

Freeport East Innovation Strategy

March 2025

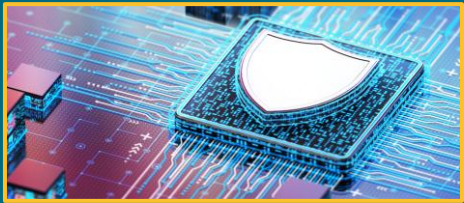
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1.0 The Innovation Opportunity at Freeport East

Freeport East will act as a convener and catalyst to accelerate the development of innovative products and services by local businesses, leveraging its unique assets and existing innovation support.

Fund



We have funds to unlock innovation and commercialisation through our public and private partners – e.g. our Cyber Innovate to Elevate programme with Essex Uni

Connect



We are engaging and strengthening the ties across academia and industry partners including the Universities and Innovation hubs in the East of England

Attract



Located next to 8 innovation clusters covering 4 sectors, 829 businesses and £3.2bn turnover, we will use this to attract investment into the region.

Deploy



Centred around one of the UK's most extensive port ecosystems, we will facilitate innovation to drive productivity and tackle social/economic disparities.

2.0 Our Innovation Strategy

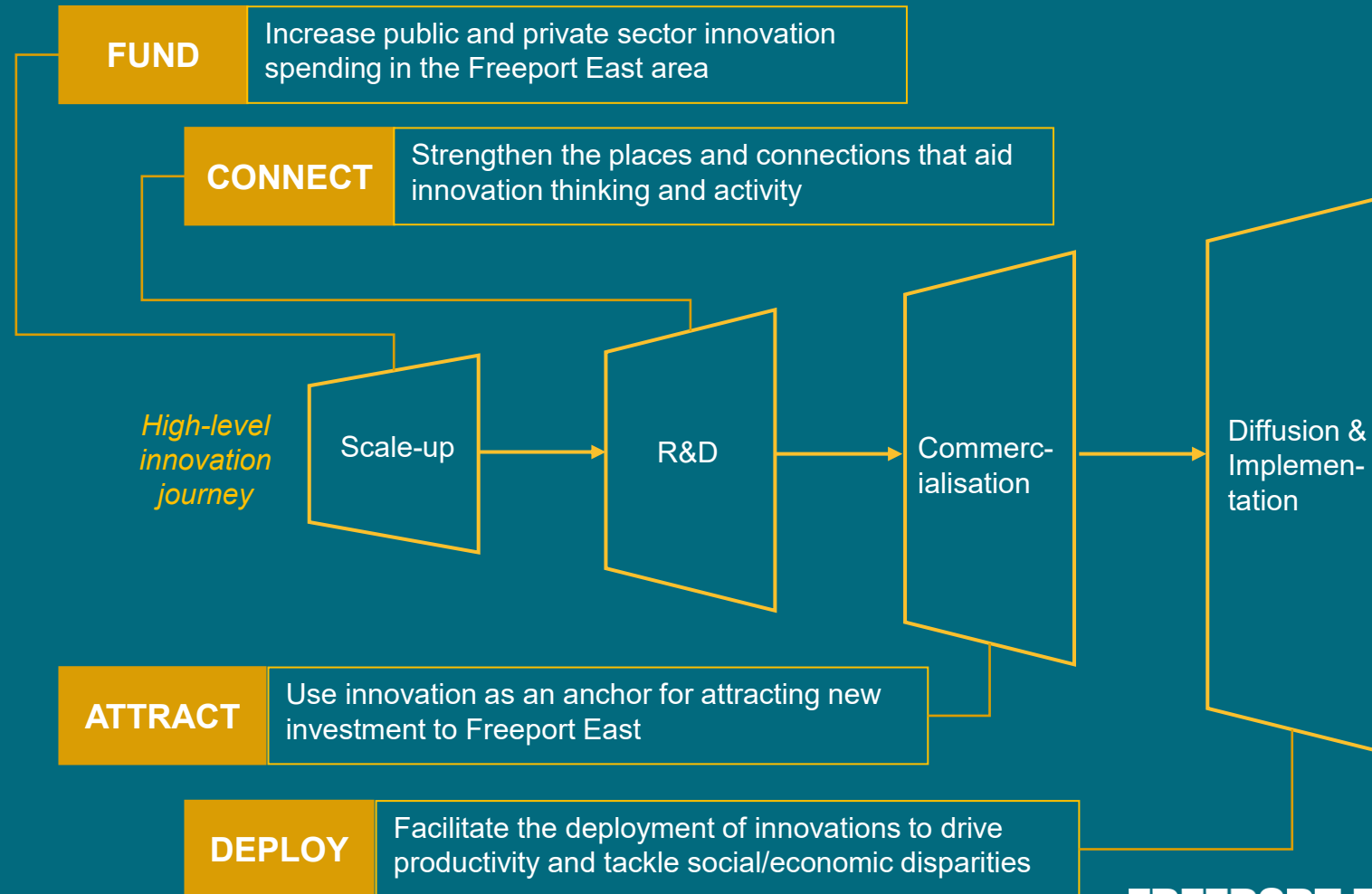
A four-point strategy that responds to needs across the innovation journey

