

Lower Thames Crossing

Skills, education &
employment strategy

Contents

1.	About the Lower Thames Crossing	3
2.	Our local communities	4
3.	Strategy objectives	5
4.	Ambitions	6
5.	Objectives	8
	- Deliver a skills legacy	8
	- Create new jobs	14
	- Inspire future careers	18
	- Support business growth	22
6.	Reporting – targets and monitoring	26
7.	Appendices	32

1. About the Lower Thames Crossing

The Lower Thames Crossing is a proposed new road connecting Kent, Thurrock, Essex and Havering through a tunnel beneath the River Thames. It is the most ambitious road project in more than 35 years.

As the world's third largest road tunnel, it will almost double road capacity between Kent and Essex, bringing communities together and driving economic growth. This will give millions of people more flexibility and choice for where they live, work and learn.

The Lower Thames Crossing has been designated a pathfinder project by National Highways. This means we are exploring carbon neutral construction and supporting the Government to reach net zero by 2050. We are putting carbon at the heart of everything we do, from continually exploring new and improved building methods to ensuring our current and future workforce and supply chain have the appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding to set the standard for the future of low-carbon infrastructure.

To build the Lower Thames Crossing we'll need a diverse workforce ranging from engineers, architects and designers to caterers, sign makers and IT support. Over the six-years of construction, the Lower Thames Crossing will provide work for more than 22,000 people – including those employed directly to build the project and thousands more through the supply chain.

About this document

Our Skills, Education and Employment (SEE) Strategy details how we intend to provide sustainable benefits to local communities by providing new work, jobs and educational opportunities.

It also explains how we will cultivate the skills of the project's workforce and local communities to keep the construction and highways industries moving forward.

This is the first version of this strategy which aligns with National Highways' Strategic Business Plan 2020-2025 to build skills and capability in line with future requirements, recognising the benefits of a diverse talent pool that reflects local communities. Its 'People Strategy' focuses on key themes including:

- fostering a diverse and inclusive culture
- ensuring engaged and motivated colleagues
- matching the right people with the right skills to ensure they can reach their potential
- meeting the needs of business and customers, both now and in the future.

2. Our local communities

The Lower Thames Crossing would provide a connection between the A2 and M2 in Kent and M25 south of junction 29 in Essex. The route and associated works are proposed within Gravesend, Thurrock, Havering and Brentwood local authorities.

The Thames Estuary is a diverse mix of rural and urban areas. It is close to London with some communities among the most prosperous nationally, while others have been identified as among the most deprived.

The area is home to important ports, airports, road and rail infrastructure, which is key to the UK's economy and supply chain. Providing a gateway to the world and the rest of the country, this area is vital and instrumental in keeping people, goods and services moving and enabling international trade.

Despite this, as detailed within the **Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission report: 2050 vision**, Kent and Essex have struggled to keep pace with the scale of employment growth in London. The report details how the Thames Estuary area has a high proportion of adults with no formal qualifications. Wages in this area are also the third lowest in the UK per capita gross value added (GVA), half that of London and lower than seven of the eight English regions.

As detailed in the **South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) Major Projects Skills and Employment 2021** report, due to COVID-19 there has been a large increase in people receiving benefits across the SELEP region and skill levels are below the national average.

The report details how the area is seeing an extraordinary amount of growth in its pipeline of major projects, including the Lower Thames Crossing, presenting a multi-billion-pound boost to the economy. It also explains how these major projects will create a further demand for skills alongside the opportunity to upskill locally with new jobs and work for businesses.

In line with Government's ambitions, the Lower Thames Crossing is a key infrastructure investment. It will play a fundamental role in the drive to unlock economic growth through job creation, new work for businesses, higher skilled workers and stronger infrastructure and better transport.

3. Strategy objectives

The size and scale of the Lower Thames Crossing programme offers a huge opportunity to leave a positive skills, education and employment legacy across local communities. We want to take every opportunity to engage local people in the construction of the crossing, whether that be through new work and jobs or by supporting educators and delivery activities that will excite and inspire the next generation.

We've been working closely with key stakeholders within the South East and Thames Estuary regions, including local authorities, industry professionals, education and training providers and businesses, to develop a strategy that understands and aligns to local needs and priorities.

Our commitment is to create opportunities for new jobs and work, higher skills and better education.

Our objectives are to:

- **Deliver a skills legacy** – create a higher-skilled community and improve training standards for building world-leading low-carbon infrastructure.
- **Create new jobs** – breakdown barriers to employment and provide new and inclusive opportunities.
- **Inspire future careers** – assemble the next generation of talent through effective engagement with local students and educators.
- **Support business growth** – provide local businesses and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with the tools to win new work and maximise economic benefits during and after construction.

Our SEE Strategy will be embedded into the culture of the project. Working with our supply chain and delivery partners, we'll deliver it by setting objectives and targets, implementing plans, and managing and monitoring data.

If our Development Consent Order is granted and when our delivery partners are onboard, we'll use our SEE Strategy's aims and objectives to support construction of the project. The SEE Strategy will be updated bi-annually to keep on top of the changing needs and priorities of our communities. There are three key themes that run throughout:

- The ambition to tackle inequality and create opportunities for all: in the workplace, in the classroom and in our supply chain.
- The commitment to work collaboratively with key stakeholders and other major projects in the region to adapt to evolving needs and priorities, and maximise outcomes for local communities and the wider construction industry.
- Our aim to lead by example and set the standard for building low-carbon infrastructure.

As well as working with key local stakeholders, the Lower Thames Crossing will keep on top of emerging Government initiatives such as Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIP) and Net Zero Strategy.

4. Ambitions

We have six ambitions for the Lower Thames Crossing to ensure it provides sustainable benefits to local communities and the construction and highways industries. We've set ourselves a number of targets (see pages 26-27) to help us achieve these.

Figure 1: SEE ambitions and descriptions



5. Objectives - Deliver a skills legacy

Objective

Create a higher-skilled community and improve training standards for building world-leading low-carbon infrastructure.

Summary

- Understand the skills gaps and availability of existing skills within local communities.
- Ensure a coordinated approach amongst the delivery partners to addressing skills and labour demand, and opportunities to upskill local people.
- Conduct regular monitoring and refinement of skills and labour forecasts as construction and operational plans develop and mature.
- Prepare annual Employment and Skills Plans to ensure new and emerging challenges are addressed throughout the delivery of the project.
- Upskill project workforce with industry training to support career progression and enable them to do their job more sustainably.
- Provide local communities with new industry related training to develop local skills and create better access to higher skilled jobs.
- Provide an early careers programme including opportunities for apprenticeships, traineeships, and jobs for newly-qualified graduates.
- Understand and update the current training curriculum and standards by incorporating more carbon and green skills information.
- Develop a carbon culture from the ground up.

