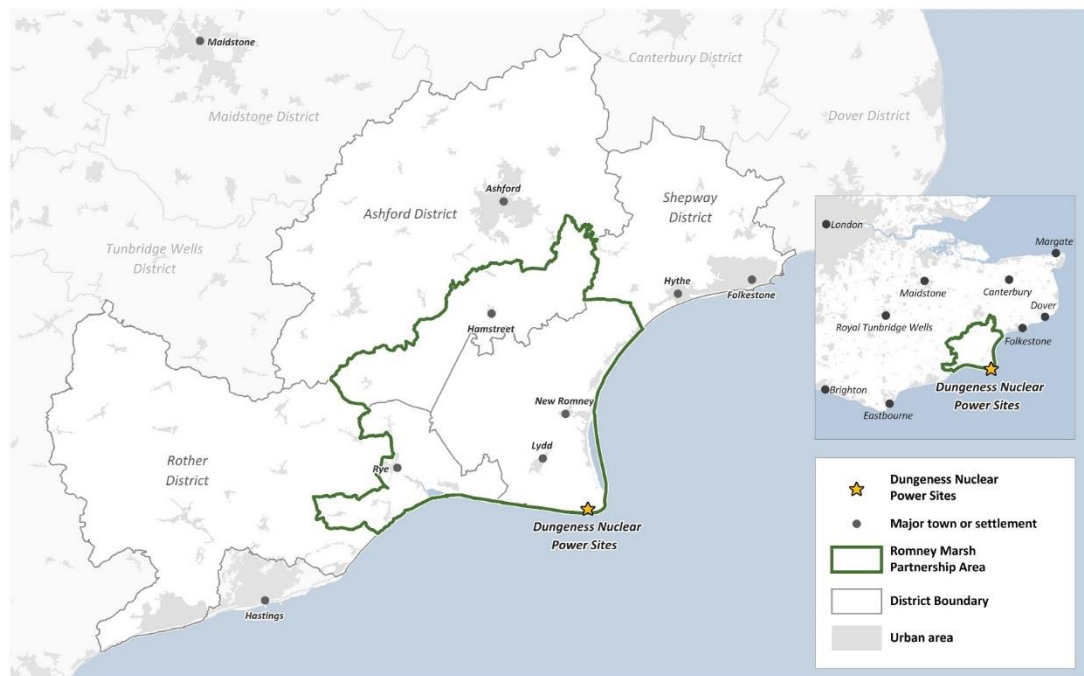
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1. Introduction

The Romney Marsh Partnership

- 1.1 The Romney Marsh Partnership (RMP) was established in 2012 to lead the delivery of the Romney Marsh Socio-Economic Plan; an economic strategy targeted at mitigating the negative consequences of decommissioning at Dungeness A nuclear power station and securing a stronger economic future for the area.
- 1.2 The RMP covers a largely rural geography across three local authority areas – Shepway, Rother and Ashford. Rye and New Romney are the largest settlements within the area, whilst the towns of Ashford, Folkestone and Hastings are located in close proximity. **Throughout this plan “Romney Marsh” should be taken to refer to the area covered by the RMP.**
- 1.3 The RMP currently comprises representatives from each of the three district authorities, Kent and East Sussex County Councils, Magnox Ltd, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, Dungeness Site Stakeholders Group, Marsh Academy, Romney Resource Centre, Rye Partnership and Chambers of Commerce.

Figure 1.1 The RMP Area



Source: Regeneris Consulting, 2014

Our Delivery Plan, 2014-2017

- 1.4 The purpose of this Delivery Plan is to provide a framework for the activities and actions of the RMP over the next three years. The Plan builds upon the foundations provided by the Romney Marsh Socio-Economic Plan (2011) and the successes achieved by the RMP since it was formed.
- 1.5 The specific objectives of the Plan are to:

- **Reflect an extended RMP area** – since inception, the RMP has extended to cover a larger area than originally envisaged, now taking in parts of Ashford Borough and Rother District. The Delivery Plan has been developed to ensure future activity fully reflects this larger geography
- **Continue to respond to the impacts of decommissioning** – the Romney Marsh Socio-Economic Plan was originally developed to respond to the impacts of decommissioning at Dungeness A Site. Within the plan, 2016-18 was identified as a critical milestone for the local area, with a sharp decline in employment at Dungeness A Site projected. These considerations remain unchanged, with significant change in the economic make-up of the area projected to occur within the timescales of this Delivery Plan
- **Provide a spend plan for the Marsh Million fund** – one of the RMP’s major successes to date has been the establishment of the Marsh Million; a £1 million fund to support enterprise and economic development in the project area. A clear framework is required to ensure benefits from the delivery of this fund are maximised
- **Take account of emerging funding opportunities** – since the Romney Marsh Socio-Economic Action Plan was developed, there have been significant changes in the external funding landscape, not least the inception of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SE LEP) and its strategies for accessing and delivering European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and Local Growth Fund (LGF). It is important that the nature of these changes are understood locally, and that a framework exists to exploit any opportunities

Magnox Ltd – Proposed Change in Parent Body Organisation

On 31 March 2014, the NDA announced that Cavendish Fluor Partnership (CFP) was the Preferred Bidder in the competition to select a new Parent Body for Magnox Ltd and Research Sites Restoration Limited (RSRL). Subject to successful conclusion of the Transition Period on 1st September 2014, CFP will become the new Parent Body for Magnox Ltd.

It is recommended that the Delivery Plan is reviewed at an appropriate future point in time to take account of the new Parent Body’s plans, in particular its socio-economic priorities.

Plan Contents

1.6 The Romney Marsh Delivery Plan comprises the following chapters:

- Chapter 2 – Romney Marsh Context. An update from the original plan of the socio-economic characteristics and policy influencing the Romney Marsh area
- Chapter 3 – Achievements to Date. A summary of the activities and achievements of the RMP since it was formed
- Chapter 4 – Framework for Delivery. The principles underpinning the Delivery Plan and the main areas for focus over the next 3 years
- Chapter 5 – Areas for Intervention. A summary of the projects and interventions which could be delivered in support of the overarching priorities and objectives
- Chapter 6 – Delivering the Plan. Recommended processes for delivering the plan, including RMP structures and accessing external funding and resources.

2. Romney Marsh Context

- 2.1 Reflecting the creation and subsequent expansion of the RMP, this Delivery Plan focuses on a larger Romney Marsh geography than the original Romney Marsh Socio-Economic Plan. This section provides a summary of socio-economic and policy context relevant to the extended Romney Marsh area, focusing in on the area's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Socio-Economic Performance

- 2.2 Romney Marsh is a largely rural area, characterised by some fairly unique socio-economic characteristics. The most important of these are summarised below. Throughout, when referring to Romney Marsh, we are referring to the geography covered by the RMP¹.

The Romney Marsh Economy

- 2.3 Rye and New Romney are the major economic centres within Romney Marsh, accounting for a high proportion of the area's businesses, employment and population. The nuclear sector at Dungeness also continues to play an important role in the Romney Marsh economy, whilst there are also strengths in the visitor economy and in terms of local enterprise performance.

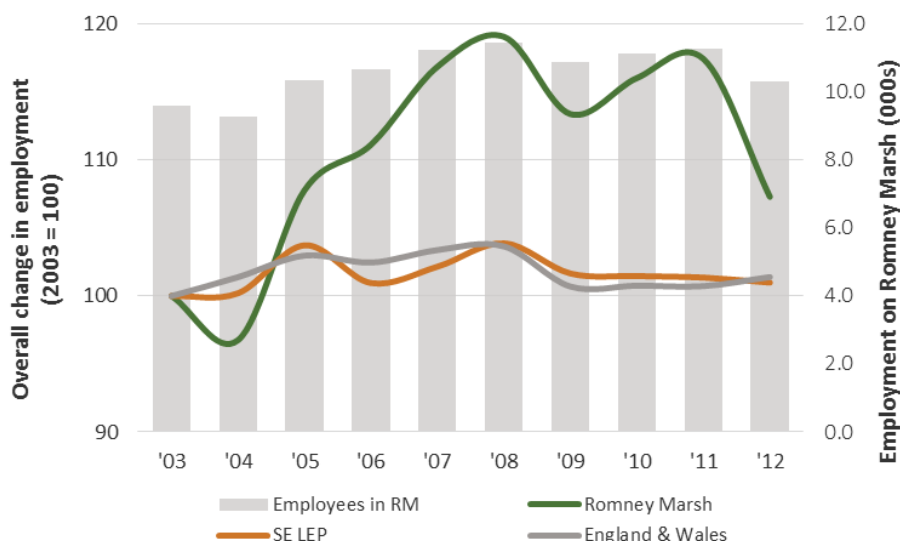
Jobs on Romney Marsh

- 2.4 The latest available data on local employment indicates that in 2012 there were **11,000 jobs on Romney Marsh²**.
- 2.5 Overall, between 2003 and 2012 **employment on Romney Marsh increased by 700 jobs or +7%**. This is in line with the overall trend seen nationally over the same period. However, this overall trend conceals different growth rates experienced in the intermediate period between 2003 and 2012. As the chart overleaf shows, **Romney Marsh experienced considerable employment growth (+1,800 jobs) between 2003 and 2008, but a fluctuating decline to its employment base (-1,100 jobs) since the start of the recession.**

¹ The RMP area is mapped in Figure 1.1. It is defined as comprising the following statistical localities: Rother 002A, Rother 004A-004D, Rother 004E, Ashford 010A-010B, Ashford 014A-014B, 014D, Shepway 009A, Shepway 011A-011E, Shepway 012A-012D, Shepway 013A-013-D.

² All employment data from Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES), accessed at <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

Figure 2.1 Overall employment change (indexed to 2003) and employment 2003-12



*The overall employment trend between 2003 and 2012 is for illustrative purposes only. Changes in the methodology between the ABI and BRES (as well as within BRES in 2010) do not allow for a continuous analysis in employment trends.

Source: ONS, Annual Business Inquiry, 2003-2008; ONS, Business Register and Employment Survey, 2008-2012.

Businesses on Romney Marsh

- 2.6 Romney Marsh is home to around **2,200 businesses**³. There are around **97.0 businesses per 1,000 people aged 16 to 64**, 1.5 times the density seen in the SE LEP (66.2) and nationally (64.6). Despite a higher density, data from the UK Business Count shows that **the number of businesses on Romney Marsh has not changed since 2011**, compared to an increase of 2.6% in the SE LEP and 3.2% nationally.
- 2.7 Self-employment is a good indicator of the level of enterprise activity locally. Data from the latest Census (2011) indicates that **over 13% of Romney Marsh's residents are self-employed**. This is higher than the averages seen in SE LEP (11%) and nationally (10%). **Over the past 10 years, the level of self-employment on Romney Marsh increased by around 6%.**
- 2.8 Another indicator for the measure of local enterprise is the number of people working mainly at or from home. The latest Census indicates that **around 5% of the population on Romney Marsh works mainly at or from home**, compared to 4% in the SE LEP and 4% nationally. Although it is not possible to directly compare the results of the two latest Censuses due to changes in the definition of home-working in 2011, it is very likely that the proportion of people working mainly at or from home increased over the past 10 years. As the table below indicates, in the 2001 the percentage working from home on Romney Marsh was lower than in the SE LEP and England and Wales. **In 2011 the proportion of home workers on Romney Marsh was higher than in either of the other comparator areas.**

³ All business data from Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR), accessed at <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/business-register/uk-business/index.html>

Table 2.1 People working mainly at or from home, 2001 and 2011 Censuses

	Romney Marsh	SE LEP	England & Wales
2001 Census	8.0%	9.5%	9.2%
2011 Census	4.9%	3.7%	3.5%

Source: ONS, Census of Population, 2001 & 2011

Sectoral Strengths

- 2.9 Around half of all jobs on Romney Marsh are in either **wholesale and retail (1,700 jobs / 16%)**, the **health and social work sector (1,600 jobs / 15%)**, or the **accommodation and food sector (1,600 jobs / 15%)**⁴. The latter of these partly reflects the relative strength of the visitor economy in the local area:

The Romney Marsh Visitor Economy

Tourism has long played an important role in the Romney Marsh economy. Whilst data is not available for Romney Marsh as a whole, recent research highlights the significant role that tourism plays across the sub region. In Shepway, tourism contributes around £219.3 million to the economy and supports around 4,000 jobs across the district (2009 figures⁵); in Rother, tourism contributes around £272.0 million to the economy and supports around 6,400 jobs (2011 figures); and in Ashford, the sector contributes £236 million to the local economy and supports more than 3,800 jobs (2009 figures).

The Romney Marsh area benefits from a diverse range of visitor attractors including:

- Coastline – the Romney Marsh coastline is a significant draw for visitors. The coastline’s diverse offer includes: beach casting at Dungeness (the historic home of modern beach casting); commercial fishing at Dungeness and Rye (both major attractors of visitors); watersports along the coastline; wider recreational activities (e.g. renowned golf courses and attractive cycling environment) and ‘traditional’ seaside resorts (e.g. at Dymchurch and Camber)
- Inland natural environment – Romney Marsh’s natural environment is one of its greatest assets and has a strong visitor offer based around its nature and bird reserves and unspoilt countryside with its walking and cycling opportunities
- Historic towns and heritage attractions – Romney Marsh has a network of historic towns, Cinque Ports, and villages. The historic core of Rye is a nationally renowned visitor destination, whilst across Romney Marsh there are numerous heritage assets including the medieval churches, the Royal Military Canal and the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway.

It is important to note that Romney Marsh also benefits from proximity to numerous other significant visitor destinations. These include coastal resorts such as Hastings and Folkestone and historical landscapes such as 1066 Country.

