

An aerial photograph of a city waterfront, likely Liverpool, featuring a mix of modern glass-fronted buildings and historic architecture, including a prominent clock tower with a statue on top. The city is situated along a river or harbor, with a large parking lot and a canal in the foreground. A large yellow diagonal graphic element is on the right side of the image.

Forward thinking
Straight talking

Empowering freeports & green freeports to hit their targets

Gateley / GLOBAL

Opportunities & ambitions

Firstly, any solutions must do more than create jobs, however valuable these may be. The UK's Freeports' and Green Freeports' ambition is about a longer-term strategy designed to stimulate trade, attract foreign direct investment (FDI), create a sustainable skills ecosystem and foster innovation growth. They are also expected to contribute to the decarbonisation of the economy and drive progress towards Net Zero targets.

These are lofty goals, especially when set against the backdrop of an economy struggling to emerge from post-Brexit and post-Covid downturns, an unprecedented geopolitical situation and an increase in the cost of living. In addition, policymakers want to see more output with less input (i.e. they want to cut millions from previous commitments).

To increase the complexity of an already complex scenario, there is the additional challenge of attracting and retaining capital. While domestic capital is valuable, it can often be insufficient to meet the scale of investment needed for large projects, industry innovation and workforce development that the Freeports will ultimately need to thrive and deliver upon their ambitious targets.

The weaknesses in the UK's savings culture mean that wholesale domestic private capital cannot be relied upon to fund investment, while public debt secured from the private sector is far from viable. In light of this, it is evident that fresh capital, new innovations and links to new markets through FDI will help the Freeports not only to achieve their ambitions but to become competitive and attractive on a global scale.

While this may seem self-evident, the pressing question is how the Freeports/Green Freeports are planning to meet and deliver upon these targets. Just as important as the 'macro' factors are the micro-factors and minutiae. For example:

- What are the businesses each Freeport wants to attract?
- Why?
- Where are the current gaps in the supply chain and/or skills base?
- What are the innovation challenges that public- and private-sector stakeholders face?
- What skills are crucial and how can they be nurtured locally?
- What does the infrastructure and innovation ecosystem to support this look like and how can it be created?

Most importantly, do the Freeports have the resource, expertise, capacity and time to deliver their ambitious targets? If the answer is 'No' or 'Not sure', who will be the advisor or partner to help design and deliver the answer to their challenges?

The UK Freeports initiative represents a powerful – and unique – opportunity to drive regional economic growth and prosperity across many areas of the UK, especially those that have higher levels of deprivation and lower employment rates. However, ambition is one thing, and delivering the outcomes of an ambition is a completely different animal.

Take, for example, the lack of certainty around the Labour government's industrial strategy and what it could mean for the Freeports / Green Freeports and their targets. These include the creation, by 2043, of 131,000 direct jobs (along with 83,000 indirect jobs) across the English Freeports alone, of which just 5,740 had been created according to the latest round-up available.¹ The Scottish Green Freeports are targeting a further 50,000 direct and indirect jobs over the next 10 years,² and the Welsh Freeports around 20,000 by 2030,³ bringing total jobs targeted to some 284,000.

Do we think these and other ambitions are achievable? The answer is: YES, WE DO, but it requires individual Freeports/Green Freeports to have the right approach and right delivery partners in place to unpack the complex challenges they face and to help design and deliver a solution that will:

- Create an innovation ecosystem that harnesses the power of technology and collaboration
- Create a sustainable, dynamic and fit-for-purpose skills ecosystem
- Identify, attract and retain sustainable (not transactional) inward investment

That's the solution; now we'll tell you how we got to it, why it's the right one, and how to deliver it.

¹ <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5804/cmselect/cmbeis/272/report.html>

² <https://forthgreenfreeport.com/news/full-business-case-lodged-as-forth-green-freeport-moves-to-accelerate-transformational-project-for-scotland/>; <https://renews.biz/88594/scots-green-freeport-forecasts-10-000-highland-jobs/>

³ <https://www.gov.wales/wales-new-freeports-unveiled>

Turning ambition into action: Engaging experienced partners

A big differentiator the Freeports have as an advantage over non-Freeport and/or Investment Zone areas is the tax reliefs available. To some extent, these may help to attract trade and investment. However, tax reliefs alone are not enough to secure sustainable investment and growth.

The vision, value proposition and strategy of each Freeport must go further than being a place to secure tax relief. To build the self-sustaining, world-class clusters that will deliver jobs, productivity and regeneration, each Freeport should focus its strategy on innovation, capital attraction and skills. Once a fit-for-purpose strategy has been created, the Freeport must have a solution for strategy execution and delivery. Both need to encompass:

- an innovation ecosystem that harnesses the power of technology and collaboration
- a dynamic, fit-for-purpose skills ecosystem involving tertiary education, businesses and public sector
- sustainable (not transactional) inward investment that drives and develops the resilient ecosystems above.

The stakes may be high, but the opportunity is vast. By engaging a specialised advisor and delivery partner at the onset, Freeports / Green Freeports can be assured that their strategies and delivery mechanisms are realistic, based on best practice, measurable and achievable within a set timeframe. Utilising a dedicated delivery partner can provide them with the expertise, resources and frameworks needed to shape their economic future – exceeding their targets and establishing a self-sustaining legacy of economic regeneration, resilience and sustainable growth.