Approach

Skills demand

The Lower Thames Crossing will take thousands of people to build it, creating a significant demand for a skilled workforce for the construction of the project. The scale of opportunities is huge and we're committed to changing industry standards to leave a lasting legacy not only for the region, but also for the wider construction industry.

To understand the demand, we have used previous National Highways projects and comparable infrastructure schemes to calculate workforce numbers. This showed that we will engage more than 22,000 people during construction, including 10,000 jobs at peak. This is made up of both direct and indirect jobs with roles varying from lower to higher skill levels.

There are also indirect opportunities for skills and employment opportunities arising from the project.

Figure 2: Direct jobs and departments

Those directly employed to deliver the project: these include, but are not limited to:

Site roles

Traffic marshalls	Rig operators	Site supervisors
Security	Crane operators	Formwork gangers
Chain operators	Tunnel operatives	Form workers/carpenters
Plant fitters	Tunnel boring machine (TBM) operators	Steel fixer gangers
Auto-electricians	Pick-up drivers	Surveyors
Electricians	Van drivers	Concrete gangs
Pipefitters	Plant operators	Tower crane operators
Welders	Loading shovel drivers	Telehandlers
Slings	Trucks/dumper drivers	Pump operators
Steel fixers	Banks person	Store managers
Steel erectors/cladders	Labourers	General operatives
Joiners	Ground workers	

Office departments

Engineering	Quantity surveying	Document control
Design/building Information modelling (BIM)	Contract management	IT/digital support
Surveying	Estimating	Business administration
Project management	Accounts	Human resources
Environment	Procurement & buying	Stakeholder and community engagement
Health, safety & wellbeing	Logistics management	Communications
Consents	Quality control	Social value
Data analyst		

Figure 3: Indirect jobs

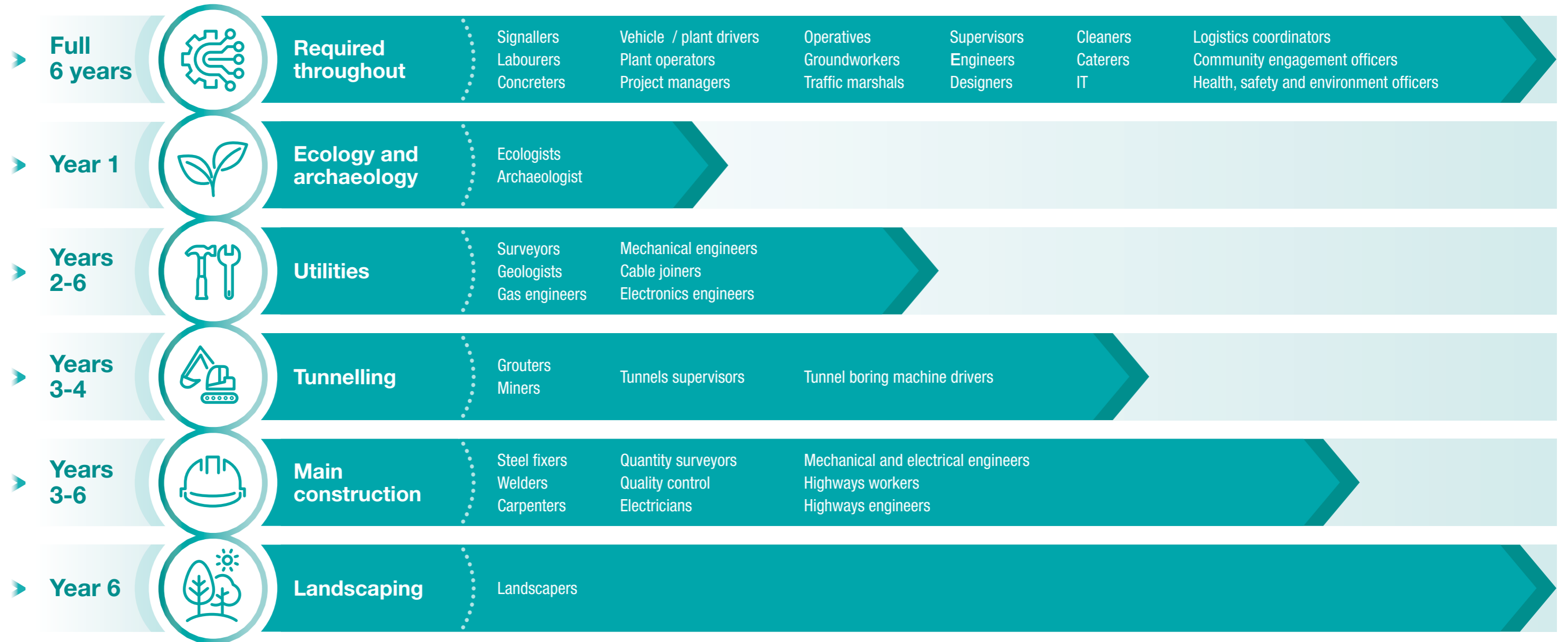
Secondary opportunities for businesses and organisations. These include, but are not limited to:

Secondary business opportunities

Accommodation	Leisure	Logistics
Catering	Retail	Cleaning
Office supplies	Manufacturing	Facilities

Here is an indicative timeline of the direct jobs that will be required during the six years of build for the Lower Thames Crossing

Figure 4: indicative direct jobs timeline



Before construction

To date, our focus has been on understanding local needs and priorities, which enables us to tailor our approach and plans for construction of the project. To do this we have been working closely with key stakeholders within the local communities and the South East/Thames Estuary region, including local authorities, the South East Local Enterprise Partnership

(SELEP), job brokerage services and other large infrastructure projects.

Our end goal is to ensure opportunities for local people are maximised by working together to train up and coordinate skilled work. We are also a member of several existing skills working groups (see figure 5).