⁴ Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES), accessed at <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

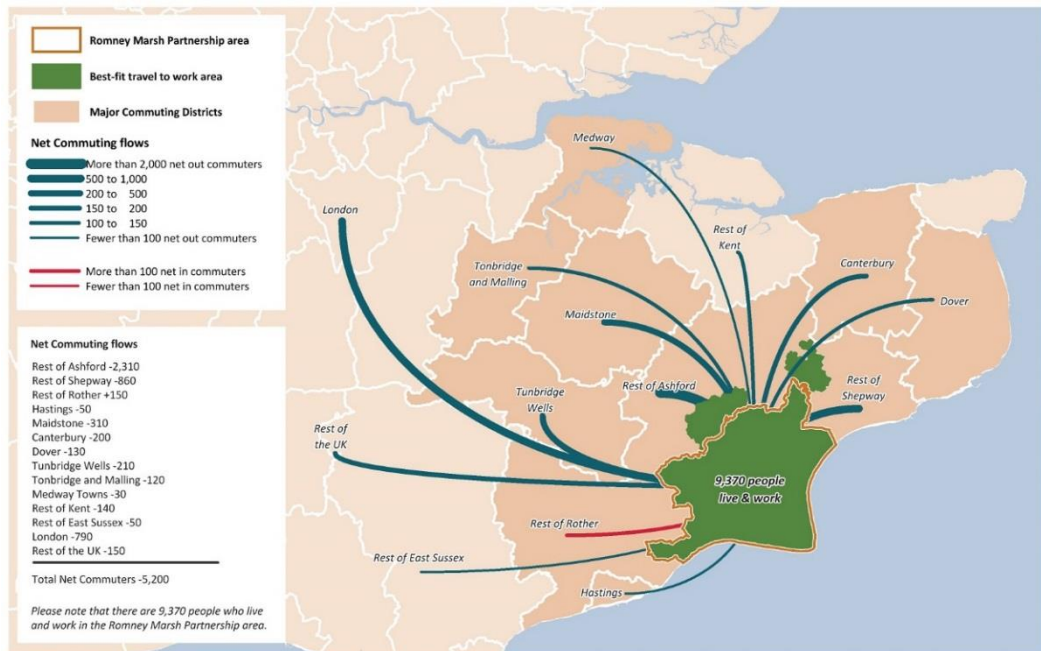
⁵ The Economic Impact of Tourism on the District of Shepway (2009), Visit Kent, accessed at http://www.visitkentbusiness.co.uk/library/Shepway_Tourism_Economic_Impact_Estimates_2009.pdf; The Economic Impact of Tourism Rother 2011, Tourism South East, accessed at http://212.104.140.187/media/pdf/7/p/2011_-_Rother_Tourism_Economic_Impact_Estimates.pdf; Economic Impact of Tourism on the Borough of Ashford (2009), Visit Kent, accessed at http://www.visitkentbusiness.co.uk/library/Ashford_Tourism_Economic_Impact_Estimates_2009.pdf

- 2.10 The presence of the Dungeness nuclear sites also continues to have a significant impact on the industrial make up of Romney Marsh. This is reflected in a **very high location quotient⁶ for energy** when compared to the SE LEP (LQ 22.2) and nationally (LQ 15.6). *The economic importance of nuclear activities to the Romney Marsh economy are considered in more detail later in this chapter.*
- 2.11 Whilst local level data on the economic value of agriculture and fisheries is not available, it is also important to note that these activities are also an important source of economic activity across the Romney Marsh area.

Romney Marsh: A net exporter of labour

- 2.12 **There are around 9,400 people who live and work on Romney Marsh**, with Rye, New Romney and Dungeness the major locations of employment⁷.
- 2.13 **Despite this, overall Romney Marsh is a net out-commuting area.** As highlighted by the map below, **Romney Marsh as a whole experiences a daily net out-commuting flow of over 5,200 people.** This includes:
- Around 9,300 people commuting out of Romney Marsh on a daily basis, with major destinations including Ashford and London
 - Around 4,100 people commuting into Romney Marsh on a daily basis, largely from other parts of Shepway, Rother and Ashford

Figure 2.2 Net commuting flows to and from Romney Marsh



Source: ONS, Census of Population, 2001⁸. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database rights 2014.

⁶ Location quotient (LQ) is a measure of concentration between two geographies. A LQ of 1.0 suggests that the area has the same concentration of jobs / businesses in a specific industry as a comparator geography. A LQ higher than 1.0 suggests a greater concentration than in the comparator area.

⁷ National Census – 2001. Travel to work statistics for the 2011 Census are not due for publication until 2015.

⁸ Travel to work data from the 2011 census of population is due for publication in 2014

The Romney Marsh Population

- 2.14 Key demographic and labour market data indicates that Romney Marsh is experiencing an ageing population that is getting older at a faster rate than seen in the SE LEP and England and Wales. Partly as a result of this, the area's economic activity rate and overall employment rate are lower than those seen elsewhere. The area is also characterised by below average skills levels. These and other indicators are summarised in Table 2.2 overleaf, which identifies the key socio-economic factors influencing Romney Marsh. These are discussed in further detail below.

Table 2.2 Summary of main indicators of the RMP area population.							
	Romney Marsh			SE LEP		England & Wales	
	2001	2011	% change	2011	% change	2011	% change
<i>Demography</i>							
No of residents (000s)	37.3	39.0	+4.6%	3,979.3	+8.0%	56,075.9	+7.8%
% 0-15 years	18.0%	15.8%	-12.1%	19.0%	-6.2%	18.9%	-6.4%
% working age (16-64)	60.0%	58.8%	-2.1%	62.8%	+0.6%	64.7%	+1.3%
% 65 and over	22.0%	25.4%	+15.5%	18.2%	+5.0%	16.4%	+3.0%
<i>Employment & Jobs</i>							
% economically active	62.5%	64.1%	+2.6%	70.4%	+3.7%	69.7%	+4.7%
% employed	58.0%	58.1%	+0.2%	63.4%	+0.9%	61.9%	+2.1%
% unemployed	2.6%	3.8%	+43.6%	4.0%	+44.9%	4.4%	+30.5%
% claimants	-	2.4%	-	2.5%	-	3.0%	-
<i>Qualifications, Occupations and Skills</i>							
% no qualifications	34.4%	29.0%	-15.8%	23.3%	-19.0%	22.7%	-21.1%
% level 4+	12.7%	19.4%	+53.4%	23.5%	+49.4%	27.2%	+72.8%
% managers & prof.	22.6%	24.3%	+7.3%	27.0%	+4.8%	28.2%	+7.2%
% semi-skilled / tech.	39.2%	37.7%	-4.0%	37.8%	-6.1%	35.6%	-8.1%
% low-level skills	38.1%	38.1%	-0.2%	35.2%	+3.7%	36.2%	+3.6%

Source: ONS, Census of Population, 2001 & 2011; Job Seekers' Allowance, January 2014.

Demography

- 2.15 In 2011, Romney Marsh was home to 39,000 people⁹. **Around one-in-four of the area's residents were aged 65 years or older.** This is exceptionally high, especially when compared with the SE LEP (18%) and national (16%) averages. A look at how the population has changed over the past 10 years indicates that **the Romney Marsh population is not only older but is ageing at a faster rate than is seen elsewhere.** To further exacerbate this, the proportion aged under 16 years has declined (-12%) at twice the rate seen elsewhere (-6% in both the SE LEP and nationally) over the past 10 years.

Employment and Jobs

- 2.16 Economic activity in the RMP area has seen a slight increase over the past 10 years. Nevertheless, when compared with that in SE LEP and nationally, **Romney Marsh's economic activity rate (64%) is considerably lower** (70% in both SE LEP and nationally). This is partly the result of an ageing population but may also be an indicator of other demographic forces.
- 2.17 Furthermore, **local resident employment on Romney Marsh (58%) is also lower than that seen elsewhere.** A look over the past 10 years shows that the proportion of residents in

⁹ All population and labour market data from 2011 Census.

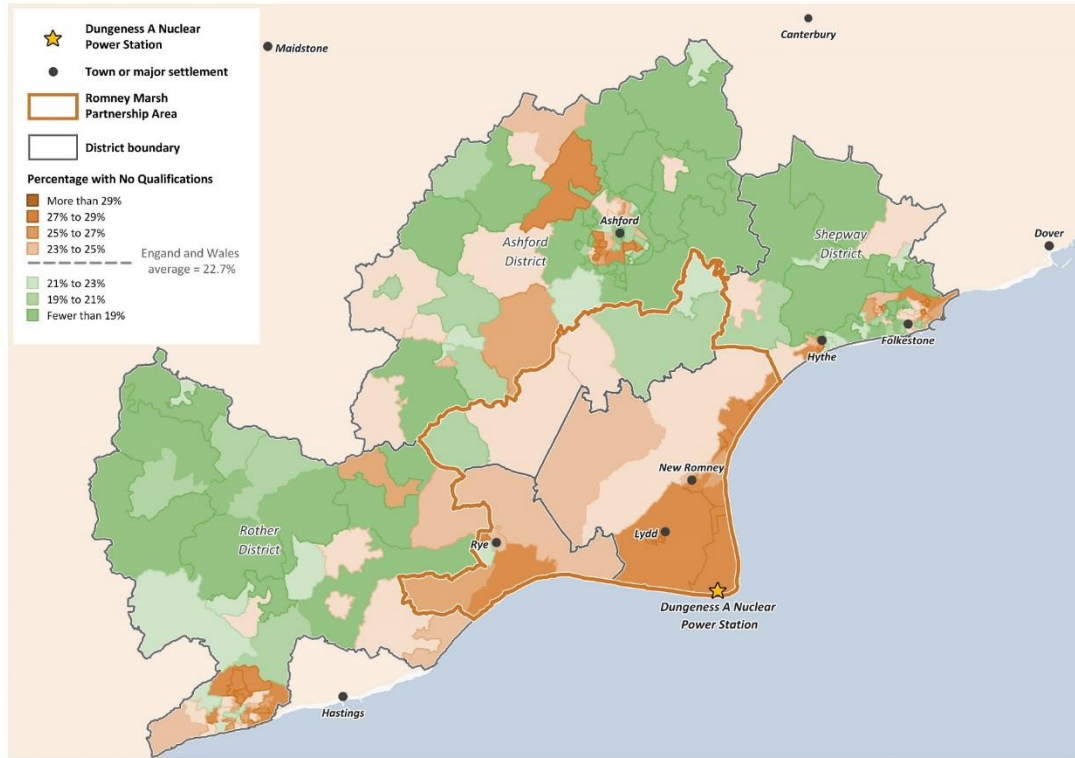
employment **has remained relatively flat on Romney Marsh** (+0.2%) compared to slight increases in the SE LEP (+1%) and nationally (+2%). **The unemployment rate on Romney Marsh is in line with rates experienced elsewhere.** This indicates that people on Romney Marsh tend to fall into economic inactivity, rather than unemployment, thus being lost from the labour market.

Qualifications, Occupations and Skills

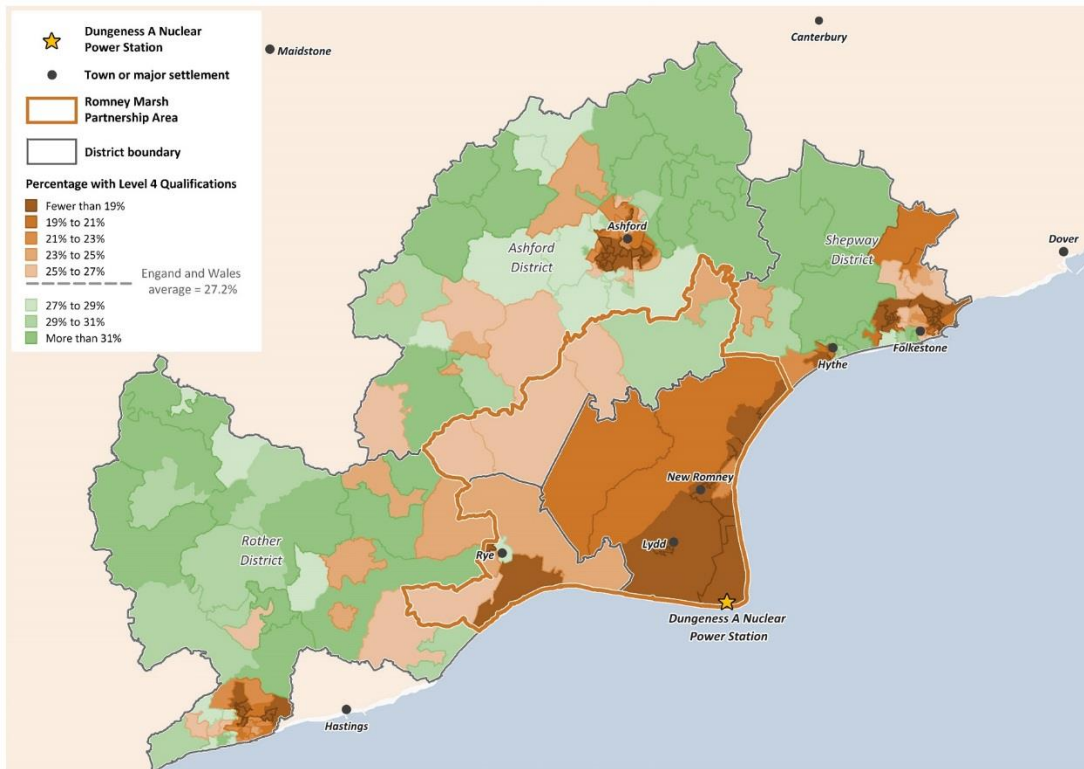
- 2.18 In 2011 **around a third of Romney Marsh's population did not possess any qualifications**, compared to 23% in both the SE LEP and nationally. Although the proportion with no qualifications declined across all areas, the rate of decline on Romney Marsh (-16%) was slower than that seen in SE LEP (-19%) and nationally (-21%). Furthermore, **the proportion with a degree of higher qualification (level 4+) on Romney Marsh (19%) was lower than that seen elsewhere** (24% in SE LEP and 27% nationally).
- 2.19 Whilst skills performance is weak across much of the Romney Marsh area, performance is stronger than average in a number of localities, including in rural Ashford (in closest proximity to Ashford town) and in parts of Rye. This is illustrated in the maps overleaf.

Figure 2.3 Skills Performance, 2011

Proportion of the Population with No Qualifications, 2011



Proportion of the Population with Level 4+ Qualifications (degree or higher), 2011



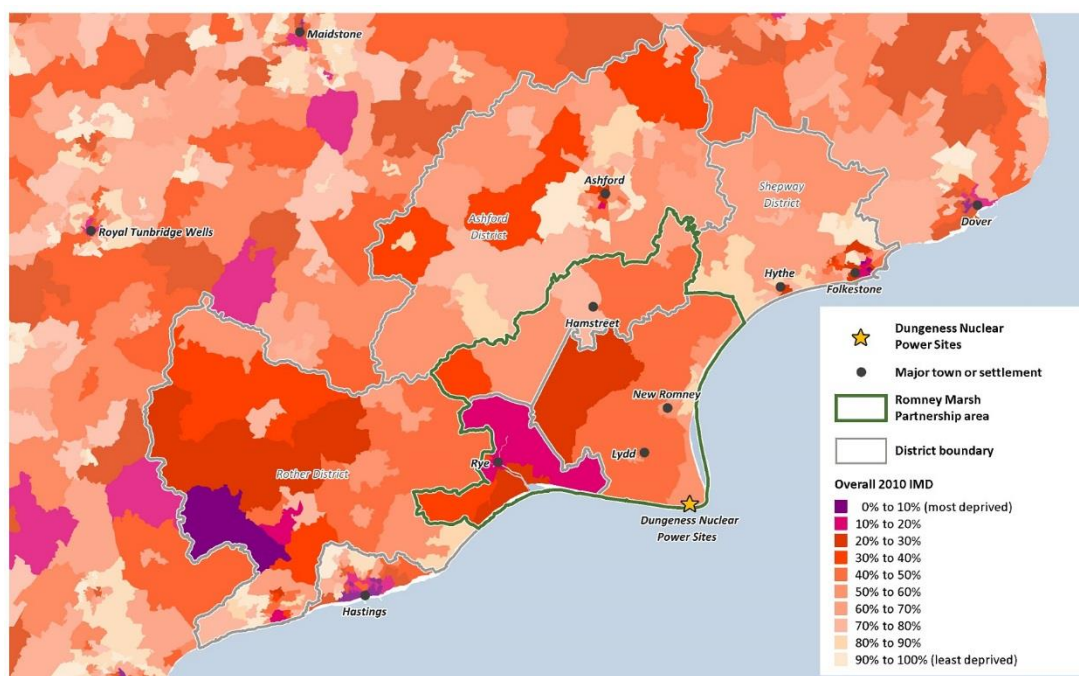
Source: ONS Census, 2011.

