



THURROCK

Economic Development Strategy

STRATEGY DOCUMENT

Thurrock Thames Gateway
Development Corporation

Contents

1. An Economic Strategy for Thurrock	1
2. The Economic Challenge for Thurrock	4
3. The Strategy Framework	8
4. Creating a Network of Economic Hubs	38
5. The Way Forward	43

1. An Economic Strategy for Thurrock

- 1.1 Thurrock faces a challenging future. The area must generate 26,000 additional jobs by 2021 in order that planned housing development and new population growth is fully sustainable. The need to create new employment will be significantly more challenging than the requirement for additional housing and means that the local economy must perform as strongly as possible over this critical period.
- 1.2 There are a number of essential factors that will support successful economic growth in Thurrock. These factors include skills development, provision of sites, premises and infrastructure, development of more effective business functions and networks, successful marketing and the attraction of high value-added inward investment.
- 1.3 Skills development, in particular, is of paramount importance to Thurrock's economic future. Without a significantly improved skills base, existing businesses will struggle to generate new employment and the area will fail to attract new investment.
- 1.4 It is the responsibility of all local partners collectively, led by the Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation, to ensure that the factors necessary for successful employment growth are all firmly in place. Employment growth in key target sectors must be both effectively 'enabled' and 'embedded'.
- 1.5 This Strategy is designed to address the key challenges currently facing the Thurrock economy and the challenges that may become more apparent in the future as the area itself, as well as external influences, alter.
- 1.6 The Strategy incorporates a number of components developed via the following mechanisms:
 - A thorough analysis of the economy of Thurrock;
 - In-depth consultation within Thurrock and at a regional and Thames Gateway-wide level;
 - An extensive survey of businesses based in Thurrock.
- 1.7 A detailed baseline review has been undertaken to ensure that the elements outlined within this Strategy are in line with the direction of travel of existing local, sub-regional and regional bodies. The review exercise also re-visited existing data to ensure that Thurrock's economic and social characteristics are fully taken account of. Critical to the recommendations outlined within this document, the baseline review identified the key sectors that should be specifically targeted for employment growth.

Thurrock's Economic Hubs

1.8 Through the completion of the Development Corporation's Spatial Plan and the ongoing development of the Borough Council's Local Development Framework, five key 'economic hubs' have been identified, namely:

- Purfleet;
- Grays;
- Lakeside and West Thurrock;
- Tilbury, and;
- London Gateway

1.9 These hubs collectively form the locations for employment growth across a range of target sectors and are effectively the engines of economic development in Thurrock. As such, it is absolutely imperative that the conditions and attributes for growth are evident and fully accessible in each hub.

1.10 The hubs will play unique, individual roles in securing employment growth. These roles are based on location characteristics, local economic history and linkage to surrounding areas. Each hub has been subject to a detailed masterplanning exercise which has identified sites for development and priority options for physical, economic and social improvement. These priorities must be delivered in full if Thurrock is to meet its job growth objectives successfully. Failure to deliver the proposals outlined in the masterplans for any of the hubs will seriously constrain Thurrock's potential for growth.

1.11 Critically the development of the hubs will provide a new mix of housing which will allow new and existing residents to stay and grow in the borough, creating a clear continuum for economic growth in the next 2 decades and beyond.

1.12 There are a number of critical developments across the hubs that will provide specific impetus to economic development efforts in Thurrock. These include:

- Full realisation of the London Gateway Developments, including development of the deep water port and associated land-side industrial and business functions;
- Establishment of a multi-functioning Learning Campus at Grays providing quality learning opportunities that range from post 14 learning through to further and higher education, all aimed at supporting growth in target sectors;
- Development of significant, high specification office space in the vicinity of Lakeside and as part of the London Gateway developments;
- Delivery of the Royal Opera House Production Park at Purfleet;
- The development of a state of the art, coal powered, carbon capture power station at Tilbury with an associated sustainable industrial park;

- A complete reorientation of the Thurrock inward investment offer positioning the area as one of national and international importance.
- 1.13 It is the responsibility of the Development Corporation to ensure the effective implementation of the masterplans and in so doing to provide the physical basis upon which partner agencies can successfully support the various strands of economic development activity.

Risks & Dependencies

- 1.14 The delivery of significant employment growth across key hub locations and within a number of target sectors is subject to considerable risk. The effective economic development of the area will be directly dependent upon a number of key factors, both physical and non-physical:
- Significant improvement to the road and transport networks serving Thurrock, in particular, improvement to Junction 30/31 of the M25 and improved road access to London Gateway;
 - Delivery of quality sites and premises in hub locations across Thurrock, in particular those that will attract operations in sectors likely to generate most employment;
 - Ability to successfully deliver the five masterplans covering the hubs and generate substantial investor and developer interest in the various priority sites and locations coming forward;
 - Delivery of a substantially improved skills and qualifications base that moves closer in quality to that of the Greater South East, driven by significant and sustained expansion of learning structures and facilities;
 - Development of a quality housing offer that attracts and retains high skill, high income individuals and their families;
 - Significantly improved partnership working, in order that partners in Thurrock and the wider area provide a strong, supportive basis for growth and development.

2. The Economic Challenge for Thurrock

2.1 The Thurrock Economic Development Strategy is designed to address a number of key economic challenges for the area. These are set out below.

2.2 **The need for new employment.** The overarching challenge for Thurrock is to create new jobs – 26,000 jobs are required by 2021. This is a necessary requirement for sustainable growth: an area with an increasing population requires more employment in-situ in order to generate economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Role of the Strategy – to create the platform for employment growth particularly in those sectors capable of generating significant numbers of quality, sustainable new jobs.

2.3 **The continually evolving policy landscape.** Thurrock finds itself at the crossroads of a number of strategic geographies. As a Thames Gateway Growth Area, it is subject to the direct influence of Central Government, as well as other organisations tasked with developing this specific growth area as a whole. Simultaneously, as an area within the Eastern region of England, Thurrock is directly affected by policy and strategy developed at the regional level.

2.4 The pressures and demands of a growth area location mean that the overall policy framework is shifting continually as development plans are designed and implemented. A key challenge for Thurrock therefore is both to adhere to and complement these policy platforms, while taking any opportunity to ‘bend’ them to its advantage. The Economic Development Strategy seeks to utilise the existing strategic landscape to generate maximum benefit for Thurrock.

Role of the Strategy – to support the achievement of regional and Thames Gateway wide objectives, while utilising the existing policy landscape to best effect.

2.5 **A relatively unbalanced employment base.** It is well known that the Thurrock economy has been driven historically by the presence of several large sectors that have dominated the business base in employment terms. Transport, logistics, port functions, as well as retail, still account for a substantial part of the current economic landscape. The challenge for Thurrock here is twofold. Firstly, there is a need to **diversify** the economy to some extent in order that it is less dependent upon a relatively narrow range of sectors. Secondly, and correspondingly, this diversification process must not impact upon the area’s core sectors negatively or create unnecessary barriers to the continuing development of businesses in these core activities.

2.6 Diversification and growth must be achieved simultaneously and in a mutually reinforcing fashion. As such, the area’s main employment sectors must be supported in diversifying *internally*, seeking to grow and attract higher value-added, higher skill functions wherever possible.

Role of the Strategy – to support both growth of the employment base in Thurrock as well as an appropriate and achievable level of diversification that does not impinge on the current performance of core sectors.

- 2.7 **A relatively weak skills base.** In comparison with the national profile, the labour force in Thurrock possesses a limited volume of higher level qualifications. This is particularly the case in terms of Level 3 and Level 4 qualifications. In addition, there are relatively low rates of progression from secondary school to further and particularly higher education.
- 2.8 This skills base is unlikely to attract new high value-added economic functions successfully, nor will it provide the platform for the current business base to maximise productivity and revenues. This is not to say that the area lacks skills per se, many of the industries that contribute to Thurrock’s current performance are highly skilled in nature, but this is not necessarily reflected in terms of formal accredited qualifications. There is a key challenge here around not only improving the quality of the overall skills base specifically in terms of qualification levels, but also in ensuring that these skills are deployed and utilised as effectively as possible.

Role of the Strategy – to provide the platform for uplift in the quality of the skills base in Thurrock and the capacity of businesses to use higher level skills effectively.

- 2.9 **A relatively limited educational offer.** Thurrock does not currently exhibit significant breadth in availability and delivery of Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE). There is no HE facility in the Borough currently, although some HE access or foundation level learning is available in a limited number of disciplines. There is a key challenge here around how to develop both breadth and depth in the education and learning offer. In addition to developing new facilities in Thurrock itself, the development of a transparent, accessible and effective offer on a wider geographic scale, encompassing institutions in London and the Eastern Region is necessary.
- 2.10 Of vital importance here is that the overall structure is clear, coherent and offers easily accessed progression routes suitable to a wide range of learners. There is a need to balance both the needs of the employer – often looking for bespoke, focused provision - with the needs of individual learners – usually requiring formal accreditation as a progression ‘currency’ within the labour market.

Role of the Strategy – to support the development of an education and learning offer strong in both depth and breadth.

- 2.11 **Some concentrations of socio-economic disadvantage.** A number of specific communities within Thurrock experience particularly severe levels of disadvantage on a par with large inner-city urban areas. In particular, South Ockendon and Tilbury have identifiable communities where multiple forms of deprivation are apparent. The challenge here is around ensuring that communities broadly within Thurrock are able to take advantage of new opportunities. Where there are segments of the population that are ill

equipped to take up these new opportunities, for whatever reason, the result will be an inability to utilise the Borough's pool of human resources effectively. Overall, this means Thurrock will not achieve its full economic potential.

Role of the Strategy – to support the ability of Thurrock's existing communities to access new opportunities and receive maximum possible benefit.

- 2.12 **Relatively low rates of enterprise.** Historically, Thurrock has not demonstrated high rates of new business formation. The presence of a number of very large employers in key industrial sectors may to some extent explain this trend. Recently, there has been a noticeable improvement in enterprise levels, with larger numbers of new businesses forming across the Borough. There remain, however, relatively high rates of business failure. Overall, the role of enterprise within the local economic environment is becoming stronger. As such, the challenge is to facilitate higher rates of sustainable business formation by building upon the currently improving enterprise base, ensuring that these businesses continue to locate in the Borough as they grow, develop and diversify.

