



**Greengrid**  
Connecting green spaces South Essex

## Thames Gateway South Essex Greengrid Strategy

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#### **Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership Greengrid Strategy**

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This CD contains the following items:

- The final project report - .pdf file with full text and illustrations.
- Three appendices: these provide background information – further appendices will be available shortly
- Brand logo information

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The Strategy is promoted by the Greengrid 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 Greengrid 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 Greengrid.
- Section 3:** describes the Vision for the Greengrid, 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.

## Brand Guidelines

[Click here for Brand Guidelines](#)

## Acknowledgements

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Mary Spence, Chief Executive,  
Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership  
Martin Wakelin, Principal Landscape Architect,  
Essex County Council  
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The Thames Gateway South Essex Greengrid Strategy is also available on CD-Rom from:

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

Tel: 01268 595345  
[www.greengrid.co.uk](http://www.greengrid.co.uk)

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## What is the Greengrid?

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 Greengrid 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.

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 Greengrid 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 Greengrid. 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.



*Walkers at Coalhouse Fort*

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 Greengrid 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 Greengrid 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**.

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 Greengrid;
- **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.



*Seafront path at Southend*

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 Greengrid 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 Greengrid 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.

## 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 Greengrid 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*



*Oil refineries at Shellhaven and Coryton*



## 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 subregion as a growth area

The Thames Gateway South Essex Greengrid 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 Greengrid
- 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.

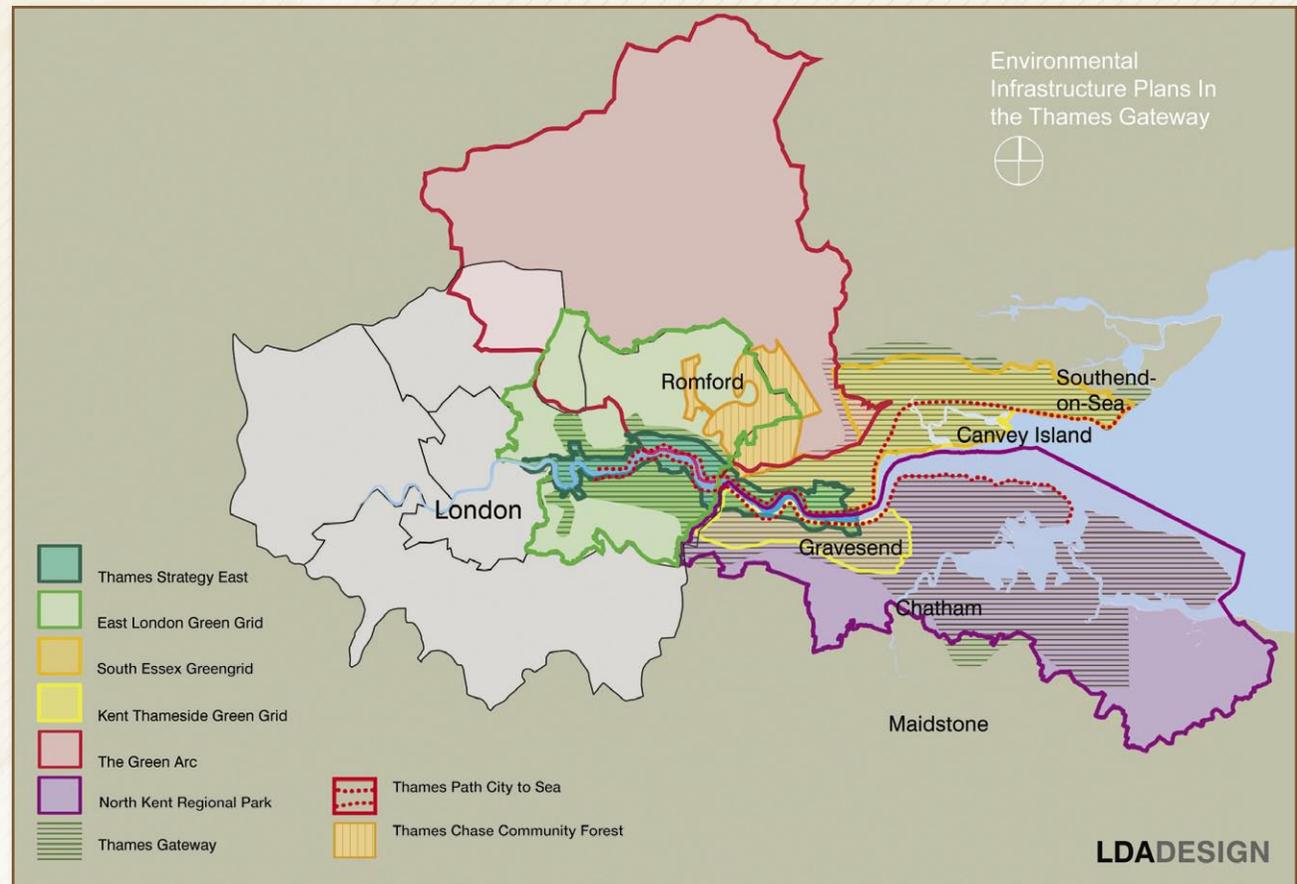


Figure 3 Environmental Infrastructure Planning in the Thames Gateway

## 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 longterm.

The principal aims for the Strategy are to propose:

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

The key objectives of the Greengrid 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.

### 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.



*Historic artefact near Coalhouse Fort*

**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).

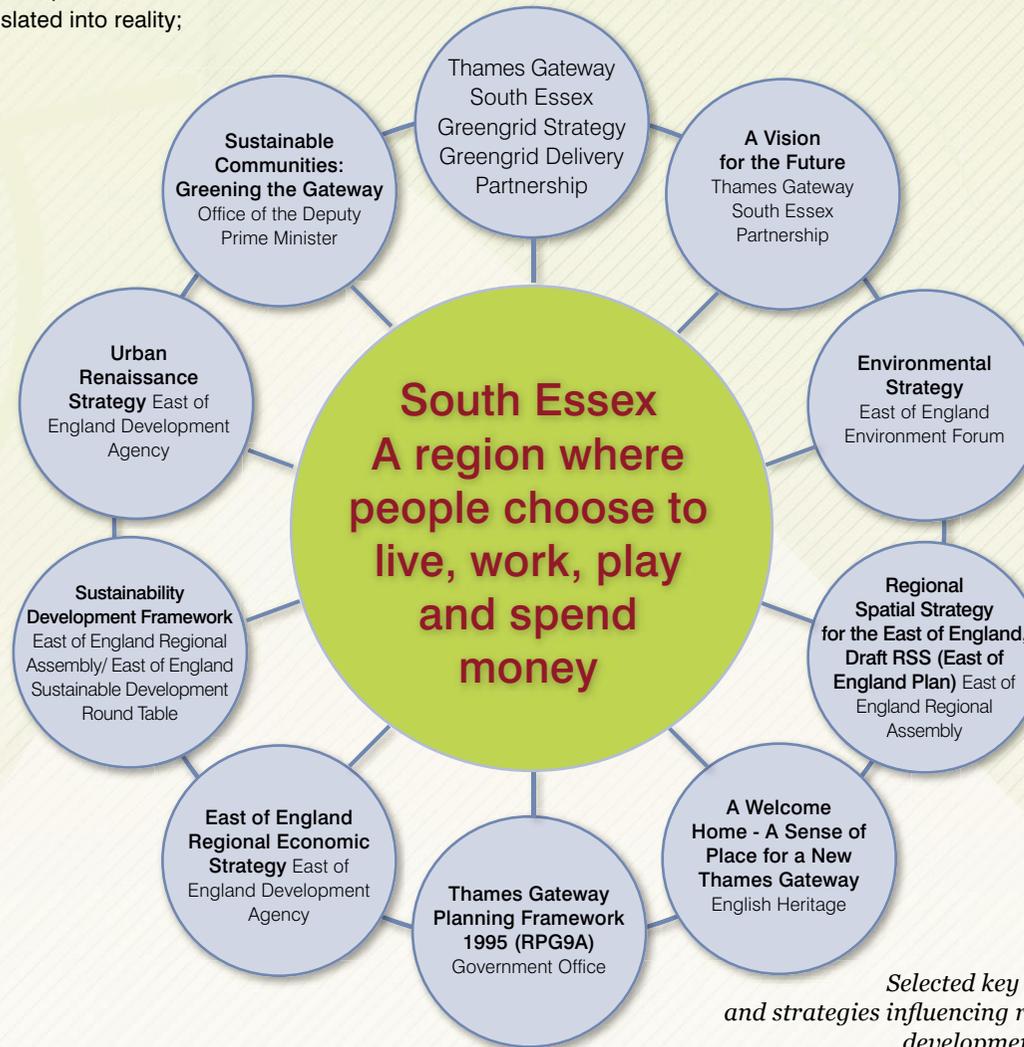


Figure 4  
Selected key regional policies and strategies influencing regeneration and development in South Essex

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
- 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;
- **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.



*View to Admiralty Boom at Shoeburyness*

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.



*Tilbury Power Station*

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 Greengrid 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 Greengrid

There is no doubting the economic benefits of investing in the Greengrid 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 (1,400 acres) 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 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.



St. Clements Church and Proctor Gamble Factory at Tilbury

### 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 Greengrid 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 Greengrid 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 Greengrid are possible.

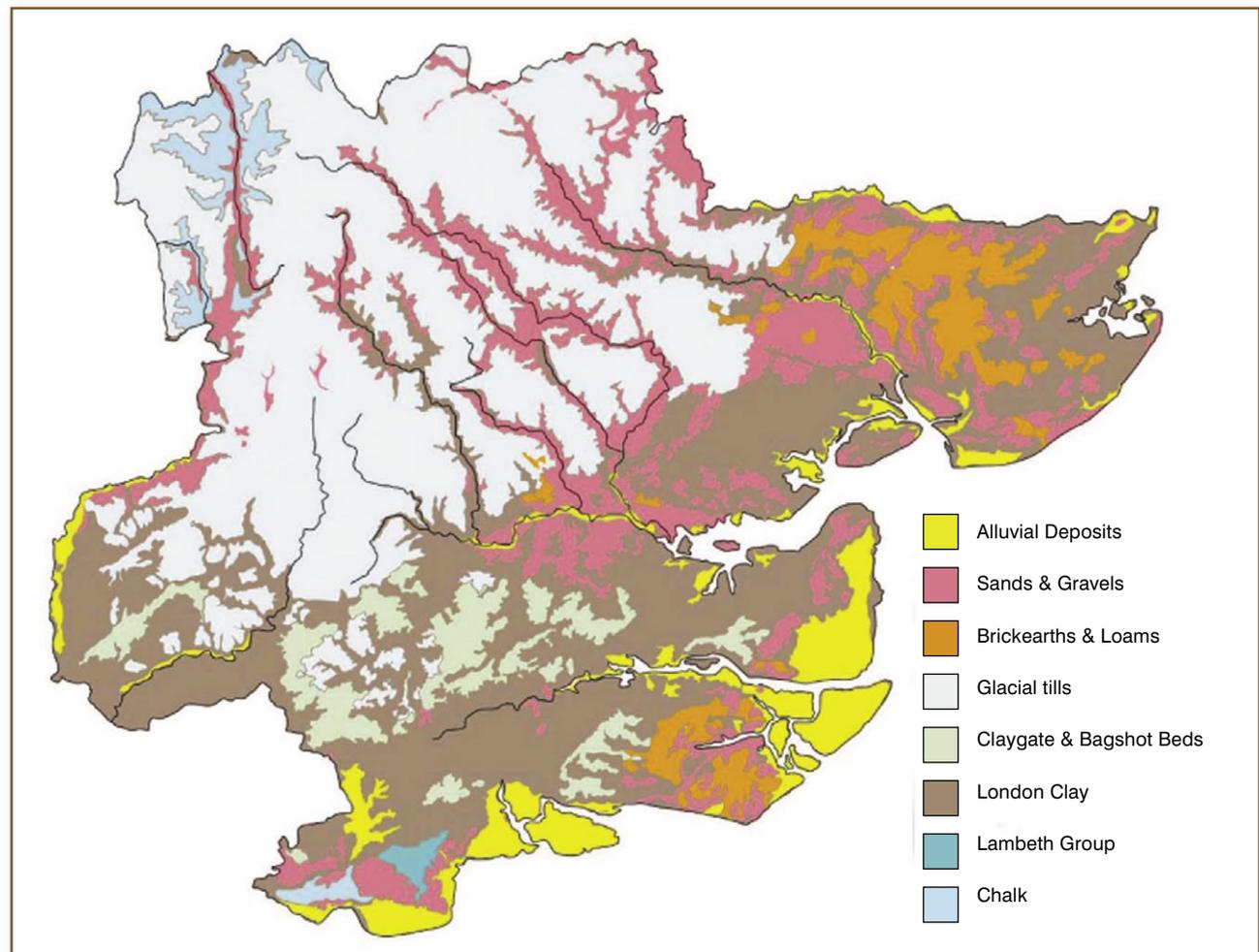
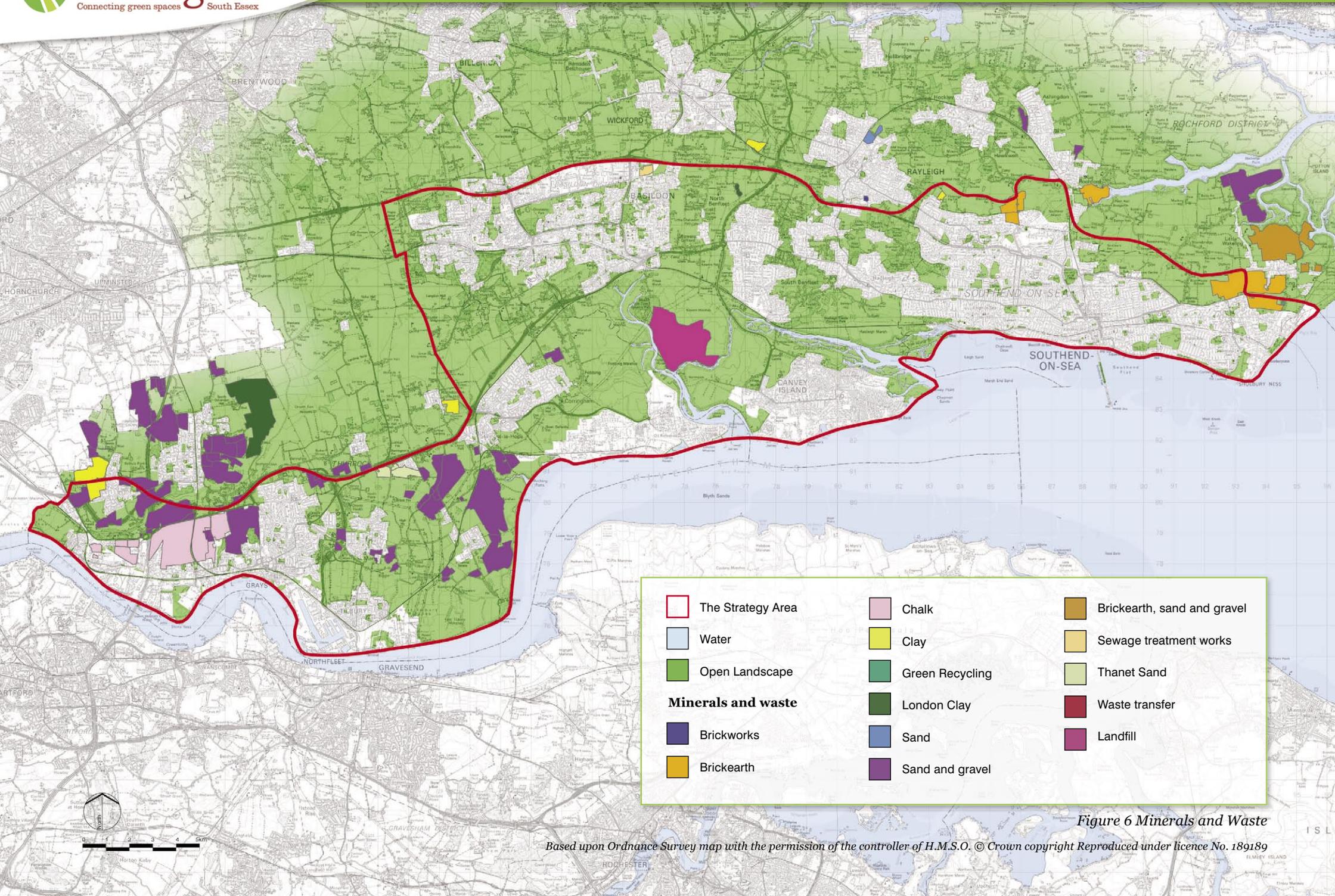


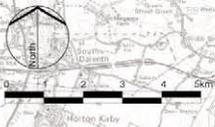
Figure 5 Geology (courtesy of Essex County Council 1998)



	The Strategy Area		Chalk		Brickearth, sand and gravel
	Water		Clay		Sewage treatment works
	Open Landscape		Green Recycling		Thanet Sand
<b>Minerals and waste</b>					
	Brickworks		London Clay		Waste transfer
	Brickearth		Sand		Landfill
			Sand and gravel		

Figure 6 Minerals and Waste

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### 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. Retrofitting 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.