- 2.20 Around a quarter (**24%**) of employed residents on Romney Marsh are occupied as managers, directors and senior officials and/or professionals. This is 3-4% lower than in the SE LEP and nationally. On the other hand, the proportion of low-level and semi-skilled residents on Romney Marsh (**38%**) is higher than in SE LEP (**35%**) and nationally (**36%**).
- 2.21 Although the proportion of people employed as managers and professionals (+7%) increased at a rate similar to that seen nationally (+7%), the proportion of semi-skilled and low-level skilled residents did not experience a similar rate of change to that seen elsewhere. This suggests that over the past ten years Romney Marsh has seen a migration of high-skilled individuals into the area. This confirms the analysis of the travel-to-work data presented above, indicating that **the area experiences a net daily out-commuting flow**.

Quality of Life

- 2.22 The map below indicates Romney Marsh experiences some challenges in terms of quality of life for its residents. As illustrated by the concentration of darker shading on the map, deprivation on Romney Marsh is relatively high, especially when compared with other parts of Shepway, Ashford and Rother districts which are not included in the RMP area. A high relative deprivation is the result of a number of factors, including high deprivation in terms of education and skills, as well as barriers to housing (resulting from the area's isolation).

Figure 2.4 Overall index of multiple deprivation for Romney Marsh



Source: DCLG, Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2010. Contains Ordnance Survey Data © Crown copyright and database rights 2014.

The Place

- 2.23 Perhaps Romney Marsh's greatest asset is the strength of its natural and built environment, which make the area an attractive place to live, visit and work.

- 2.24 Romney Marsh offers a unique natural habitat and is seen as one of the most important environmental assets in the SE of England. Much of Romney Marsh provides a distinct 'Living Landscape' hosting productive farmland, unique habitats and areas of natural beauty.
- 2.25 In addition, Romney Marsh offers a strong network of locations:
- New Romney and Rye are the two major centres within the RMP area, both acting as hubs for commercial and educational activity. Other employment centres include Dungeness (nuclear power activities) and Rye Harbourside industrial estates
 - Rye itself is a historic town, with a nationally renowned visitor offer. Romney Marsh also has a number of other historic assets including medieval churches and the Royal Military Canal
 - The coastal area (including Dymchurch and Camber) provides a significant visitor offer including attractive beaches, a diverse range of recreational activities (including watersports, golf courses and fishing) and accommodation.
- 2.26 Despite this, the nature of the geography of the area also results in considerable challenges relating to accessibility, connectivity and flood risk. These impact significantly on local socio-economic conditions:
- Data from the latest census indicates that in 2011, around 15% of all households on Romney Marsh did not own a car. Although this is lower than the regional and national averages, the limited availability and low quality of public transportation both within Romney Marsh and linking it to wider areas (such as Ashford) may lead to certain groups (including youths and older people) experiencing relative isolation from skills provision and employment opportunities. Accessibility constraints also have the potential to negatively impact upon business and enterprise and upon the strength of the visitor economy.
 - There are also challenges in terms of digital connectivity. Broadband is nowadays regarded as vital to the future prospects of a place's economy. It is seen as not only a way of reducing the negative impacts of commuting through the promotion of home-working, but also as an enabler of enterprise away from traditional urban centres. Reflecting its largely rural characteristics, broadband access and speeds remain a key challenge for the Romney Marsh area.
 - Reflecting the coastal and low lying characteristics of Romney Marsh, a significant proportion of the area is classified as being at high risk of flood. The socio-economic implications of this are significant, with the risk of flood affecting the day to day lives of residents and businesses but also upon the willingness of the private sector to invest in the area.
- 2.27 A number of proposed improvements to infrastructure in the sub-region have the potential to impact upon the Romney Marsh area:
- A number of proposed transport improvements – this include improvements to the bus service between Romney Marsh and Ashford, and the proposed extension of HS1 services from Ashford to Hasting
 - Lydd airport expansion – the expansion of Lydd Airport has recently commenced. The plans include a 294m runway extension, and a new terminal building with capacity for up to 500,000 passengers annually
 - Broadband programmes – East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and Kent County Council (KCC) are working to enhance broadband provision within their respective boundaries:

- The *E-Sussex* and *Make Kent Quicker* broadband projects aspire to have 100% coverage of at least 2 Mbps by the end of their respective projects (2016 for *E-Sussex*, 2015 for *Make Kent Quicker*)
- In East Sussex, £34 million is being invested (by ESCC, BDUK and BT) so that by 2016 99% of all properties in the county will have access to higher-speed fibre broadband. In Kent, the £39.5 million *Make Kent Quicker* project aspires that by 2015 96% of all properties have access to higher broadband speeds
- Shepway District Council has also been working with Kent County Council (via KCC's community broadband fund) to support the availability of superfast commercial internet across the district's main employment sites
- Ashford Borough Council and Shepway District Council are co-operating to maximise opportunities for superfast broadband in their areas
- Flood defence schemes – the Environment Agency is an important partner in the local area and is investing in flood defence schemes on an ongoing basis. Most recently, significant investment has been required to repair storm damage in winter 2013/14. The Environment Agency is also leading on proposals for additional defences such as the Broomhill Sands Sea Defence Wall, which will help to protect a significant number of homes at Camber. Similar infrastructure is required at locations across Romney Marsh, including in Rye where flood defence investment is required in order for some development sites to proceed.

The Continuing Importance of Nuclear Activities at Dungeness

- 2.28 The nuclear power industry continues to play an integral role in the socio-economic characteristics of Romney Marsh – in terms of decommissioning activities at Dungeness A Site, ongoing energy generation at Dungeness B and also the potential for additional nuclear sector investment in the longer term.

Decommissioning Activities at Dungeness A Site

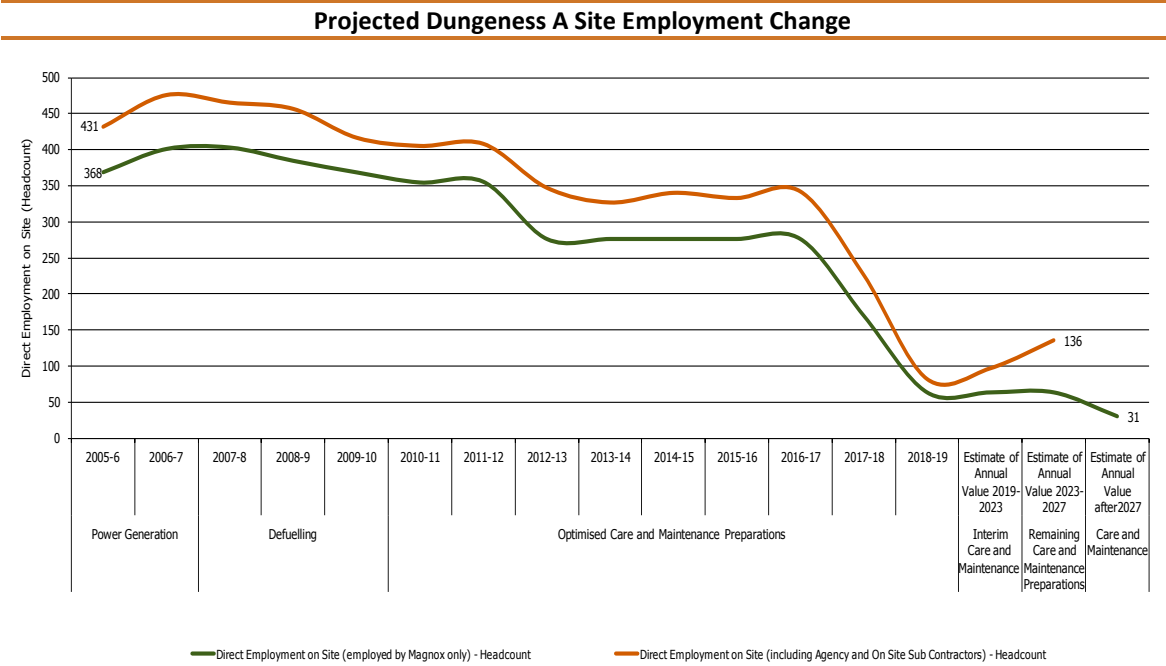
- 2.29 The original Romney Marsh Socio-Economic Action Plan was developed in response to the perceived threat of decommissioning activities at Dungeness A Site. Based upon a robust economic impact assessment of the decommissioning process, the report concluded that:

- The importance of Dungeness A and B to Romney Marsh should not be underestimated
- The decommissioning process will not produce an economic 'shock' for the area, but has produced the perception of a downturn
- The negative impacts will primarily be related to employment rather than through local supply chains
- The geography of impact will spread beyond Romney Marsh – impacts on Ashford, Folkestone and Hastings should not be overlooked
- It is unlikely that the existing sectors in the local economy will be able to create new opportunities to absorb job losses in the medium term
- 2016 -2018 will be a critical time period for the economic future of Romney Marsh.

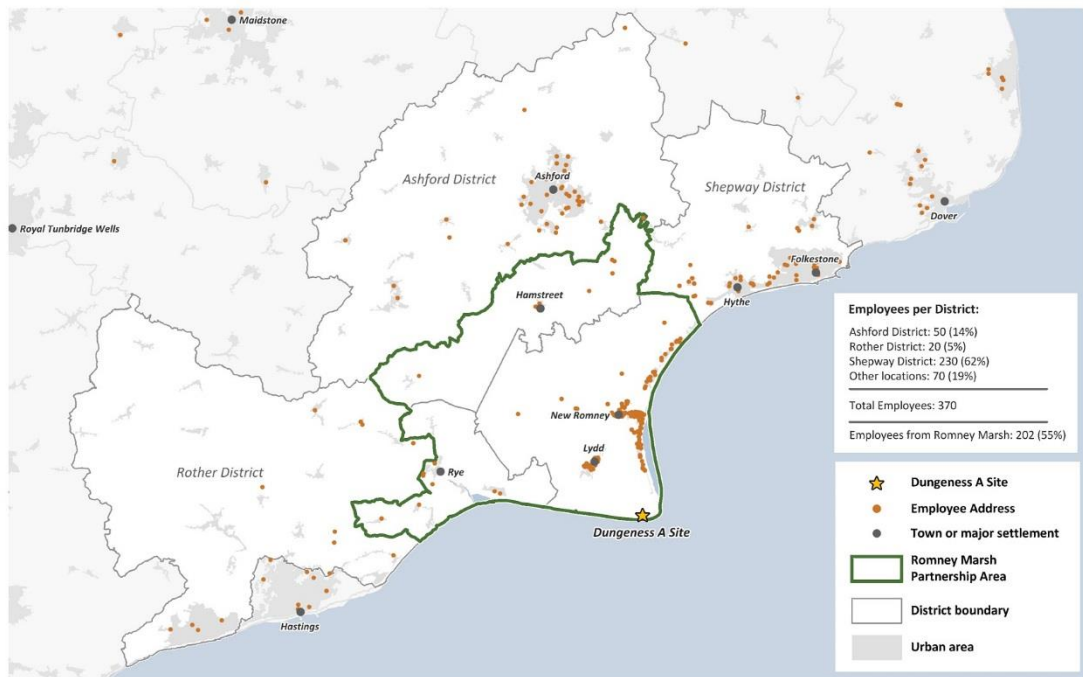
- 2.30 High level discussion with Magnox suggests that many of these conclusions remain unchanged. Whilst the overall decommissioning process at Dungeness A Site is currently under review¹⁰, 2016-2018 is still anticipated to be a period when on-site employment declines to minimal levels. The impacts of these employment changes will impact both on the RMP area but also on the wider sub-region, reflecting the geographical spread of Dungeness A Site employees. This is visualised in the following figures which show that around 200 Dungeness A Site employees live on Romney Marsh.

¹⁰ On 31 March 2014, the NDA announced that Cavendish Fluor Partnership (CFP) was the Preferred Bidder in the competition to select a new Parent Body for Magnox Ltd and Research Sites Restoration Limited (RSRL). Subject to successful conclusion of the Transition period on 1st September 2014, CFP will become the new Parent Body for Magnox. It is recommended that the Delivery Plan is reviewed at an appropriate future point in time to take account of the new Parent Body's plans.

Figure 2.5 The Impacts of decommissioning at Dungeness A Site



Location of Residents of Dungeness A Site Employees (2011 data)



Source: Regeneris Consulting. Contains Ordnance Survey Data © Crown copyright and database rights 2014.

Ongoing Activities at Dungeness B

2.31 Despite decommissioning activities at Dungeness A Site, the nuclear industry still has a significant and ongoing role to play in the Romney Marsh and wider sub-region.

- 2.32 Dungeness B continues to produce power and there is potential for generation to continue until 2028¹¹. The station employs more than 550 permanent staff (supplemented by a significant number of sub-contractors when short term maintenance projects take place) and has over 200 contract partners.

Possible Future Nuclear Sector Investments

- 2.33 In addition to ongoing power generation at Dungeness B, the longer term potential for future nuclear sector investments such as new nuclear generation continue to be supported while the government's new policy on Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) is expected during summer 2014.

Policy context

- 2.34 Since the publication of the first socio-economic action plan, there has been considerable change in the local and sub-regional policy context. This reflects numerous factors, not least the creation and subsequent expansion of the RMP, as well as the formation of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SE LEP).

Local context

- 2.35 At the Romney Marsh level, there have been considerable developments since the first socio-economic action was published. The addition of parts of Rother and Ashford districts to the RMP meant that Romney Marsh is now influenced by local policies in these two districts as well as in Shepway District.
- 2.36 In the Shepway District adopted core strategy, a key aim is to develop New Romney as the residential, business, service, retail and tourist centre for the Romney Marsh. It suggests that future development on Romney Marsh should seek to support the retention of existing businesses and the attraction of new employment opportunities through the provision of an adequate supply of employment land to meet future needs.
- 2.37 Rother District's proposed core strategy submission¹² highlights that the local economy in Rye is dominated by local tourism. This strategy's aspiration is to improve the economic and social well-being of Rye and the Rye Harbour area by supporting and promoting strategic transport links to the wider locality, as well as securing investment in local community facilities. Rye Town Council (as a relevant body under the powers afforded to them in the Localism Act) has applied to the district council to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan. If successful, the local community would determine general planning policies for the development and use of land within Rye Parish Ward, in general conformity with the district's development plan. In this instance, the district council would remain the planning authority.
- 2.38 Although it was published in 2008, Ashford Borough's adopted core strategy aspires to achieve a step change in areas where there are existing social and environmental problems. To achieve this, there is a focus on supporting new development and activity to help sustain local shops and services, and improving links to surrounding areas so that people have better access to a wider range of jobs and services. The Ashford part of the Romney Marsh is largely rural, and specific objectives for these areas include improving rural connectivity (transport and broadband) and supporting rural enterprise and job creation.

