

REPORT TO THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE 16 MARCH 2011

PORTFOLIO: PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION

REPORT FROM HEAD OF PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION

SUBJECT: INTEGRATED COUNTY STRATEGY (ICS)

1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 That the Greater Essex Integrated County Strategy be endorsed.
- 1.2 That there be a further report in due course on progress towards developing an action plan to take forward the priority themes and investments, as outlined in the report.

2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The ICS, prepared by all authorities in Greater Essex, sets out a strategic focus around Thames Gateway South Essex, key towns and low carbon energy that will most effectively provide economic growth in Greater Essex.

3 SALIENT INFORMATION

- 3.1 The ICS provides the connection between national and local policy, identifies strength and potential, and considers how assets in the county can be used to improve the area for residents and make greater Essex a more attractive location for businesses. A summary of the strategy is appended to this report and a full copy has been placed in the Members' Library.
- 3.2 The ICS provides a shared and agreed vision for Greater Essex to identify the real priorities and outcomes needed to achieve increased economic growth. The plan is underpinned by extensive research and background material looking at the economic climate, transport, employment and sustainability.
- 3.3 The ICS sets out a strategic focus around Thames Gateway South Essex, a number of key towns and the low carbon energy agenda. The strategic focus is developed into eight priority themes – town centres, neighbourhood regeneration, sustainable growth, economic drivers, economic base, skills, sustainable connectivity and key sectors. In turn, the priority themes are linked to sixteen areas for priority investment (see section 7.0 of appendix).
- 3.4 At this stage, the intention is for all authorities in Greater Essex to endorse the approach set out in the ICS and to support the next steps of developing more detailed proposals.
- 3.5 The preparation of the ICS has progressed against the rapidly changing backdrop of government proposals for economic vehicles and products to support future growth. It is important for the next stage of the ICS to fully

reflect these changes and to build in options that will take best advantage of new opportunities.

- 3.6 The Kent, Greater Essex and East Sussex Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is preparing proposals to support and develop business and enterprise, aiming to obtain support from the Regional Growth Fund. It will be important to rest the proposals from the ICS within the context and direction of the LEP.
- 3.7 At a more local level, authorities are preparing their own Local Investment Plans (LIPs) and, whilst these are focussed very specifically on locally important projects, it will nevertheless also be essential to tie-in these bottom up perspectives to the wider brief set out in the ICS.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 It would be possible to set aside the ICS and simply focus at a local level on priority projects. However, this would be to lose sight of the very real opportunities expected to emerge from the strategic focus and perspectives for investment and economic growth outlined in the ICS.
- 4.2 That being the case, the option to not be involved in the preparation of the ICS is neither appropriate nor realistic if the District wants to pull its weight in delivering real economic growth and development in South East Essex.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no specific resource implications other than officer time involved in progressing the ICS.
- 5.2 Proposals for investment may emerge in due course and these will be progressed through budget making as appropriate.

6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from the Integrated County Strategy.

I confirm that the above recommendation does not depart from Council policy and that appropriate consideration has been given to any budgetary and legal implications.

SMT Lead Officer Signature: _____

Head of Planning & Transportation

Background Papers:

Greater Essex Integrated County Strategy, December 2010.

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The Greater Essex Integrated County Strategy



This document provides an introduction to the Integrated County Strategy, summarising our core priorities guiding investment in our county. This document should be read in conjunction with the full ICS document, which provides a comprehensive analysis of the evidence base, and further details on the investments which should have a transformative effect on our county.

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1.0 Vision

1.1 Greater Essex is taking a clear lead in responding to the changing global economy. The Integrated County Strategy (ICS) provides a vision for Greater Essex, identifying the investment needed to maximise our economic growth. The ICS exists to direct investment to projects that will underpin the future economic stability of UK plc.

1.2 The ICS provides the connection between national and local policy, identifies strength and potential, and considers how we can use our key assets to improve the area for residents and make Greater Essex an even more attractive location for businesses. Moreover, within the context of public spending cuts and reduced public intervention, the ICS aims to identify the key strategic projects which will provide the maximum return on investment and greatest benefits.

1.3 The ICS has been produced on behalf of the Essex Chief Executives Association with agreement from all 15 county, unitary and district authorities of Greater Essex. A collaborative and rigorous process of research, consultation, and testing of issues and opportunities has identified a tripartite focus that, if adhered to, will most effectively provide economic growth in Greater Essex.