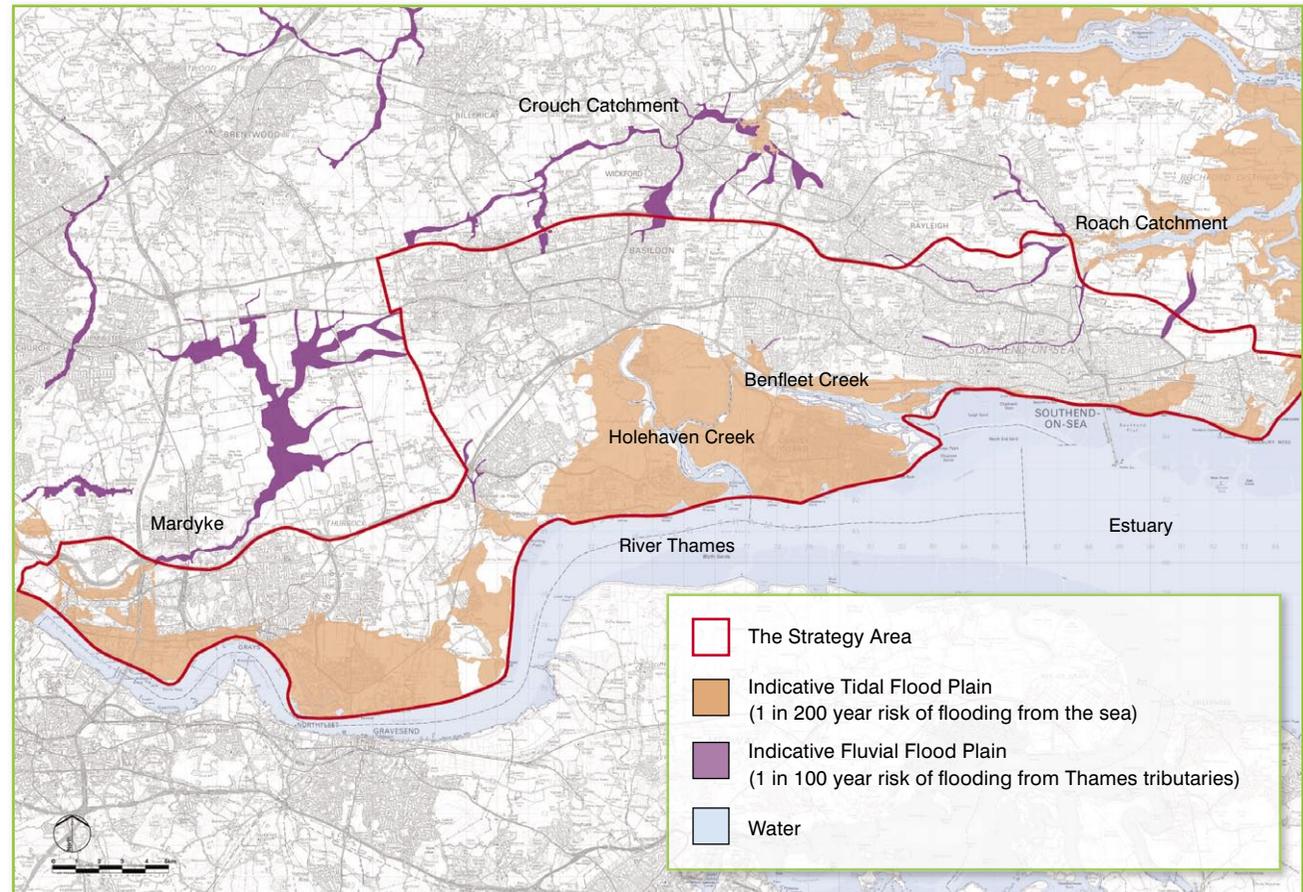


Figure 7 Hydrology

## 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



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

- Flat, open areas provide opportunities for landmarking and way-finding
- 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.

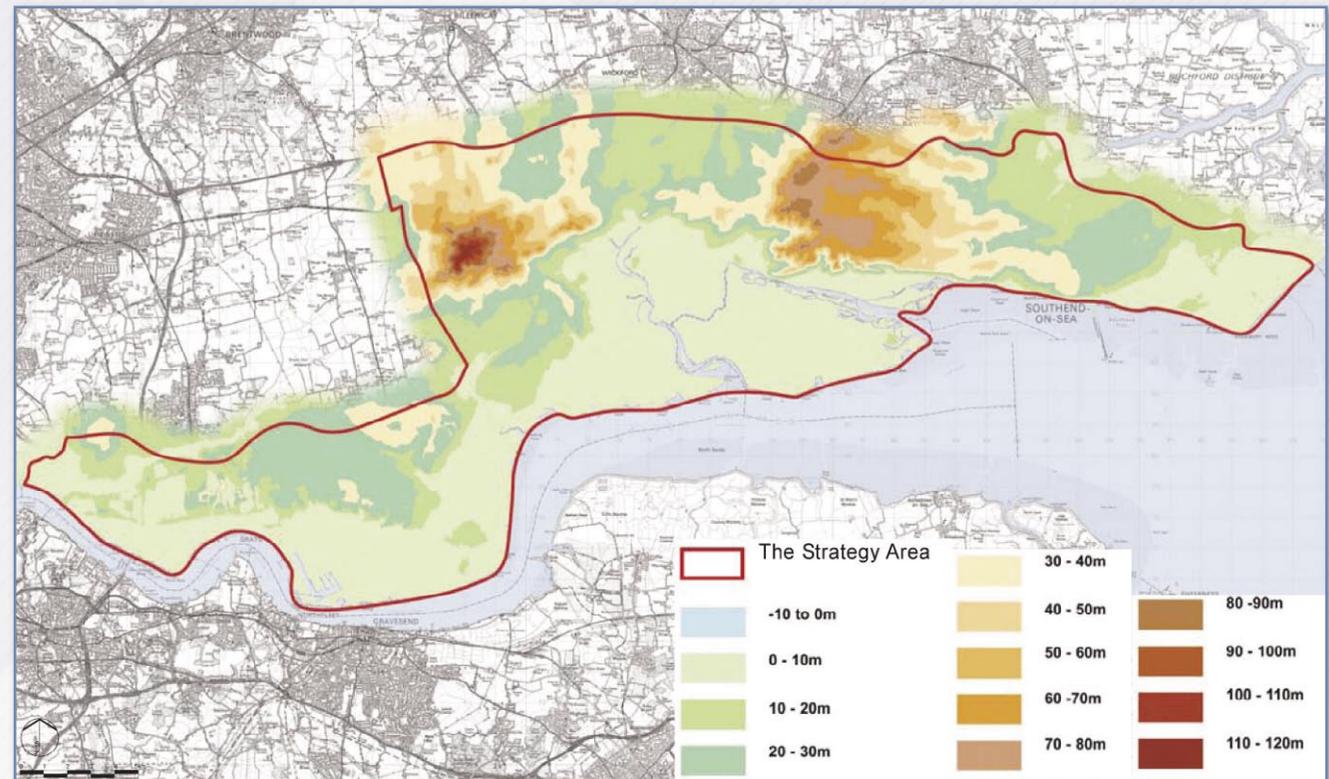


Figure 8 Topography

### 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](http://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

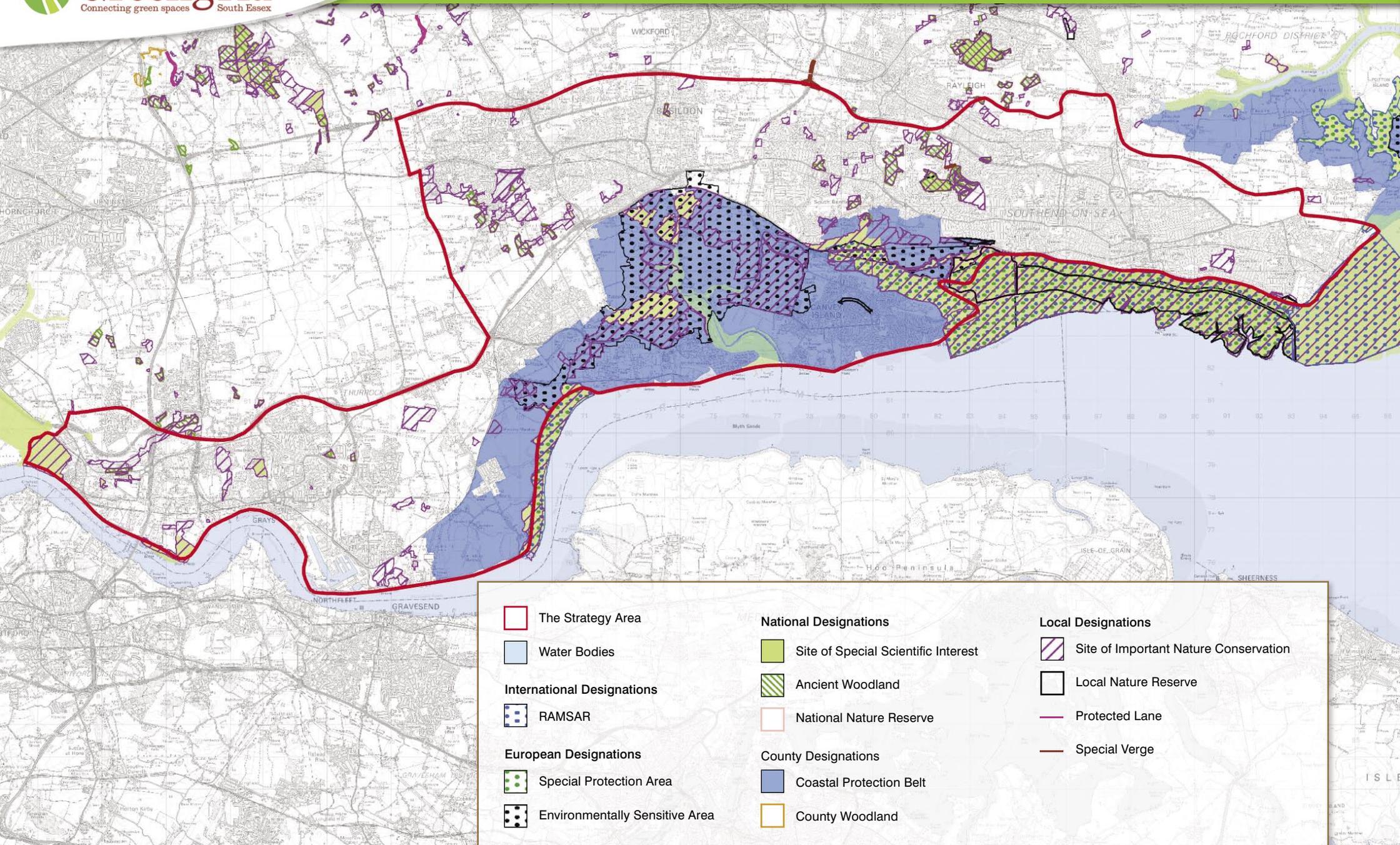
- Only ancient woodland has been mapped here, however, the vision and themes of the Regional Woodland Strategy for the East of England are compatible with this Strategy; and
- Habitat conservation and creation is integral to the archaeological and historical resources of the area.

#### 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.



*Habitat and wildlife exploration in the marshes at Rainham, Wennington and Aveley Marshes Nature Reserve*



The Strategy Area	<b>National Designations</b>	<b>Local Designations</b>
Water Bodies	Site of Special Scientific Interest	Site of Important Nature Conservation
<b>International Designations</b>	Ancient Woodland	Local Nature Reserve
RAMSAR	National Nature Reserve	Protected Lane
<b>European Designations</b>	<b>County Designations</b>	Special Verge
Special Protection Area	Coastal Protection Belt	
Environmentally Sensitive Area	County Woodland	



Figure 9 Biodiversity

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## 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 Greengrid 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.

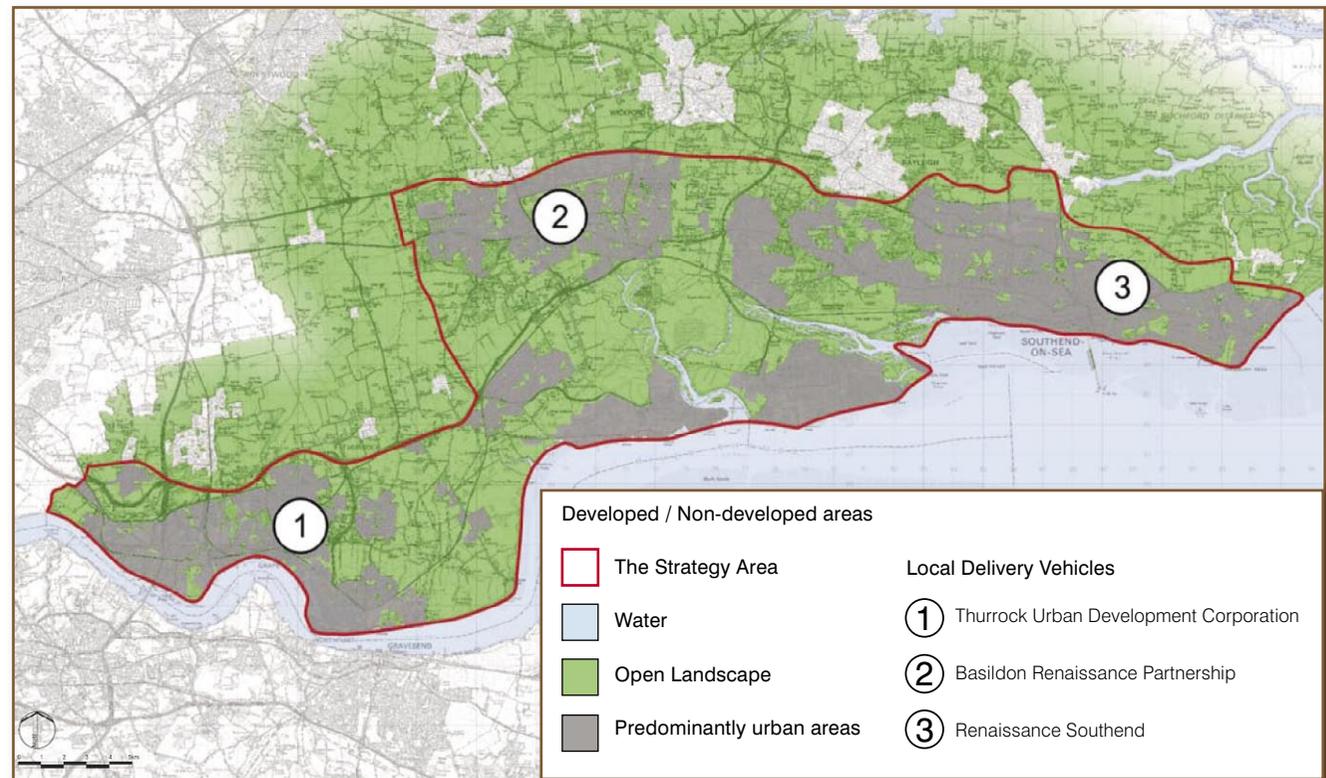


Figure 10 Predominantly Urban/Non-urban Areas and Location of Local Delivery Vehicles

### Summary:

There is an opportunity for the Greengrid 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 Greengrid 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.



*Marginal land close to Tilbury Power Station*

### 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).

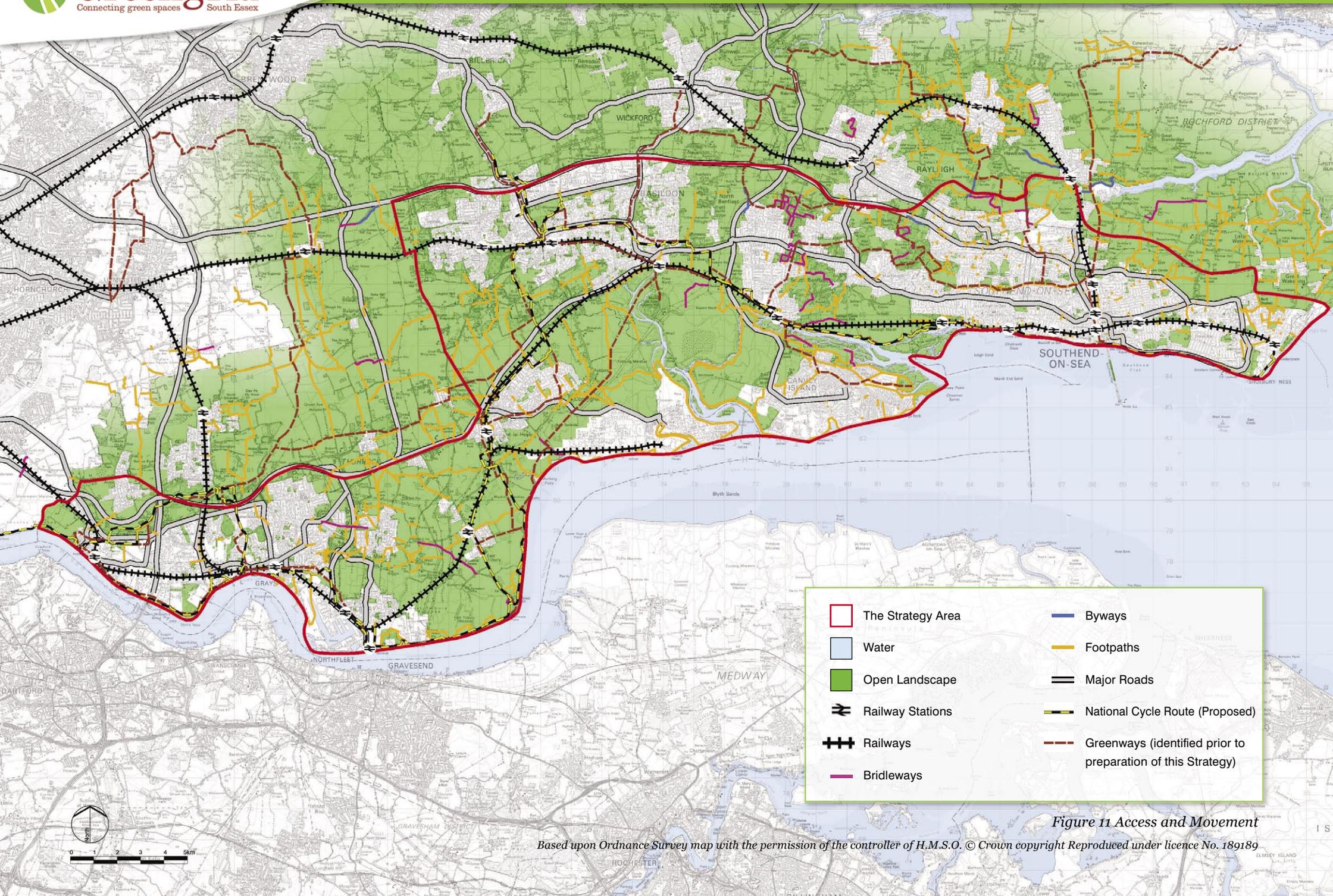
#### Analysis and Opportunities:

- 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 Greengrid and increase the strategic significance of particular routes.

