



THAMES GATEWAY

south essex



A vision for the future

a better environment
health and community
transport and infrastructure
investment and development
marketing and communications
skills, learning and employment



FOREWORD



"The regeneration of Thames Gateway is a national and regional priority. The Strategic Partnership that I chair is working closely with partners across the Gateway to deliver this objective.

I am pleased to launch the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership with their publication of "A Vision for the Future". I particularly welcome their commitment to developing key opportunities in Basildon, Southend and Thurrock and their emphasis on community regeneration.

The creation of the South Essex Partnership is an important step forward and I have every confidence that we shall be working closely together on delivering the Gateway as one of the largest regeneration projects in Europe."

Lord Falconer, Minister for Housing and Planning and Chair of the Thames Gateway Strategic Partnership



"The inclusion of South Essex in the Thames Gateway gives us the opportunity to create something special in South Essex. The Thames Gateway initiative is not about economic growth for its

own sake, but improving the quality of life and range of opportunities for residents. It is to make the most of this opportunity that the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership has been formed.

Our 'vision' is to establish South Essex as a focal point for major economic regeneration and to draw in investment. This will increase opportunities for local people, improve housing and the local environment, provide new infrastructure and a better quality of life for everyone in South Essex.

The arguments for the inclusion of South Essex in the Thames Gateway were always compelling. The award of Gateway status is a major step in the regeneration of South Essex, which has tremendous potential. We are determined to see this initiative succeed and make a real difference to the people who live in the area.

We are ready to pick up the challenge. We are seeking to engage partners and to stimulate a wide-ranging debate on the issues and suggested solutions. It is our aim to develop a 'vision' into a positive and more detailed strategy for South Essex which can provide a clear framework for potential investors."

Councillor Andy Smith, Leader of Thurrock Council and Chair of the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out a **vision for the future** for Thames Gateway South Essex. It is an opportunity for driving forward regeneration and achieving growth and prosperity in South Essex as a key part of the Thames Gateway, now the **national priority for regeneration**.

Our overriding aim is to provide an **improved quality of life for all the people of South Essex** and to allow the area to participate, via the Thames Gateway initiative, in the prosperity of the wider South East and East of England.

To realise this opportunity, the **Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership** has been formed to:

- **improve skills and employment** opportunities across a range of economic sectors, and promote a **competitive business environment** by stimulating the creation of effective business support networks linked to research institutions
- secure **leading edge infrastructure**, particularly improved and **sustainable transport**
- secure **investment and site development** to promote urban renaissance and provide employment opportunities
- create a **high quality and sustainable urban and rural environment** which enhances the natural assets of the area and harnesses features such as the River Thames
- **improve the health and well-being of all communities** throughout South Essex
- promote a **high profile and positive image** of Thames Gateway South Essex and market the opportunities in the area for investment and development

To promote the strengths and diversity of Thames Gateway South Essex, this approach will be based on a framework of **complementary visions** for regeneration hubs centred upon **Thurrock, Basildon and Southend** to secure:

- **Thurrock**: as a **world leading logistics hub** and exemplar for **community development, learning and enterprise** for South Essex.
- **Basildon and Castle Point**: as a **business hub** for South Essex
- **Southend and Rochford**: as a **cultural and intellectual hub** and a **higher education centre of excellence** for South Essex



These **three hubs will provide the main focus for implementation** of the whole range of objectives aimed at bringing about our vision.

Further **opportunities for investment** which would impact on South Essex as a whole have a regional or national dimension. These too must form part of our vision, because of the scale of the additional resources they would bring to South Essex. A **Lower Thames crossing** is an example of such an opportunity, as are the possibilities of creating a major new port at **Shell Haven**,

making better use of the **river**, clearing up the **wirescape** which spoils parts of South Essex, and establishing links between the **business community, research and higher education**.

As a first step, this **vision has been prepared to engage potential partners and to raise awareness** of Thames Gateway South Essex and the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership. It is not at this stage a formal consultation, but is intended to **open the debate about the sustainable revitalisation of South Essex**.



CONTEXT

Thames Gateway is the UK Government's top - and a European - priority for regeneration.

Thames Gateway covers a wide geographical area, spanning the boundaries of three regional development agencies, for London and those for the East and South East of England. It includes the areas of 20 local authorities (either in whole or in part) in London, North Kent and South Essex.