2.0 Our strategic focus

2.1 Our broad strategic focus is set out in the three boxes below:

Thames Gateway South Essex (TGSE)

Achieve transformational development and change throughout TGSE to significantly improve the local economy, quality of life of residents, and natural and built environment

Key Towns

Promote opportunities for economic growth, redevelopment, and regeneration in the key urban centres of Southend, Thurrock, Basildon, Harlow, Chelmsford, and Colchester

Low Carbon Energy

Support the growth of renewable and low carbon energy as a key sector and promote the growth and location of associated industries in Greater Essex

3.0 Our strengths

3.1 Greater Essex has an unparalleled economic offer; our key facets are as follows:

Excellent European and UK location for business

Close proximity to London, Cambridge and Felixstowe

Established international links achieved through good transport links to London and to Europe

Presence of multi-national and leading edge and innovative companies

Buoyant business environment, with a UK-leading reputation for business start-ups and entrepreneurship

World class airports and expanding ports

Internationally significant logistics sector

Good access to higher education facilities

Regional cities, regional town centres, and a major retail offer

Growing agricultural economy supporting related businesses

High quality natural environment



4.0 Why is the ICS required?

4.1 Our ambition for Greater Essex is to create a highly performing and competitive economy that makes a significant contribution to UK economic growth and recovery; provides for the successful regeneration of Essex communities; promotes healthy communities and supports vulnerable people; and provides a high quality of life for our residents.

4.2 To achieve this, Greater Essex must tackle the key issues that limit the area's ability to maximise the full economic potential that its major strengths provide for. These issues include:

- Connectivity within and between the main towns, especially at times of peak demand
- Economic and physical decline in parts of our major towns
- Rail service needs improvement in terms of quality, service pattern, and travel time
- Below average skills levels at Levels II, III and IV compared to national and regional averages
- Increasing number of young people who are economically inactive
- Low proportion of Essex SMEs who trade internationally
- Shortage of staff to service the expanding logistics sector
- High house prices and localised problems of housing affordability
- Access to broadband in rural areas

4.3 We recognise that the era of reduced finances make it necessary for us to target any available investment very carefully. The ICS provides a clear statement to:

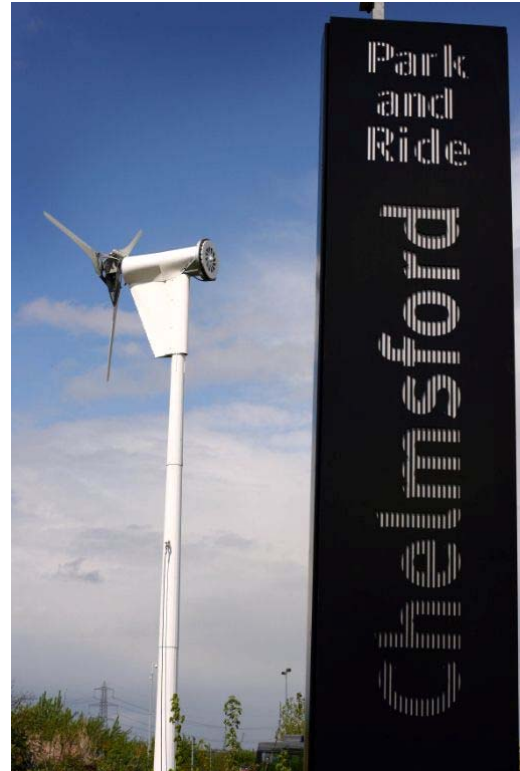
- 1) identify the issues of highest importance; and
- 2) identify the interventions which would produce the greatest benefits