Role of the Strategy – to encourage the development of support and infrastructure necessary to increase rates of enterprise and to ensure that growing businesses choose to remain in Thurrock.

- 2.13 **A number of infrastructure constraints.** In terms of progressing the economic development of Thurrock, a number of physical infrastructure elements will need to be addressed. In particular, the ability to move physically within the Borough is key; whilst the Borough is highly accessible from other parts of both the UK and Europe, due to its good external transport links, movement within the Borough itself can sometimes be difficult. In addition, infrastructure associated with business premises and business space is also limited. The near absence of high specification office premises across the Borough is detrimental to its economic development.

Role of the Strategy – to provide the platform for ongoing infrastructure development.

- 2.14 **A significant scale of development planned for Thurrock's key hub locations.** Thurrock has five key economic hubs – Purfleet, West Thurrock/Lakeside, Grays, Tilbury and London Gateway (formerly Shellhaven). These locations are all currently subject to individual masterplanning processes. As such, a large number of plans will be coming forward for the redevelopment and reconfiguration of these areas. It is imperative that planned development, especially as it relates to economic functions is taken forward in a coherent and complimentary fashion. The overall, desired result is that these locations compliment each other economically with each one effectively reinforcing the economic impact of the others. Any forms of unnecessary competition or duplication of activity or effort must be avoided.

Role of the Strategy – to provide guidance on the development of economic activities across the area that can be reflected in individual development plans for each of the economic hubs.

- 2.15 **London Gateway.** The London Gateway development presents an excellent opportunity for Thurrock to address several economic objectives simultaneously. The growth and diversification of the economic base will be supported positively by proposed developments at the former Shellhaven site.
- 2.16 The development of a large-scale, deep-water port, associated land-side operation, as well as business park developments will provide new employment opportunities and provide new key elements to the business infrastructure, not only of Thurrock, but of the greater South East of England as a whole. The key challenge is to support the development of London Gateway in a manner that maximises the benefit for Thurrock specifically. This will require detailed planning and facilitation in order that employment and skills development opportunities accrue to local people directly. In addition, there is a role to be played here in terms of ensuring that developments take place in a timely and environmentally sustainable fashion.
- 2.17 A number of factors under the direct influence of local partners will lead to London Gateway delivering a larger scale benefit to the local area in terms of business and employment opportunities. Skills development is key and it is imperative that education sector partners design and implement a robust and relevant programme of support to the developers and occupiers of London Gateway. In addition, local partners are also able to influence and support the development of local supply chains and business networks that again embed the benefits of development locally as fully as possible. Failure to implement measures of this kind will not necessarily hamper the development of London Gateway, but will reduce the opportunity to secure benefits specifically for local communities and local businesses.

Role of the Strategy – to identify and promote opportunities for development at London Gateway, maximising business development, skills enhancement and overall employment opportunities.

3. The Strategy Framework

- 3.1 The overall aim of the Thurrock Economic Development Strategy and accompanying Implementation Plan is to provide a basis for securing successful **employment growth and economic diversification**.
- 3.2 This is a strategy ‘owned’ by the Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation, but which will be delivered in partnership with a range of key local and regional stakeholders. As such, the Economic Development Strategy draws together a number of existing strategic visions that collectively express the broad economic aspirations of these stakeholders.

Vision

- 3.3 This Economic Development Strategy is essentially driven by the vision of the Development Corporation:

“To secure the comprehensive and sustainable housing and economic growth of Thurrock, through the structured development and regeneration of the Borough for the benefit of new and existing communities and for visitors to the area”.

- 3.4 This vision is underpinned by a series of Strategic Goals. The role of the Economic Development Strategy therefore is to address those goals which are specifically about the economic future of the Borough, as illustrated below:

Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation Strategic Goals	Direct contribution from EDS
1. Contribute to the provision of sufficient capacity to meet strategic growth targets including 26,000 new jobs and 18,500 new homes in a sustainable way by 2021	High
2. Increase participation and attainment in lifelong education and skills development	High
3. Create a wide range of jobs with a future	High
4. Increase the choice and quality of housing provision for everyone	Low
5. Provide modern community infrastructure and service delivery	Medium
6. Enhance the quality and use of valuable green space	Low
7. Increase opportunities for entertainment, leisure and culture	Medium
8. Ensure that all parts of Thurrock are accessible to, from and within the Borough	Low
9. Ensure that development and regeneration take place in an environmentally sensitive way	Medium

- 3.5 The Development Corporation’s vision is complimented by the aspiration for Thurrock set out in Thurrock Council’s “Our Sustainable Community Strategy”. The Sustainable Community Strategy is intended as a long term ‘road map’ for Thurrock providing direction on how local partners should work together towards an agreed vision and set of goals (through the Thurrock LAA). The vision articulated within the Strategy is that:

“Thurrock will be the location of choice – a place where people thrive and

prosper; where residents can access services that will make a difference; and where development is sustainable and supports new and existing communities as they regenerate and grow”.

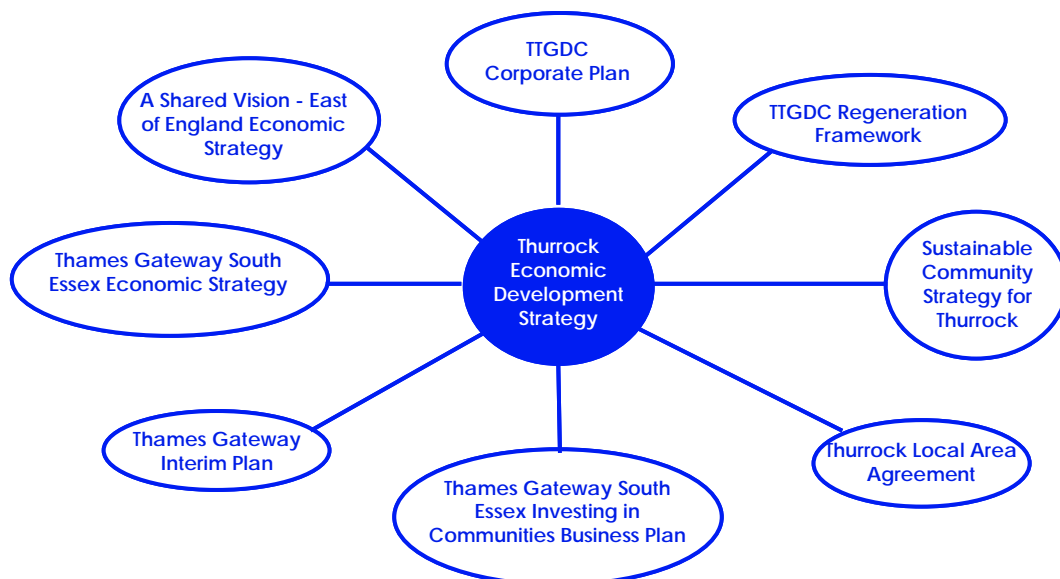
3.6 Thurrock Council’s Community Strategy shares many of the aims and objectives of the Economic Development Strategy and therefore activities developed under the Community Strategy should be key contributors to Thurrock’s successful economic development.

3.7 Allied to the Community Strategy Vision, the 4th Block of the Thurrock LAA, Economic Development and Enterprise (EDE), seeks to find a balance between retaining Thurrock’s economic heritage and tradition of manufacturing and supporting growth in enterprise and inward investment. To inform delivery, the LAA identifies five goals for individual delivery bodies and the Local Strategic Partnership as a whole. These are:

- GOAL 1 – Skills, aspiration and educational participation;
- GOAL 2 – Competitiveness, productivity, entrepreneurship and enterprise;
- GOAL 3 - Innovation in the knowledge sectors including science and technology research;
- GOAL 4 - Creation of high quality places; and,
- GOAL 5 - Social Inclusion and maximum participation within the local economy.

3.8 The Economic Development Strategy is directly relevant to all of the above goals and should therefore be considered as a key mechanism for achieving the Community Strategy vision.

3.9 As well as more local strategies, the Economic Development Strategy also draws upon and reinforces the strategic priorities outlined in the suite of relevant regional and sub-regional and policy statements, as illustrated below:



