

Delivering the future

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THAMES GATEWAY
south essex



Welcome to

ThamesGateway SouthEssex



"The Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership has made significant progress since its launch in September 2001. This new strategic framework establishes for the first time an ambitious and challenging sub-regional agenda for the growth, development and regeneration of Thames Gateway South Essex over the next 20 years".

"The framework provides a solid basis for the ongoing work of the Partnership and provides an important focus for delivery".

"The framework also makes an important contribution towards meeting the government's own objectives for the Thames Gateway, which we have outlined in our Communities Plan".

"I congratulate the Partnership for its broad vision and endorse the strategic direction this framework sets in train".

THE RT HON LORD ROOKER
MINISTER OF STATE FOR
HOUSING AND PLANNING



In 2001, the Partnership laid out its Vision for the future of south Essex, and the opportunity provided by the area's inclusion in the Thames Gateway. The government has shown its confidence in that Vision, by identifying funding to kick start the process of regeneration and growth.

Delivering the Future lays out the actions which we believe are needed so that Vision can be realised. It cannot be achieved through the work of the members of the Partnership alone. It will need to involve a wide range of stakeholders, including public and private sector organisations like the Learning and Skills Council, Business Link for Essex, commercial developers, the health services and the Universities.

We hope that this document will act as a prospectus and a clear framework for investors and for those who want to work with us to deliver our objectives of a better quality of life and increased opportunity for all those who live, and work, in the area.

ANDY SMITH
CHAIRMAN
THAMES GATEWAY SOUTH ESSEX PARTNERSHIP



The regeneration of Thames Gateway South Essex is of regional and national importance. The government has recently given further impetus to the growth of the area through the national action plan, 'Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future', which was unveiled this year.

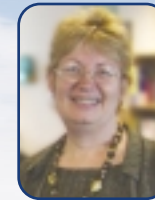
This document outlines the present strengths, challenges and opportunities for people and places in south Essex. It also provides proposals and actions to achieve a vibrant economy, inclusive communities, a high-quality environment and improved infrastructure.

EEDA is committed to working with local communities and partners by providing a range of strategic, advocacy and investment support to new and evolving projects. Together, we have a unique opportunity to lead the way in building sustainable communities.

I am grateful to Mary Spence and the Thames Gateway South Essex Executive for leading the development of the Strategic Framework and to all of those whose participation, commitment and expertise was essential to its creation.

The Framework is an important step in a longer journey to achieve the growth potential and sustainable regeneration of Thames Gateway South Essex. Through effective partnerships between the public, private and voluntary sectors, I am confident that we can make a real and lasting difference to the whole area.

VINCENT WATTS
CHAIRMAN
EAST OF ENGLAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY



Delivering the Future has been developed in collaboration with a wide range of contributors from around south Essex and the East of England region. It is based on an ambitious, but realistic and achievable, set of objectives for Thames Gateway which will transform both the image and the reality of life for those who live, work and invest here.

South Essex is the most exciting place to be in the UK today. With a vision which encompasses not just the built form but also culture, the arts, sport and business innovation, we can offer a supportive and enthusiastic environment for investors who are willing to work at the cutting edge of new approaches to sustainability.

The Partnership has laid down the challenge – a demand for the highest quality of sustainable development which complements and supports London World City while retaining its own clear identity.

I hope this summary of the opportunities will encourage you to join us to deliver the future.

MARY SPENCE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A Sense of Place

The character of south Essex is perceived by its residents as essentially urban, but in fact there is a significant amount of high quality green space which has ecological importance. It benefits from being close to London. It also benefits from its proximity to the river estuary and access to the sea. It encompasses a significant manufacturing and industrial base, together with high quality research facilities, and a major tourist resort. Many of its disadvantaged communities are located in urban areas, but within easy reach of high quality open spaces and the river. Its position offers a unique blend of opportunities for living, working and leisure.

To promote the strengths and diversity of south Essex, the Vision focuses on complementary locations centred upon **Basildon, Southend, Thurrock, Castle Point and Rochford**.

Action and investment will be required to:

- Support the sustainable urban regeneration of **Basildon**
- Support the renaissance of **Southend**
- Achieve the vision for **Thurrock**
- Improve and enhance the sustainability of **Castle Point**.
- Develop **Rochford** as an area for leisure, recreation and tourism activity

New delivery mechanisms are being established to drive this forward.

BASILDON

The Basildon District Strategic Development Partnership includes Basildon District Council; East of England Development Agency; English Partnerships; Essex County Council and Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership.

Action is planned for the town centre, Gardiners Lane South, and estate renewal. A project brief has been agreed for a scoping study to assess the opportunities and way forward in the regeneration of Basildon town centre. Action required includes major redevelopment in some parts of the town centre; investment in the public transport infrastructure; diversifying uses in the town centre; environmental improvement; and improving accessibility, particularly by foot.

At Gardiners Lane South, master planning for the 90-acre site will create an urbanised business and residential development; 1.2 million square feet of high quality business space; business support and innovation centre; mixed use elements including a hotel, restaurants and shops; 17-acre ecology park and common; significant investment in public transport serving the Cranes Corridor and links with the town centre; new access to the A127; and up to 400 homes including key worker accommodation.

Basildon Council has always supported a successful programme of estate renewal including Five Links, Bluehouses and Vange. Other estates are now being identified for on-going programmes.

SOUTHEND

Southend will be a centre of cultural and educational excellence within the TGSE Area. To achieve this, a number of key constraints need to be overcome.

A 'new renaissance company' is being formed comprising representatives from key partners core to the achievement of Southend's regeneration, such as the East of England Development Agency, English Partnerships, the Housing Corporation, the University of Essex, South East Essex College and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council. This company will be responsible for making the step changes needed for the area to achieve its vision, and for engaging in partnering arrangements with appropriate private sector parties to bring forward specific development opportunities.

Priorities for delivery include:

- Transforming Southend into a thriving cultural hub for south Essex, by developing its cultural strategy, beach facilities, resort and tourism facilities and leisure attractions, and the overall environmental quality of Southend and its environs
- Developing the area's university facilities, expanding upon the new Southend town centre campus to provide sustainable and accessible facilities for the region
- Improving the accessibility of Southend and Rochford by improving surface access, both road and rail, and upgrading London Southend Airport to support stronger links with Europe



THURROCK

Thurrock will be the centre for international trade, enterprise and connections, building on a rich maritime heritage, maximising the value of the river and empowering diverse communities to provide an exciting, vibrant and sustainable place to live, work and visit.

An Urban Development Corporation dedicated to Thurrock is to be established. This corporation will be headed by a Board, comprising representatives from partner organisations together with robust delivery structures accountable to the Board and the community. Shadow arrangements are to be established with a view to implementing the new arrangements within 12-18 months. Thurrock Council and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are working closely in developing the new delivery mechanism.