Figure 5: Existing skills working groups and their purpose table

Ambition	Descriptions	Location
South East Major Projects Group (MPG)	Brings together organisations within the SELEP region, its partners, Government departments and other relevant bodies to ensure a local supply chain and workforce that will underpin the successful delivery of large infrastructure projects.	South East local authorities
Skills Sub-Group	Brings together skills leads from each of the MPG members to address skills needs and shortages. A skills report has been commissioned and a joint action plan is being developed.	South East local authorities
Skills Advisory Panel (SAP)	Brings together employers, skills providers and key local stakeholders to better understand and resolve skills mismatches at a local level. There are 36 SAPs across England as part of Mayoral Combined Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships.	South East local authorities
LTC Skills and Employment Working Group	Consists of skills professionals within each local authority who are a key consultee on the development and revisions to the annual Employment and Skills Plans that will be produced by our delivery partners.	Local authorities
Economic Development & Skills Partnership	A multi-agency partnership to ensure that local business and residents are aware of opportunities.	Thurrock
11-19 Strategy Group	Consists of head teachers in Thurrock with the aim of learning about opportunities and initiatives open to students within the borough.	Thurrock
Kent's Transport and Logistics Sector	Identifies potential national and local skill shortages within the transport and logistics sector and what partners in the area can do in support.	Kent

We are working closely with the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the SELEP's Skills Advisory Panel and other large infrastructure projects (Bradwell B, Tideway and HS2), to assess the skills that would be required to deliver the project.

Skills gap analysis

A comprehensive skills gap analysis will be carried out by our delivery partners upon contract award. It would be updated annually to identify emerging needs, trends and availability of skills across the tier 1 and tier 2 communities (as defined in chapter 6). This will inform the annual Employment and Skills Plan along with existing analysis such as the SELEP Skills Report, which has recently identified challenges and opportunities for jobs and skills across all sectors in the region over the next 15 years. It will include detailed projections for when additional skills will be required and a plan to ensure delivery risks are mitigated.

Developing local skills

We want to provide people with the tools to access higher skilled jobs, minimise the skills gap and maximise opportunities for local people to gain more meaningful employment. Our delivery partners will be required to proactively offer industry related training to local communities. This could involve working with existing skills and training services, such as DWP and local job centres, to offer training including Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) and CITB accredited courses.

Our delivery partners will also be required to provide industry specific qualifications to upskill the Lower Thames Crossing workforce. These may include national vocational qualifications (NVQs), health, safety and leadership qualifications and the future skills needed to deliver a greener economy.

Upskilling opportunities would be provided in a coordinated way that allows individuals to gain skills and experience working across different contracts on the project. The upskilling programme would also maximise opportunities to partner with other major projects or specialist training providers such as Transport for London's Tunnelling and Underground Construction Academy (TUCA).

To continue to improve industry best practice, tier 1 delivery partners* will be required to sign up to the CITB's National Skills Academy for Construction (NSAfC). This provides structure and direction to construction programmes to deliver consistent and high-quality training.

The NSAfC is one of 19 National Skills Academies supporting UK industries by developing training infrastructure to address sector-by-sector skills challenges.

The impacts and data from the NSAfC will be embedded into the Lower Thames Crossing's reporting cycle. It will include an independent industry expert who will work with us and our contractors to review outcomes and approaches on a quarterly basis and support them in meeting their skills needs.

Apprenticeships, traineeships and graduates

We recognise that an important area to develop skills and training will be through apprenticeships, traineeships and graduate opportunities. We want to attract and develop future talent, including early careers, those wanting to get back into work, or people looking for something new.

*Tier 1 delivery partners are the three of five management contacts who will build the new road. It consists of the Kent roads contract, tunnels contract and roads north of the Thames contract

Our delivery partners will be required to develop an Early Career Talent Strategy that will detail how they will:

- promote access to opportunities and resources within our local communities (local definition in chapter 6)
- develop support programmes and forums to support new entries into and on the project
- develop standards and courses to address the skills gap
- develop effective succession planning to make sure early career talent have the right skills and attributes to succeed in their training programme
- develop training programmes for staff managing early career talent to provide the right support and guidance.

The Early Career Talent Strategy will be an annex to the delivery partner's annual Employment and Skills Plan.

Carbon Academy

There is a greater urgency than ever to do things more sustainably, reduce carbon and transition into a green economy. This puts the Lower Thames Crossing in a prime position to influence and drive change and set the standard for the future of construction.

But this requires a workforce with the right knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to create a more sustainable society. They need to have skills in the low carbon and environmental goods and services sector and be able to help all businesses use natural resources efficiently and sustainably, plus be resilient to climate change.

We are developing a Low Carbon Strategy to look at exactly how we can build the project with the lowest emissions. This includes exploring materials, market and management, plus the development of the Carbon Academy.

The Carbon Academy aims to set the standard for the future of the construction and highways industries by incorporating new working practices and standards and updating and creating new education and training. We will work in partnership with industry professionals and local education and training providers to test and scale-up innovative ways of building and maintaining low-carbon infrastructure.

It would be rolled out through a web portal, designed to upskill and support those involved in building the Lower Thames Crossing. This would ensure everyone has the appropriate skills, tools and understanding to deliver the UK's greenest road.

It will be a platform for promoting the project's carbon ethos and sharing important information, such as training, technical guidance and tools. It will be developed ready for delivery and be continually refreshed and updated with learnings from our partners.

The Carbon Academy will live beyond the Lower Thames Crossing as a tool for industry, setting the standard for future projects to use and learn from. Our ambition is that it will:

- change the standard of careers for low-carbon construction
- upskill the industry for all jobs to be done more sustainably
- futureproof businesses
- create a behavioural change for the future of construction.

Create new jobs

Objective

Create new opportunities by breaking down barriers to employment and providing new and inclusive jobs.

Summary

- Work with local stakeholders, and education and training providers to identify needs and priorities, and support local communities into new work.
- Develop pre-employment programmes focused on providing job roles that are accessible to disadvantaged or underrepresented groups (see figure 8).
- Proactively engage existing work provisions to maximise opportunities for local people experiencing unemployment.
- Support and use existing skills and training services where possible.
- Work with and share learning and best practice across other large infrastructure projects to maximise the impacts across the region.

Approach

Local communities

A programme of this scale can have a huge impact on local communities, so we want to make sure local people have the best chance to benefit from the project. In addition to the work described in chapter 4, we have been liaising closely with local stakeholders to understand current needs and priorities within our communities so that we can best tailor our approach and plans during delivery.

We want at least 45% of our workforce to be recruited locally. Of this at least 20% are targeted to be from within our local authorities and the other 25% from within 20-miles of the project route.

Our delivery partners will be required to engage with local job brokerage services and education providers to advertise jobs and provide support and resource material for their networks.