¹¹ <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/02/13/edf-britain-idUKL5N0LI1QE20140213>

¹² Published in 2011 and expected to be adopted in 2014 subject to the Inspector's report.

Sub-Regional / Regional context

- 2.39 At the sub-regional context, the SE LEP has recently submitted its strategic economic plan (SEP) and European structural and investment fund strategy (ESIFS) to government.
- 2.40 The SE LEP has been allocated £165 million of ESIF for the 2014-2020 period. This includes:
- A European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) allocation of around £83 million. This will be used to fund interventions across the LEP area which promote innovation and smart specialisation; accelerate business starts and growth; improve access to finance; and increase trade and attract investment
 - A European Social Fund (ESF) allocation of around £83 million for skills and employment interventions. The SE LEPs priorities for investment are employer-led infrastructure and enhanced information, advice and guidance; apprenticeships and other vocational provision; up-skilling the workforce and supporting SME growth; and, active inclusion, transition to work, and reducing youth unemployment
 - A European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) allocation of around £14.4 million. This funding is aimed at supporting jobs and growth in rural areas and can be spent on projects that will: build knowledge and skills; fund new and developing non-agricultural, micro, small and medium-sized rural businesses; fund small scale renewable and broadband investments in rural areas and support tourism activities.
- 2.41 The SE LEP has also recently submitted to government its strategic economic plan (SEP). This outlines the LEP's bid for its Local Growth Deal – a share of the £2bn national Single Local Growth Fund and the 'asks' of government to support the delivery of business and economic investment in new ways.
- 2.42 The SEP outlines a number of geographical 'growth deals' across the LEP area. Of relevance to Romney Marsh are the growth deals for Kent and Medway and East Sussex. These set out ambitions for significant investment over the next six years to unlock potential through increasing housing and commercial development; delivering transport and broadband infrastructure to unlock growth; backing business expansion through better access to finance and support; and delivering the skills that the local economy needs.
- 2.43 Key proposals of relevance to the Romney Marsh area include:
- Electrification of the rail line between Hastings and Ashford. There are also emerging proposals to extend HS1 from Ashford to Hastings. Such proposals will provide enhanced capacity and reliability, as well as improving links to London from across the sub-region.
 - Development of a new junction (Junction 10a) on the M20 at south east Ashford. Improved access will help to enable future growth in the south east part of Ashford, as well as providing a focus for the regeneration of Romney Marsh and the expansion at London Lydd Airport.
 - Improvements to broadband connectivity. The SEP suggests that in the medium-to-long term there will be around 4% of all properties in the LEP which will not have access to a superfast broadband connection. Across Kent and East Sussex, the two respective County Councils aim to have all properties served by speeds of at least 2Mbps.
 - Support to bring forward proposed developments at Rye Harbour and Camber Central Car Park.

Summary: Romney Marsh's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

2.44 Building upon the context described above, Romney Marsh's socio-economic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are summarised in the table below.

Table 2.3 SWOT analysis based on policy and socio-economic contexts

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An attractive place to live, visit and work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique natural habitat and unique environmental assets • A strong network of villages and towns with appeal to visitors and residents • The nuclear industry – an important provider of high skill, high value jobs • A strong visitor economy – based around historic towns and Cinque Ports such as Rye, the natural environment and a diverse recreational offer • High business density on Romney Marsh – employment generating potential? • Evidence of entrepreneurial culture, including a high self-employment rate and high levels of home working • The RMP – a strong partnership with significant momentum upon which to build. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited economic growth in recent years, with limited change in employment and business numbers • Economic reliance on the nuclear industry • An ageing population impacting upon the size of the local labour market and upon demand for services • Below average skills levels – implications for both local businesses and residents • Below average levels of economic activity and employment, with concentrations of unemployment around area's main settlements. • Transport and digital connectivity challenges leading to issues of economic and social isolation.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to Ashford, London and Europe – large economic and population catchments • Opportunities to strengthen the visitor economy based upon natural environment, historic settlements and recreation offer (e.g. watersports and sports tourism) • Opportunities to strengthen the marine sector through development of coastal and maritime facilities, including at Rye Harbour • Opportunities to explore new nuclear industry activities • Care sector – creating high quality care provision and associated employment opportunities • Population ageing – potential to tap into the experience and skills of older generations • Connectivity opportunities – high speed broadband, HS1 extension etc. • Labour market and growth opportunities relating to proposed development activity including Rye Harbour and Lydd Airport • New funding sources such as the Marsh Million and new European programmes provide an opportunity to support the delivery of RMP activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing decommissioning activities at Dungeness A and uncertainty about future nuclear activities leading to economic, social and community uncertainty • Population ageing – implications for service provision and quantum of employment locally • Skills levels and (anecdotally) aspiration challenges amongst younger age groups impacting on ability to participate in the labour market • Ongoing issues of physical isolation impacting on economic growth aspirations and on the ability of certain groups to participate in the labour market and community • Environmental challenges such as flooding impacting upon residents and businesses and constraining investment • The wider macro-economic context – continuing to impact upon the ability of businesses to create jobs and upon the ability of start-ups to secure the necessary support and finance.

3. Achievements to Date

3.1 The Romney Marsh Socio-Economic Action Plan was published in 2011, and in the intervening period partners have achieved a number of notable successes. Together, these successes have provided a strong platform upon which this Delivery Plan aims to build and also ensure that there is already strong momentum in the local area in terms of delivery activity.

3.2 A number of the most important achievements of the past few years are summarised briefly below.

Formation and Extension of the RMP

3.3 The RMP was established in 2012 to oversee the delivery of the Romney Marsh Socio-Economic Plan.

3.4 The RMP has enjoyed a strong start. It has already achieved strong buy in from key stakeholders and partner organisations across the Romney Marsh Area. It has also already demonstrated flexibility in pursuit of its objectives. Originally set up to cover just the Shepway parts of Romney Marsh, the RMP was quickly extended to include parts of Ashford and Rother to cover a more functional economic area.

3.5 The RMP provides a strong mechanism around which to base future socio-economic strategy and delivery across Romney Marsh

Appointment of RMP Coordinator

3.6 The RMP has recently appointed its first position – the RMP Coordinator. This represents a considerable achievement and is significant in providing the RMP with a ring-fenced resource for the first time. The coordinator thus represents a valuable asset and will be instrumental in taking forward the contents of this Delivery Plan and related activities.

Establishment of the Marsh Million

3.7 One of the greatest achievements to date has been the creation of the Marsh Million investment fund. The fund is targeted at helping businesses to increase production and help safeguard or create jobs by investing in plant machinery, buildings, equipment and marketing activities.

3.8 The scheme consists of:

- a business loan scheme worth around £700,000, offering interest-free loans of up to £10,000 to small businesses located on Romney Marsh
- an economic projects scheme worth around £300,000, offering grant support to projects of more general economic interest.

3.9 The Marsh Million must be spent by 2017, with all loans repaid within 5 years. Given wider constraints on funding for local economic development, the fund clearly provides a significant opportunity for the area to pursue its socio-economic objectives.

Existing Delivery and Interventions

- 3.10 Aside from the creation of the RMP, the original Romney Marsh Socio-Economic Action Plan proposed a number of areas for intervention. Strong progress is already being made across the RMP area in relation to a number of these.
- 3.11 Perhaps the strongest example of this is the **New Romney Business Incubation Centre**. This project is underway and is due to launch in Spring 2014 having accessed funding from Shepway DC, Kent CC and Magnox. The centre will provide incubator space for 30 businesses at the Romney Resource Centre (RRC) over a pilot period.
- 3.12 In addition, there are a number of **apprenticeship and employability interventions** underway across the RMP area:
- As part of its decommissioning activities, Magnox Limited is delivering internal training programmes to upskill and reskill employees
 - The Marsh Academy Community Hub (MACH) opened in 2013 and provides a new facility aimed at improving the employability of students. The Romney Resource Centre, the Marsh Academy and Shepway District Council are working collaboratively on a number of projects. These include Shepway District Council's own scheme, the Marsh Academy apprentice scheme and also RRC's activity in sign-posting apprenticeships. RRC is also undertaking some jobs brokerage activity
 - Significantly, the extended RMP area has also offered the potential to link into employability / training delivery across a much larger area. This is particularly the case in Rother:
 - The Rye Partnership is working with a number of partners (such as Job Centre Plus (JCP) and Sussex Coast College Hastings) to deliver employability interventions. These include a successful rural employability project being delivered across Rye, Camber and Icklesham parish; and non-accredited adult learning courses in a variety of subjects targeted at offering a pathway back into education.
 - More generally, it is important to note that the extended RMP area draws in the activities of a number of additional education / training providers, including the Sussex Coastal College Hastings, the Rye Studio School and Rye College (where many young people from Lydd attend)
 - Crucially there is already evidence of strong partnership working across the extended RMP area. The Rye Partnership is delivering its activity in a number of locations including at the Tilling Green Community Centre in Rye and in Lydd and has also subcontracted delivery in New Romney to the RRC. The Partnership has also facilitated introductions between the MACH and the Sussex Coastal College Hastings.
- 3.13 RMP work has also led to the introduction of vitally needed additional early and late bus services and infrastructure between New Romney and Ashford, and the RMP has also been able to offer strategic support to a number of economic proposals developed by third parties.
- 3.14 Rother, Shepway and Natural England are working together on a Sustainable Access Strategy which is an obligation arising from the Local Plan process. The aim of the strategy is to manage development and recreational pressure resulting from the visitor economy on Romney Marsh through stakeholder partnerships.

- 3.15 Together, this delivery progress highlights the willingness of the key partners on Romney Marsh to work together to improve local socio-economic conditions and together provide further strength to the foundations of this Delivery Plan.
- 3.16 More detail on relevant projects /interventions currently being delivered locally is included in Chapter 5.**

4. Framework for Delivery

- 4.1 This chapter summarises the overall framework for our Delivery Plan, focusing on the overarching principles which will inform all our activities and the specific area of focus and objectives which will underpin project development and delivery.

Overarching Principles

Recognising and taking advantage of functionality of place

- 4.2 It is important that all our activities recognise the functionality of place; recognising that economic and social flows are not constrained within pre-established boundaries. The RMP has already acknowledged this in extending its geography to cover a wider area. It is important that the RMP continues to be flexible in the future, to enable effective delivery both at the local level on Romney Marsh, but also across wider (sub-regional) geographies:

- The individuality of locations on Romney Marsh – although Romney Marsh needs a more recognisable identity, it is important that locations within the area are also encouraged to capitalise upon their own unique identities, ultimately generating more interest and value. For instance:

- New Romney and Rye are the two major centres within the RMP area, both acting as hubs for commercial and educational activity
- Rye itself is a historic town, with a nationally renowned visitor offer
- Lydd offers a historic core as well as proximity to nature reserves that could be capitalised upon. The proposed airport expansion at Lydd has the potential to support additional commercial activity across Romney Marsh and the surrounding area.
- The coastal area (including Dymchurch and Camber) provides a significant visitor offer including attractive beaches, a diverse range of recreational activities (including watersports, fishing, cycling and golf courses) and accommodation
- Much of Romney Marsh provides a distinct 'Living Landscape' hosting productive farmland, unique habitats and areas of natural beauty.

- The importance of working in partnership across wider geographies – Romney Marsh has strong socio-economic relationships with the wider sub-region. Folkestone, Ashford and Hastings are particularly significant in terms of the jobs/ commercial, social and community facilities that they provide. It is important that partners acknowledge that success in other areas (e.g the creation of new jobs and housing) has the potential to drive improvement on Romney Marsh. Likewise, it is important that, where relevant, the RMP is flexible enough to work in partnerships across wider areas to achieve critical mass in accessing opportunities.

An inclusive Romney Marsh community

- 4.3 As highlighted in Chapter 2, Romney Marsh has a number of distinct socio-economic characteristics which influence the wealth and wellbeing of its residents. These vary both by group and by geography:

- Demographic challenges – Romney Marsh is characterised by relatively low skills levels and levels of economic activity amongst younger age groups, and also by a relatively elderly population
- Locational challenges – taken as a whole, Romney Marsh is not a deprived location. Despite this, significant socio-economic challenges exist at certain localities, as demonstrated by clusters of unemployment and deprivation in and around many of the villages and towns in the area.

4.4 It is important that the delivery of this strategy responds to the needs of all of these groups, ensuring that any opportunities that emerge help to develop a more inclusive community across Romney Marsh.

Acknowledging the ongoing importance of the nuclear industry to Romney Marsh

4.5 The nuclear industry continues to play an important role both for Romney Marsh and the wider sub-region. In the short term, employment at Dungeness A will decline sharply from 2016 to 2018 as part of ongoing decommissioning. However, Dungeness B continues to produce power with potential for generation to continue until 2028¹³. Longer term ambitions relating to preserving nuclear activities including the potential for new nuclear generation continue to be supported, and a new government policy on MRWS is expected in summer 2014. .

4.6 Reflecting this, the nuclear sector will continue to impact significantly on the socio-economic characteristics of Romney Marsh for some time to come. It is important that the RMP continues to work with the sector and associated stakeholders to understand and respond to opportunities and threats as and when they emerge.

A concerted approach to developing a coherent and value adding Romney Marsh brand

4.7 Although Romney Marsh has a number of definitive selling points and distinctive locations, the area continues to suffer from weak external perceptions and recognition. A critical underlying principle of this plan is ensuring that people outside the area are more aware of the Romney Marsh and understand exactly what the area has to offer.

4.8 As part of this, it is important that clear and consistent messages are communicated with regards to the area. Achieving consistency when referring to both challenges and opportunities will be critical in ensuring that the area is able to generate the investment and lever the resources needed to support delivery activity.

Focusing on effective and efficient delivery of projects and interventions which are truly value adding

4.9 The RMP has had a strong start with a number of notable successes. It is important that this momentum is continued, with a focus on the effective and efficient delivery of its plans and proposals. In doing so, the RMP should focus its attentions on interventions where there is a proven need, clear additionality (i.e. avoiding duplication) and the potential to achieve strong returns in terms of impacts and outcomes for the area and its communities.

¹³ <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/02/13/edf-britain-idUKL5N0LI1QE20140213>

- 4.10 That said, the RMP must be realistic with its expectations. It takes time to bring about tangible and sustainable change in an area and achieving overarching objectives will require long term vision. The RMP must also be realistic about its capacity to deliver, where necessary working in wider partnerships and drawing on additional resources to achieve its goals.