Action and investment is needed to create:

- A focal point for the Arts, Heritage, Culture and Recreation
- A flagship Environmental & Ecological Community
- High value and sustainable Logistics Hub, underpinned by a multi-modal transport system
- A World Port, connecting London and south Essex with the world's trade centres
- An exemplar for Community Regeneration, Learning, Development and Enterprise
- A Centre of Excellence for technological, R&D and futures development, expertise and skilling

Priorities for delivery include:

- Improvements in local transport infrastructure to integrate communities; improve sustainability; support the world port and logistics sector
- Investment in new health, education and community facilities to assist community regeneration; support enterprise; raise aspirations
- Relocation of existing businesses and promotion of the area for high quality investment and development to improve housing opportunities; increase economic wealth; attract new business sectors; create a centre of excellence for logistics and transport
- Creation of a sustainable centre for the arts, culture and heritage to provide new employment and educational opportunities; attract retail and heritage tourism; develop a diverse socio-economic community
- Housing development, which is sustainable; utilises the riverside; has a sense of identity and exclusivity; protects the environment and green belt



CASTLE POINT

Castle Point has a good quality environment but is heavily reliant on surrounding centres for retail and service functions. It also has a very high employment deficit and lacks adequate supplies of affordable housing. These factors result in high levels of transportation demand but with an historically low level of investment in transportation infrastructure. These issues should be addressed both in terms of the position of Castle Point and as an integral element of Thames Gateway.

The vision and objectives will be met by:

- Providing greater employment opportunities on Canvey Island
- Strengthening service centres at Canvey, Hadleigh and Benfleet
- Making better use of urban land to provide affordable housing
- Investing in transport infrastructure and public transport opportunities
- Proposals to contribute to the green grid and protect the open land

The main activities to achieve these objectives will be:

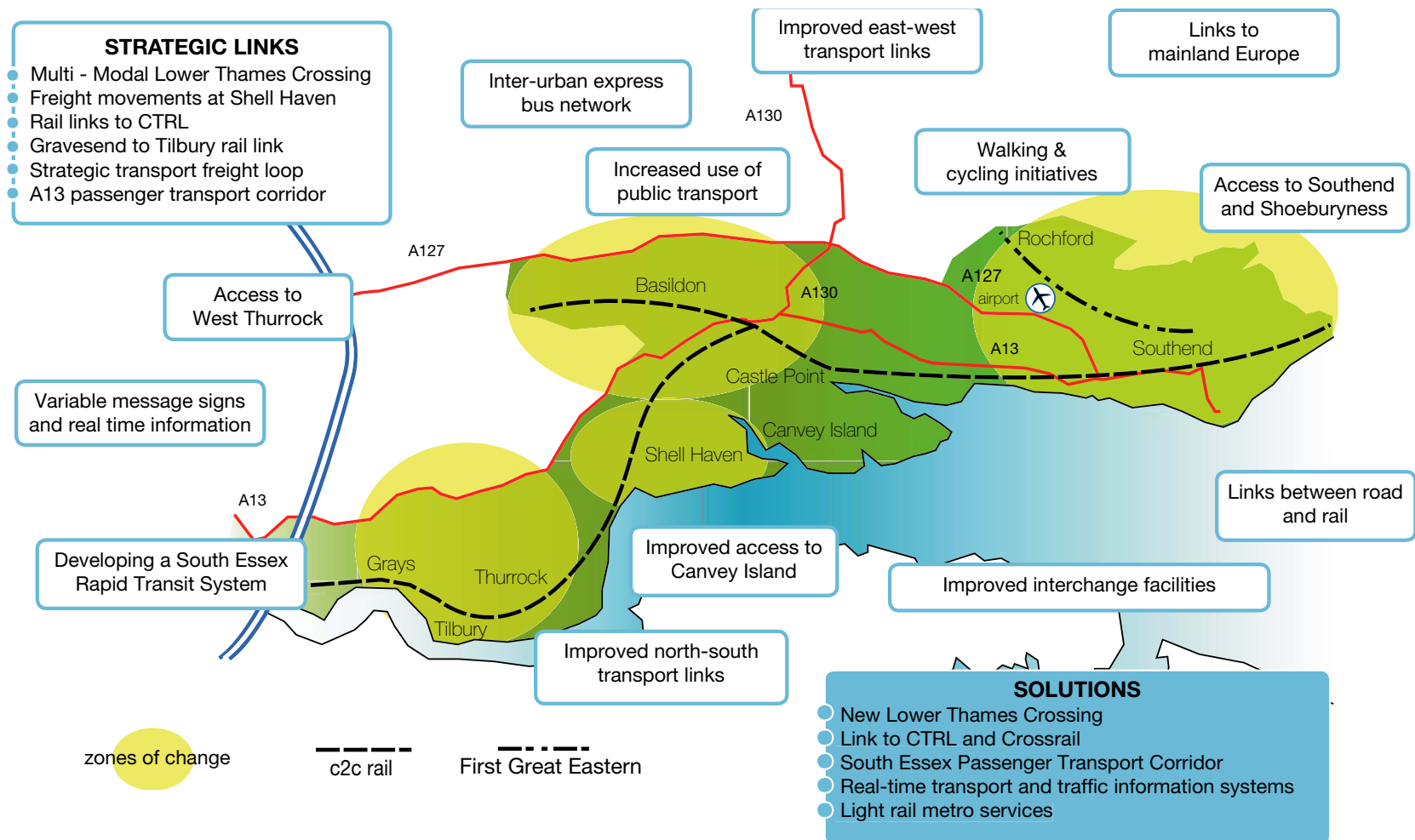
- Development of employment opportunities at Northwick Road, Canvey Island
- Environmental enhancement of main service centres
- Development of sites identified in the Urban Capacity Study for affordable housing
- Development of country parks on Canvey and Hadleigh
- Improvement to the A130 link to Canvey Island and Roscommon Way and the Fenchurch Street/Southend railway line

ROCHFORD

Of particular interest to Rochford is the potential to develop those themes which link to the vision in Southend, in particular developing the area for leisure, recreation and tourism activity. The District has a high socio-economic profile, high value housing and quality environment which balances the communities of south Essex, and provides an attractive inward investment proposition for business, particularly the developing service sector. The characteristics and aims identified contribute to the wider and balanced sub-regional offer for Thames Gateway South Essex.

