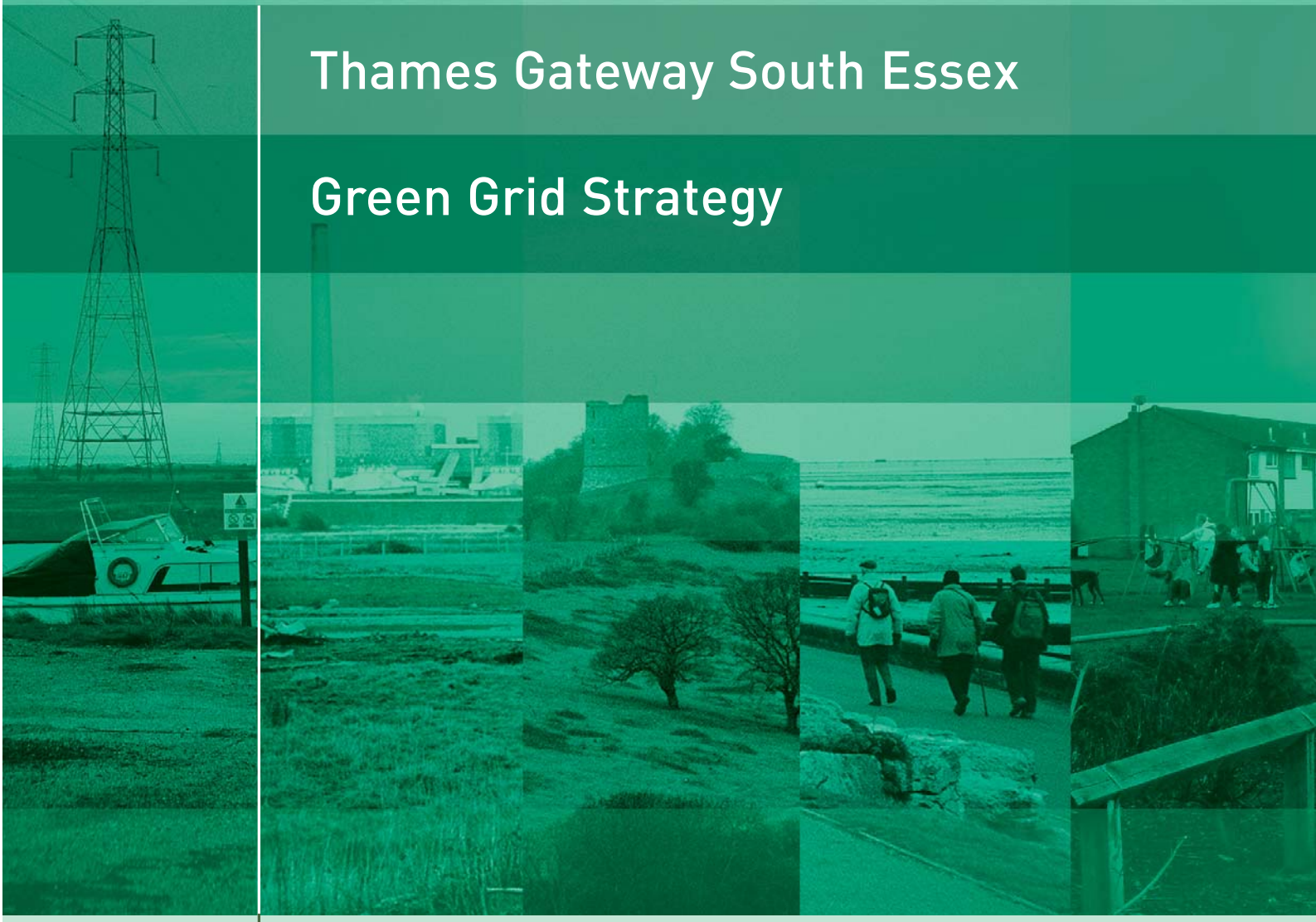
Thames Gateway South Essex

Green Grid Strategy



April 2005

Greengrid
Connecting green spaces South Essex

THAMES GATEWAY
south essex

THAMES GATEWAY SOUTH ESSEX GREEN GRID STRATEGY

The Strategy is promoted by the Green Grid Partnership and funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's (ODPM) Sustainable Communities Plan put forward in 2003 for delivering growth in the Thames Gateway. LDA Design was appointed by the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) in December 2003 to prepare the Strategy. Figure 1 defines *The Strategy Area*.

A partnership has been brought together to take forward the Green Grid initiative comprising:

- Founding members of the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership (TGSEP): Basildon District Council, Castlepoint District Council, Rochford District Council, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, Essex County Council, Thurrock Council
- Government agencies: Countryside Agency, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, English Nature, and English Heritage
- Local/national environmental trusts: Essex Wildlife Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, Sustrans, and Groundwork UK
- Other non-governmental bodies and partnerships: Thames Estuary Partnership, Thames Chase Community Forest; and
- East of England Development Agency.

Guide to Using the Strategy

The Strategy is in three sections and supported by five appendices:

Section 1: provides an introduction and the background to the Strategy.

Section 2: describes and analyses the resource of the Strategy Area, and describes the broad Strategic Opportunities for the Green Grid.

Section 3: describes the Vision for the Green Grid, delineates a spatial Strategic Framework for the whole Strategy Area supported by Strategic Guidance for local authorities, statutory agencies, planners, developers and all others with an interest in development in the Strategy Area. It also delineates Area Frameworks for Thurrock, Basildon and Castlepoint, and Southend and Rochford, describes key issues and opportunities, and provides guidance.

Section 4: concludes the Strategy addressing the principles of delivery, community engagement, and promotion and marketing.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Steering Group for their guidance and support throughout the preparation of this Strategy:

Mary Spence, Chief Executive, Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership
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The Thames Gateway South Essex Green Grid Strategy is also available on CD-Rom from:

Thames Gateway South Essex Green Grid Partnership
3rd Floor, Acorn House
Great Oaks, Basildon
Essex, SS14 1AH

Tel: 01268 595345
www.greengrid.co.uk

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What is the Green Grid?

Thames Gateway South Essex sits within the Thames Gateway which is a national government priority for regeneration and development. The government expects **43,800 homes** to be built, and **55,000 jobs** to be created within **Thurrock, Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford and Southend by 2021**. There will be regeneration within existing communities and new development will be on previously developed land.

The government is also committed to developing **sustainable communities**. This means meeting the **social, economic and environmental** requirements of today's communities without compromising the ability of future communities to meet their requirements.

Sustainable Communities: Greening the Gateway makes a powerful case for the government's expectations of a high quality, functional green space network throughout the Thames Gateway. The **Thames Gateway South Essex Green Grid Strategy** is an equally powerful response to that expectation.

Our Vision is to achieve:

A living system threading through the urban and rural landscape, connecting places that are attractive to people, wildlife and business, and providing clean air, food, water, energy, minerals and materials.

This is a radical vision which places:

- **Landscape at the heart of the development process;** and
- **Environmental process at the heart of sustainable development and the economy.**

It is a vision which will require sustained investment and long-term commitment from national, regional and local politicians, communities, businesses, developers, the voluntary sector and other institutions. It proposes nothing less than an **environmental infrastructure** that **protects, enhances** and **creates new**:

- **areas of outstanding landscape, riverscape and townscape character**
- **biodiversity value**
- **archaeological, cultural and built heritage; and**
- **settings for development; views and landmarks**

and that:

- **promotes sustainable energy production**
- **provides for clean air, food and water**
- **manages flood risk**
- **ameliorates the effects of climate change; and**
- **promotes healthy living, a strong sense of community and a sustainable economy.**

Walkers at Coalhouse Fort

It will link every resident with the fine townscapes, landscapes and riverscapes in the area from **Doorstep to Countryside and Estuary** by foot, by bicycle, by road and by rail via a sequence of civic squares, streets, boulevards, parks, gardens, green corridors, outdoor sports areas, children's play areas, allotment and community gardens, city farms, cemeteries and churchyards, country parks, hills, marshes, creeks, estuaries, etc. The notion of the **Harlequin Landscape** is also promoted to ensure that the emotional dimensions of outdoor space are not forgotten.

The Thames Gateway South Essex Green Grid Strategy is promoted by:

- local government members of the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership;
- government agencies;
- local and national environmental trusts;
- other non-governmental bodies and partnerships; and
- the regional development agency.

What is the Resource?

The Strategy begins by establishing the national, regional, and local **policy context** for the Green Grid. Through a series of consultations with key stakeholders, the documentation and analysis of the existing resource was verified, and the multiple **Strategic Themes** to be addressed by the Strategy identified, these are listed below under Strategic Frameworks and Guidance. The existing resource base analysed includes:

- Geology
- Hydrology
- Topography

- Biodiversity
- Developed/non-developed areas
- Access and movement
- Archaeological, historic and cultural resources
- Designated public open space; and
- Landscape character.

The potential implications of climate change are also discussed.

There are some fine landscapes, townscapes and riverscapes within the area. From the estuary, creeks, and marshes, often juxtaposed with impressive industrial and commercial facilities, to the more rural and hilly landscapes of **Hadleigh** and **Benfleet**. There is also an impressive cultural resource including **Coalhouse** and **Tilbury Forts, Prittlewell Priory** and **Southend Pier**. There is great wildlife value - particularly the Thames Estuary, the marshes and pockets of **ancient woodland**.

As part of the analysis of the resource base, the constraints and opportunities presented by each resource are identified and summarised in the **Strategic Opportunities** plan which sets out the potential for spatial **Green Grid Frameworks**. The **Strategic Opportunities** plan provides the link between the analysis of the resource and the **Overall Strategic Framework**, and the **Strategic Area Frameworks** for **Thurrock; Basildon and Castle Point**; and **Southend and Rochford**. It also provides the link for the **Strategic Guidance** based on the **Strategic Themes**.

Strategic Frameworks and Guidance

The Green Grid will be delivered to a large extent through the planning system. The Strategy is, therefore, intended to influence the preparation of the **Regional Spatial Strategy, Local Development Frameworks and Documents, Regeneration Frameworks** and all master plans and development proposals. The Strategy is intended to provide the context for the preparation of local authorities **Parks and Open Space Strategies** prepared in accordance with **PPG17: Open Space, Sports and Recreation.**

The Green Grid will also be delivered through investment in, and the implementation of public transport, utilities and stand-alone environmental infrastructure projects. Consequently, the Strategy sets out spatial framework plans supported by **Strategic Guidance** addressing each of the **Strategic Themes** in order to ensure 'joined-up' delivery.

The **Overall Strategic Framework** covers the whole of the Strategy Area; the **Strategic Area Frameworks** cover Thurrock; Basildon and Castle Point, and Southend and Rochford.

Seafront path at Southend

The Frameworks delineate four **Strategic Corridor** types:

- **Parkways and urban green roadways** - major highways that will need to be upgraded and provide the opportunity for a design and environmental design-led approach rather than a purely engineering one;
- **Riverways** - as corridors and sequences of spaces and places;
- **Railways** - as ecological corridors, a window on the landscape with stations recognized as gateways to the Green Grid;
- **Greenways** - national, regional and sub-regional footpaths/cyclepaths; and

five **Strategic node** types:

- **Strategic Parks** - existing and proposed;
- **Strategic Destinations**;
- **Strategic Landmarks** - existing and proposed;
- **Strategic Views and Viewpoints**;
- **Strategic Bridging Points**.

The **Key Issues and Opportunities** relevant to each **Strategic Corridor** are identified and a **Vision** for each defined. The **Strategic Area Frameworks** are also supported by the identification of **Key issues and Opportunities**, and by **Guidance** specific to the area.

Strategic Guidance is provided that elaborates and supports the **Overall** and **Area Framework Plans**. The **Guidance** is based on following **Strategic Themes** and written in the form of a checklist for ease of use by planners, developers and all stakeholders:

- Accessibility
- Planning
- Character - landscape, townscape and riverscape
- Biodiversity
- Archaeological, historical and cultural resources
- Flood risk and water management
- Education, skills and learning
- Leisure and recreation
- Urban form
- Views and landmarks
- Infrastructure
- Positive physical and mental health; and
- Social and economic benefits.

Community Engagement

Change on the scale envisaged in South Essex will also require that **community capacity is built to accept it and support** it. Existing communities are fearful that new development may destroy much of what they value about where they live, lead to more congestion, and divert investment into new developments at the expense of the existing areas that need enhancing. These are the twin instinctive reactions to change on this scale: firstly that we have reached the limits of the existing environment to support it; and secondly, that we have reached the limits of existing communities' capacity to grow and develop. Engagement of existing and new communities is, therefore, an important aspect of the Green Grid and offers an enlightened way of building community capacity by engaging them in the process of environmental change and involvement in delivery.

Promotion and Marketing

Promotion, branding, marketing and investment are crucial aspects in engendering political and community support for the Strategy and its delivery. It is also crucial to encouraging use by the community, and promoting tourism. The Green Grid can form a key element in promoting the area to outside investors - there is no doubt that high quality environments, attract high quality people, who attract high quality businesses.

Oil refineries at Shellhaven and Coryton

Executive Summary

The time is right, the time is now

We have a once in a generation opportunity to develop communities fit for the twenty-first century. The Green Grid is a substantial part of the overall vision for South Essex. It is a vital part of the mechanism for delivering sustainable communities, and has the capacity to transform once and for all the image of Thames Gateway South Essex.

Marshland reeds

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Thames Gateway South Essex sits within the Thames Gateway which is a national government priority for regeneration and growth (Figure 1: The Strategy Area, Figure 3: Environmental Infrastructure Planning in the Thames Gateway). The success of the London and South-East economy is driving demands for 43,800 homes to be built, and 55,000 jobs to be created in the five local authorities of South Essex by 2021, this is as identified in the Draft Spatial Strategy (East of England Plan). The extensive brownfield sites along the Thames will provide much of the space to accommodate the growth necessary to maintain region's economic function, provide essential housing and facilitate regeneration.

Change on this scale will require significant investment in the 'functional green infrastructure' which must be built alongside the transport, utilities, and buildings infrastructure. The Government have recognised this and published **Creating Sustainable Communities: Greening the Gateway** which sets out the core principles that the Government believes should be adopted in the planning and design of greenspaces in the Thames Gateway. It calls for a multi-functional network of attractive and accessible green spaces that can link inner urban areas to rural areas and help to improve health, provide for flood storage, filter pollution, encourage wildlife, and provide shelter and a green framework within which people can enjoy living and working. **Greening the Gateway** is a powerful statement of intent that:

Promotes:

- green space infrastructure planning in the Thames Gateway
- the government's expectation of 'extremely high standards' in the design and implementation of new developments; and
- the central role of accessible green space in securing sustainable economic and social regeneration, and the government's desire to see the Thames Gateway 'become a world class model of sustainable development, with the living landscape at its heart'.

It also recognises:

- the 'impressive natural and historic heritage' of the area; and
- the need for its protection and enhancement through the regeneration process.

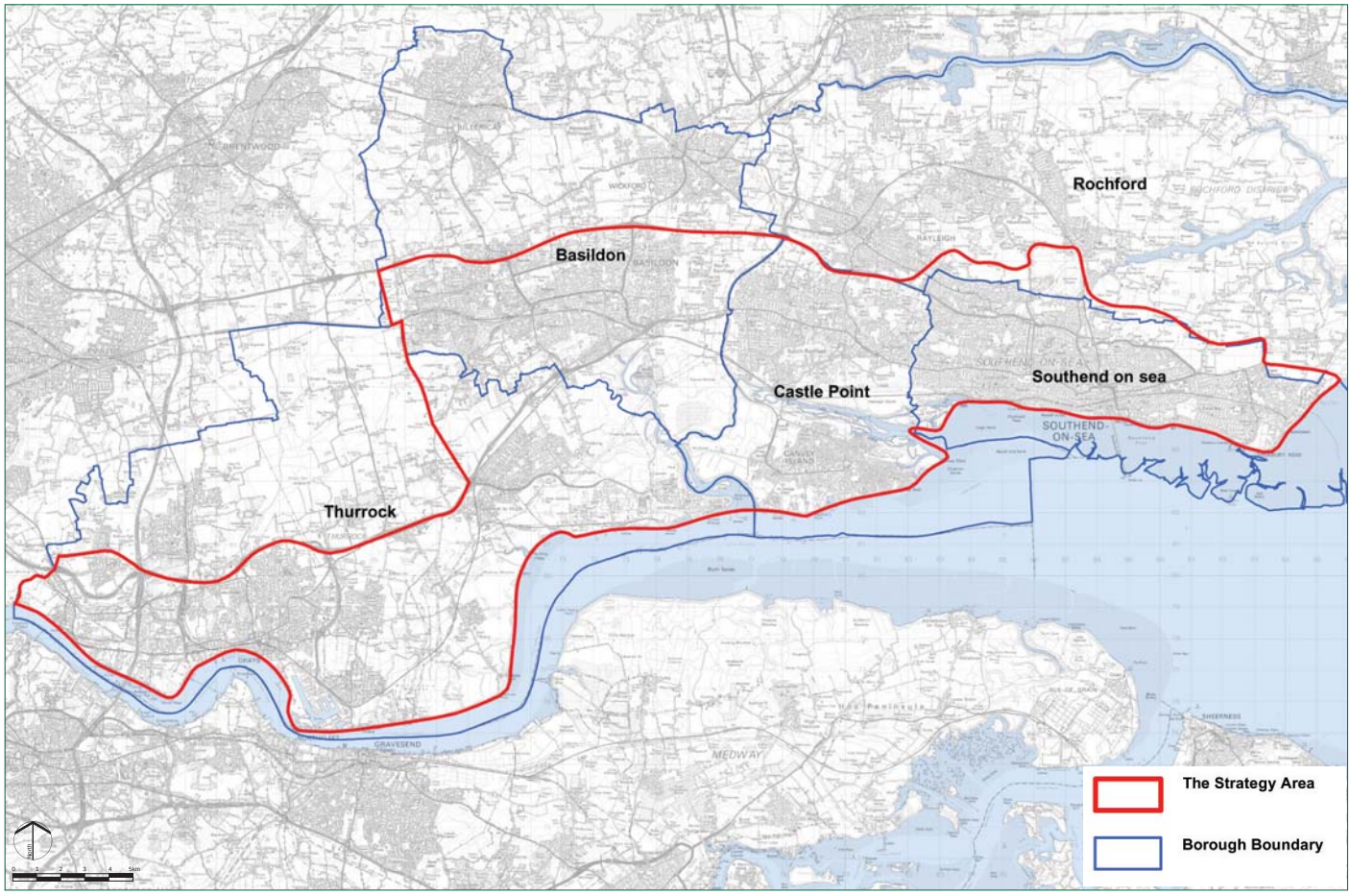


Figure 1 The Strategy Area

Greening the Gateway - Core Principles / Strategic Themes	Planning in Advance	Developing an environmental evidence base	Encouraging inclusiveness and integration	Protecting local character and distinctiveness	Protected Designated Sites	Habitat restoration and creation	A dynamic landscape	Community Involvement
Accessibility		✓	✓				✓	✓
Planning	✓	✓	✓					✓
Character - landscape, townscape and riverscape		✓		✓			✓	
Biodiversity		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Archaeology historical and cultural resources		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Flood risk/water management		✓		✓		✓	✓	
Education, skills and learning		✓	✓				✓	✓
Leisure and recreation		✓	✓				✓	✓
Urban Form		✓		✓			✓	
Views and Landmarks		✓		✓			✓	
Infrastructure		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Positive physical and mental health			✓				✓	✓
Social and Economic benefits			✓			✓	✓	✓

Figure 2: Cross-Cutting Themes and Principles

It calls for the landscape to be regarded as:

- the 'functional green infrastructure' needed to create a 'positive sense of place, provide environmental protection for local communities and enhance quality of life'.

It looks forward to:

- the 'emergence of a continuous linked network of varied landscapes, both within and between built-up areas'; and
- recognises that this will take 25-30 years to come to fruition.

Greening the Gateway Implementation Plan and **Delivering the Thames Gateway** expand the concepts described by the **Greening the Gateway** and set out the delivery framework and Government strategy for the development of the sub-region as a growth area

The Thames Gateway South Essex Green Grid Strategy (the Strategy) develops the policies, principles and conceptual approach of Greening the Gateway by:

- identifying the **Resource** that exists
- identifying the **constraints and opportunities** in developing the green grid
- proposing a spatial **Strategic Framework** for the whole of the Strategy Area, and **Strategic Area Frameworks** for Thurrock; Basildon and Castle Point; and Southend and Rochford; and
- promoting **Strategic Guidance** based on the **Strategic Themes** as follows:

- **Accessibility**
- **Planning**
- **Character - landscape, townscape and riverscape**
- **Biodiversity**
- **Archaeological, historical and cultural resources**
- **Flood risk and water management**
- **Education, skills and learning**
- **Leisure and recreation**
- **Urban form**
- **Views and landmarks**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Positive physical and mental health; and**
- **Social and economic benefits.**

These Strategic Themes relate closely to the core principles of Greening the Gateway and have been developed through consultation, site reconnaissance and review of best practice. **Figure 2: Cross-Cutting Themes and Principles** illustrates the links between Greening the Gateway and this Strategy.

