

THAMES GATEWAY – SOUTH ESSEX PARTNERSHIP – ROCHFORD SPECIAL DELIVERY VEHICLE

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report updates Members on developments within the Partnership and seeks endorsement to the Council establishing a special delivery vehicle to oversee projects within the District funded via Thames Gateway monies.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Thames Gateway – South Essex forms part of the overall Thames Gateway initiative, which covers part of Kent and much of East London bordering the Thames. It is a national initiative and represents the largest regeneration project in Europe. Only a small part of Rochford lies within the Gateway; that is London Southend Airport and the adjoining employment area, but nonetheless the District enjoys full representation at Board level with the Leader of the Council, Cllr P F A Webster, being the Council's board representative.
- 2.2 Following on from the Deputy Prime Minister's announcements in late July/early August, progress is now well advanced to set up special delivery vehicles for each of the zones of change within Thames Gateway – South Essex. Thurrock is about to get its own Urban Development Corporation, which will mirror the Authority's boundaries. Southend's delivery vehicle will be a company limited by guarantee and will focus on the town centre and seafront. Basildon's delivery vehicle will comprise a partnership arrangement involving the Council and English Partnerships and will focus on the town centre and Gardiners Lane. Government funding will go directly to the projects in these areas via the delivery vehicles rather than via the South Essex Partnership Board.
- 2.3 To facilitate projects in both Castle Point and Rochford, Government have requested via the Thames Gateway South Essex partnership that special delivery vehicles should also be established in Castle Point and Rochford. However, given that the development opportunities are much more limited, it is recognised that a much more informal arrangement is appropriate.

3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 In order to take advantage of the funding opportunities available via Thames Gateway, it is proposed that the type of development vehicle established in Rochford District should simply be a working group of the Board of Thames Gateway – South Essex Partnership. Membership would be Rochford District Council, Essex County Council, East of England Development Agency (EEDA) and Thames Gateway – South Essex Partnership. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and the Regional Government Office would be invited to attend meetings as appropriate.
- 3.2 Membership would comprise a single representative of each of the above organisations, with the District Council chairing the Working Group's meetings.
- 3.3 The Working Group would identify potential projects, funding sources and determine the most appropriate means of delivery. It would also manage and monitor progress. Draft terms of reference are attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.4 With £1.5m having now been allocated to the Cherry Orchard Business Park for infrastructure improvement and ancillary works to accelerate the speedy development of that site, one of the first tasks of the Working Group would be to oversee the effective implementation of that project.
- 3.5 It is likely that via EEDA, further monies will be allocated specifically to Rochford and the Working Group will be able to oversee that task. Without such a body being in existence, it is unlikely that such funding will be forthcoming.

4 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The establishment of a specific delivery vehicle for Rochford and the funding streams that will hopefully follow offers the potential to secure significant environmental enhancements in the District.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The key resources involved in the establishment of a Working Group as a delivery vehicle for Rochford will be Member and officer time. However, given the limited number of development opportunities, the time input should be equivalent to no more than six to eight meetings per year.

6 RISK IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Strategic Risk

Without the establishment of a single delivery mechanism, as set out above, it is unlikely that funding opportunities via the Thames Gateway will be forthcoming.

6.2 Resource Risk

The only inputs from the Authority will be in terms of officer and Member time. In return, there is the potential to secure additional sums of funding via the Thames Gateway to facilitate projects within the District.

6.3 Reputation Risk

If a suitable delivery mechanism is not established, that may impact on our working relationships with the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership, ODPM, EEDA and the Government Office for the Regions.

7 RECOMMENDATION

7.1 It is proposed that the Committee RESOLVES

To agree to the establishment of a Working Group as outlined above, chaired by Rochford District Council, to oversee the implementation of projects funded via Thames Gateway monies. (CE)

Paul Warren

Chief Executive

Background Papers

Report to the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership Board dated 5th September.

For further information please contact Paul Warren on:-

Tel:- 01702 318199
E-Mail:- paul.warren@rochford.gov.uk

DRAFT

Rochford Working Group Delivery Mechanism Terms of Reference

1. To identify and promote new projects for submission to the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership Board for potential funding.
2. To oversee the implementation of projects specifically identified for funding via the Thames Gateway initiative.
3. To identify the skills mix, resource requirements, potential alternative sources of funding required and appropriate timeframes to secure effective project implementation.
4. To report back on a quarterly basis to the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership Board on progress.