In the context of the Thames Gateway South Essex, the key priorities include:

- With Southend Borough Council, resolving the future of London Southend Airport and its environs
- Developing and extending the green grid concept across the District and, in particular, in association with the development and expansion of Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park
- Promoting the leisure and tourism potential of the District and securing new hotel provision in the area
- Promoting the enhancement of Rochford Town as a centre for 'Arts and Crafts'
- Conserving and enhancing the District's heritage, particularly in the centers of Rochford and Rayleigh
- Enhancing rail/bus interchange facilities across the District
- Securing high value-added employment



Transport



The transport network in south Essex is heavily influenced by London and is dominated by a significant east-west corridor. Two train operating companies (c2c and First Great Eastern) and two strategic roads (A13 / A127) cater for this movement of people and goods.

The transport network in south Essex suffers from severe peak period congestion, with some of the most heavily used non-trunk roads and commuter railway lines in the region. Current railway journey times are slow and the network is inhibited by bottlenecks in the system, particularly at Barking and Stratford.

Both railways are currently operating at line capacity.

The A13 and the A127 carry significant volumes of traffic within south Essex and westwards towards London.

The M25 is at present the only strategic link with Kent via the Dartford Crossing at the western end of the south Essex area. The Gravesend to Tilbury foot passenger ferry provides a local facility.

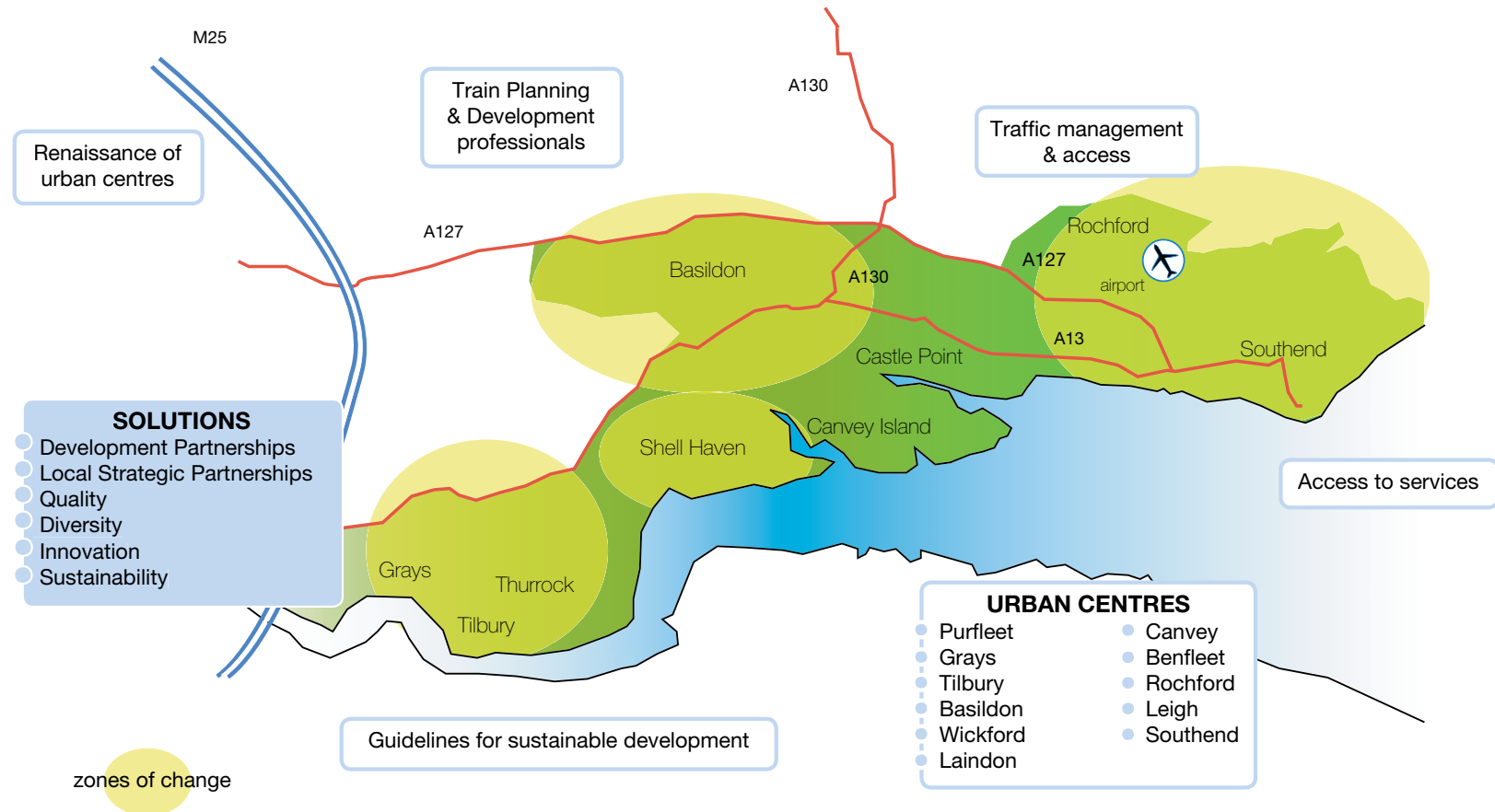
The London Southend Airport, Tilbury Port and the planned new major port development at Shell Haven provide considerable opportunities for contributing to the regeneration of the area. Improving the transport infrastructure to realise this potential in a sustainable way will be of vital importance and a considerable challenge.

Action and investment is needed to:

- Improve strategic links to mainland Europe and the rest of the UK
- Improve links within the Thames Gateway
- Ease local transport congestion and improve connectivity

Priorities for delivery include:

- Developing detailed proposals for the construction of a multi-modal Lower Thames Crossing; rail linkages with CTRL; improved links to Crossrail and east-west, new strategic north-south rail links; Gravesend to Tilbury rail link; Strategic Intermodal Interchanges; developing the Freight Loop for south Essex; improving strategic links to Southend, particularly to the east of the town; port development at Shell Haven; developing the A13 passenger transport corridor; regenerate Southend Airport and increasing real time traffic information on strategic routes
- Identifying funding for new regional transport routes including a Benfleet-Wickford passenger rail link; Shenfield rail loop; river-based transport link; express bus network; light rapid transit system; local intermodal interchanges; improved cycle and walking routes and an improved c2c service pattern
- Improving local transport to increase access to new development sites and to reduce car dependence, including enabling Thurrock to support its role as a global centre for logistics, and as the crossroads of the south Essex transport network; providing new rail, road, cycle and walking access including new railway stations at West Thurrock and Southend airport; improving access to Lakeside; upgrading railway stations; extending Roscommon Way on Canvey Island; improving existing access routes to Canvey Island and upgrading bus stations



UrbanRenaissance



Thriving local and town centres are essential components of successful communities, and support SMEs. South Essex has a variety of urban forms, from older seaside resorts like Southend and Canvey Island, to a New Town (Basildon) and smaller settlements.