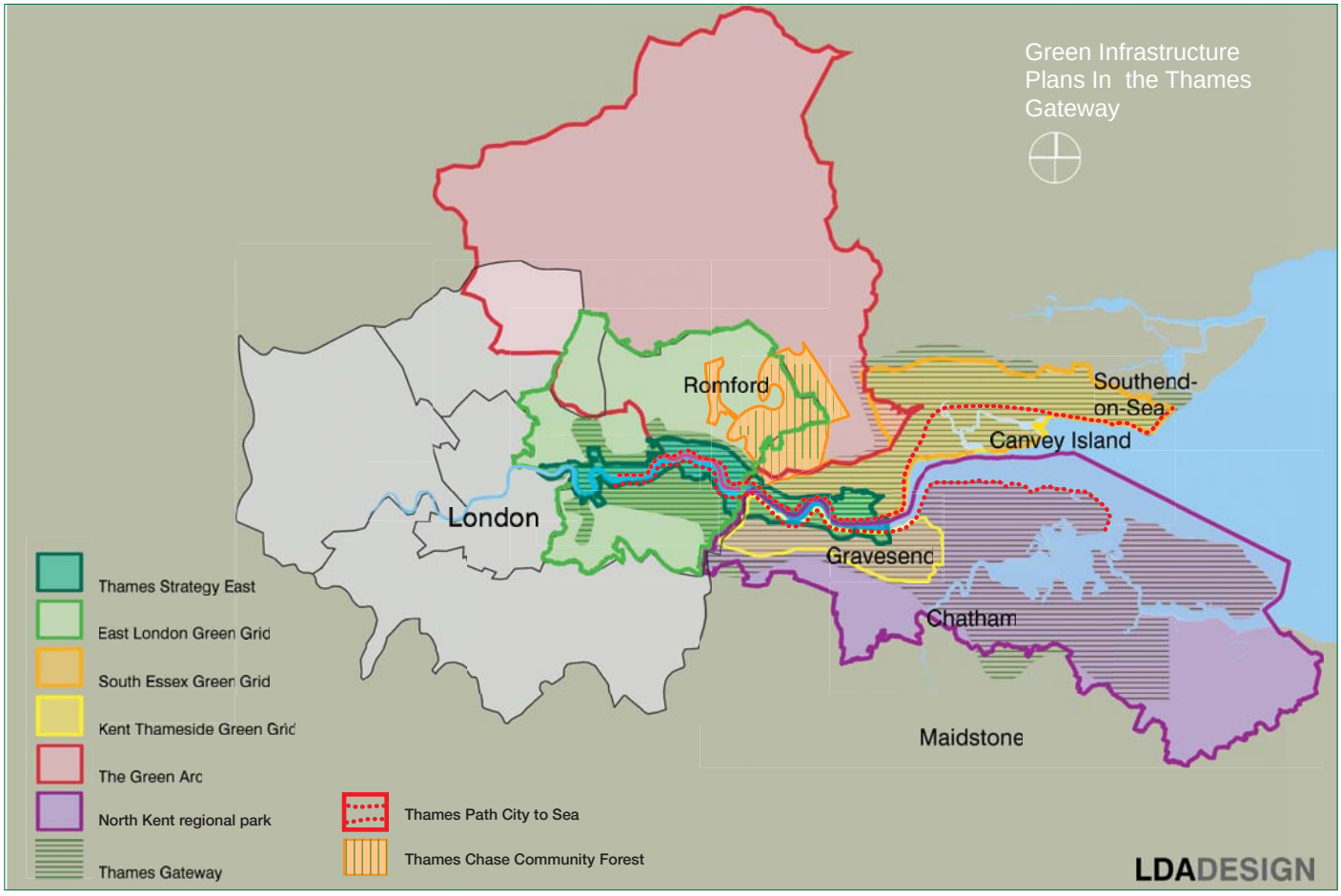


Figure 3 Environmental Infrastructure Planning in the Thames Gateway

1.2 Purpose, Aims and Objectives of the Strategy

The **purpose** of the Strategy is to:

- Provide a holistic and long-term vision for the sustainable future development and management of the Strategy Area
- Define an environmental infrastructure that promotes the establishment and management of appropriate character settings; and
- Provides the context for development over the long-term.

The principal **aims** for the Strategy are to propose:

- A Strategy for the development and management of the overall Green Grid in South Essex.

The key **objectives** of the Green Grid are to:

- embrace different habitats and land uses across rural and urban boundaries
- connect new communities with existing neighbourhoods and the regenerated riverside across spatial and conceptual boundaries, providing improved 'access for all'
- conserve and enhance existing sites and links
- conserve and enhance biodiversity
- create well-designed and high quality new elements in identified areas of opportunity and need
- contribute to improved environmental sustainability and enhancement through flood-risk management, improved air and water quality and noise abatement
- create a distinctive 'sense of place' through enhancement and celebration of landscape character and heritage
- enhance the image and confidence in South Essex as a high quality place to live, work and invest
- engage all communities with an interest in the planning, management and celebration of the network
- plan and promote the network as part of a broader sustainable environmental agenda including the transport system
- promote use of the network for recreation and tourism, education and healthy living; and
- promote employment creation, and learning and skills development through environmental activity.

1.3 Policy Context

The following are selected key regional policies and strategies influencing regeneration and development in South Essex, and this Strategy. Figure 4 illustrates other key policies and strategies influencing development and regeneration in South Essex. Appendix 2 provides a description of the full policy context.

Historic artefact near Coalhouse Fort

Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England, Draft RSS (East of England Plan)

Draft RSS (East of England Plan) sets out a strategy to guide development in the East of England up to 2021. With regard to green space planning, it seeks to protect and enhance the diversity and local distinctiveness of landscape character, and to identify, develop and implement an environmental infrastructure. In particular it promotes local development documents that:

- Provide connected and substantial networks of accessible multi-functional green space, in urban, urban fringe and adjacent countryside areas to service the new communities
- Have a multiple hierarchy of provision of environmental infrastructure, in terms of location, function, size and level of use
- Provide and safeguard environmental infrastructure based on the analysis of existing natural, historic, cultural and landscape assets, and identification of new assets to deliver the environmental infrastructure
- Identify Biodiversity Conservation Areas and Biodiversity Enhancement Areas to deliver large scale habitat enhancement; and
- Set targets for the provision for natural green space within development areas.

It also encourages:

- Appropriate management and expansion of wildlife corridors that are important for the migration and dispersal of wildlife
- The establishment of networks of semi-natural green spaces in built up areas
- Increased woodland consistent with landscape character; and
- The identification, protection, conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.

1.0 Introduction

Creating Sustainable Communities: Greening the Gateway, ODPM, January 2004

Greening the Gateway, as noted in the Introduction, sets out the core principles that the Government believes should be adopted in the planning and design of green spaces in the Thames Gateway. It is not intended to be a spatial plan, but calls for a network of attractive and accessible green spaces that link inner urban areas to rural areas, are multi-functional and can help to improve health, provide flood storage, filter pollution, encourage wildlife, provide shelter and a green framework within which people can enjoy living and working.

Making it Happen: Thames Gateway and growth areas, ODPM, July 2003

Making it Happen reports the progress of delivering growth in the Thames Gateway and the Growth Areas.

Creating Sustainable Communities: Greening the Gateway Implementation Plan, ODPM, February 2005

The **Implementation Plan** sets out the delivery framework for **Greening the Gateway**. It clarifies how Government, its Agencies and its funding will support the delivery of greenspace. It also broadly outlines the strategic roles envisaged for other delivery agents in the Thames Gateway and how these contribute to the overall framework.

Creating Sustainable Communities: Delivering the Thames Gateway, ODPM, March 2005

Delivering the Thames Gateway is the Government strategy for developing the Thames Gateway sub-region as a growth area. It demonstrates what has been achieved to date, provides key priorities and direction for the future, showing how the programme will be rolled forward. The document highlights current and future initiatives related to improvements in transport; education and health; housing; and the environment. Those relevant to this Strategy are:

- £400 million for transport projects, in addition to the £600 million previously allocated;
- £40 million investment in three new universities and colleges in **Southend**, Medway and Royal Docks;
- Agreement between the three regional planning bodies, in the Inter-Regional Planning Statement, that the Gateway has the potential for 128,500 homes, spread across London, North Kent and South Essex;
- A strategic vision for green spaces, set out in **Greening the Gateway**, and a follow-up **Implementation Plan**, which explains how the vision will be translated into reality;
- 80% of new development on brownfield land, protecting valuable greenfield space;
- A strengthened planning framework to ensure local authorities take account of flood risk in their development frameworks and in planning decisions (revised PPS25 on flooding to be published early 2006).

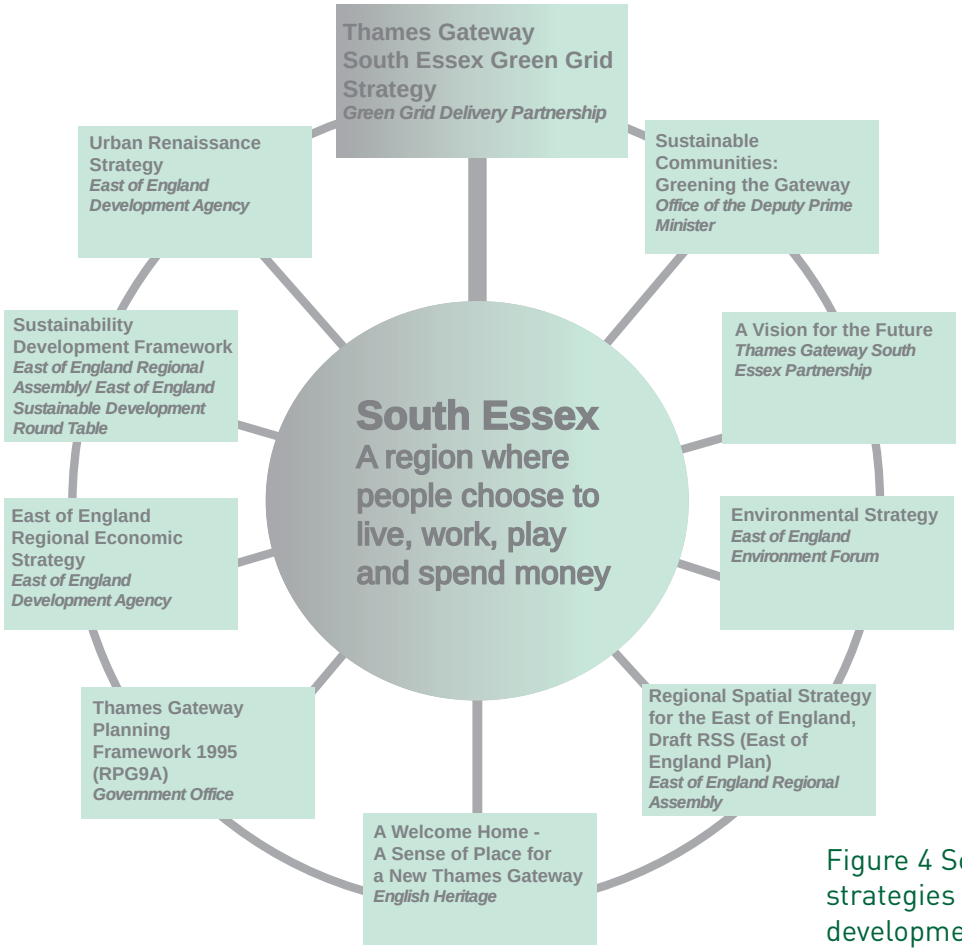


Figure 4 Selected key regional policies and strategies influencing regeneration and development in South Essex

1.0 Introduction

It also provides an investment pledge of **Government funding** in the Gateway to facilitate growth and regeneration:

- £475 million from the Thames Gateway Programme Fund for projects that will support growth and regeneration, improving the quality of life for existing and new residents. The budget to 2008 is £850 million; and
- £6 billion across Government as a whole to ensure the delivery of sustainable communities.

Longer term goals for proposed infrastructure and investment relevant to this Strategy are:

By 2010:

- At least 60,000 new homes will be built across the Gateway, helping to make home ownership more affordable for local residents and key workers;
- The Code for Sustainable Buildings will be in use by developers, raising the environmental standards of housing; and
- There will be a well-used green network which links up communities through high quality green space.

By 2016:

- At least 120,000 homes will be built across the Gateway, of which at least 35% will be affordable for rent or for purchase by first time buyers including key workers;
- The 53,000 hectares of greenspace in the Gateway will be protected, enhanced and added to, and accessibility will be increased for local residents;
- All the major strategic locations in the Gateway (which include large areas of derelict and contaminated brownfield land) will have been substantially developed, providing a mix of homes, jobs and amenities in new sustainable communities.

The document emphasises that the regeneration of the Thames Gateway will be delivered through a **partnership approach**, engaging both the public and private sector.

It describes the **delivery structure** for the Gateway:

- An ODPM Thames Gateway Delivery Unit, on site in the Gateway, to drive forward action;
- The local delivery vehicle framework for South Essex consists of **Thurrock Urban Development Corporation** and the two regeneration partnerships of **Basildon Renaissance** and **Renaissance Southend**. (Refer to Figure 10 Predominantly Urban/Non-Urban Areas and Locations of Local Delivery Vehicles).

It promotes the concepts of:

- **strategic development locations** in **Thurrock**; Stratford, Lower Lea and the Royal Docks; Greenwich Peninsula and Woolwich; London Riverside; North Kent Thameside; and Medway Waterfront; and

View to Admiralty Boom at Shoeburyness

- **urban renewal areas** in Barking; **Basildon**; Bexley; Sittingbourne and Swale; and **Southend**.

Key principles of the **Strategic Vision** are to:

- Support good quality, sustainable development that integrates successfully with existing communities;
- Return derelict and contaminated brownfield land to productive use;
- Preserve and enhance the Gateway's rich environmental and cultural heritage;
- Promote the prosperity and vitality of town centres and local businesses;
- Ensure that infrastructure and local services are in place when the community needs them;
- See that investment and change respond closely to the needs of all residents and promotes social inclusion; and
- Respect and develop the diversity of Gateway communities.

The document promotes sustainable communities in the Gateway which are:

- **Active, inclusive and safe** - fair, tolerant and cohesive with a strong local culture and other shared community activities;
- **Well run** - with effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership;
- **Environmentally sensitive** - providing places for people to live that are considerate of the environment;
- **Well designed and built** - featuring a quality built and natural environment;
- **Well connected** - with good transport services and communications linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services;

Tilbury Power Station

- Thriving - with a flourishing and diverse local economy;
- Well served - with public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to people's needs and accessible to all; and
- Fair for everyone - including those in other communities, now and in the future.

These documents make it clear, however, that these plans are subject to the review of regional spatial strategies. Consequently, the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England will provide the key regional policy context for this Strategy.

A Vision for the Future, Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership (TGSEP)

The Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership have developed regeneration objectives for Thames Gateway South Essex and these are set out in the TGSEP first-stage planning document, 'A Vision for the future' launched in Autumn 2001 and expanded in 'Strategic Framework - Delivering the Future' launched in July 2003. Six broad themes are described with objectives which include the creation of 35,000 new jobs from regeneration around the existing urban areas and redevelopment of brownfield sites. Achieving this capacity will be dependent on significant improvements to transport infrastructure, public transport services and environmental infrastructure. The link between an attractive environment and thriving economies has been recognised within the partnership's vision. The report promotes action to 'bring the natural environment closer to communities by developing a Green Grid linking urban and rural environments'. The South Essex Green Grid is a key component in the regeneration process, promoting opportunities to improve quality of life and creating a better sense of place for the region.

1.4 Other Thames Gateway Green Grid, and Strategic Green Infrastructure Initiatives

There are several Green Grid and other strategic open space planning initiatives underway in the Thames Gateway that complement and support this Strategy and vice-versa. Environmental Infrastructure Planning in the Thames Gateway (Figure 3) illustrates the boundaries and extent of the following strategies that are at various stages of development:

- Thames Strategy East
- East London Green Grid
- Kent Thameside Green Grid
- The Green Arc
- North Kent Regional Park
- Thames Path City to Sea; and
- Thames Chase Community Forest.

Other initiatives such as Green Gateway and the Regional Woodland Strategy for the East of England focus on the contribution that trees and woodland can make to green infrastructure in the region.

The Thames Chase Partnership is a successful example of strategic greenspace planning and implementation. It has doubled the amount of greenspace within its boundaries from 9% to 17% proving that greenspace creation is viable.

1.5 The economic argument for investment in the Green Grid

There is no doubting the economic benefits of investing in the Green Grid as envisaged in this Strategy. Places as diverse as Boston, New York, Minneapolis, Portland, Oregon and Boulder, Colorado in the United States; and Zurich, Aarhus, Copenhagen and Stuttgart in Europe; and Melbourne, Australia all prove that high quality environments, attract high quality people, and high quality businesses. CABE Space's 'Is the grass greener...?' report provides detailed information on the successful delivery and funding of parks, open spaces and green infrastructure.

Boulder, Colorado has been investing a dedicated portion of its sales tax in buying and developing a comprehensive parks system which ranges from its downtown mall and park to mountain wilderness areas since the 1960s. It now has the highest percentage of post-graduate residents in the United States. Portland, Oregon has similarly been investing in its parks and open spaces since Olmsted planned it in the early 1900s, most recently through a Bond Issue worth $135 million - people moving their typically take an average reduction in salary of $4,750/annum. Parks Victoria has completely recast itself as a leader in the design, development, management and maintenance of

public parks in the last 10 years - Melbourne is in the top ten "best places to live in the world". Quality of life matters to people.

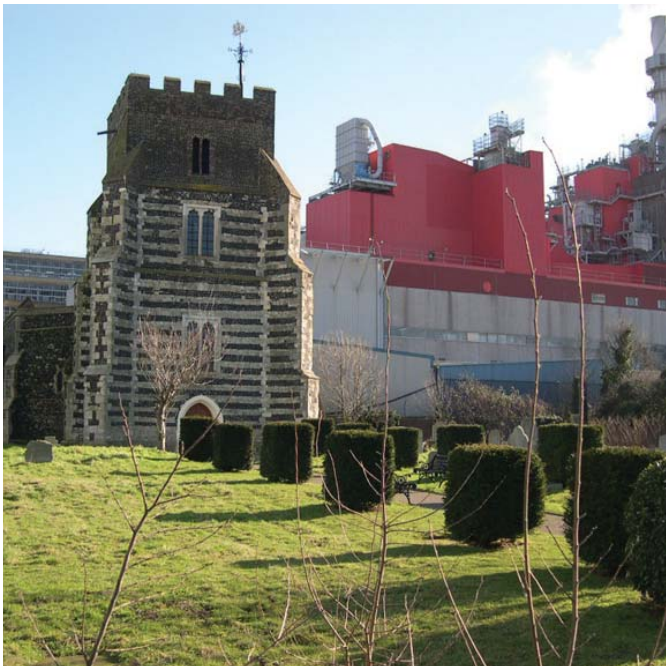
There is also no doubt that investment in public open space enhances land values. Properties within three blocks of Central Park, New York rose by nine-and-two-thirds in the fifteen years following its completion, elsewhere in New York they only doubled.

According to Alexander Garvin, Minneapolis has 'the best-located, best-financed, best-designed, best-maintained public open space system in America.' The statistics are impressive, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board serves a city population of around 360,000 (with a regional population of approximately 1 million) and is responsible for parks and open spaces covering almost 2,582ha (6,380 acres) with twenty-two lakes making up 566ha (1,400acres) of the total area. There are approximately 170 park properties ranging from the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden - part of the world famous Walker Art Center - to athletics tracks. The raison d'être for the parks system was economic. An independent Parks Board was proposed by the Minneapolis Board of Trade in 1883 who explained:

The rapid growth of our city . . . warns us that the time has come when, if ever, steps should be taken to secure the necessary land for such a grand system of Parks and Boulevards as the natural situation offer and will give to Minneapolis, not only the finest and most beautiful system of Public Parks and Boulevards of any city in America, but which, when secured and located as they can now be at a comparatively small expense, will, in the near future, add many millions to the real estate value of our city.

On its establishment 1883, the Park Board was charged with establishing, managing and maintaining a parks system; crucially, it was given the power to issue bonds, levy taxes, and condemn property. It therefore, had the wherewithal to design, build, manage and maintain the parks. Furthermore, the Park Board is elected and, therefore, democratically accountable. More than 100 years later, the parks and open spaces form a complete and connected system and yet are still being developed and extended as Minneapolis continues to grow and change.

The Strategy promotes high quality environmental infrastructure that in turn promotes high quality development and vice-versa. High quality environments yield, over time, higher property values. We therefore need to explore ways of capturing back a part of that rise in value not only to pay back early capital investment, but



St. Clements Church and Proctor Gamble Factory at Tilbury

also to ensure adequate funding for its management and maintenance in perpetuity. This will encourage investor confidence and facilitate positive marketing of Thames Gateway South Essex as a high quality and attractive place to live, work and play forever.

The concept of the 'working landscape', of placing a value on 'environmental functions' performed by the environmental infrastructure such as flood risk management, water cleansing through reed bed systems, reduction in urban 'heat island' temperatures through extensive tree planting, promotion of healthy living through preventative health-care, etc., need to be costed, agreed and signed up to.

2.0 The Resource

South Essex is very diverse with a mix of urban, rural, marshland and industrial areas. Consequently, it has a great diversity of landscape, townscape and riverscape characters. The resource varies from excellent to poor, but in general, post-war development is the poorer and in greater need of enhancement both in itself, and in relation to the overall landscape, townscape and riverscape.

The Strategy, therefore, aims to ensure that existing urban areas with their streets, squares, parks, boulevards, town centres and other facilities, are enhanced and connected to the urban fringe and the more rural areas to satisfy the multiple needs for leisure, recreation, flood risk and water quality management, local food production, biodiversity, education, energy production, waste management, etc. The Strategy also looks towards new development and infrastructure projects to ensure the best of the resource is protected and enhanced, distinctive new settings created, and any necessary negative impacts mitigated.

Consequently, this section describes the resource that exists within the Strategy Area. It analyses and summarises the significance of the resource and opportunities in relation to the Strategic Themes outlined in Section 1.

It first documents, analyses and summarises the land resource and natural systems comprising geology, hydrology, topography and biodiversity. It then documents and analyses the land use and human systems resource of developed/non-developed areas, the Zones of Change and local delivery vehicles; access and movement including roads, railways, footpaths, cycleways and bridleways; archaeology, historic and cultural resources; designated public open space and; landscape character. Finally, there is a brief discussion on the impacts of climate change.

A CD-Rom of the Strategy is available from Thames Gateway South Essex Green Grid Partnership which allows greater scrutiny of the mapped data.

It should be noted that the data was gathered throughout 2004 and is subject to change.

View to Hadleigh Castle on the escarpment above Hadleigh Marsh

Saltmarshes around Benfleet Creek on the Thames Estuary

2.1 Land Resources and Natural Systems

Figure 5 Geology maps the geology of Essex. Figure 6 Minerals and Waste defines those areas within the Strategy Area where there are existing or approved quarries, landfills and other mineral and waste activities.

Geology

The Resource:

- Sedimentary rocks include Chalk and Thanet Sands which outcrop in Thurrock and Claygate, and Bagshot Sands and Gravels which outcrop on the Langdon and Benfleet Hills. London Clay underlies much of the rest of the Strategy area
- There are areas of pre-glacial river terrace gravels and periglacial brickearth deposits particularly in the Southend area.
- Large areas of more recent alluvial soils are found in the Mardyke Valley and along the Thames Estuary of which the Saltmarsh and Mudflat fringe is the most recently deposited.
- There is a history of geological exploitation in the area, with large chalk quarries, sand and gravel pits concentrated in the Thurrock area
- The main current landfill site is at Newlands in marshes west of Canvey Island
- Large potential landfill sites occur around East Tilbury; and
- Saltmarshes represent the current phase of geological formation.

Analysis and Opportunities:

- Influences local and regional distinctiveness - topography, soils, land use, biodiversity, landscape character
- Educational, cultural and recreational benefits - interpretation of geological features, historic and cultural legacy; and
- Economic and social benefits relate mainly to extraction industry and the sensitive planning and design of after-use of mineral and landfill sites which could make a significant contribution to the Green Grid network.