Thames Gateway South Essex is an extension of the original Thames Gateway which was designated by Government in 1995. New Regional Planning Guidance for the South East, which was published by the Government in March 2001, confirmed the

extension of Thames Gateway into South Essex to include more of Thurrock, part of Basildon (including Basildon New Town), the boroughs of Castle Point and Southend-on-Sea, and a small part of Rochford including London Southend Airport.

Thames Gateway South Essex lies within the East of England. The vision fits together with the East of England regional economic strategy and will be included within revised sub-regional planning guidance for Thames Gateway.

The Thames Gateway



KEY ISSUES

There is an **urgent need to identify priorities for Thames Gateway South Essex** within Thames Gateway as a whole, having regard to:

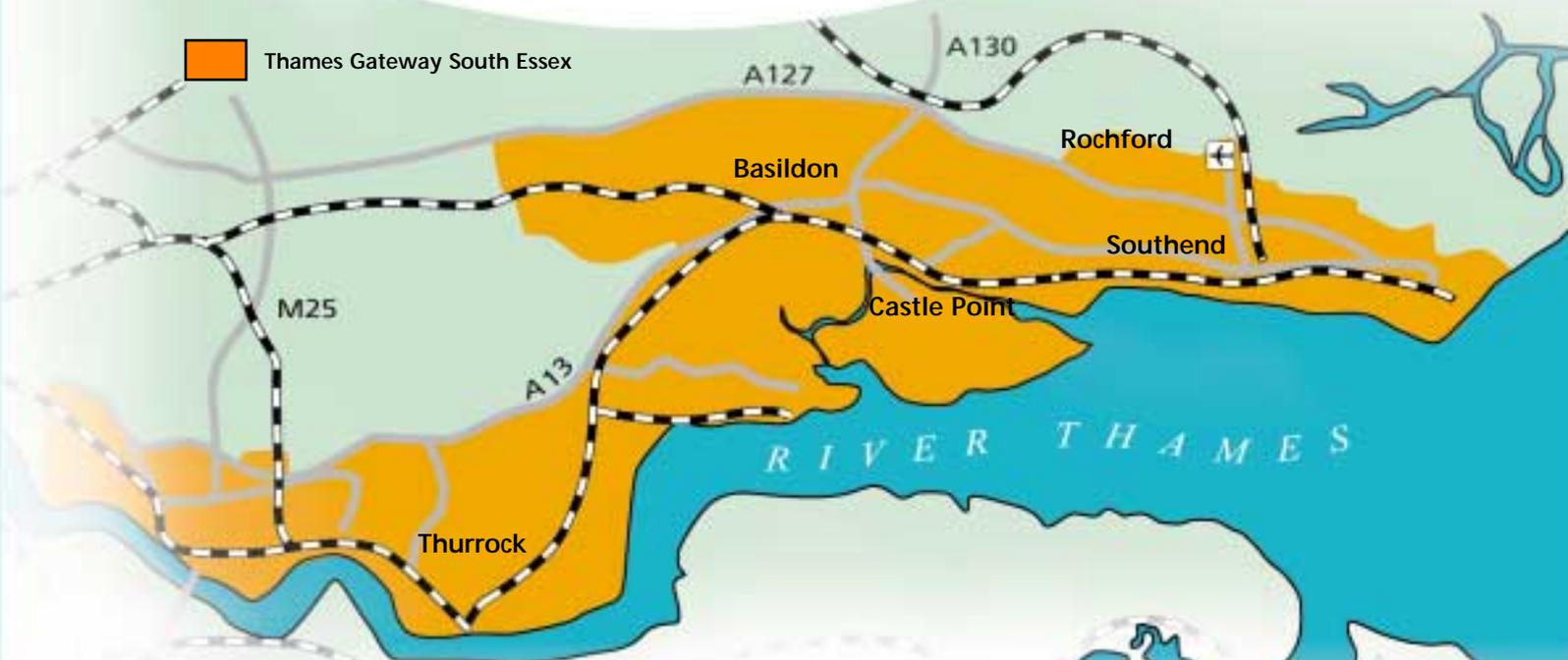
- its position and relationship with London
- a poor quality urban fringe which inhibits access to the countryside
- the commonality of need for regeneration along the River Thames and its estuary
- dominant overhead power lines and associated infrastructure
- the shared past of declining industries
- an under-performing economy and a low skills base.
- similar problems associated with structural economic change.

The wider perception of Thames Gateway South Essex is:

- sprawling urban areas of undistinguished design, with out-dated facilities
- inadequate transport infrastructure in need of modernisation and improvement
- lack of awareness of the river and other environmental assets

The Thames Gateway designation brings a regional and national recognition of opportunity for regeneration and need for change. A radically enhanced image, a fresh perception of the problems and opportunities, and environmental improvement are essential preconditions to the process of change and regeneration.

