

## **The Thames Estuary Growth Board Selects MediaLink to Support Ambition for Adding Up to £115 Billion to UK Economy**

*Hires the Strategic Advisory Firm for Digital Infrastructure Analysis, with Goal to Bolster Media & Creative Industries with £3.7 Billion, among Other Development Initiatives*

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LONDON--(BUSINESS WIRE)--The Thames Estuary Growth Board (TEGB) announced today it has hired strategic advisory firm MediaLink, an Ascential company, to handle a through-the-line analysis of the region's digital landscape, which will support an explosion of development across the media, production, entertainment, leisure, energy, housing, river crossing, river freight, and education sectors and is expected to create 1.5 million new jobs by 2050 across the region.

The Thames Estuary Growth Board (TEGB) has launched a project plan, one of the largest of its kind in Europe, stretching along the Thames Estuary embracing South Essex, East London and North Kent – a geography of some 1,000 square miles and home to approximately 3.5 million people. The plan, backed by the UK Government and nineteen local authorities across the Thames Estuary, is targeting an increase of £115 billion by 2050 back into the UK economy as a result of private and public investment.

Thames Estuary Envoy Kate Willard OBE, who chairs the TEGB, said, “We are ambitious about catalysing excellent digital infrastructure in the Thames Estuary and accelerating investment in the right areas for the benefit of residents, workers and visitors. It is key to our action plan, ‘The Green Blue,’ and we are actively establishing the right partnerships to make that vision reality. MediaLink capably demonstrated the ability, experience, resources and capacity to deliver everything outlined in our project specification, and we look forward to working with them to achieve that aim.”

A robust digital infrastructure will serve as the foundation for all entities in the Thames Estuary region to experience successful economic, cultural, and commercial growth that aligns with “The Green Blue” initiatives as defined by the Board. MediaLink’s work will have an outsized impact on the growth, development and leadership status of the UK’s media and entertainment industries and is expected to help add 50,000 jobs in the creative economy. The work will contribute to the growth board’s work with the London Resort, which has had its development consent order recently approved by the UK government. It will also support the £3.7 billion economic programme to boost the creative industries underpinned by the Thames Estuary Production Corridor, which includes the building of more than 1,000,000 square feet of new film studios in Dagenham and Purfleet. In addition, the digital strategy will feed into all other aspects of the TEGB’s long-term plans, including the creation of a hydrogen facility and thousands of new homes.

“The scale of growth of the project that the TEGB has undertaken in the UK is enormous and unprecedented for both the post-COVID economy at large and for the vibrant future of the creative industry in the UK, with its strong ties to work in the US,” said Michael Kassan, Chairman and CEO of MediaLink. “We’re honored to have the opportunity to tap into the insights, strategic know-how and operator experience of our global team, leveraging their unparalleled understanding of media, marketing, entertainment and technology to create a digital infrastructure that hits the sweet spot of satisfying both commercial objectives and consumer needs. The challenge is ambitious, and we couldn’t be more excited to take it on.”

Ray Mia, lead on the TEGB’s digital infrastructure project and the Thames Estuary Production Corridor as well as President of Free Turn Audio and founder of Jacaranda Music Group, added, “We plan to build a new regional digital

highway that will ensure local businesses can out compete regional and global rivals, creating a best-in-class work environment to meet the demands of future work-places, as well as the massive opportunities this will bring. Our goal for the creative industries is to build the foundations for industry-leading companies across a variety of sectors including film, television, fashion, theatre, dance, gaming and music – backed by gold-standard facilities, services and connectivity and plugged directly into an expanding global entertainment market.

“The work is not just about the creative industries – we have many sectors, industries and communities this work will benefit from. This is about skills training, routes to careers and place-building built on strong digital economies. It is very clear what our objectives are: scalability, sustainability and longevity. Kate’s vision is an outstanding idea of the future, and I know Michael and the MediaLink team are the ideal partners to put us on the map and on the global stage. We’re in a good place.”

### **About MediaLink:**

MediaLink is a leading strategic advisory firm operating at the intersection of media, marketing, advertising, entertainment, technology and finance. Unlike any other company in the strategic advisory space, MediaLink provides counsel for navigating the age of digital disruption in the core areas of data and technology, investor strategies, marketplace development, partnership optimization, talent and organization, and transformations. Founded in 2003 by Michael E. Kassan, MediaLink employs 125 professionals in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and London. MediaLink is an Ascential company. [www.medialink.com](http://www.medialink.com)

### **About Ascential plc:**

Ascential is a specialist information, data and analytics company that helps the world’s most ambitious businesses win in the digital economy. Our information, insights, connections, data and digital tools solve customer problems in four principal disciplines:

- Digital Commerce via data, analytics and managed services brands Flywheel Digital, Yimian and Edge;
- Product Design via global trend forecasting service WGSN;
- Marketing via global benchmarks for creative excellence and effectiveness, Lions and WARC, and strategic advisory firm MediaLink; and
- Retail & Financial Services, including the world’s premier payments and FinTech congress Money20/20 and events, data and tools for retailers.

### **About the Thames Estuary Growth Board**

In 2018, The Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission published an ambitious vision for growth in the area of east London, north Essex and south Kent to unleash its potential. An exciting and ambitious vision, it is regarded as integral to the future of the UK economy.

Kate Willard OBE was appointed by the Government to drive this vision, leading a dedicated Thames Estuary Growth Board. The Growth Board has set out its action plan, entitled “The Green Blue”, to realise the amazing potential of the Thames Estuary. With plans for developments over the next two years, looking ahead across the next ten, The Green Blue is about making great things happen.

We call our plan “The Green Blue” because we are creating good, green, sustainable growth using the important, blue waterway of the Thames that connects the UK with the rest of the world.

The Thames Estuary Growth Board will deliver and support existing projects which will lead to job creation; housing solutions; new transport and digital infrastructure, ultimately contributing billions to the economy by 2050.

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