Summary:

The geology (in conjunction with the topography) of the Strategy Area offers great opportunities for education, interpretation and expressing distinctiveness. It should be a consideration in all development proposals so that geological and topographical character inform the designed experience. Additionally, the minerals and waste mapping indicates areas where opportunities for creative contributions to the Green Grid are possible.

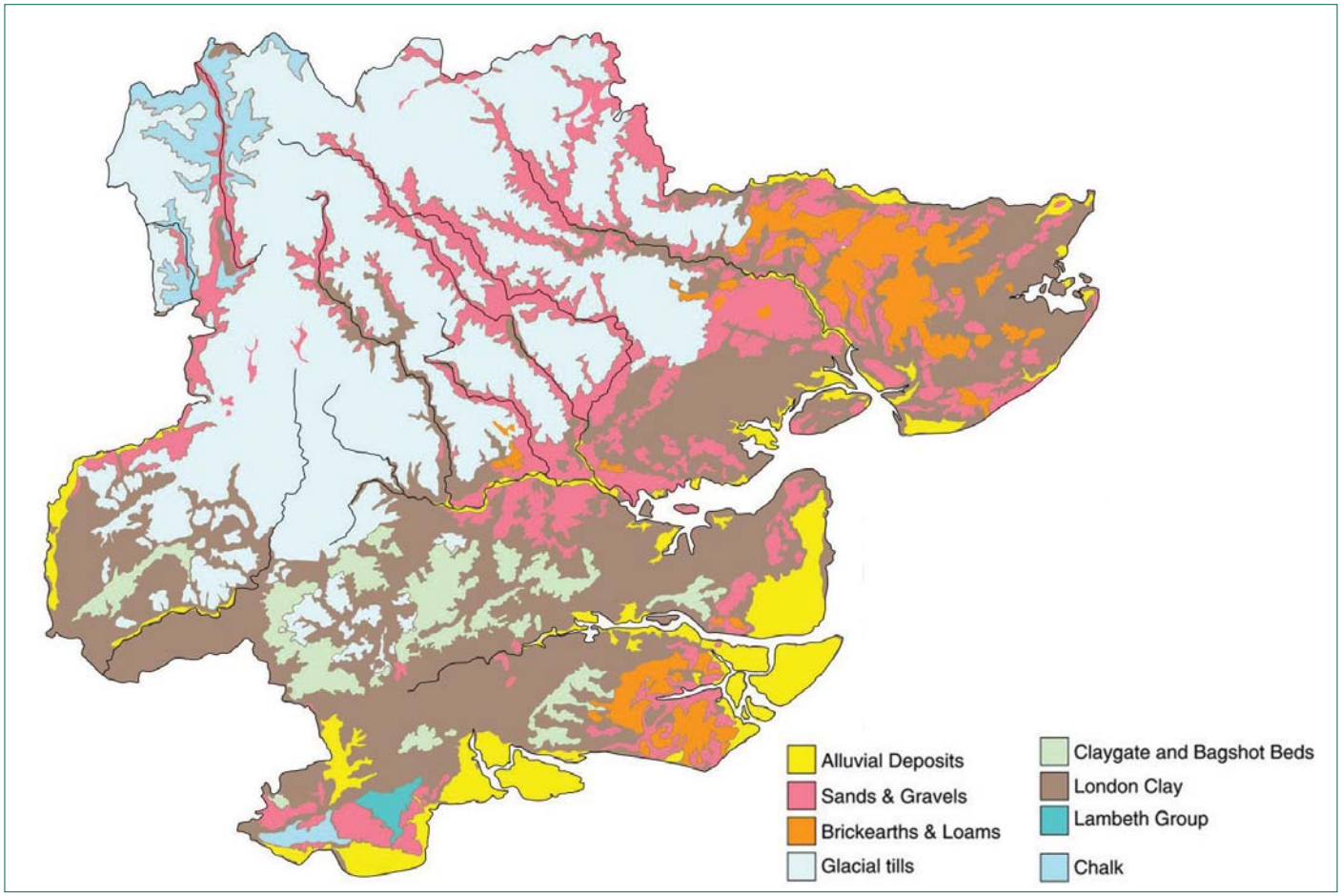


Figure 5 Geology (courtesy of Essex County Council 1998)

Hydrology

Figure 7 Hydrology maps the flood plains of the Estuary, its tributaries and river catchments to the north of the Strategy Area.

The Resource:

- Hydrology within the Strategy Area is dominated by the River Thames, its estuary and tributaries to the south, and the rivers Crouch and Roach and their tributaries to the north.

Analysis and Opportunities:

- River and tributary corridors provide good physical links for walking, cycling and for ecology
- Rivers and tributaries influence local and regional distinctiveness - topography, soils, land use, biodiversity, landscape character
- The water resource is a major contributor to biodiversity
- The rivers and tributaries are a major contributor to the archaeological, historic and cultural resource
- Large, low-lying areas beside the Thames, Crouch and Roach estuaries are at risk of flooding by high tides, consequently, comprehensive flood risk management proposals based on Strategic Flood Risk Assessments provide the opportunity to ensure that multiple benefits for people and wildlife are achieved. The benefits of woodland planting in floodplains in reducing peaks and troughs of flow rates should be considered, although this option would not be appropriate where the landscape character is distinctly open, e.g. marshes
- The flood risk adjacent to inland rivers and tributaries is generally localised, however, as above, multiple benefits of comprehensive flood risk management proposals are possible
- A Flood Risk Management Strategy is not available for the Strategy Area
- Educational potential - interpretation of river and estuary features including historical exploitation and cultural context of marshes and water courses; historic and contemporary uses and changing perception of the Thames Estuary
- Tourism, leisure and recreational potential - fishing, sailing, boating, wildlife watching, and as an attractive setting for shared use paths
- Key role in environmental infrastructure planning for new and existing development
- The rivers and estuaries provide for dramatic views that should be exploited through positive proposals for sequences of views and landmarks
- Access to the rivers and their tributaries provide the potential for creating a greater sense of well-being
- Major economic benefits of the Thames Estuary: as a freight transport corridor and hub; for the fishing industry; and as a setting for appropriate development

Summary:

There are serious long-term challenges posed by flood risk and the effects of climate change within the Strategy Area. It is essential that flood risk from high tides, and fluvial run-off are addressed through Flood Risk Management Strategies in a co-ordinated way. Strategic Flood Risk Assessments must be completed for each river and its catchment as soon as possible to ensure that improvement to existing infrastructure and the creation of new infrastructure address all the Strategic Themes of this Strategy, and long term opportunities are not lost. Retro-fitting for flood risk management is always much more expensive. All new developments should explore opportunities for zero surface water run-off, green roofs, porous paving and sustainable drainage systems.

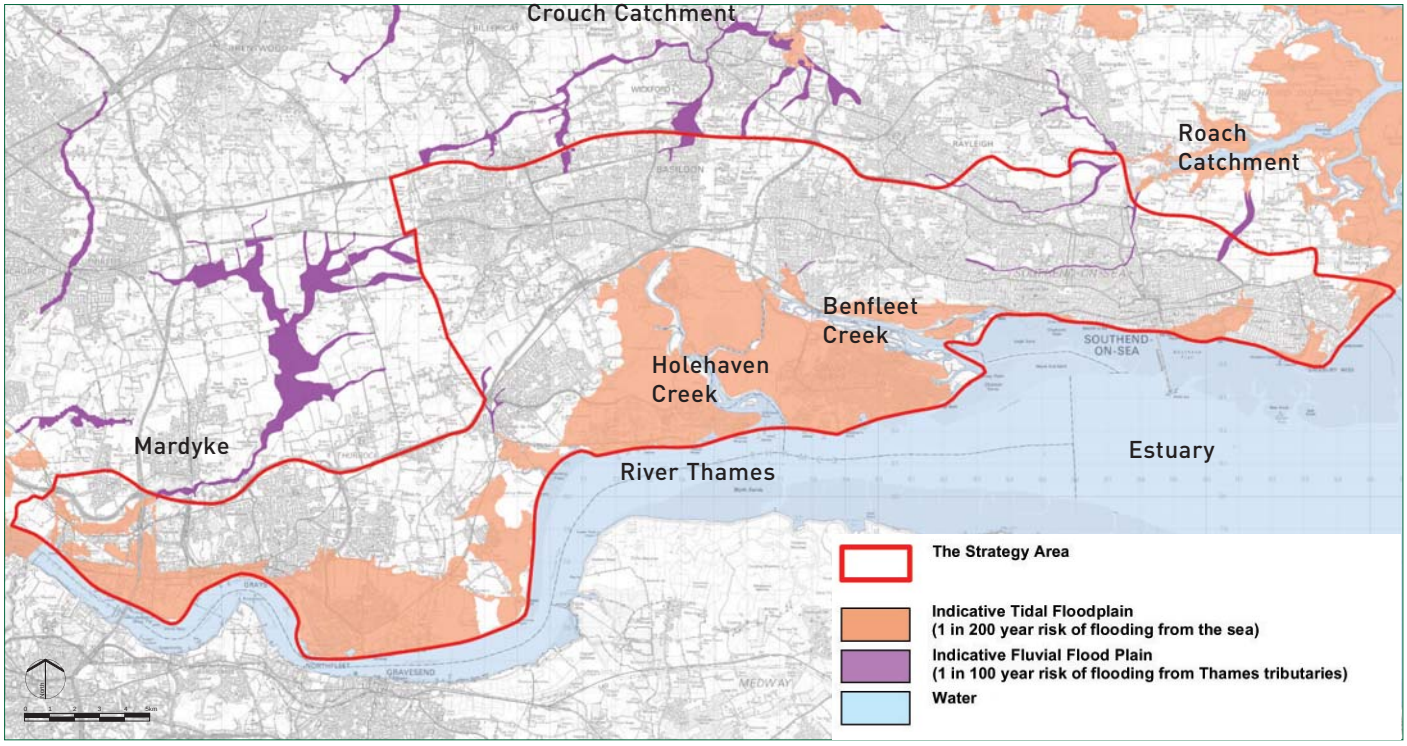


Figure 7 Hydrology

2.0 The Resource

Topography

Figure 8 Topography illustrates the influence of changes in elevation from the Thames Estuary and its marshes to the Thames Terraces.

The Resource:

- The Strategy Area is relatively flat adjacent to the western section of the estuary, rising inland on the Thames Terraces; highest points are the Langdon and Benfleet Hills; and
- Topographical features include rock outcrops around Tilbury, escarpments from Langdon Hills to Hadleigh, and cliffs along coastline at Southend.

Analysis and Opportunities:

- Topography within the Strategy Area influences local and regional distinctiveness - land use, biodiversity, landscape character, townscape
- High points provide opportunities for landmarks and sequences of spectacular views over South Essex and the Thames Estuary to Kent and London
- Flat, open areas provide opportunities for landmarking and way-finding

Cliffs at Southend provide opportunities for views of outer reaches of Thames Estuary

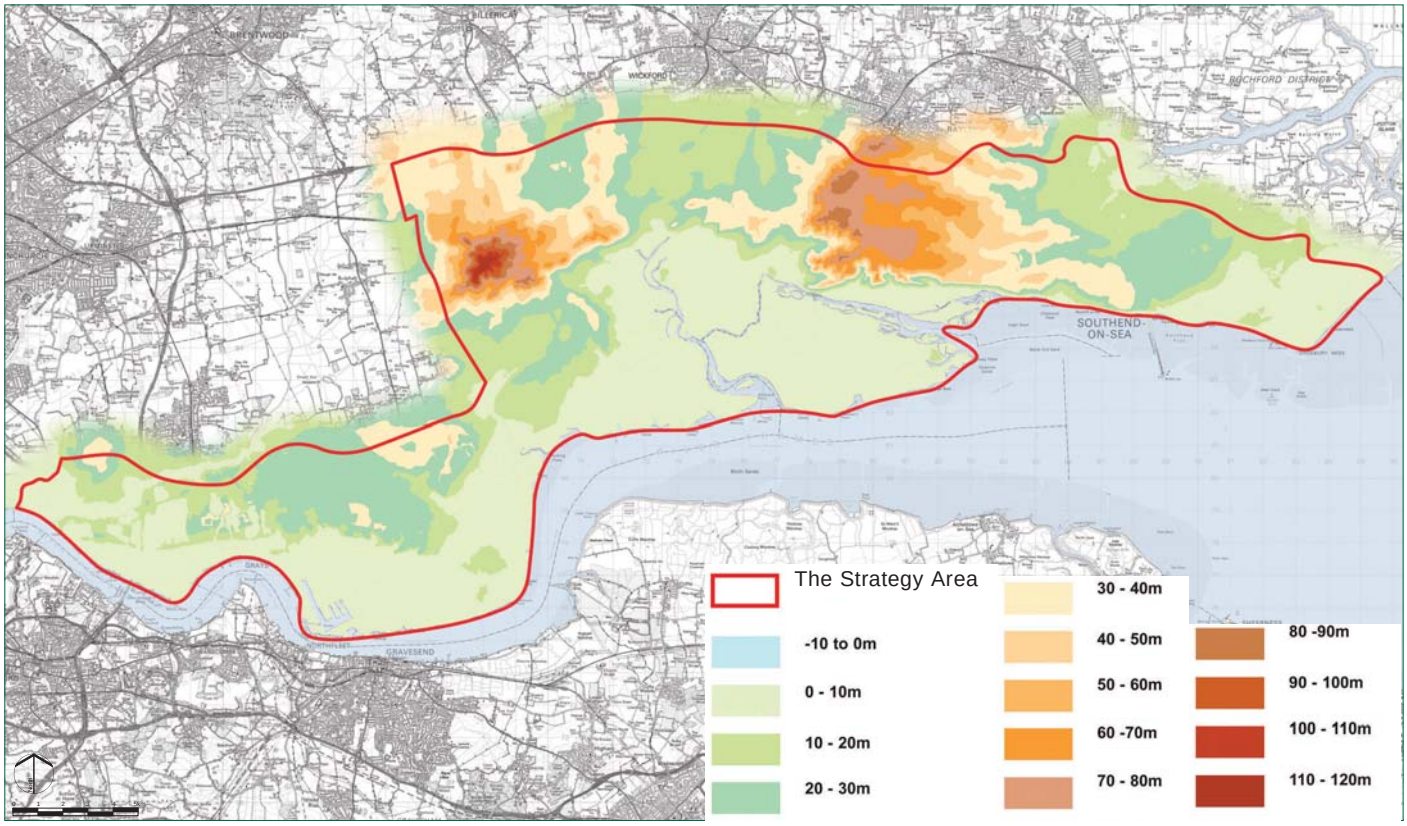


Figure 8 Topography

- A balance needs to be struck between protecting wildlife and habitats, providing areas for enjoyment by people
- Topography is integral to archaeology and historical resources of the area
- There are potential links with flood risk management proposals
- Educational and cultural benefits - for example, the role of topography in siting of fortifications and landmarks; and
- Topography influences microclimate which in turn influences site planning, creating shelter for development and recreation.

Summary:

The combination of urban and industrial form, and geology and topography give rise to a sequence of views and landmarks that characterise the Strategy Area. Opportunities to exploit this should be a key consideration when framing development, access and movement, and infrastructure proposals.

Moorings at Fobbing Marshes

2.0 The Resource

Biodiversity

Figure 9 maps current designations for biodiversity and wildlife sites within the Strategy Area. It should be noted that sites and their boundaries are updated regularly.

The Resource:

- There are numerous international, European, national and local designations within the Strategy Area (regularly updated information can be found on www.english-nature.org.uk)
- The majority of the nature conservation sites are valued for their birdlife and wetland habitats, and are concentrated along the coast and estuaries
- Inland, there are significant pockets of ancient woodland, heathland, flower rich grassland, freshwater wetland and mosaic habitats
- Disused quarries and brownfield sites provide some excellent habitats; and
- Areas which can be valuable for nature conservation but are not protected (and are therefore not mapped) include gardens, allotments, cemeteries, school grounds, roadside verges, brownfield sites, etc. Wildlife Sites (formerly Sites of Important Nature Conservation) do not have statutory protection but are promoted by Local Plans.

Analysis and Opportunities:

- Biodiversity influences local and regional distinctiveness - landscape, townscape and riverscape character
- Educational potential - interpretation of ecology of natural and urban habitats
- Social and economic potential related to inclusiveness and community involvement, and to the development of leisure, recreation and tourism
- Potential for enhancement and integration of biodiversity within urban areas including brownfield sites (for further information on this and related principles refer to 'Biodiversity by Design: A Guide for Sustainable Communities' published by the Town and Country Planning Association)
- Recognise that trees and woodland planted in appropriate areas (i.e. not marshes) can bring high quality sustainable, economic and environmental benefits to the area. (Refer to 'Regional Woodland Strategy for the East of England' published by the East of England Regional Assembly and the Forestry Commission)
- Recognise that habitats are living systems and that our understanding and evaluation of them is constantly changing. The value of brownfield sites for biodiversity and people should not be overlooked
- Potential for protection, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife in infrastructure proposals
- Living in harmony with nature - improved health and sense of well-being

Habitat and wildlife exploration in the marshes at London Riverside Conservation Park

- Only ancient woodland has been mapped here, however, the vision and themes of the Regional Woodland Strategy for the East of England are compatible with this Strategy; and
- Habitat conservation and creation is integral to the archaeological and historical resources of the area.

Summary:

The biodiversity value of the Strategy Area is varied and good. All opportunities for protection, enhancement and creation should be exploited alongside proposals for regeneration and development. When combined with the needs for access and movement, flood risk management, biomass production, etc; and as part of Strategy Area-wide mosaic of habitat and corridors, liveability and quality life will be enhanced.

2.2 Land Use and Human Systems

Urban Development

Figure 10 delineates the predominantly urban and non-urban areas within the Strategy Area; the government s approximate locations of Local Delivery Vehicles that have been established.

The Resource:

- Approximately half of the Strategy Area is urban
- Urban land uses include residential, commercial, industry, transport, leisure and retail
- Non-urban land uses include arable and pastoral farming, woodland, heath, marshes and mudflats, quarries and recreation; and
- The majority of the non-developed land is designated Greenbelt, however, the quality of some areas of green belt used for quarrying and landfill is poor.

Analysis and Opportunities:

- The planning system will influence delivery of this Strategy and it should be embedded within it
- Land use within the Strategy Area is likely to change particularly where Local Delivery Vehicles have been established
- There is potential to enhance and improve accessibility to and through developed and non-developed areas
- Security needs of particularly commercial land uses must be considered
- Improved quality of urban, urban fringe and rural environments improves local and regional perceptions of the environment contributing to a sense of well-being
- There is increasing recognition of the contribution to biodiversity of land use within urban areas, i.e. gardens, derelict land, allotments, cemeteries, green lanes, hedgerows, roadside verges, etc;
- The protection, enhancement and creation of new areas of biodiversity value, to improve links to and through developed and non-developed areas should be taken
- There is potential to enhance knowledge of the archaeological, historic and cultural resources and to embed the resources in development proposals
- The opportunities to exploit non-developed areas for flood risk and water quality management should be taken
- Similarly, the potential to exploit non-developed areas for leisure, recreation and tourism should be considered
- The planning of green spaces as an integral part of residential development is important
- The creation of new, and enhanced existing sequences and views and landmarks should be considered; and
- The social and economic benefits of delivering the Green Grid through the development process should be recognised.
- Woodland establishment can be an important means of regenerating urban and industrial wasteland. It can be a cost-effective and technically successful 'soft' end-use for operational, vacant, derelict or poorly restored, and contaminated land.

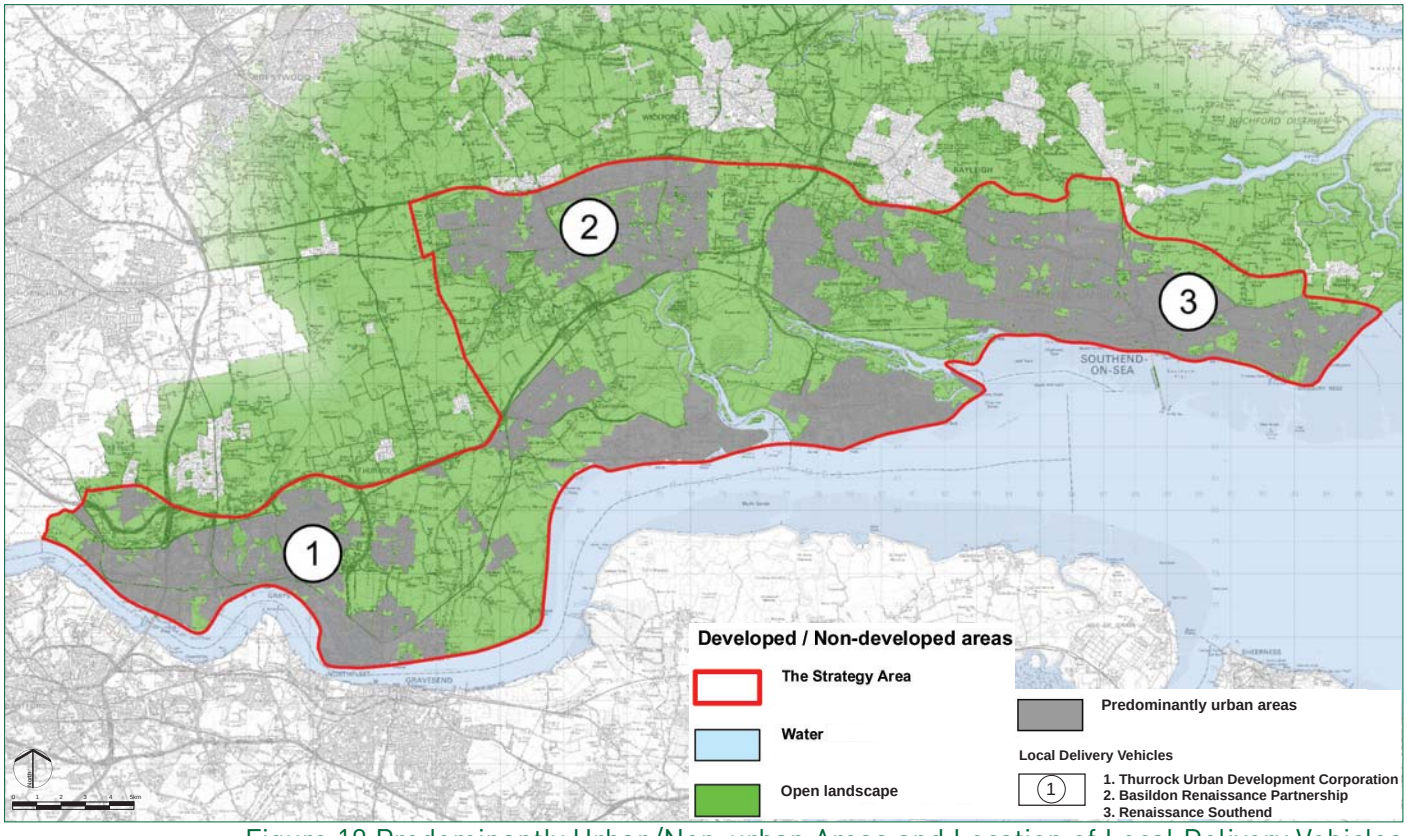


Figure 10 Predominantly Urban/Non-urban Areas and Location of Local Delivery Vehicles

2.0 The Resource

Summary:

There is an opportunity for the Green Grid to link to and through existing developed areas and non-developed areas in a co-ordinated, strategic way. Regional and local plans should embed the principles of this Strategy in their frameworks and policies. The opportunity for all development and infrastructure proposals to contribute to a new and existing co-ordinated network of spaces and places that address all the Strategic Themes of this Strategy should be exploited. There is a lot of open land in between developed areas, much of it designated Green Belt. Some of this land is poor agricultural land, disused quarries, landfill, brownfield, etc, and should provide opportunities for incorporation in the Green Grid network as working landscapes .