#### 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.



	The Strategy Area		Byways
	Water		Footpaths
	Open Landscape		Major Roads
	Railway Stations		National Cycle Route (Proposed)
	Railways		Greenways (identified prior to preparation of this Strategy)
	Bridleways		

Figure 11 Access and Movement

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### 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

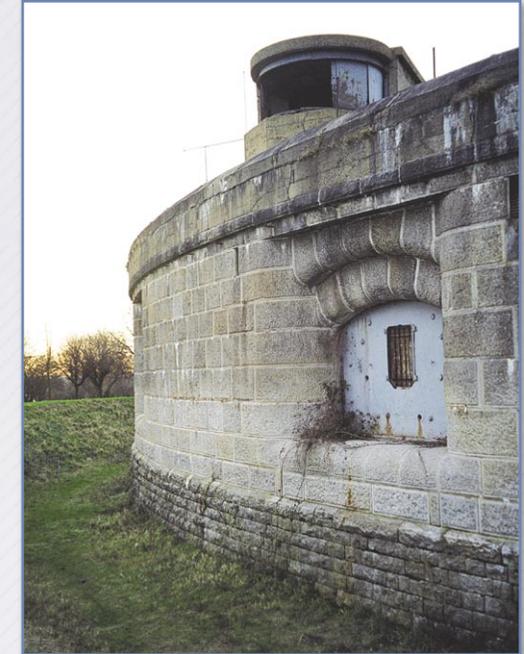


*Tilbury Fort*

- 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 Greengrid 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 Greengrid 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



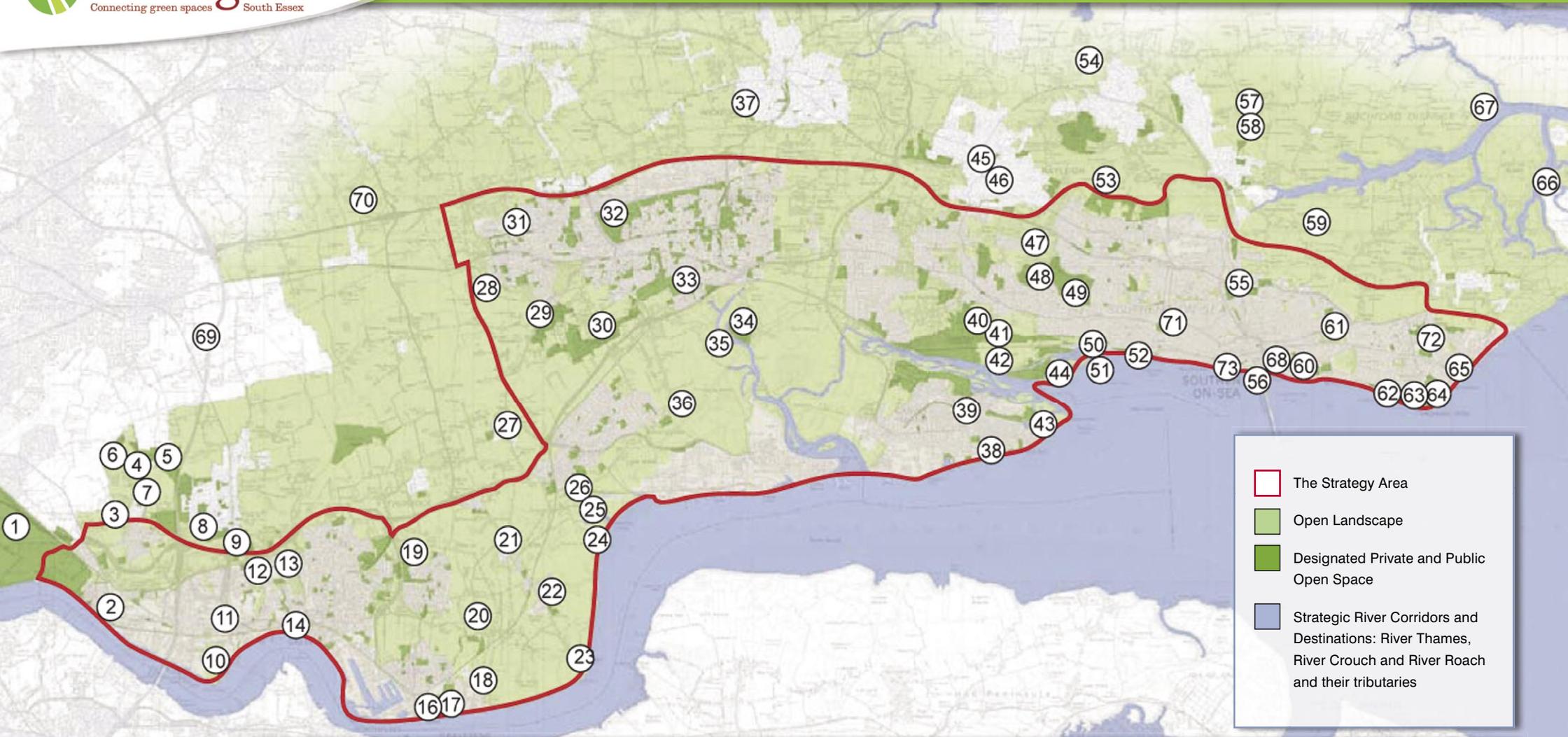
*Coalhouse Fort*

- 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.

#### 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.



**Destinations associated with open spaces**

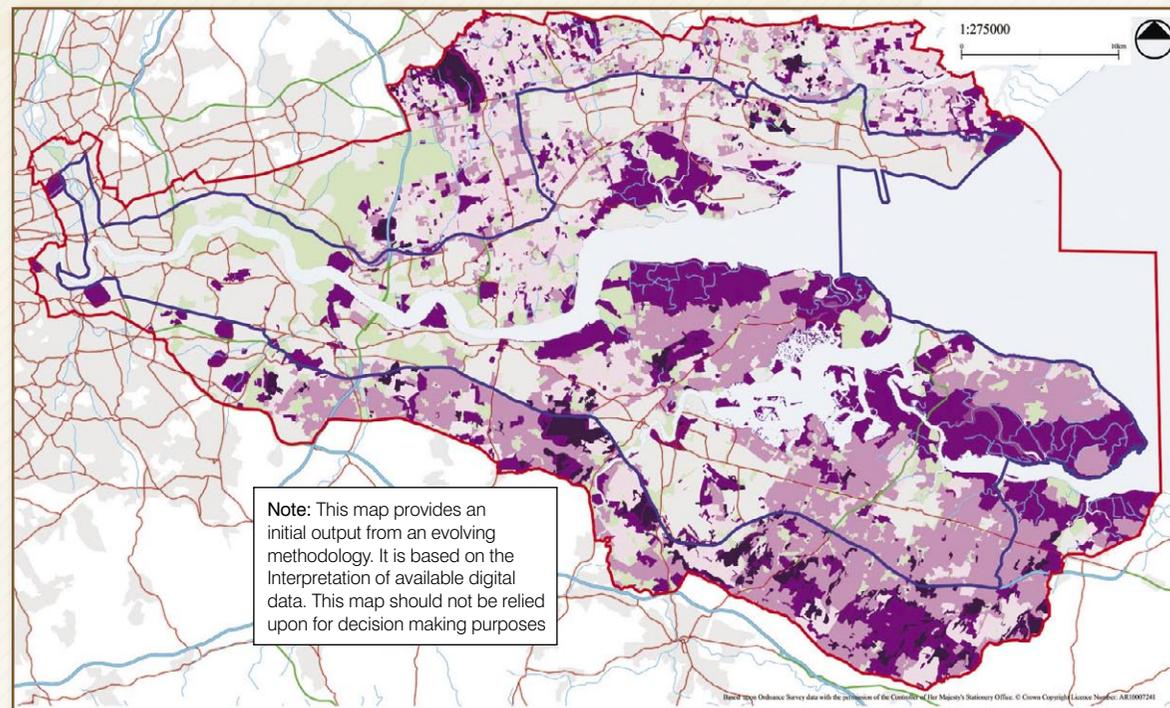
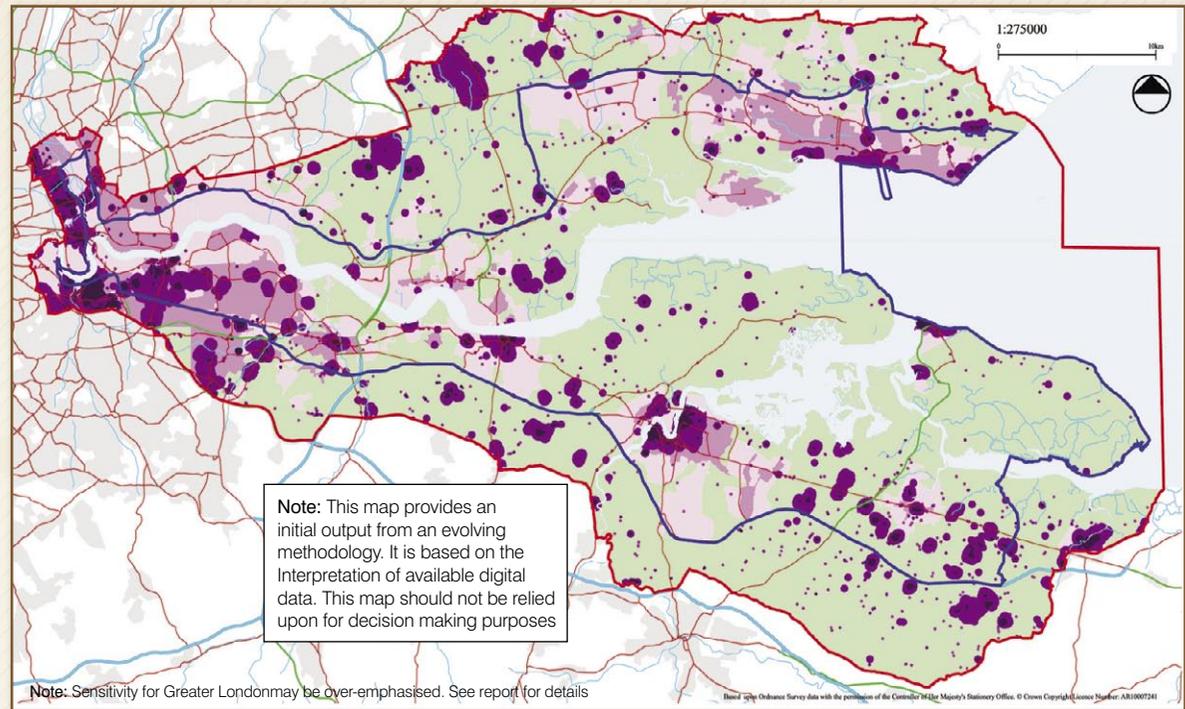
- |  |                         |  |                          |                             |                                 |
|--|-------------------------|--|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Rainham, Wennington and Aveyl Marshes Nature Reserve | 11 St. Clements Church  | 26 Grove House Wood  | 37 Wickford Country Park | 51 Leigh Marshes            | 65 Shoebury East Beach          |
| 2 Purfleet Garrison                                    | 12 Grays Chalk Quarry   | 27 Horndon on the Hill   | 38 Canvey Sea Front      | 52 Leigh Beach              | 66 Essex Coast NME's            |
| 3 Kennington Park                                      | 13 Chafford Gorges      | 28 Dunton Plotlands, Langdon Nature Reserve and Langdon Visitor Centre | 39 Canvey Lake           | 53 Gusted Hall              | 67 The Beagle                   |
| 4 Belhus Woods Country Park                            | 14 The Wharf            | 29 Langdon Hills Country Park  | 40 Hadleigh Castle       | 54 Plumbrow Mount           | 68 Southend Coastal Attractions |
| 5 Oak Wood   | 15 Mardyke Valley       | 30 One Tree Hill   | 41 Hadleigh Castle       | 55 Priory Park              | 69 Thames Chase Forest Centre   |
| 6 Cely Woods   | 16 Worlds End Pub       | 31 Laindon Common  | 42 Hadleigh Marsh        | 56 Southend Pier            | 70 Thorndon Country Park        |
| 7 Belhus Chase   | 17 Tilbury Fort         | 32 Gloucester Park   | 43 Canvey Heights        | 57 Doggetts Pond            | 71 Chalkwell Park               |
| 8 Mardyke Woods  | 18 Tilbury Arts Centre  | 33 Vange Hill  | 44 Two Tree Island       | 58 Doggetts Farm            | 72 Shoebury Park                |
| 9 Davy Down Riverside Park                             | 19 Orsett Village       | 34 Wat Tyler Park  | 45 Rayleigh Windmill     | 59 Butlers Gate             | 73 Southend Cliff Gardens       |
| 10 West Thurrock Marshes                               | 20 West Tilbury Village | 35 Vange Marshes   | 46 Rayleigh Castle       | 60 Southchurch Park         |                                 |
|  | 21 Linford Wood         | 36 Fobbing Village   | 47 Pound Wood            | 61 Southchurch Hall Gardens |                                 |
|  | 22 East Tilbury         |  | 48 Great Wood            | 62 Shoebury Beach           |                                 |
|  | 23 Coal House Fort      |  | 49 Belfairs Park         | 63 Gunners Park             |                                 |
|  | 24 Mucking Marshes      |  | 50 Old Leigh Village     | 64 Shoebury Garrison        |                                 |
|  | 25 Stanford Marshes     |  |                          |                             |                                 |



Figure 12 Destinations

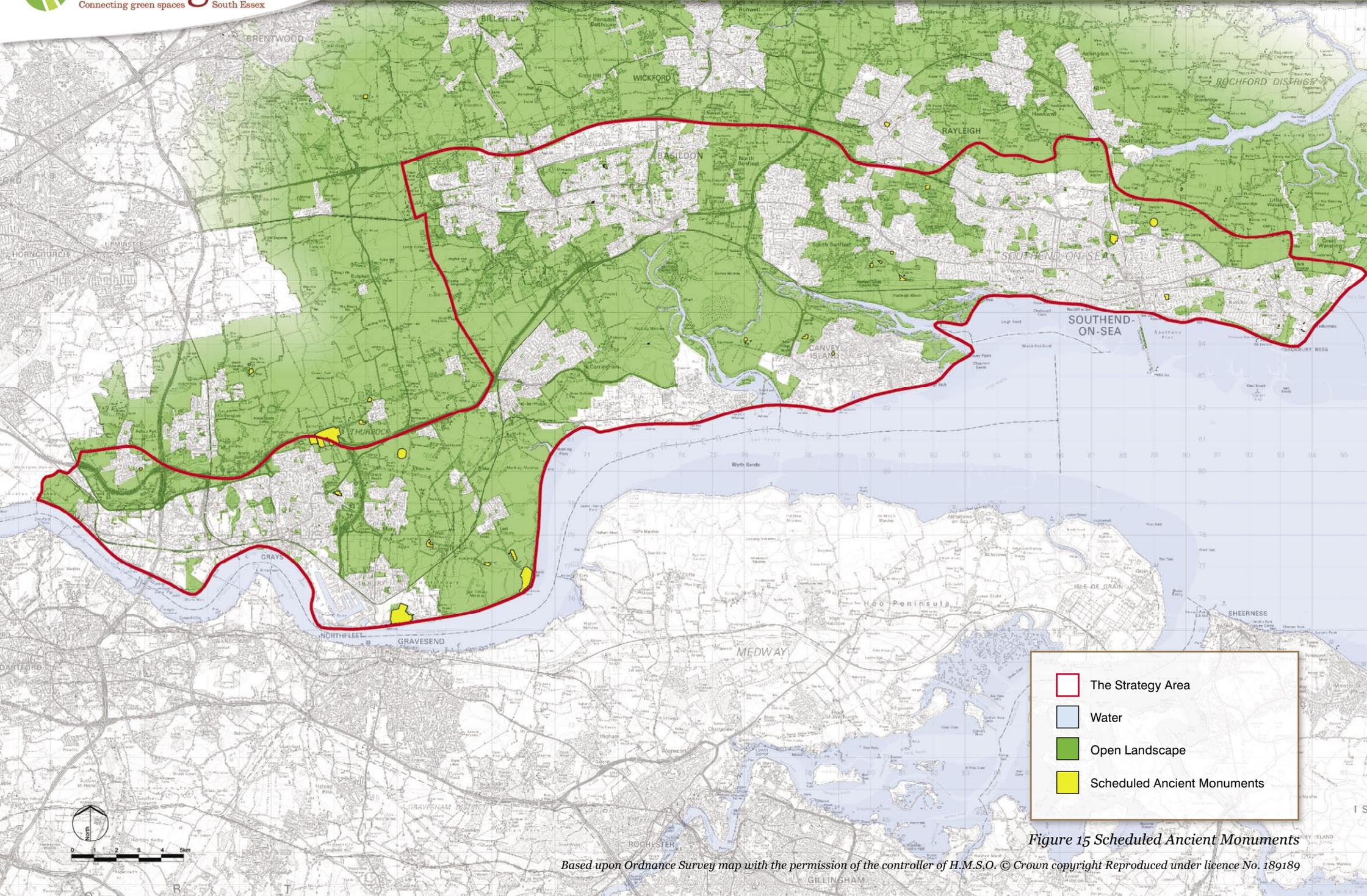
- Study Area
- Thames Gateway Area
- Sensitivity (Please see report for definitions)
- Limited Known Sensitivity
- Sensitive
- Moderately Sensitive
- Highly Sensitive
- Extremely Sensitive
- No Data
- Urban Area (Outside Study Area)

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



- Study Area
- Thames Gateway Area
- Sensitivity (Please see report for definitions)
- Limited Known Sensitivity
- Sensitive
- Moderately Sensitive
- Highly Sensitive
- Extremely Sensitive
- No Data
- Urban Area