Our high-level theory of change:

IF Freeport East acts as an innovation catalyst to enhance and build on existing local innovation initiatives...

THEN local innovative businesses will be more successful in developing and selling innovative products and services....

BECAUSE they will have better access to strategic **FUNDING**, more **CONNECTIONS** with partners, increased likelihood of **ATTRACTING** investment, and more opportunities to **DEPLOY** their services/products in key markets.



2.1 FUND Increase public and private sector innovation spending in the Freeport East area

Outcomes

200 SMEs supported to secure innovation funding by 2033

£10m allocated by FPE to support local innovative businesses by 2033

30 business-academic partnerships supported to secure innovation funding by 2033

Activities

- Allocate FPE's funds to support businesses to innovate products or services
- Provide advice/support to help industry and academic collaborations secure innovation funds for local business development
- Leverage FPE's access to Government innovation networks to secure funding for local businesses



Work undertaken to date - examples

First round of programme funds totalling almost £1m have been completed and we have awarded grants of £985k+ to local businesses from our Innovation & Skills and Clean Growth Funds.



Existing initiatives being leveraged - examples



ANGLIA
CAPITAL GROUP



UK Research
and Innovation

Innovate UK

2.2 CONNECT

Strengthen the physical and virtual places and connections that aid innovation thinking and activity, particularly in areas less well served currently

Outcomes

25

Innovation events by 2033 that bring together innovators, local businesses and academia.

3

Innovation centres established in the Freeport East Area.

3

Active place-based Innovation Clusters driving local innovation and identity.

Activities

- Create innovation centres at Gateway 14 in Stowmarket, in Harwich and elsewhere, to establish new connections between local business, academia and wider innovation landscape.
- Act as a node for the existing Connected Innovation Network (25 centres across Norfolk and Suffolk) to strengthen connections across business, academia and beyond.
- Strengthen connections between innovation centres, to strengthen the local innovation offer to businesses.



Examples – work undertaken to date

Freeport East is active in the regional and national innovation landscape and has successfully brokered a range of new partnerships, including:

- Shoreside Power from Optimised Hydrogen Lifecycle (SPOHL): - a £3m project;
- PALLETS – a £1m project; 3) Hydrogen Zero Emission Maritime (HyZEM) – a £1.44m project

Existing initiatives being leveraged



2.3 ATTRACT

USE INNOVATION AS AN ANCHOR FOR ATTRACTING NEW INVESTMENT TO FREEPORT EAST

Outcomes

£750m new investment attracted into Freeport East by 2033.

30 new businesses attracted into the region by 2033

Activities

- Build a new dedicated Freeport East Innovation Cluster to attract/retain investment in key sectors
- Freeport East –chaired bimonthly Inward Investment Group meeting with all local partners, to coordinate and liaise on FDI
- Showcase opportunities in new sectors such as green hydrogen, digital and clean energy – including by undertaking strategic analysis
- Support potential inward investors to connect to existing innovation networks
- Provide first-rate aftercare for landed FDI



Examples – work undertaken to date

- FPE's first FDI, Rux Energy UK Ltd (first overseas subsidiary of an Australian company), focused on solutions for improved storage and distribution of hydrogen . First staff hired and office opened in Harwich.
- FPE's second FDI, Assan Panel, Türkiye (part of Kibar Holding) £45M investment. 100 new jobs to be created. Planning consent on Gateway 14

Existing initiatives being leveraged



2.4 DEPLOY

Work to facilitate the deployment of innovations across our region to drive productivity and tackle local social and economic disparities

Outcomes

50

Businesses supported to leverage new innovations to develop innovative new products or services

3

Innovation partnerships established that bring new technological innovations to local businesses and communities.