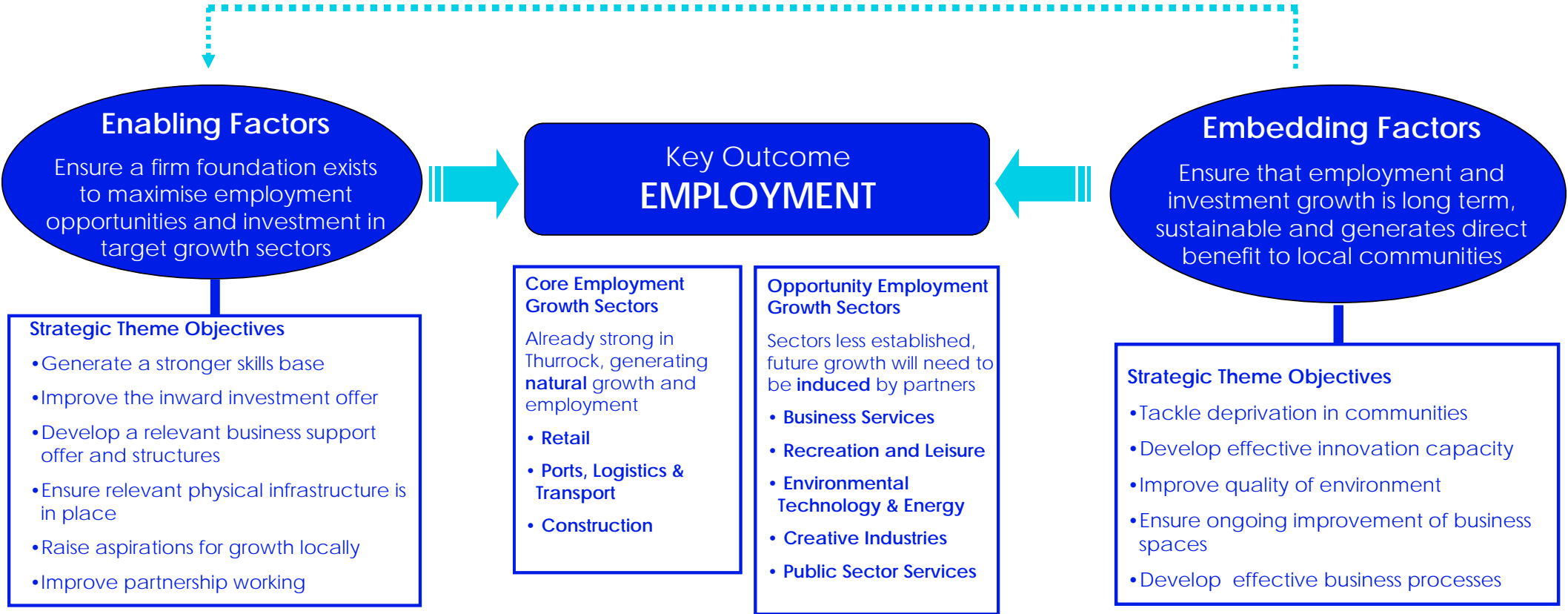
The Strategy Framework

3.10 The overall Strategy Framework is illustrated overleaf. This framework is composed of three key parts:

- The **employment dimension**. The overall aim of this Strategy is to secure significant new employment in Thurrock. This new employment will come from a series of target sectors;
- **Enabling factors** – those strategic elements that must be firmly in place to support employment growth in target sectors; and,
- **Embedding factors** - elements required to ensure that employment growth is sustainable and impacts directly upon the communities of Thurrock.

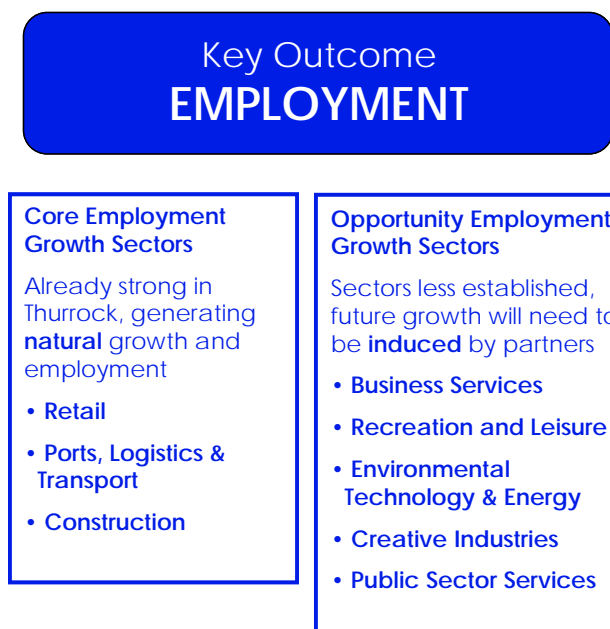
3.11 Each of these dimensions is described in turn below.

Thurrock Economic Development Strategy - Framework



The Employment Dimension

- 3.12 Employment is at the heart of the Strategy. The overarching objective is to achieve a significant increase in net employment in both 'core' sectors and 'opportunity' sectors. The key elements are presented below.



- 3.13 The Strategy adopts a 'balanced portfolio' approach. This means focusing on employment growth that is available from the area's main employment sectors, whilst also stimulating growth in a series of other sectors which are currently under-represented but which have shown signs of nascent growth from an existing base.

- 3.14 Overall, this employment growth will arise from three main sources:

- **Expansion of individual enterprises already present in Thurrock.** This may involve increasing the scale of the existing business function, but may also include the development of additional or diversified functions. This is more likely to be the source of employment growth for the area's existing core sectors.
- **New inward investment.** This involves new investment from incoming operators and occupiers - from either domestic or international sources - and may be relevant to either core sectors or opportunity sectors.
- **Newly forming businesses.** This will essentially involve 'new starts' - new businesses emerging in the Borough which are likely to be very small or micro in scale initially. These enterprises may emerge across a wide variety of sectors and will not necessarily be tied only to core or opportunity sectors.

- 3.15 All of these sources of employment growth are to be encouraged and will form components of an overall approach to developing the local economy.

Target Sectors - Core Sectors

- 3.16 Employment growth for Thurrock is available, with appropriate support, from a range of sectors that are already well represented in the local economy and which have the potential to grow further. These sectors are presented below and have been selected via analysis of recent and ongoing employment trends in the Thurrock economy, proposed developments in the Borough's main economic hubs, as well as broader sub-regional and regional trends.

Port, Logistics & Transport

- 3.17 This is one of Thurrock's strongest sectors. There are around 8,500 jobs in Thurrock currently in this combined series of related sub-sectors. Key activities include:

- Supporting Transport Services;
- Storage and Warehousing;
- Transport Agencies;
- Water Transport; and,
- Freight Transport.

- 3.18 Nationally, this broad sector has shown limited employment growth in recent years. This has not been replicated in Thurrock however, where the sector is strong and represents a key and growing concentration of activity even by international standards.

- 3.19 The development of operations at **London Gateway** will play a key role in supporting continued employment growth in this range of sectors. As such, there is a requirement for partners locally to facilitate efficient, sustainable development at London Gateway. In addition, the port related functions at Tilbury will continue to develop and again, sustainable growth and diversification must be supported by the effective actions of public partners. A key requirement is the definition of clear, complimentary and mutually reinforcing roles for **London Gateway** and **Tilbury** ports.

- 3.20 Recent figures suggest that the London Gateway development when fully realised could generate 14,500 jobs across a variety of sectors (some of which would not fall within the port, logistics and transport categories). Taking into account London Gateway and Tilbury Port plans, as well as associated supply chain and secondary impacts, there is potential to create around 10,000 jobs in Thurrock in port, logistics and transport functions up to 2021. This will, however, depend on a number of significant infrastructure improvements, in particular around Junction 30/31 of the M25, as well as addressing a number of critical skill shortages (e.g. drivers).

Retail

- 3.21 This sector has grown dramatically in Thurrock over the last decade, especially following the establishment of the Lakeside Shopping Centre and associated activities. Lakeside is a centre of regional significance with a catchment that extends

well beyond the Thurrock boundary. Retail alone accounts for almost a quarter of all jobs in the Borough. The sector continues to grow in size and will expand further as the local population increases with the onset of new housing development.

3.22 Key sub-sector retail activities include:

- Sale of motor vehicles;
- Food & Beverages;
- Clothing;
- Footwear;
- Furniture; and,
- Household, Lighting & Hardware.

3.23 If Thurrock were to follow the projected employment growth rate for the retail sector nationally¹, this would suggest an additional 3,000 jobs to 2021. Taking into account the capacity for retail employment indicated by the emerging masterplans, this indicates a figure of around 11,000 additional retail jobs would be possible in Thurrock. Generating employment closer to this upper end figure would require all of the masterplans to be delivered in full, as well as success in removing the 'no net additional retail floorspace' clause from the East of England Plan.

Construction

3.24 This sector is strongly represented in Thurrock and continues to grow. The massive scale of construction activity in the broader Thames Gateway area, as well as Greater London, including the 2012 Olympics and associated regeneration programme, means that there is likely to be continued, significant growth in this sector. In addition, the scale of the developments proposed for London Gateway will form the basis for a significant number of temporary construction sector jobs.

3.25 Key construction sub-sectors include:

- General Construction;
- Civil Engineering;
- Specialist Trades;
- Electrical Installation; and,
- Plumbing and Joinery.

3.26 The Construction sector is diverse in nature and ranges from large multinational operators to independent, local micro businesses. As such, the nature of support structures for growth and market development must be equally diverse.

¹ Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) 'Working Futures (2006)

- 3.27 If Thurrock were to follow national trends in projected employment growth, this suggests an additional 1,300 jobs to 2021. It is likely, however, that given the scale of development in Thurrock and the wider Thames Gateway that a higher level of employment growth may be possible.

Supporting Growth in Core Sectors

- 3.28 These core sectors collectively offer a strong platform for ongoing employment growth – they are already strong and have exhibited an upward trajectory over recent years in terms of new job creation. There are however a number of issues to be considered in taking these sectors forward:

- The need to facilitate the continued employment growth of these sectors by **delivering or promoting the main components for growth** in terms of sites and premises, skills and market access and well established supply chains.

There are a core set of generic requirements that all sectors need for growth. These will include a strong skills base generally, good business support and training structures, effective transport networks with minimal congestion, as well as a strong business community that supports development of local supply chains and procurement opportunities. In addition, core sectors will have specific requirements around key sites and premises, infrastructure, land assembly and planning decisions. These may include:

- **Ports, Logistics & Transport** – significant improvement to Junction 30/31 of the M25, as well as improved access to the London Gateway site generally. Also, removal of land constraints around the Port of Tilbury, to allow for expansion.
 - **Retail** – removal of the ‘no net additional retail floorspace’ clause from the East of England Plan.
 - **Construction** – identifying large enough sites in appropriate locations to accommodate construction assembly related functions.
- Enabling the **internal diversification** of these sectors by supporting the development of higher value-added, higher skill functions. This would include increasing the representation of managerial and research and development related components of these sectors’ operations in Thurrock.

This process requires existing businesses to invest in higher order functions, which in turn means that the components must be in place locally or at least regionally for these functions to develop effectively. Key factors include access to a flexible, high quality skills base, to R&D and innovation services as well as effective managerial capacity. The availability of these factors in the Thurrock area will make it more likely that businesses will extract added value and cost efficiencies from investing in higher order operations in Thurrock.