Some urban areas have the infrastructure of roads, railways and utilities in proximity to brownfield (and some green field) land that provides the opportunity for appropriate extension as long as the best of the resource is protected, the poor enhanced, and the principles of sustainable development and this Strategy are embedded in proposals.

Access and Movement

Figure 11 delineates the major roads, railways, bridleways, byways, footpaths, cycleways and Greenways (identified prior to preparation of this Strategy) within the Strategy Area.

The Resource:

- There is a relatively comprehensive network of designated public footpaths, although quality of provision particularly in urban areas is often poor
- There is generally poor provision of bridleways and byways
- Proposed National Cycle Routes will provide better links to and through most urban areas
- Rail and road transport networks are considered to be good in a national context (despite apparent local north-south rail deficiencies), however, they are at capacity
- The Thames Estuary is an important shipping corridor with numerous commercial and industrial facilities along its banks, including the cruise terminal at Tilbury and the proposed port-expansion at Shellhaven
- River based public transport is limited to the Tilbury - Gravesend Ferry; and
- Proposed national leisure routes e.g. South North Sea European Regional Park (promoted by SAIL); and City to Sea (promoted by Thames Estuary Partnership).

Analysis and Opportunities:

- Increase in high quality connections from **'doorstep to countryside/estuary'** would encourage inclusiveness and use of the environment for informal recreation contributing to healthy living and a sense of well-being
- Integrated transport and development would provide benefits of improved environment including improved water and air quality
- Transport corridors which incorporate functional environmental infrastructure would contribute to improved water management, and increased urban and rural biodiversity
- Improved accessibility to the archaeological, historical and cultural resource would enhance sense of place and sense of community
- Increased access providing opportunities for experiencing the variety of local cultural and environmental and educational destinations would encourage exploration
- A connected network of footpaths, cycleways and bridleways that is safe, attractive and well publicised would create a viable, alternative transport, leisure and recreational resource
- Access and movement through the Strategy Area should exploit the potential for a sequence of views and landmarks
- Improved access would raise the profile of South Essex as a place to live, visit and work, thereby attracting investment and people
- Alternative and safe routes to work, schools, sports facilities, retail areas, nature reserves, parks and other destinations would enhance liveability
- Easy access to information about routes and integration of various types of transport would encourage better use of existing and future transport links; and
- Promotion of, and links to national leisure routes would raise the profile of Green Grid and increase the strategic significance of particular routes.

Marginal land close to Tilbury Power Station

Summary:

Road and rail transport network is good but at capacity, there are great opportunities for embedding the principles of this Strategy at the planning and design stages of

upgrading the existing, and implementing new transport infrastructure. Transport proposals should recognise the opportunities for incorporating good design which would address all the Strategic Themes of this Strategy, including foot and cycle access and movement, healthy living, biodiversity, character, flood risk, urban form, views and landmarks, and the economy.

Archaeology, historic and cultural resources

Figure 15 locates the Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the Strategy Area. Figure 12 locates the key destinations within the Strategy Area. Figures 13 and 14 are extracts from English Heritage's Thames Gateway Historic Environment Characterisation Project. The project identifies 140 Historic Environment Character Areas within the Thames Gateway and assesses the sensitivity to change of the historical assets of the area.

The Resource:

- A wide variety of strategic urban and rural, archaeological, historic, environmental and cultural destinations are distributed evenly throughout the Strategy Area
- There are a number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments throughout the Strategy Area, including Tilbury and Coalhouse Forts and Prittlewell Priory
- The marshlands present a significant historical asset which is highly sensitive to major physical change
- Specific woodland areas around the Langdon Hills and Daws Heath are significant historical assets which are extremely sensitive to physical change
- There are pockets of built heritage/urban areas which are either highly or extremely sensitive to change scattered throughout South Essex with particular concentration in and around Southend
- Some destinations have strong recreational appeal, such as the forts, country parks, nature reserves and Southend seaside; and
- Southend is a major tourist destination.

Analysis:

- There is evidence in South Essex of human occupation stretching back over 500,000 years. The historic settlement pattern developed around an intricate and integrated relationship between gravel/London clay upland, grazing marsh, creeks and estuaries. The large marshland embayment bounded to the south by Canvey/Shellhaven to the north and east by Vange/Benfleet/Hadleigh/Leigh and to the west by Fobbing/Corringham, to a surprising extent preserves this relationship. The woods and marshes of South Essex, were a particularly valuable resource in the medieval period and ownership was divided amongst a number of, often quite distant, manors. The footpaths, bridleways, tracks and lanes which will form the core of the Green Grid were created to serve this integrated pattern of settlement and economic exploitation. In creating a new physically and conceptually integrated approach to the South Essex landscape the Green Grid will in a sense be restoring an ancient reality
- Perhaps the most significant aspect of the historic environment of South Essex is the grain of the landscape, its field boundaries, tracks and paths
- Archaeological and historical resources are integral to the topography, habitat conservation and creation resources of the area.
- The contribution the resource makes to the celebration of sense of place, sense of time, and sense of community should be fully recognised and exploited
- The contribution the resource makes to character of the Strategy Area should be recognised and exploited
- The interpretation of the historic context of South Essex - the archaeological evidence from prehistoric times, fortification of the estuary through the ages, changing social history, etc - should be exploited
- The broadening of knowledge and perceptions of the resource will improve the image of South Essex attracting people and businesses; and
- The contribution of the resource to local character and distinctiveness should be recognised and exploited.

Tilbury Fort

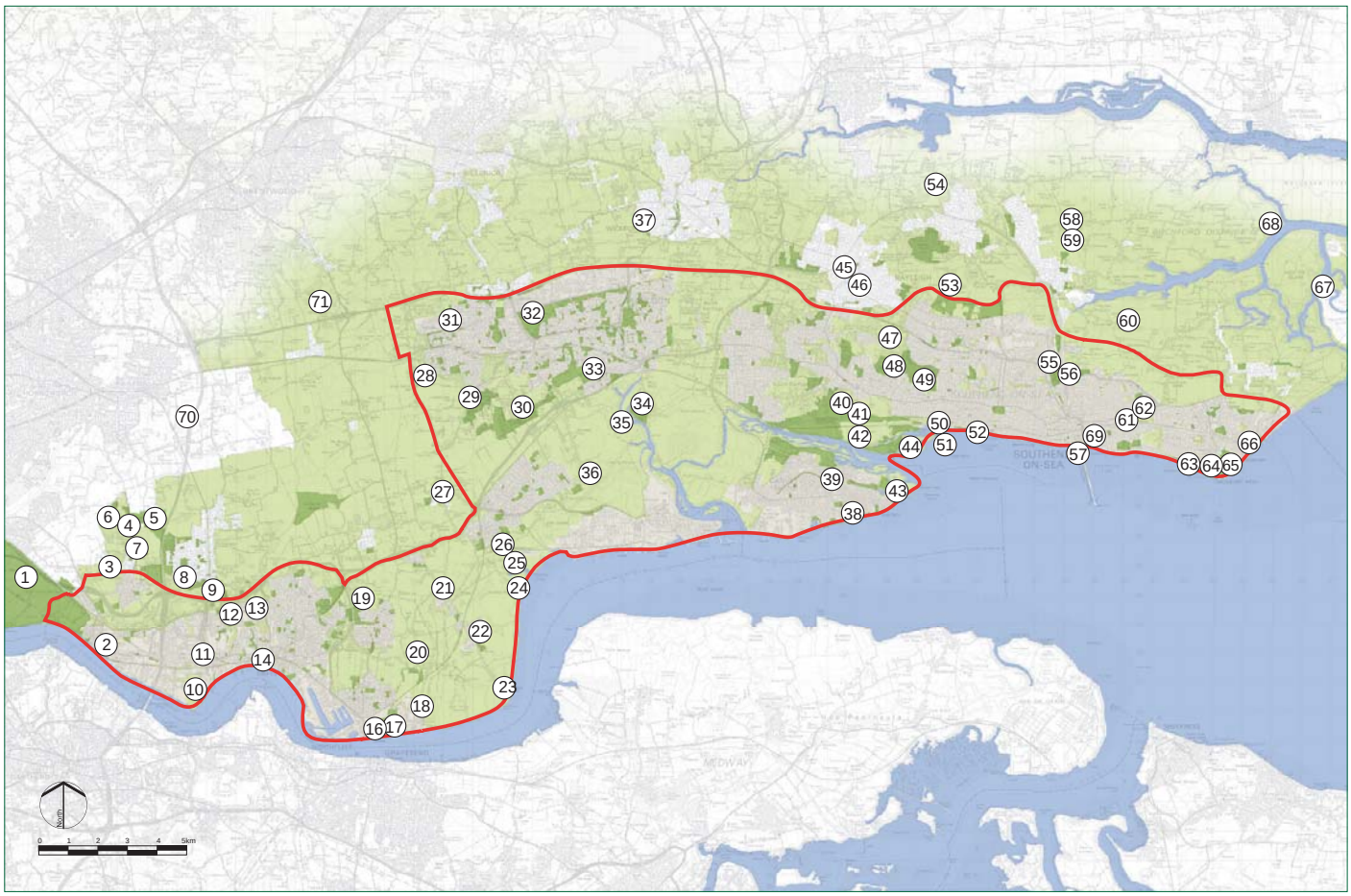


Figure 12 Destinations

Destinations associated with open spaces

1 Rainham Marshes/Proposed London Riverside Conservation Park
2 Purfleet Garrison
3 Kennington Park
4 Belhus Woods Country Park
5 Oak Wood
6 Cely Woods
7 Belhus Chase
8 Mardyke Woods
9 Davy Down Riverside Park
10 West Thurrock Marshes
11 St. Clements Church
12 Grays Chalk Quarry
13 Chafford Gorges
14 The Wharf
15 Mardyke Valley
16 Worlds End Pub
17 Tilbury Fort
18 Tilbury Arts Centre
19 Orsett Village
20 West Tilbury Village
21 Linford Wood
22 East Tilbury
23 Coal House Fort
24 Mucking Marshes
25 Stanford Marshes
26 Grove House Wood
27 Horndon on the Hill
28 Dunton Plotlands, Langdon Nature Reserve and Langdon Visitor Centre
29 Langdon Hills Country Park
30 One Tree Hill
31 Laindon Common
32 Gloucester Park
33 Vange Hill
34 Wat Tyler Park
35 Vange Marshes
36 Fobbing Village
37 Wickford Country Park
38 Canvey Sea Front
39 Canvey Lake
40 Hadleigh Castle Country Park
41 Hadleigh Castle
42 Hadleigh Marsh
43 Canvey Heights
44 Two Tree Island
45 Rayleigh Windmill
46 Rayleigh Castle
47 Pound Wood
48 Great Wood
49 Belfairs Wood
50 Old Leigh Village
51 Leigh Marshes
52 Leigh Beach
53 Gusted Hall
54 Plumbrow Mount
55 Prittlewell Priory
56 Priory Park
57 Southend Pier
58 Doggetts Pond
59 Doggetts Farm
60 Butlers Gate
61 Southchurch Park
62 Southchurch Hall
63 Shoebury Beach
64 Gunners Park
65 Shoebury Garrison
66 Shoebury East Beach
67 Essex Coast NME's
68 The Beagle
69 Southend Coastal Attractions
70 Thames Chase Forest Centre
71 Thorndon Country Park

The Strategy Area

Open Landscape

Designated Private and Public Open Space

Strategic River Corridors and Destinations: River Thames, River Crouch and River Roach and their tributaries

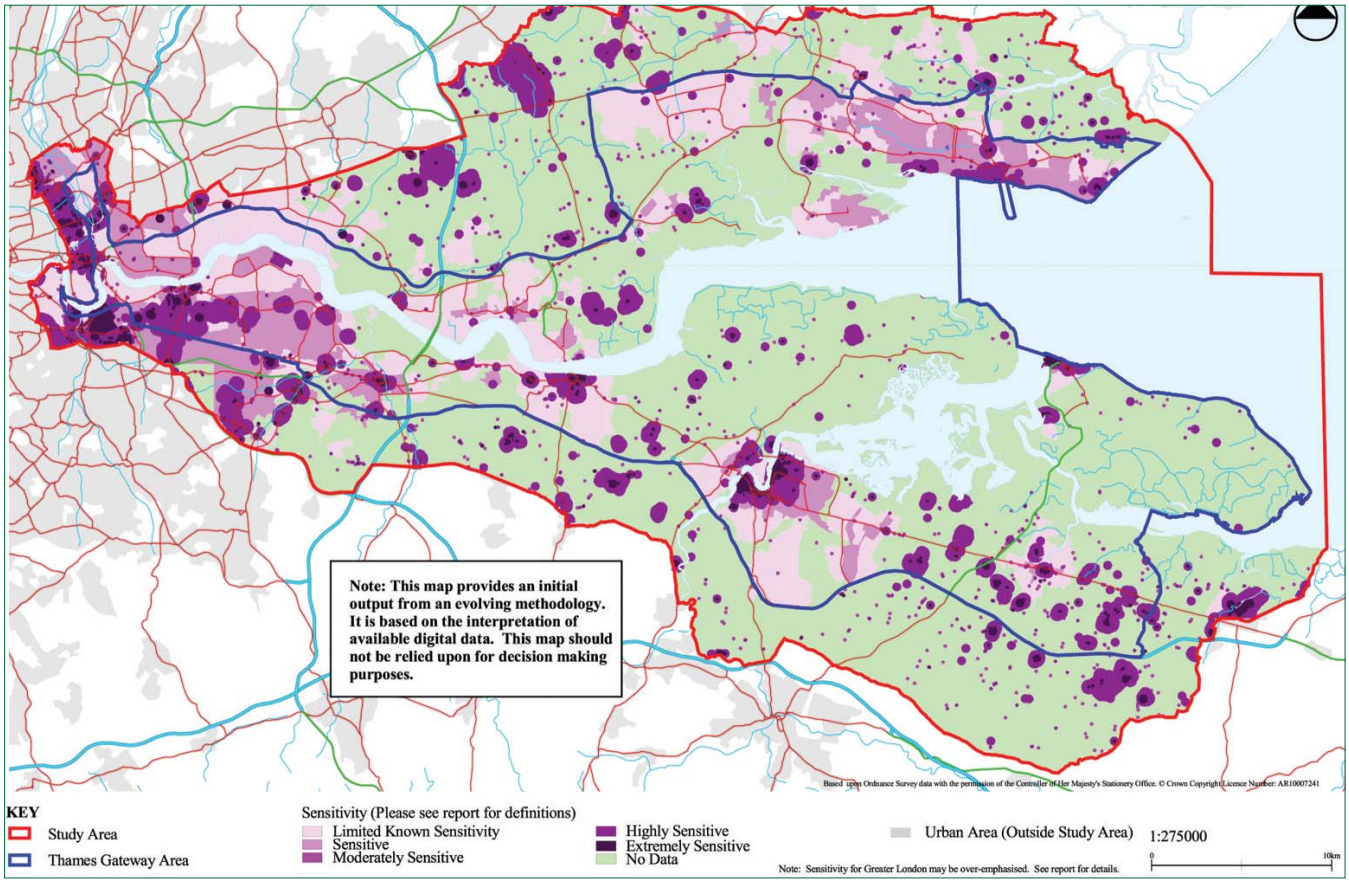


Figure 13 Built Heritage Urban Sensitivity - Initial Output
(Extract from Thames Gateway Historic Environment Characterisation Project, 2004, courtesy of English Heritage)

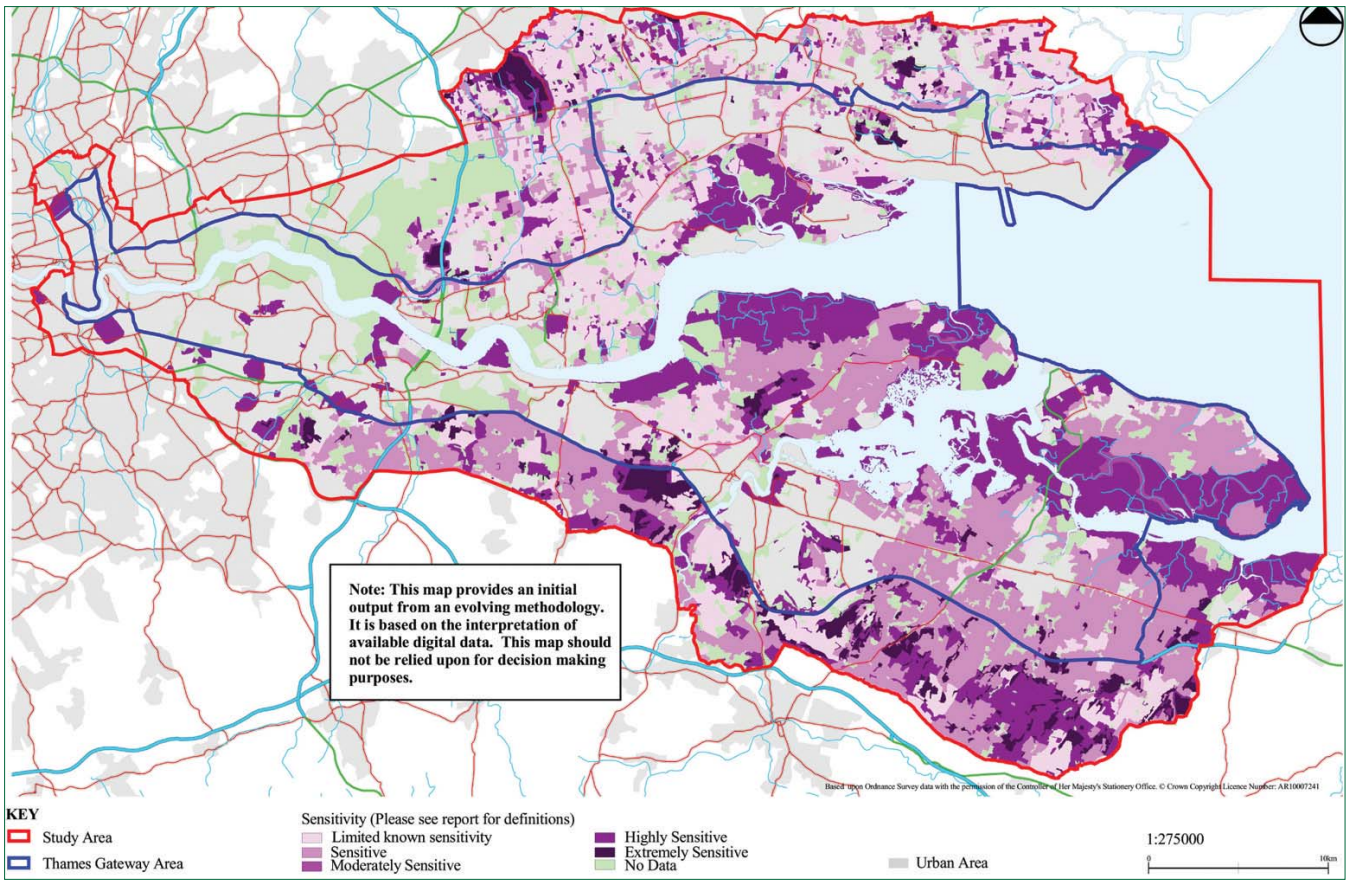


Figure 14 Historic Landscape Sensitivity - Initial Output
(Extract from Thames Gateway Historic Environment Characterisation Project, 2004, courtesy of English Heritage)

2.0 The Resource

Summary:

There is a rich and varied heritage and cultural resource within the Strategy Area. There is an opportunity to create a network of routes which explore the variety of the historic environment which characterises the distinctiveness of the Strategy Area, leading to strategic destinations of particular significance. There is an opportunity to promote enhanced, management and conservation of the historic environment, and to promote events based around the resource providing a focus for community life from the local to the regional, national and international scale. This in turn will engender pride as well as opportunities for education, skills and learning, and the basis for marketing the tourism, leisure and recreational potential of South Essex.

Coalhouse Fort

Landscape Character

Figure 16 defines the National Landscape Character designations that encompass the Strategy Area. Figure 17 defines landscape character designations prepared in outline to inform this Strategy. More detailed information on Landscape Character is available in Appendix 5.

The Resource:

- There are two national character areas within the Strategy Area: the Greater Thames Estuary (adjacent to the River Thames), and the Northern Thames Basin (inland)
- There are fourteen Local Landscape Character Areas, including marshes, creeks, farmland, terraces, hills and towns; and
- There are many degraded rural fringe areas.

Analysis and Opportunities:

- The wild, remote and distinctive character of the estuary has been shaped over thousands of years and has been eroded, particularly through 20th century urban and industrial development. The juxtaposition of wild marshes, estuary and industry has appeal and some drama
- 20th century urban development has been a dominant influence on townscape character with the main exception of Southend which was developed as a seaside resort during Victorian times
- Many of the rural, estuary and river landscapes have real quality and should be protected, enhanced, promoted and marketed
- Post-war urban development is generally poor, as is the quality of the urban fringe, both of which emphasise the perception that South Essex has poor character and environmental quality
- The local and regional landscapes of South Essex are distinctive and adaptable providing a variety of scales for settings for development
- Landscape character expresses sense of place, sense of time, and enhances sense of community, therefore, its quality is central to promoting a positive image of South Essex for investors, locals and visitors alike; and
- The distinctive, unconventional beauty of large scale elements such as the industrial structures, and passing tanker ships set in the vast 'skyscapes' of sea and marshes should be fully recognised, enhanced and promoted
- Landscape elements and features which help characterise the landscape of South Essex such as hedgerow networks, ditches, saltmarsh and mudflats, grazing marsh, broadleaf woodlands should be enhanced and managed appropriately. This could be done through 'planning gain' e.g. mitigation of development/transport proposals, and through countryside projects and agri-environmental schemes.