Thames Gateway South Essex



SKILLS, LEARNING AND EMPLOYMENT

To improve skills and employment opportunities across a range of economic sectors, and promote a competitive business environment by stimulating the creation of effective business support networks linked to research institutions.

The South Essex economy has traditionally focused on the manufacturing and light engineering sectors. Small businesses account for over a third of all VAT registrations in Essex. Recent job losses in the traditional industries have to some extent been offset by new jobs in the leisure and retail sectors. South Essex accounts for fifty percent of the unemployment in Essex and there are pockets of severe unemployment in some wards, amongst the highest in the Thames Gateway.

The focus needs to be on raising standards across all levels of education, skills and training, through a real partnership between education and training providers, business, the community and local authorities.

This will be achieved by:-

- the development of centres of excellence to support business, linked to business clusters and developing a knowledge based economy that meets the needs of business
- the promotion and development of higher education within South Essex, through nurturing greater links between further education, training, and business organisations as well as ensuring university provision across the area

- fully addressing the need for basic and higher skills for the unemployed, particularly striving for NVQ level 2 or equivalent attainment for all, promoting lifelong learning and new skills for the long-term unemployed
- harnessing the role of the community and voluntary sector in developing skills, as well as creating employment opportunities through community based businesses and social enterprises
- encouraging greater business involvement in training provision and ensuring that this leads to improvements in productivity
- turning childcare into a business opportunity, for employers and employees, rather than a barrier
- supporting and developing business competitiveness in the area, thus retaining much needed employment opportunities for local people, ensuring that everything is done to support employers and retain them within South Essex.



TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

To secure leading edge infrastructure, particularly improved and sustainable transport.

The transport network in South Essex is primarily based on east-west movement. The area is served by rail links from Central London on two lines, and the A13 and A127. The M25 cuts through the western end of the area, which is at present the only link with North Kent. The realigned A130 will provide an improved link to central Essex and the A12 corridor.

In general the transport network suffers from severe peak period congestion, with some of the most heavily-used non-motorway roads and commuting lines in the region. Improvements to this network are of paramount importance to the success of South Essex, without which the economic potential of the area cannot be realised. Significant opportunities in port development at Tilbury and Shell Haven and expansion of air links at London Southend Airport will provide catalysts for investment, improving connections and employment.

There is a need to ensure that the area is also well connected to the information and communication technology network and basic services, such as an adequate power supply to meet demand, are maintained.

This will be achieved by:-

- identifying the future requirements for all modes of transport within the context of South Essex and Thames Gateway
- improving access within South Essex, across the Thames Gateway, to London, the wider regions and Europe
- identifying and developing key interchanges within South Essex to ensure effective integration of transport modes
- promoting the development of seaport and airport facilities
- securing investment in the railways, including better links between existing lines, as well as station improvements, service reliability and links to the strategic rail network, the Channel Tunnel Rail Link and Crossrail
- improving all forms of sustainable transport, in particular bus services and infrastructure, investigating rapid transport options and assessing the potential of the River Thames as a major passenger and freight transport corridor
- developing state-of-the-art communications, signing and management systems and ensuring that the whole area is well connected for information and communication technology development by maximising the opportunity of the pan-European fibre optic network which passes through the Thames Gateway area.



INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

To secure investment and site development to promote urban renaissance and provide employment opportunities

No area can achieve sustainable growth without proper use of its land. New development land will be an increasingly scarce resource and the emphasis will be on promoting the re-use of redundant land and buildings. Thames Gateway and Thames Gateway South Essex have large tracts of brownfield land and bringing that, and redundant property, forward for development is a priority.

Major sites at Shell Haven, Shoeburyness, on Canvey Island, within the Cranes Corridor in Basildon and in the town centres will act as catalysts for attracting the right kind of development which meets the objectives of Thames Gateway South Essex.

This will be achieved by:-

- identifying and developing action plans for key catalyst developments within South Essex and developing a spatial planning strategy allied to future Structure Plans, Unitary and Local Plans and Local Transport Plans
- developing an effective inward investment enquiry system that promotes all of South Essex
- improving the ability for site land assembly and innovative design of new developments
- identifying a strategy for joint working on common development 'project themes' across South Essex, such as regenerating the town centres and estate renewal
- improving accessibility to sites, in particular by public transport, for freight and in marginalised locations such as Shoeburyness and Canvey Island
- providing appropriate sites which can attract a more diverse range of business uses, from business parks, knowledge based industries and major logistics centres to meeting the needs of small businesses through incubation centre development
- maximising the use of brownfield land and land within the urban areas, and providing adequate resources for site decontamination and reclamation.