- Establishing sub-regional and regional level ‘**critical mass**’ in certain activities, in order that they form a core component of a broad geographic economy. This is already the case with port, logistics and transport activities. In addition,

it is possible to create construction sector related concentrations of activity, drawing upon current local specialisms that supply to a wide geographical market. This process should be tied directly to the ongoing development and diversification of the port and logistics sectors, in order that Thurrock can become a strong construction-logistics hub servicing a wide area that includes the Thames Gateway and wider South East of England.

- 3.29 To summarise, if all of the assumptions and requirements underpinning employment growth in core sectors are addressed fully, the following jobs growth is potentially attainable:

Potential employment growth in Core Sectors in Thurrock to 2021	
Port, Logistics & Transport	10,000
Retail	3,000 – 11,000
Construction	1,300
Total	14,300 – 22,300

- 3.30 Whilst this Strategy focuses on 3 core sectors, there are other industry types that should not be neglected. Manufacturing in particular has a strong tradition in Thurrock and despite 2 decades of restructuring, maintains the potential for growth in the future. As such, partners should continue to monitor and support the diversification and advancement of this sector where appropriate.

Growth Sectors - Opportunity Sectors

- 3.31 The employment growth of Thurrock’s core sectors must be fully complemented by the growth and development of a number of sectors which offer additional sources of new employment and which simultaneously contribute to the twin goal of economic **diversification**. These ‘opportunity’ sectors, although present and demonstrating some growth in Thurrock over recent years, are likely to require a more robust form of support and intervention than the ‘core’ sectors.
- 3.32 Although some of these sectors will not generate significant volumes of new employment in the short to medium term, especially in comparison with the core sectors, they do offer a good opportunity to broaden the overall economic base. As with the core sectors, these opportunity sectors have been identified via analysis of identifiable trends in the local economy and wider economic opportunities available regionally.

Business Services

- 3.33 Although present and currently growing in Thurrock, this broad sector remains under-represented. In order to achieve a more balanced and ultimately sustainable economic profile, it is vital that business services activities increase their share of overall employment. There are already emerging strong sub-sectors including industrial cleaning and labour recruitment, but growth should be encouraged and supported in **professional services** such as **accountancy and legal services**, but also in **back office processing activities, business related consultancy, computer and IT services**.

- 3.34 In taking these sectors forward it is likely that in the short to medium term and especially given the current local skills profile, employment growth will be more easily achieved in medium level business services, as opposed to higher end professional services. This should not however preclude the growth of higher end professional services as a longer term goal for Thurrock.
- 3.35 Growth of business services as a key employment sector will be directly related to the growth of the area's other main sectors, as business services by their nature support the development and execution of other economic activities. A key factor in supporting the growth of business services therefore is to align development of these activities directly to growth in other key sectors in order that the overall process becomes mutually reinforcing. Business services tied to supporting activities in port activities, logistics, distribution, construction and retail for example will be particularly important.
- 3.36 Employment growth in business services in Thurrock will begin from a relatively small base. The emerging masterplans suggest capacity for around 2,000 additional jobs in business services to 2021. This volume of additional jobs would require Thurrock to achieve employment growth levels in business services on a par with national trends over recent years. This employment is likely to be concentrated in certain key hubs, namely **Grays** town centre, as well as **Lakeside** and **West Thurrock**. In addition, the **London Gateway** development also presents a major opportunity to develop higher end business services functions aligned to the other key operations on this site.

Recreation & Leisure

- 3.37 There are a number of reasons why Recreation & Leisure activities offer good growth opportunities for Thurrock. With housing development and associated population growth, there will be a direct knock-on effect in terms of increased demand for locally available leisure and recreation activities. In order to generate sustainable growth in Thurrock generally, there is a need to ensure that increased leisure services are available and accessible locally without the need for unnecessary travel outside of the area.
- 3.38 Key sub-sectors for growth include:
- Sporting activities;
 - Operation of sports and leisure facilities;
 - Gambling and betting activities;
 - Entertainment activities.
- 3.39 These sectors have already demonstrated growth potential over recent years despite starting from a relatively small base. Planned developments within key economic hubs, in particular in and around **Lakeside**, offer good opportunities for the development of leisure facilities and therefore a higher value visitor offer in the area overall. Combined with the planned 'greening' of certain areas within Thurrock, the opening up of riverside spaces and the ongoing development of attractions such as

Rainham, Aveley and Wennington Marshes, the Recreation and Leisure sector provides a good basis for employment growth.

- 3.40 Recreation & leisure related employment growth will take place in a number of key locations. In particular, the **Lakeside** area will be a major location for leisure related activities, as this area seeks to diversify its offer away from the current dominance of retail. In addition, **Grays** is also likely to be a key location for employment growth in this sector. Sites identified within the emerging masterplans overall suggest capacity for up to 1,800 additional jobs in this sector.
- 3.41 An additional consideration concerns the attraction of inward investment, where a high quality leisure and recreation offer locally will act as an important component of the overall offer to businesses possibly seeking to locate in Thurrock.

Environmental Technologies, Recycling & Energy

- 3.42 Business activities covering environment, energy and recycling are already present in Thurrock on a relatively small scale. There is an opportunity to grow employment in these sectors on a limited basis in the short to medium term. There are a number of reasons for this; the Energy sector is already well established in Thurrock and there are plans to replace the current Tilbury Power Station with a state of the art, low emissions, carbon capture facility. This equates to an investment in the area of approximately £1.5billion. This scale of investment could act as a catalyst to the development of other green energy functions around the redevelopment of the power station.
- 3.43 In addition, there is potential to develop a broader range of business functions associated with recycling. Thurrock's position as a port and logistics hub, as well as its proximity to London suggests that it may be a good location for certain types of recycling activities. Development of these types of activities may require significant land use in areas effectively segregated from residential or other uses.
- 3.44 Sub-sectors within this growth sector might include:
- Production and distribution of electricity;
 - Environmental consultants;
 - Environmental pollution research and experimental development;
 - Waste collection, recycling & disposal
- 3.45 Given the current range of activities in the **Tilbury** area around port and energy functions, it is likely that this hub will feature as the key location for growth in environment, energy and recycling. Employment growth will begin from a very small base and there is unlikely to be significant new employment in the short to medium term. Employment growth is likely to be no more than 1,000 – 1,500 jobs to 2021, based on current plans. This potential employment growth is wholly dependent upon appropriate development land coming forward to accommodate growth.

Creative Industries

- 3.46 This sector is currently small in scale in Thurrock and employs relatively few people. Again, as populations grow across communities in the Borough, there will be an increase in latent demand for cultural services. As the various economic hubs and town centres across Thurrock develop in line with implementation of their respective masterplans, spaces for additional cultural activity will be created.
- 3.47 The development of the Royal Opera House Production Park offers the basis for further growth of these activities in the Borough. Thurrock Council has also prioritised Cultural Industries as an area for future support and development.
- 3.48 In the short to medium term, employment growth within Creative and Cultural Industries will be relatively small in scale. The emergence of this sector will, however, offer an opportunity to gradually diversify the overall business base in Thurrock. Specific sub-sectors that can be targeted for growth include:
- Live theatrical presentations;
 - Operation of arts facilities;
 - Library and archives activities;
 - Museum activities and preservation of historical sites and buildings;
 - Art & crafts.
- 3.49 It is also important to consider development of Creative and Cultural industries activities in the context of the overall quality of life offer locally to both potential residents and potential investors. An expanding set of creative and cultural activities will be seen as a positive signal as to the future development of the area.
- 3.50 The creation of new employment in creative industries will depend in part on the successful implementation of existing projects such as the Royal Opera House Production Park. The priorities emerging from the hub masterplans suggest that capacity is available overall for up to 1,000 new jobs in this sector. In addition to **Purfleet, Grays** and **East Tilbury** (specifically the former Bata factory) are likely to be key locations for this sector.

Public Sector Services

- 3.51 The development of new housing and the associated population increase will trigger a natural increase in both demand for and supply of public sector service functions. In particular, **health and welfare, education** and **safety/security related services** will need to expand in scale. Employment in these services is currently the below National average and there is an opportunity to possibly attract other types of public service function that are not directly related to population growth.
- 3.52 In contrast with private enterprises, decision making related to growth and expansion of public services is often not taken locally, but instead on a number of different spatial levels. As such, the growth of public sector employment in Thurrock will be

related to organisational strategies applied to much wider geographical areas. Communities in Thurrock will be able to take advantage, for example, of extended facilities in Basildon or other parts of South Essex and vice versa. It is therefore important that partner agencies in Thurrock ensure that the area is well positioned in terms of skills availability and key sites, in order to take advantage of the need for expanded public service delivery over the whole of South Essex.

- 3.53 As well as the direct employment effect of public sector service growth, it is important to also consider the indirect importance of local services in image and branding. Development of quality public service provision can increase an area's attractiveness to potential inward investors. The scale and quality of the local education infrastructure is often particularly influential in investment decisions.
- 3.54 In addition to growing the public sector from its traditional base, it is increasingly important for partners to consider more innovative means of delivery; in particular, using the voluntary and community sector to deliver key public services. Partners should seek to build the capacity of local social enterprises to play a fuller role in a more responsive public service. Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions, a local Community Interest Company (CIC) is already managing aspects of delivery for Thurrock Social Services and offers an exemplar model of how this could be achieved.
- 3.55 **Grays** is emerging as the key location in Thurrock for major growth in public sector services and related employment, although other centres such as **Purfleet** and **Tilbury** are also likely to see new jobs in this sector. If Thurrock follows recent employment growth rates nationally in public services, and the masterplan proposals for new employment land are fully delivered, there is a possibility of up to 2,000 additional jobs in this sector in the area.