The juxtaposition of industrial and rural/urban fringe landscapes can be dramatic, however, good quality and easy access must be provided

Summary:

An understanding of landscape character should underpin all development proposals. The opportunity should be taken to extend the outline assessments in this Strategy for all significant proposals.

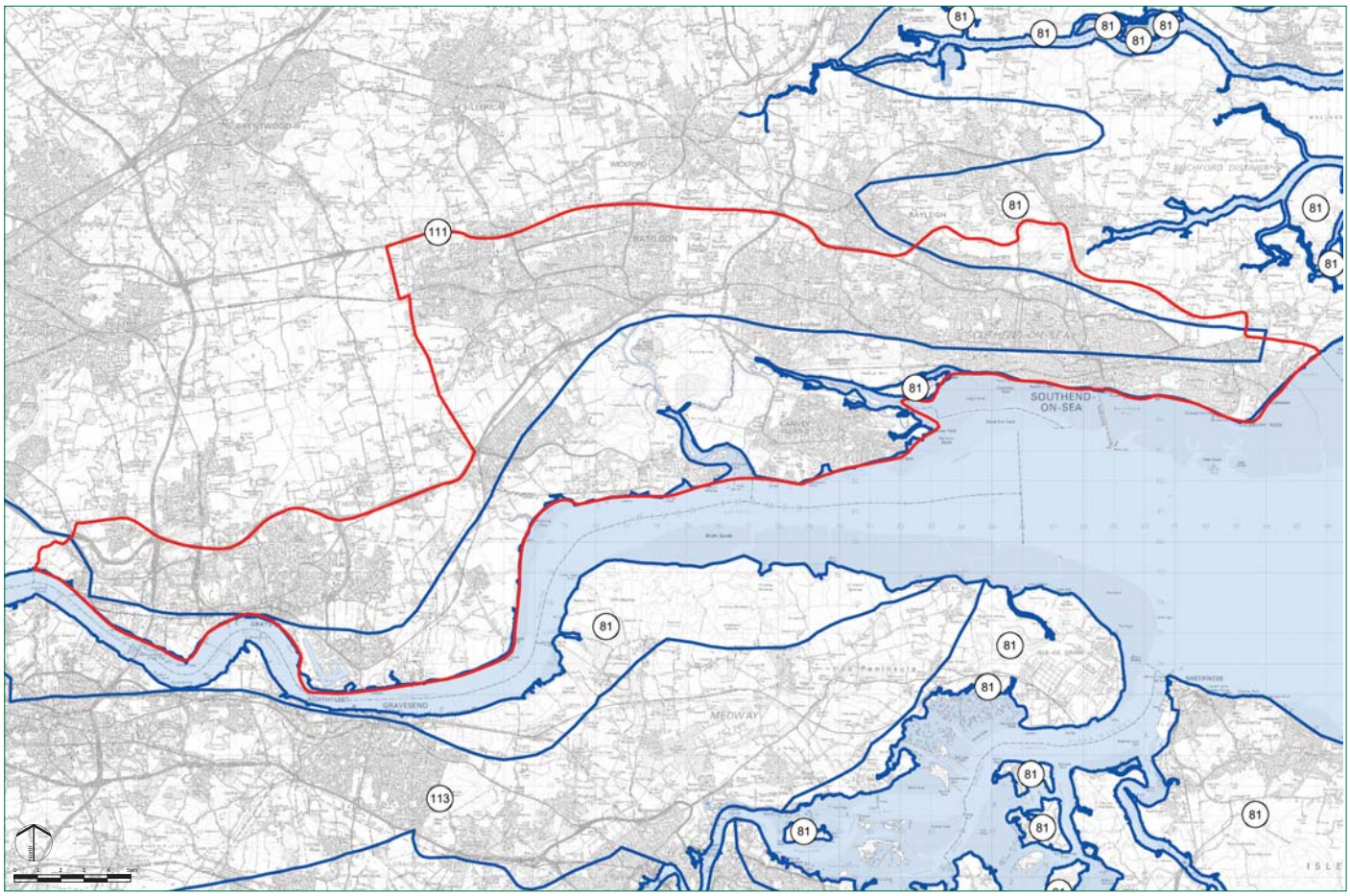


Figure 16 National Landscape Character

The Strategy Area

Water

National Landscape Character Areas
111 - Northern Thames Basin
81 - Greater Thames Estuary

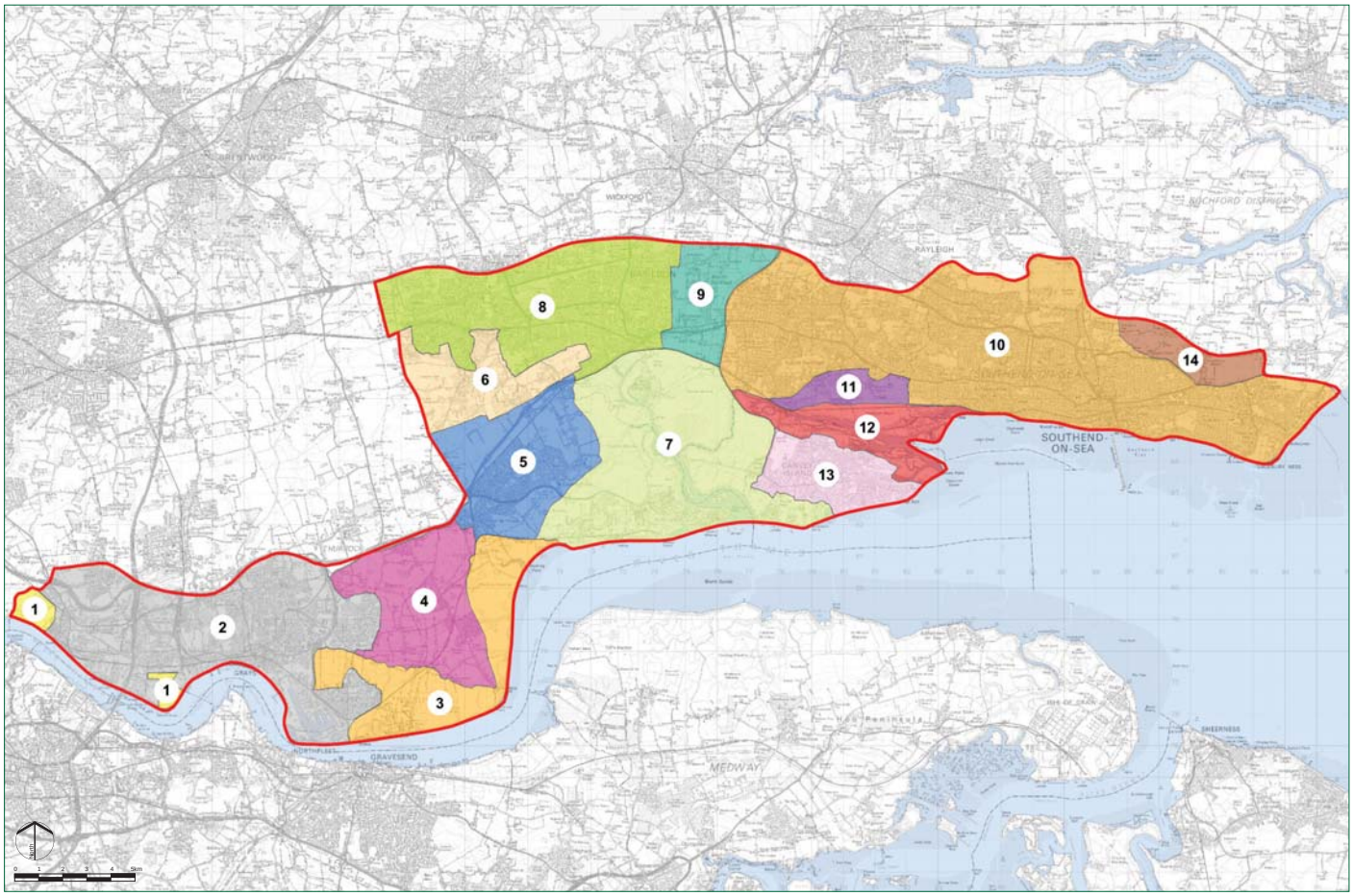


Figure 17 Sub-Regional Landscape Character Areas

The Strategy Area

Water bodies
(represents open space)

1. Aveley Marshes and West Thurrock Marshes
2. Grays and Thurrock Towns
3. Mucking and Tilbury Marshes
4. Buckingham Hill Thames Terraces
5. Corringham Thames Terraces
6. Langdon Hills
7. Fobbing and Bowers Marshes
8. Basildon Town
9. North Benfleet Farmland
10. Southend Town
11. Benfleet Hill
12. Benfleet Creek
13. Canvey Island
14. Crouch and Roach Farmlands

2.0 The Resource

Designated Public Open Space

Figure 18 delineates designated open space within and adjacent to the Strategy Area, including the Green Belt, Thames Chase Community Forest, Regional, Metropolitan, District, Local and Small Local Parks based on the size criteria of the London Plan. It also delineates areas of private open space. Figure 19 delineates the catchment areas for Regional, Metropolitan and District Parks based on the London Plan criteria - areas not covered by the catchment areas define deficient areas. Local parks are not included in the catchment analysis because, although they are crucial components of the Green Grid, they are best and more accurately analysed at the Local Authority scale as part of their PPG17: Open Space Sports and Recreation compliant strategies.

The Resource:

- Metropolitan Green Belt covers the majority of open land within the Strategy Area
- There are a number of public parks at a variety of scales within the Strategy Area - the smaller the size of park, the greater the frequency of occurrence
- Public Open Space is not distributed evenly throughout the Strategy Area
- The eastern half of the Strategy Area has a concentration of private open space; and
- The majority of the Strategy Area (with the notable exceptions of Tilbury and East Tilbury, and the eastern half of Southend) is within the catchment areas of Regional, Metropolitan or District Parks.

Analysis:

- The value of a park or open space increases exponentially when easily accessible and connected to a larger system, consequently, connecting the existing resource into a seamless network is crucial
- The contribution to and celebration of sense of place, sense of time, and sense of community should be recognised and exploited throughout the open space network
- Improvement in environmental quality, planning and design of existing designated open spaces to encourage use and ensure that they meet their full potential should be promoted
- The value of the resource for improving biodiversity in urban, urban fringe and rural areas through habitat creation and landscape management should be recognised and exploited
- The historic and cultural value of the resource should be recognised and exploited
- The potential contribution to flood risk management and water quality should be recognised and exploited
- The educational benefits of parks and open spaces as a setting for learning, improving skills, etc. should be recognised and exploited
- Better designed and managed designated open spaces to reduce anti-social activities, decrease personal and property safety issues

The quality of existing parks and open spaces should be addressed

- The Thames Chase Partnership has doubled the amount of greenspace within its boundaries from 9% to 17% showing that greenspace creation is viable in Thames Gateway
- The economic benefits of the resource through the perception and reality of the quality of the environment should be exploited;
- South Essex lies within the context of the Southern North Sea Regional Park promoted by SAIL, a transnational partnership of coastal and marine authorities from four member states bordering the southern north sea; and
- The creation of new strategic parks in deficient and new development areas should be ensured.

Summary:

There is a reasonably good distribution of public open space within the Strategy Area, however, an assessment of the quality of the resource is not an objective of this Strategy. Deficiencies in quantity, quality and distribution should be assessed through each local authority's PPG17 compliant parks and green space strategy. There is an opportunity to provide a co-ordinated network of existing and new designated parks and open spaces through this Strategy.

2.3 Climate Change

The Thames Gateway faces significant challenges due to the combined effects of climate change and the relative rise of sea levels. Through the effects of climate change, it is predicted that there will be longer, drier, hotter summers and shorter, warmer, wetter winters with increased incidences of high intensity storms which will result in high volumes of storm-water runoff, particularly in urban areas.

The East of England Sustainable Development Round Table has produced a series of information and guidance documents under the general head 'Living with Climate Change in the East of England' and recognises the Thames Gateway and Fringes as one of the sub-regions most vulnerable to sea level rise, increased flood risk, and water resources issues. These documents advocate adaptation responses to mitigate many potential climate change impacts.

The Environment Agency is preparing the Thames Estuary 2100 Strategy, which will address flood risk management in relation to the Thames through this century. Preliminary results predict that average high tide levels for the Thames and its tributaries will rise between 0.6 and 1.2 metres over the next 50-100 years. This will compound increased urban run-off along the tributaries of the River Thames. This will also be the case with the Roach and Crouch rivers. It is likely that estuary defences will need to be raised to maintain flood protection. In some areas, managed realignment may be the most cost effective option.

Fluvial and tidal flood risk management, water supply, water use, sewage treatment and water quality based upon principles of sustainability can all be addressed through co-ordinated planning and design of a multi-functional environmental infrastructure. Strategic Flood Risk Assessments provide the essential baseline for co-ordinated planning and design. The principles of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) aim to ameliorate increased flood risk.

Climate change will result in higher temperatures leading to lower air quality and the resultant detrimental affects on respiratory conditions. Increasing temperatures can be ameliorated through extensive and appropriate planting, which will also reduce carbon and other pollutant levels, and enhance air quality. Urban, urban fringe and rural forestry can help ameliorate the negative impacts of climate change; the 'Regional Woodland Strategy for the East of England' provides more details.

Climate Change will require new areas to cope with increased urban storm-water run-off

Summary:

- Climate change will have a variety of potentially serious effects on the Thames Estuary
- High tide levels will rise; fluvial run-off will increase in volume and intensity
- Co-ordinated and creative solutions will be required
- Heat island and air quality effects of climate change will need to be addressed
- Trees and woodland, particularly in urban areas, can ameliorate some impacts of climate change; and
- South Essex Green Grid provides a significant opportunity to respond to and mitigate the potential impacts of climate change.


Thames Gateway
South Essex Green Grid

3.0 Strategic Opportunities

The interconnection and implications of the **Strategic Themes** and the documentation and analysis of the resource within the **Strategy Area** are drawn together in the **Strategic Opportunities** plan (Figure 20), and described below. Together, the text and illustrations set out the potential for the Green Grid as a connected system of spaces, places and links from inner urban areas to countryside, marsh and estuary, and that address all the Strategic Themes.

The **Strategic Opportunities** plan identifies the following:

- **Areas of private, public and designated public open space** including urban and country parks
- **The strategic river corridors** of the Thames, Crouch and Roach and their tributaries
- **The strategic Roads and Railways** and stations together currently present significant barriers to walking and cycling. However, they are at capacity, and will require upgrading to support the proposed growth within the Strategy Area. Through this programme of upgrading, there will be significant opportunities to remove these barriers. These programmes will also offer significant opportunities to address the Strategic Themes of: planning - by providing opportunities for appropriate development in appropriate places; character - by enhancing the visual experience of driving or travelling by train through the Strategy Area, and by enhancing the experience and sense of arrival at destinations; biodiversity - by improving and creating new habitats, links and connections; flood risk management and water management - by storing storm water run-off from urban areas; leisure and recreation - by providing alternative transport options of foot and cycleways that are part of both destinational and recreational routes.

Existing strategic landmark - Queen Elizabeth II Bridge

The above categories comprising Strategic Roads, Railways and Stations combine with those below to provide the potential underlying 'structure' or 'framework' for the Green Grid comprising the following categories which are also identified on the **Strategic Opportunities** plan:

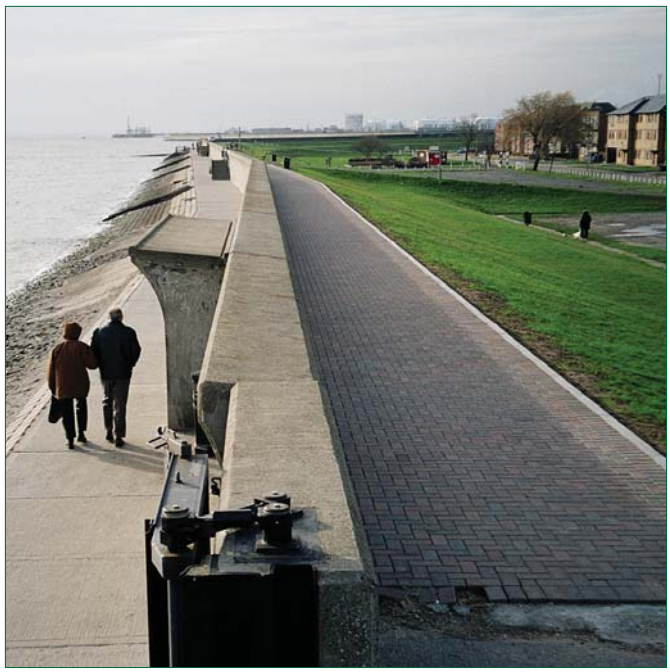
- **Strategic Green Grid Connections** running to, through and between urban areas and their hinterlands. As noted in the documentation and analysis of the resource, about half of the Strategy Area is private or public open land. Much of the open land outside urban areas is designated green belt, some of which is of poor quality due to quarrying and landfill activities, etc., but some of which is of high quality. Many urban fringe areas are of poor quality. Through this Strategy there is the opportunity to promote the positive use of all open land guided by the Strategic Themes, ie: for improvements and contributions to:
  - **access and movement** - described in more detail above;
  - **biodiversity** - through the protection and enhancement of existing areas of value, and the creation of new habitats and links;
  - **archaeology history and culture** - through the protection and enhancement of the existing resource and its incorporation into a network of destinations that will contribute to sense of place and sense of community;
  - **education, skills and learning** - by embedding the interpretation of the resource in educational, tourism and leisure programmes;
  - **flood risk management and water quality** - by creating areas to store and cleanse surface water run-off and protect from tidal inundations;
  - **tourism, leisure and receation** - by developing, marketing and promoting the existing and new resources;
  - **urban form** - by enhancing the resource and settings of existing settlements, and creating settings for new settlements and expansions;
  - **views and landmarks** - discussed below;
  - **infrastructure** - by ensuring that all road, rail and other public transport and utility infrastructure projects deliver the principles of this Strategy;
  - **positive physical and mental health** - through protecting and enhancing the existing resource, and creating new resources that are clean, green, safe and attractive; and the
  - **social fabric and economy** - great places to live attract great people;
- A sequence of existing and new **Strategic Landmarks, Views and Viewpoints** throughout the Strategy Area which together have the potential to characterise the Strategy Area, and to enhance understanding and perceptions of the Area. They also provide the opportunity for existing and future communities to achieve a greater sense of place and space. They include Queen Elizabeth II Bridge, Grays, Tilbury Docks and Coalhouse Fort, the oil refineries at Shellhaven, Basildon, One Tree Hill, Hadleigh Castle, Canvey Island, South Benfleet, Admiralty Boom, and Southend Pier;

- A network of existing and new **Strategic Destinations**, including Tilbury and Coalhouse Forts, existing and potential Country Parks, and Southend. The archaeological, historic and cultural resource provides the basis and opportunity for further enhancement and provision of destinations - these will promote sense of place and, therefore, sense of community. The potential to link these strategic destinations to local destinations such as schools, libraries, health centres, etc. - by foot and cycle - as part of a connected resource will enhance their accessibility, and enable their marketing, promotion and incorporation into educational, tourism, leisure and recreational programmes.

The existing footpaths, bridleways, tracks and lanes which will form the core of the Green Grid were created to serve an integrated pattern of settlement and economic exploitation of all parts of South Essex which operated for thousands of years. Development in the last hundred years or so has fractured this ancient pattern, however, in creating a new physically and conceptually integrated approach to the South Essex landscape the Green Grid will in a sense be restoring an ancient reality for 21st century living.

The **National Landscape Character plan** (Figure 16), and the **Sub-Regional Landscape Character Areas** plan (Figure 17) were analysed in relation to the Strategic Themes and Objectives for the Green Grid. This analysis led to the identification of four general landscape categories described below, along with the opportunities they present for incorporation in the Green Grid. Overall, there is an opportunity to achieve a cohesive yet diverse landscape, townscape and riverscape character within the Strategy Area that will complement the opportunity for developing and promoting specific Strategic Destinations:

- **Areas to be protected** - which comprise predominantly undeveloped areas, recognised as outstanding in terms of open space, connectivity to urban areas, landscape character, biodiversity and/or other resource
- **Areas providing the opportunity for enhancement and incorporation in the Green Grid** - which comprise predominantly undeveloped land with some open space provision, reduced connectivity and the potential for incorporation in the Green Grid through enhancements based on Strategic Themes
- **Areas providing the opportunity for the creation of new strategic open space for incorporation in the Green Grid** - which comprise areas with the potential to relieve areas deficient in open space provision, and with good resource potential for incorporation in the Green Grid; and
- **Areas with the opportunity for protection, enhancement or improvement to existing designated open space, and for creation of new links and open spaces for incorporation in the Green Grid** - which comprise predominantly developed land with a disjointed resource of open spaces and local areas of under-provision of designated open space.



Sea wall at Canvey Island

This documentation and analysis of the resource within the Strategy Area in relation to the Strategic Themes, provides the conceptual and spatial opportunities and rationale for the Strategy. The following section develops this conceptual and spatial understanding and rationale into an overall **Vision** and **Strategic Framework** for the Green Grid, supported by **Strategic Guidelines**, and more detailed **Strategic Area Frameworks** for **Thurrock; Basildon and Castle Point**; and **Southend and Rochford**.

4.0 Strategic Frameworks and Guidance

This section describes the **Vision** for the Thames Gateway South Essex Green Grid. This is followed by a description of a hierarchy of spaces, places and links from **Doorstep to Countryside, and Estuary** and park and open space typologies drawn from **PPG 17: Planning for Open Space, Sports and Recreation.** The concept of **The Harlequin Landscape** is also proposed to ensure that the emotional and spiritual dimension of the spaces, places and links are addressed in any plans, proposals and policies.

The **Overall Strategic Framework** is described and supported by an analysis of **Key Issues and Opportunities**, and a statement of **Vision** for each **Strategic Corridor**.

Strategic Area Frameworks for Thurrock, Basildon and Castlepoint, and Southend and Rochford are then described supported by a summary of the **Key Issues and Opportunities** and **Guidance** for each area.

