



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission

Call for Ideas



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Introduction

1. The Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission (“the Commission”) was announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in March 2016. The members of the Commission are:
 - **Rt Hon Lord Heseltine CH (Chair)**, Government Advisor on Local Growth
 - **Lord Adonis**, Chairman, National Infrastructure Commission
 - **Sir John Armitt**, President, Institute of Civil Engineers
 - **Rt Hon Greg Clark MP**, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
 - **Lord Foster**, Chairman and Founder, Foster + Partners
 - **Rt Hon Mark Francois MP**, Minister for the Thames Gateway
 - **Prof. Alice Gast**, President, Imperial College
 - **Gregory Hodkinson**, Chairman, Arup Group
 - **Sir George Iacobescu**, Chairman and Chief Executive, Canary Wharf Group
 - **Prof. Dr Uwe Krueger**, Chief Executive, Atkins
 - **Sir Stuart Lipton**, Partner, Lipton Rogers Developments LLP
 - **Sir Edward Lister**, Chairman, Homes and Communities Agency
 - **Sadie Morgan**, Director, drmm Architects
 - **Lord O’Neill**, Commercial Secretary to the Treasury
 - **Tony Pidgley**, Group Chairman, Berkeley Group
 - **Nicola Shaw**, Executive Director UK, National Grid
 - **Geoffrey Spence**, Global Head of Infrastructure, Resources and Energy, Lloyds Bank
2. Budget 2016 announced that the Commission would “develop an ambitious vision and delivery plan for North Kent, South Essex and East London up to 2050. This will focus on supporting the development of high productivity clusters in specific locations. It will examine how the area can develop, attract and retain skilled workers. It will also look at how to make the most of opportunities from planned infrastructure such as the Lower Thames Crossing.”
3. The Commission will, by March 2017, produce an interim report setting out its vision for the region. It will then report back to the Chancellor by Autumn Statement 2017 with a clear and affordable delivery plan for achieving its vision.
4. The Commission recognises that a wealth of ideas already exists for maximising the region’s potential. This call for ideas is an open invitation for all interested parties, both within and outside the Thames Estuary, to contribute their views. The Commission encourages submissions to be creative and ambitious. It also requests that submissions clearly set out the evidence that supports their positions.

Context

5. There have been numerous attempts to set a vision for the Thames Estuary over recent years. Much of what was promised in these visions has been delivered. It is clear, however, that there remains huge untapped potential in the region. This Commission is an opportunity for people right across the region to come together and create a vision that builds on past successes and faces new challenges head-on.
6. The Government is giving communities right across the country the powers and funding they need to shape their economic development. It is backing the Northern Powerhouse and the Midlands Engine, whilst continuing to empower Local Enterprise Partnerships to deliver growth in their areas. The Commission will remain mindful of this wider context, but consider what more might be done to ensure the Thames Estuary thrives.
7. Over the coming decades the Thames Estuary is expected to see significant economic growth – in terms of the number of jobs, businesses and homes. The Government is already making substantial investments in infrastructure to support this growth, notably through the extension of Crossrail to Abbey Wood, the regeneration of Ebbsfleet Garden City, and the planned Lower Thames Crossing. There are further investments being made by local and regional organisations.
8. The Commission's vision will be one for high-quality growth that recognises the existing strengths of the area whilst realising its significant economic potential. It will be a holistic vision that looks at existing focal points for growth and considers what additional focal points could be developed. It will not seek to predict how the region is likely to develop, but rather will be a vision for development that otherwise would not happen. The delivery plan will be clear, detailed and affordable within the Government's medium-term fiscal plans.
9. The Commission will take account of major projects and current industry planning processes involving a range of organisations, including but not limited to Highways England, Network Rail, Transport for London, local government and the Local Enterprise Partnerships. The Commission will not, however, seek to re-open or delay existing work being undertaken by any of the above. Instead it will look at how to make the most of these opportunities, including what related infrastructure may be required to accelerate growth.
10. The areas within scope of the Commission's remit are the London Boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Bexley, Greenwich, Havering, Lewisham, Newham and Tower Hamlets; the Kent Councils of Canterbury, Dartford, Gravesham, Medway, Swale and Thanet; and the Essex Councils of Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock.

Work streams

11. The Commission's initial work will focus on six work streams, as set out below. Respondents are invited to submit answers to the questions posed under each one. They should not, however, feel constrained by these questions. Submissions in any format will be welcomed.

12. **Creating high productivity clusters**

- a. What high productivity clusters are there in the region currently and what clusters might there be up to 2050?
- b. What skills will be needed to support these clusters and how can those skills be delivered?
- c. What can policymakers, businesses and education providers do to encourage the development of high productivity clusters?

13. **Increasing connectivity**

- a. What connectivity constraints, including energy, transport and digital, exist in the region?
- b. To what extent will planned infrastructure address these constraints?
- c. What additional infrastructure may be needed to unlock growth and productivity? How should projects be prioritised?

14. **Creating new homes and communities**

- a. What barriers exist to creating high-quality communities where people want to live, work and visit?
- b. What specific locations offer the most potential for new homes and how should these be prioritised?
- c. How can the quality of associated social infrastructure be maximised?
- d. How can growth in the region be achieved whilst meeting the UK's long-term emissions reduction targets and enhancing the region's natural assets?

15. **Securing investment**

- a. How can public funding be used to maximise private investment in the region, including foreign investment?
- b. What can be done to reduce risk for potential investors?
- c. How can increases in public sector land values be used to fund infrastructure investment?

16. **Harnessing innovation in the built environment**

- a. What international examples of innovation in design and construction should the Commission consider?
- b. What particular opportunities exist in the Thames Estuary for promoting sustainable development that can be delivered quickly?

17. **Putting it together: centres of excellence**

- a. What is your vision for creating high-quality growth that benefits the whole of the Thames Estuary?

- b. What organisational structures and interactions are needed to deliver your vision?
- c. What specific locations, of any size, have the greatest potential to become 'centres of excellence' by attracting high productivity clusters and creating world-class communities?

18. Finally, what lessons can be learnt from previous initiatives in the Thames Estuary?

How to respond

19. The deadline for submissions is midday on 9 September. Submissions should be emailed to ThamesEstuary@communities.gsi.gov.uk. Written submissions should be limited to 10 pages in length. Submissions in other formats, including graphs, images, infographics and videos, will also be welcomed. Please include contact details so the Commission Secretariat can contact you in case any clarification is required.

20. You can also make submissions by tweeting us @HMGLocalGrowth and @_bisle, and by using the hashtag #ThamesEstuary.

21. In exceptional circumstances we will accept submissions in hard copy. If you need to submit a hard copy, please send your response to:

Thames Estuary Secretariat
DCLG, 1st Floor SW, 2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

About this discussion paper

22. This discussion paper has been planned to adhere to the Consultation Principles issued by the Cabinet Office. Information provided in response to it may be published or disclosed in accordance with access to information regimes (primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

23. Please be aware that, under the Freedom of Information Act, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and we cannot give an assurance of confidentiality in all circumstances. The Department for Communities and Local Government will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act and in the majority of circumstances this will mean it will not be disclosed to third parties.