A BETTER ENVIRONMENT

To create a high quality and sustainable urban and rural environment which enhances the natural assets of the area and harnesses features such as the River Thames

Whilst the main towns may be South Essex's prominent feature, its setting along the north bank of the River Thames and the significant areas of important nature conservation sites provide real opportunities for enhancing the environment. The protection of the nature reserves, the Thames Chase regional forest and the extensive recreational use of the countryside support this.

The urban areas have expanded greatly in the last century, with the development of new settlements and an industrial landscape.

Within this area some 460,000 people live and many more work, forming the largest built-up area in the South East outside London. The transport and infrastructure links, particularly overhead power lines, are dominant features in some areas.

It is essential to improve and enhance the environment, while taking advantage of regeneration opportunities.

This will be achieved by:-

- realising the area's economic and regeneration potential whilst safeguarding its environmental assets and maximising recreational opportunities

- developing and implementing an action plan to enhance the setting and importance of the River Thames, including guidelines on new development
- promoting sustainable development of the highest quality and encouraging innovation in design
- safeguarding protected areas, in particular the foreshore, from development and introducing further measures to enhance their value
- managing waste in a sustainable way which stops the importation of waste from London, restores landfill sites and disposes of waste with minimal impact on the environment and local people
- maximising resources for the management and enhancement of the environment
- building on the success of Thames Chase to implement landscape improvements schemes, replace lost woodland, trees and hedgerows and green the urban environment
- identifying and implementing measures necessary to address flood prevention.



HEALTH AND COMMUNITY

To improve the health and well being of communities throughout Thames Gateway South Essex

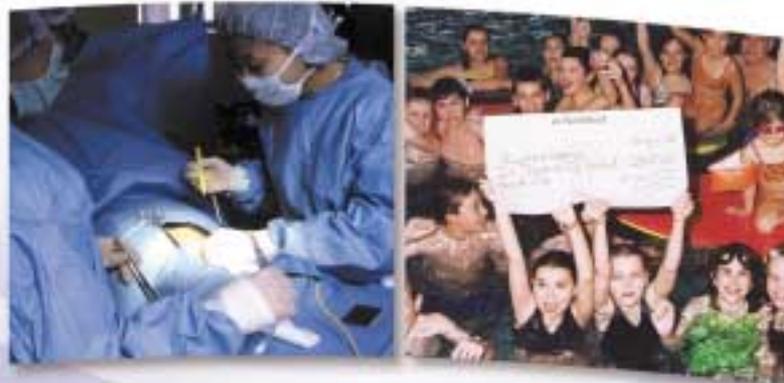
South Essex contains a number of diverse urban and rural communities with a wide range of social and economic characteristics. Within it are some of the wealthiest wards in Essex, side by side with some of the poorest, which includes wards amongst the ten percent most deprived in the country. This diversity, and the problems it creates, has been recognised through a wide range of national and EU funding for regeneration schemes in Southend, Basildon and Thurrock. Despite these characteristics, the health of people in the area reflects the national picture.

The demographics show higher than average levels of under 30-year-olds and over 65-year-olds, highlighting a significant age gap. The housing affordability gap, estate renewal and regeneration, are now key priorities to be addressed. Good quality urban regeneration will result in good quality housing in more attractive settings, enabling local people to be more involved in their local communities.

This will be achieved by:-

- greater partnership working, including information sharing, between agencies engaging with and involving all of the community, which recognises that all areas have issues which must be addressed, not just the most deprived

- improving access to high quality health and social care services, and in particular recognising the needs of the elderly and supporting the voluntary sectors who care for them
- regenerating the most run-down estates and ensuring improved housing for all, bridging the housing affordability gap, and attracting essential health and education staff to the area
- reducing teenage pregnancies, supporting people with learning difficulties and mental health problems and promoting healthy living for all
- raising education attainment throughout the area, including people with special needs
- reducing crime and disorder
- improving the cultural, leisure and recreational facilities and opportunities for all in South Essex.



MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

To promote a high profile and positive image of Thames Gateway South Essex and market the opportunities of the area for investment and development

One of the key purposes of Thames Gateway is to address the economic imbalance between areas to the west of London, such as the Thames Valley, and the east. The opportunities within Thames Gateway for investment, business development and attracting and retaining skilled workers are ready to be promoted.

