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**By:** Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Supporting Independence  
Adam Wilkinson, Managing Director, Environment & Regeneration

**To:** Cabinet, 12 May 2008

**Subject:** **Kent Thameside Delivery Board: Review and future direction**

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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**Summary:** The paper proposes a review of the partnership arrangements in Kent Thameside and discusses the implications for KCC.

Cabinet is asked to:

- i) **endorse the way ahead** for KCC in Kent Thameside as set out in this paper; and
  - ii) **authorise** the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Supporting Independence and the Managing Director for Environment & Regeneration to negotiate with partners and agree a way ahead for the Kent Thameside Delivery Board that meets KCC's strategic objectives.
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## **1. Introduction: The Current Delivery Structure in Thames Gateway Kent**

- (1) Across the 40 mile extent of the Thames Gateway (see map at Appendix 1) the structure of delivery is complex, with a host of agencies, local authorities and delivery vehicles involved in delivery, providing infrastructure to support growth or attempting to co-ordinate delivery. The Thames Gateway itself covers:
  - ◇ three Government Regions and Regional Development Agencies;
  - ◇ sixteen local authority areas;
  - ◇ three sub-regional regeneration partnerships;
  - ◇ two Urban Development Corporations and seven local regeneration partnerships;
  - ◇ an estimated sixty-six principal partner organisations plus other public and voluntary sector organisations; and
  - ◇ private sector developers, landowners and companies.

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- (2) Along with Thames Gateway London, and Thames Gateway South Essex, the Thames Gateway Kent Partnership is one of the three Area Partnerships in the Gateway. The TGKP brings together representatives of the three Kent and Medway Delivery vehicles (Kent Thameside, Medway Renaissance and Swale Forward), together with the local authorities and private sector representatives. See diagram at Appendix 2.
  - (3) At the Thames Gateway Forum last November, the Prime Minister launched the Government's Thames Gateway Delivery Plan. The high level targets for this Plan are to develop 160,000 houses and attract 225,000 jobs to the Thames Gateway in the period to 2016. This paper looks at the current structure of delivery in Kent Thameside, outlines the drivers for change short-medium term and considers the implications for KCC.
  - (4) Co-ordination of activities across the Gateway is undertaken by the **Thames Gateway Strategic Partnership**. This is the high level grouping bringing together various departments of Government with the three Thames Gateway Area partnerships (see 1(2) above), representatives of the local delivery vehicles (Urban Development Corporations and regeneration partnerships) and some of the local authorities. It is chaired by the Minister for Housing and Planning (currently Caroline Flint). It is the key vehicle in co-ordinating policy and delivery across the whole of the Gateway, and as the medium for dialogue between Government and delivery organisations.

## 2. Kent Thameside Delivery Board

- (1) The Kent Thameside Delivery Board was established to co-ordinate delivery in Kent Thameside and as a requirement for the acceptance of funding from the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and current Department of Communities and Local Government. Established as the Kent Thameside Association in 1993 it became the KTDB in 2003.
- (2) Chaired since 2003 by Lord Bruce-Lockhart, the KTDB brings together the local authorities in Kent Thameside (Dartford and Gravesham Boroughs and KCC) together with Government agencies such as SEEDA and EP and key private sector stakeholders such as Land Securities. Its Vice-Chairman is Stephen Jordan of London and Continental Railways. Roger Gough and Adam Wilkinson are the nominated KCC representatives on the Delivery Board (in addition to Lord Bruce-Lockhart as Chairman). The Chairman has a seat on the Thames Gateway Strategic Partnership, see para 1(4) above.
- (3) KCC acts as Accountable Body for the KTDB, which as a voluntary partnership has no separate legal identity. The KTDB team totals nine members of staff formerly headed by Chief Executive Michael Ward, until his resignation with effect from the end of April 2008. The total income for running costs of the KTDB for 07/08 will be £1.1m of which the KCC total net contribution will be £137k (KCC receives SLA income totalling £27k for finance, legal and HR services).