Supporting Growth in Opportunity Sectors

- 3.56 A number of interventions will be required to support growth of these target 'opportunity' sectors. Key components of a 'Sector Strategy' for each target sector will involve the following components:
- **A Specific Investment Marketing Offer** - inward investment is obviously a key component of Thurrock's economic and employment growth. It is highly important that Thurrock develops a positive marketing offer for both core and opportunity sectors. Getting the right messages into national and international markets will be of particular importance to opportunity sectors. Key activities will include:
 - Development of detailed sector intelligence associated with each key sector and appropriate sub-sector functions and relevant markets;
 - Identification of potential investor sector segments and specific firms;
 - Pre-emptive skills development activity and development of bespoke sector specific training arrangements, involving local schools, FE and HE institutions;

- Development of tailored marketing messages for target sector segments.
- **Premises/Property** - premises and property for initial location, relocation and expansion is critical for business and employment growth as well as changing perceptions of Thurrock. Given the shortage of quality office accommodation in Thurrock and weaknesses in the speculative office market, the business services sector is likely to be particularly constrained if these issues are not addressed fully.
- **Transport Issues** – all target sectors to some extent require the movement of materials or goods within the borough and on to national and international markets. Road congestion has a significant impact upon the perception of the area and can hinder the development of the visitor economy and the development of the Recreation and Leisure sector in particular.
- **Staff Training & Recruitment** - the Strategy document outlines the fundamental importance of improving skills. The nature of the opportunity sectors means that growth in these areas will require Thurrock to develop a more customer-facing, service orientated workforce and support for this will be particularly important.
- **Adopting Growth Models** - supporting existing businesses in target sectors to grow quickly, efficiently and ultimately sustainably, is important for any area attempting to achieve accelerated economic growth. As such, assisting businesses to adopt growth models is a key area of intervention for all key sectors (with the exception of public services, where we can expect growth to take place in line with an increase in population).
- **Innovation** - Supporting innovation within existing businesses in target sectors will be critical to generating an increase in higher skilled employment. Environmental Technologies and Energy in particular is a sector where growth will be linked to innovation and the planned development of Carbon Capture technology at Tilbury Power Station is a good example of this.
- **General Business Support and Mentoring** – it is important to ensure that available business support is effectively penetrating businesses in target sectors. High quality business support for Business Services and Creative industry companies is likely to stimulate growth in these sectors.
- **Improving Financial Performance** – support for improved financial systems and performance is likely to be most meaningful for Business Services and Creative and Cultural companies which are more likely to be smaller organisations working on smaller commissions which often means irregular cash flow and subsequently, periodic financial pressures.
- **Improving Operations** - developing new approaches to actually ‘doing’ business is important. Construction and Environmental Technologies and Energy are subject to specific challenges related to their operations and their perceptions as ‘dirty’ industries. Supporting businesses to overcome these will not only stimulate growth locally, it will also lead to changes in perceptions of Thurrock and subsequently provide a more investor-friendly offer.

3.57 To summarise again, if all of the assumptions and requirements underpinning employment growth in both opportunity and core sectors are addressed fully, the following jobs growth is potentially attainable:

Potential Employment Growth in Core & Opportunity Sectors in Thurrock to 2021	
Core Sectors	
Port, Logistics & Transport	10,000
Retail	3,000 – 11,000
Construction	1,300
Total Core	14,300 – 22,300
Opportunity Sectors	
Business Services	2,000
Recreation & Leisure	1,800
Environmental Technology, Recycling & Energy	1,000 – 1,500
Creative Industries	1,000
Public Sector Services	2,000
Total Opportunity	7,800 – 8,300
Overall Total	22,100 – 30,600

Supporting Employment Growth Generally

- 3.58 This Strategy proposes that a particular set of sectors should be targeted for growth. These target 'core' and 'opportunity' sectors are likely to generate the majority of new employment needed in Thurrock up to 2021. This is not to suggest, however, that employment growth generally should not be encouraged across all sectors. Moreover, Thurrock has many significant employers that may not be included within the sectors outlined above but which still provide good jobs for many local people. These major employers should continue to be supported, irrespective of sector.
- 3.59 For example, the **Manufacturing** sector in Thurrock, although having declined in overall employment numbers continues to provide a large number of jobs in the area. The support structures and priorities outlined within the 'enabling' section of the Strategy should apply to this sector as much as to the target sectors.

Enabling factors

- 3.60 In order for employment and broader economic growth to become a reality, an appropriate 'platform' for growth must be established. This requires the development and delivery of a number of important 'enabling' factors – components that will directly support the creation of new jobs.



Strategic Theme Objectives

Theme 1 - Generate a Stronger Skills Base

- 3.61 A major requirement for the ongoing growth and diversification of the Thurrock economy is a significant improvement in the current skills base. There are a number of factors of relevance here:
- Increasing participation generally in skills development and learning activities. This requires a significant increase in the share of the local population undertaking some form of skills development or learning activity, including those already in employment. In addition, an improved skills base requires higher rates of successful progression from school to Further Education, and in turn onto Higher Education where appropriate. Embedding an active culture of lifelong learning across Thurrock's communities is vital to the ongoing development and diversification of the economic base.
 - Increasing rates of qualification attainment. Incoming investors will measure the appropriateness of Thurrock as a location partly on the availability of particular types of skills. Skills are often measured or quantified in terms of volume and type of qualification attained across different disciplines. In addition, the ability of individuals to maximise their labour market opportunities and improve their socio-economic position is increasingly

dependent on their ability to demonstrate skill 'credentials' in the form of qualifications and accreditation.

- Improved deployment of skills. As far as the performance of the local business base is concerned, realising the benefit of improved skills depends on the ability of employers themselves to deploy and utilise these skills effectively. This requires effective managerial and organisational capabilities on the part of employers. The development of managerial capacity must therefore feature as part of the overall skills uplift process.
- The development of a stronger skills base also requires the availability of a robust spectrum of learning opportunities ranging from basic life skills, through to vocational education and advanced academic learning. There are two aspects to this:
 - Development of appropriate **learning facilities** that add to the existing range of education and training structures and effectively plug key gaps – particularly in FE and HE related learning. Any additional structures must not, however, unnecessarily duplicate existing provision which is available within a reasonable travel to work or travel to learn area; and,
 - Ensuring that both residential communities and business communities have easy access to **learning opportunities in wider sub-regions**, including existing learning activities based in east London, the County of Essex and North Kent. Thurrock's communities must have easy access to this broader infrastructure and must be presented with progression routes that are very clearly expressed and easy to take advantage of from a wide range of entry points.

Key Intervention Areas

- 3.62 The development of a strong growing economy, based on the availability of a high quality skills base, will be directly dependent upon the nature of the education and learning offer locally. In the case of Thurrock, there is a need to develop a stronger and more effective education offer, particularly in relation to further education and vocational education. Given the nature of the existing business base and the key industries that currently account for the largest share of employment in Thurrock, these industries are likely to require vocationally-oriented learning and training particularly at FE level which is currently difficult to access locally.
- 3.63 The existing curriculum and training offer is limited in Thurrock and needs to be expanded in terms of both breadth and depth. This does not necessarily require that a broader training and curriculum offer must be available within the Borough itself. Instead, both business and residential communities must be able to readily access a higher quality FE level offer. There are a variety of components to this process:
- **Expansion of the curriculum** currently available within Thurrock and Basildon College and partner institutions through additional course development and extension of learning directly related to Thurrock based employers. This can be done by extending availability of relevant qualifications but also by

developing closer relations with key employers, building bespoke employment-learning 'compacts', particularly for young people;

- Development of a **broader FE offer** that is accessible to Thurrock communities. This will include access to learning delivered in other locations;
- Development of **additional learning facilities** that add to and complement existing arrangements. In particular, the development of the **Thurrock Learning Campus** at Grays must be undertaken with a view to creating strong progression routes post 14, directly reflecting local business and community needs;
- **Enhancing take-up of FE level and vocational learning** both on the part of individuals and businesses. This will require closer interaction with individual learning and training providers and community and voluntary organisations. It is also vital that Thurrock schools are involved in this process, in terms of encouraging take up of further learning and working directly with employers to influence the design and take up of learning opportunities; and,
- The need to fully and effectively develop **key sector-based learning initiatives**. The target sectors outlined above will require a degree of intensive and well-tailored support delivered through innovative mechanisms. Plans for the development of a Transport and Logistics Academy in Thurrock should be re-visited in order that this initiative exhibits a clear rationale, well developed learning/training content and formalised delivery structures. The Academy concept and plans must be credible and require strong sector buy-in and effective leadership. The possibility of establishing a Logistics Academy within the London Gateway development must be fully explored.

3.64 Currently there is a lack of appropriately skilled work-ready individuals for key growth sectors in Thurrock. In addition, there is a lack of transparent learning and skills development pathways and positive aspiration towards learning. '**Employer compacts**' involve matching young people from age 14 to key, target sector employers. This will involve development of vocational pathways combining academic and vocational activities, significant work placement and key skills development. The objectives of 'employer compacts' are to: increase the supply of qualified individuals; increase skills and qualification attainment; address sector skills shortages; and, maximise opportunities for personal advancement through learning.

3.65 Interventions of this type will be key to enhancing the overall quality and flexibility of the Thurrock skills base. This is a critical prerequisite for employment growth in all sectors. Without significant uplift in the local skills base, attempts to generate substantial employment growth will be severely constrained.

Theme 2 - Improve the Inward Investment Offer

3.66 In terms of growing employment in target sectors, a broad range of components must be in place in order both to attract investment by employers new to Thurrock, but also to encourage re-investment by those already based in the Borough. The components are identified as follows:

- Strategic sites ready for development in key locations that are accessible and sustainable;
- Appropriate infrastructure including access to road and rail transport and proximity to key transport nodes and interchanges;
- High specification, flexible and adaptable premises and business space, again in accessible locations and with linkages to an appropriate range of amenity services;
- A high quality skills base available across a labour pool within a reasonable travel to work geography. This skills base must exhibit the specific range of skills and attributes necessary to attract and grow investments in target sectors;
- High quality and appropriate business support services and facilities;
- Clear routes to market and local/regional supply chain structures that generate economies of scale and scope in business operations;
- Effective investment management and after-care services including mechanisms for ongoing liaison with key investors; and,
- An effective multi-agency approach to both assessing and addressing the needs of key employers, in order that business related constraints can be identified and acted upon swiftly.

3.67 Currently, the Thurrock economic base exhibits some degree of weakness across all of these component areas. In particular, the local skills base and the suitability and availability of sites and business premises are in need of significant improvement. Strategic options for the improvement of the overall investment offer are captured by a number of different interventions, some of which are 'enabling' in nature while others are 'embedding'.