Within South Essex there is a diverse community. Creating a sense of identity for the area will be crucial, but this must recognise that individuals may associate with their local towns or neighbourhood more than with a generic sub-region.

In our marketing and communications we will make maximum use of new technologies as well as more traditional techniques.

This will be achieved by:-

- developing and promoting the opportunities within South Essex to address the imbalance between the economies of east and west London
- promoting Thames Gateway within South Essex and South Essex within Thames Gateway, nationally and internationally

- developing a long term and sustainable marketing strategy which is adaptable to changes in priorities for South Essex
- promoting the key objectives of Thames Gateway and also the visions for the regeneration hubs within South Essex
- fostering links with other parts of Thames Gateway to present a coherent Thames Gateway message
- promoting participation of partners in Thames Gateway activities
- improving communication between the partners including the development of a Thames Gateway South Essex internet and intranet.



A VISION FOR SOUTH ESSEX

The development of a core vision is seen as essential if the future vision for Thames Gateway South Essex is to be more than an aggregate of different partners' particular aspirations.

This will enable the members of the partnership to take decisions about the priority of particular projects and how resources are to be sought and spent. Such a vision has to be flexible and, realistically, be long term. It should also have sufficient coherence to provide the basis for the development of a firm framework against which projects can be assessed and to provide a clear and attractive picture for the wider public and investors.

Our vision for Thames Gateway South Essex is broad based and of necessity covers a wide range of activities. The specific geographic 'hubs' will provide a local focus for regeneration, helping to establish linkages between the various projects and initiatives being undertaken and thus increasing their effectiveness. Change will not occur without the creation of a critical mass in favour of beneficial change. The resources available through the various programmes and partners involved in this approach together will have considerable impact.

GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS

Throughout all of Thames Gateway South Essex there are common goals.

These include:-

- to make South Essex **an attractive place to live and work**, which is affordable, safe, healthy and clean
- to become a **centre of excellence for technological research and development, futures development, expertise and skilling**, building on existing business clusters such as automotive and medical research
- to be a **flagship ecological and environmental community**, specialising in sustainable new technologies and development
- to make South Essex **the place where businesses will look to first** for investment, and promote the development of local businesses
- to **break down the barriers to opportunity** caused by inequality
- to **promote urban and social renaissance** in South Essex through intelligent and targeted investment, and investment in local communities.



The key objectives for Thames Gateway South Essex will be supported by specific objectives for each of the three 'hubs':-

A VISION FOR THURROCK

- to build on our reputation as an **exemplar for community development, learning and enterprise**, raising aspiration, confidence and skills through lifelong learning and quality employment opportunities for all
- to support a sustainable **European logistics industry**, underpinned by a multi-modal transport system, and supported by a centre of excellence for the wider community
- to develop a **world port at Shell Haven and Tilbury**, connecting London and South Essex to Europe and the world's trading centres.

A VISION FOR BASILDON AND CASTLE POINT

- to make Basildon and Castle Point **the centre of business excellence** in South Essex supported by excellent infrastructure, skills, training and education, and quality business environments and facilities

- to develop a leading **business support centre** in Basildon to serve all of South Essex, both new and existing businesses
- to improve the **local transportation** network, in particular access to and from Canvey Island and along commuting routes into Basildon, including better rail links.

A VISION FOR SOUTHEND AND ROCHFORD

- To transform Southend into a **thriving cultural hub** for South Essex, by developing its cultural strategy, beach facilities, resort and tourism facilities and leisure attractions, and the overall environmental quality of Southend and its environs
- to develop **university** facilities, expanding upon the new Southend town centre campus to provide a sustainable and accessible facility for South Essex
- to **improve the accessibility** of Southend and Rochford by improving surface access, by road and rail, and upgrading London Southend Airport to support stronger business links with Europe.



MAJOR OPPORTUNITIES

Linked to our vision for regeneration focused on the three hubs, there are a number of major opportunities for change and improvement in Thames Gateway South Essex.

These are opportunities of such significance that they would ripple out right across South Essex and beyond. These opportunities would draw in substantial public and private investment, without which real improvement will not be possible. Our vision for Thames Gateway South Essex seeks to achieve sustainable economic growth as a means towards improving the general quality of life in the area. The various major opportunities need to be assessed in terms of the overall benefits which they could generate.