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- (4) As well as co-ordinating delivery in Kent Thameside, the KTDB houses the Fastrack Delivery Executive and Kent Thameside Economic Board. Chief among the KTDB's achievements in the past year has been the negotiation of the deal between Government and local partners concerning the Kent Thameside Strategic Transport Programme. This is the package of eleven schemes to support development over the next 20 years in Kent Thameside, also known as 'homes and roads'.
  - (5) Following Michael Ward's departure, and Lord Bruce-Lockhart's decision to relinquish Chairmanship of the KTDB, the Delivery Board has agreed that time is right for a short review of the partnership arrangements in Kent Thameside.
  - (6) The rationale for a review at this stage relates to factors at both regional and national levels, including the following:
    - In 2003 the focus was upon planning for delivery in Kent Thameside. With the opening of Ebbsfleet International Station, the granting of planning permission for Eastern Quarry and the successful implementation of the Fastrack network, delivery is undeniably happening in Kent Thameside. The review will ascertain whether the current structure is fit for purpose;
    - The Sub National Review of Economic Development and the proposed strengthening of the Local Authority role in Economic Development including a statutory economic assessment duty;
    - The proposed transfer of accountability for the Thames Gateway to the new Homes and Communities Agency under Sir Bob Kerlake from April 2009;
    - The new round of Local Area Agreements which will be shaping action on the ground across the Gateway;
    - Joint working across Thames Gateway Kent leading to a potential Multi Area Agreement covering the North Kent districts and Medway;
    - The changing structure of partnership working across Kent in general.

### **3. Scope & Nature of Review**

- (1) Kent Thameside will continue to play a significant role in the Thames Gateway in future. The headline targets of 30,000 homes and 50,000 jobs are important in a regional and pan Gateway context. Ebbsfleet Valley is identified as one of the four spatial transformers across the whole Gateway in the Government's Delivery Plan and is thus critical to the success of the Thames Gateway initiative.
- (2) In its Delivery Plan, the Government has allocated some £51.7m of DCLG funding to support growth in the period 2008-11. This funding will support projects in Dartford & Gravesend town centres, the waterfront,

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Ebbsfleet Valley and station regeneration.

- (3) It is essential, therefore, that the review is undertaken in a timely and efficient manner and does not impede progress on delivery. The partners in the Kent Thameside Delivery Board wish to conclude discussions and agree a way forward before the end of this month (May).
- (4) There are a range of potential structures which the restructured Delivery Board could take, depending on the nature of activities proposed for it. Discussions are ongoing with the KTDB partners to establish an agreed list of common priorities for action. Once these are agreed, then the form of the restructured Delivery Board can be resolved.
- (5) The range of potential structures include:
  - ◇ The establishment of a Special Purpose Vehicle, perhaps along the lines of the Ashford model;
  - ◇ Absorbing the delivery vehicle into one of the key agencies (eg KCC or SEEDA);
  - ◇ Strengthening the relationship with the Local Strategic Partnership;
  - ◇ Placing responsibility for delivery within the hierarchy of the emerging North Kent Multi Area Agreement (see above); and
  - ◇ A refocused status quo.
- (6) Each of the above structures has some merits, as well as potential disadvantages. We will be working closely with partners over the coming weeks to ensure that the proposed structure is fit for purpose to ensure the challenge of delivery in Kent Thameside is met.

#### **4. Implications for KCC**

##### Regeneration Strategy

- (1) Although much of the delivery will be undertaken by the private sector, Local Authorities will continue to have a vital role in delivering the Thames Gateway initiative. The Thames Gateway will therefore feature significantly in the KCC Regeneration Strategy which will articulate our aspirations for Kent and the Thames Gateway. The Strategy will provide a framework for assessing the key priorities for KCC to focus upon in the coming years.
- (2) KCC will continue to play an active role in the work of the Kent Thameside Delivery Board. Part and parcel of this process is ensuring that there is a focus upon delivery. The aspiration to ratchet up the pace of delivery will place further demands upon KCC. It is essential, therefore, that we play a full role in the restructuring of the current delivery arrangements in Kent Thameside.

##### Corporate Service Provision

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- (3) Responding to growth in Thames Gateway Kent is a corporate issue for KCC and touches upon every aspect of service delivery in North Kent. Previous reports to Cabinet and COG have highlighted the issues in relation to the development of major sites (eg Eastern Quarry) and this will continue to place significant demands on staff across KCC into the future.
  - (4) Furthermore, it is important that an Authority the size of KCC continues to influence the agenda for the Thames Gateway, not just locally on the Kent delivery vehicles but also regionally and nationally.

## 5. Conclusion

- (1) The Thames Gateway is likely to remain a high priority both regionally and nationally for the foreseeable future. We see development of the Thames Gateway as one of the major issues facing Kent in years to come. It is important that as the strategic county authority KCC continues to play a leading role in order to retain influence at local, regional and national levels. This will require a co-ordinated effort across the County Council, in recognition of the role that all Directorates can play in regeneration and the creation of sustainable communities
- (2) Given the external factors identified in this paper, and the increasing pace of delivery on the ground in Kent Thameside, it is appropriate at this time to review the partnership arrangements currently in place. This review needs to be conducted in a timely and efficient manner to ensure the focus remains upon delivery. It is our intention to ensure KCC plays an active role in this process.