Thames Gateway South Essex encompasses large areas of retail development including a number of large sub-regional centres such as Basildon, Southend-on-Sea and Lakeside Shopping Centre in Thurrock. These larger sub-regional centres combine with many smaller local shopping centres to provide an array of facilities and amenities for shopping, business and leisure for both the resident population and those visiting from outside the area.

An attractive, accessible and safe town centre with a good mix of entertainment and shopping is essential for the promotion of a buoyant business climate and the attraction of inward investment. The importance of local and sub-regional centres is recognised by partners and actions to share best practice and support and develop the individual character of local retail and community centres should be undertaken. These should include actions to revitalise local towns and centres to deliver an urban renaissance.

The Partnership has agreed that the guiding principles for its activities are:

- Quality
- Diversity
- Innovation
- Sustainability

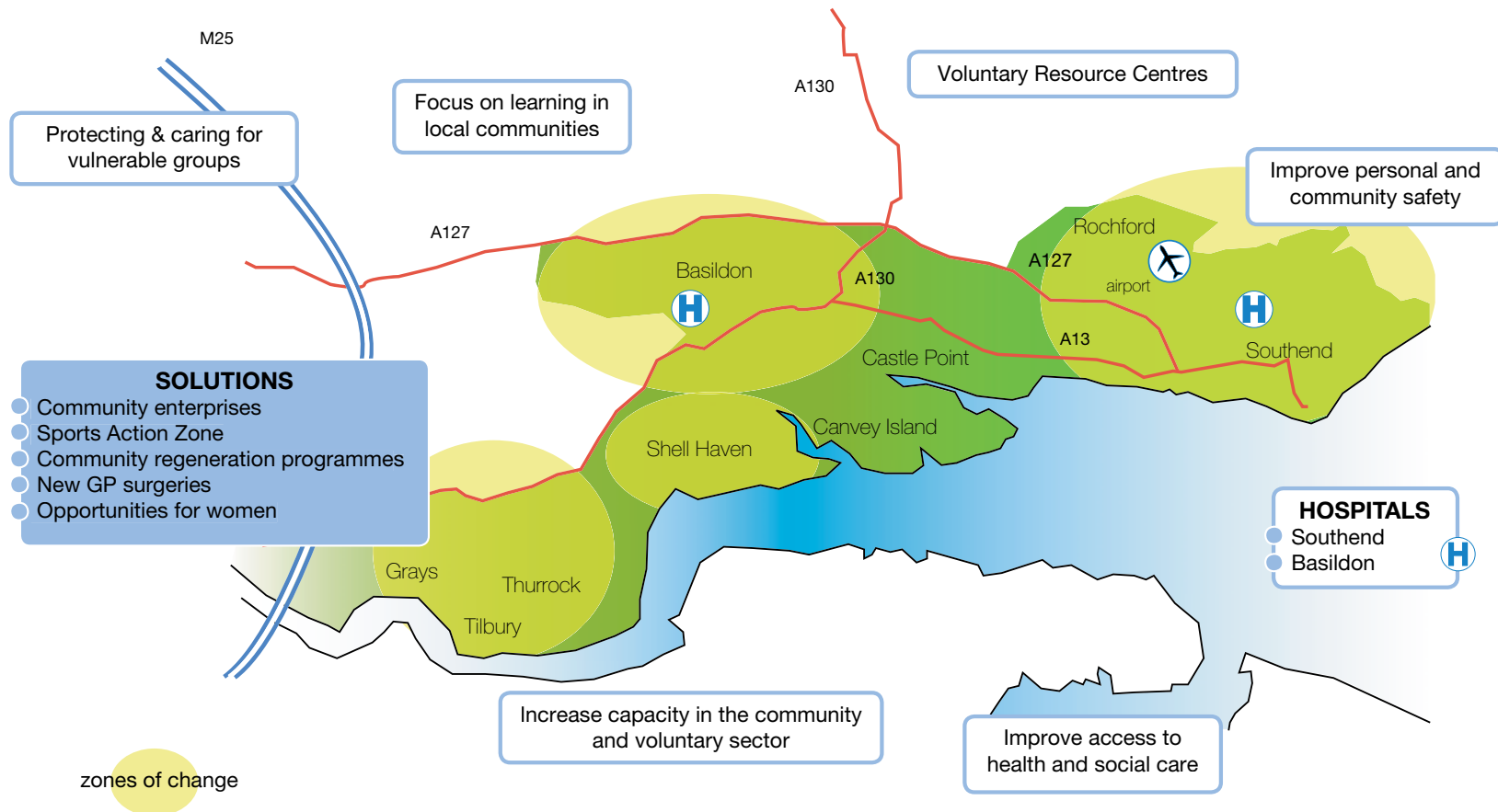
South Essex has a legacy of large areas of poorly designed, poorly built, social housing, for example in Tilbury and Basildon, much of which has reached or is beyond the end of its natural life. There is an urgent need to address these existing problems. The most significant opportunities for development are through estate renewal and intensification and through Town Centre renewal and densification and remediation of smaller industrial sites.

Action and investment is needed to:

- Continue a comprehensive programme of estate renewal
- Ensure local towns and centres can thrive
- Establish south Essex as an attractive place to live and work

Priorities for delivery are:

- Developing a programme for renaissance of identified urban centres which includes a mixture of uses; design of public areas; traffic management and access; business support and development; community safety; living, working and leisure
- Producing sustainable development guidelines which maximise the use of urban land; meet nationally-recognised environmental standards; meet the best standards for public safety and urban design; protect and enhance the built and natural environment
- Ensuring access to first rate services and facilities to reduce inequalities in health and education



Community



The population of south Essex is around 635,000, almost half that of Essex, and 12% of the East of England region. The population is concentrated in 3 main urban areas, and is slightly younger than the regional average. In the DETR Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), Thurrock ranks at number 113 out of 345, Southend and Basildon follow close behind with rankings of 134 and 144 respectively.

Deprivation in south Essex lays cheek-by-jowl with affluence. South Essex has 17 wards that fall amongst the 10% most deprived in the East of England region, four of which rank amongst the most deprived 10% in the whole of England. Thurrock has 8 of those 17 wards, 6 are in Basildon, 2 are in Southend and 1 is in Castle Point.

Education Deprivation (predominantly measured by lack of qualifications amongst adults and children) reveals a particularly severe situation in some south Essex wards. Basildon's Fryerns East and Vange not only rank as the most deprived wards in the East of England, but also are identified as the third and sixth most deprived out of 8414 wards in the whole of England. Six south Essex wards rank amongst the worst 10% in the East of England, whilst 15 rank amongst the worst 10% in England.