5.0 Our strategic focus, priority themes, and priority investments

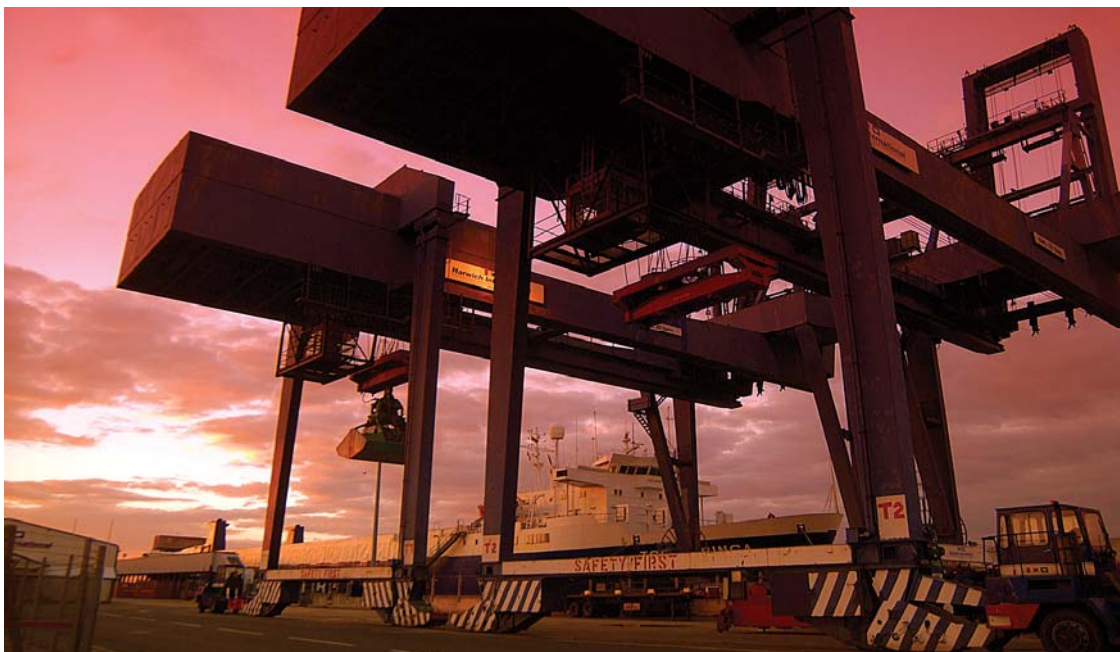
5.1 Research undertaken throughout the production of the ICS identified a number of opportunities for Greater Essex based on our existing assets. The key priorities closely relate to the main opportunities in Greater Essex, and attempt to use existing assets and opportunities to direct investment and provide the most effective approach to realising our significant economic potential.

5.2 Our approach to directing investment will be towards:

- 1) Prioritising the smarter use of our existing assets and maximising benefits arising from new economic opportunities
- 2) Targeting action to tackle key areas of development, growth and regeneration
- 3) Delivering changes that nest within a clear, long term strategy



Section 7 illustrates our approach. It details our tripartite focus (on TGSE, Key Towns and Low Carbon Energy), and demonstrates the link between this, our priority themes, and our priority investments.



Thames Gateway South Essex (TGSE)

Achieve transformational development and change throughout TGSE to significantly improve the local economy, quality of life of residents, and natural and built environment

Priority Themes:

The Thames Gateway is the UK's top priority for regeneration, and the largest regeneration opportunity in Europe. Despite its industrial heritage, Thames Gateway South Essex is an area of significant untapped potential; and one that has previously punched below its weight in terms of attracting inward investment. To realise its full potential it must improve its image, skills levels, the quality of its town centres, and the transport connections between its towns.

Nevertheless, its close proximity and good connections to London and Europe, large economic base with leading companies, and major development opportunities, have all resulted in the area being earmarked for large scale growth in jobs and homes.

Thus far, this has been supported by robust performance of the logistics, manufacturing and retail sectors. The future and sustained realisation of this growth now requires a clear vision to direct future regeneration so that transformational development and change can be achieved.

The vision for Thames Gateway South Essex is:

To undertake a major economic, social, and environmental transformation of the urban areas in the sub-region through a programme of large scale regeneration, employment-led development and transport improvements, so that its local economy, quality of life of residents, and its natural and built environment is significantly improved.

Priority Investments:

The ICS will focus on the delivery of transformational change within the vision stated above. Priority investments established for the TGSE through the ICS are as follows:

Town centre regeneration in Basildon, Lakeside Basin, and Southend

- Provide for new housing growth
- Create a more positive image

Promote and advance neighbourhood regeneration needs

- Deliver regeneration in key neighbourhoods in Basildon

Promote and maximise potential benefits at key sites for employment and further economic development

Support the delivery of the London Gateway and make best use of the economic opportunities created by its growth

Maximising the job opportunities arising from the low carbon and digital economy through up skilling the local workforce

- Improve the skills levels of resident workers

Create an improved economic base and quality office space

- Improve the quality, availability, and range of employment sites and premises
- Improve the economic base in key urban areas