We want to break down barriers to employment opportunities, so we will be liaising closely with our delivery partners and supply chain to ensure they have inclusive and accessible processes that:

- attract, recruit and retain people from a range of backgrounds; irrespective of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, transgender status, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or socioeconomic status (this list is not exhaustive)
- ensure the working culture, practice and environment is open and transparent
- consider and understand the diverse needs of customers and neighbouring communities

The delivery partners will maintain detailed and accurate records of all employment opportunities to measure and monitor progress against the SEE targets.

Defining local

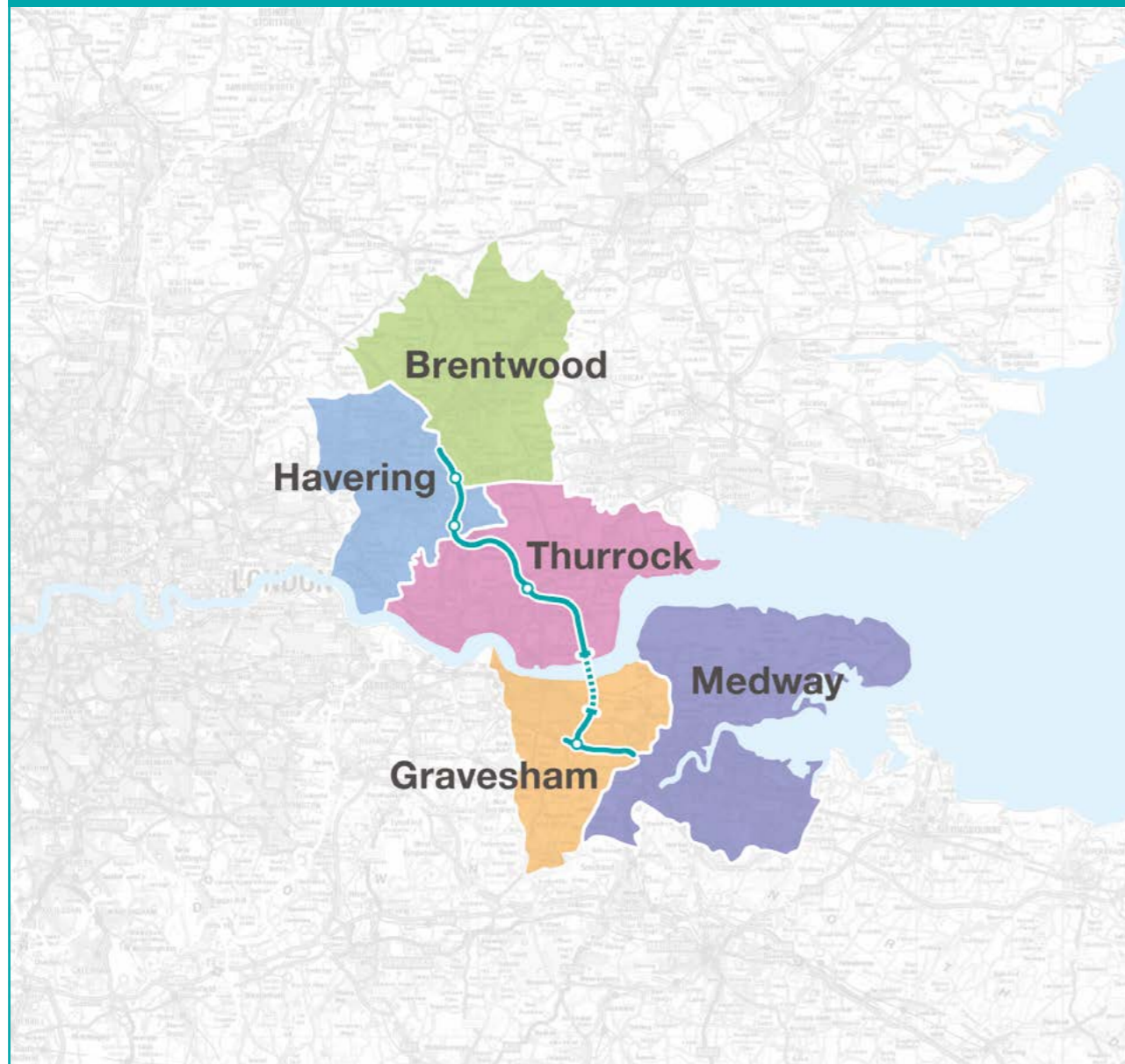
When recruiting for jobs, 'local' is defined in two ways; those living within one of the local authorities impacted by the construction of the new road (tier 1) and those who live within a 20-mile radius of the Lower Thames Crossing route or associated works (tier 2).

Tier 1 – local authorities

Postcodes that sit within the local authorities:

- South of the River Thames: Gravesham and Medway
- North of the River Thames: Thurrock, Havering and Brentwood

Figure 6: Tier 1 — local authority map



Tier 2 – within 20-miles of the project

Postcodes within a 20-mile radius of the project:

Figure 7: Tier 2 — indicative example of a 20-mile radius map



Placement programmes

The Lower Thames Crossing delivery partners will be required to develop pre-employment programmes for disadvantaged and underrepresented groups. To date, the groups identified with our key stakeholders can be found in figure 8. The pre-employment programmes must incorporate employability

skills, such as mock interviews, careers advice, digital training and a work experience placement designed to enhance knowledge and skills to support moving into a job role. They will also be required to offer guaranteed interviews to local job applicants from priority groups who meet the minimum criteria (see figure 8).

Figure 8:

Priority groups (not exhaustive)	Definitions
Care leavers	Someone who has spent time in the care of a local authority, such as foster or residential care.
Ex-offenders	Someone seeking paid work who has criminal convictions.
Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)	Someone who is unemployed and not receiving education or vocational training.
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)	Someone with special education needs, such as a learning difficulty or disability, that means they need special health or education support.
Ex-military	Someone who previously worked within the military forces, including impacted family members.
Adult learners	An adult who is 19 or over in education.
Homeless, or those at risk	Someone without a home or at risk of not having or losing their home.
Women returners	Women returning to work after an extended career break, such as raising a family.

Returners to work

The Lower Thames Crossing delivery partners will be required to proactively maximise opportunities for local people who are unemployed with returning to work on the project.

Working with other projects

We are working with other large infrastructure projects within the region to plan how we can maximise opportunities for local people. Our delivery partners will be expected to work collaboratively during construction, which could involve delivering recruitment events, placement programmes, a shared job brokerage or training up and coordinating skilled workers across multiple projects.

