

THE THAMES GATEWAY

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1. Following the recent announcement by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, this report seeks Members agreement that the Council work in partnership with the Essex Thames Gateway Authorities (Rochford, Southend, Castle Point, Basildon and Thurrock) to develop and implement a co-ordinated mechanism for delivering the objectives of the Thames Gateway.
The extension of the Thames Gateway is a statutory designation.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On the 7th March 2000, the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions announced the extension of the Thames Gateway to include Basildon, Castle Point, Southend, Thurrock, and the site of London Southend Airport within Rochford District.
- 2.2 The announcement follows an extensive campaign by all authorities involved to secure an extension to the boundaries in the interests of creating an integrated approach to economic regeneration, addressing the needs of South Essex and creating a counter balance to the economic and development pressures to the west of London.
- 2.3 Inclusion within the extended Gateway will have the following benefits:
- The identification of common economic and social problems
 - Shared analysis of causes and methods for tackling problems
 - Exchange of data and good practice
 - Attraction of European funds
 - Joint activities to identify and access sources of funds to tackle key problems
 - Preparation of joint bids
 - The development of a more balanced and sustainable pattern of development across the whole of the extended area

3 PARTNERSHIP MECHANISM

- 3.1 The benefits outlined above will work to stimulate the economy of south Essex and thus help to facilitate the economic regeneration of the area. However, in order to gain maximum benefit it is considered essential that the authorities in south Essex, included in the Gateway, work together in partnership within a formal administrative mechanism.
- 3.2 The Essex Economic Partnership (EEP) created a mechanism, involving the south Essex authorities, which has been successful in

securing the extension to Thames Gateway. In order to create a strong and recognisable body capable of representing all of the south Essex Thames Gateway authorities in discussions with Ministers and Civil Servants, it is considered essential that this partnership mechanism, co-ordinated by EEP, be formalised.

- 3.3 The EEP is due to report the arrangements for delivery of the Thames Gateway in south Essex to a meeting with Hilary Armstrong on 20 April 2000. Therefore, it is essential that all authorities agree to be part of such a partnership mechanism in order to ensure that EEP can make a robust presentation to Ministers.

4 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The aim of the extended Thames Gateway is to address economic regeneration issues, including skill shortages. Economic regeneration has an important influence on crime and disorder.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Thames Gateway extension has the potential to bring considerable environmental benefits to the south Essex.

6 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 It is proposed that the Council **RESOLVES:**

To agree to work in partnership with the Essex Thames Gateway Authorities, and that a formal South Essex Thames Gateway Partnership Mechanism, co-ordinated by the Essex Economic Partnership, be developed. (HCPI)

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Background Papers:

Letter from Essex Economic Partnership dated 31 March 2000.

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