Enhance connectivity to jobs and services, and deliver reliable and predictable journey times

- Improve connectivity between the complex pattern of towns and to the strategic transport network
- Improve access to international ports and airports
- Reduce congestion and crowding on transport networks

Key Towns

Promote opportunities for economic growth, redevelopment, and regeneration in the key urban centres of Southend, Thurrock, Basildon, Harlow, Chelmsford, and Colchester

Priority Themes:

Our main towns are the drivers of the local economy and have been identified as critical to the delivery of the ICS. Commuting patterns within Greater Essex emphasise the key role provided by our main urban areas in serving both their own population and their rural catchments in terms of jobs and services.

This presents an opportunity to build on their role as key economic centres; to promote their self containment; and cement their economic vitality by supporting growth and redevelopment with focused investment around stimulating the economy and improving infrastructure.

Well designed and attractive town centres and neighbourhoods improve perception and encourage new residents and businesses to locate there. We want our towns to be successful. We will ensure the growth is sustainable by creating a high quality of life for residents, and providing employment growth alongside new housing to reduce the need to commute long distances. Appropriate transport provision will be necessary to ensure reliable journey times, manage road traffic congestion, and provide a variety of travel choices. Thriving towns are essential to enhance the competitiveness of local businesses and provide attractive places to live and to invest in.

Regeneration and development is not just about the direct delivery of jobs and homes; it will also

have a catalytic effect of attracting people to live and work in our towns, and improving the economy of Greater Essex as a whole. Attractive town centres that provide a broad range of services and facilities, and good quality housing for a range of people, will enable Essex towns to emerge as nationally significant magnets for investment.

Priority Investments:

The priority investments in the ICS for the key towns will be:

Town centre regeneration and redevelopment in Chelmsford, Harlow, Colchester, Basildon, Lakeside Basin, and Southend

- The need for modernisation, physical redevelopment and regeneration, and improvement to the range of services and facilities within town centres
- Ensuring that town centres capture the amount of retail and leisure spend that would be expected for urban areas of their size and rural hinterlands
- Ensuring that connectivity within and between the main towns is appropriate to support a thriving economy

Neighbourhood regeneration and improvements to housing quality and choice in Harlow, Colchester, and Basildon

- Supporting regeneration needs in neighbourhoods across Greater Essex reduce levels of deprivation and improve housing quality
- Improving affordability and choice of housing to meet the needs of the urban area

Create a balanced pattern of sustainable growth

- Ensuring that housing is matched with jobs and services, particularly in areas of highest growth
- Ensuring appropriate transport provision is available to support growth

Low Carbon Energy

Support the growth of renewable and low carbon energy as a key sector and promote the growth and location of associated industries in Greater Essex

Priority Themes:

Greater Essex is at the centre of the world's largest market for offshore wind energy and is next to the UK's most dense area of new offshore development situated between the Humber, Greater Wash, and the Thames Estuary.

Our ports are perfectly located to support this fast growing sector. It is our imperative to promote Greater Essex as *the* place to invest for innovative companies in this sector. We expect that Essex will become predominant nationally in terms of the development and growth of the renewable energy sector. It therefore has to be a focus area for the ICS.

This provides a significant opportunity for Essex to nurture its renewable energy sector, as well as ensuring that our businesses are able to capitalise on the requirements of the manufacture, maintenance, and infrastructure based operations of the offshore wind farms.

With the UK's transition towards a low carbon economy, there will also be a significant opportunity for Greater Essex firms to compete in the growing markets for green technologies and low carbon energy components and products.

Before the decommissioning of Bradwell Nuclear Power Station in 2002, Greater Essex had been an important producer of the UK's low carbon electricity. As part of the Government's programme to increase the UK's production of low carbon energy, Bradwell has been put

forward as a candidate site for the construction of a new nuclear power station.

However, a proposal at Bradwell has yet to be brought forward by a promoter and it would have to be decided by Government. It has not been included in the ICS on that basis.