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



-  The Strategy Area
-  Water
-  Open Landscape
-  Scheduled Ancient Monuments

Figure 15 Scheduled Ancient Monuments

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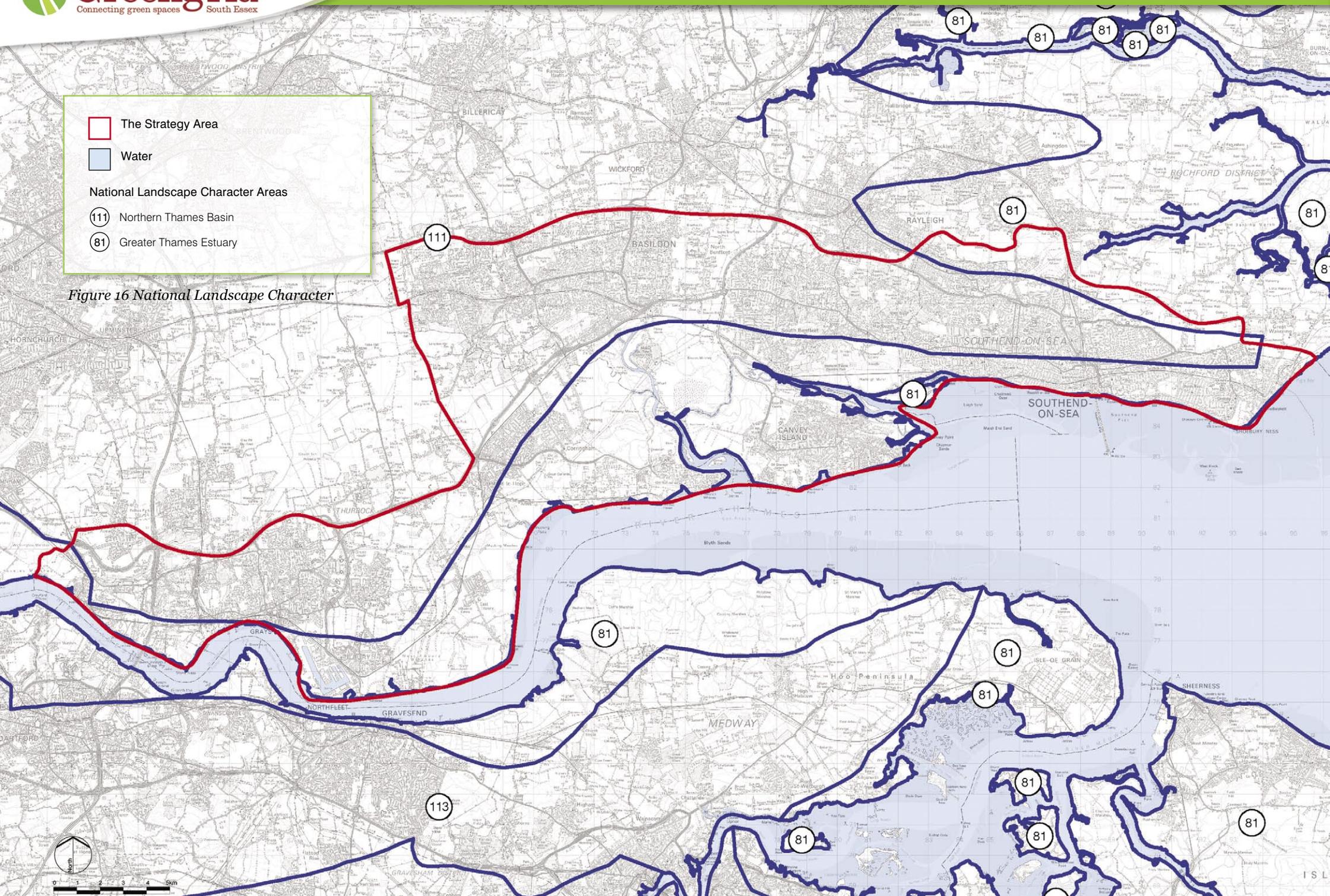
 The Strategy Area

 Water

National Landscape Character Areas

-  Northern Thames Basin
-  Greater Thames Estuary

Figure 16 National Landscape Character



### 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 'skylscapes' 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.

#### 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.



*Moorings at Fobbing Marshes*



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

 The Strategy Area	 Mucking and Tilbury Marshes	 Fobbing and Bowers Marshes	 Benfleet Hill
 Water bodies (represents open space)	 Buckingham Hill Thames Terraces	 Basildon Town	 Benfleet Creek
 Aveley Marshes and West Thurrock Marshes	 Corringham Thames Terraces	 North Benfleet Farmland	 Canvey Island
 Grays and Thurrock Towns	 Langdon Hills	 Southend Town	 Crouch and Roach Farmlands

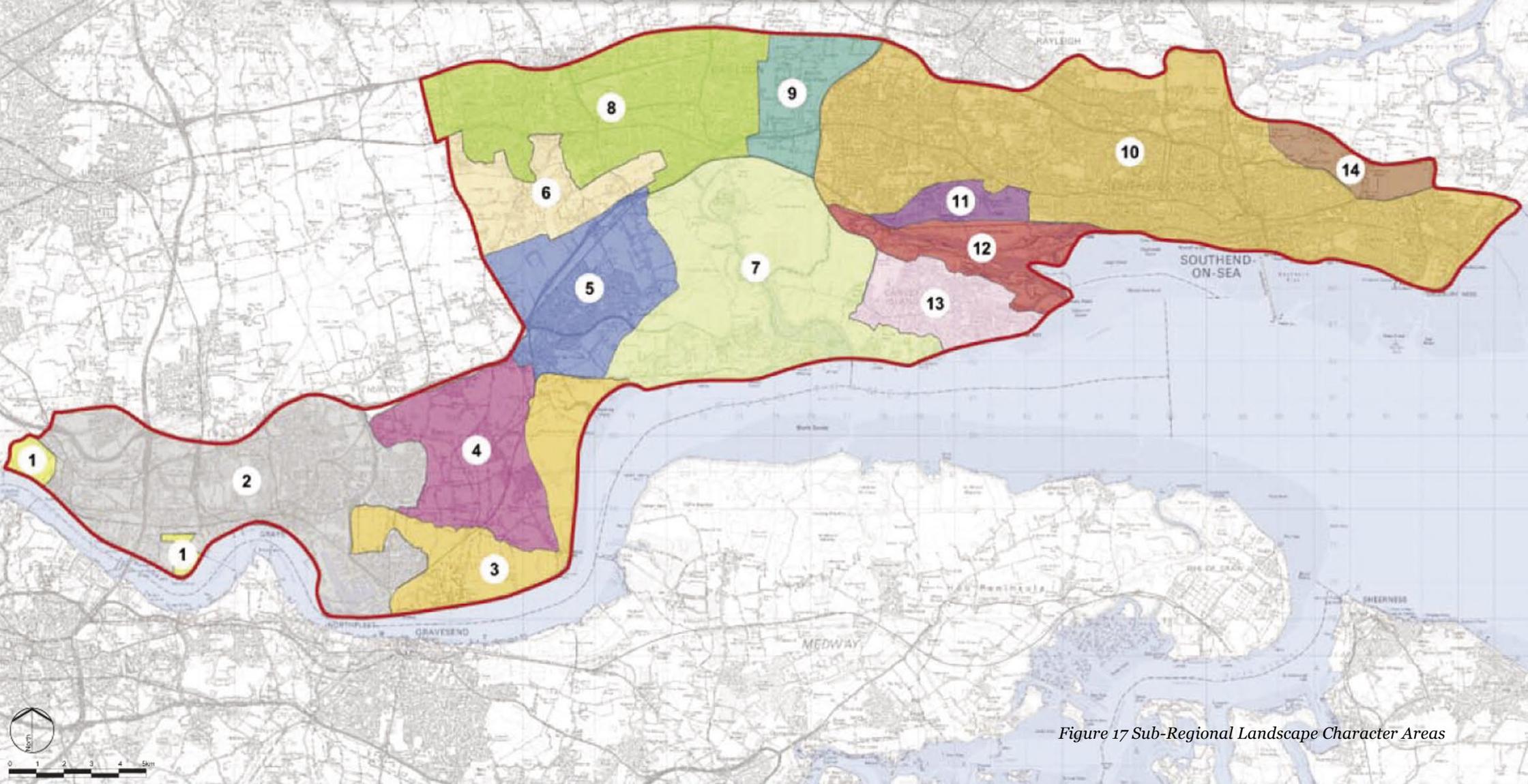


Figure 17 Sub-Regional Landscape Character Areas



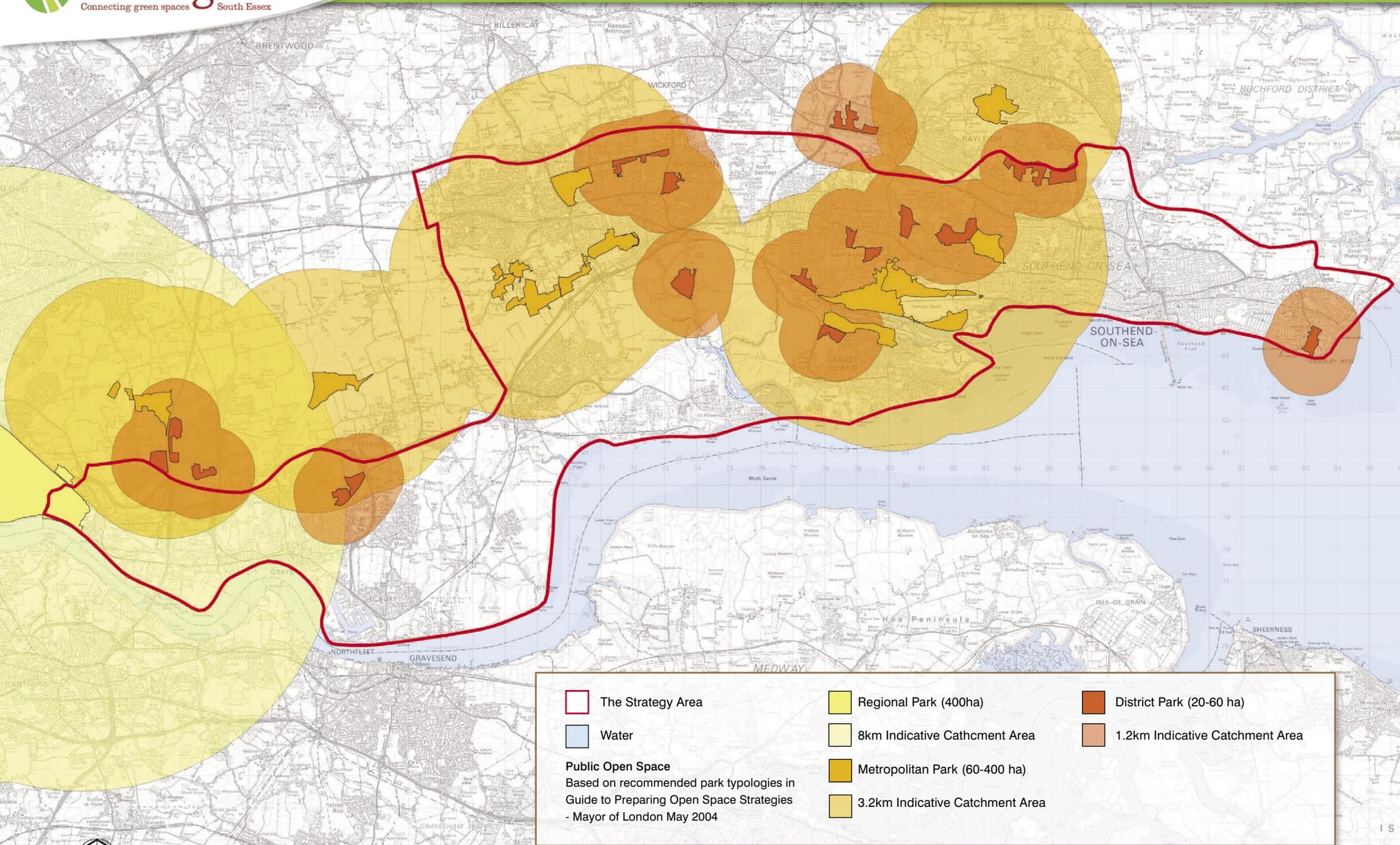


Figure 19 Indicative Catchment Areas for Strategic Designated Open Space

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### 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 Greengrid, 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 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

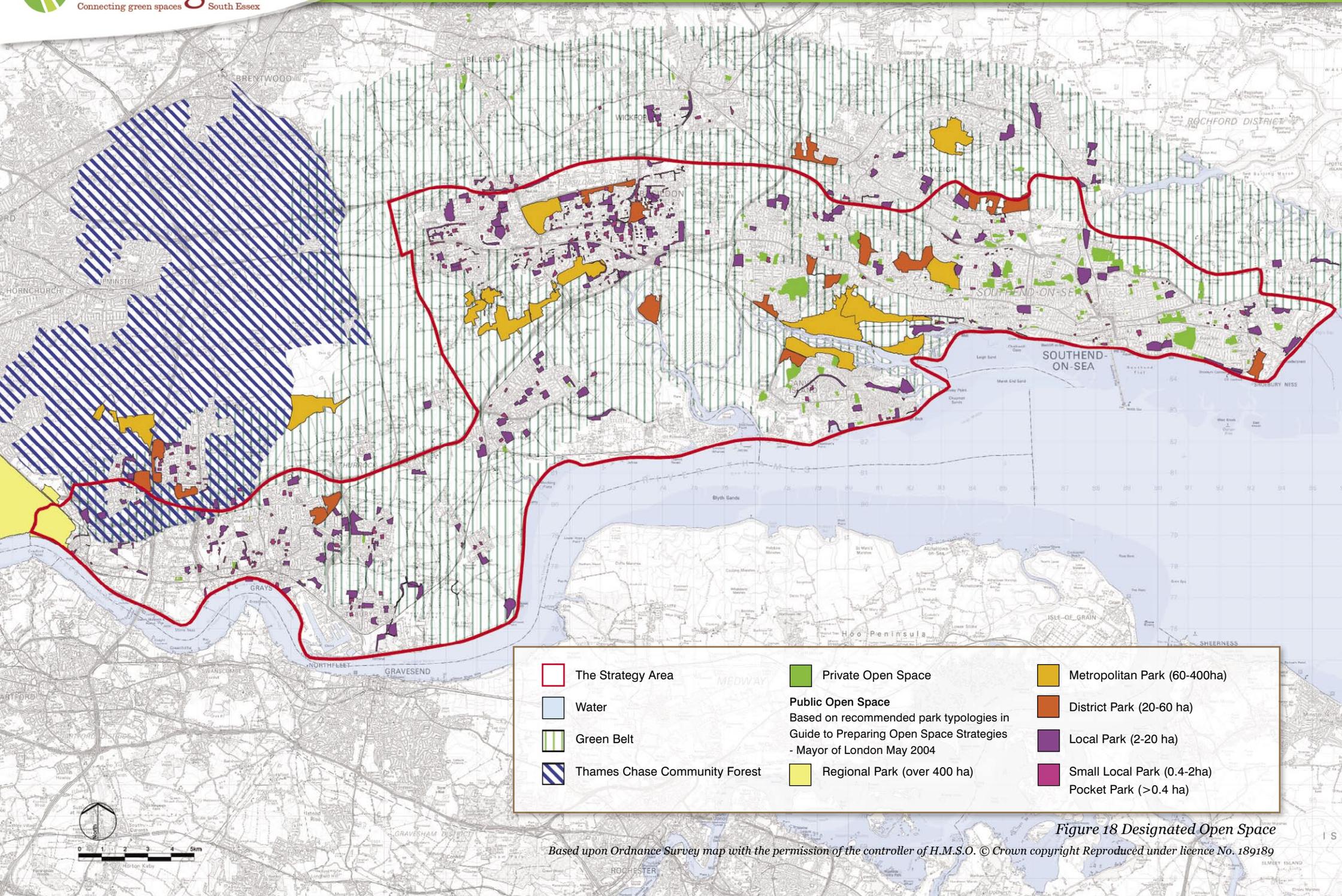
- The economic benefits of the resource through the perception and reality of the quality of the environment should be exploited;
- South Essex lies within the context of the Southern North Sea Regional Park promoted by SAIL, a transnational partnership of coastal and marine authorities from four member 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.



*The quality of existing parks and open spaces should be addressed*



The Strategy Area	Private Open Space	Metropolitan Park (60-400ha)
Water	<b>Public Open Space</b> Based on recommended park typologies in Guide to Preparing Open Space Strategies - Mayor of London May 2004	District Park (20-60 ha)
Green Belt	Regional Park (over 400 ha)	Local Park (2-20 ha)
Thames Chase Community Forest	Small Local Park (0.4-2ha) Pocket Park (>0.4 ha)	

Figure 18 Designated Open Space

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### 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 coordinated planning and design. The principles of sustainable 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.

#### 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 Greengrid provides a significant opportunity to respond to and mitigate the potential impacts of climate change.



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

### 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 Greengrid 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.

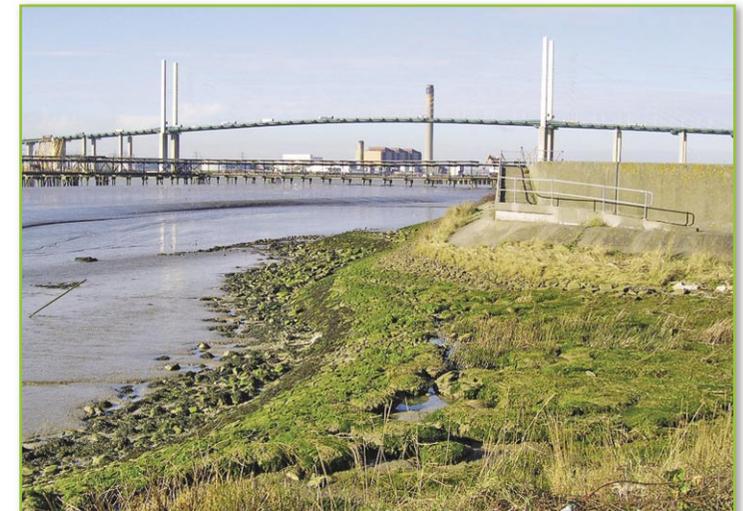
The Strategic Opportunities plan identifies the following:

- **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.