Sharing learnings and best practice will also be crucial to the success and impact across the region.

Inspire future careers

Objective

Assemble the next generation of talent through effective engagement with local students and educators.

Summary

- Prioritise engagement towards those education providers that are most affected by the project and areas of socio-economic disadvantage.
- Develop an inclusive education programme that is aligned to the needs of local education providers including:
 - delivering science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) workshops and activities in schools to educate and inspire future careers in construction, including skills needs and carbon/sustainability education.
 - providing careers advice and resources to young people and those looking for a career change.
- Develop work placement programmes in line with established courses and qualifications that provide practical experience of working on a large infrastructure project.
- Help to address the local tutor shortage using staff knowledge and expertise
- Work with and share learning and best practice across other large infrastructure projects to maximise impacts across the region.

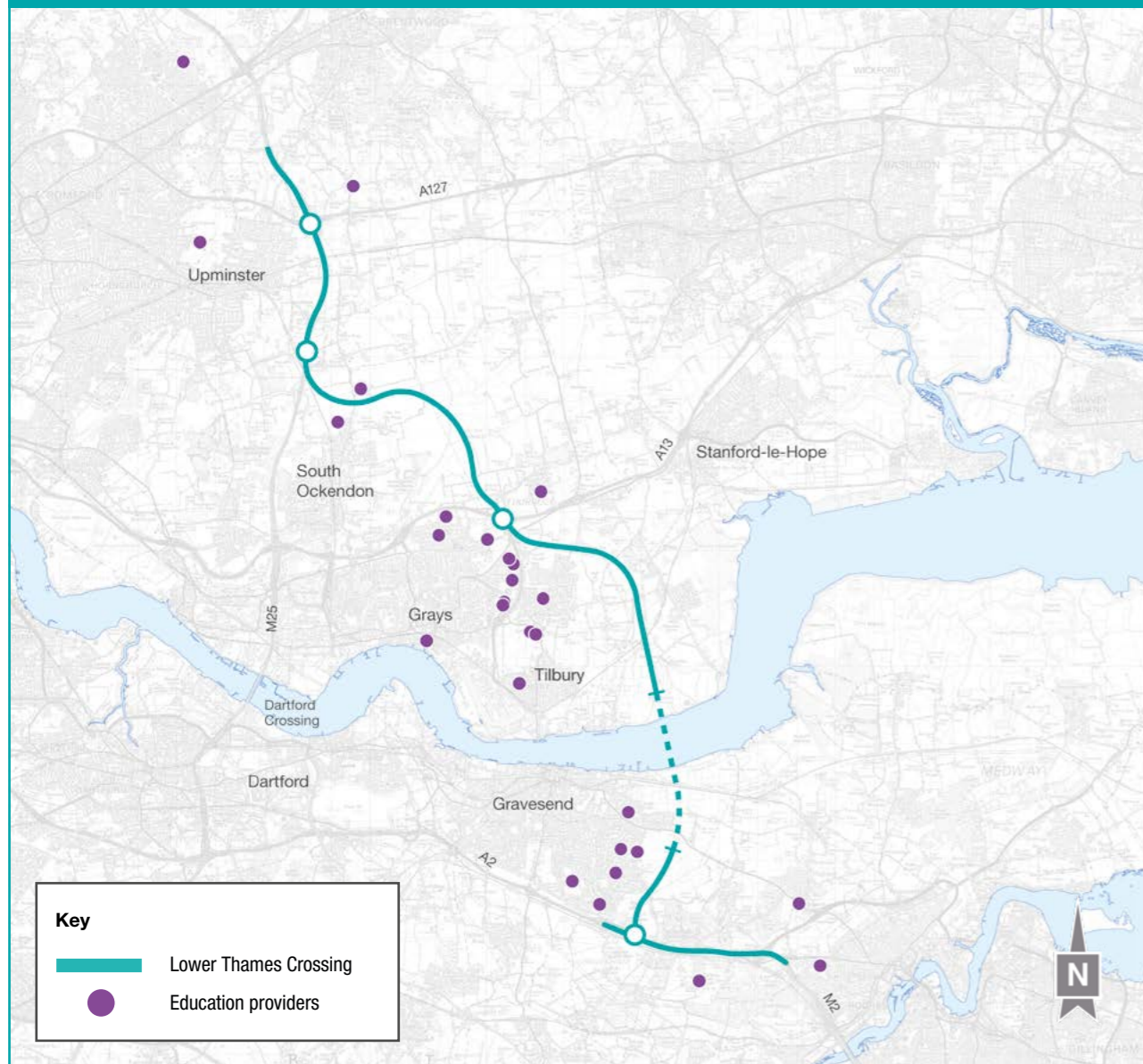
Approach

Local engagement

In the Lower Thames Crossing School Engagement Plan, local education providers have been arranged in a tier classification to understand how directly affected they could be by the project. The tiers are based on the anticipated construction impacts for noise, air quality, vibration and severance.

Our delivery partners will be partnered with a cluster of local schools, which they will prioritise their engagement with. These clusters will be made up of education providers most affected by the project and those from areas of socio-economic disadvantage, as referred by their local authority. Through this approach, the delivery partners will be able to work more closely with education providers, embed into their annual curriculum plans and maximise their engagement by measuring their impact. While we plan to assign clusters, their engagement will not be limited to this.

Figure 9: Indicative map of local education providers



Education programme

We are working in partnership with STEM Learning and The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) to develop an inclusive education programme to support both school and technical college educational needs. By using existing education providers, we'll be able to maximise our engagement by connecting with, and learning from, existing resources and networks, as well as using our own specialisms for creating innovative tools. We will also minimise the number of unnecessary contacts for schools and provide consistent employer engagement.

The education programme will provide support and training for those in education through five important delivery areas (see figure 10) and be made up of workshops, activities, careers advice, mentoring and resources.



Figure 10: Five education delivery areas

Work placement programmes

The education work placement programmes will be made up of work experience and T Level industry placements. It will offer at least one week's experience to students to support their careers education, while the industry placements will be designed to prepare students for the world of work.