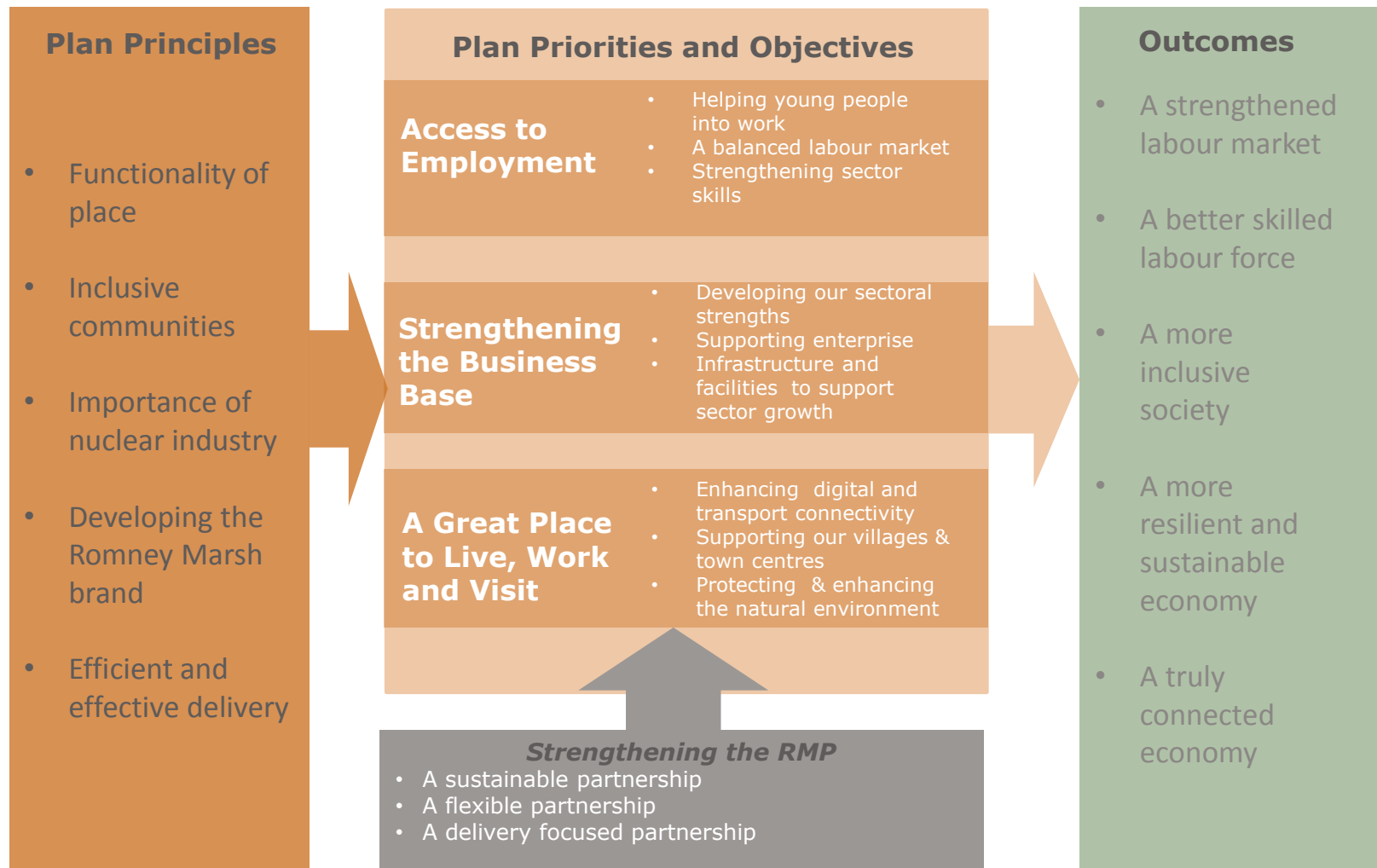
Priority Areas for Interventions

- 4.11 We have identified 3 priority areas for intervention over the course of this Delivery Plan. These have been designed to build strongly upon those identified in the original Romney Marsh Socio-Economic Plan, but also reflect the outcomes of the socio-economic analysis (Chapter 2) and our consultation with RMP members:
- **Access to Employment** – supporting local people throughout the labour market to maximise their skills potential and access employment
 - **Strengthening the business base** – helping Romney Marsh to evolve into a more diverse and resilient economy by supporting existing businesses and encouraging enterprise
 - **Ensuring that Romney Marsh remains a great place to live, work and visit** – ensuring that Romney Marsh develops the facilities, environment and connectivity which makes the area attractive to residents, businesses and visitors alike.

Plan Framework

- 4.12 Reflecting these principles and priorities, the overall framework for our Delivery Plan is illustrated overleaf.
- 4.13 Specific areas for intervention and delivery mechanisms are then considered in more detail in the following chapters.

Figure 4.1 Romney Marsh Delivery Plan Framework



5. Areas for Intervention

- 5.1 This chapter sets out the rationale underpinning each of the three priority areas, specific objectives and potential areas for intervention.
- 5.2 Areas for interventions have been identified by RMP members and include:
- Short term initiatives – initiatives which are already relatively well worked up and which could potentially begin delivery in the short term pending prioritisation and full development work
 - Longer term initiatives – initiatives which are less well worked up and which require further development before they can be considered for future delivery. Further development work should include detailed business planning and feasibility work to confirm project need, firm up delivery activities and mechanisms, establish costs and project impacts.
- 5.3 Given the resources available to it and its partner organisations, the RMP must be realistic about the number of projects and interventions that it can take forward at any one time. This in mind, project prioritisation will be an important early step in taking the plan forward. Regeneris has undertaken an initial process of project prioritisation based upon project information provided by partners. Projects which have been identified as a potential immediate priority are flagged up in the intervention tables.
- 5.4 ***However, it is important to note that all interventions require further development work by the RMP and partner organisations. This includes a collaborative process of project review and prioritisation, building upon the initial work completed by Regeneris. More information on this – including guidance on how project prioritisation should be undertaken – is provided in the next chapter.***

Priority Area 1: Access to Employment

- 5.5 Romney Marsh continues to experience a number of employment challenges. On the labour demand side, it is anticipated that there will be a sharp reduction in employment levels at Dungeness A Site in 2016. More generally across the sub-region, the recovery from the economic downturn continues to be relatively slow in terms of the scale and nature of employment generation. On the supply side, the area continues to experience challenges in terms of the skills levels of its residents and in terms of levels of economic participation amongst certain groups.
- 5.6 With these considerations in mind, supporting local employment remains an important area of focus for the RMP over the 2014-2017 period.

Objectives

- 5.7 The RMP will support local people throughout the labour market to maximise their skills potential and access employment. In particular it will work towards:
- Developing the labour market, so that people of all ages have opportunities to improve and make full use of their skills
 - Strengthening skills to support growth in key sectors
 - Ensuring that young people have access to employment, work experience or other meaningful activity which will increase their employability.
 - Improving public and community transport to ensure that people can access opportunities

Rationale for Intervention

5.8 Chapter 2 highlighted a number of significant challenges for the Romney Marsh area in terms of skills and employment. These include:

- **Comparatively low skills levels** – a relatively high proportion (29%) of Romney Marsh residents do not possess any qualifications and a lower than average proportion of residents (19%) hold Level 4 (degree level) or higher qualifications¹⁴. Whilst performance has improved over the past decade continued underperformance in terms of skills has multiple implications, including for the employment potential (and hence economic wellbeing) of residents and the ability of local businesses to recruit appropriate skills
- **Comparatively low economic activity rates** – levels of economic activity across Romney Marsh are 64% compared to 70% nationally¹⁵. Whilst this partly reflects the presence of an older than average population, it is significant in terms of implications for the relative size of the local labour market
- **Specific challenges for younger and older age groups** – specific challenges have been identified for younger age groups in and around Romney Marsh, with anecdotal evidence suggesting lack of aspiration being a contributing factor. It is also important to ensure that Romney Marsh's older age groups are viewed as a strong resource for the area, with a focus on helping residents to remain active in the skills and employment markets, and also exploring other potential opportunities including the development of the voluntary sector and intergenerational support for younger age groups
- **Decommissioning at Dungeness A** – decommissioning activities at Dungeness A present a considerable challenge in terms of employment and skills. At the simplest level, it is anticipated that employment at Dungeness A Site will decline to minimal levels in the 2016-2018 period. Whilst some employees will be able to move to other nuclear sites and some will be nearing retirement age, there will undoubtedly be some employees who will be seeking new employment opportunities. Ensuring that these employees are given the opportunity to make the most of their skills assets (or reskill where necessary) will be important in preventing a sharp labour market shock in the local area.

Existing Activity and Opportunities to Build Upon

5.9 There are a number of existing activities and opportunities which the RMP can look to build upon in relation to supporting local employment:

- **Magnox Activities** – as part of its decommissioning activities, Magnox Limited is delivering internal training programmes to upskill and reskill employees. This includes training for power station employees to secure relevant and employer desirable qualifications
- **The Marsh Academy Community Hub (MACH)** – the MACH opened in 2013 and provides a new facility aimed at improving the employability of students. The MACH provides a dual service which will help students prepare for employment and self-employment by engaging with local business and enterprise to develop a framework which addresses not just the needs of students at the Marsh Academy, but the needs of local employability
- **Momentum from Marsh Academy and Romney Resource Centre (RRC)** – a number of apprenticeship interventions are already underway. These include Shepway District

¹⁴ Skills data from 2011 Census, accessed at <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

¹⁵ Labour market data from 2011 Census, accessed at <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

Council's own scheme, the Marsh Academy apprentice scheme and also RRC's activity in sign-posting apprenticeships. RRC is also undertaking some jobs brokerage activity, for example, with EDF for the current Dungeness B maintenance outage



- **Opportunities to link into activities across wider areas** – the extended Romney Marsh Area offers the potential for the RMP to consider wider skills and activities being delivered across wider areas in Ashford and Rother and the opportunity to link in with new partners, such as the Sussex Coastal College and the Tilling Green Community Centre. Existing delivery of relevance includes:
 - Both RRC and The Rye Partnership in partnership with the JCP, Sussex Coast College Hastings and a number of other agencies have been running a successful rural employability project since 2013.
 - The Rye Partnership also runs non-accredited adult learning courses in a variety of subjects, as a way of offering a pathway back into education. The Partnership holds the Sussex Coast College contracts for this and RRC are one of the contractors for delivery across New Romney, Lydd and through into Rye and the rural surrounds.

The RMP should explore the opportunity for knowledge sharing and where appropriate the roll out of delivery across wider areas

- **New round of European Funding** – examples being the new SE LEP European programme offering significant potential funding opportunities for skills and employment projects, with up to £83m of ESF funding allocated across the LEP area, and the European Fisheries Fund (EFF). Identifying the nature of the opportunity is a crucial first step for the RMP and is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.



Intervention Pipeline

- 5.10 Partners have identified a number of potential interventions targeted at tackling skills and employment challenges across Romney Marsh. These are summarised in the table below.


Table 5.1 Supporting Local Employment: Intervention Pipeline  = potential priority					
Project Name	Description	Lead Organisation and Partners	Timescales and Status	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
DEVELOPING A BALANCED LABOUR MARKET, WHERE PEOPLE OF ALL AGES HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE AND MAKE FULL USE OF THEIR SKILLS					
 Skills for Decommissioning	As part of its decommissioning activities, Magnox Limited is delivering internal training programmes to upskill and reskill employees. This activity is reaching a critical juncture with a large decline in employment at Dungeness A Site anticipated in 2016-18. The RMP should continue to work with Magnox Ltd to identify any complementary activities which might be beneficial in supporting the needs of employees. This might include signposting to training activities or linking employees into employability or jobs brokerage schemes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magnox Ltd • EDF • Romney Resource Centre • Education providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term – 2014-2016 • Further project development required 	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magnox Ltd • ESF
Intergenerational Project	An intergenerational project working with older people (aged 55-70) and young people (aged 15-18) to allow people from differing social and economic backgrounds to interact and develop a marketable project model (e.g. refurbishing furniture in a Shabby Chic style). The project aims to engage vulnerable young people with people of an age who have transferable skills and want to share them. It will reduce social isolation and will lead to supporting employment gaps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Romney Day Centre • The Marsh Academy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term – 2014 to 2026. • Business case developed 	Around £75,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magnox Socio-Economic Fund¹⁶ • Marsh Million • ESF • Awards for All • Kent Community Foundation

¹⁶ The nature of the Magnox Socio-Economic Fund is subject to change pending the completion of Parent Body Organisation negotiations. It is recommended that the Delivery Plan is reviewed at an appropriate future point in time to take account of the new Parent Body's plans.


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<p>Investing in Young People</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An extension of the current NEET Programme being delivered by RRC, which provides young people aged 16 - 25, who face challenging circumstances and lacking opportunities, with a one-stop facility for education, advice, support, mentoring, safety and sanctuary. RRC proposes that this project be run over a 5 year period to allow for a proper impact study to be carried out that would hopefully lead to further funding. The project can be broken into four key areas: Capital investment into the current (or new) building and facilities Investment in Services i.e. Counselling services Investment in qualifications Investment in staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Romney Resource Centre Kent CC Shepway DC Social Services/ Agencies Education Funding Agency Magnox Ltd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short term – 2014 to 2019 Business case developed 	<p>£345,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kent CC Magnox Socio-Economic Fund ESF
<p>Rural Employability Project</p> 	<p>Providing employability support to unemployed adults and support to businesses to assist them in finding staff and apprentices. Activities will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bringing work club services and employability training to these rural locations; Identifying barriers to employment and work with partners to address needs; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rye Partnership Romney Resource Centre JCP Sussex Coast College Hastings Chambers of Commerce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short term – 2014-2017 Outline business case developed 	<p>£200,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JCP Magnox Socio-Economic Fund ESF

Romney Marsh Partnership Delivery Plan, 2014-2017

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing dyslexia screening and specialist support; • Working with businesses to identify local skills gaps; • Developing work experience opportunities; • Supporting businesses to develop apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities; • Setting up a guaranteed interview scheme 				
ENSURING YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT, WORK EXPERIENCE OR OTHER MEANINGFUL ACTIVITY TO INCREASE EMPLOYABILITY					
<p>Apprenticeships on Romney Marsh</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An apprenticeship scheme for young people on the Romney Marsh, ensuring that the courses are relevant to the needs of the area. The Marsh Academy will become a provider of apprenticeships and will enable a local onsite learning facility at the Marsh Academy Community Hub (MACH). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Marsh Academy • Shepway DC • Magnox Ltd • EDF • Sussex Coast College • RRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term – 2014 to 2017. • In delivery, further support required 	£43,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magnox Socio-Economic Fund • Marsh Million • Marsh Academy • ESF
Apprenticeship Incentives for SME's	Funding incentives to be devised to encourage SME's to take up the offer of the apprenticeship Scheme. Currently SDC offer £1,500 as a contribution to the salary of an apprentice, which actually costs anything from 16 - 18 £5,226pa to £7,254 18 - 20 and £12,305 for those aged 21+.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepway DC • Ashford BC and Rother DC • Magnox Ltd • RRC • MACH • East Sussex & Kent CC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer Term • Further project development required 	£50,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent CC • Marsh Million • ESF
Romney Marsh Careers and Skills Service	A newly formed Romney Marsh Careers and Skills Service will provide a face-to-face information intervention for youngsters aged 12+ rather than providing advice via a phone line or website. There is a lack of accessible careers information, which is a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Romney Resource Centre • Magnox Ltd • EDF • Rye Partnership • Shepway DC, Ashford BC and Rother DC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer term • Further project development required 	£250,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent CC • ESF • Other government funding