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

- **Strategic Greengrid 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 recreation** - 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;



*Existing strategic landmark - Queen Elizabeth II Bridge*

- 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 Greengrid 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 Greengrid 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 Greengrid. This analysis led to the identification of four general landscape categories described below, along with the opportunities they present for incorporation in the Greengrid. 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:

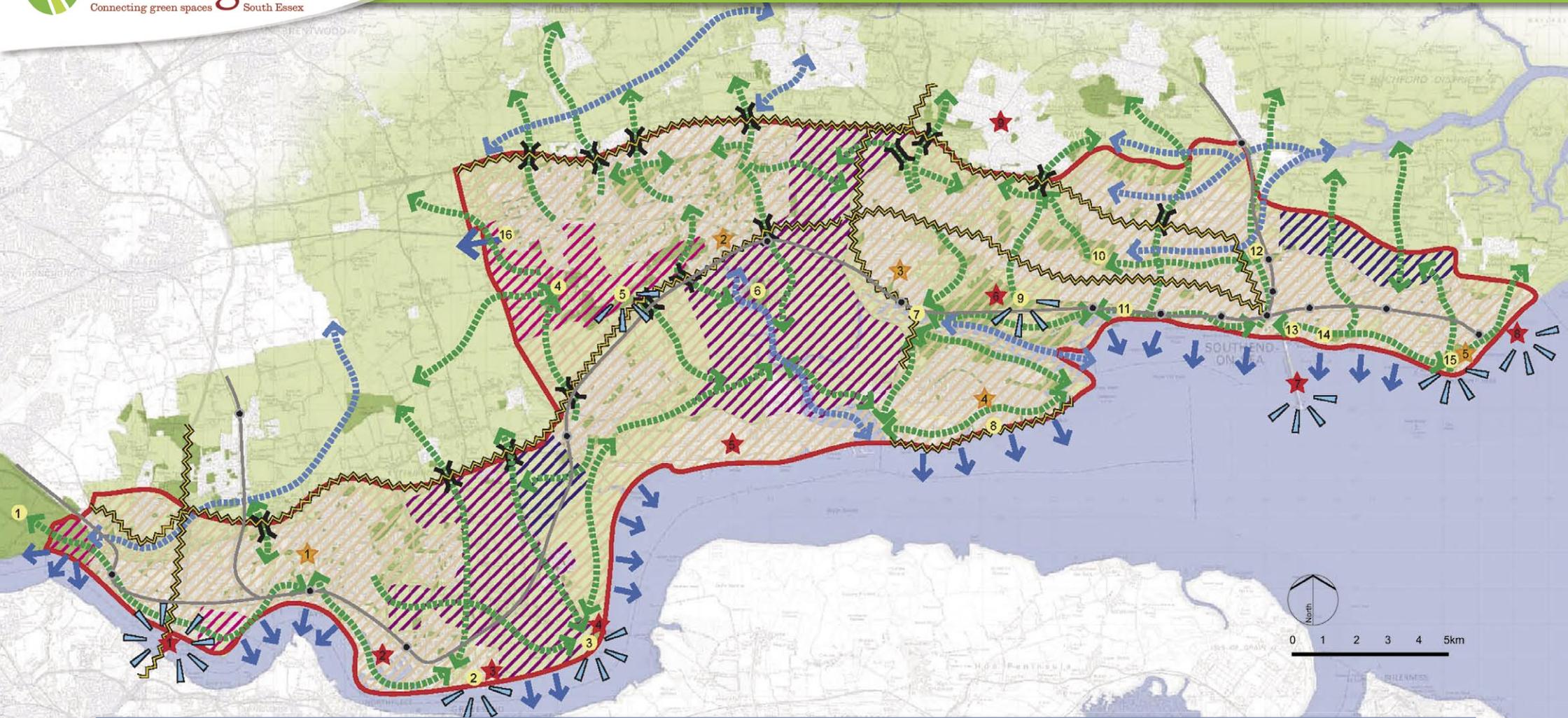
- **Areas to be protected** - which comprise predominantly undeveloped areas, recognised as outstanding in terms of open space, connectivity to urban areas, landscape character, biodiversity and/or other resource

- **Areas providing the opportunity for enhancement and incorporation in the Greengrid** - which comprise predominantly undeveloped land with some open space provision, reduced connectivity and the potential for incorporation in the Greengrid through enhancements based on Strategic Themes
- **Areas providing the opportunity for the creation of new strategic open space for incorporation in the Greengrid** - which comprise areas with the potential to relieve areas deficient in open space provision, and with good resource potential for incorporation in the Greengrid; 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 Greengrid** - which comprise predominantly developed land with a disjointed resource of open spaces and local areas of underprovision of designated open space.

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 Greengrid, supported by **Strategic Guidelines**, and more detailed Strategic Area Frameworks for Thurrock; Basildon and Castle Point; and Southend and Rochford.



*Sea wall at Canvey Island*



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid red; margin-right: 5px;"></span> The Strategy Area</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #d9ead3; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Open Landscape</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #5cb85c; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Designated Public and Private Open Space</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #4f81bd; margin-right: 5px;"></span> River Thames, River Crouch, River Roach and their tributaries</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, red 2px, red 4px); margin-right: 5px;"></span> Areas to be protected and incorporated in the Greengrid</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(-45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, red 2px, red 4px); margin-right: 5px;"></span> Areas providing the opportunity for enhancement and incorporation in the Greengrid</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, blue 2px, blue 4px); margin-right: 5px;"></span> Areas providing the opportunity for creation of new strategic open space for incorporation in the Greengrid</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(-45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, blue 2px, blue 4px); margin-right: 5px;"></span> Areas providing 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 Greengrid</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Railways (and Stations)- Which create major barriers to access and movement by foot and cycle</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border-bottom: 2px dashed green; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Opportunities for Strategic Greengrid Connections</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border-bottom: 2px dashed blue; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Opportunities for Strategic River Corridors and Destinations</li> </ul>	<p><b>4 Strategic Destinations</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>1. 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Shoebury Garrison</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. South Benfleet</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> </li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border-bottom: 2px dashed blue; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Strategic Viewpoint</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border-bottom: 2px solid blue; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Strategic Views</li> </ul>	1. Queen Elizabeth II Bridge	5. Shellhaven	2. Tilbury Docks	6. Hadleigh Castle	3. Tilbury Power Station	7. Southend Pier	4. Coalhouse Fort	8. Admiralty Boom		9. Rayleigh Castle	1. Grays	4. Carvey Island	2. Basildon	5. Shoebury Garrison	3. South Benfleet	
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Figure 20 Strategic Opportunities

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## 4.0 Strategic Frameworks and Guidance

This section describes **The Vision** for the Thames Gateway South Essex Greengrid. 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 Greengrid 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.

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.



Figure 21 Transect: Doorstep to Countryside

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

The Greengrid 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 Greengrid:

- **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 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 Greengrid.



Figure 22 Transect: Doorstep to Estuary

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.

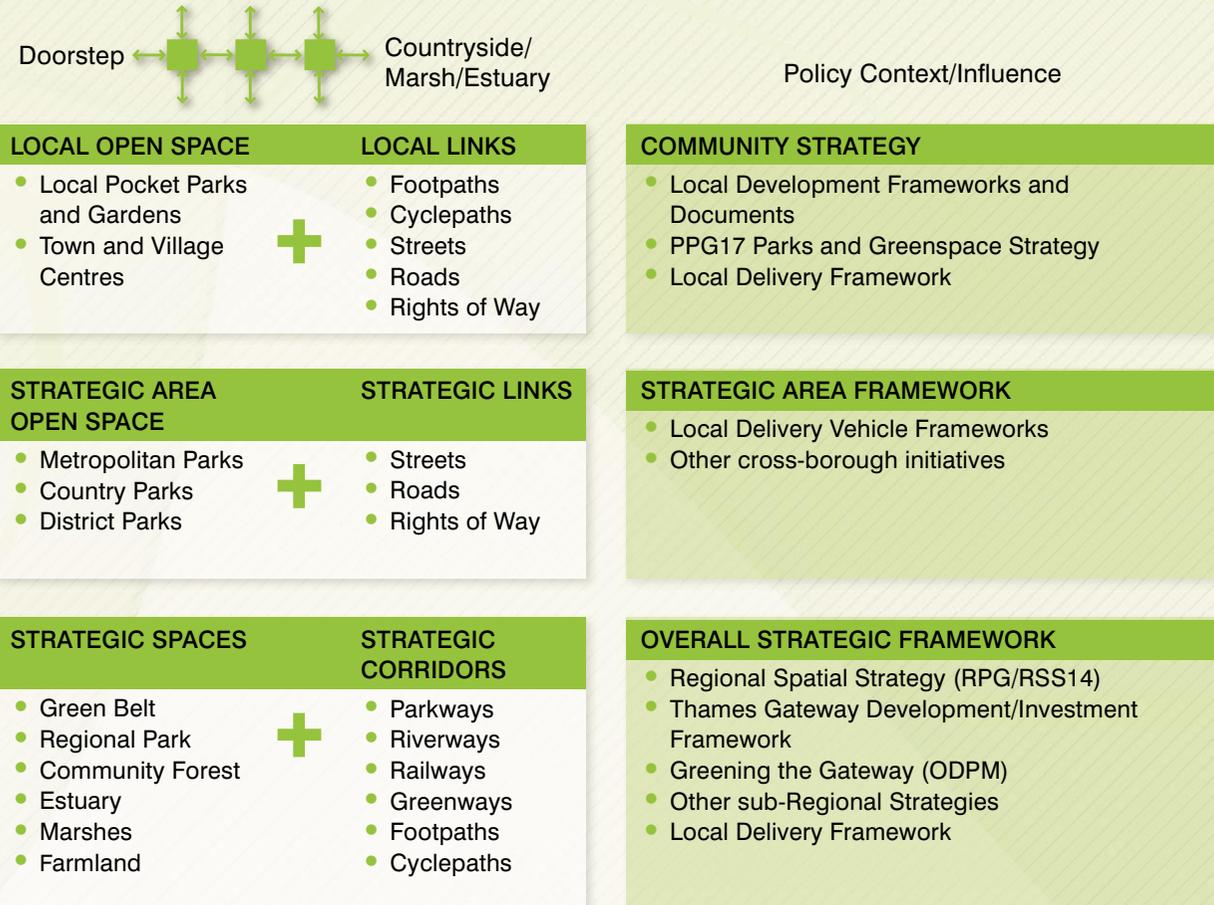


Figure 23: Hierarchy of Spaces, Places and Links

## 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 Greengrid 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.

## 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.



**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)



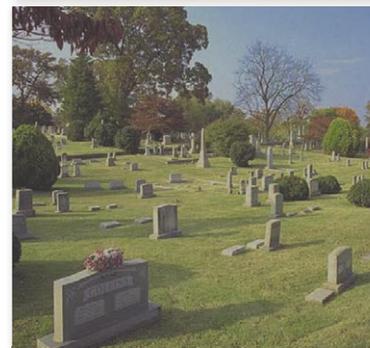
**Orange space:** movement, laughter and fun (shopping streets, sports fields, places to watch and be watched)



**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

Figure 24 The Harlequin Landscape

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 Greengrid; and
- **Greenways** - national, regional and sub-regional footpaths/cyclepaths.

The Overall Strategic Framework also identifies the following **Strategic Nodes**. These are places that contribute to the strategic open space network and characterise the locality:

- **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 System.

Parkway Link



## Urban Green Roadways

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

### Key issues and opportunities:

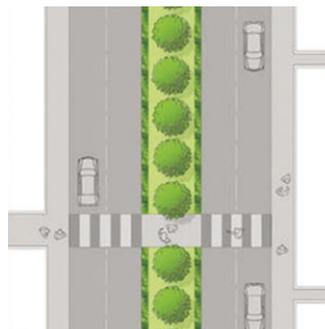
- major roads in predominantly urban or suburban areas
- poor visual quality typified by uncoordinated paving materials and clutter of signs and street furniture
- poor provision for cyclists and pedestrians
- create physical barriers within communities with inconvenient and poorly designed at-grade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

### Urban Green 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.

Urban Green roadway



## 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

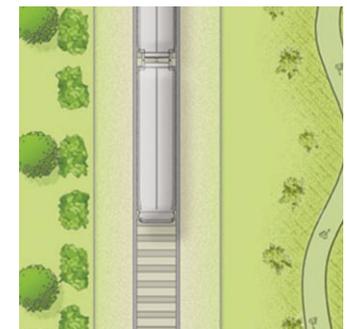
- inter-urban rail corridors with identified potential for upgrading of capacity of urban/suburban stations
- diverse visual experience whilst travelling by rail contrasts with the generally bland visual quality of the stations
- form physical barriers between communities with few crossing points
- generally 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

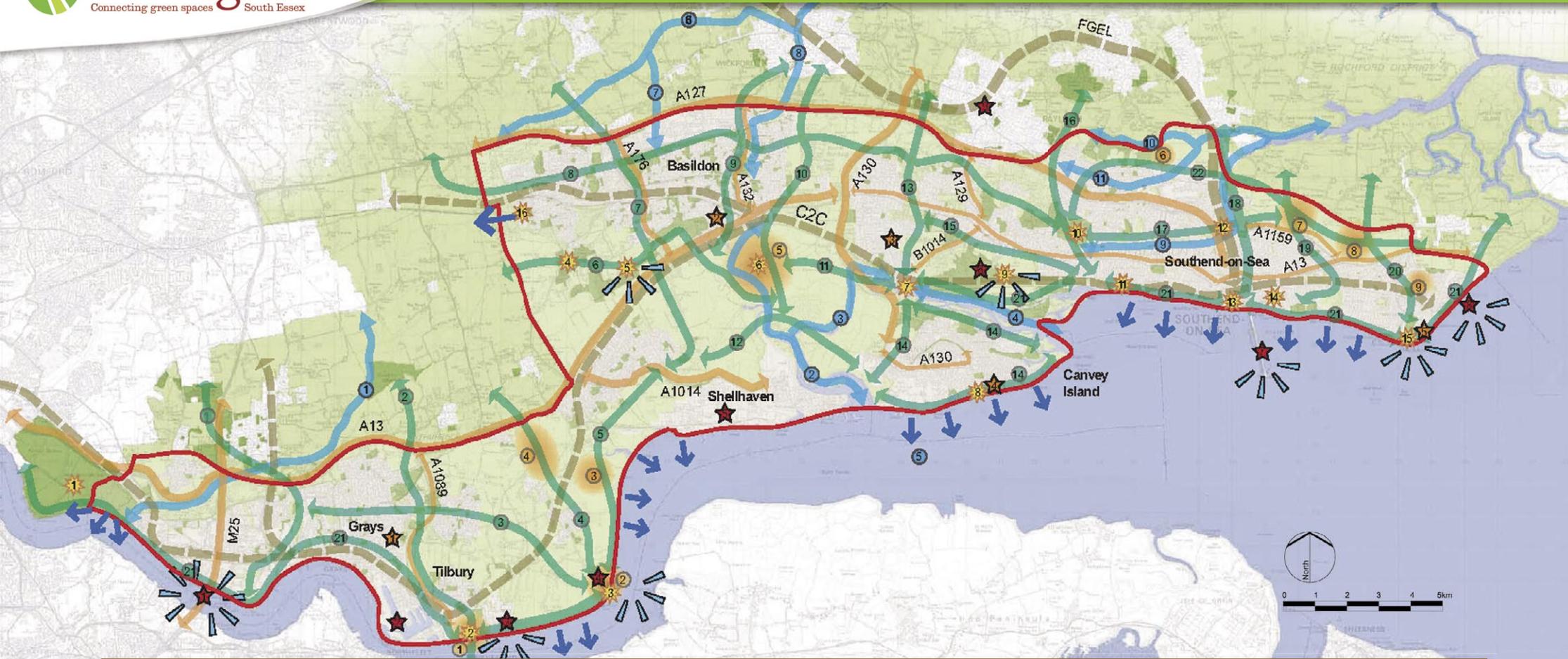
### Railways Vision

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

- link into other strategic corridors
- maintain and enhance biodiversity and act an 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.

Railway corridor





<p><b>Parkways</b> A13 Parkway A130 Parkway A127 Parkway</p> <p><b>Urban Green Roadways</b> A1089    A13    A1159    A176 A130    A129    A132    B1014</p> <p><b>Railways</b> C2C First Great Eastern Line (FGEL)</p> <p><b>Riverways</b> <b>Thames Catchment</b> 1. Mardyke Valley 2. Hole Haven Creek 3. East Haven Creek 4. Benfleet Creek 5. River Thames <b>Roach Catchment</b> 9. Prittlebrook 10. Rayleigh</p> <p><b>Crouch Catchment</b> 6. River Crouch 7. Crays Hill Brook 8. Nevendon Brook</p> <p>11. Eastwood</p>	<p><b>Greenways</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thurrock/ Grays</li> <li>Tilbury</li> <li>Chadwell St Mary</li> <li>East Tilbury</li> <li>Stanford-le-Hope</li> <li>One Tree Hill</li> <li>Corringham-Basildon</li> <li>Basildon-Southend</li> <li>East Basildon</li> <li>Wat Tyler</li> <li>Bowers Marshes</li> <li>Fobbing Marshes</li> <li>South Benfleet</li> </ol> <p><b>Strategic Parks</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tilbury Fort Country Park</li> <li>Coalhouse Fort Country Park</li> <li>Cory Country Park</li> <li>Bluehouse Country Park</li> <li>Wat Tyler Country Park</li> <li>Cherry Orchard County Park</li> <li>Garons Park</li> <li>Bourne Park</li> <li>Shoebury Park</li> </ol>	<p><b>Strategic Destinations</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rainham, Wennington and Aveley Marshes</li> <li>Tilbury Fort</li> <li>Coalhouse Fort</li> <li>Langdon Hills Country Park</li> <li>One Tree Hill</li> <li>Wat Tyler Country Park</li> <li>Benfleet Creek</li> <li>The Concorde Cafe</li> <li>Canvey Island Sea Front</li> <li>Hadleigh Castle</li> <li>Belfairs Park</li> <li>Leigh Beach</li> <li>Priory Park</li> <li>Southend Seafront</li> <li>Southchurch Park</li> <li>Gunners Park</li> <li>Langdon Visitor Centre</li> </ol> <p><b>Existing Strategic Landmarks</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Queen Elizabeth II Bridge</li> <li>Tilbury Docks</li> <li>Tilbury Power Station</li> <li>Coalhouse Fort</li> <li>Shellhaven Oil Refinery</li> <li>Hadleigh Castle</li> <li>Southend Pier</li> <li>Admiralty Boom</li> <li>Rayleigh Castle</li> </ol> <p><b>Proposed Strategic Landmarks</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grays</li> <li>Basildon</li> <li>South Benfleet</li> <li>Canvey Island</li> <li>Shoebury Garrison</li> </ol>	<p><b>Strategic Viewpoints</b></p> <p><b>Strategic Views</b></p> <p><b>The Strategy Area</b></p> <p><b>Open Landscape</b></p> <p><b>Designated Public Open Space</b></p>
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Figure 25 Overall Strategic Framework  
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## 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.