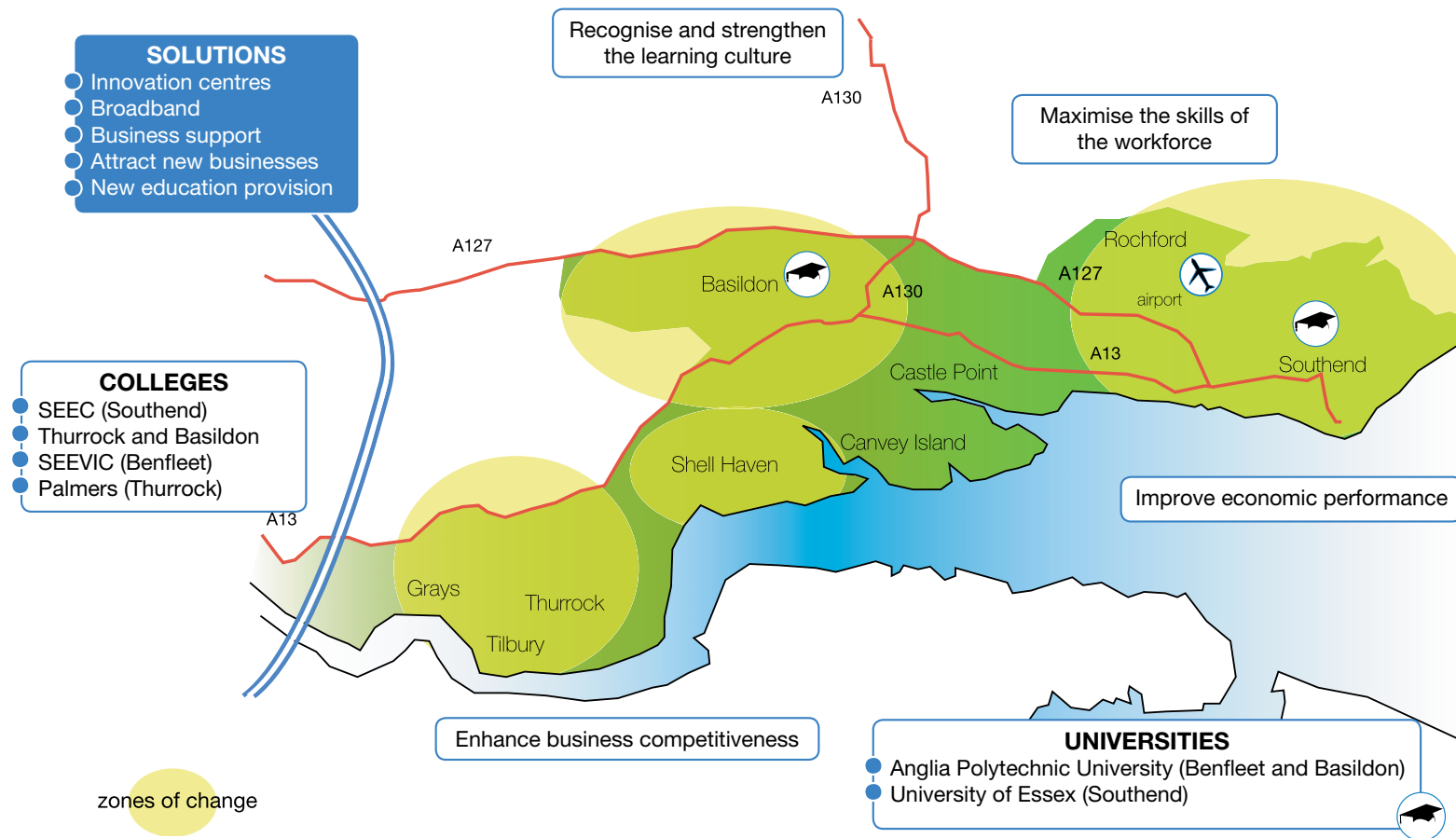
Information from the 2001 Census of Population will be used to produce a detailed analysis to help the Partnership understand the scale and nature of multiple deprivation within south Essex communities and to identify potential solutions.

Action and investment is needed to:

- Improve health
- Increase community capacity

Priorities for action are:

- Focusing on learning in local communities through encouraging community-based access to learning; developing community businesses and social enterprises; improving participation by isolated social groups; increasing funding for community-based environmental projects; improving opportunities for women; increasing funding for neighbourhood renewal and other community-led regeneration programmes
- Increasing capacity in the community and voluntary sector by improving the effectiveness of existing funding; increasing the capacity to access funding through, for example, the creation of Voluntary Resource Centres; providing baseline data to support project development; increasing the number of volunteers; developing regeneration skills
- Actions to improve personal and community safety by developing a Sports Action Zone and related projects for young people; enhancing drug and alcohol programmes; reducing truancy and exclusion in schools; recruiting and training outreach and community workers to support young people; coordinating police and other services to meet the needs of local communities; facilitating programmes to support and rehabilitate young offenders
- Improving health by improving access to health and social care services, including new hospital provision and local healthcare delivery; improving services to the elderly; ensuring sufficient supply of a skilled workforce, both paid and volunteers; addressing the shortage of GPs; reducing health inequalities, particularly teenage pregnancies, learning difficulties and mental health; promoting healthy living - for example, through the development of Health Living Centres promoting independence; protecting and caring for vulnerable groups



Prosperity



The economy of south Essex has been growing at above the national rate since 1995, establishing a solid foundation for regeneration and further growth. There are over 14,000 businesses, providing over 200,000 jobs. However, GDP is still below the regional target, average earnings are less than £20,000 p.a. VAT de-registrations are running at a faster rate than elsewhere in the region, and economic activity rates (the number of people of working age in employment) are also below average. Many jobs require low skill levels.