Romney Marsh Partnership Delivery Plan, 2014-2017

	significant barrier to social mobility, with advice much more widely available to wealthy, well-connected youngsters. Those youngsters who live in workless homes, often don't have the 'soft network' contact via family and friends to the world of work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent and East Sussex CC • MACH 			
STRENGTHENING SKILLS TO SUPPORT GROWTH IN KEY SECTORS					
<p>Skills development and career pathways</p> 	Improving links between employers and education by supporting and encouraging work experience, apprenticeships, work readiness training, etc. - expanding on the 'Own Grown' approach through locally managed initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marsh Academy • Schools • FE Colleges • Voluntary Sector • Magnox Ltd & EDF • Other businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term – 2014 to 2020. • In delivery; further support require 	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESF • LEADER • Private Sector • Third Sector
Romney Marsh Community Education Hub	To consolidate RRC's existing educational, training and employment support service in one central location, to provide a Community Education Hub in Mountfield Road, New Romney to raise the aspirations and achievements of residents and businesses across the RMP area through learning and training. There would be a mix of short courses, to Saturday courses aimed at beginners, enthusiasts and families, together with vocational qualification courses that progress from Level 2 to Level 5 and beyond.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Romney Resource Centre • Shepway DC • Ashford BC • Kent CC • Rye Partnership • East Sussex CC • Magnox Ltd • MACH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer term • Further project development required 	£1m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDA • Kent County Council • ESF • LEADER
Infrastructure Development Jobs Brokerage	Project to prepare 'job-ready' people with appropriate skills and CVs for developers in infrastructure projects across Romney Marsh and the wider sub-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepway DC • Ashford BC • Kent CC • Rye Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer term • Further project 	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent and East Sussex CCs • Magnox Socio-Economic Fund

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	region e.g. Lydd Airport expansion, ongoing works at Dungeness B, Mountfield Rd New Romney; Shorncliffe redevelopment in Folkestone; Ashford Retail Outlet Centre expansion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Sussex CC • Magnox Ltd • MACH • Romney Resource Centre • Private sector – developers / businesses 	development required		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESF
Cultural sector development	Development of the local skills base in the cultural / creative sectors to encourage entrepreneurship and develop the sector as an economic driver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rother DC • The School, Rye • FE Colleges • Ashford BC • Shepway DC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer term • Further development required 	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESF • LEADER • Private Sector • Third Sector

Priority Area 2: Strengthening Our Business Base

- 5.12 The original Romney Marsh Socio-Economic Action Plan highlighted the dominant role that the nuclear power sector plays in the economy of Romney Marsh and the wider sub-region. Whilst this has provided strong benefits in terms of employment and associated wealth generation over a period of decades, there are implications for the long term economic resilience of the area as highlighted by the projected impact of decommissioning activities at Dungeness A Site. That said, there is evidence of new economic opportunities emerging in the area: potential opportunities have been identified to further develop strengths in sectors such as the visitor economy and the maritime sector, whilst there is evidence that the area has some momentum in terms of enterprise performance.
- 5.13 Continuing to build upon these opportunities will be important in the coming years, particularly given the context of decommissioning timescales at Dungeness A Site and ongoing challenges for enterprise and SMEs relating to the wider economic context.

Objectives

- 5.14 The RMP will focus on helping Romney Marsh to evolve into a more diverse and resilient economy by supporting existing businesses and encouraging enterprise. There will be a particular focus on:
- Developing a more diverse economy by supporting growth in our current and emerging sectors
 - Providing the environment in which entrepreneurship and enterprise is encouraged and can flourish
 - Developing strong business and employment infrastructure to support sector growth.

Rationale for Intervention

- 5.15 Chapter 2 highlighted a number of significant challenges for the Romney Marsh area in terms of business and enterprise. These include:
- **Decommissioning at Dungeness A Site** – over recent decades, the nuclear sector has played a dominant role on the Romney Marsh economy. The process of decommissioning at Dungeness A has highlighted that this represents a significant threat to the area in terms of levels of employment dependence and hence economic and social well-being of local communities. Developing a more diverse and resilient economy is thus a necessary and critical objective
 - **Challenges for business and enterprise** – there are some signs that Romney Marsh is performing comparatively well in terms of enterprise. The area has a relatively high business density and strong levels of self-employment and home working. However, both existing and new enterprise continue to face significant challenges in surviving and growing. These include challenges which affect business across the country (e.g. access to finance and appropriate support) but also more local issues, such as premises, connectivity and workforce challenges. Small businesses are integral to the Romney Marsh economy and as such developing the right conditions for these to prosper will be important in developing a stronger economy
 - **Opportunities to develop new sector strengths** – opportunities have been identified to secure growth in sectors such as the visitor economy and the marine sector. These are sectors where existing critical mass exists but where full economic potential is not currently

being maximised. In seeking to support these sectors, it will be important to support the provision of appropriate sector infrastructure. This ranges from functional and attractive employment premises to improved facilities to attract more visitors to the local area.




Existing Activity and Opportunities

5.16 There are a number of existing activities and opportunities which the RMP can look to build upon in relation to supporting local enterprise and sector development:

- **The Marsh Million**– as identified in Chapter 3, the establishment of the Marsh Million provides a significant opportunity for the area to pursue its socio-economic objectives over the period to 2016. The fund consists of a business loan scheme worth around £700,000 (offering interest-free loans of up to £10,000 to small businesses located on Romney Marsh) and an economic projects scheme worth around £300,000 (offering grant support to projects of more general economic interest).
- **Wider support for enterprise** – there are also a number of other existing enterprise activities to build upon in the coming years. The New Romney Business Incubation Centre is due to launch in Spring 2014 and will provide incubator space for 30 businesses. Enterprise First is also providing support and advice to start-ups, whilst the Romney Resource Centre and the MACH are working to bridge the gap between young people and local businesses, and ensure that the skills needs of local businesses are understood.
- **Developments in the visitor economy** – some progress has been made towards developing the strength of the visitor economy in recent years. The concept of a Romney Marsh Visitor Brand is being explored in light of reduced investment in Discover Folkestone Hythe & Romney Marsh (part of Visit Kent). A number of other potential projects to improve visitor facilities are also being explored including improvements to the Romney Marsh Visitor Centre, a package of improvements at Rye Harbour and improvements to water sport facilities along the coastline. Recent funding from Magnox Ltd. to support the development of the Varne Boat Club provides a positive example on which to build in this regard. Rother, Shepway and Natural England are also working together on a Sustainable Access Strategy which is targeted at managing development and recreational pressure resulting from the visitor economy on Romney Marsh.
- **Opportunities to link into activities across wider areas** – the extended Romney Marsh Area offers the potential for the RMP to consider business and sector development activities being delivered across wider areas. The activities and expertise of the Rye Partnership and Rother and Ashford local authorities are particularly significant in this respect, with proposed developments such as Rye Harbour offering important opportunities to support sector development (e.g. the visitor economy), enterprise and job creation. The RMP should explore where there is potential for a greater degree of critical mass to be achieved via an integrated and collaborative approach to such interventions.
- **SE LEP Funding Opportunities** – the new SE LEP European programme offers significant potential funding opportunities for business support and sector development projects, with up to £83m of ERDF funding and £15m of EAFRD funding allocated across the LEP area. There are also potential opportunities to access future LEP Single Local Growth Fund (SLGF) allocations for sector infrastructure interventions; a number of investments for Romney Marsh are proposed within the Kent and Medway and East Sussex Growth Deals, including the developments at Rye Harbour and Camber Central Car Park. Again, identifying the precise nature of these funding opportunities is a crucial first step for the RMP and is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.


Intervention Pipeline

- 5.17 Partners have identified a number of potential interventions targeted at strengthening the Romney Marsh business base. These are summarised in the table below.


Table 5.2 Strengthening the Romney Marsh Business Base: Intervention Pipeline  = potential priority					
Project Name	Description	Lead Organisation and Partners	Timescales and Status	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
PROVIDING THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ENTERPRISE IS ENCOURAGED AND CAN FLOURISH					
Marsh Million Loan Scheme ¹⁷ 	A business loan scheme worth around £700,000, offering interest-free loans of up to £10,000 to small businesses located on the Romney Marsh. The loan is targeted at helping businesses to increase production and help safeguard or create jobs by investing for example in plant machinery, buildings and equipment. It is important that RMP plays a vocal role in driving and influencing the Marsh Million over the next 2 years, ensuring that the area gains maximum benefit from this significant opportunity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent CC • Magnox Ltd • Ashford BC • Shepway DC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term – 2014-2016 • In delivery 	£700,000 (already funded)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Enterprise Partnership 	A newly formed voluntary partnership between local authorities and businesses to help determine local economic priorities, lead economic growth and support the creation of local jobs within the local area. This should serve a number of functions including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying gaps in existing business support and exploring need and demand for additional delivery locally (e.g. support for businesses to maximise benefits of faster broadband) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepway DC • Ashford BC • Rother DC • Rye Partnership • MACH • Enterprise First • Magnox Ltd • Kent CC • East Sussex CC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term – 2014-2017 • Further development needed 	£10,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magnox Socio-Economic Fund • Kent CC • Shepway DC, Ashford BC and Rother DC

¹⁷ In addition to the £700,000 Marsh Million Loan Scheme, an additional £300,000 Marsh Million funding is available under the Economic Project Scheme. This funding is set aside for the delivery of economic development projects and is outlined in more detail in Chapter 6.


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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying current and future skills / training needs for employers Identifying and facilitating new supply chain opportunities for local businesses (e.g. opportunities relating to Lydd Airport and development projects such as Rye Harbour) Providing a networking platform for Romney Marsh businesses to encourage increased collaboration, knowledge sharing and supply chain development 				
Romney Marsh Pop-up & community shop	A 12 month pop-up shop on New Romney High Street. The shop will offer the opportunity to local businesses and community organisations e.g. creative businesses, therapy providers, services, to showcase their product, test public reaction and gain customer relations experience. Businesses from the RBIC will be encouraged to use facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shepway DC Ashford BC Action Communities in Rural Kent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Longer term – 2015 to 2016 Further project development needed 	£40,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Magnox Socio-Economic Fund Marsh Million LEADER Third sector
SUPPORTING GROWTH IN OUR CURRENT AND EMERGING SECTORS					
Romney Marsh Visitor Centre 	Improvements to RMVC at Romney Warren to position the RMVC as a central information point for visitors to Romney Marsh and provide an engaging visitor experience featuring the natural heritage of the area. The project will tidy and improve the site and facilities e.g pathways, catering, children's play area; provide quality site interpretation; develop visitor activities and signpost visitors to other attractions on Romney Marsh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kent Wildlife Trust Shepway DC RM Visitor Centre Registered Charity RMCP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short term – 2014 to 2015 Business case developed 	£50,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Third sector Shepway DC Marsh Million Leader Landfill Tax Kent Wildlife Trust

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<p>Romney Marsh Visitor Brand</p> 	<p>Establishing an overarching brand for Romney Marsh as a tourism destination. The brand will be built around an enhanced Romney Marsh Visitor Centre at Romney Warren; Romney Marsh Food; watersports from Rye to Dymchurch; environmental tourism; dark skies etc. to be developed within new branding. There is some uncertainty as to the status of 'Visit Folkestone, Hythe and Romney Marsh', offering a window of opportunity to refocus the Romney Marsh Brand in the near future.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepway DC • Ashford BC • Rother DC • Kent CC • East Sussex CC • Visit Kent • 1066 Country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer term • Further project development required 	<p>£50,000 to £100,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marsh Million • LEADER • Private • ERDF • Third sector
<p>Romney Marsh Tweed</p>	<p>Romney Tweed CIC's vision is to create a bespoke, sustainable weaving industry based on the production of high end contemporary tweed made from Romney Wool. The vision is that in five years there will be a thriving weaving industry, it will create at least 30 jobs, be training at least 20 young people per year in a variety of roles such as textiles, design, marketing, sales, finance and business development. The tweed will be sold to retailers, fashion designers and, via a website, internationally and will attract additional tourists to the area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Romney Tweed CIC • Shepway DC • Romney Resource Centre • MACH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term – 2014-2017 • Business case developed 	<p>£320,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent CC • Marsh Million • Shepway DC • ESF • LEADER • Magnox Socio-Economic Fund
<p>Water-based leisure / tourism offer</p>	<p>Continuation of concept envisaged in Camber VMI. Camber and the nearby communities on the Romney Marsh coastline attract significant numbers of sports anglers, wind surfers, kite surfers etc. These visitors represent a significant economic opportunity to the local area, but also pose challenges around traffic management, etc. A</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepway DC • Local operators • Rother DC • East Sussex CC • Rye Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer Term • Further project development required 	<p>TBC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magnox Socio-Economic Fund • East Sussex CC • Rother DC • Private Sector

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	targeted and co-ordinated approach to developing this sector whilst managing the impact could have significant benefits to the local economy.				
Romney Marsh Food Project 	A project using food as a common theme to support local farmers and fishing industry as well as enhancing the local visitor offer. The project would include a food producer co-op, Romney Marsh brand, buy local schemes, investigate the potential for new crops, promote healthy eating, deliver events and food tours and develop the food and tourism offer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepway DC • Produced in Kent • Kent CC • Visit Kent • Ashford BC • Rother DC • Rye Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer term – 2015-2016 • Further project development required 	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marsh Million • LEADER • EAFRD • Third sector • Private
Vineyard Trail	Creation of a vineyard trail linking Gusbourne Vineyard to neighbouring vineyards and producers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ashford BC • Gusbourne Vineyard • Visit Kent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer term – • Further development required 	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marsh Million • Private Sector Partners/ Advertising
SECTOR INFRASTRUCTURE					
Package of Rye Harbour improvements	To develop the economy of the Harbour of Rye, through the provision of new business space and improved infrastructure for visiting boats. The project will also include a refit of the fish market building in Rock Channel and an expansion of the fish market offer for the Romney Marsh.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rye Partnership • Environment Agency • Rastrum Limited • Rother DC • East Sussex CC • SE LEP • Rye and District Chamber of Commerce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer term – • Further project development required 	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLGF • EFF • Coastal Communities • Magnox Socio-Economic Fund
Kitewell Lane, Lydd – business units	Provision of 4 X B1 Industrial Units providing space for in the region of 15-20 jobs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepway DC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer term – 2017 to 2018 • Further project development required 	£350,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepway District Council • ERDF • Marsh Million (towards feasibility/design study costs)
Phase 4 Mountfield Road,	Servicing of around 6ha employment land, providing space for around 200 jobs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepway DC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer term – 2017 to 2018 	£1 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepway District Council • ERDF

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further project development required 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private • Marsh Million
Mountfield Road Signage	To promote New Romney businesses in Mountfield Road with a signage board at the top end of Mountfield Road, so that customers/clients have the necessary information to utilise these services, without travelling to Ashford/Folkestone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepway DC • Romney Marsh BIC • RRC • SME's • Magnox Ltd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer Term • Further project development required 	£7,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepway DC • Marsh Million
Rye Harbour Road	Rye Harbour Road has significant amounts of undeveloped land, with capacity to provide up to 35,000 sq m of additional business space and 1000+ jobs. Sites are in a variety of private ownerships. Constraints on development include land contamination and infrastructure capacity, including utilities; however, further work needs to be done to quantify the scale of these issues and identify how these might be resolved and whether public funding is required to do so.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rother DC • SELEP • Landowners • EA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer term – 2017 to 2018 • Further project development required 	£50,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGF funding • LEADER
Camber Central Garage Site Business Units	The provision of small business units as part of a mixed use development on the former garage site at New Lydd Road, Camber. These could be artisan / workshop facilities doubling up as retail outlets during the high season.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rother DC • Camber Parish Council • Rye Partnership • East Sussex CC • Magnox Ltd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer term – 2017 to 2018 • Further development required 	£1m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Sector • Magnox Socio-Economic Fund • East Sussex CC
Camber Central Car Park redevelopment	Redevelopment of the Central Car Park at Camber to provide improved shops, cafes, accommodation and public facilities. The next step for the council will be to seek a development partner to progress the scheme. Whilst it is	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rother DC • Private Developer • East Sussex CC • SE LEP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer term – • Further project development required 	£50,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magnox Socio-Economic Fund • East Sussex CC • Rother DC • SLGF

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	expected that this development will be privately funded, further preparatory site investigatory work may be needed to minimise developer risk and inform the procurement process.				
Stocks Mill Visitor Facilities	Preservation of a heritage and tourism site by improving the understanding and access to the Grade II listed Windmill. Potential projects include provision of car parking, water and updated display boards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent CC • Friends of Stocks Windmill • Ashford BC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer term – • Further development required 	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage Lottery Fund • Kent CC

Priority Area 3: A Great Place to Live, Work and Visit

- 5.18 Romney Marsh is already an attractive place to live work and visit, not least as a result of the quality of its natural and built environments, and the quality of life benefits that these bring to the communities who are connected to the area.
- 5.19 However, the area also faces numerous challenges which constrain socio-economic performance. These include connectivity challenges across much of the area, and wider challenges around the supply of housing and employment infrastructure.
- 5.20 Protecting and, where possible, strengthening environmental assets and ensuring the provision of strong infrastructure, housing and amenities will be important in helping to retain and attract residents, businesses and visitors, and in turn maximising the socio-economic benefits that these different groups can bring to Romney Marsh.

