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Susan Priest appointed as director of SELEP

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Susan Priest appointed first director of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership.

by business editor Trevor Sturgess

An economy-boosting organisation has appointed its first director.

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Susan Priest is to head the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), which covers Kent, Medway, Essex, East Sussex, Southend and Thurrock.

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Dr Priest will lead a three-person team that will service the business led private-public sector group which replaced the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) in March 2010. She is the executive director for business development.



She will work alongside LEP chairman John Spence with the aim of creating the most enterprising economy in England.

Dr Priest received her PhD from St Catharine's College Cambridge for her examination of the effectiveness of government policy to stimulate small and medium enterprise (SME) growth and competitiveness.

She said: "I am delighted to be joining the South East LEP at this time of tremendous opportunity to enhance the growth and competitiveness of the area. There is much to do and with the backing of major businesses, local and central government alike, I'm looking forward to having real impact in this very exciting role."

Mr Spence added: "The South East LEP is focused on optimising opportunities for and removing the barriers to growth and enterprise across the whole area. We are focused on making clear strategic interventions and enabling the activities that will enhance the economy of both our area and the whole of UK plc.

"I firmly believe that in Susan we have the person with the right calibre, skills and experience to drive forward our ambitions."

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The LEP is the largest outside London, representing a combined population of 3.9 million people, 130,000 businesses, and 1.3 million jobs. The region covered contributes £55 billion a year to the national economy.

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