Priority Investments:

The priority investments in the ICS for low carbon energy will be:

Support the promotion and location of wind port and related industries focused on Harwich and Essex University

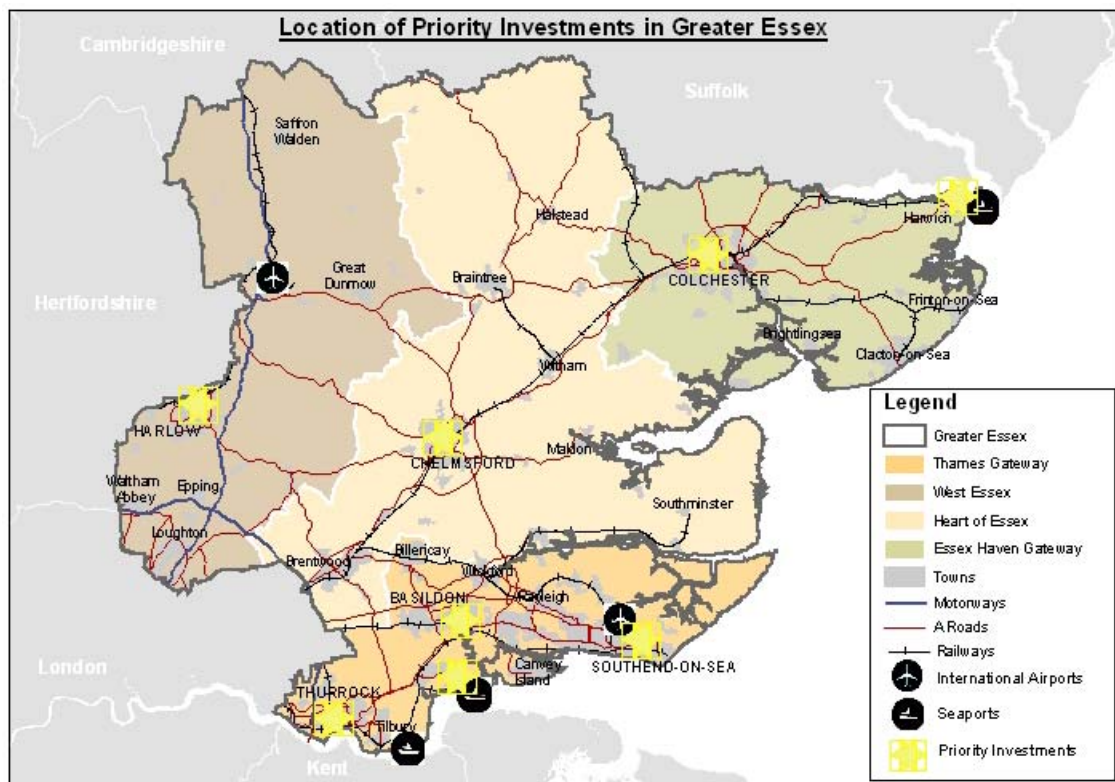
- Develop the excellent opportunities to grow local businesses to service off-shore renewable energy providers (such as for maritime survey work, the manufacturing of components, construction, and ongoing service and maintenance requirements)
- Enable Greater Essex companies to take advantage of market growth in green technologies and low carbon energy generation

Support the development and improvement of the Haven Gateway ports and make the best use of the economic opportunities created by growth

- Promote Greater Essex ports as hubs to serve the fast growth of UK off-shore renewable energy generation

Maximise the job opportunities arising from the low carbon economy through up skilling the local workforce

- Link the development of both these business sectors with the expertise provided by the University of Essex
- Provide skills training so that local people can take advantage of the increased demand for skilled workers



6.0 Next Steps

6.1 The next stage of the ICS will review in greater detail our agreed priority investments, and consider how they will be developed into more detailed proposals that could be resourced and delivered.

6.2 The ICS takes a broad and long term perspective looking between 10-20 years ahead. We now need to consider the following questions:

- How to organise the delivery of the priority investments in terms of their timing and phasing? For example, they could be grouped into different time bands (e.g., 1-3 years, 3-5 years, and 6+ years).
- Which stakeholders will be involved in delivery?
- What are our resourcing options; what is available and how will the ICS interface with the Local Enterprise Partnership's preparation of Regional Growth Fund bids?

- What could be achieved using existing resources?
- Which interventions could provide the greatest overall benefit? (e.g., more detailed sustainability report, costing and viability studies, and cost/benefit analyses could be undertaken)

The main ICS document that accompanies this summary provides background to the ICS process, and further information on the transformative change that a focus on TGSE, key towns and low carbon energy will sustain for our economy

7.0 The ICS Priorities

Our Strategic Focus