Partners in Growth: Our Vision

Gateley Global, CENSIS and Weight Lifted bring an experienced team with vast expertise and networks spanning programme design & delivery, inward investment promotion and attraction and innovation – ideally qualified to partner with each Freeport / Green Freeport to address its own unique target, issues and, most importantly, opportunities.

Together, we can build the communities and clusters you'll need to not only meet but exceed your targets and drive growth in your own region – creating credibility and buy-in from partners and investors from day one, and with commercial viability at the heart of everything we design and deliver for you.

Our own track record – from the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority to the recent CENSIS Tech Summit which brought together over 650 attendees from companies, government and academia with a common goal of growth and prosperity from innovation – shows this in action.

Want to get started? Get in touch.

Rebecca Bekkenutte

MD, Gateley Global

rebecca.bekkenutte@gateleyglobal.com
gateleyglobal.com



Paul Winstanley

CEO, CENSIS

paul.winstanley@censis.tech
censis.tech



Chris Staerck

Director, Weight Lifted

chris@weightliftedltd.com
weightliftedltd.com



Case studies

Delivering a Business Growth & Inward Investment Service for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough

Gateley Global was appointed by the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) to design and deliver a Business Growth Service that supported indigenous businesses in their growth aspirations as well as to provide an ambitious inward investment service that identified and captured sustainable investment opportunities into the region proportionately across all of its local authority stakeholders in line with the Levelling-Up Agenda. The multi-disciplinary Business Growth Service designed and delivered by Gateley Global with Weight Lifted saw:

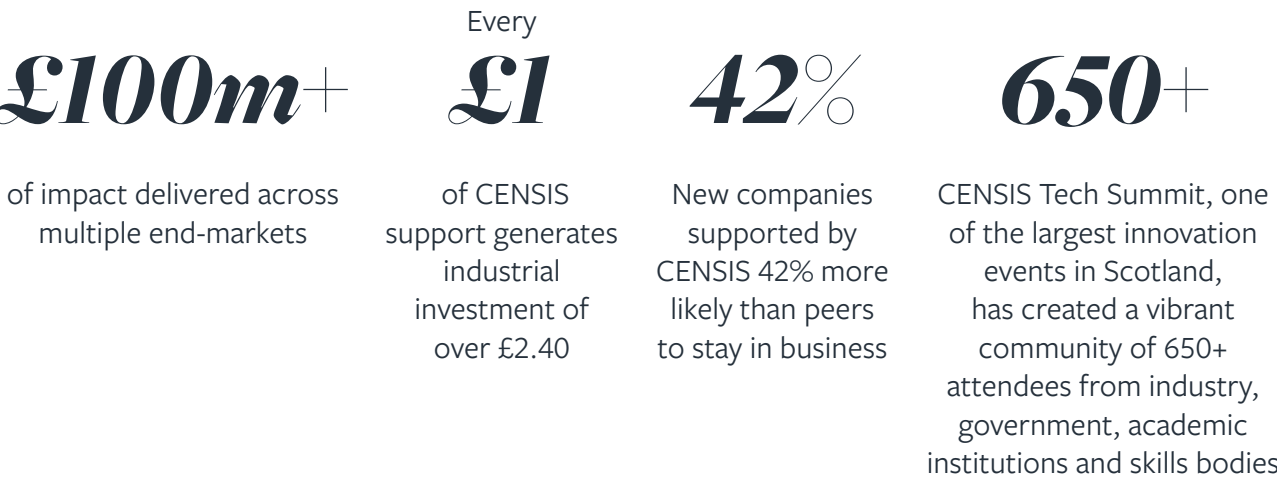


“The Gateley Global team really understand inward investment and company drivers. Their expertise, professionalism and FDI insight are unmatched. Gateley Global brought more than expertise, they brought strategic thinking and operational excellence that exceeded our expectations. They have been great to work with and have been instrumental in the success of FDI attraction to our region.”

Steve Clarke, Assistant Director – Business, Trade and Investment, CPCA

Fast-tracked digital innovation impact in Scotland & beyond

Innovation specialists CENSIS bridge the gap between technology concept and impact, partnering with business, public sector, universities and colleges on 4 areas: project formation, commercialisation, programme delivery and ecosystem development.



“[CENSIS] allowed people to upskill and retrain in vital technologies. A skilled population is fundamental to business productivity and economic prosperity, supporting the transition to net zero, the digital revolution and lifelong training to make sure that employers have the supply of skills they need.”

Ivan McKee MSP, Scottish Government Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise (2021-2023)

The building blocks to go into our proposed design solution... we are offering a complete picture



1

Vision

- Building authenticity and achieving rapid impact and outcomes
- Commercial viability at the core

4

Demand

- Engaging all partners and mapping market potential
- Commercialising technology solutions

2

Expertise

- Specialist team with collective experience
- Highly agile, enabling capability

5

Supply

- Rapid evolution of market supply
- Engaging our global networks to build appetite

3

Experience

- Commercial credentials with proven track record of delivery
- Systematic processes and robust governance

6

Stakeholders

- We will engage stakeholders early, aligning them with you:
- Connect with partners to surface challenges and needs
 - Analyse and map these to create a single version of truth
 - Continuously engage all and invite their perspectives.

Our design approach will enable you to smoothly transition into delivery... at pace, for impact and outcome

Gateley / GLOBAL