It concludes with **Strategic Guidance** supporting the Strategy and the Frameworks. The Frameworks, Issues and Opportunities, Visions, and Guidance are intended to be a material consideration when plans and policies are prepared, including the Regional Spatial Strategy through to Community Strategies, Local Development Frameworks, and master plans and proposals for individual sites.

The Vision

A living system threading through the urban and rural landscape, connecting places that are attractive to people, wildlife and business, and providing clean air, food, water, energy, minerals and materials.

The **Vision** for the South Essex Green Grid derives from an understanding of the resource of South Essex and the imperative to live in a sustainable way. It is about people and places, quality of life, and minimal impact on the environment. It is about promoting investment in an '**Environmental Infrastructure**' that has equivalent status alongside transport, utilities and built form infrastructure. The scale of change envisaged will require commensurate investment to completely transform the image and the reality of South Essex. The vision is also about limits: environmental limits to support our current way of living, and community limits to accept change. The vision articulates a way to build community capacity for change, through promoting positive environmental change - the two go hand in hand.

Figure 21 Transect: Doorstep to Countryside

This is a radical vision which places:

- **Landscape** at the heart of the development process, and
- **Environmental process** at the heart of sustainable development and the economy.

It is a vision which will require sustained investment and long term commitment from national, regional and local politicians, communities, businesses, the voluntary sector and institutions. It builds on the emerging synergy of existing initiatives including **Greening the Gateway**. The structure of governance must match the scale of this challenge, alongside financial and fiscal mechanisms to promote and encourage delivery, and long-term management and maintenance.

Doorstep to Countryside, and Estuary: a diverse hierarchy of spaces, places and links

The Green Grid is not just about green spaces. It is about connecting people from their front door, via a safe, clean and attractive street, often with domestic gardens, to their local park within walking distance, and then into the wider network of larger parks, town and village centres, and onto country parks, the marshes and estuaries via the strategic network. It comprises a wide variety of existing and new space, places and links. The benefits of this increased connectivity and improved quality of environment are clear from the analyses of the various resources in South Essex described in Section 2.

The following typology taken from **PPG 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation** illustrates the broad range of open spaces that could and should contribute to the Green Grid:

- **parks and gardens** - including urban parks, country parks and formal gardens
- **natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces** - including woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (eg downlands, commons and meadows) wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and derelict open

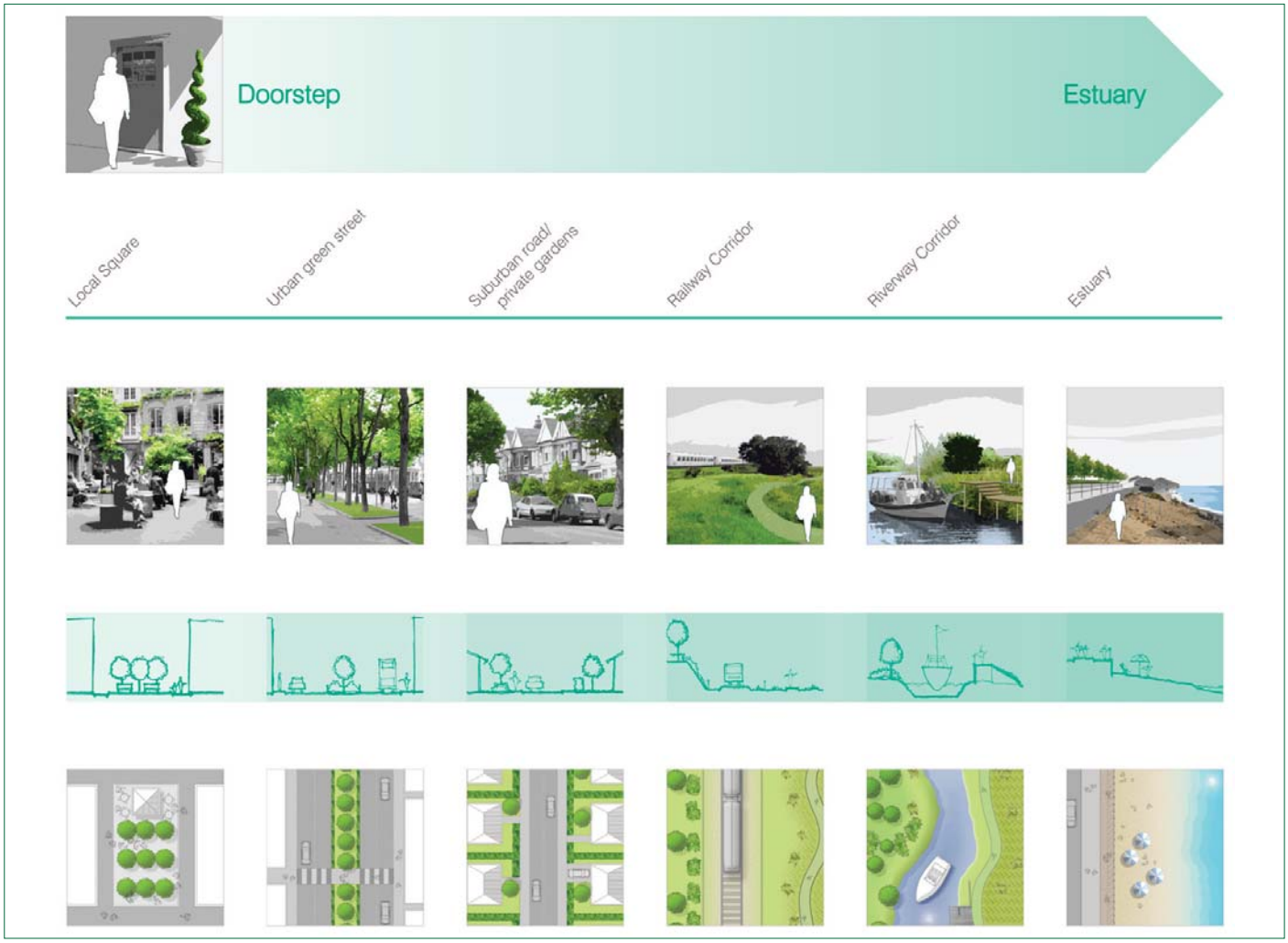


Figure 22 Transect: Doorstep to Estuary

land and rock areas (eg cliffs, quarries and pits)
- **green corridors** - including river and canal banks, cycleways, and rights of way
- **outdoor sports facilities** (with natural or artificial surfaces and either publicly or privately owned) - including tennis courts, bowling greens, sports pitches, golf courses, athletics tracks, school and other institutional playing fields, and other outdoor sports areas
- **amenity greenspace** (most commonly, but not exclusively in housing areas) - including informal recreation spaces, greenspaces in and around housing, domestic gardens and village greens
- **provision for children and teenagers** - including play areas, skateboard parks, outdoor basketball hoops, and other more informal areas (eg 'hanging out' areas, teenage shelters)
- **allotments, community gardens, and city (urban) farms;**
- **cemeteries and churchyards**
- **accessible countryside in urban fringe areas**; and
- **civic spaces**, including civic and market squares, and other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians.

It should be noted that open space does not have to be accessible to be of value to the Green Grid.

This typology, or variations of it, should be used by local authorities when preparing assessments of need and audits of existing open space and recreational facilities. Local authorities should also recognise that most areas of open space can perform multiple functions. They should take account of the various functions of open space when following the Guidance in this Strategy. These include:

- **strategic functions**: defining and separating urban areas; better linking of town and country; and providing for recreational needs over a wide area
- **urban quality**: helping to support regeneration and improving quality of life for communities by providing visually attractive green spaces close to where people live
- **promoting health and well-being**: providing opportunities to people of all ages for informal recreation, or to relax, walk, cycle or ride within parks and open spaces or along paths, bridleways and canal banks. Allotments may provide physical exercise and other health benefits
- **havens and habitats for flora and fauna**: sites may also have potential to be corridors or stepping stones from one habitat to another and may contribute towards achieving objectives set out in local biodiversity action plans
- **as a community resource**: a place for congregating and for holding community events, religious festivals, fetes and travelling fairs; and
- **as a visual amenity**: even without public access, people enjoy and gain mental health benefits from having open space near to them to provide an outlook, variety in the urban scene, or as a positive element in the landscape.

In broad terms, and to facilitate ease of understanding, **Figure 23: Hierarchy of Spaces, Places and Links** defines the concept of a hierarchy of spaces, places and links used in the Framework plans from Doorstep to Countryside, Marsh and Estuary, and some of the key policies that this Strategy is both influenced by and intended to influence. **Figure 21 Transect from Doorstep to Countryside** and **Figure 22 Transect from Doorstep to Estuary** illustrate generic scenarios for these spaces, places and links.

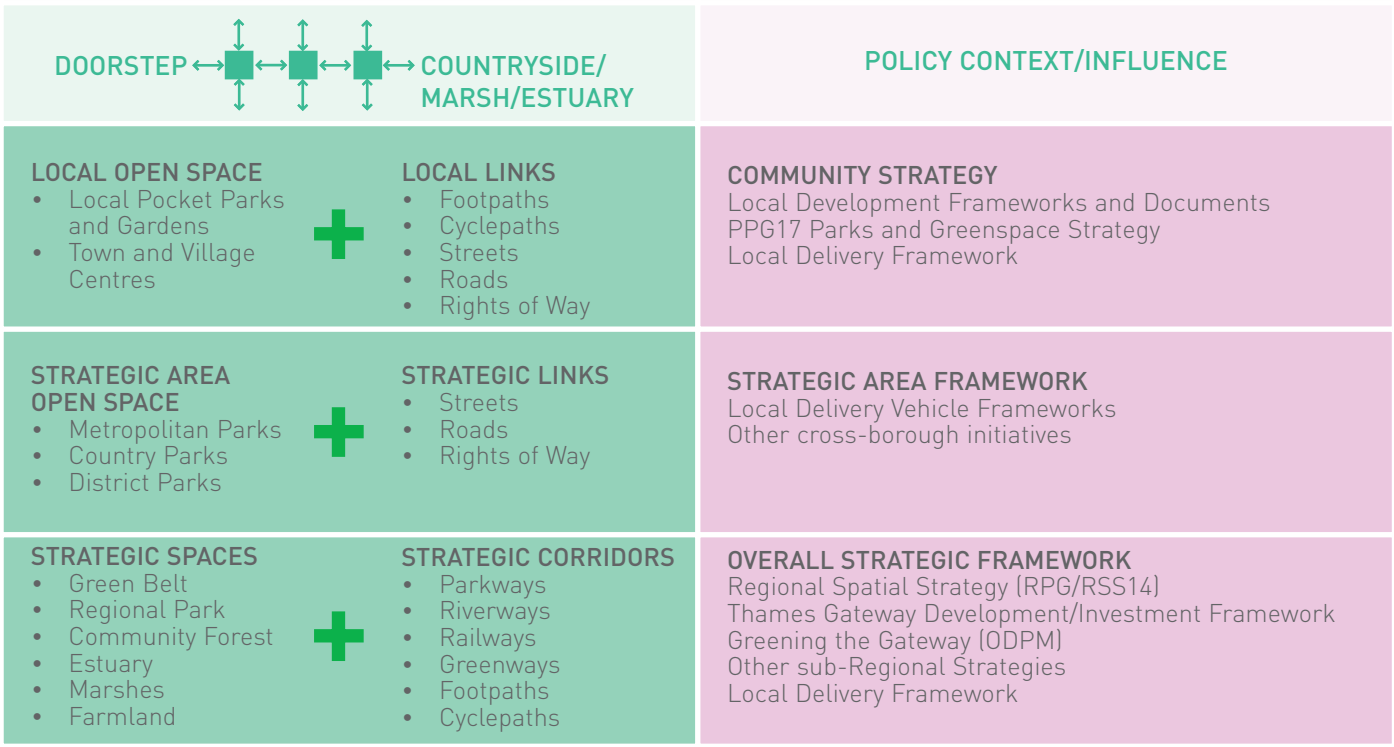


Figure 23: Hierarchy of Spaces, Places and Links

4.1 The Harlequin Landscape

In addition to establishing a formal hierarchy of spaces, places and links, considering their physical extent, function and connectivity, it is also essential to consider the more emotional aspects, potential meanings and the spiritual dimension. Tom Turner in his book **The City as Landscape** put forward the powerful and appealing idea of **The Harlequin Landscape**. The Harlequin Landscape is composed of colours representing the complexity and diversity of emotional and spiritual needs. Figure 24 provides some examples of the Harlequin Landscape.

All plans, proposals and policies contributing to the South Essex Green Grid should address these complexities during preparation. Additional considerations, Turner says, are: age, culture, ownership, religion, art, politics, ethnicity, urban functions and leisure activities.

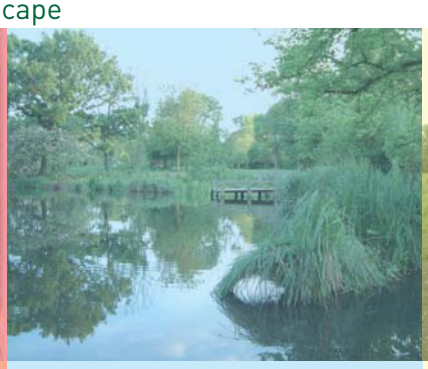
4.2 Sense of Place and Sense of Belonging

By making places better to live in, work in and to visit, culture forms a key part of the quality of life and the pride which communities (residents and local agencies alike) take in their environment.

- Culture is a dynamic component in much regeneration activity and in environmental improvement: it needs to be embedded in the policy, planning and design processes from the earliest stages
- Public open spaces - part of required facility provision - offer great opportunities for locally distinctive design, and for locating commissioned pieces of art and design
- Cultural resources (e.g. historic buildings) - offer opportunities for helping create distinctive neighbourhoods and local pride, and also can act as places where the work of artists, heritage specialists and others can be promoted within the community.

Figure 24 The Harlequin Landscape

Red space: exciting (urban squares, festivals, fairs)



Blue space: cool, serene, water everywhere, sensuality (lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, marshes, wetlands)

Yellow space: stimulating curiosity, an abundance of things to hear, smell and touch (meadows, commons, fields)

Orange space: movement, laughter and fun (shopping streets, sports fields, places to watch and be watched)

Purple space: mysterious, powerful and scarce - calm but with drama lurking in the shadows. (Gorges, pits and narrow paths)

Brown space: wholesome and satisfying. (Earth, rocks, soil, farming, allotments)

Grey space: solemn and about the transience of life. (memorials, cemeteries, crematoria, woodland burial sites)

White space: magnificent, urban, pompous, designed

Green space: relaxing in every way

4.3 Overall Strategic Framework

The **Overall Strategic Framework** is delineated in Figure 25. It applies to the whole of the Strategy Area providing the context for sub-regional interventions that can make a significant contribution to the Strategic Themes and more generally:

- the quality of the environment
- the experience, image and visual quality of the landscape, townscapes and riverscapes which in turn encourage social inclusion and social regeneration
- connectivity of spaces and places, and to and through urban areas, the greenbelt, the countryside, the marshes, the estuary and other destinations
- the creation of new multi-functional spaces and places for biodiversity, energy, biomass, food forestry production, etc.,
- environmental processes such as flood-risk and water management, biodiversity, air quality; and
- provide the landscape/townscape context for appropriate urban development.

The Overall Strategic Framework delineates four **Strategic Corridor** types which will be made up of the PPG17 typologies outlined within Section 3:

- **Parkways and urban green roadways** - major highways that will need to be upgraded and provide the opportunity for a design-led, multi-functional approach rather than a purely engineering one
- **Riverways** - as multi-functional corridors and sequences of spaces and places
- **Railways** - as multi-functional corridors, a window on the landscape, and with stations recognised as gateways to the Green Grid; and
- **Greenways** - national, regional and sub-regional footpaths/cyclepaths.

The Overall Strategic Framework also identifies the following **Strategic Nodes**:

- **Strategic Destinations**
- **Strategic Parks** - existing and proposed
- **Strategic Landmarks** - existing and proposed
- **Strategic Views and Viewpoints**
- **Strategic Bridging Points**

The following is a summary of the **Key Issues and Opportunities** for each **strategic corridor** type followed by a **Vision** for each.

Parkways and Urban Green Roadways

The resource documentation and analysis section highlighted that many main roads are significant barriers to access and movement by foot and cycle, creating a need for bridges in strategic locations.

These are the significant roads identified by the London to Southend Movement Study (LOTS, January 2004). The roads have been further divided into two types: **Parkways** and **Urban Green Roadways**.

Parkways

These include the A13, A130, A127, A1014, M25 and the A1089.

Key issues and opportunities:

- inter-urban roads, predominantly dual or more carriageways with potential for radical change due to identified need for increased road capacity
- generally visually bland and unresponsive to surrounding landscape and/or townscape character
- predominantly cater for motor vehicles only and do not promote recreational and destinational cycling and walking
- negative health issues such as poor air quality, accidents, increased stress
- create physical barriers between spaces, places and communities with few crossing points
- minimal land take which leads to obtrusive landforms and planting schemes
- do not provide good visual experience of movement through the landscape, based on views and landmarks, or sense of arrival at towns or other places
- do not exploit the full potential for biodiversity; and
- traditional drainage designs which culvert surface water run off.

Parkways Vision

To realise the full potential of widened, improved capacity roads through consideration of increased land take to create a more sustainable strategically significant green corridor which will:

- link into other strategic corridors
- create compelling visual experience of movement through the landscape and sense of arrival at towns through the design of sequences of views and landmarks
- incorporate segregated cyclepaths
- create attractive bridging/crossing points in strategically important locations
- reflect local diversity in planting and built features e.g. bridges, retaining structures, etc.
- create landmarks to help to give a sense of place e.g. bridges, artworks, framing views
- maximise habitat creation opportunities e.g. woodland, hedgerows, meadows, etc; and
- integrate surface water run-off considerations with opportunities to create wetlands and waterbodies as part of a Sustainable Drainage Systems.

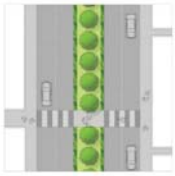
Urban Green Roadways

These include: Basildon - A176, A132
Southend - A13, A127, A1159
Castlepoint - A130, A129

Key issues and opportunities:

- major roads in predominantly urban or suburban areas
- poor visual quality typified by uncoordinated paving materials and clutter of signs and street furniture
- poor provision for cyclists and pedestrians
- create physical barriers within communities with inconvenient and poorly designed at-grade crossings; and
- Road environment dominates local urban character.

Urban green roadway



Urban Green Roadways Vision

To apply a co-ordinated approach to environmental improvements by establishing design codes for each Urban Green Road which will result in clean, safe and attractive public realm. Urban Green Roads will:

- Create clean, safe and attractive routes that improve the visual experience for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists
- link into other strategic corridors
- incorporate cyclepaths and good quality, wide pavements with good signage, street furniture and minimal clutter
- create streetscapes which respond to local materials and character
- enhance wayfinding and local urban character by incorporation of appropriate artworks
- incorporate street trees and/simple planting where appropriate and possible
- retain distinctive characteristics e.g. shrubby verges in Southend; and
- improve crossings for pedestrians.

Railways

There are two mainline railways through the Strategy Area - C2C and First Great Eastern line (FGEL). They are important contributors to sustainable transport and to quality of life. The stations are gateways to communities, commuters use them every day, visitors judge towns by the quality of their stations, they should contribute to the quality of experience in moving through the Strategy Area, and on arrival at destinations. They should be considered the 'front door' to their communities.

Issues and opportunities

Railway corridor

- inter-urban rail corridors with identified potential for upgrading of capacity of urban/suburban stations
- diverse visual experience whilst travelling by rail contrasts with the generally bland visual quality of the stations
- form physical barriers between communities with few crossing points
- generally poor connectivity between stations and bus, footpaths, greenspace and the cycleway network
- well established habitat corridors of high ecological value; and
- personal and property safety issues both on trains and at stations

Railways Vision

To promote rail corridors as the 'window' on South Essex, and the stations as 'gateways' to communities and the Green Grid which:

- link into other strategic corridors
- maintain and enhance biodiversity and act as ecological corridors
- create clean, safe and attractive 'gateways' at stations, with coordinated street furniture, signage, artworks and planting that are responsive to local character
- enhance wayfinding by creating information hubs at stations
- create improved links to stations by bus, cycle and footpaths; and
- create attractive and accessible crossing points in strategically important locations.

4.0 Strategic Frameworks and Guidance

Riverways

There are three river catchments within the Strategy Area: the Thames, the Crouch and the Roach. The river Thames and its estuary is the dominant feature of the Strategy Area; and a key influence on its physical, economic and social development. The following summaries of key Issues and Opportunities and vision statements are based on the three catchments. The numbers in brackets correspond to those on the Framework Plans.

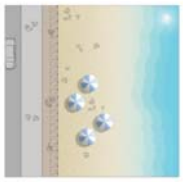
Thames catchment

Comprising: (1) Mardyke Valley, (2) Holehaven Creek, (3) East Haven Creek, (4) Benfleet Creek, and (5) Thames Estuary.

Key issues and opportunities:

Estuary

- no Strategic Flood Risk Assessments or river development frameworks addressing multi-functional role of the rivers for flood risk management, biodiversity, access, leisure recreation, etc.
- tributaries flow through predominantly rural/urban fringe areas and often associated with estuarine marshland
- associated flood barrier features - gates, walls, dykes
- Thames Estuary is the dominant influence on the land use and landscape character in South Essex
- health and leisure benefits of an urban river frontage are recognised at Southend but connections with the estuary elsewhere are generally poor
- physical and visual connections between urban areas and the Thames Estuary and its tributaries have been severed by industry, transport infrastructure and/or flood defences
- complex land use patterns have been influenced by the Estuary over thousands of years
- military defences have been located within the Thames Estuary throughout the ages leaving their mark in places such as Coalhouse and Tilbury Forts; and
- Estuarine habitats including marshland and foreshore are of high ecological value.



Thames Catchment Vision

To restore, enhance and promote the rivers as multi-functional systems based on Strategic Flood Risk Assessments that enhance the existing attributes of the rivers and the Thames Estuary, and are managed for access, wildlife and education by:

- preparing a development framework for each river based on flood risk and water management, sustainable drainage systems and multi-functional use
- promotion for leisure and tourism including ferry services
- sensitively designed improvement of connectivity from urban areas to and through the ecologically diverse marshland and foreshore habitats
- enhancing the educational, skills and learning opportunites of the estuary and the marshes; and
- enhancement of destinations through the creation of parks and visitor/interpretation centres which promote the national and local archaeological, historical and cultural value of the estuary in:
  - military defence
  - industry and commerce
  - leisure and tourism; and
  - ecology and natural processes by:
  - establishing physical and visual connections between urban communities and the riverside
  - creating continuous riverside journey; and
  - promoting the land uses close to the river which maximise access.