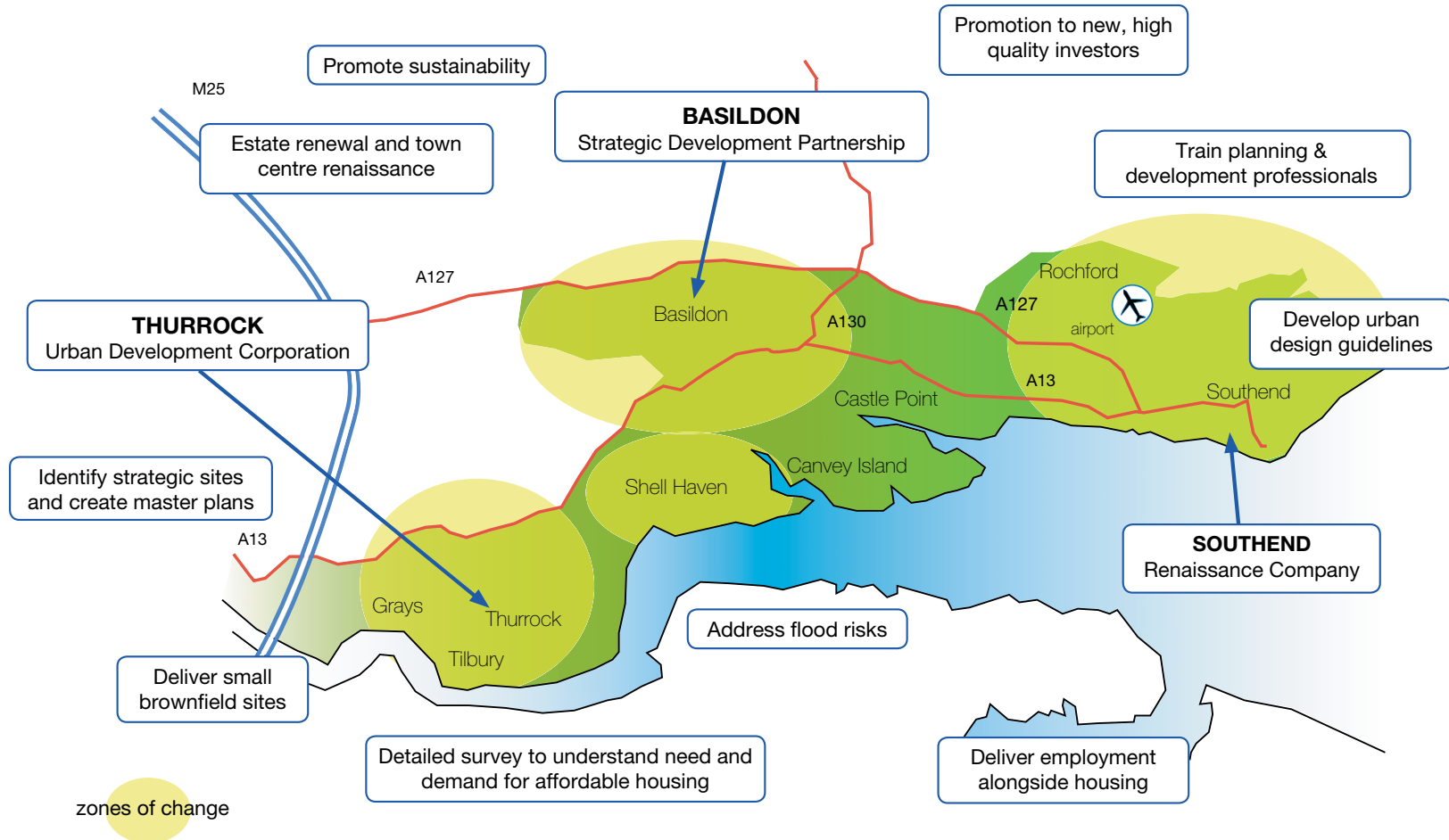
Qualification and skill levels among south Essex residents are currently considerably below regional rates. Only 30% of the population have NVQ2 equivalent qualifications, 15% are qualified to level 3, and 14% at level 4 (higher education). Participation in Higher Education is around 35%, against a national target of 50%.

Action and investment is needed to:

- Increase the success of our businesses
- Introduce new and higher value businesses
- Increase the skills of young people and the working population

Key sectors identified for action are:

- Recognising and strengthening the learning culture through promoting existing provision; extending collaboration between providers; creating seamless transitions between stages of education; removing barriers to learning; increasing education and business links
- Enhancing business competitiveness through skills development; working with family-owned businesses to assist growth and competitiveness; developing skills strategies for supply chains, sectors and clusters; developing Foundation Degrees to support key sectors; facilitating provision of local tailored and 'just-in-time' training; improving links between HE and industry; innovative new provision such as the New Technology Institute, sector-based Academies, Centres of Vocational Excellence and the new University College Campus in Southend
- Maximising the skills of the workforce by identifying and developing potential entrepreneurs; creating a business support infrastructure to develop innovation and entrepreneurship; developing transferable skills; enabling older workers and carers to return to the workforce; improving opportunities for the long-term unemployed
- Improving economic performance through developing innovation centres and business parks; creating business incubators; extending broadband and ICT use in SMEs; revitalising town centres; promoting the area to investors; attracting new businesses



Homes



In 2002, the average price of a house in south Essex was £116,428. This is below the South East average, but still above the level that many public and private sector key workers can afford. In addition, Southend, Basildon and Thurrock all have significant need for additional social rented housing provision.

South Essex has been a significant location for housing developments since the post-war period. From the development of Basildon New Town, through to major developments at Chafford Hundred, the area has accommodated the needs of the London housing market without major investments in new infrastructure. This has led to an imbalance in the relationship between housing and employment which is unsustainable in the long term. The strategy for south Essex, therefore, seeks to deliver employment-led regeneration and growth.

Within the current statutory development plans a total figure of 24,350 housing units were allocated for south Essex for the period 1996-2011, approximately a third of which had been completed by 2000. Approximately 25% have still to have sites identified.

Government planning policy seeks net densities of 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare (dph), with even higher densities where there is good public transport accessibility. The recently published 'Communities Plan' indicates that the gross average density of new build housing development in the districts and boroughs of south Essex has ranged from less than 20 to over 30dph over recent years. On-going monitoring does, however, indicate that these average densities are increasing, and that there is potential for significantly higher net residential densities in appropriate locations. The second RPG Annual Monitoring Report for the East of England, for example gives an average planned density of 77dph (gross) for Southend in 2001. Preparatory work carried out by the Partnership indicates that there are significant challenges to be overcome in

meeting the housing needs of the area in the short term. Brownfield sites are often heavily contaminated, difficult to access or have developed unique ecologies. Much of the coastal area is protected by sea walls, which need to be extended and maintained. There are shortages in construction-related craft and management skills; land values are low and do not attract investment of the quality sought by the Partnership to achieve the vision.