3.68 In addition to configuring a quality investment offer covering the necessary components, an equally important process involves the marketing of this offer directly to target markets or individual investors.

Key Intervention Areas

3.69 Management and coordination of inward investment activity is vital to Thurrock's economic growth objectives. As such, the process of attracting and managing inward investment must exhibit a number of core characteristics:

- Configuring the right investor offer, targeted at investors in identified growth sectors. This should not, however, preclude the opportunity to attract other forms of quality investment in an opportunistic fashion;
- Effective communication of the Thurrock offer to potential sectors of interest. This requires a coherent and consistent marketing approach which is aligned with other marketing activities in both the Thames Gateway area and the East of England Region; and,

- Coordinated activity across all bodies engaged in inward investment activity including Gateway to London, East of England International, Essex County Council and the Development Corporation. It is essential that all organisations that might have any involvement at all in attracting inward investment to Thurrock promote a consistent message about Thurrock's economic benefits and offer a fully joined up service. This requires an agreed marketing approach and an open sharing of information, which all partners must promote.

3.70 Thurrock is located at the 'crossroads' of two separate inward investment functions. Thurrock is part of the **Thames Gateway** and therefore relates to Thames Gateway wide inward investment and marketing activity. Simultaneously, as part of **South Essex**, Thurrock is also associated with the Essex-wide investment function.

3.71 Given the overarching priority to secure significant, sustained employment growth in Thurrock, it is vital that the area can take direct advantage of inward investment opportunities and support across each of these functional geographies. There is a requirement here for clear and effective communication across all parties involved in inward investment in the Thames Gateway and South Essex, as well as willingness to effectively cross-refer and share information. Thurrock should not be tied to lining up exclusively with either one or the other of these inward investment functions. Strong partner relationships across the board will be critical here.

Theme 3 – Develop a Relevant Business Support Offer and Structures

3.72 It is imperative that Thurrock's businesses, irrespective of the individual stage of their development, have access to high quality business development support that results directly in both improved performance and employment growth. There are two factors here:

- The development of a robust, holistic business development offer which is characterised by high quality provision and tailored to the needs of Thurrock's businesses. This will involve the consolidation of existing support plugging any gaps that currently exist.
- Facilitating maximum take up of business support through effective outreach to businesses, strong partnership working and effective diagnosis of business support needs.

3.73 The introduction of new regional structures for the provision of Business Link services will act as a basis for taking services further into the Thurrock business community via outreach and brokerage delivered by locally based experts. In addition, it is important to ensure that business support is available to cover the whole range of needs over the business lifecycle, ranging from initial start up through to growth, diversification and maturity.

Key Intervention Areas

3.74 The business support offer and associated delivery arrangements must be configured specifically to encourage both business growth and diversification. This includes

diversification **across** sectors, as well as **within** sectors. There is already a significant volume of business support available to businesses in Thurrock. A key requirement is that this existing infrastructure is utilised as effectively as possible, while developing new support which adds to and extends existing delivery.

3.75 Specific programmes of support must include the following:

- Highly tailored support for existing Thurrock businesses in target sectors to ensure that employment growth potential is achieved. This will include managerial and marketing support in order to extend market reach, increase revenues and encourage product and service diversification;
- Support to encourage ongoing innovation within target sectors and to facilitate access to regional R&D facilities.

Theme 4 - Ensure Relevant Physical Infrastructure is in Place Locally

3.76 Employment and broader economic growth requires that key components of the physical infrastructure offer are in place. These include:

- Strategic employment sites;
- Business spaces and premises;
- Quality access infrastructure, including road and rail linkages that facilitate effective movement of goods and people;

Strategic Sites

3.77 It is imperative that Thurrock is able to offer quality, sustainable sites in key locations that offer target sector operators sound opportunities for future growth and development. Currently, the area is constrained in terms of employment sites. These must, however, be brought forward across all key economic hubs, if successful employment growth is to be realised. Given the need for significant growth in job numbers to 2021, key sites must come forward in the next three to five years.

3.78 The target sectors identified indicate that a diverse range of sites and premises will be required. Creative and cultural industries for example may favour small scale, flexible workspace, business services will require relatively high-spec office accommodation, whereas some of the functions associated with recycling and energy will have a requirement for larger sites in suitable locations clearly separated from other uses, especially residential. Given that the major part of the area's employment growth is likely to come from the 'core' sectors, sites suitable for these types of operations must come forward as a priority.

3.79 Consideration should be given to developments on land that is currently designated as green belt, where this will increase the potential for employment growth in key sectors. Operators in business services and leisure and recreation in particular are likely to be drawn to locations of this type. Correspondingly, activities such as recycling, energy and green technologies are probably best located in areas such

as Tilbury, where there is limited land available that is suitable for housing related development.

Business Space

3.80 Employment growth will depend fully upon Thurrock's ability to provide space within which this growth can take place. This includes business space for newly forming enterprises, appropriate spaces that can be occupied by potential inward investors, as well as space that allows the flexible expansion or relocation of existing operations within Thurrock. There are a number of considerations here:

- In order to promote higher levels of new business formation and take advantage of recently increasing rates of new enterprise, there is a need to provide flexible space for start up businesses. In addition, there is a requirement for sufficient supply of appropriate follow-on space in order that when these new starts reach a critical growth point, they are not constrained by space related issues.
- Businesses spaces must be located in appropriate, accessible and sustainable locations across the Borough that are attractive to these enterprises. In addition, business space must be flexible and offer the key components required of recently formed businesses. This will involve the development of incubation space with appropriate facilities, as well as fully serviced office or business accommodation.
- The space requirements of those **businesses already present** in the Borough and seeking expansion are likely to be diverse in nature and fully dependent upon the type of activity already taking place. There is a need to understand more fully the specific requirements of these businesses individually and to develop a detailed knowledge base of sites and premises across the area, in order that businesses can be effectively and efficiently relocated where necessary.
- **Incoming investors** will expect to be able to easily access sites and premises that meet their specific needs. This requires the development of appropriate premises in key locations. The possibility of utilising the proposed London Gateway development as a mechanism for enhancing the availability of premises, particularly higher specification office space, should be fully explored.

Transport & Access

3.81 Given Thurrock's importance as a transport and logistics hub, it is imperative that transport and access mechanisms operate effectively. Local businesses regularly complain of severe difficulties encountered moving goods within the Thurrock area, despite external linkages to the area itself being strong. There is a clear need to ensure that transport networks are effective in supporting movement of goods and people across both internal and external markets.

3.82 A continuing source of frustration for existing Thurrock businesses is the difficulty in movement caused specifically by congestion around Junction 30/31 of the M25. There is a clear need to address this specific pinch point, especially in light of

proposed developments around London Gateway, which will significantly increase pressure on key transport nodes. In addition, road access to and from the London Gateway site will have to be significantly extended in order that the area functions effectively as a logistics and business hub.

Housing

- 3.83 It is important to take into consideration the direct relationship between the quality and diversity of Thurrock's housing offer and the potential to attract new inward investment, especially in higher value added functions. The provision of a wide range of residential property options for new and existing residents, and in particular an expansion of larger, more executive style housing provision, will be important in persuading potential investors that the overall infrastructure is conducive to the success of their business.

Key Intervention Areas

- 3.84 A number of intervention areas follow logically from the objectives outlined above:
- It is imperative that the key employment sites identified within the masterplans for Thurrock are brought forward in a timely manner. In particular, sites suitable for investments tied to the area's 'core' sectors must be brought forward as a priority.
 - The Development Corporation and its partners will have to consider the possibility of leveraging developer interest in creating a speculative office accommodation market. This may possibly be approached via intensive marketing of individual strategic sites alongside configuration of the broader investment offer, in order to generate developer and potential occupier interest in office developments in Thurrock. The development of a landmark, high specification office development should be considered, possibly in the vicinity of Lakeside.
 - All public partners must continue to lobby actively for improvements to Junction 30/31 of the M25, in order to create efficiencies in the movement of goods around the area, especially in light of developments at London Gateway.
 - The Development Corporation and its partners must work closely with developers to ensure that a suitable range of housing is constructed in Thurrock. Of particular importance, is the need for quality executive style housing in sustainable locations, complete with requisite quality infrastructure (social and physical) in order to attract and retain high skill, high income individuals.

Theme 5 – Raise Aspirations for Growth Locally

- 3.85 The development of improved aspiration is key to successful economic development and employment growth. This means a positive approach is necessary on the part of local businesses, local residential communities and strategic public sector partners. There is a role here for careful, targeted marketing of the opportunities emerging

from the growth and regeneration of Thurrock and how these can be taken advantage of by local people and local businesses.

- 3.86 In addition, the opportunity to tie existing economic development and learning processes to the needs of the target sectors should also be explored. This will include for example initiatives within schools encouraging young people to consider and prepare for careers in Thurrock's growth sectors.

Key Intervention Areas

- 3.87 Interventions geared towards raising local aspirations for growth will include the development of specific programmes within schools such as work placements and employer compacts that encourage Thurrock's young people to think about future career opportunities in core and opportunity sectors. This process also increases the capacity of educational and other support personnel to plan for future employment growth and to consider the recruitment, skill and training needs of key sectors. This process of capacity building can also be extended to the community and voluntary sectors which can also play a role in raising aspirations for growth within communities.

Theme 6 - Improve Partnership working

- 3.88 The effective delivery of economic growth in Thurrock requires that the Development Corporation and partners collaborate very closely indeed in terms of both the design and delivery of key interventions. This requires the further development of strategic partnerships and appropriate protocols for implementation of key actions, resulting in turn in improved mutual understanding and trust-based relationships.
- 3.89 In addition, it is imperative that all partners can work collectively and can respond readily to any changes in the external socio-economic environment. This requires careful planning on the part of all public partners and a detailed and shared understanding of each other's policy and delivery priorities and constraints.