Riverway corridor

Crouch catchment

Comprising: (6) Crouch River, (7) Crays Hill Brook and (8) Nevendon Brook; and

Roach catchment

Comprising: (9) Prittlebrook, (11) Eastwood, and (10) Rayleigh.

Key issues and opportunities:

- no Strategic Flood Risk Assessments or river development frameworks addressing multi-functional role of the rivers for flood risk management, biodiversity, access, leisure recreation, etc.
- Some ancient field systems survive
- Basildon and Southend urban and urban fringe areas see the upper reaches of the tributaries of the Crouch and Roach which enter the North Sea around the marshy Essex coast at Maplin Sands and Foulness but have little connection with them, and could form important strategic links; and
- many urban sections culverted or canalised.

Crouch and Roach Catchment Vision

To restore, enhance and promote the Roach and Crouch as multi-functional rivers and tributaries based on Strategic Flood Risk Assessments managed for human access and wildlife by:

- preparing development framework plans for each river based on flood risk and water management, sustainable drainage systems and multi-functional use
- linking into other strategic corridors and connections to and through urban areas

- creating a connected footpath and cyclepath system; and
- enhancing the visual qualities and the biodiversity by de-culverting and recreating soft, vegetated edges where appropriate.

Greenways

The Greenways are national, regional and sub-regional footpaths, cyclepaths and bridlepaths that connect to and through towns and the rest of the Strategy Area, and where they are not directly associated with parkways, railways and riverways. In addition to their role as leisure and recreational routes they will also provide alternative transport options.

Key issues and opportunities:

- the strategic footpath, cyclepath and bridleway system connecting doorstep to local park/urban open space/countryside/marsh/estuary is disjointed - there is no confidence that any route is complete, safe and attractive throughout
- sections of the strategic footpath, cyclepath and bridleway system are often poorly designed, and not safe, clean, attractive, and accessible; and
- green open spaces and parks connected by the strategic footpath, cyclepath and bridleway system are often poorly maintained, with limited facilities, and poor security.

Greenways Vision

To create a continuous network of safe, clean, attractive, well sign-posted, well promoted and accessible footpaths, cyclepaths and bridleways that connect attractive, culturally and visually diverse towns, villages, parks and open spaces by:

- preparing and promoting a Strategic Greenway Plan with design codes as a key element of the Green Grid Strategy.

Shared use path connecting Coalhouse Fort with Tilbury Fort

Potential for the sensitive design of a bridge at London Riverside Conservation Park (source: Thames Path City to Sea: Thames Estuary Partnership)

4.4 Strategic Area Frameworks

To facilitate more detailed framework descriptions, the Strategy Area is divided into three sectors based on landscape character and borough boundaries, they are: **Thurrock; Basildon and Castle Point;** and **Southend and Rochford**.

In addition to the **strategic corridors** and **strategic nodes** the Strategic Area Frameworks also identify:

- existing Public Rights of Way; and
- proposed links of strategic significance.

As with the Overall Strategic Framework the following text summarises the **Key Issues and Opportunities** for each area, followed by **Guidance** on how to achieve the vision for the whole of the Strategy Area with particular emphasis on Thurrock, Basildon and Castlepoint, and Southend and Rochford. The numbers in brackets correspond to those on the Strategy Area Framework figures.

Potential revitalisation of Canvey Island's flood wall
(source: Thames Path City to Sea: Thames Estuary Partnership)

Potential for sensitively designed path at Fobbing Marshes
(source: Thames Path City to Sea: Thames Estuary Partnership)

4.5 Thurrock Strategic Area Framework

The following text should be read in conjunction with **Figure 26: Thurrock Strategic Area Framework.** The numbers in the text refer to the numbers on Figure 26.

Key Issues and Opportunities:

- located on the outer edge of London on the banks of the Thames Estuary
- foreshore dominated by industry including oil storage and refinery works, docks, passenger boat terminal and power station
- electricity pylons feature throughout the area which can provide local landmarks but also have negative connotations related to visual qualities and health concerns
- military defence heritage highlights at Coalhouse and Tilbury Forts
- mineral workings at Mucking Flats and on higher land east of Linford
- generally low-lying with a rock outcrop feature which runs east/west through the heart of Purfleet
- Mardyke Valley - marsh, estuarine character approximately south of A13; wooded, steeply sided further north
- Thames Chase Community Forest extends north
- Major out of town shopping centre at Lakeside
- Queen Elizabeth II Bridge provides landmark; connects northern and southern banks of estuary by car only - no footpath or cyclepath (cyclists will be transported over/through the crossing) opportunity for excellent views missed; creates a significant barrier for pedestrians and cyclists
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Wildlife Sites are often adjacent to urban areas, some are brownfield: proposed London Riverside Conservation Park based around Wennington, Aveley and Rainham Marshes
- Internationally recognised wildlife habitats at Mucking Marshes, also of historical importance to the Thames Estuary;
- A13 inter-urban road creates physical barriers to north-south movement
- East Thurrock - more rural with historic hamlets, and the architecturally and socially important East Tilbury - a former factory with associated housing laid out in a grid based on East European model
- East Thurrock Green Belt - typical urban fringe - degraded farmland of relatively low ecological value with remnants of previous land uses and field patterns
- pressure on green belt to meet housing needs; and
- International Port at Tilbury and proposed large port facility at London Gateway development at Shellhaven.

Guidance

- Embed this Strategy into Thurrock Visioning Project, Thurrock Community Strategy, Local Development Framework and Documents and Thurrock UDC Regeneration Framework to ensure that its full potential is realised
- Promote and enhance the visual landmarks within Thurrock such as Queen Elizabeth II Bridge and Tilbury Power Station
- Utilise the geological legacy of Thurrock:
  - Develop disused mineral workings as parks as and when land becomes available in strategic locations identified: Cory and Bluehouse Country Parks
  - Create Chadwell St.Mary Greenway (3) associated with chalk rock outcrop feature through Purfleet and Tilbury
- Promote the industrial heritage of Thurrock:
  - Interpret the social and wealth creator aspects, and industrial processes, e.g. at Tilbury Port, Tilbury Power Station, and the industrial complexes at Purfleet
  - Identify brown field sites with high biodiversity value e.g. West Thurrock Marshes
- Promote agricultural heritage of Thurrock: maintain and interpret the history and workings of the agricultural land and marshlands at East Tilbury and Mucking Marshes
- Promote military defence heritage: improve interpretation facilities at proposed Coalhouse Fort Country Park and Tilbury Fort Country Park
- Create A13 Parkway Corridor between outer London, Thurrock and Basildon, and build distinctive pedstrian/cycle bridges reconnecting urban areas to the Mardyke Valley, Thames Chase Community Forest and the South Essex countryside
- Promote leisure and commuter ferry links from Tilbury across, and up and down the Thames (Riverway 5).
- Incorporate flood risk and water management schemes, based on Strategic Flood Risk Assessments, in green spaces associated with the Thames (Riverway 5) and the Mardyke Valley (Riverway 1)
- Maintain ecological value of C2C Railway Corridor, improve visual and environmental qualities of, and connectivity to stations at Lakeside, Purfleet, Grays, Tilbury, East Tilbury; and
- Create four new strategic parks:
  - Tilbury Fort Country Park - military history/port history, connected to Greenways (2) and (21)
  - Coalhouse Fort Country Park - military history of fort and estuary connected to Greenways (3), (4), (5) and (21)
  - Cory Country Park - industrial history of marshes, connected to Greenway (5)
  - Bluehouse Country Park - mineral extraction/farming practices, connected to Greenways (4)

Mardyke Valley

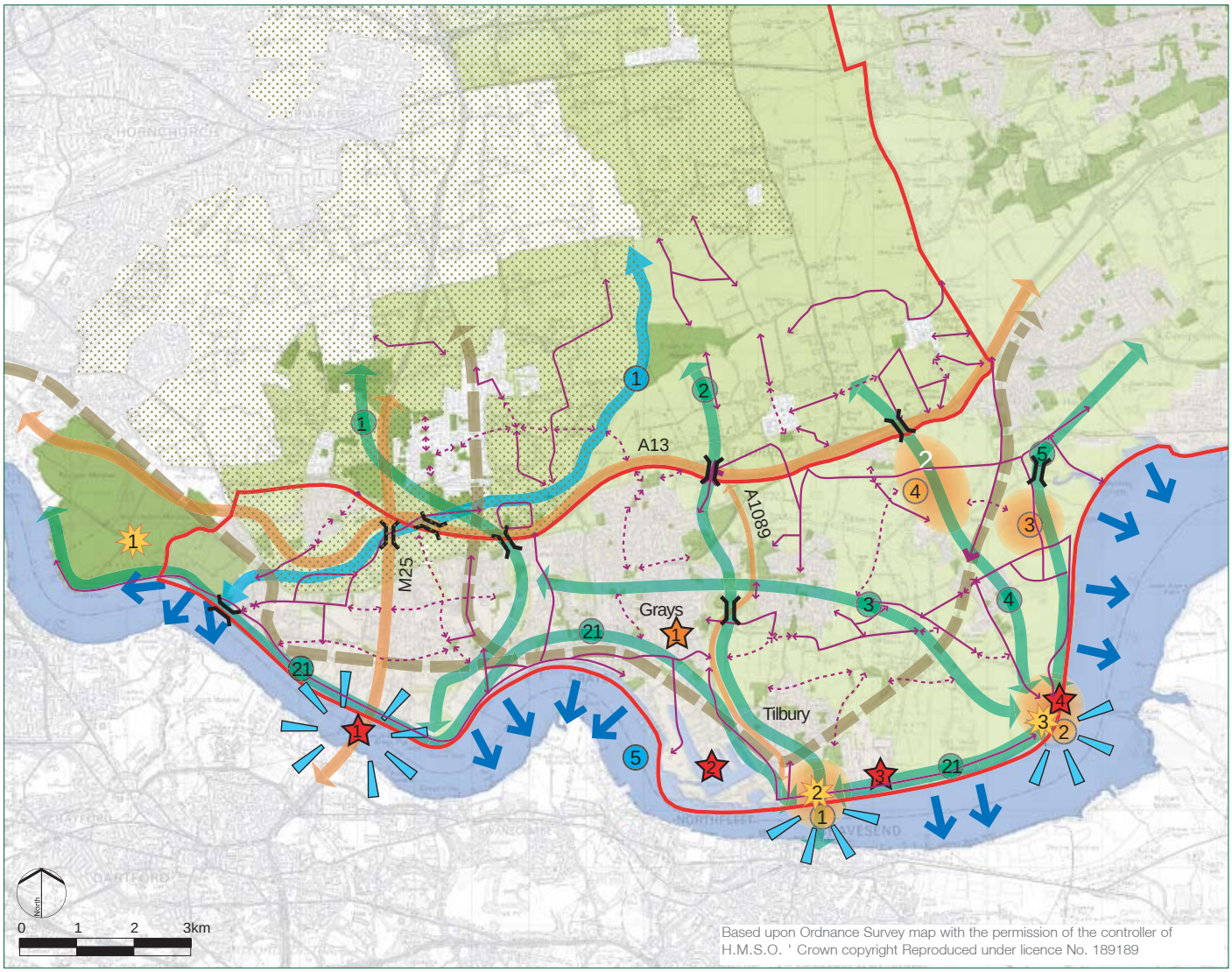


Figure 26 Thurrock Strategic Area Framework

PARKWAYS

A13 Parkway
M25 Parkway

URBAN GREEN ROAD WAYS

A1089

RAILWAYS

C2C

RIVERWAYS

Thames Catchment
1. Mardyke Valley
5. River Thames

GREENWAYS

1. Thurrock/ Grays
2. Tilbury
3. Chadwell St Marys
4. East Tilbury
5. Stanford-le-Hope
21. City to Sea/Shoreline

STRATEGIC PARKS

1. Tilbury Fort Country Park
2. Coalhouse Fort Country Park
3. Cory Country Park
4. Bluehouse Country Park

STRATEGIC DESTINATIONS

1. London Riverside Conservation Park
2. Tilbury Fort
3. Coalhouse Fort

EXISTING STRATEGIC LANDMARKS

1. Queen Elizabeth II Bridge
2. Tilbury Docks
3. Tilbury Power Station
4. Coalhouse Fort

PROPOSED STRATEGIC LANDMARKS

1. Grays

Open Landscape

Designated Open Space

The Strategy Area

Existing Public Rights of Way/Proposed links of Strategic Significance

Strategic Views

Strategic Viewpoints

Strategic Bridging Points

Thames Chase Community Forest

4.6 Basildon and Castle Point Strategic Area Framework

The following text should be read in conjunction with the **Figure 27 Basildon and Castle Point Strategic Area Framework.** The numbers in the text refer to the numbers on Figure 27.

Key Issues and Opportunities

- Bissected by escarpment running east-west
- Low lying flat marsh area to the south enclosed by urban areas to west and east and industry of Shellhaven to south. Intersected by Thames tributary creeks
- Escarpment is a dramatic landscape feature of generally steep grassy slopes with clumps of woodland
- Dramatic panoramic views over the marshes and foreshore to the estuary, open sea and North Kent
- Electricity pylons visually dominate much of the marsh areas sometimes providing exciting scenery, sometimes generating negative visual reactions and health concerns
- Transport corridor runs along the base of the escarpment to the eastern end of Basildon suburbs - railway continues east to Southend, A13 rises to northern edge of South Benfleet, forms physical barrier between Basildon and estuarine marshes
- Military defence heritage highlight at Hadleigh Castle on escarpment
- Flood defence features
- Canvey flood wall
- Fobbing Marsh and Benfleet flood barriers
- Dykes
- Wat Tyler Country Park, Langdon Hills Country Park, Hadleigh Country Park are existing facilities
- Higher ground, gently rolling topography above escarpment
- Benfleet Woods
- A130 acts as a barrier to east-west connectivity
- Planned 20th century new town of Basildon contrasts with suburban sprawl of South Benfleet
- Tributaries of River Crouch
- Complex settlement and land use pattern generated over thousands of years
- A127 forms physical barrier to connections with Rayleigh and Rochford Borough countryside; and
- After-use of waste disposal site at former mineral workings at Canvey marshes.

Guidance

- Embed this Strategy in Basildon and Castle Point Community Strategies, Local Development Frameworks and Documents, and in Basildon Renaissance Partnership's Regeneration Framework to ensure that its full potential is realised
- Promote the Strategic Landmarks at Hadleigh Castle, and Shellhaven
- Utilise the geological legacy of Basildon and Castle Point:
  - Re-use waste disposal site (former mineral site) to expand existing country park facilities close to Wat Tyler Country Park, (Greenway 10)
  - Create One Tree Hill and Hadleigh (Greenways 6 and 15 respectively) which follow escarpment
- Promote industrial heritage:
  - Interpret the social and wealth creator aspects and industrial processes of Shell Haven and Coryton oil refineries
  - Identify and enhance brown field sites with high biodiversity value, e.g. Northwick Road site
- Promote agricultural heritage: maintain and interpret the history and workings of the marshlands, e.g. Fobbing and Bowers Marshes etc. and agricultural land in urban fringe and Green Belt
- Enhance the river frontage at Canvey Island - create a path around the 'island', improve access to the estuary wall and create high quality and exciting destinations along the sea wall - Canvey Loop (Greenway 14)
- Enlarge and enhance the open space and educational value of Wat Tyler Country Park, an enlarged Country Park which has the potential to become a Regional Park
- Promote leisure and commuter ferry links along the Thames (Riverway 5) and the navigable tributaries of the Thames (Riverways 2, 3 and 4) .
- Create distinctive bridging structures across C2C Railway Corridor, A127, A130 and A13 Parkways to reconnect Basildon urban areas to the marshlands of the Thames Estuary and the South Essex countryside
- Incorporate flood risk and water management schemes, based on Strategic Flood Risk Assessments, in green spaces associated with the Thames (Riverway 5), the waterways associated with the Crouch (Riverways 6, 7 and 8)
- Improve landscape quality of urban fringe area and increase inter-urban connectivity between South Benfleet and Basildon (Greenway 8), and between the marshlands and countryside north of the A127 (Greenway 10)
- Recognise and enhance land use history of area; and
- Maintain and enhance the ecological value of C2C Railway Corridor, improve visual and environmental qualities of, and connectivity to stations at Stanford-le Hope, Pitsea, Basildon, Laindon and South Benfleet.

Fobbing Marshes

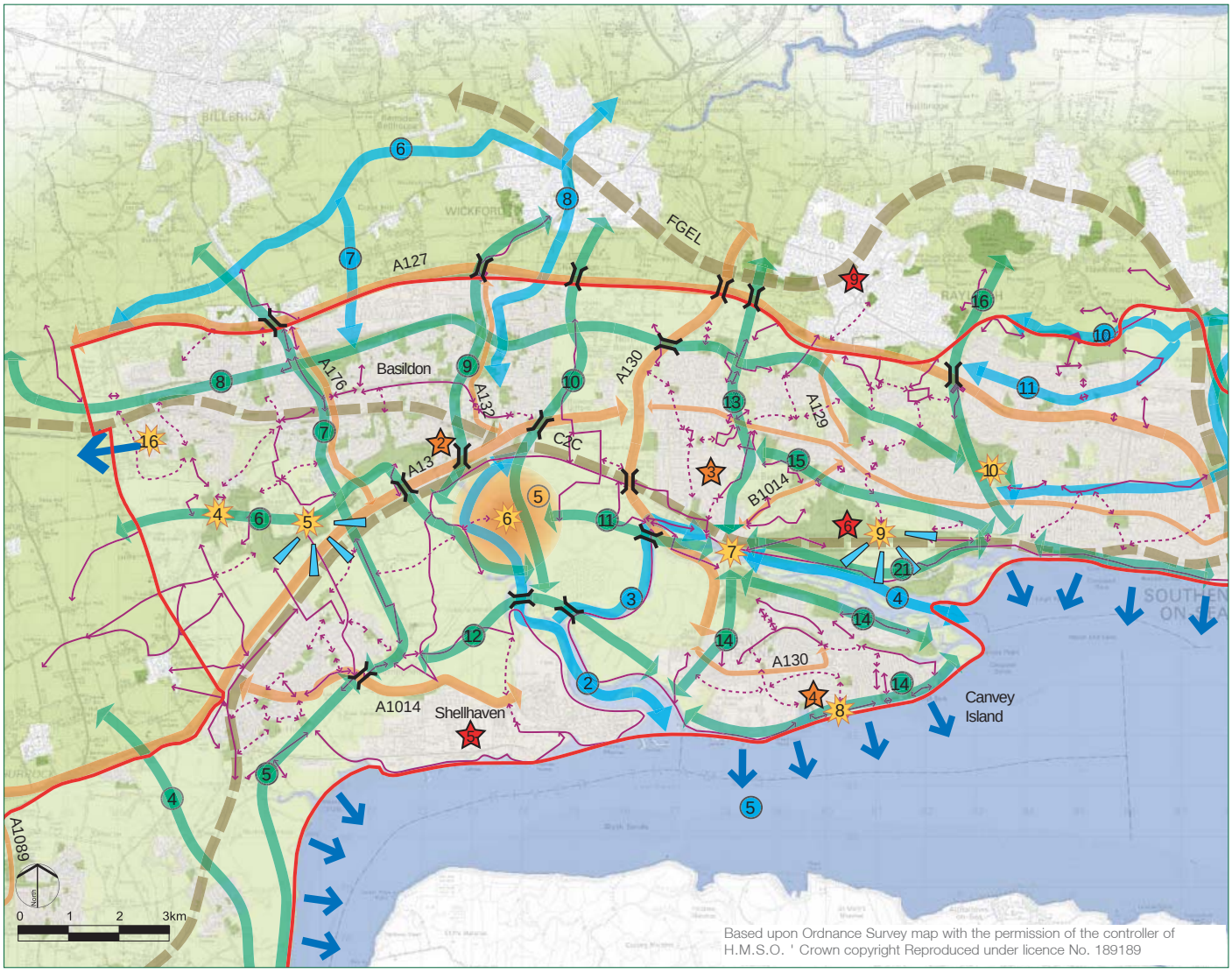


Figure 27 Basildon and Castle Point Strategic Area Framework

Parkways

A13 Parkway
A127 Parkway
A130 Parkway
A1014 Parkway

Urban Green Roadways

A130
A129
B1014
A13
A176
A132

Railways

C2C
First Great Eastern Line (FGEL)

Riverways

Thames Catchment
2. Hole Haven Creek
3. East Haven Creek
4. Benfleet Creek
5. River Thames

Crouch Catchment
6. River Crouch
7. Crays Hill Brook
8. Nevendon Brook

Greenways

4. East Tilbury
5. Stanford-le-Hope
6. One Tree Hill
7. Corringham-Basildon
8. Basildon-Southend
9. East Basildon
10. Wat Tyler
11. Bowers Marshes
12. Fobbing Marshes
13. South Benfleet
14. Canvey Loop
15. Hadleigh
16. Leigh/Rayleigh
21. City to Sea/Shoreline

Strategic Parks

5. Wat Tyler County Park

Strategic Destinations

4. Langdon Hills Country Park
5. One Tree Hill
6. Wat Tyler County Park
7. Benfleet Creek
8. The Concorde Cafe Canvey Sea Front
9. Hadleigh Castle
10. Belfairs Wood
16. Langdon Visitor Centre

Existing Strategic Landmarks

5. Shellhaven Oil Refinery
6. Hadleigh Castle
9. Rayleigh Castle

Proposed Strategic Landmarks

2. Basildon
3. South Benfleet
4. Canvey Island

Open Landscape

Designated Public Open Space

The Strategy Area

Existing Public Rights of Way/Proposed links of Strategic Significance

Strategic Views

Strategic Viewpoints

Strategic Bridging Points

4.7 Southend and Rochford Strategic Area Framework

The following text should be read in conjunction with the **Figure 28 Southend and Rochford Strategic Area Framework.** The numbers in the text refer to the numbers on Figure 28.