T Levels follow GCSEs and are equivalent to 3 A-Levels. By incorporating them into the programme, we will be able to support students with further training and study while providing them with 315 hours (approximately 45 days) of work experience. We will have a variety of industry placements to offer, including but not limited to, construction and built environment, digital design, engineering, business and administration. The placements will be completed over a two-year course for students who have finished their GCSEs. T Levels sit alongside A-Levels and apprenticeships to give young people the opportunity to gain the industry, employability and technical skills needed to be an asset in the workplace. This route offers our contractors and supply chain an effective channel for recruitment, while giving young people exposure and experience into their chosen career paths.

We will work with education and training partners to make sure we are offering beneficial placements that provide positive experiences and opportunities for young people to use the skills they have learnt, as well as the chance to network and meet industry experts.

Ambassadors and advisors

To support both the education and work placement programmes, the project will support staff to become a mixture of both STEM Ambassadors and CEC Enterprise Advisors. STEM Ambassadors are volunteers from a wide range of science, technology, engineering and mathematical related jobs and disciplines, along with other general office and project support roles. They will offer their time and enthusiasm to schools, delivering activities and presentations to help bring STEM subjects to life, while demonstrating the value of them in careers.

CEC Enterprise Advisors will be members of staff who take their industry skills and knowledge and combine it with strategic thinking to support career leaders to improve secondary schools with their Gatsby Benchmarks.

What are Gatsby Benchmarks?

A framework of eight guidelines to improve careers provision, Gatsby Benchmarks have been adopted as part of the Government's Careers Strategy and statutory guidance for schools and colleges.

Support for educators

The *SELEP November 2021 Major Projects Skills and Employment report* details how there is a shortage of tutors for technical subjects, such as construction and engineering, across the South East region, particularly those who are able to teach emerging and evolving skills*. Working with the SELEP and other infrastructure projects, our delivery partners will be required to release staff for teaching to help tackle these shortages. They will do this through offering staff Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training and courses or equivalent to prepare them for the classroom. In addition, to address evolving skills they will offer specific support to tutors through the ambassador and advisor programmes.

Working with other projects

We are working with stakeholders and other large infrastructure projects within the region to maximise our engagement with both students and educators. Our delivery partners will be expected to work collaboratively to maximise outcomes and share best practice.

*Emerging skills refer to those forecast by infrastructure projects across the South East region. Evolving skills refer to new technologies and working methods such as those relating to solar, hydrogen, carbon.

Support business growth

Objective

Provide local businesses and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with the tools to win new work and maximise economic benefits during and after construction.

Summary

- Develop a Supply Chain Directory for our delivery partners to build a supply chain with local businesses.
- Spend at least £1 in every £3 of construction budget with SMEs.
- Have early engagement with delivery partners to identify gaps and develop plans to support business growth.
- Ensure procurement platforms support local businesses and SMEs and provide clear visibility of opportunities.
- Deliver a supply chain support programme that upskills businesses by providing guidance and training to build more resilience and improve capability and capacity.
- Have direct engagement with companies and business networks and participate in existing and new events and initiatives to promote opportunities.
- Pay supply chain invoices within a maximum of 30 days (per tier).

Approach

Supply Chain Directory

To help SMEs and local businesses access work opportunities we've developed a Supply Chain Directory. This list of local businesses and their specialisms will be given to our delivery partners, making it simple for them to build their supply chain with local businesses and SMEs.

SME spend

In line with the Department for Transport's Small and Medium Enterprise Action Plan, we will work with contractors and suppliers to track SME spend throughout the supply chain. This will provide transparency of the project's contribution towards the wider Government SME agenda for £1 in every £3 of direct and indirect construction budget. All of our delivery partners will be required to report on SME and local business spend.

Procurement platform

Our delivery partners will be required to use CompeteFor as their procurement platform. This is a free supplier platform that enables businesses to compete for contract opportunities. By using this platform and encouraging local businesses and SMEs to register, it will make sure opportunities are advertised fairly and transparently.

Promoting opportunities in the supply chain

We're working closely with local authorities, the SELEP and networking organisations to understand local business needs and priorities. This will help us to build our supply chain and learn how, together with our delivery partners, we can best support local businesses and SMEs.

Our delivery partners will be required to continue working closely with stakeholders and other major projects in the region to identify opportunities to collaborate and support businesses to win work on contracts beyond the Lower Thames Crossing. Figure 11 highlights networking organisations and major projects.

Figure 11: Business networking organisations and major projects that can promote opportunities in the supply chain

Organisation	Location
Essex Chambers of Commerce	Essex
Kent Invicta Chambers of Commerce	Kent
British Chambers of Commerce	National
Federation of Small Businesses	National
I-Construct	National
Thurrock Business Board	Thurrock
Havering Means Business	Havering
Basildon for Business	Basildon
SELEP Major Projects Group	Regional

Contract engagement

We will work with bidders for the delivery contracts through the tendering phase and after the contract award to make sure they are committed to delivering the project with local businesses and SMEs using tools like the Supply Chain Directory. By engaging with contractors in this way, we aim to identify gaps in the supply chain that will enable us to deliver appropriate training and upskilling initiatives to support local businesses and SMEs.

Once contracts have been awarded, each of the main works contractors will be required to take part in one-to-one sessions with business networking organisations to break down barriers and help a greater number of local businesses and SMEs enter their supply chains.

In addition, the delivery partners will be encouraged to develop and use a local amenities network to increase the number of local businesses working with the project.

Supply Chain Support Programme

A programme will operate throughout the construction period to provide support to local businesses and SMEs. This will include providing advice, facilitating business-to-business mentoring, and supporting networking. It is hoped this will improve resilience and continue to develop their ability to bid for future contracts.

Our delivery partners will be required to prepare a Supply Chain Support Programme Delivery Plan to demonstrate how this has identified and targeted local and regional priorities and opportunities. They will also need to show how it has been designed to complement and support existing initiatives being led by stakeholders.

We are currently working with the Supply Chain Sustainability School (SCSS) to provide local businesses and SMEs with the advice and skills they need to make the most of the project's opportunities such as events and initiatives, and training.

By working with, and supporting, the local SME sector in these ways, we will maximise the number of SMEs in our supply chain and create a lasting legacy of skilled and capable businesses ready to service other major projects within the region and beyond.

Supply chain payment

Our delivery partners will be required to pay all supply chain invoices within a maximum of 30 days. They will also monitor payments across all tiers of the supply chain to demonstrate that the following targets have been met; tier 2 within 19 days, tier 3 within 23 days and tier 4 and above within 30 days. This will be essential to achieve successful integrated working and creating a strong, resilient and sustainable supply chain.