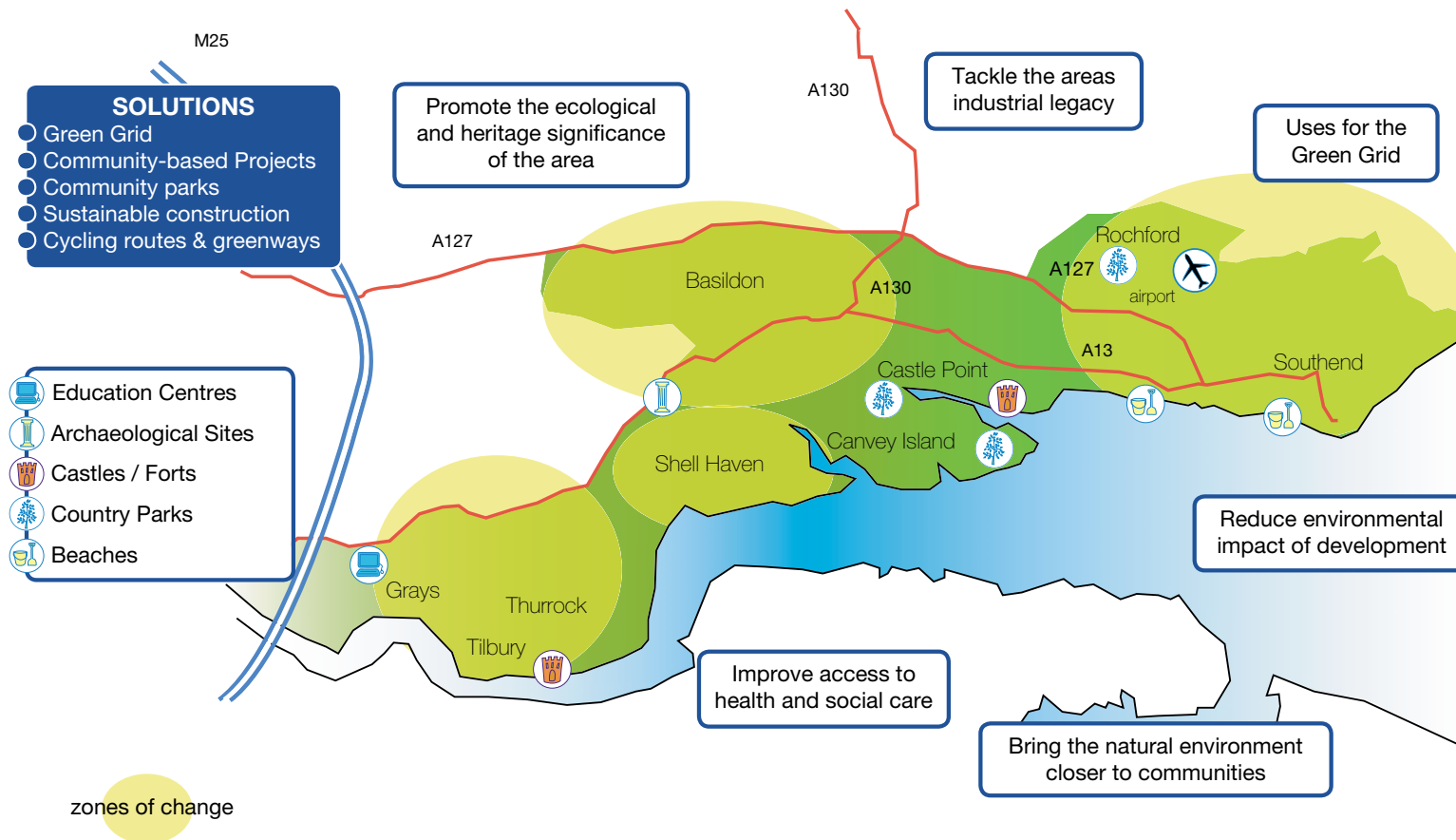
Action and investment is required to:

- Bring forward sites
- Deliver employment sites alongside housing
- Address flood risk
- Assist development of small brownfield sites
- Support estate renewal and town centre renaissance

Priorities for action are:

- Understand demand and the need for affordable housing by undertaking a detailed survey
- Identify strategic sites and create delivery masterplans for these
- Develop urban design guidelines, kitemarks and competitions to set sustainable standards for development and to promote best practice
- Undertake promotion and investment campaigns to attract new, high quality investors and to address the existing negative external image of the area
- Provide training and learning for planning and development professionals working in south Essex

Special delivery mechanisms have been created to drive the strategy forward.



Environment



Thames Gateway South Essex has a shared and internationally important historic and natural environment. Whilst the main towns may be the area's prominent features, its setting along the north bank of the River Thames, and the significant areas important for nature and heritage conservation, provide real opportunities for the environment. The urban areas have expanded greatly in the last century with the development of new settlements and an industrial landscape.

The local authority Sites and Monuments documents (SMRs) records around 1800 archaeological sites and listed buildings, including 24 Scheduled Ancient Monuments within Thames Gateway South Essex, reflecting 450,000 years of human history. The Thames estuary has for millennia been a major routeway to and from mainland Europe and the wider world. The range and variety of archaeological sites in the area is a reflection of this, and encompasses everything from submerged prehistoric forests in the inter-tidal zone through to World War II defences.

As well as the important 'quality of life' aspects of the environment, significant attention must be given to the contribution that a positive attitude to environmental issues can make to the success of businesses, for example with respect to resource efficiency. The scope for developing the environment, technologies and environmental industries and tourism, as a cluster within south Essex, should not be underestimated.

Sustainability

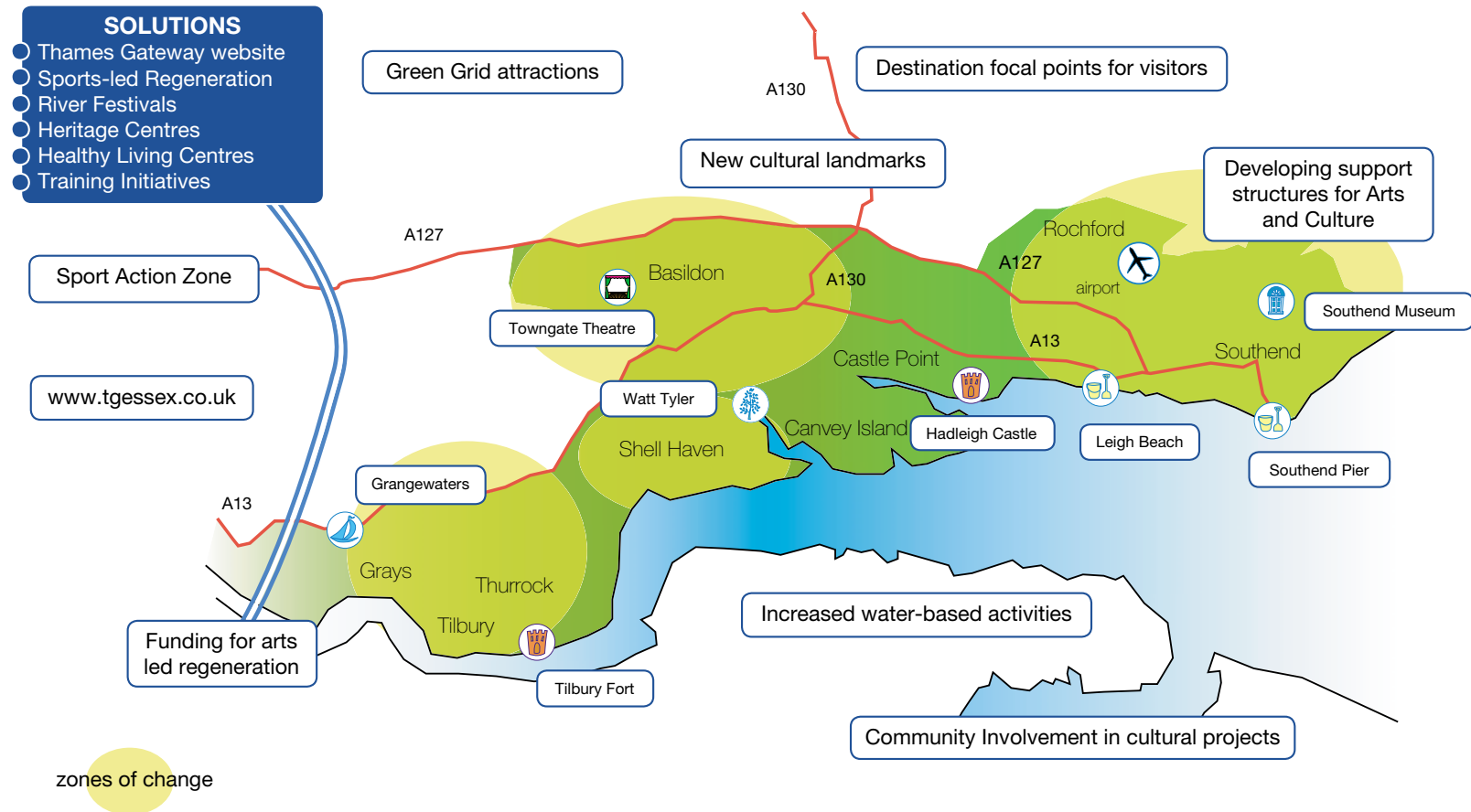
In 1987 the World Commission on Environment and Development defined Sustainable Development (SD) as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. In the UK this has been interpreted to mean:

- Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth
- Social progression that recognises the needs of all
- Effective protection of the environment
- Prudent use of resources

In effect, new development should meet our needs for industrial development, new homes and other buildings, while at the same time respecting environmental objectives, using land in the most efficient way and minimising the need to travel.

Action and investment is required to:

- Promote the ecological and heritage significance of the area by restoring and increasing the value and accessibility of the marshes and wetlands; improve transport and wildlife corridors; enhance the setting and importance of the river Thames; create a green grid and regional park
- Bring the natural environment closer to communities by developing a green grid linking urban and rural environments; increase urban green spaces; develop a website to provide information; support community-based environmental projects
- Tackle the area's industrial legacy by introducing a programme to redress 'eyesores' such as overhead power lines and industrial sites; develop a centre of excellence for environmental technologies and waste management; seek effective community uses for old landfill sites; ensure all new building is environmentally sustainable
- Reduce environmental impact by developing new cycle routes and greenways; minimise water use in new developments; develop the use of the river for leisure, living and business



Leisure



'The process of regeneration must be inclusive, and includes the creation of opportunities for employment and training, an increase in the employability of local people, the refurbishment and re-use of existing buildings and the construction of new ones, the provision of publicly accessible facilities, the creation of a safe and healthy environment and the strengthening of a sense of place and purpose'.

Involvement in, and access to, cultural and sporting activities has been proved to provide an excellent environment for the promotion of social inclusion. Both Southend and Thurrock have targeted arts-led regeneration funding.

The need to preserve our heritage and to use that heritage to educate and involve will be a prime consideration in our developing Culture Vision. This emerging work will also identify the impact areas for focusing delivery of the Vision.

Tourism is a priority feature of south Essex, and our strategy will be to promote tourism particularly around Southend and especially where it positively impacts upon the environment (for example, considerate nature trail rambling), and to enable easy access to the river frontage and the integration of water-based activities into the social fabric of the area, (e.g. around Leigh and Tilbury).

Organisations so far involved with creating the Cultural Vision include:

- East England Arts; Go-East; The Cultural Consortium; Living East; Sport England; English Heritage; Directors of Culture and Leisure from all 6 Partner authorities.

Action and investment is needed to:

- Enable culture, leisure, tourism and sport to support regeneration and social inclusion
- Establish new landmarks to stimulate investment and a sense of identity
- Increase the attractiveness of the area as a destination for tourism and leisure
- Increase interaction between business and the arts

Priorities for delivery include:

- Ensuring funding for arts-led regeneration is available across south Essex to stimulate social inclusion; improve educational aspiration and achievement; improve health
- Achieving sports-led regeneration funding to engage young people, enhance their confidence and encourage them back into learning; provide diversion from crime and involvement with drugs; improve health in all age groups
- Developing proposals for a major cultural landmark, which may be physical (a building or sculptural statement); and/or virtual (a River Festival or Arts Festival)
- Establishing a programme for commissioning and installing public art in town centres; along transport routes; at gateways to south Essex
- Developing destination focal points for tourism including the natural environment, the river; and existing heritage sites
- Developing support structures for arts and culture such as the Thames Gateway South Essex website; media centres; heritage and culture centres; recording studio; training initiatives; Healthy Living Centres; and artists' communities

The growth and future of the Thames Gateway in South Essex



Delivering the future lays out the road map for achieving the Vision of the partners for south Essex. It may take 20 years to achieve. What will that future look like? Imagine a July day in 2025. South Essex, the driest part of the United Kingdom, is bright and sunny, and as people get up to go to work and to school, they feel glad to be living in the best place in the East of England. Essex jokes, traffic jams and landfill sites are distant memories.

Today's family can enjoy travelling on the new Metro system to work and with so many new jobs locally, only those who really want to have to make the journey into the capital.

At the end of the day, the legacy of the Olympics, the revitalisation of the rivers, and the cultural renaissance stimulated by the new University of Southend, mean that there are a wide range of activities catering for every member of the family. For those who want quieter pursuits, the world-renowned bird and wildlife reserves provide a good place for winding down.

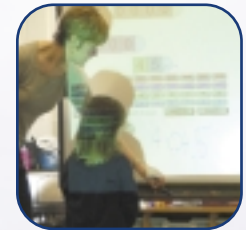
The tourist season is also well under way, with visitors coming from all over the world to enjoy the unique blend of holiday opportunities – everything from beaches to sport, concerts to country walks are within easy reach, as well as being just 35 minutes away from London World City.

Two years ago, the partners jointly succeeded in their bid to become a European Capital of Culture, and together with the Thames Marshes World Heritage Site, this has not only boosted the tourism industry but has brought further new business investment.

South Essex has become the place where people most want to live, work and play.

I hope you will join us in this journey.

MARY SPENCE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



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