Key Issues and Opportunities:

- Steep escarpment along much of the frontage overlooks the Thames Estuary and a narrow strip of seafront onto which beaches, promenades, seaside amusements are squeezed, and out of which juts Southend pier
- Steepest parts of escarpment contain parks, remaining slopes built on mainly for residential and visitor accommodation
- Above the escarpment on level ground and on lower lying ground to the east of Southend Pier a strip of urban development extends from Shoeburyness in the east to South Benfleet in the west
- The A127/A1159/A13 (east) forms a physical barrier between the urban areas and the countryside of Rochford
- Possible expansion of Southend Airport
- Heritage assets are concentrated in the vicinity of the sea frontage and include military defence assets, notably at Shoebury Garrison and the Admiralty Boom.
- North of the A127, A1159 and the adjoining urban areas of Southend is predominantly rural, interspersed with villages and hamlets of Rochford. Gently rolling farmland with large blocks of woodland to the west around Rayleigh gives way to flatter, more spartan pastureland with hedges, hedgerow trees to the east within the Roach valley.
- Links south to the seafront are generally good, however, links north to the Rochford countryside are in need of improvement
- There is a deficit of parks in Southend, however, generally they are of high quality (a number with Green Flags)
- The seafront and pier provide attractive leisure routes which promote exercise and healthy living - gaps in provision and variable quality
- Southend has been a major tourist destination since Victorian times, and is particularly popular as a day trip and short break destination
- The A13 urban road is a key main road which generally reduces connectivity within Southend; and
- The foreshore is an internationally important area for nature conservation and includes the country's largest local nature reserve.

Guidance

- Embed this Strategy into Southend and Rochford Community Strategies, Local Development Frameworks and Documents, and the Southend Urban Regeneration Company's Regeneration Framework, to ensure that the full potential of this Strategy is realised
- Promote and enhance the visual landmarks of the area such as Southend Pier and Admiralty Boom at Shoeburyness
- Utilise the geological legacy of Southend and Rochford: maintain the character of the cliffs at Southend by ensuring land slips are repaired using sympathetic retaining structures
- Promote leisure industry of Southend and Rochford:
  - Retain and/or restore distinctive heritage features of the parks and elsewhere
  - Promote Rochford countryside as a destination alongside Southend attractions to encourage longer visits by tourists
- Promote sustainable connections (Greenway 18 and FGEL Railway) with Southend Airport, and ensure that any potential development of the airport is carried out using sustainable principles
- Improve existing and create new north/south connections (Greenways 16, 18, 19 and 20) - between urban areas and the cliffs, beaches, promenades and attractions of the seafront, and with the distinctive and attractive countryside of Rayleigh and the Roach valley
- Create and/or enhance four new interconnected country parks on the northern edge of Southend which will help make up the deficit of parks within the urban area, and encourage the use and appreciation of the Rochford countryside. Each park should have a distinctive character related to its location and existing land uses:
  - Garons Park - leisure/sport, connected to Greenways (17),(19) and (22)
  - Bourne Park - agriculture, connected to Greenways (20) and (22)
  - Shoebury Park - ecological, connected to Greenway (22)
  - Cherry Orchard Jubilee Park - riverside, connected to Greenway (22) and Riverway (10)
- Create distinctive bridges/crossings across A127 Parkway and A1159 Urban Green Road to reconnect urban areas to the Rayleigh and Roach valley countryside
- Improve the visual quality and crossings of A13 Urban Green Road within Southend
- Promote leisure ferry links from Southend Pier to London, the rest of the estuary and the East Coast
- Incorporate flood risk and water management schemes, based on Strategic Flood Risk Assessments, in green spaces associated with the Thames (Riverway 5) and the waterways associated with the Roach (Riverways 9, 10 and 11); and
- Improve the visual and environmental qualities of the C2C and FGEL Railways and connectivity to stations.

Southend seafront

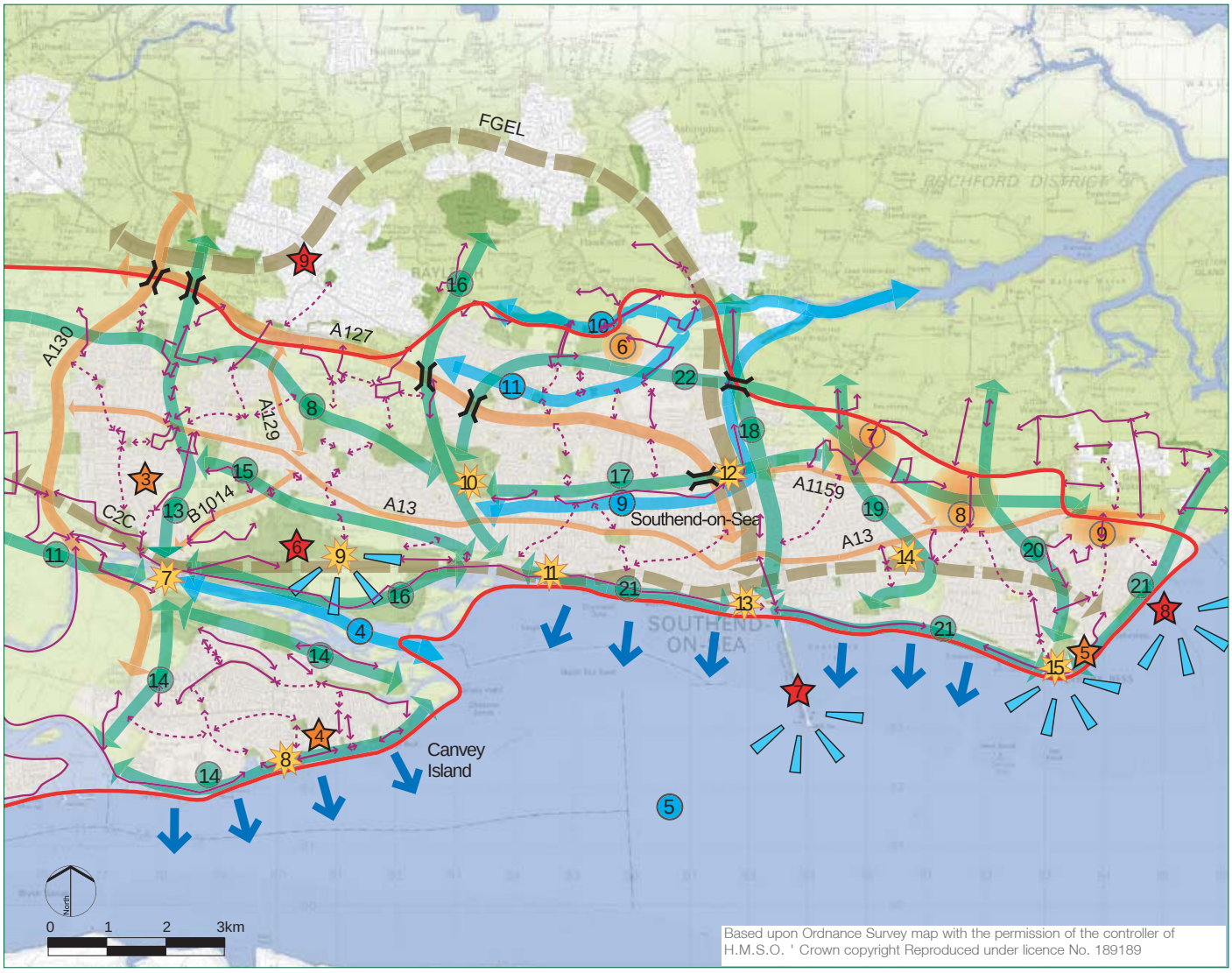


Figure 28 Southend and Rochford Strategic Area Framework

Parkways

A127 Parkway
A130 Parkway

Urban Green Roadways

A13
A129
A1159
B1014

Railways

C2C
First Great Eastern Line (FGEL)

Riverways

Thames Catchment
4. Benfleet Creek
5. River Thames

Roach Catchment
9. Prittlebrook
10. Rayleigh
11. Eastwood

Greenways

8. Basildon-Southend
11. Fobbing Marshes
13. South Benfleet
14. Canvey Loop
15. Hadleigh
16. Leigh/Rayleigh
17. Prittlebrook
18. Central Southend
19. Southchurch
20. Shoeburyness
21. City to Sea/Shoreline
22. Rayleigh/ Bournes Green

Strategic Parks

6. Cherry Orchard Country Park (existing)
7. Garons Park (existing)
8. Bourne Park (new)
9. Shoebury Park (new)

Strategic Destinations

7. Benfleet Creek
8. The Concorde Cafe Canvey
9. Hadleigh Castle
10. Belfairs Wood
11. Leigh Beach
12. Prittlewell Park and Priory
13. Southend Seafront
14. Southchurch Park
15. Gunners Park

Strategic Landmarks

6. Hadleigh Castle
7. Southend Pier
8. Admiralty Boom
9. Rayleigh Castle

Proposed Strategic Landmarks

3. South Benfleet
4. Canvey Island
5. Shoebury Garrison

Open Landscape

Designated Public Open Space

The Strategy Area

Existing Public Rights of Way/Proposed links of Strategic Significance

Strategic Views

Strategic Viewpoints

Strategic Bridging Points

4.8 Strategic Guidance

The following **Strategic Guidance** is based on the **Strategic Themes** and promotes the protection of valuable assets, the enhancement of poor quality assets, the mitigation of any negative impacts of necessary development, and the creation of new assets. The Guidance is intended to inform the preparation of the Regional Spatial Strategy and other regional and County level social, economic, and environmental policies; Sub-regional Spatial Strategies and Frameworks; Community Strategies, Local Development Frameworks and Documents, Area Development Frameworks, parks and open space strategies, master plans, and all other development proposals. The Guidance is intended to be used as a checklist to ensure that the multi-functional benefits of this Strategy are considered by development proposals at every scale, and that opportunities to join up the delivery of Sustainable Communities are not missed. They are based on the principle that 'Every proposal should seek to achieve . . .'. They elaborate the information contained in the Framework Plans and should be read in conjunction with them.

The underlying principle of the guidance is to promote high quality in the provision of both new and existing assets.

4.8.1 Accessibility

Every proposal should seek to:

- Provide safe, attractive, well designed, well sign posted, well promoted continuous routes for pedestrians and cyclists within Strategic Corridors and Links. In the case of rail corridors this provision should be concentrated around stations. In urban areas 'park and ride' facilities should be promoted to encourage public transport links and reduce the number of car journeys. The potential added benefits of 'green' bridges over Parkways should be promoted. Commuter cycle and footpath routes should also be promoted. Provision for bridleways should be made where there is an existing or projected need. The routes should link into the Thames Path City to Sea
- Provide safe and attractive facilities including shelter, drinking water, toilets, first aid, telephones and accommodation for rangers at regular intervals for each Greenway Corridor and Link
- Create/maintain connections into, through and between existing and proposed communities via the Strategic Corridors and Links
- Provide key river crossings where they support strategic requirements, particularly connecting banks of the River Thames and its tributaries
- Promote Strategic Corridors and Links related to public transport hubs
- Comply with the Rights of Way Improvement Plans required by the CROW Act (2000). All proposals for footpaths and/or cycleway's should be accompanied by a recreation strategy and plan, which shows how the proposed paths integrate with the existing path network, identify 'honey-pot' areas, and demonstrate how proposals complement each other across the Strategy Area. Included within this, should be consideration of 'users' requirements, such as commuter and leisure routes - including the need for solid surfaces and muddy-boot surfaces. They should also consider the needs of those with mobility issues who do not necessarily want flat, hard surfaces. Pathways should maximise the opportunity to broaden people's experience and should not be prejudiced by urban or rural contexts. Local Access Forums should be consulted; and
- Link Strategic Corridors to national leisure routes beyond the Strategy Area.
- Achieve the accessible green space standards promoted by English Nature (ANGst) and the accessible woodland standards promoted by The Woodland Trust (www.woodland-trust.org.uk).

Hadleigh Castle

4.8.2 Planning

Every proposal should seek to:

- Comply with national, regional and local planning guidance including this Strategy; and
- Be tested for compliance with this Strategy.

4.8.3 Character - landscape, townscape and riverscape

Every proposal should seek to:

- Ensure that the design of new developments - buildings, landscapes and structures - create or enhance a sense of place and local identity. They should respect and enhance existing landscape, townscape and riverscape character as defined in this Strategy, and be based on a more detailed local characterisation carried out in accordance with Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment published by the Landscape Institute
- Use hard and soft materials in the buildings, landscapes and structures which respect the local

character and differences in geology
- Promote the character and culture of South Essex; and
- Use plants appropriate to the local landscape character e.g. woodland should not be introduced to marsh areas.

4.8.4 Biodiversity

Every proposal should seek to:

- Map areas of conservation importance which will place proposals in context and ensure that wildlife refuges and habitat creation/restoration areas are appropriate and sustainable. Mapping should identify statutory and non-statutory designated sites, Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitat and species, as well as areas considered to be valuable in the wider countryside context
- Contribute to the establishment of a connected system of habitats, the value of brownfield sites should not be overlooked
- Promote the ecological, educational and health benefits of maintaining/improving the biodiversity of private open space including domestic gardens
- Encourage the promotion of wildlife by less intensive farming methods, hedge-laying and hedge planting e.g. Countryside Stewardship Scheme
- Promote the role of trees and woodland as described in the Regional Woodland Strategy for the East of England; and
- Complete a sustainability check list to ensure the most sustainable options are selected.

4.8.5 Archaeological, historical and cultural resources

Every proposal should:

- Be based on English Heritage's 'Thames Gateway Historic Environment Characterisation' project and associated archaeological and built heritage surveys to inform conservation priorities, designs and proposals
- Protect, enhance, promote and interpret designated heritage features; and
- Encourage celebration of cultural heritage.

4.8.6 Flood risk and water management

Every proposal should:

- Be based on a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the catchment area
- seek to be multi-functional and address all the Strategic Themes of this Strategy
- aim to enhance Riverways by restoring water courses to natural profiles and with retention ponds, wetland and marshland habitats where appropriate as part of sustainable drainage systems (SDS)
- where appropriate, incorporate the principles of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SDS) e.g. use of porous paving materials to reduce run off, incorporation of balancing ponds, green roof systems, etc.
- seek to maintain/create areas of informal wildlife habitats, alongside or within river corridors which are not accessible by the public. Refuge areas free from disturbance are essential elements for the maintenance of local biodiversity and therefore an essential element to the quality of life of both urban and rural communities. (The Environment Agency typically asks for a minimum of 8m (alongside freshwater rivers) and 16m (alongside tidal rivers) buffer zones, which do not include hard development). The Agency also sees this as an opportunity to ensure paths and greenspaces are integrated into built developments adjacent to the river corridor, whether residential, industrial or mixed use. Useful reference could also be made here to the 'Regional Woodland Strategy for the East of England'. This will ensure higher standards of design within these areas and facilitate the integration of new developments in to the local community; and
- consider the cumulative impact of new bridges in relation to existing bridges further upstream and downstream of the site. Bridges disrupt river corridors, create shading and can affect river processes depending on size, width and design. The Environment Agency normally seeks clear spanning bridges, with minimum widths. Existing bridges should be used and adapted if at all possible. Opportunities should also be sought for incorporating bat and bird boxes within the bridge structure.

Queen Elizabeth II Bridge

4.8.7 Education, skills and learning

Every proposal should seek to:

- Promote the educational benefits of the Green Grid through Local Education Authorities, Sure Start, children's centres, nurseries, schools and colleges
- Promote the Green Grid as 'safe routes to schools' to encourage children to walk and cycle to school
- Enhance the visual quality and biodiversity value of school grounds; and
- Promote events and community engagement in conservation management work.

4.8.8 Leisure and Recreation

Every proposal should seek to:

- Promote the leisure and recreational uses of each Strategic Corridor and Link; and
- Promote the cultural qualities of South Essex.

4.8.9 Urban form

Every proposal should seek to:

- Achieve the seven objectives of urban design promoted in *By Design - Urban Design in the Planning System, Towards Better Practice, DETR/ CABE, 2000*:
    - Character
    - Continuity and enclosure
    - Quality of public realm
    - Ease of movement
    - Legibility
    - Adaptability; and
    - Diversity
- Be prepared in accordance with this Strategy.

4.8.10 Views and landmarks

Every proposal should seek to:

- Be based on a landscape and visual assessment which identifies key viewpoints and landmarks, and proposes their protection, enhancement and the creation of new viewpoints and landmarks
- Put forward proposals to mitigate any negative impacts on identified Strategic Views and Landmarks; and
- Encourage appreciation of the rugged, distinctive visual qualities of industrial landscapes.

4.8.11 Infrastructure

Every proposal should seek to:

- Promote implementation of environmental infrastructure created alongside all transport, utilities, flood risk management and built form infrastructure.

4.8.12 Positive physical and mental health

Every proposal should seek to:

- Promote access for both urban and rural communities to green space with a diversity of active and passive recreational and leisure pursuits which will encourage participation and provide significant benefits for physical and mental well-being and encourage social inclusion
- Promote links with Primary Care Trusts, Social Services Departments, hospitals and mental health trusts to exploit the potential for healthy living programmes
- Consider proposals for horticultural therapy
- Consider opportunities and provision of allotments and small holdings for local food production; and
- Promote the understanding of the role of regular exercise for a healthy life style as outlined in the East of England Plan for Sport.

4.8.13 Social and economic benefits

Every proposal should seek to:

- Promote social regeneration through the creation of high quality parks and greenspaces in the right place, of the right quality and with the right facilities based on identified social and demographic needs of local communities in accordance with a parks and green space strategy prepared in accordance with *PPG 17: open space, recreation and sports*
- Establish the economic value of environmental functions performed by the Green Grid such as reducing air pollution, enhancing water quality, flood water storage, energy production, food and forestry production, waste recycling, etc. and charge those who benefit to provide revenue for high quality management and maintenance
- Include proposals for capturing back land values enhanced through investment and improvements to the Green Grid to repay capital costs and contribute to revenue funds for ongoing management and maintenance. Consider establishing Community Development Finance Investment vehicles to manage parks and green spaces
- Promote local food production and distribution of produce
- Include employment opportunities for those with mental health problems or a disability
- Contribute to developing a sense of pride/belonging in the community; and
- Explore how the Green Grid can feature in recruitment packages.

Beach at Southend

5.0 Making it Happen

Sustainable Communities: Greening the Gateway, makes a powerful case for the Government's expectations of a high quality, functional green space network throughout the Thames Gateway. This Strategy for the Thames Gateway South Essex Green Grid is an equally powerful response to that expectation. It proposes a spatial and policy framework derived from an understanding of the positive and negative aspects of the resource that exists, community requirements derived from stakeholder consultations and workshops, and a Vision promoting a fundamental shift in emphasis that places landscape at the heart of the development process, and environmental process at the heart of sustainable development and the economy.

Every bit of the landscape, and every environmental process should be exploited to improve accessibility to and through the area particularly by foot and by bicycle; to protect, enhance and create new areas of outstanding landscape, riverscape and townscape character; biodiversity value; archaeological, cultural and built heritage; settings for development; views and landmarks; and provide sustainable energy, clean air, food and water; manage flood risk, ameliorate the effects of climate change; promote healthy living and a strong sense of community and a sustainable economy. This should be delivered through the planning system - the Strategy should influence the preparation of the Regional Spatial Strategy, Local Development Frameworks and Documents, and all development proposals. It should also be delivered through investment in, and the implementation of public transport and utilities infrastructure.

The economic arguments for investment in the Green Grid are compelling. The need for a creative approach to delivery, investment, promotion and marketing which matches the scale and dynamics of this Strategy's Vision is evident.

Delivery partners will range from European and national government and their agencies, national interest groups, regional government and its agencies, local authorities, developers, voluntary organisations and community groups.

The Strategy promotes high quality environmental infrastructure that in turn promotes high quality development and vice-versa. High quality environments yield, over time, higher property values. Consequently, there should be exploration into ways of capturing back a part of that rise in value not only to pay back early capital investment, but also to ensure adequate funding for its long term management and maintenance should be explored. This will encourage investor confidence and facilitate positive marketing of South Essex as a high quality and attractive place to live, work and play forever.

Delivery/development partners will be encouraged to promote the concept of the **'working landscape'**, of placing a value on 'environmental functions' performed by the environmental infrastructure such as flood risk management, water cleansing through reed bed systems, reduction in urban 'heat island' temperatures through extensive tree planting, promotion of healthy living through preventative health-care, etc. The broad principle should be that **'those who benefit from it should pay for it'** - this may require much greater transparency in how and why projects are funded and delivered, and the costs agreed up front.

Through this Strategy, there is an opportunity to not only improve on existing environmental provision through Green Grid projects, but also to ensure that every new development has significant **'added value'** based on the principle that we should **invest once, and invest wisely for long term benefit.** There is no doubt that excellence in planning, design, implementation, management and maintenance at the beginning of projects, leads to much more sustainable solutions at a fraction of the cost of retro-fitting them.

The delivery agents of the Green Grid will need to be at the table when all key projects are being planned, designed and implemented.

5.1 Community Engagement

Change on the scale envisaged in South Essex will also require that **community capacity is built to accept it and support** it. Existing communities are fearful that new development may destroy much of what they value about where they live, lead to more congestion, and divert investment into new developments at the expense of the existing areas that need enhancing. These are the twin instinctive reactions to change on this scale: firstly that we have reached the limits of the existing environment to support it; and secondly, that we have reached the limits of existing communities' capacity to grow and develop. Engagement of existing and new communities is, therefore, an important aspect of the Green Grid and offers an enlightened way of building community capacity by engaging them in the process of environmental change and involvement in delivery.

Community Engagement Case Study : Thames Chase Community Forest

Since its inception in 1990 Thames Chase has placed the local communities at the heart of improving the local environment. The Thames Chase Plan has community policies which promote community action, involvement and participation. The Community Forest's overall objective is to achieve a high level commitment and involvement in creating the Community Forest.

In reality this has translated into various programmes. The Thames Chase partnership has used 'Planning for Real' techniques to engage local communities and allow them to become involved in green space planning for a new area of the Forest. Other new sites opened by the Forestry Commission have been subject to community consultations including one to one interviews, "walks and talks" and an innovative 'Countryside Supermarket' idea. As a result of this engagement, Thames Chase has numerous 'Friends of' groups, volunteer warden groups and a permanent, and active Thames Chase Volunteer group.

Cultural Activity

Cultural activity has the capacity to engage all sections of community in the processes of building healthy, vibrant and inclusive neighbourhoods. Investment in culture, and support and encouragement for a wide range of cultural activities is an integral part of creating sustainability and health, and in setting the conditions for inclusive and forward looking communities.

5.2 Promotion and Marketing

Promotion, branding, marketing and investment are crucial aspects in engendering political and community support for the Strategy and its delivery. It is also crucial to encouraging use by the community, and promoting tourism. The Green Grid can form a key element in promoting the area to outside investors - there is no doubt that high quality environments, attract high quality people, who attract high quality businesses.

Mudflats at Shoeburyness

5.3 The time is right, the time is now

We have a once in a generation opportunity to develop communities fit for the twenty-first century. The Green Grid is a substantial part of the overall vision for South Essex. It is a vital part of the mechanism for delivering sustainable communities, and has the capacity to transform once and for all the image of Thames Gateway South Essex.

THAMES GATEWAY south essex

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