Supplier tiers

This is the process of organising suppliers into tiers based on their level in our supply chain. Tier 1 refers to the Lower Thames Crossing delivery partners and tiers 2-4 refer to other organisations who supply labour, materials, goods or services.

9. Reporting – targets and monitoring

Reporting

To achieve our skills legacy, we have worked with our local stakeholders to set a series of SEE targets for the construction of the project. The SEE strategy's targets, as well as the aims and objectives, will be written into all delivery partner contracts, the specialist contracts (for example, utilities or archaeology) and their supply chain. Each will be required to submit an annual Employment and Skills Plan that aligns with their key performance indicators (KPIs) and the SEE strategy.

We will ensure that the project is setting the standard for supporting skills, employment, training and career development. We will work with bidders for the delivery partner contracts through the tendering phase and after the contract has been awarded to make sure they are committed to delivering on the SEE strategy's focus areas.

In chapter 10, appendix 1, you will find a summary table detailing the main deliverables before and during construction.

Minimum targets

To meet our ambitions, each of our delivery partners will contribute to, and be measured against, the targets (shown on the right) during construction. These figures are based on estimated contract values and lessons learnt from other large infrastructure projects and they are the overall minimum target. Financial incentives will also be written into contracts to not only meet but exceed important targets.



Figure 12: SEE minimum targets and activities

To highlight the importance of the strategy, and to set a high standard for our contractors and supply chain, we are already actively delivering against these focus areas, with a number of initiatives, recruitment drives and events having already taken place.

Targets and descriptions

Below are the descriptions of each target.

Figure 13: SEE targets and descriptions	
Target	Description
Training for local communities	Through new accredited and non-accredited training opportunities, we want to provide at least 350 local people with the tools to access higher skilled jobs. Examples of training include site safety, CITB training and greener skills for more sustainable ways of working.
Industry skills	By providing employees with new industry qualifications, we want to upskill our workforce to support their career progression and/or their abilities to do their job more sustainably. At least 500 employees will be supported to attain new technical or occupational skills, including national vocational qualifications (NVQs), health, safety and leadership qualifications and future skills needed to deliver a greener economy.
Apprentices (60% new/40% existing)	Apprenticeship courses offer invaluable qualifications alongside on-the-job experience. We will offer more than 400 new apprenticeships – 60% for new employees and 40% for existing employees to support career progression.
Graduates/trainees 26-week retention	We will support more than 290 people through our graduate and trainee programmes that offer meaningful support and career development.
Returners to work 26-week retention	We want to help address unemployment within our communities by getting over 500 local people into work on the project. A returner to work is somebody who was unemployed before starting the new job.
Pre-employment programmes	We want to breakdown work related barriers for local people. Our pre-employment programmes will offer more than 650 people valuable training and work experience and provide them with the tools to get into a fulfilling career.
Education engagement	We aim to inspire the next generation of construction professionals. Through an inclusive education programme, we'd like to provide at least 5,000 hours of engagement to raise awareness of STEM subjects and employment opportunities, while supporting students with their education and development into the working world.
Support to educators	We want to help address the local tutor shortage by using our staff knowledge and expertise. We pledge to spend at least 2,000 hours supporting and tutoring educators to help deliver effective learning, careers engagement and training to students.

Target	Description
Education work placements	Our education work placements will offer valuable work experience to over 470 students, supporting them with their careers education, preparing them for the world of work and growing a future pipeline of talent for the project and wider region.
SME spend	Through spending more than £1 in every £3 of construction budget with SMEs, we will support local businesses to gain work on the project and build resilience to maximise local economic and business growth during and after construction.
Business upskilling	We aim to upskill more than 1,000 local businesses by providing them with the skills needed to bid for work on the project and future contracts. Through mentoring, workshops and training sessions, we will improve their capability and capacity to gain new work not only on the project, but within the wider region.
Supply chain payment	To create a strong, resilient and sustainable supply chain, we will ensure invoices are paid within a maximum of 30 days (per tier).

Monitoring

As part of the project reporting mechanisms, all delivery partners and supply chain partners will be required to complete a regular report to effectively monitor target outcomes and impacts during construction. The findings from the reports will be discussed in a quarterly SEE forum and published in an annual outcomes report. The data will be reviewed at a project, contract and local authority level.

The figures below show an example of the types of monitoring data we will be capturing:

<p>Deliver a skills legacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # industry skills qualifications # residents undertaken training within a 20-mile radius of the project boundary # new apprentices # existing apprentices # graduates # trainees # green skills training # carbon literacy courses # short courses # weeks of training (apprentices, traineeships & graduates) 	<p>Create new jobs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # workforce who live within local authorities # workforce who live within a 20-mile radius of the project boundary # newly employed job starts # newly employed job starts who have sustained 26 weeks of retention # pre-employment programme days
<p>Inspire future careers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # work placement weeks # hours of school engagement # hours of support for educators # T Level placements # hours of SEND support <div data-bbox="178 1570 439 1669" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Key # the number of</p> </div>	<p>Support business growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £ spent with SMEs # supply chain invoices paid within contractual timeframes (by tier) # supply chain procurement events held # carbon training sessions # hours of business support and mentoring provided # of businesses supported # supply chain workshops # businesses from Supply Chain Directory in supply chain