Objectives

- 5.21 The RMP will focus on ensuring that Romney Marsh develops the facilities, environment and connectivity which make the area attractive to residents, businesses and visitors alike. In particular it will focus on:
- Enhancing broadband and transport links to develop a truly connected economy
 - Protecting and enhancing our natural and built environment
 - Supporting the development of a strong civil society across Romney Marsh and its communities.

Rationale

- 5.22 Chapter 2 highlighted a number of significant challenges for the Romney Marsh area in terms of business and enterprise. These include:
- **Connectivity challenges across Romney Marsh** – reflecting its largely rural characteristics, parts of Romney Marsh experience considerable connectivity constraints relating to both transport and digital connectivity. These constraints impact demonstrably on local socio-economic conditions, impacting both on the economic (and consequentially social) mobility of some residents and also upon the attractiveness of the area to business. Addressing these constraints will clearly require long term vision and strategy but will be important in ensuring Romney Marsh is able to continue to attract residents, businesses and visitors
 - **Making the most of Romney Marsh’s physical and built assets** – Romney Marsh offers a unique natural environment and a strong network of towns and villages. Both of these assets are of integral importance to quality of life for Romney Marsh residents and also for the area’s aspirations regarding its visitor economy. However, challenges are faced in relation to access to leisure, recreational and community facilities and amenities for local communities. Continuing to support efforts to maintain the vitality and viability of the area’s villages and towns remains an important priority
 - **Opportunities to develop a stronger civil society** – a strong civil society is important in any community and can directly influence quality of life for residents. With this in mind, it is important that decommissioning at Dungeness A Site does not impact negatively on the Romney Marsh civil society as has been the case in other parts of the country which have experienced employment shocks. There are a number of opportunities to strengthen a




sense of community cohesion and civil society across Romney Marsh, not least relating to the elderly population profile of the area and potential opportunities to secure a stronger voluntary sector and intergenerational interaction across communities.

Existing Activity and Opportunities



- 5.23 There are a number of existing activities and opportunities which the RMP can look to build upon in relation to Romney Marsh ‘the place’:
- **Existing infrastructure projects** – a number of infrastructure projects are in development which will help to improve levels of connectivity across Romney Marsh. Shepway DC is working with KCC to improve the bus service to Ashford. Investments in rural broadband are also underway– these include KCC and government schemes along with local interventions by other providers such as VFAST
 - **Opportunities to link into activities across wider areas** – the nature of infrastructure projects means that they often require long term vision, large scale funding and buy in from a range of partners. This is particularly the case in terms of broadband and transport projects. With this in mind, the extended Romney Marsh Area offers greater potential for the RMP to achieve greater influence and critical mass in the pursuit of infrastructure projects
 - **SE LEP Funding Opportunities** – the new SE LEP European programme offers significant potential funding opportunities for infrastructure projects, with up to £83m of ERDF funding and £15M of EAFRD funding allocated across the LEP area. There are also potential opportunities to access future LEP Single Local Growth Fund (SLGF) allocations for infrastructure interventions; a number of investments for Romney Marsh are proposed under the Kent and Medway and East Sussex Growth Deals including improvements to the Ashford to Hastings rail line. Again, identifying the nature of these opportunities is a crucial first step for the RMP and is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Intervention Pipeline


- 5.24 Partners have identified a number of potential interventions targeted at helping Romney Marsh to remain a great place to live, work and do business. These are summarised in the table below.

Table 5.3 A Great Place to Live, Work and Visit: Intervention Pipeline  = potential priority					
Project Name	Description	Lead Organisation and Partners	Timescales and Status	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
ENHANCING DIGITAL AND TRANSPORT LINKS TO DEVELOP A TRULY CONNECTED ECONOMY					
 Improved public transport (bus)	Enhanced service (more buses at earlier and later times) on route 11 Romney Marsh to Ashford. Raised curbs, clearways and improved bus stop infrastructure on service 11 & 11A Romney Marsh to Ashford. In the longer term, explore potential to provide High-Speed bus services, and improved weekend commuter and shopper services from Romney Marsh to Ashford to help create the opportunities for employment of Marsh residents in the wider area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent CC • Shepway DC • Ashford BC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term – 2014-15 • Initial project approved 	£50,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent CC • Private
 Romney Marsh Wheels 2 Work/Community Transport Scheme	RM W2W would be a not-for-profit CIC, which loans scooters to people between the ages of 16 - 65 living within the Romney Marsh area, who find it difficult to get to work or training opportunities because they do not have access to private or public transport. Loans would be for a period of 6 to 12 months dependant on personal circumstances. Individuals will pay a weekly contribution and have a plan to obtain their own transport at the end of the loan period. Individuals will attend a Compulsory Basic Training course and complete it to a nationally recognised standard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepway DC • Action for Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK) • RRC • Rye Partnership • Ashford BC and Rother DC • Kent CC • East Sussex CC • Magnox Ltd • MACH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer Term – 2015 onwards • Further project development needed 	£475,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magnox Socio-Economic Fund • Shepway DC • Kent CC • Ashford BC

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 Superfast Broadband for Romney Marsh	To maximise the provision of Superfast Broadband to businesses and residents located across Romney Marsh. KCC is leading the national superfast roll out in Kent and ABC and SDC will seek additional funding from government and other sources for hard to reach areas and new technologies (such as wireless across Romney Marsh) in order to provide superfast service to Romney Marsh.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent CC • Ashford BC • Shepway DC • Rother DC • Rye Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer term – 2015 onwards • Further project development required 	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent CC • BDUK and ERDF • Private Sector Partner • Marsh Million • Magnox Socio-Economic Fund
PROTECTING AND ENHANCING OUR NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT					
 Royal Military Canal Cycle Path Extension	Sustainable tourism project to provide bridleway through "missing links" alongside the Royal Military Canal enabling the whole route to be cycled, together with linked circular routes connecting to outlying villages and existing cycle routes and associated promotion activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent CC • Shepway DC • Ashford BC • Rother DC • East Sussex CC • Romney Marsh Countryside Project • Parish councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer term – 2015 onwards • Further project development required 	£2million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HLF • Leader • Magnox Ltd • LAs • County Councils
Public realm improvements	Improved environment at key locations (such as the street frontage in Dymchurch) to improve resident and visitor experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepway DC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer term • Further development required 	£100,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marsh Million • Private • Third sector • HLF
Romney Marsh Living Landscape	Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership Scheme proposal comprising a programme of built and natural heritage actions including tourism, recreation, skills training projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent Wildlife Trust • Shepway & Rother DC • Natural England, RMCP, RSPB, EA • Marsh Academy, RRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer term – 2016 onwards • Further project development required 	£2.8 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HLF • Marsh Million • Third sector
SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STRONG CIVIL SOCIETY ACROSS ROMNEY MARSH AND ITS COMMUNITIES					
Rural Community Development	Expansion of existing ACRK community-led rural regeneration services, but with a focus on the 24 parishes within Romney Marsh. Effectively this is a bespoke element of ACRK community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACRK • Kent CC • Parish / Town Councils • Community Groups • Ashford BC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term – 2014 to 2017 • Outline Business Case Developed 	£37,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magnox Socio-Economic Fund • Ashford and Shepway • Marsh Million

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	planning, affordable housing, village hall management, social enterprise development and rural retail support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepway DC 			
Micro Housing	Piloting delivery of micro (or similar) housing models to meet local need. Transfer of practice used elsewhere to support young professionals. Offer of apprenticeship opportunities during construction. Tie-in with ACRK equivalents elsewhere in England.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACRK • Ashford & Shepway DCs • Housing Associations • Parish / Town Councils • European Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term – 2014 to 2017 • Outline Business Case Developed 	£180,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Commission • Marsh Million • ESF
Building the capacity of the third and voluntary sector across Romney Marsh	Project aimed at helping to build the capacity of the third sector across Romney Marsh to help it capitalise upon funding opportunities and to become an effective and realistic mechanism for project delivery. The third sector has particularly strong potential across Romney Marsh given the relatively elderly population and potential for strong levels of voluntary activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepway DC, Ashford BC and Rother DC • Voluntary sector partners • Community groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer term • Further project development required 	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepway DC, Ashford BC and Rother DC • Third sector partners • ESF
Tilling Green Community Hub 	The redevelopment of the former Tilling Green primary school site to provide new affordable homes and a rural community hub. This follows a 3 year pilot scheme to develop a working model for rural socio-economic development through the provision of services, adult education, family learning and community development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rye Partnership • Rye Town Council • Amicus Horizon HA • JCP • Sussex Coast College • Rother Voluntary Action • East Sussex CC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer term - 2015 onwards • Business case in development 	£1 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Allocation • Amicus Horizon • Rye Partnership

6. Delivering the Plan

- 6.1 This chapter provides an overview of the delivery mechanisms for this Plan, the main areas of focus for the RMP itself, and suggestions as to how it can evolve in coming years.

Roles and Responsibilities

- 6.2 The RMP provides a strong lead organisation to drive the delivery of this Plan.
- 6.3 However, reflecting the existing nature and geography of the RMP, the current resources available to it and the complex and collaborative requirements of many sources of external funding, in the short term the RMP will need to draw on wider partnerships and expertise to take the Delivery Plan and its interventions forward.
- 6.4 This in mind, it is expected that Delivery Plan roles and responsibilities will be as follows in the short term:

Responsibility	Lead Organisation	Description
Delivery Plan Ownership	RMP	The RMP will retain overall ownership of the Delivery Plan, taking responsibility for working with wider partners to disseminate its contents in the pursuit of wider influence and (in the longer term) leverage.
Pipeline and Prioritisation	RMP with support from partners organisations	The RMP will take responsibility for maintaining the project pipeline and prioritising its contents. It will need to work collaboratively with partner organisations in this regard, particularly in terms of understanding the nature of project proposals.
Project Development	RMP and Partner Organisations	At this stage, the project lead organisation will need to take responsibility for project development, including the working up of business cases and funding bids. The lead organisation will be identified as part of pipeline development and will necessarily vary on a project by project basis.
External funding	RMP with support from officers from Shepway, Ashford and Rother Districts	The RMP should take the lead in developing and maintaining a strong understanding of the external funding landscape and disseminating this to partner organisations. Officers from Shepway, Ashford and Rother District Councils should support the RMP in this respect given existing expertise / knowledge.
Project / intervention delivery	Partners organisations in collaboration with RMP	At this stage, there is limited capacity for the RMP to act as a delivery organisation in itself. That said, where possible the RMP should retain some influence in delivery, with partners continuing to report to RMP on progress and impacts

- 6.5 Specific roles for the RMP over the next few years are discussed in more detail below.

Strengthening the RMP

- 6.6 As discussed in Chapter 3, in the period since it was established in 2011, the RMP has already evolved into an effective partnership with strong membership and buy in from partner organisations. It is critical that this momentum is maintained over the next 3 years, with the RMP continuing to strengthen its capability to influence local socio-economic conditions.

Partnership Objectives

6.7 Over the next 3 years the RMP should place emphasis on becoming:

- A delivery focused partnership: focusing on developing and delivering (via wider partnerships) the right interventions in an efficient and effective manner
- A flexible partnership: which has the ability and influence to draw in additional expertise and work collaboratively with wider stakeholders / partnerships as and when necessary
- A sustainable partnership: in the longer run, the RMP should focus its attention on becoming a more a sustainable partnership which has increasing levels of strategic influence and stronger capability to drive delivery activity.

RMP Structure

6.8 Whilst the RMP remains relatively new, it has already formed a strong local presence with strong buy in from key partners across Romney Marsh.

6.9 As discussed above, it is recommended that the RMP remains flexible enough to draw in the right members and expertise. This includes:

- **Short term expertise** – it might be necessary to draw in additional expertise on a project by project basis. For example, specific transport expertise might be beneficial if the RMP is working on a transport related project. Identifying the required expertise and right partners will be an important early stage in project prioritisation and development
- **Longer term members / partners** – it is also important that the RMP remains flexible enough to identify and secure buy in from new partners as and when they emerge. These might be new businesses entering the local area or organisations providing new sources of funding or expertise.

6.10 On occasion it might be appropriate for the RMP to set up internal working groups in pursuit of its objectives. These can help to further expertise on specific issues of interest to the RMP– e.g funding sources or theme specific research.

6.11 It is important to note that Working Groups can be resource intensive; as such, caution should be taken to ensure that they are set up selectively, only when there is a clear need. In ensuring efficiency, the following principles should be adhered to:

- Given the existing resource constraints of the RMP and its members, no more than two Working Groups should be set up at any one time
- Working Groups must be founded around clear research objectives and given a set timeframe to report back on findings to the full RMP
- Working Groups should be disbanded once they have reported to the full RMP.

RMP Activities

6.12 Reflecting the above, there are a number of areas for action for the RMP both in the short term (2014/15) and over the longer term (2015/17). These are summarised below.