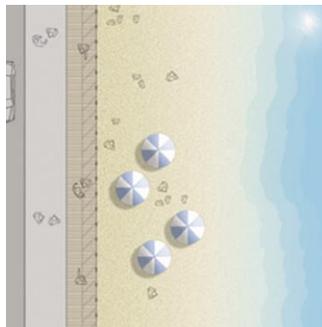
#### Key issues and opportunities:

- 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:

Estuary



- 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 opportunities 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.

### Crouch catchment

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

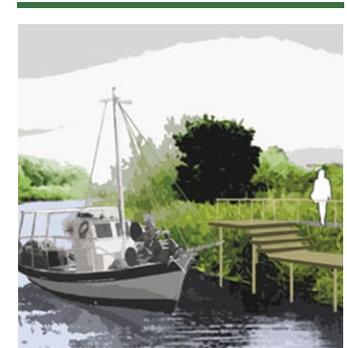
### Roach catchment

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.

Riverway Corridor



## Crouch and Roach Catchment Vision

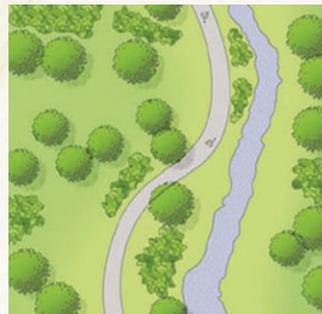
To restore, enhance and promote the Roach and Crouch as multi-functional rivers and tributaries based on Strategic Flood Risk Assessments managed for human access and wildlife by:

- 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.

Greenway



*Shared use path connecting Coalhouse Fort with Tilbury Fort*



*Potential for the sensitive design of a bridge at Rainham, Wennington and Aveley Marshes Nature Reserve (source: Thames Path City to Sea: Thames Estuary Partnership)*

### 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 Greengrid Strategy.

## 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 Conservation Park based around Rainham, Wennington and Aveley Marshes Nature Reserve
- 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



*Mardyke Valley*

- Create A13 Parkway Corridor between outer London, Thurrock and Basildon, and build distinctive pedestrian/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)

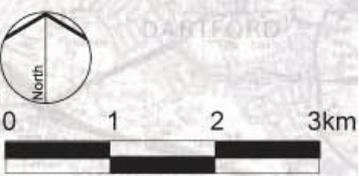
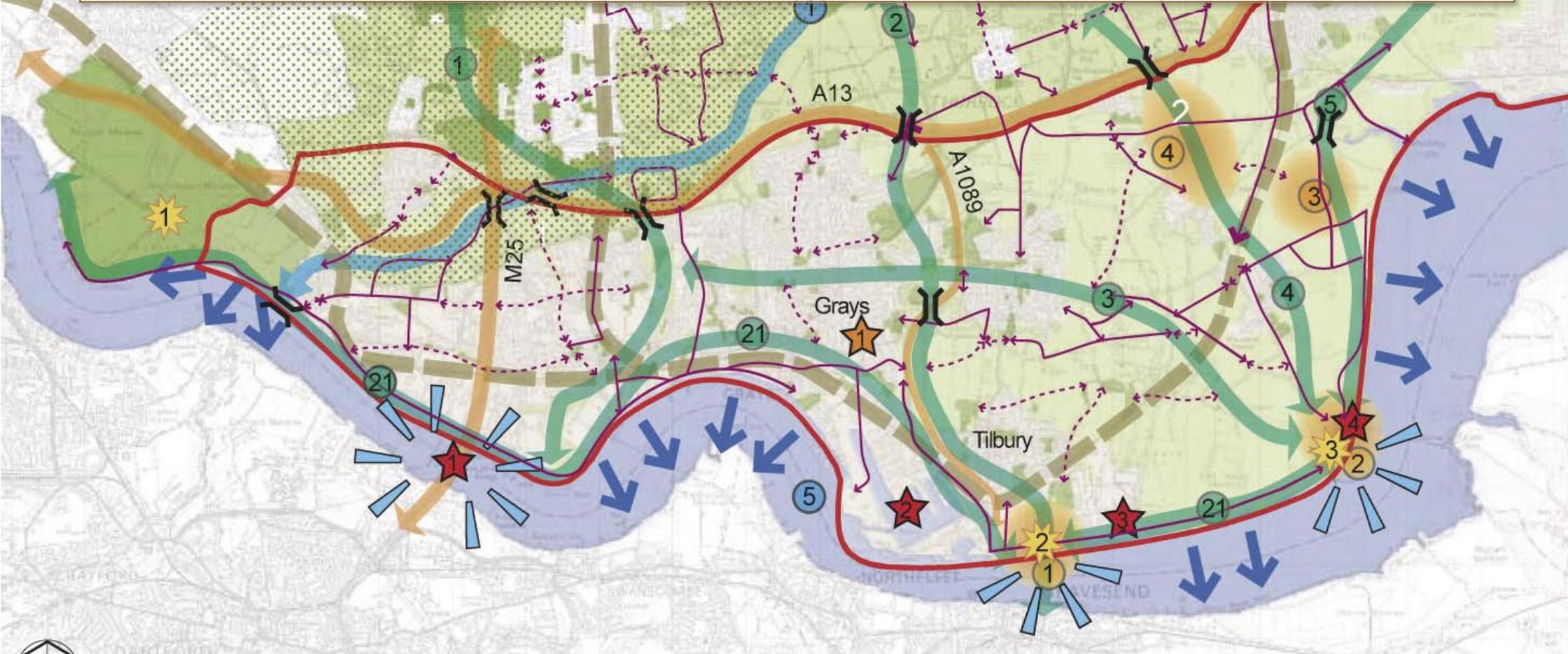


Figure 26 Thurrock Strategic Area Framework

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## 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) .



*Fobbing Marshes*

- 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.

 <b>Parkways</b> A13 Parkway A127 Parkway A130 Parkway A1014 Parkway	 <b>Existing Strategic Landmarks</b> 5. Shellhaven Oil Refinery 6. Hadleigh Castle 9. Rayleigh Castle	 <b>Strategic Destinations</b> 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	 <b>Greenways</b> 4. East Tilbury 5. Stanford-le-Hope 6. One Tree Hill 7. Corringham-Basildon 8. Basildon-Southend 9. East Basildon 10. Wat Tyler	 <b>Strategic Viewpoint</b>  <b>Strategic Views</b>
 <b>Urban Green Roadways</b> A130 A129 B1014 A13 A176 A132	 <b>Riverways</b> <b>Thames Catchment</b> 2. Hole Haven Creek 3. East Haven Creek 4. Benfleet Creek 5. River Thames <b>Crouch Catchment</b> 6. River Crouch 7. Crays Hill Brook 8. Nevendon Brook	 <b>Proposed Strategic Landmarks</b> 2. Basildon 3. South Benfleet 4. Canvey Island	 <b>Strategic Viewpoint</b>  <b>Strategic Views</b>	 <b>The Strategy Area</b>
 <b>Railways</b> C2C First Great Eastern Line (FGEL)	 <b>Strategic Bridging Points</b>	 <b>Existing Public Rights of Way/Proposed links of Strategic Significance</b>	 <b>Open Landscape</b>	 <b>Designated Public Open Space</b>
 <b>Strategic Parks</b> 5. Wat Tyler County Park				



Figure 27 Basildon and Castle Point Strategic Area Framework

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## 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) Royal Artillery Way (Eastern Avenue) 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

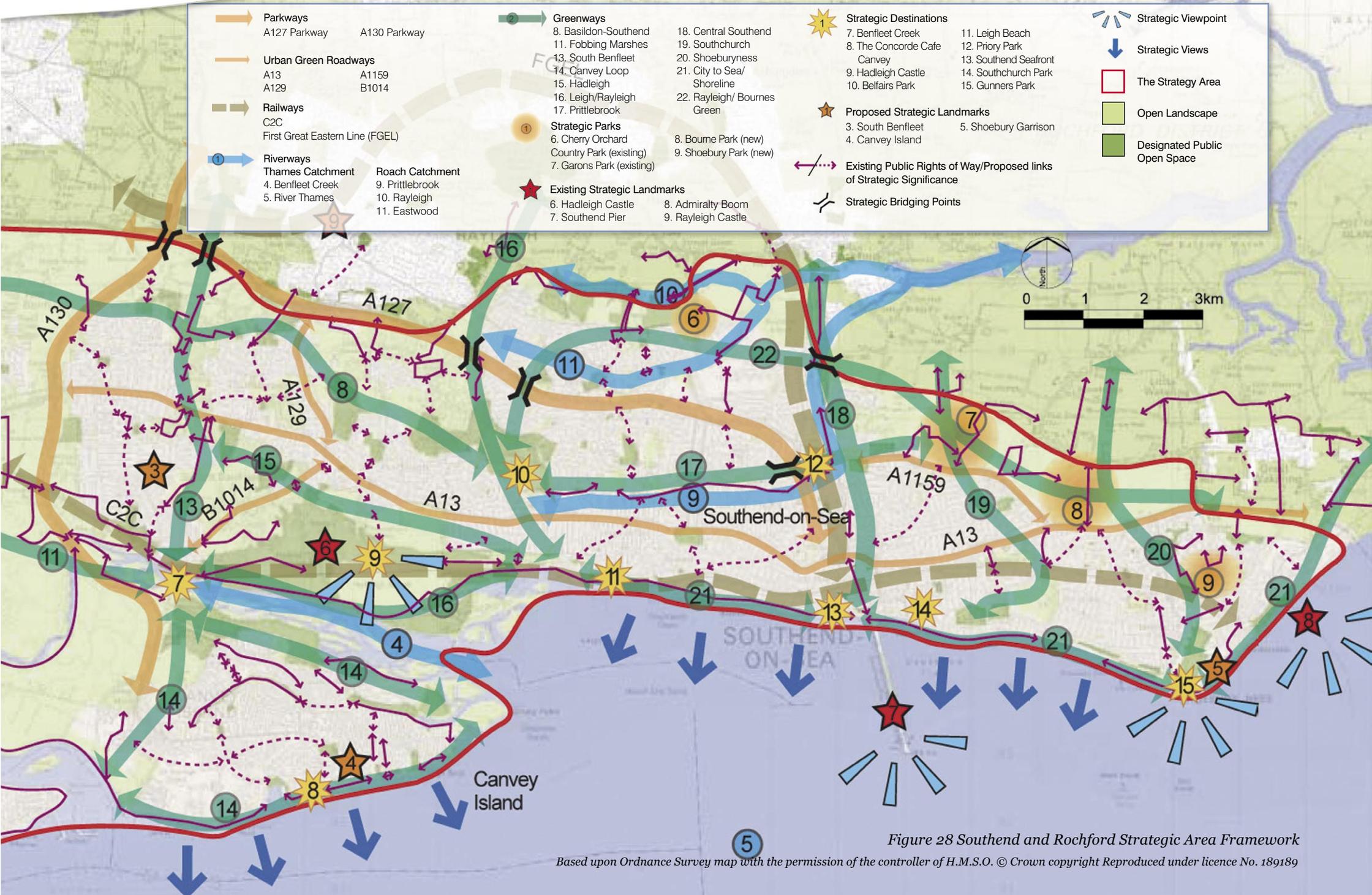
- Southend has been a major tourist destination since Victorian times, and is particularly popular as a day trip and short break destination
- The A13 urban road is a key main road which generally reduces connectivity within Southend; and
- The foreshore is an internationally important area for nature 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 four new interconnected strategic country parks and enhance existing parks to link the Rochford countryside 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), associated with the proposed Fossetts Camp public open space
  - 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, Royal Artillery Way (Eastern Avenue) 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*



Parkway A127 Parkway      A130 Parkway	Greenways 8. Basildon-Southend 11. Fobbing Marshes 13. South Benfleet 14. Canvey Loop 15. Hadleigh 16. Leigh/Rayleigh 17. Prittlebrook	Strategic Destinations 7. Benfleet Creek 8. The Concorde Cafe 9. Hadleigh Castle 10. Belfairs Park 11. Leigh Beach 12. Priory Park 13. Southend Seafront 14. Southchurch Park 15. Gunners Park	Strategic Viewpoint  Strategic Views
Urban Green Roadways A13      A1159 A129      B1014	Strategic Parks 6. Cherry Orchard Country Park (existing) 7. Garons Park (existing)	Existing Strategic Landmarks 6. Hadleigh Castle      8. Admiralty Boom 7. Southend Pier      9. Rayleigh Castle	The Strategy Area
Railways C2C First Great Eastern Line (FGEL)	Riverways Thames Catchment      Roach Catchment 4. Benfleet Creek      9. Prittlebrook 5. River Thames      10. Rayleigh 11. Eastwood	Proposed Strategic Landmarks 3. South Benfleet      5. Shoebury Garrison 4. Canvey Island	Open Landscape
		Existing Public Rights of Way/Proposed links of Strategic Significance	Designated Public Open Space
		Strategic Bridging Points	

Figure 28 Southend and Rochford Strategic Area Framework

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## 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](http://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.



*Queen Elizabeth 11 Bridge*

## 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 (SUDS)
- where appropriate, incorporate the principles of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) 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.

## 4.8.7 Education, skills and learning

Every proposal should seek to:

- Promote the educational benefits of the Greengrid through Local Education Authorities, Sure Start, children's centres, nurseries, schools and colleges
- Promote the Greengrid 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.



*Beach at Southend*

### 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 Greengrid 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 Greengrid 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 Greengrid can feature in recruitment packages.

### 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 Greengrid 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 Greengrid 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 Greengrid 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 Greengrid 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 Greengrid 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.



*Mudflats at Shoeburyness*

## 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 Greengrid 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.

## 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 Greengrid 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.

## Appendix 1 - Policy Context

### Introduction

This Appendix provides more detail on the national, regional and local policy context not included in the Strategy. The Strategy is complementary to existing policies and guidance for the Thames Gateway. It is also, however, intended to influence the preparation of policies either currently in preparation or that will be prepared. This section of the Strategy describes the relevant policy documents which have influenced and are supported by the Strategy, or which the Strategy will support and influence. It also describes other guidance relevant to the Strategy.

Through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill 2004, Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) replace Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) and County Structure Plans. Local Development Frameworks containing Local Development Documents replace local plans and unitary development plans. Area Action Plans provide the necessary mechanisms to drive development and improvement at the local scale.

The Strategy links to national, regional and borough planning guidance. There are also emerging plans and strategies of relevance including the Thames Gateway Development Investment Framework, Essex Structure and Local Plans, Thames Strategy East, Thames Gateway South Essex Estuarial Study, the Thurrock Urban Development Corporation's Regeneration Framework, the East London and Kent Thameside Green Grids, and parks and open space strategies prepared in accordance with PPG17: Open Space, Sports and Recreation. This Strategy provides the overarching spatial and policy guidance for Local Authority's Parks and Green Space Strategies.

### National Policy Context

The following are relevant national policies, papers and guidance:

The Urban White Paper - Our Towns and Cities: The Future, November 2000

Explains the approach for achieving an urban renaissance, and to ensure that urban policies are not just about housing and planning, but also about improving people's prosperity and quality of life. It promotes well managed public open spaces that improve the attractiveness of urban areas, encourage healthier lifestyles, benefit wildlife, education and quality of life in general. It recognises the need for everyone to have access to well-maintained and safe open spaces. It highlights that there need to be improvements in open space management and maintenance.

The Transport White Paper: A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone, 1998

Highlights aspirations to create a modern, integrated transport system to revitalise towns and cities, to improve rural links, and support economic prosperity while protecting the environment. It supports sustainable development as part of an integrated transport policy.

The Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future, ODPM, February 2003

Outlines the Government's vision for thriving, sustainable communities. It is intended to promote communities that are economically prosperous, have sufficient affordable homes and are pleasant places to live. It allocates £446 million to be made available in the Thames Gateway from 2003-2006, and of this an initial £91.6 million is available to projects in Thames Gateway South Essex. It recognises

that all communities should have a clean, safe and attractive environment in which they can take pride, that quality of life is closely linked to the quality of the local environment. Specifically, it promotes the advantages offered by accessible and linked open space networks of 'green chains' and 'green links', and the opportunities afforded by rivers for promoting tourism.

The Sustainable Communities: Making it Happen: Delivering Growth in the Thames, July 2003

This subsequent report outlined progress on the implementation of the Sustainable Communities Plan and announced funding for key strategic projects in Thames Gateway and the Growth Areas.

It recognised the Greengrid as a multifunctional, sustainable network of open spaces and green links, that will be a key driver in the regeneration process for the Thames Gateway South Essex. It recognised the Greengrid as an essential community resource and economic tool in the regeneration process. Thames Gateway South Essex was allocated £5 million for the development and delivery of the South Essex Greengrid.

## Appendix 1 - Policy Context

It reemphasised the Thames Gateway as an area of sustained growth to accommodate the economic success of London and the wider south-east. Due to the scale and intensity of work it proposed Local Delivery Vehicles (LDVs) to take development forward. Of these, Thurrock Urban Development Corporation which was formally established in October 2003; Southend Urban Regeneration Company has been established; and the existing Basildon Renaissance partnership will have an expanded role.