Figure 14: SEE monitoring data

10. Appendices

Appendix 1: Main deliverables before and during construction

LTC SEE objectives	Prior to construction	During construction
<p>Deliver a skills legacy by creating a higher-skilled community and changing training standards for building low-carbon infrastructure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Work with key stakeholders, industry professionals, other large projects and delivery partners to understand local needs and priorities, map common skill gaps and monitor labour forecasts. ■ Develop a Skills and Employment Working Group to determine a coordinated approach to addressing skills and labour demand within local communities. ■ Engage with local skills and training providers to understand local industry training needs. ■ Develop an Early Careers Strategy and early careers training programme. ■ Delivery partners to develop their first annual Employment and Skills Plan. ■ Develop the Carbon Academy through partnerships to understand what is available now to fill in any gaps and change the standard of carbon education and training. ■ Begin to understand and develop new qualifications, training programmes and apprenticeship standards where required. ■ Develop communications campaigns to promote relevant skills, education, employment and training opportunities to local communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Define partnerships to support the delivery of the SEE strategy. ■ Main works contractors must sign-up to the National Skills Academy. ■ Provide local communities with new industry related training opportunities. ■ Upskill project workforce with industry training. ■ Run recruitment and training programmes within communities, including for skilled roles, apprenticeships, graduate and training programmes. ■ Regularly monitor and refine our skills and labour forecasts as construction and operational plans mature and update annual Employment and Skills Plans. ■ Continued liaison with working groups to support changing needs and priorities around skills, reviewing plans and maximising opportunities. ■ Regularly review and update the online Carbon Academy to cultivate content, including learnings from delivery partners. ■ Continue to develop new qualifications, training programmes and apprenticeship standards where required.
<p>Create new jobs by breaking down barriers to employment and providing new and inclusive opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Work with local stakeholders, existing work, education and training providers to identify local job needs and priorities. ■ Use existing working groups, pre-employment programmes, and skills and training services, to plan and prepare for construction. ■ Develop a placement programme focused on providing job roles that are accessible to disadvantaged or underrepresented groups. ■ Work with other large infrastructure projects and share learnings and best practice to maximise impacts and outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Define and use job role advertising/advertisement process. ■ Run pre-employment programmes for disadvantaged or under-represented groups. ■ Ongoing engagement with existing work provisions to maximise opportunities for local people returning to work. ■ Continue to liaise with working groups, pre-employment, and education programmes to support SEE outcomes. ■ Monitor and report on recruitment channels and outcomes. ■ Continue to work, and share learnings and best practice, with other large infrastructure projects to maximise impacts and outcomes.

LTC SEE objectives	Prior to construction	During construction
<p>Inspire future careers through effective engagement with local students and educators.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Work with STEM and the Careers and Enterprise Company to develop an education programme, including SEND. ■ Start to develop a STEM Ambassadors and Enterprise Advisors network within the project. ■ Begin employer engagement with students, educators and those looking for employment. ■ Develop education work placement programmes, including work experience and T Level placements. ■ Develop a School Engagement Plan that details our approach towards those most affected by the project and from an area of socio-economic disadvantage. ■ Share learning and best practice across other major projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Embed education programme with schools. ■ Run an inclusive STEM programme, providing information and digital resources for students and educators. ■ Continue partnerships with STEM and the Career and Enterprise Company to monitor impacts (not just hours). ■ Use skilled workforce and expertise for tutoring educators. ■ Deliver, monitor and report on the education work placement programmes and T Levels. ■ Monitor and report on engagement and outcomes.
<p>Support business growth by providing the tools to win new work and maximise economic benefits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop an Supply Chain Directory to maximise the number of local businesses and SMEs within the supply chain. ■ Learn from and use existing organisations to understand needs, priorities, and best approach. ■ Work with the SCSS to provide local businesses with mentoring and training. ■ Develop a Supply Chain Support Programme Delivery Plan. ■ Raise awareness of procurement platform ‘CompeteFor’ to encourage local businesses and SMEs to register. ■ Run programmes and events for early engagement with local businesses and SMEs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure all work opportunities are published on CompeteFor to ensure they are advertised fairly and transparently. ■ Continue to run support programmes and events for opportunities to join the supply chain. ■ Develop a supply chain mentoring programme to provide continuous training and learning to SMEs and local businesses. ■ Make sure all activities and their impacts are monitored and evaluated in a consistent way that demonstrates the value to communities and the local and regional economy.

Appendix 2: Related documents

There are a number of documents related or connected to the SEE strategy, including:

- **Lower Thames Crossing Early Career Talent Strategy**
Internal document that will detail our apprenticeship, traineeship and graduate programme plans.
- **Lower Thames Crossing Wider Economics Impact Report**
This will assess the wider impact of the project on skills and employment within the immediate and regional economy, and be published with the project’s Development Consent Order planning application.
- **Lower Thames Crossing Supplier Guide**
This will detail what a supplier will need to work on the project – currently being developed.
- **Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission report: 2050 vision**
Sets out an ambitious vision and delivery plan for north Kent, south Essex and east London up to 2050. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/718805/2050_Vision.pdf
- **SELEP March 2021 Skills Report**
Identifies challenges and opportunities for jobs and skills across all sectors in the region over the next 15 years. www.southeastlep.com/app/uploads/2021/03/SELEP-Local-Skills-Report-March-2021-FINAL.pdf
- **Major Projects in the SELEP Area November 2021 Skills and Employment report**
This identifies the challenges and opportunities the SELEP region is likely to face in meeting the demand for jobs and skills across all sectors of employment over the next 15 years as a result of the range of emerging major projects. www.southeastlep.com/app/uploads/2022/03/Mace_SELEP-Major-Projects-Skills-and-Employment_March22.pdf
- **Department for Transport’s Small and Medium Enterprise Action Plan**
This details the Government’s action plan for improving business opportunities for SMEs – assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1008497/dft-small-and-medium-enterprise-action-plan-june-2021.pdf
- **Lower Thames Crossing Lowest Carbon Strategy**
Currently being developed.

Appendix 3: Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
LTC	Lower Thames Crossing
SEE	Skills, Education and Employment
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
SELEP	South East Local Enterprise Partnership
EDSP	Economic Development Skills Partnership
SAP	Skills Advisory Panel
MPG	Major Projects Group
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
CITB	Construction Industry Training Board
NSAfc	National Skills Academy for Construction
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths
CEC	The Careers and Enterprise Company
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
NEETs	Not in Education, Employment or Training
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SCSS	Supply Chain Sustainability School
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
CPD	Continuing Professional Development

If you need help accessing this or any other National Highways information, please call **0300 123 5000** and we will help you.

© Crown copyright 2022.

You may re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence:

visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/

write to the **Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU**, or email psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Mapping (where present): © Crown copyright and database rights 2021 OS 100030649. You are permitted to use this data solely to enable you to respond to, or interact with, the organisation that provided you with the data. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.

This document is also available on our website at www.nationalhighways.co.uk

For an accessible version of this publication please call **0300 123 5000** and we will help you.

If you have any enquiries about this publication email info@highwaysengland.co.uk or call **0300 123 5000***. Please quote the National Highways publications code **PR##/22**.

National Highways creative job number BED22_0058

*Calls to 03 numbers cost no more than a national rate call to an 01 or 02 number and must count towards any inclusive minutes in the same way as 01 and 02 calls.

These rules apply to calls from any type of line including mobile, BT, other fixed line or payphone. Calls may be recorded or monitored.

Printed on paper from well-managed forests and other controlled sources when issued directly by National Highways.

Registered office Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford GU1 4LZ

National Highways Limited registered in England and Wales number 09346363