Immediate Actions (2014-15)

6.13 Immediate actions for the RMP include:

- Initial project prioritisation and development** – within this document there are some initial recommendations on potential projects for shortlisting. However, it is important that the RMP itself takes some ownership over the process of targeting and dedicating resource to projects. To assist in making decisions between projects, the following questions are suggested as filters for this:

Question of Project	Yes	Partially	No	Unknown
Does it meet RMP Objectives?				
Does it benefit the whole RMP area?				
Is it fundable?				
Is there an appropriate organisation to deliver the project?				
Does it provide value for money (outputs versus spend)?				
Does it link to or enhance other RMP projects?				

Based on the analysis of the suggested projects herein, the following have been suggested by Regeneris for initial prioritisation:

Immediate priority (short term delivery potential):

- Skills for Decommissioning
- Investing in Young People
- Rural Employability Project
- Apprenticeships on Romney Marsh
- Skills development and career pathways
- Marsh Million Loan Scheme
- Enterprise Partnership
- Romney Marsh Visitor Centre
- Improved public transport

Longer term priority (need further development in short term before delivery can commence):

- Romney Marsh Visitor Brand
- Romney Marsh Food Project
- Romney Marsh Wheels 2 Work/Community Transport Scheme
- Superfast Broadband for Romney Marsh
- Royal Military Canal Cycle Path Extension
- Tilling Green Community Hub

- Feasibility Capital Investment** – a number of the projects outlined within this report will need further feasibility studies to assist with the prioritisation process. Is it not efficient to look at all of these so the RMP board needs to prioritise capital investments and work with the relevant authorities to establish feasibility and viability.
- Establishing a working funding plan** – as discussed throughout this report, 2014/15 is an important juncture in the funding landscape for local economic development. Romney Marsh has been provided with the significant opportunity of the Marsh Million. More generally, 2015 will see the inception of the new round of European funding (ERDF, ESF an EAFRD), LEADER and also the Local Growth Fund (LGF). A summary of possible funding

sources is provided in the next section. It is important that the RMP quickly identifies the nature of these opportunities and puts the structures in place which will maximise its ability to 1) secure funding and 2) maximise benefit through delivery. An initial internal working group might be a beneficial mechanism through which to accelerate this research and places the RMP in a strong position to access funding come 2015.

Longer Term Actions (2015-17)

6.14 Longer term actions for the RMP include:

- **Maintaining a strong project pipeline** – the project pipeline should not be viewed as a static resource. The RMP should ensure that the pipeline continues to be updated, with partner organisations asked to review and update their proposals on a continual basis. The RMP Coordinator should take responsibility for refreshing the pipeline spreadsheet and keeping the RMP aware of its contents and status
- **Preparing for future funding challenges** – whilst 2014/15 offer a number of funding opportunities, there are also a number of funding challenges on the horizon. These include the likelihood of a reduction in Magnox / NDA funding from 2016 onwards and the need to plan for the period post Marsh Million delivery. It is important that the RMP remains aware of these challenges and begins to consider longer term funding strategies in response
- **RMP forward planning** – as discussed above, it will be necessary for the RMP to consider how it wishes to evolve over the longer term. This is co-dependent on identifying the opportunities and risks to the RMP area over the longer term, through additional context research as appropriate. Canvassing the opinions of RMP members will be an important first step in this regard, supported by research into the nature and relative benefits of other different partnership models seen across the UK.

Resourcing the Plan

- 6.15 As with any strategy, funding the actions within this plan will perhaps be the most significant challenge that partners will face in delivery.
- 6.16 However, whilst there continue to be significant constraints on levels of public (and private) sector investment in local economic development, in 2014 there are also a number of significant new funding opportunities which the RMP could potentially exploit should it work up strong interventions and put robust delivery mechanisms in place. Potential funding sources for the RMP are summarised in the table below and then set out in more detail in the rest of this section.
- 6.17 **It is important that this is not viewed as a static source of information:** as discussed above, the RMP should ensure that it maintains an ongoing focus on funding, identifying new opportunities as they emerge and engaging with new partners where necessary to secure additional leverage.

Table 6.1 Summary of Funding Sources Relevant to the RMP

	Source	Value	Time Periods	Focus
Local	Marsh Million (business loan fund)	£0.7m	To 2017	Enterprise
	Marsh Million (economic projects scheme)	£0.3m	To 2017	RMP Delivery Plan Priorities
	Shepway DC, Rother DC, Ashford BC	No set value	Ongoing	Enterprise, Skills, Infrastructure
County	Kent CC & East Sussex CC	No set value	Ongoing	Enterprise, Skills, Infrastructure
	LEADER	TBC	2015-2020	Rural enterprise and skills
LEP Level	ERDF	£82.5m	2015-2020	Enterprise, innovation, trade, CLLD
	ESF	£82.5m	2015-2020	Vocational skills, up-skilling, social inclusion
	EAFRD	£14.5m	2015-2020	Rural enterprise and skills
	SLGF	TBC	2015/16 onwards	Sites and Infrastructure, Skills Capital
National	Future RGF Rounds	TBC	No time period	Business growth, innovation
	Charitable Funds and Civil Society Funding	No set value	Ongoing	Wide ranging
Other	Magnox & NDA Socio-Economic Funding	No set value	Ongoing(PBO changes to be determined)	Skills, Enterprise, Sites and Infrastructure
	Private Sector (local businesses or sector contributions e.g. renewable sector)	No set value	Ongoing	Wide ranging

Local Funding Sources

Marsh Million

- 6.18 The **Marsh Million Business Loan Scheme** is a £700,000 scheme funded by Magnox Ltd, Kent County Council, Shepway District Council and Ashford Borough Council. The scheme offers 0% interest loans to support small and micro businesses as well as start-ups with potential for growth in the Romney Marsh Area. Loans of between £2,500 and £10,000 are available to businesses employing fewer than 50 employees who are able to show that their proposal will have a positive impact on the economy of the Romney Marsh area, generating sustainable, private-sector employment. The Marsh Million can be used to cover both capital and revenue funding, including: development finance to expand businesses; funding to cover the costs of deposits, moving and/or improving premises, provide gap funding; provide funding to cover stock purchases; assist businesses with covering intangible business costs (e.g. patents, IT software and licenses); and purchase on road vehicles.
- 6.19 In addition, the Marsh Million also includes an economic projects scheme worth around £300,000, offering grant support to projects of more general economic interest, which will commence during summer 2014.
- 6.20 All Marsh Million funding must be spent by 2017, with all loans repaid within 5 years.

Shepway DC, Rother DC and Ashford BC

- 6.21 As the local authorities responsible for the RMP area, Shepway District Council, Rother District Council and Ashford Borough Council are responsible for the delivery of many of the statutory services in the area. Where possible the three councils need to be encouraged to 'bed' mainstream services to ensure that they are closely linked to the principles outlined within this Delivery Plan. The potential to utilise local funding pots such as New Homes Bonus and Community Infrastructure Levy should also be explored. In addition, the councils should also seek to join Kent CC and East Sussex CC and the SE LEP to lobby on behalf of the area.

Charitable Funds and Civil Society Funding

- 6.22 The **Roger De Haan Charitable Trust** supports a number of charitable causes and projects in East Kent (Shepway District in particular) and aims to make a substantial impact on the community in which it is based. The projects that can access funding from this trust can be varied in nature, including amongst others, projects in education; arts, culture and heritage; community development and regeneration; as well as supporting young people and the health and welfare of older people.
- 6.23 Some projects that received funding from the **Roger De Haan Charitable Trust** include the Creative Quarter in Folkestone (£50 million), Turner Contemporary (£200,000), the Marlowe Innovation Centre, and the New Romney Skate Park (£23,500).

County Level Funding Sources

Kent CC

- 6.24 Kent CC's **Kent Employment Programme** grant offers £2,000 in additional to national funding to businesses hiring an unemployed 18-24 year old apprentice.
- 6.25 The **Kent Big Society Fund** was established with initial funding from Kent CC to provide loan financing to support existing and newly created social enterprises that benefit the local community and enhance the economic, social and environmental vibrancy of the county. The fund's aim is to spread the culture of social enterprise and break down barriers which prevent enterprising social businesses from accessing finance. Once finance is repaid, it will be re-loaned and re-invested back in the community.
- 6.26 **Expansion East Kent** (part of RGF) is a scheme offering a total £35 million in the form of 0% interest loans. Loans are available to sole traders, partnerships, limited companies and not for profit businesses in East Kent which have the potential to create or safeguard jobs. The scheme is aimed particularly at attracting businesses in scientific research and development; manufacturing, especially in the development of the supply chain to support the renewable energy industry, as well as tourism, heritage and culture-related activities. The scheme funds investments in both tangible assets, including land, buildings, plant machinery and equipment as well as intangible assets such as assets acquired from third parties by the transfer of technology or knowledge.

East Sussex County Council

- 6.27 The **East Sussex Invest 3 (ESI-3)** is a £4 million regional growth fund (RGF) project aimed at creating and safeguarding private sector jobs within the county until February 2015. The project offers two types of funding, including a **small business grants programme** offering grants of between £3,000 to £5,000 to existing SMEs, start-up businesses and social enterprises showing evidence of growth and potential job creation; as well as a **business loan scheme** for applications of over £5,000

offering loans at interest rates of between 0-5% to SME and local start-ups. The **ESI-3** will cover a number of priority sectors including manufacturing, engineering, scientific and bio-chemical, finance, R&D, ICT and healthcare technologies.

- 6.28 The **Jobs for Social Inclusion** fund is offering grants of £3,000-£10,000 to employers in East Sussex to encourage and support them in offering jobs to vulnerable adults who receive support from the East Sussex CC's Adult Social Care.

LEADER Programme

- 6.29 LEADER provides funding to support skills and employment in rural areas.
- 6.30 For the 2008-2013 LEADER programme, activity was delivered locally by the Kent Downs and Marshes Local Action Group (covering the Kent part of the RMP area) and the Wealden and Rother Rural Local Action Group (covering the East Sussex part of the RMP area).
- 6.31 Whilst this programme has now ended, a new LEADER Programme is expected to begin in 2015. It is expected that the current LEADER areas will be reviewed for the new programme, with the potential for a new LEADER area covering a larger part of the RMP area.
- 6.32 The RMP should ensure that it maintains dialogue and engagement to understand the nature of any potential funding opportunities as and when they emerge.

Charitable Funds and Civil Society Funding

- 6.33 **Let's Do Business Group** (which includes **Ten Sixty Six Enterprise** and **Capitalise Business Support Limited**) provides business advice, training, access to finance and business events for entrepreneurs and start-up businesses in Sussex, Kent, and the wider South East. Funding that is available from the **Let's Do Business Group** includes start-up and business growth loans. The amount of funding that is available to businesses varies, and depends on both the status of the business (whether it is a start-up or more established) and the period it has been trading for.

LEP Funding

European Structural and Investment Funds

- 6.34 European Structural and Investment Funds are designed to improve economic growth and social wellbeing across different regions in the UK. The SE LEP has been allocated approximately £165 million of ESIF for the 2014-2020 period. The SE LEP has recently completed its strategy for how it plans to invest this allocation:
- An ERDF allocation of around £83 million. This will be used to fund interventions across the LEP area which promote innovation; accelerate business starts and growth; improve access to finance; and, increase trade and attract investment
 - An ESF allocation of around £83 million. The SE LEPs priorities for this investment are skills and employment; employer-led infrastructure; enhanced information, advice and guidance; apprenticeships and other vocational provision; up-skilling the workforce and supporting SME growth; and, active inclusion, transition to work, and reducing youth unemployment
 - An EAFRD allocation of around £14.4 million. This funding is aimed to support jobs and growth in rural areas and can be spent on projects that will build knowledge and skills in rural areas, fund new, and developing non-agricultural, micro, small and medium-sized

rural businesses; fund small scale renewable and broadband investments in rural areas and support tourism activities in rural areas.

SLGF

- 6.35 The SE LEP has recently submitted to government its strategic economic plan (SEP). This outlines the LEP's bid for its local Growth Deal – a share of the £2bn national Single Local Growth Fund and the 'asks' of government to support the delivery of business and economic investment in new ways.
- 6.36 The SEP outlines a number of geographical 'growth deals' across the LEP area. Of relevance to Romney Marsh are the growth deals for Kent and Medway and East Sussex:
- The growth deal for Kent and Medway sets out an ambition to invest over £80 million each year for the next six years to unlock potential through increasing housing and commercial development; delivering transport and broadband infrastructure to unlock growth; backing business expansion through better access to finance and support; and delivering the skills that the local economy needs. While Romney Marsh does not feature strongly in the current Kent and Medway project pipeline, there remains potential to influence this and secure SLGF investment for the local areas as delivery progresses over the coming years
 - The Growth Deal for East Sussex sets out the interventions which need to be delivered to unlock the LEP's ambitious business and housing growth plans for the area and to build upon current investments in infrastructure. The Growth Deal identifies a number of projects of direct relevance to this delivery plan – the dual tracking and electrification of the Ashford to Hastings rail line and the Rye Harbour and Camber Central Car Park developments. With this in mind, it is important that the RMP works closely with East Sussex County Council, Rother District Council and the SE LEP to ensure a coordinated approach to bringing forward the proposals.

Other Funding Sources

Magnox & NDA Socio-Economic Funding

- 6.37 The decommissioning process at Dungeness A will have a number of adverse social and economic impacts on communities. Through the Energy Act 2004, the NDA is required to consider the socio-economic impacts of the decommissioning activities on the local community, and support any activities that will benefit the social or economic life of communities living close to the decommissioning sites. One way this is achieved is through direct NDA funding aimed at supporting socio-economic activities in and around the impacted area.
- 6.38 The socio-economic support's main thematic priorities include: employment support, by focusing on higher value job creation; education and skills improvements both to support decommissioning and clean-up and the diversification of the local economy; the provision of additional economic and social infrastructure; and economic diversification into other industries and sectors, including the local supply chain.
- 6.39 Magnox have already provided significant funding for socio-economic projects in the Romney Marsh area. Examples include contributions to the RMP Co-ordinator post, the Marsh Million and to the New Romney Business Incubation Centre. Whilst Magnox remains willing to invest in further socio-economic projects in the area, it will only do so where there is a strong business case, built around proven need / demand and clear additionality.

- 6.40** *It is also important to note that this source of funding is expected to reduce in coming years, as decommissioning at Dungeness A Site progresses to the next stage in 2016.*

On 31 March 2014, the NDA announced that Cavendish Fluor Partnership (CFP) was the Preferred Bidder in the competition to select a new Parent Body for Magnox Ltd and Research Sites Restoration Limited (RSRL). Subject to successful conclusion of the Transition period on 1st September 2014, CFP will become the new Parent Body for Magnox.

The nature of the Magnox Socio-Economic Fund is subject to change pending the completion of Parent Body Organisation negotiations. It is recommended that the Delivery Plan is reviewed at an appropriate future point in time to take account of the new Parent Body's plans.

Other Private Sector Sources

- 6.41 In addition, the RMP should recognise the potential to lever in funding from wider private sector sources to support economic development projects, as and when opportunities emerge.
- 6.42 This might include establishing direct relationships with local businesses where relevant or working with wider partners such as the County Councils to explore the potential to access private sector contributions (e.g. from the renewables sector).



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