Key Intervention Areas

- 3.90 The development of effective processes around inward investment, as discussed above, will be a critical component of improved partnership working. It is imperative that partnership arrangements around both configuring and marketing the Thurrock investment offer are strong.
- 3.91 Additionally, a number of Thurrock's main partnership bodies will play key roles in the delivery of the Economic Development Strategy interventions. In particular, the Thurrock Learning Partnership, Thurrock LSP's Economic Development Group and the Thurrock Business Association will all be directly involved in the design, delivery or monitoring of specific strategy interventions.

Embedding Factors

- 3.92 In order for the economic development of Thurrock to be sustainable in the long term, it is imperative that the economic gains in terms of new employment, enhanced skills and new business formation are successfully embedded locally. As such, investments will be less likely to flow to other locations as external influences alter and therefore further development can be based upon the evolving local economic base. In order for this process to be effectively realised, a number of 'embedding factors' are necessary.



Strategic Theme Objectives

- 3.93 In many instances, there will be a direct link between enabling and embedding functions. For example, the development of a quality skills base will both enable employment growth and support the embedding of this growth. The same is true of a number of other key components as outlined below.

Theme 1 – Tackle Deprivation in Communities

- 3.94 Economic growth is more likely to be achievable and have long lasting benefits where local communities are fully equipped to take advantage of new opportunities. This requires that Thurrock's communities are not constrained from full participation in the local economy and that individuals do not face unnecessary barriers to participation. As such, consideration must be given specifically to supporting the most disadvantaged communities and neighbourhoods in the Borough. This effort must build upon existing activity and utilise the current infrastructure for delivery of

both mainstream and specialist support services to communities, as well as the expertise and skills of Thurrock's voluntary and community sector.

3.95 There are a number of factors that should feature in efforts to support local neighbourhoods, these include:

- Facilitating access to and delivery of key mainstream services, particularly health, welfare and learning services;
- Supporting the capacity of the community and voluntary sector as deliverers of services, in particular intensive outreach to the most disadvantaged;
- Acknowledge and act upon poor health in Thurrock and ensure interventions are put in place to combat this;
- Improving the quality of the existing housing stock in deprived areas; and,
- Improving environmental amenities and open spaces in deprived areas.

Key Intervention Areas

3.96 Cohesive, healthy neighbourhoods are fundamentally important to the future economic development of Thurrock. This is also important in the context of development of new social infrastructure which should be taken forward not only in terms of supporting an increasing population, but with a view also to engaging socially excluded groups.

3.97 As such, there is a need to develop key components of an '**economic inclusion strategy**', including:

- Intensive support for individuals and groups facing particular, and often multiple, barriers to economic participation, including lone parents, older unemployed individuals, long-term benefit recipients and disabled people;
- Facilitating the effective delivery and take up of mainstream services in, and taking delivery of services closer to, the heart of deprived communities; and,
- Enhancing the quality of the social housing stock, in order that housing conditions are not detrimental to overall levels of economic activity. This particular aspect of the work is already underway as part of the Development Corporation and Borough Council's shared approach to neighbourhood renewal.
- Developing links between PCT and economic development. Bringing delivery of health services to the workplace and employment/ economic development delivery to key health nodes (GP surgeries, pharmacies etc.)

3.98 Successful embedding activities will also require development of the **skills and capacity of the voluntary and community sector** in Thurrock. In particular, the sector should be supported in developing capacity to deliver mainstream and additional services to communities of need. This sector will play an important role in ensuring that economic inclusion and activity rates are raised in deprived neighbourhoods, allowing local people to better take advantage of new job and learning opportunities. A strengthened community and voluntary sector is very important as a

'legacy' aspect of economic development, supporting communities over the long term.

- 3.99 There is also a very important role to be played in this process by **social enterprise**. Enterprises that operate as private businesses but which generate a clear social return are often useful vehicles for delivering much needed services to specific neighbourhoods, while simultaneously offering learning and training opportunities as well as enhancing community capacity generally. There is scope to develop the role of social enterprise much further within Thurrock in order to generate sustainable forms of support for disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Theme 2 - Develop Effective Innovation Capacity

- 3.100 Thurrock's twin goals of employment growth and economic diversification require that existing and new businesses create more diverse functions and develop new products and services. This, in turn, requires that businesses undertake an increased volume of research and development activity. In order for this to be achieved a number of factors are important:

- **Raising awareness** amongst businesses of the benefits of increased R&D, especially in terms of market penetration and alternative revenue streams;
- **Facilitating access** to existing R&D related support or to those organisations that can broker access to this support. Encouraging a much higher take up amongst Thurrock businesses of the services offered by ExDRA is an important starting point; and,
- Enabling access to **HE level research** and R&D facilities where appropriate. In particular, close collaboration with the most geographically accessible HE institutions, especially the University of Essex (both the Colchester and Southend campuses), the University of East London and Anglia Ruskin University. This process will require intensive activity in terms of marketing the benefits of increased R&D, developing meaningful access routes and creating strong collaborative partnerships between Thurrock based employers and key research departments.

Key Intervention Areas

- 3.101 The development of greater innovation capacity across Thurrock's business base will involve direct outreach support to firms so that they are able to identify and fully exploit key areas for research, innovation and product development. This will involve linkage with a network of organisations via physical and virtual means that will support the sharing of information and learning from best practice.
- 3.102 It is also important to ensure that innovation is not restricted to the private sector. Public service providers, as well as the voluntary and community sector must also be supported in developing more effective ways of designing and delivering services in order to support the ongoing development of the economic base. As such, it is important that R&D support and outreach functions are also relevant to the needs of public and community service operators where this is feasible and appropriate.

Theme 3 - Improve Quality of Environment

- 3.103 Access to quality environments – both urban and rural – is vitally important on a number of fronts. Quality environments are conducive to the improved health of local communities, acting as a positive influence on economic and broader community activity. Quality in the natural and built environment also acts as one of the key factors falling within an effective local inward investment offer. As such, it is important that both urban and rural environments in Thurrock and the public realm components of these environments are enhanced in terms of overall quality.

Key Intervention Areas

- 3.104 The masterplans covering all of the economic hubs within Thurrock will contain recommendations for improved public realm, better use of open space and improved access to green areas. Given the importance of presenting an improved image of Thurrock generally to potential investors, it is important that these plans are fully realised and are not diluted in the face of competition for space from residential and other forms of development. It is vital to strike an appropriate balance between type and quality of development and the availability of quality accessible public spaces.
- 3.105 Embedding the benefits of economic growth is related in part to the nature and quality of public realm and public space. Quality public spaces will help to encourage good health and economic participation generally and will also act as part of the incentive structure to both draw in and retain skilled individuals and their families.

Theme 4 – Ensure Ongoing Improvement of Business Spaces

- 3.106 As outlined earlier, the development of an appropriate and high quality range of premises and properties is vitally important to the development of a more diverse business base. As the economy of Thurrock continues to grow and evolve, so too will the various associated demands for business space. As such, there must be an ongoing effort in developing flexible spaces. This is particularly the case in terms of businesses wishing to expand or diversify individual operations.
- 3.107 The need to develop appropriate ‘move on’ space for target sectors is vital to the successful development of the Thurrock economy.

Key Intervention Areas

- 3.108 It will be critical to ensure that on an ongoing basis Thurrock provides a relevant range of business spaces that allow firms to locate or start up in the area, to develop and expand further and therefore ‘move on’ to other types of space as required. A failure to provide a wide range of quality business space will increase the risk that firms may move away from the area as they grow and develop.

- 3.109 Activity here will involve clear monitoring and recording of the types of business spaces and premises available in Thurrock as well as the use made of them by local businesses. This information should be collated and updated regularly and made available to potential and current occupiers through a web-based portal. In addition, the ongoing gathering and presentation of this information will provide a platform upon which decisions can be taken on new capital build for business space in different locations across Thurrock.
- 3.110 There is a need here to ensure that where gaps become apparent in the range and usage of different types of space that steps are taken to actively encourage developer interest in providing any types of space which may be in short supply.

Theme 5 – Develop Effective Business Processes

- 3.111 The development of sub-regional, regional and national supply chains with a focal or nodal point around Thurrock is an important factor in the development of the area's economy and the process of embedding new and existing investment. Supply chains are vital to the effective operation of any business.
- 3.112 New businesses will be attracted to the area if they perceive robust supply chains are in place and are directly available to them. In addition, existing businesses can achieve additional growth if their supply chains are operating effectively in terms of both scale and quality. For these reasons it is important that some effort is expended in ensuring that existing and incoming businesses are able to identify and access strong supply chain networks. There are two key requirements:
- Facilitating and maximising access to London and the broader South East as a component of supply chain configuration; and,
 - Facilitating the development of effective procurement processes, especially with regard to public sector procurement.

Key Intervention Areas

- 3.113 There is a clear need to maximise and 'multiply' the benefit of growth and investment by configuring and embedding local supply chains and business 'ecosystems'. In the case of Thurrock's core sectors, this will require development of additional and secondary supply functions, including part assembly and coordination of intermediary production inputs.
- 3.114 An additional objective is the diversification of existing supply side firms and attraction of additional local suppliers for key target industries, as well as increasing local employment and income generating opportunities through enhanced supply chains.
- 3.115 In addition, the development of effective services for investors features as both an 'enabling' and an 'embedding' factor. It is important that the needs of key investors are understood and that their changing requirements are taken into account as their tenure in Thurrock increases.

3.116 It is also important that the area's key employers per se are continually engaged in dialogue, in order to ascertain whether their needs are actually changing over time. In this way, it will be possible to adapt services as time goes on. For example, in sectors undergoing some form of business or market re-orientation, a re-shaping of local business support or skills development infrastructure at short notice will help a business to maintain market position.