LOWER THAMES CROSSING

The river is a major barrier to communications within Thames Gateway and to north-south inter-regional links east of London. As a location for improving transport links it presents a number of opportunities. Proximity to Europe and links with it are an asset and could be combined with more 'local' improvements within Thames Gateway and Thames Gateway South Essex. A Lower Thames crossing has the potential to be a major opportunity, and the optimum location needs to be identified. It would bring considerable benefits to South Essex, including environmental improvements, but would also certainly require rigorous environmental assessment.

SHELL HAVEN

The proposals for Shell Haven have the potential to improve the competitiveness of Thames Gateway South Essex in import/export terms. The spin-off benefit in terms of jobs

from port development needs to be assessed as well as the impact accompanying commercial development in the area could have on surrounding town centres.

That said, however, it ranks as a potential major opportunity for investment in Thames Gateway South Essex, and a source of highly skilled logistics employment.

THE RIVER

The River Thames is an attractive environmental feature for all parts of the Thames Gateway. Existing links to Europe could be further enhanced via passenger and goods terminals and the international cruise liner facility at Tilbury. With increased affluence could come greater demand for nautical activity. The river should represent a main thrust for environmental improvement, including dealing with global environmental issues.



WIRESCAPE

Pylons cross much of Thames Gateway South Essex and the moment has come to make a serious assault on this issue. As higher value is created in the area it will be possible to channel greater private sector investment into such improvements.

BUSINESS, RESEARCH AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Improvements in the transport infrastructure and the environment, including links to Europe, will benefit the economy of South Essex. There is no doubt that the area, with improved north and south links connecting to the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, and improved air and maritime links, is particularly well placed to occupy a pivotal position in Europe. But occupying a pivotal role in a business sense must go further and deeper into the local economy and exploit the dynamic characteristics of the local economy and workforce.

The development of the research and development base in relation to major automotive, medical and defence research establishments in the area must be part of such a strategy, with links to higher education. Links between business and universities are key to successful economies. There is a need to develop such a network in Thames Gateway South Essex and to seek full university status for the university at Southend.



THE WAY FORWARD...

Following the launch of the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership on September 26 2001, the vision document will be used to help develop a shared vision for Thames Gateway South Essex, to engage partners and generate progress, and to stimulate a wider debate of the issues and suggested solutions.



It highlights the key sectors in which activity is required and should be capable of acting as a basis for seeking funds. It will be able to inform local, regional and sub-regional strategies and act as a

framework for the delivery of local initiatives. It will link Thames Gateway South Essex with the longer established areas of Thames Gateway in North Kent and London.

Thames Gateway South Essex offers us all a great opportunity to regenerate and revitalise South Essex.

It will help us improve the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in South Essex - through better employment opportunities; an improved environment and infrastructure; better housing and health; and increased cultural and leisure activities.

This document sets out the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership's vision for this major regeneration area. It highlights key areas for action and we hope there will be a wider debate of the opportunities and issues.

At this stage we are still developing ideas for the delivery of the vision and we would like to encourage your views either as a potential partner, an organisation, a business or as a local resident.

The inclusion of South Essex in the Thames Gateway area is a major achievement. It is important that we work together to take advantage of this opportunity.

Write to me at the address below to let me know your views and how you would like to become involved in the regeneration of South Essex. I look forward to hearing from you.

Mary Spence

**Chief Executive
Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership
The Basildon Centre
St Martin's Square
Basildon
Essex SS14 1DL**



“Thames Gateway South Essex offers us all a great opportunity to regenerate and revitalise South Essex.”

The Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership has been formed to develop a vision and implement a regeneration strategy for Thames Gateway South Essex.

The Partnership will provide a focal point for dialogue with Government, national, regional and other local organisations which can contribute to economic regeneration.

It will champion the area's interests and act as a conduit for funding and investment. It aims to adopt an inclusive approach and to encourage partnership working and will seek to inform and consult widely.

The Partnership Board will have overall responsibility for taking the vision forward with a broadly-based membership with representation from the public, private, education and voluntary sectors. The current members of the Board are:

Councillor Andy Smith (Chair)

Leader of Thurrock Council

Councillor Ron Williams CBE

Essex County Council

Councillor John Potter

Leader of Basildon District Council

Mr Peter Rainbird CBE DL

Chair, Essex Economic Partnership Limited

Councillor Dave Wells

Leader of Castle Point Borough Council

Councillor Mrs Jeannette Helson

Rochford District Council

Mr Alan Cherry MBE

Board Member,
East of England Development Agency

Councillor Charles Latham

Leader of Southend Borough Council






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