### PPG1: General policy and principles

Sets out the government's approach to planning, and the principles of the planning system to balance the provision of homes and employment, economic development, protecting the environment and amenity in a sustainable way. It is based around three themes: sustainable development, mixed use, and design.

### PPG2: Green Belt

Sets out the Principles of Green Belts which are to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up area, prevent neighbouring towns from merging, assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, preserving the setting and special character of historic towns and assisting in urban regeneration. The Green Belt provides long term restraints on peripheral growth, which can sometimes be at conflict with sustainable development policies (PPG 3 and PPG 13) which focus a significant proportion of the development on the fringes of the larger development.

### PPG3: Housing

Sets out policies for a new approach to planning for housing. It highlights a commitment to increase the density of new housing to relieve development pressure on greenfield land. It promotes housing development centred around existing centres and close to transport nodes.

### PPG6: Town Centres and Retail Developments

Provides planning guidance for the planning of town centres and retail, promoting mixed use development, good urban design, sequential approach to developments, parking strategies and quality standards.

### PPG9: Nature Conservation

Provides advice on all aspects of nature conservation policy, including need for the conservation of features (such as rivers) which, because of their linear and continuous structure or their function as stepping stones, are essential for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange. It emphasises the importance of designated sites and undesignated areas for nature conservation.

### PPG 13 Transport

Provides policies that address the contribution transport makes to improving the quality of life for motorists, other road and public transport users, and business. The policies aim to reduce congestion and pollution, achieve better access to development and facilities, and promotes their sustainable distribution.

Highlights that sustainable transport policy should be integral to sustainable development. It also promotes greater use of river transport, including freight and recreation.

### PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment

Provides policies for the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas, and other elements of the historic environment. It complements the guidance on archaeology and planning given in PPG 16 Archaeology and Planning.

### PPG16: Archaeology and Planning

This guidance sets out policies on archaeological remains on land, and how they should be preserved or recorded both in an urban setting and in the countryside. It gives advice on the handling of archaeological remains and discoveries

under the development plan and control systems, including the weight to be given to them in planning decisions, and the use of planning conditions.

### PPG 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation

Sets out the government's guidance on planning open spaces, sports and recreational facilities, and the need to ensure they are of a high quality, attractive to users, well managed and maintained. Requires audits of provision, assessment of need and opportunity, and open space standards to be set locally. The companion guide to PPG17 illustrates an example of how audits and assessments can be undertaken. It emphasises the important role of open space in supporting the government's objectives for an urban renaissance, for social inclusion, community cohesion, health, well-being and sustainable development.

## Appendix 1 - Policy Context

### PPG24: Noise

Policies minimise the adverse impact of noise. Emphasises that the effect of noise should be taken in to account with regard to the enjoyment of SSSI's and other areas of landscape, wildlife and historic value.

### PPG 25: Development and Flood Risk

This guidance covers flood risk from both rivers and the sea. Represents a step change in the recognition of flood risk in development decisions. It introduces a sequential test for flood risk sites and the requirement for Flood Risk Assessments to be carried out for medium to high risk locations. It also places considerable importance on Sustainable Drainage Techniques.

### The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), 1994

This was published in response to Article 6 of the Biodiversity Convention which identified the need to develop national strategies for the conservation of biological diversity, and the sustainable use of biological resources. It set out various tasks: to conserve species and habitats; to develop public awareness and understanding; and to contribute to biodiversity work in the European and global context. It highlights national species and habitats of importance for protection and enhancement.

### CROW ACT (2000): Rights of Way Improvement Plans and Local Access Forums

Set out duties for highway authorities to set up plans and forums, and requirements for auditing all routes - footpaths, bridleways, roads, cycle tracks and bridleways - when considering improvements. These routes should not just be recreational routes but provide access for everyday living, for example, from home to school, home to work or shops and activity to improve people's health and well-being.

Thames Estuary 2100, Environment Agency (in preparation)  
This study, currently underway, aims to determine the appropriate level of flood protection needed for London Thames Estuary for the next 100 years. The existing tidal defences were designed to give protection up till 2030. It is understood that this document will be produced in 2005.

### Public Health White Paper

The Government is expected to publish a White Paper on Public Health in 2004 following its consultation exercise "Choosing Health". Amongst its likely target areas will be the urgent need to tackle obesity in the community. A combination of initiatives and settings will feature, but the importance of physical exercise in a variety of forms is bound to feature.

At least five a week: evidence of the impact of physical activity and its relationship to health April 2004  
Published by the chief Medical Officer, this report sets out a clear evidence base for the impact of physical activity on physical and mental health. It makes the point that all members of the community need to take at least five, 30 minute periods of moderate intensity exercise each week. Adopting such behaviour can halve the risk of heart disease, strokes or diabetes.

### Healthy Schools, Active Minds September 2004

This is a joint document from the Departments of Health, Education and Skills, Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Culture, Media & Sport and the Food Standards Agency. It sets out a blueprint for promoting health amongst children, through a combination of healthy eating, sport and physical education, and encouraging walking and cycling to school.

### Local exercise action pilots 2004

This initiative was launched by the Department of Health, to examine how primary care trusts can work with partners to promote exercise. In addition to the use of gyms and swimming pools, two of the pilots include aspects which

complement this Strategy by including green spaces, and walking and cycling. The lessons from the evaluation, which is due in 2006, ought to inform the ongoing development of this Strategy.

A space for Nature, English Nature, Sets out for adopted Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) based on a hierarchy of size and distance criteria. The ANGSt model requires:

- that no person should live more than 300m from their nearest area of natural greenspace of at least 2ha in size;
- provision of at least 1ha of Local Nature Reserve per 1,000 population;
- that there should be at least one accessible 20ha site within 2km from home;
- that there should be one accessible 100ha site within 5km;
- that there should be one accessible 500ha site within 10km.

The standards were justified in the following ways:

- everyday contact with nature is important for well-being and quality of life;
- everyone should be able to enjoy this contact, in safety, without having to make any special effort or journey to do so;
- natural greenspace in towns and cities can play an important part in helping safeguard our national treasure of wildlife and geological features;
- accessible natural greenspaces give everyone an excellent chance to learn about nature and to help protect it in practical ways.
- Adequate provision of vegetated areas helps to ensure that urban areas continue to function ecologically.

## Appendix 1 - Policy Context

### Regional and Sub-Regional Policy Context

The emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) replace Regional Planning Guidance and County Structure Plans; this Strategy is intended to influence the development of the RSS. The following documents are relevant to this Strategy at the regional scale:

#### RPG 3B/9B: Strategic Planning Guidance for the River Thames

Sets out the government's planning policies for the River Thames from Windsor to the sea. It presents a vision for the River which provides a land use planning framework for enhancing its status and vitality. It accepts that opportunities exist, particularly in London and the Thames Gateway, to develop and exploit its potential, to enhance the quality of the riverside environment, to improve standards of urban design, and to bring the River and the riverfront back to life. It builds upon and supersedes existing guidance for the River and riverside land as set out in Chapter 2 of Strategic Guidance for London Planning Authorities (RPG 3) and in Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG 9). It also develops and should be read in conjunction with the Thames Gateway Planning Framework (RPG 9A).

RPG 9: Regional Planning for the South East, March 2001  
Identifies the Thames Gateway as a regional and national priority for regeneration and growth with the potential to make a major contribution to the Region's economy. The scale of the further development potential is seen to present a vital opportunity for creating more sustainable forms of development in the future. RPG9 sets a target of around 1 million new homes by 2016 as part of a regeneration programme for the region. The guidance encourages this development opportunity to occur in a planned way within the framework set by RPG9a.

#### RPG9a: Thames Gateway Planning Framework 1995

Provides the Government's over arching framework for economic, social and environmental regeneration. It identifies scope for residential and commercial development with environmental enhancement. It identifies opportunities to link open space in the Thames Gateway to create a Greengrid. Emphasises that the Greengrid should be identified and safeguarded in development plans and policies. It supports bringing the river to life by encouraging people to live, work and play along the waterfront as an integral part of the Greengrid of walkways, cycle paths and parks. It also encourages open spaces associated with the riverside to be of a high quality and environmental value. The network of open spaces and green links joining a regenerated riverside to existing neighbourhoods and new communities.

#### Thames 2100, Environment Agency

This guidance is in preparation. It aims to determine the appropriate level of flood protection needed for the Thames Estuary from 2030 onwards - existing tidal defences were designed protect until that date. It is understood that this document will be published in 2006. Current advice from the Environment Agency is to produce Strategic Flood Risk Assessments for all development, categorising land uses into flood compatible/resilient/flood protected. They advise that urban uses should be flood protected and most other land uses should be flood compatible/resilient.

#### Countryside Character Volume 7, The Countryside Agency, (1999)

Provides The Countryside Agency's broad character areas of the Greater Thames Estuary and the North Thames Basin which lie within the Strategy Area. The document describes the expansive low-lying nature of marshes and beaches; the pressures of urban, industrial and recreational development; and the pervasive presence of water within the Thames

estuary. The more elevated plateau of the Thames basin in the northern section of the Strategy area is described as a varied landform divided by river valleys with some extensive areas of broadleaved woodland; the influences of large towns and transport infrastructure; and fields with hedgerow-deficient boundaries. These character areas are described in more detail in Section 3 of this report.

#### A Welcome Home - A Sense of Place for a New Thames Gateway, English Heritage, 2004

Historic environmental characterisation of the Thames Gateway has revealed a rich heritage and sense of place, within which the history and identity can be used positively to improve local character and create new places that are diverse and thriving.

#### Sustainability Development Framework for the East of England, East of England Regional Assembly, and East of England Sustainable Development Round Table September 2001

This Framework promotes twenty one sustainability issues and sets objectives for each. As part of Local Environmental Quality it promotes the identification, protection and management of open spaces for the benefit of people and wildlife. It also seeks to protect and enhance natural and built environmental assets, and emphasises that revenues generated from tourism should be directed towards their management. Other objectives are to protect and enhance biodiversity, promote the health advantages of walking and cycling, and to improve the environment by means of adequate investment and management.

## Appendix 1 - Policy Context

Woodland for Life Regional Woodland Strategy for the East of England, November 2003, EERA/Forestry Commission  
The Regional Woodland Strategy promotes the vision 'that trees and woodland are widely recognised as bringing high quality sustainable benefits to all who live and work in the East of England'. It provides a number of strategies for the enhancement, over the next 20 years, of the social, economic and environmental benefits that trees and woodlands bring to the people who live and work in the region.

Regional Environment Strategy for the East of England. EEEF and EERA, July 2003  
The document sets out a vision for the region that celebrates, protects and enhances our natural, historic and built environment.

Culture: a catalyst for change, a strategy for cultural development for the East of England, June 2004, Living East.  
The Strategy's vision is: 'To put culture at the heart of the regions life' and promotes 3 key themes:

- Living life to the full
- Living organisation
- Living image

### East of England Development Agency (EEDA) Initiatives

The East of England Development Agency (EEDA) is an important member of the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership. Its goal for the region is 'to make the East of England a world-class economy, renowned for its knowledge base, the creativity and enterprise of its people and the quality of life of all who live and work here'. A Shared Vision: the regional economic strategy for the East of England published in December 2004 sets out a framework for the economic development of the region over a ten year period. Eight major themes for economic growth in the East of England are identified, and that the Thames Gateway has the potential to provide for the 'delivery of development sites, ICT networks, housing, education and skills within a high quality environment'.

### Corporate Plan 2003-2006

Published in April 2003, it describes how EEDA will use its available resources over the period 2003/2006 to help deliver the regional economic strategy. As part of an urban and rural renaissance common issues are identified and EEDA's role in directing the creation of 'liveable spaces' in towns, cities and in rural communities is expanded. As part of this process EEDA has also produced an urban renaissance strategy for the region which highlights the holistic approach of South Essex Greengrid in identifying the area's green spaces, their value to the area, and how best to utilise their assets. The document also acknowledges the role of Greengrid in addressing the concern that the abundance of green space in South Essex is not neglected during the extensive programme of regeneration of the Thames Gateway.

### East of England Regional Economic Development Strategy, EEDA, 2001

This strategy for the region provides the basis for the main themes of East of England Development Agency (EEDA). These are:

- Competitive business and organisations for a world class region;
- creativity, innovation and enterprise;
- investing in success;
- regeneration (supporting people and communities);
- clear identity and international profile and
- leading-edge infrastructure and high quality environment.

### East of England Regional Sustainable Tourism Strategy, EEDA, March 2004

The sustainable Tourism Strategy for the East of England provides an update to the East of England Tourism Strategy published in 2000. The strategy acknowledges that EEDA will need to work with a number of partners to achieve further tourism investment, particularly where there are cross-regional issues. Wildlife tourism is recognised as a growth area and a priority area. The Strategy recommends supporting attractions that have a convincing business plan, are commercially driven, do not displace activity at other attractions and use public sector investment for the development of infrastructure at destinations.

Towns and Cities Strategy and Action Plan, EEDA, December 2003 Provides a strategy and action plan to promote urban renaissance through delivery of urban quality and sustainable communities in the region.

### Essex County Council Structure Plan and other Initiatives

#### Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan (April 2001)

- Encourages the development of countryside recreation. It aims to "maximise public access to, and enjoyment of, the countryside for passive and active recreation, compatible with the conservation of its character, appearance and ecological value..." (12.2)
- Identifies that for people living in urban areas, access to the countryside, including country parks and other common land, is important for informal recreation. This includes walking, cycling etc (12.20). However, at present the distribution of open space in Essex is uneven and there are currently large areas of population living far from large areas of land devoted to informal countryside recreation (12.23).
- Supports improvements to access to the undeveloped coast maintaining and extending footpaths with the aim of providing a continuous coastal footpath. (12.26)
- Encourages strategic policy for developing new routes in the southern and eastern parts of the plan area and on the undeveloped coast. These will include long distance routes, circular routes and local routes to reflect the variety of demands from different types of user." (12.27)
- Encourages the strategic maintenance and enhancement of the existing strategic network of canals and waterways across the plan area which can be used for recreational, leisure and tourism use...Where possible, more access points and riverside paths should be provided." (12.37)

## Appendix 1 - Policy Context

Essex Local Transport Plan – The Essex Approach to Transport, 2000

- Aims to produce a more integrated and inclusive transport system, co-ordinated with strategic and local land-use planning, in line with the aims of the government white paper A new deal for transport: Better for everyone (1998), which set out a detailed transport strategy for the country. The potential to cater for short trips by cycle is highlighted, and walking is cited as a priority to be improved.
- The Thames Gateway is identified as a Key Priority area for transport investment.
- Promotes recreational cycling in partnership with Sustrans.
- Promotes walking short distances as a mode of transport.

Essex Local Transport Plan – The Essex Approach to Transport – review 2002

- Describes progress made towards achieving the objectives and targets of the Essex Local Transport Plan published in 2000.
- Council continues to develop the concept of a Rural Route Network, which integrates on-road routes with off road routes, eg bridleways. Public Rights of Way to be co-ordinated with wider strategies such as the Essex Rural Strategy. A Local Access Forum established in 2003 advises the Countryside Agency on matters relating to ProW and will develop a ProW improvement plan.
- Several schemes to encourage walking and cycling are under way, with an emphasis on increasing the number of short journeys made by walking and cycling, rather than by car, as well as implementing new national cycle routes etc.

Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership (TGSEP) Initiatives

The regeneration objectives for Thames Gateway South Essex 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 with supporting objectives are described 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 is recognised. The Framework promotes action to 'bring the natural environment closer to communities by developing a Greengrid linking urban and rural environments'. This Strategy, therefore, is a key component in the regeneration process to improve quality of life alongside building a better sense of place for the region.

Local Policy Context

It is recognised that Local Development Frameworks and Area Development Frameworks will replace Local Plans in due course. This Strategy is intended to inform the preparation of those Frameworks. The following local authorities have published Local Plans and policies which have influenced this Strategy:

- Thurrock
- Castle Point
- Basildon
- Rochford
- Southend –on-Sea

Local Biodiversity Action Plans

Local Biodiversity Action Plans identify local priorities and contribute to the delivery of the national species and Habitat Action Plan targets.