Activities

- Identify opportunities for local businesses to deploy innovations in mobility, clean energy, healthcare, and education into local service delivery
- Facilitate local businesses to secure commercial contracts for such deployments, working with UKRI, IUKBG, IUKBC, Catapults, DWP, both LSIPs, Schools, NHS Trusts, Health Innovation East), and other third sector organisations



Examples – work undertaken to date

- Innovation & Skills and Clean Energy Funds - £c.1m awarded in the first round across 15 projects
- Harwich Innovation Cluster SG supported
- Gateway 14 Skills & Innovation Centre to be supported

Existing initiatives being leveraged



Department
for Work &
Pensions

3.0 Innovation Assets Accessible to FPE businesses

Businesses locating in FPE can access a range of world-class innovation assets

- Test facilities/lab
- Office space
- Advice & networks
- Funding

	Energy	Agri-Tech & -Food	AI / Digital	Adv. Manufacturing	X-Cutting
FPE Area	ORE Catapult, incl. Fit 4 Offshore Renewables ●●	- Agri-Tech East ● - Essex Plant Innovation Centre ●	- Stowmarket Innovation Gateway ●●● - Adastral Park / Innovation Martlesham ●●● - Knowledge Gateway ●● - Digital Forum, Colchester ●● - Tech East ●	- New Anglia Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering (NAAME) ●● - Hetzel Engineering Centre ●●	- University of Suffolk Innovation Labs ● - Sudbury/Stowmarket Innovation Labs ●
Wider Geography	- Orbis Energy CEFAS ● - East of England Energy Group (EEEGR) ● - East Wind ● - Hydrogen East ●	- Broadland Food and Innovation Centre ●●● - Norwich Research Park ●●●	Smart Emerging Technologies Institute (SETI) – UEA ●●		- MENTA ●● - Framlingham Technology Centre ●● - Scottow Enterprise Park ●● - Akcela ●● - Anglia Capital Group ●

4.1 Case Study – Completed Innovation Activity

£1M Freeport East Clean Growth and Innovation & Skills Funds

- The Clean Growth Fund provides financial assistance to local businesses focussed on clean energy and other priority industry sectors.
- The Innovation and Skills Fund focuses on skills and innovation access in underserved communities.
- £1m has been awarded to offer support to small and growing businesses under both funds, fostering opportunities for new innovations and skills in high potential sectors (incl. green energy.)



Freeport East Clacton Event Inspires Young People about Opportunities in Freight & Logistics

- In 2024, Freeport East with the Connected Places Catapult and Clacton Coastal Academy organised an industry workshop followed by a judged youth hackathon / pitching event in Clacton.
- The event showcased a range of careers in the freight and logistics sector inspiring young people to consider exciting career opportunities.
- The event was supported by the Department for Transport through the Freight Innovation Cluster operated by the Catapult.
- Major employers also attended incl. Hutchison Ports UK, Colchester Institute, and DWP.



4.2 Case Study – Planned Innovation Activity

Freeport East and Mid Suffolk District Council agree £18m funding package for Gateway 14 Skills & Innovation Centre

- £18.8m has been agreed to create a Skills & Innovation Centre at Gateway 14 in Stowmarket – the latest development there to support business, create jobs, and boost the local economy.
- Mid Suffolk District Council's plan for the three-storey centre at Gateway 14, part of the Freeport East site, includes:
 - office space for high growth start-ups,
 - collaboration spaces,
 - training and meeting rooms, and
 - a café.



Harwich Innovation Cluster

- The [Harwich Clean Energy & Maritime Innovation Cluster](#) offers collaborative opportunities for local businesses, with recent developments on clean energy and with local industry partners incl. RWE, Firefly Fuels & HCS.
- A recent report by sector specialists [Opergy Group](#) identified the potential steps to be taken to support the town's progress to becoming a national leader in clean energy, including the potential for an eventual new iconic multi-million-pound innovation hub.
- Freeport East has also set up the [Harwich Innovation Hub](#) with Shared Prosperity Fund Support from Tending DC.



5.0 Get In Touch

Check out our website for further information

- www.freeporteast.com

Email us at:

- enquiries@freeporteast.co.uk