4. Creating a Network of Economic Hubs

- 4.1 This Strategy focuses on creating economic growth by generating investment, new business formation and growth in existing businesses. It is equally important, if Thurrock is to achieve and exceed its economic goals, that partners work towards the long term aim of creating a network of high quality, mutually reinforcing economic hubs.
- 4.2 In line with the recommendations of the Thames Gateway Interim Plan, all of the main partner agencies across Thurrock need to take a holistic view of the Borough, ensuring that each key economic hub has a specific role in the wider context of the area whilst also functioning as a collective entity under the Thurrock 'umbrella'.
- 4.3 Partners need to guide development of each economic hub to create defined economic identifies within the context of a wider network. As such, it is proposed that appropriate **partner groups** are set up to **guide the economic and physical transformation of each hub** as part of the overall transformation of Thurrock. The following section outlines the economic 'vision' for each of Thurrock's hubs, outlining key activities which will contribute to growth in the economy as a whole.

Purfleet

Purfleet's Role in the Thurrock Economy

- 4.4 Purfleet will be the gateway to Thurrock for those travelling from London and the west as well as being the gateway to the wider London area for those travelling from Thurrock itself. Purfleet will take advantage of its location in relation to London and the wider South East, becoming the residential location of choice for **a highly skilled workforce** drawn to the riverside location and leisure offer afforded by the vast open space opened up via the RSPB centre.
- 4.5 The development of the Royal Opera House Production Park will form the basis of a new **creative sector** serving London but also benefiting from road transport links and access to wider UK markets. A new business village at Botany Way will provide a home for Thurrock's successful **new businesses** formed by members of Thurrock's existing population and new, higher skilled residents.
- 4.6 Existing high profile riverside businesses will continue to be supported and will benefit from a more qualified workforce from across the borough.

Purfleet: Key Activities

- 4.7 Key milestones in achieving this 'vision' for Purfleet include:
- Comprehensive development of Purfleet centre;
 - Development of a housing offer which compares favourably to Havering, Basildon and new developments at Barking Riverside;

- Continued engagement with Purfleet’s existing business base;
- Successful delivery and marketing of the Royal Opera House Production Park;
- Scoping and identification of partners for the development of a new ‘Business Village’ at Botany Way.

Grays

Grays’ Role in the Thurrock Economy

- 4.8 Grays will grow as the **district centre for Thurrock** and as such will provide administration and education functions for the Borough’s growing population. The town will need to provide **high quality public services** to attract and cater for highly-skilled residents across the borough. The town’s retail offer will develop as a ‘local’ town centre shopping area as opposed to the regional level retail offer provided by Lakeside.
- 4.9 Town centre housing within 45 minutes of Central London will attract a highly-skilled population which, as with Purfleet, will initially commute to London and elsewhere for employment, but will later provide the **critical mass to drive Thurrock’s economy** in the future.
- 4.10 A number of the key physical elements of Thurrock’s economic transformation will be located in Grays. The **Learning Campus** will drive skills development in the Borough, A new **Community Hospital** will form a vital component of social infrastructure and will be a key element in growing the public service sector in the borough as a whole. Finally, **new office development ‘seeded’ by a growing public sector** will provide significant ‘move on’ space for smaller businesses looking to move from elsewhere in the Thames Gateway as a whole.

Grays: Key Activities

- 4.11 Key milestones in achieving this ‘vision’ for Grays include:
- Development of a diverse housing offer which suits both commuters and locally based employees;
 - Ensure the appropriate curriculum offer is developed for the Thurrock Learning Campus;
 - Develop office and other business accommodation;
 - Canvas and reflect the needs of Thurrock’s public sector bodies to ensure a relevant infrastructure base in Grays;
 - Ensure relevant town centre improvements to appeal to a broader population.

Lakeside & West Thurrock

Lakeside & West Thurrock's Role in the Thurrock Economy

- 4.12 Lakeside and West Thurrock will continue to provide a **regionally significant retail offer** which will be expanded to include **major leisure functions** both to the north and south of the existing shopping centre. As an existing known 'brand', Lakeside offers the potential to provide **the 'big-bang' to stimulate Thurrock's office market**. A flagship office development, in the vicinity of Chafford Hundred Station and visible from the M25 and A1306 would also begin to improve perceptions of Thurrock.
- 4.13 Like Purfleet, West Thurrock will remain home to some of Thurrock's best known incumbent businesses. The obvious transport benefits, however, also create further opportunity to develop **high quality road based logistics** functions in the area. New residential development will **address some of the perceived lack of 'executive housing'** and will complement rapid employment growth at London Gateway, Lakeside and Tilbury.

Lakeside and West Thurrock: Key Activities

- 4.14 Key milestones in achieving this 'vision' for Lakeside and West Thurrock include:
- Continuing to make the case for expanded retail at Lakeside;
 - Undertake feasibility analysis and develop a marketing offer for significant high profile office development at Lakeside;
 - Support the development of appropriate executive /'move on' housing around London Road and Bluelands Quarry;
 - Ensure appropriate consideration is given to the marketing of new leisure facilities to a regional and national audience.

Tilbury

Tilbury's Role in the Thurrock Economy

- 4.15 The continuing success of port activities at Tilbury means that the area will continue to be **a significant source of employment** within Thurrock, as well as home to a satellite of the proposed Academy of Transport and Logistics at London Gateway. A complementary relationship with London Gateway will mean that **Tilbury will continue serve European markets** while London Gateway will focus on growing international markets.
- 4.16 The riverside location, port and transport links make Tilbury an ideal location for the growth of **Thurrock's Environmental Technologies and Energy opportunity sector**. The development of a new Coal Power Station should be accompanied by a feasibility process for **a new sustainable industrial park** which could become the home to a sophisticated new generation of firms in the ETE sector.

- 4.17 Development sites available around Tilbury mean that the area will have significant new housing. This development must be carried out in a way that ensures **socio-economic uplift for the existing community**. The Bata site in East Tilbury in particular should be considered as a possibility for **quality residential development linked to the new workforce** at London Gateway and wider South Essex. A combination of quality residential development with flexible space for creative and cultural sector activity in this location could create significant impetus in terms of the image and re-branding of the area.

Tilbury: Key Activities

- 4.18 Key milestones in achieving this 'vision' for Tilbury include:
- Explore the potential for developing further employment land for a sustainable industrial park in the vicinity of the new Tilbury Power Station;
 - Ensure complementarities between Tilbury and London Gateway including the development of the academy of Ports and Logistics;
 - Target 'neighbourhood renewal' embedding interventions in key deprived wards in Tilbury (St Chads, East Tilbury);
 - Consider residential proposals for East Tilbury, whilst ensuring improved links to Tilbury's new town centre.

London Gateway

London Gateway's Role in the Thurrock Economy

- 4.19 London Gateway is **Thurrock's biggest opportunity** to deliver something in the Borough which has national and international significance. This will bring large scale employment in port and logistics sectors as well as in supporting industries via development of a large scale business park. London Gateway is private-sector led and as such reduces the level of risk absorbed by the public sector as well as facilitating substantial employment growth within the Borough.
- 4.20 To maximise the long term impact of London Gateway, a **National Academy for Transport and Logistics** should be considered on or within sight of the new port. Taking its cue from similar internationally recognised developments, this should provide a tailored educational offer as well as key facilities to be used by businesses located on both the 'dry' and 'wet' sides of the port. A satellite at Tilbury will help foster and maintain links between the two ports.
- 4.21 The remainder of the South East Thurrock area, and Corringham, will largely be **residential and mixed-use** in nature (with a local business presence as opposed to significant sector development) and as such an improved level of service provision will be necessary to support the local population and business base.

Long Term Objectives

4.22 Key milestones in achieving this 'vision' for London Gateway include:

- Develop relationships between DP World and relevant public sector partners as well as providing links to the existing business community;
- Work with relevant partners to ensure the maximum inward investment benefit is extracted from the development;
- Provide clear leadership for the Academy of Skills and Logistics;
- Support the development of necessary road and rail infrastructure for London Gateway.

5. The Way Forward

- 5.1 The economic and physical development of Thurrock is currently subject to an intensive period of planning and design. In particular, the masterplans covering the five economic hubs, despite being at various stages of completion, are proposing specific types of development in particular locations. This in turn generates predictions regarding the spaces and sites for new employment generation.
- 5.2 As indicated earlier, potential for job growth is greatest at London Gateway and Lakeside/West Thurrock. As a result, it is important that the necessary 'front-end' activities are undertaken by the time that this employment growth is predicted to come on stream. For growth to be '**enabled**', the relevant inward investment, skills, business development and infrastructural interventions will need to have taken place to maximise impact. This enabling activity must start immediately and will focus upon a four year period between 2007 and 2011 when, it is anticipated, the main period of net employment growth in Thurrock's economic hubs will begin. It is envisaged that this enabling activity will continue up to (and potentially even beyond) 2014 when the Development Corporation reaches the end its lifespan.
- 5.3 As employment growth and investment begins to be generated in Thurrock, activities focussed on ensuring this growth is sustainable will need to start. The Development Corporation and its partners' activities must at this point become focussed on '**embedding**' economic/employment growth and investment, ensuring that it is continuous and that Thurrock successfully completes its economic transformation. A concerted period of embedding activity will take place beyond the lifespan of the Development Corporation. Mechanisms and structures will be in place to ensure that this activity continues until 2021 and beyond.
- 5.4 The economic transformation of Thurrock and the creation of substantial new employment must be seen as long term process and will require strong partnership working over a significant period.

Action & Implementation

- 5.5 The realisation of the Thurrock Economic Development Strategy will ultimately involve the successful delivery of a number of specific project actions, building directly upon the 'areas for intervention' outlined in this document. Priority actions with associated phasing and costs are presented in detail in an accompanying Implementation Plan.
- 5.6 Project implementation will require action and contributions from a variety of partners, and these partners will vary depending on the specific nature of the actions. It is imperative that the relevant partners agree the detail of the actions and the precise phasing of delivery.
- 5.7 A number of the priority actions for Thurrock are already underway or are likely to begin in the near future. In addition, an important element of delivery of economic

improvement for Thurrock is tied to the successful implementation of the various masterplans, each of which acts as a platform for economic growth in its own right, supporting the contributions by various partners. The actions of the Development Corporation, as a facilitator of physical change, will provide leverage for improved impact on the part of a whole range of economic development partners.