## Appendix 3 - Index of Collated Information

Title	Author	Date
South Essex SSSI, RAMSAR, SPA, SAC's		
European Route of Industrial Heritage		
Thames Strategy East		In Preparation
East London Green Grid		In Preparation
Kent Thameside Green Grid		In Preparation
North Kent Regional Park		In Preparation
Essex Coast Environmentally Sensitive Area : Environmental Guidelines	ADAS	March 1997
Leisure for Life – A Leisure Strategy for Basildon	Basildon District Council	
Basildon District Local Plan	Basildon District Council	Adopted March 1998
Basildon District Local Plan Proposals Map	Basildon District Council	Adopted 25 March 1998
Basildon District Local Plan Conservation Area Inset Maps	Basildon District Council	Adopted 25 March 1998
Basildon District Local Plan 2001-2011	Basildon District Council	July 2001
Strategic Plan 2003/2006	Basildon District Council	2003
Various leaflets	Basildon District Council	
Gardiners Lane South, Basildon – public consultation, draft supplementary planning guidance	Basildon District Council	March 2003
Basildon District Local Plan Alterations – Policy BAS S5 and Policy BAS SH4	Basildon District Council	Adopted 23 Sept. 1999
Town Parks, Grounds and Open Spaces	Basildon District Council	
Extracts from Community Strategies	Basildon/Castle Point/Southend/Rochford	
Castle Point Borough Council Adapted Local Plan	Castle Point Borough Council	Dec 2003
Essex Landscape Character Assessment	Chris Blandford Associates/Essex County Council	July 2002
Character Area 81 – Greater Thames Estuary (Extract from Countryside Character Vol. 6)	Countryside Agency	
East of England 2010 : Prosperity and opportunity for all (Regional Economic Strategy)	EEDA	2001
EEDA Corporate Plan 2003-2006	EEDA	April 2003
Towns and Cities Strategy and Action Plan: Urban Renaissance in the East of England	EEDA	Dec 2003
Sustainability Development Framework for the East of England	EEDA	Sep 2001
A Shared Vision: the regional economic strategy for the East of England	EEDA	Dec 2004

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The East of England Plan (Draft RSS)	EERA - East of England Regional Assembly	
Our Environment, Our Future: The Regional Environment Strategy for the East of England	EERA / East of England Environment Forum (EEEF)	July 2003
East of England Sustainable Development Framework	EERA / Sustainable Development Round Table	Oct 2001
Living with Climate Change in the East of England	EERA / Sustainable Development Round Table	Nov. 2004
Woodland For Life: The Regional Woodland Strategy for the East of England	EERA/Forestry Commission	Nov. 2003
Woodland for Life: Regional Woodland Strategy for East of England	EERA/Forestry Commission	Nov 2003
A Welcome Home – A sense of Place for a New Thames Gateway	English Heritage	March 2004
An Archaeological Research Framework for the Greater Thames Estuary	English Heritage/Essex County Council, et. al.	
Thames Gateway and Flood Risk Management – A Preliminary Assessment	Environment Agency	May 2003
Essex Local Transport Plan – Annual Progress Report	Essex County Council	July 2002
Essex Local Transport Plan – Annual Progress Report – Technical Annex	Essex County Council	July 2002
‘Richer in land than in inhabitants’: Historic landscape in Thames Gateway	Essex County Council	
Biodiversity Action Plan	Essex County Council	
Essex and Southend-on-Sea : Replacement Structure Plan	Essex County Council	April 2001
The Thames Chase Plan	Essex County Council	2000
Essex Local Transport Plan – The Essex Approach to Transport	Essex County Council, Environmental Services	July 2000
Essex Local Transport Plan – Appendices	Essex County Council, Environmental Services	July 2000
Regions and subregions of Essex – Extract from The Essex Landscape, in search of its History	Essex County Council, Planning	1996
The Archaeology of South Essex	Essex County Council/English Heritage	
Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation	Essex Wildlife Trust	
A New Focus for England’s Woodlands – Strategic Priorities and Programmes	Forestry Commission	
Thames Gateway Planning Framework 1995 RPG9A	Government Office	1995
Bringing the Big Outdoors Closer to People: Improving the Countryside around London: The Green Arc Approach	Land Use Consultants for the Green Arc Steering Group	April 2004
Culture: a catalyst for change, a strategy for cultural development for the East of England	Living East	June 2004
Creating Sustainable Communities : Greening the Gateway	ODPM	Jan 2004
Creating Sustainable Communities : Greening the Gateway Implementation Plan	ODPM	Feb 2005
Creating Sustainable Communities : Delivering the Thames Gateway	ODPM	March 2005
Making it Happen : Thames Gateway and Growth Areas	ODPM	July 2003
Rochford District Replacement Local Plan 2003 – Pre-deposit version	Rochford District Council	2003
Woodlands Walks in South-East Essex – Kingley Wood/Hockley Woods	Rochford District Council	
Rochford “Our Heritage, Our Future” – Information	Rochford District Council	
Rochford District Community Strategy – Draft 1	Rochford District Council	
Rochford District Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy	Rochford District Council	April 2002

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Rochford District Transport Strategy	Rochford District Council	March 2000
Arts and Leisure Home Page	Rochford District Council	2002
Environmental Policy	Rochford District Council	
Volary Views – Issue 4	RSPB	Spring 2003
SAIL Leaflet	SAIL	
The Grapevine	South Ockendon Community Forum	May 2003
Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Archaeology (extract from internet)	Southend-on-Sea Borough Council	2003
Extract from Annual Progress Report 2002	Southend-on-Sea Borough Council	July 2002
Southend-on-Sea Borough Local Plan – Proposals Map	Southend-on-Sea Borough Council	Adopted March 1994
Examples of work undertaken in Southend: Boroughwide and Strategic Tasks	Southend-on-Sea Borough Council	
Southend 2011 – An Urban Vision for the New Millennium	Southend-on-Sea Borough Council	March 2001
Parks Strategy	Southend-on-Sea Borough Council	2003
Chalkwell Park Management Plan Index	Southend-on-Sea Borough Council	
A Safer Journey to School	Southend-on-Sea Borough Council	1999
Learning for Living – The single regeneration budget in Southend-on-Sea	Southend-on-Sea Borough Council	2002
Combating Crime, Theft and Vandalism	Southend-on-Sea Borough Council	
East Coast Festivals	Southend-on-Sea Borough Council	
Strategic Greenways in Thames Gateway South Essex	Sustrans	
The National Cycle Network : North East London Cycle Route	Sustrans	June 1999
The Thames Chase Plan	Thames Chase	2000
Out and About in Thames Chase	Thames Chase Community Forest	2004
Tidal Thames Habitat Action Plan	Thames Estuary Partnership	March 2003
Thames Estuary Recreation Study	Thames Estuary Partnership	June 2001
Annual Report, year ended 31 March 2003	Thames Gateway South Essex	2003
A Vision for the Future	Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership	

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Delivering the Future	Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership	July 2003
The Tilbury Challenge	The Port Partnership	2002
Thurrock Borough Landscape Character Assessment	Thurrock Council	Sept. 2001
A Landscape Strategy for Thurrock	Thurrock Council	2002
Thurrock Unitary Development Plan – Written Statement	Thurrock Council	Deposit March 2003
Thurrock Unitary Development Plan – Proposals Map	Thurrock Council	March 2003
Unitary Development Plan – Written Statement and Proposals Map	Thurrock Council	March 2003
Greenways Strategy	Thurrock Council	
Port Plan for Shell Haven	Thurrock Council	2002
Sustainable Communities: An Urban Development Corporation for Thurrock – A Consultation Paper	Thurrock Council	
Local Plan	Thurrock Council	
Biodiversity by Design: A Guide for Sustainable Communities	Town and Country Planning Association	October 2004

## Appendix 4 – Landscape Character Analysis

Landscape Character assessment provides a methodology for understanding the landscape resource, and provides an informed basis for decisions on appropriate management and interpretation. This landscape character assessment and analysis considers local areas in terms of their inherent landscape value and their potential for this Strategy. The results guide further assessment at a smaller site specific scale to outline key priority sites within the Strategy Area.

The desk-based landscape assessment is based on information from the following sources:

- Countryside Character Volume 7 The Countryside Agency (1999)
- Essex County Landscape Assessment, Chris Blandford Associates (2003)
- Thurrock Borough Landscape Assessment, Thurrock Council (Sept. 2001); and
- Regions and Sub-regions of Essex , J. Hunter in The Essex Landscape - in search of its history, ECC Planning (1996).

The desk based study was supported by on site reconnaissance.

### National Landscape Character

In 1999 the Countryside Agency published Volume 7 of the Character of England map (The Countryside Agency 1999). The map and supporting description provides the top tier in the hierarchy of Landscape Character Assessment in England and a national context for regional and local landscape and ecological assessments.

The Strategy Area is covered by two National Landscape Character Areas, as defined by the Countryside Agency in the Character of England map (1999). The relevant areas are the Greater Thames Estuary and the Northern Thames Basin

(Figure 14 National Landscape Character ).

The Greater Thames Estuary Landscape Character Area (LCA) covers a band of land alongside the Thames estuary, extending inland up tributary rivers from Faversham in North Kent to Harwich. It covers the southern part of the study area from Purfleet to Two Tree Island, and a smaller area between the northern edge of Southend and the Strategy Area. Key characteristics of this section of the Greater Thames Estuary LCA are:

- Extensive open spaces dominated by the sky within a predominantly flat, low-lying landscape. The pervasive presence of water and numerous coastal estuaries extend the maritime influence far inland
- Strong feeling of remoteness and wilderness persists on the open beaches and salt marshes, on the reclaimed farmed marshland and also on the mudflats populated by a large and varied bird population
- Traditional unimproved wet pasture grazed with sheep and cattle. Extensive drained and ploughed productive arable land protected from floods by sea walls, with some areas of more mixed agriculture on higher ground
- Open grazing pastures patterned by a network of ancient and modern reed-fringed drainage ditches and dykes, numerous creeks and few vertical boundaries such as hedges or fences
- Hedgerows are absent from the large, rectilinear fields with trees beginning where the marsh ceases and the ground starts to rise on land overlying the London Clay Lowlands. Generally, tree cover is limited to farmsteads and dwellings on the higher, drier pockets of ground
- Distinctive military heritage on coastline such as Napoleonic military defences and 20th century pillboxes.
- Numerous small villages and hamlets related to the coastal economy of fishing (at Mersea), boatbuilding and yachting. The historically important coastal cargo transport network of 'Thames Barges' developed as a result of settlement pattern
- Modern day pattern of local parishes reflects the historical layout of settlements, surrounded by farmland on the higher ground inland, giving way to marsh down to the waterfront
- Pressure on edges, particularly around major estuaries, from urban, industrial and recreational developments together with the associated infrastructure requirements often on highly visible sites against which the marshes are often viewed; and
- The Thames edge marshes are themselves subject to the chaotic activity of various major developments including ports, waste disposal, marine dredging, urbanisation, mineral extraction and prominent power stations plus numerous other industry-related activities such as petrochemical complexes.

## Appendix 4 – Landscape Character Analysis

The Northern Thames Basin LCA covers the higher parts of the study area, i.e. the Thames Terraces, the Langdon and Benfleet Hills and Southend. It extends to the northern boundary of the study area, except at the eastern end. Much of this LCA falls outside the study area boundary, as it extends northwards in an arc between Hertford, Chelmsford and Colchester. The Northern Thames Basin is subdivided into four smaller LCAs. The area within the study area is known as the “London Clay Lowlands” Its key characteristics are:

- The area north-west of Thurrock is influenced by straight field boundaries which are thought to be the boundaries of Roman estates
- Groves, mineral extraction sites and wood pastures were historic features of the area
- London Clay soils are difficult to cultivate. Historically, permanent grassland would have dominated in this area. Today’s intensive cereal production is the result of ploughing and fertilising the soil since the 1950s and the installation of underdrainage systems
- Hedgerows are generally species-poor with a high preponderance of Blackthorn. Dutch Elm disease largely destroyed elm hedges, elm hedgerow trees and field trees within the farmed landscape. As a result, much of the farmed landscape appears neglected and featureless.
- Interest and variety in the landscape are provided by the hills around Langdon, Hockley and Rayleigh. They are quite well wooded relative to the surrounding land, but have also been heavily developed
- “Plotland” woods of Laindon and Thundersley are a distinctive landscape feature, where woodland has sprung up on former urbanised land
- The area contains a variety of settlements, including Southend seaside resort, Basildon New Town, commuter

settlements, and outer London suburbs. Traditional buildings are weatherboarded timber with brownish red pantiled roofs; and

- Development and significant mineral extraction dominates the area around Grays and Thurrock, with substantial sand and gravel pits visible in the alluvial deposits that overlay the London Clay.

### Local Landscape Character

There are fourteen distinctive local landscape character areas within the Strategy Area. The numbers, names and key characteristics described below correspond to those areas delineated on Figure 15 Sub-regional Landscape Character Areas.

#### 1. Aveley and West Thurrock Marshes

- Flat low-lying landscapes with alluvial clayey soils
- Mostly traditional grazing marsh with an intricate network of winding ditches, areas of seasonal flooding, and small areas of reed beds.
- A lack of hedges/trees and fences, with only a few isolated areas of scrub.
- Extensive open landscapes, dominated by the sky, with a strong feeling of exposure.
- Small 20th century brick and concrete military structures.
- Settlement confined to the boundaries; and
- Visually detracting influences include the surrounding industrial estates and pylon routes.

#### 2. Grays and Thurrock Towns

- Large areas of development. Historically linked with Thames Docks and associated river traffic.
- 20th century development associated with the river crossing at Dartford, and the motorway/ trunk road network.
- Development form is dense settlements on slightly raised ground, separated by lower-lying areas of marsh and river valleys

- Within settlements are areas of disused workings, many of which now contain woodland and lakes.
- Adjacent to the river Thames, the landscape is dominated by large-scale industrial sites including port buildings, power stations, and petrochemical works; and
- To the north, the landscape is dominated by transport infrastructure and associated retail areas.

#### 3. Mucking and Tilbury Marshes

- An expansive low-lying landscape of drained and wet marshland. Skyscapes and views to the estuary contribute to the area’s sense of isolation
- Mudflats, salt marshes and creeks are visible at low tide
- Historic defensive features (earthworks and buildings) at Coalhouse Fort
- Where marsh has been drained, a regular pattern of arable fields bounded by ditches has been created
- Settlement is limited to a few scattered farms on the inland edge of the landscape character area.
- Large industrial buildings dominate views to the south west; and
- Flooded gravel pits (some of which have been used for tipping) are a feature of the landscape.

## Appendix 4 – Landscape Character Analysis

### 4. Buckingham Hill Thames Terraces

- Underlying geology of sands and gravels creates a distinctive undulating ridge with a relatively steep southern escarpment
- Local high point of Buckingham Hill gives a sense of elevation which is enhanced by panoramic views over the marshes and Thames estuary below
- A predominantly arable landscape, of regular medium-large fields, traditionally bordered by hedgerows, although many hedgerow trees have been lost to Dutch Elm disease
- Areas of relict sandy heath and oak/ash woodland, particularly around the summit of Buckingham Hill
- The southern escarpment of the ridge is characterised by a small-scale landscape of hedgerowed fields and lanes
- The settlement pattern is largely limited to scattered farms. Main roads, the edges of surrounding towns, and areas of 20th century suburban housing and industry have an urban-fringe influence.
- Gravel and sand pits are scattered throughout the area; and
- Power lines pass through the character area and influence views.

### 5. Corrington Thames Terraces.

- An area dominated by the 20th Century extensions to the settlements of Corrington and Stanford-le-Hope
- An elevated landscape forming a transition between the marshes to the south and east and Langdon Hills to the north
- Underlying geology of sands and gravels creates the Thames Terrace ridge
- Plotlands create a distinctive settlement pattern in the eastern part of the area

- A network of historic trackways to the river is still discernable in the road pattern; and
- In general a fairly open arable landscape, with a rectilinear field pattern and limited tree cover (primarily due to the loss of hedgerow elms).

### 6. Langdon Hills

- Prominent rounded sand and gravel hills and ridges, with steep south and west facing escarpments
- A strongly wooded character with significant areas of ancient, typically oak-hornbeam woodland
- A patchwork of irregular small to medium sized fields, mainly pasture, with thick hedgerow boundaries set within a wooded structure, providing a feeling of intimacy. There are some small remaining areas of species-rich meadows
- Sense of elevation with dramatic panoramic views of lower land and the Thames estuary
- Historically sparse settlement pattern of individual dwellings/small hamlets, overlain in parts by 20th century plotland development. Some plot lands are now characterized by self-regenerating woodland. Built development is well integrated into the landscape with little adverse visual impact; and
- Absence of visual impacts from power lines, major roads or mineral workings.

### 7. Fobbing and Bowers Marshes

- Flat, low lying, open and exposed land, with wide sweeping views dominated by the sky
- Extensive areas of grazing marsh with some significant pockets of intensive arable farmland, on poorly drained alluvial clay soils. A large disused tip is located in the centre of the C.A.
- Network of mostly winding ditches and dykes including small reed beds, and wider creeks, with fringing saltmarsh and tidal mudflats.

- Lack of hedgerows and fences. Small isolated areas of scrub
- Restricted settlements and few roads/footpaths lead to a sense of wildness/remoteness; and
- Oil storage tanks and chimneys of refineries are prominent in views, and provide strong vertical features in a landscape which otherwise has a strong horizontal emphasis.

## Appendix 4 – Landscape Character Analysis

### 8. Basildon Town

- Classic ‘new town’ layout with dense development separated by parkland areas
- All development is of a similar age (Mid 20th century)
- Roads are generally laid out on a distorted grid system; and
- The town has a series of distinct zones: residential, industrial, retail etc.

### 9. North Benfleet Farmland

- An open area, characterised by regular arable fields and “plotlands” development
- Plotlands have a distinctive character - a regular grid of plots, accessed from straight roads. Plots contain a variety of permanent or temporary dwellings, and are well vegetated
- The edges of the area are dominated by transport corridors - the A13, A130 and A127
- Fields are traditionally divided by hedgerows. These survive best in the south-west corner of the character area, where there are mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The eastern side of the character area is much more open
- The area has an elevated feel and a gently undulating topography; and
- Pylon routes dominate views of farmland in the A130 corridor.

### 10. Southend Town

- A predominantly 19th century, densely developed seaside town
- The focal point of the town is the seafront, with residential districts stretching inland.
- The western part of the character area is elevated, with steeply undulating topography around Benfleet Hill

- Extensive blocks of woodland (including some ancient woodland) dominate the Benfleet Hill area; and
- Modern residential areas at the peripheries of older settlements.

### 11. Benfleet Hill

- Rolling hills with steep south and west facing escarpments covered by open grassland or a mosaic of small woods, pastures and commons
- Panoramic, long-distance views across Benfleet Creek and Canvey Island
- Settlement limited to scattered houses and farms; and
- Woodland and mature vegetation gives a sense of relative enclosure.

### 12. Benfleet Creek

- A flat landscape dominated by the main channel and braided creeks and islands of Benfleet Creek
- Hadleigh Castle is an important focal point and vertical element in the landscape
- Concentration of visitor attractions at Hadleigh Castle Country Park and Two Tree Island Nature Reserve
- Views to the north dominated by Benfleet escarpment; and
- No settlements.

### 13. Canvey Island Town

- A flat landform, reclaimed from the sea
- A relatively densely built-up area, with a strongly urban feel
- Buildings restrict outward views, except on Canvey seafront, from where there are views across the Thames estuary to the Kent coast; and
- Strongest sense of time-depth around the village marshes and Dutch cottage.

### 14. Crouch and Roach Farmland

- Rolling or gently undulating arable farmland, with regular fields of variable size and thick or intermittent hedgerow boundaries

- Frequent long views across farmland to the estuaries from higher ground
- Strongly right angled pattern of lanes; and
- Small villages, a scattering of hamlets, farmsteads and newer suburban properties are concentrated along the lanes on higher ground.

## COLOUR VALUES



## FULL COLOUR (PANTONES/CMYK)

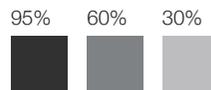


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