## 6. Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

- iii) **endorse the way ahead** for KCC in Kent Thameside as set out in this paper; and
- iv) **authorise** the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Supporting Independence and the Managing Director for Environment & Regeneration to negotiate with partners and agree a way ahead for the Kent Thameside Delivery Board that meets KCC's strategic objectives.

### Background Documents:

*Thames Gateway Delivery Plan*, HMSO, November 2007

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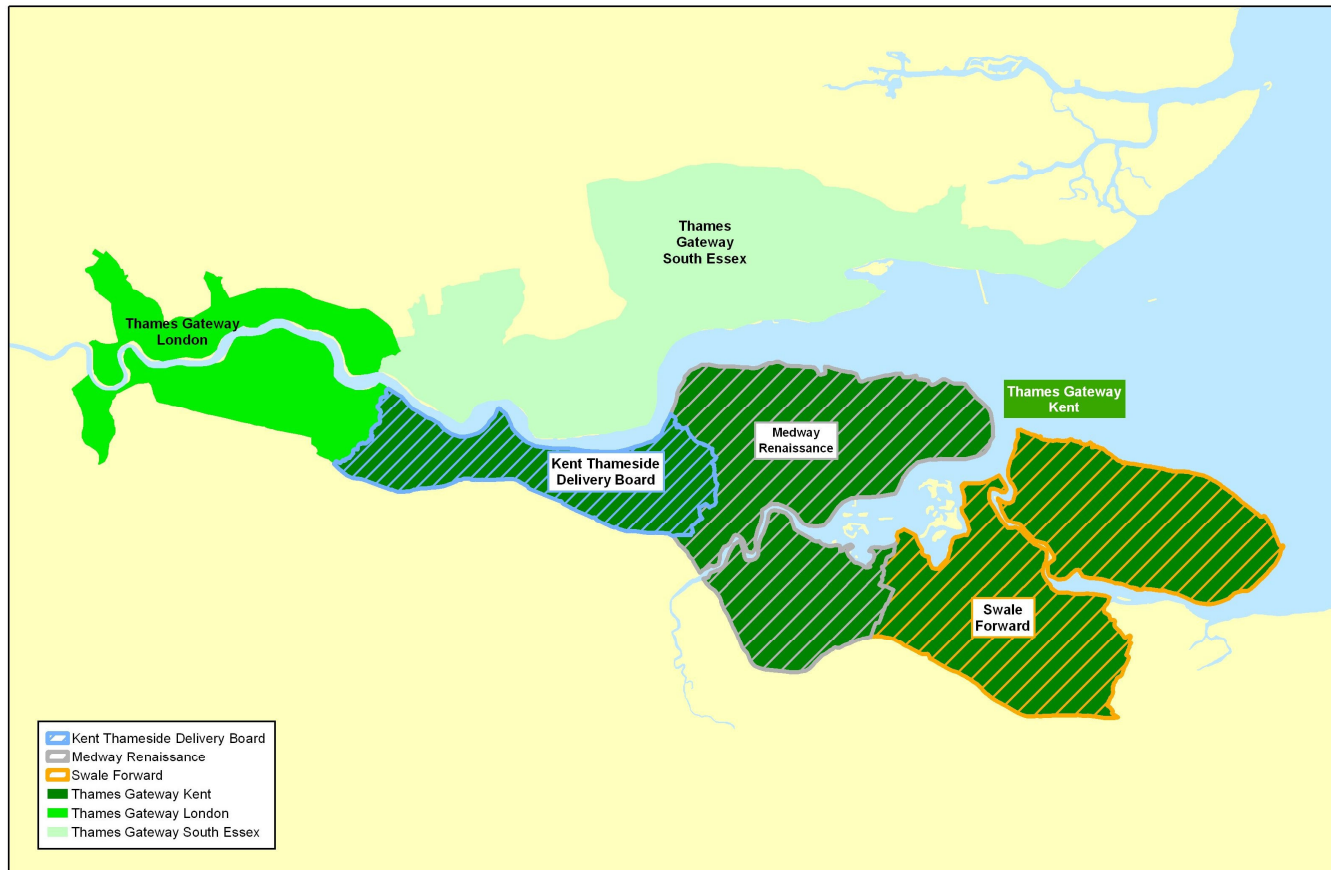
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## Appendix 1: The Thames Gateway and Regeneration Partnerships

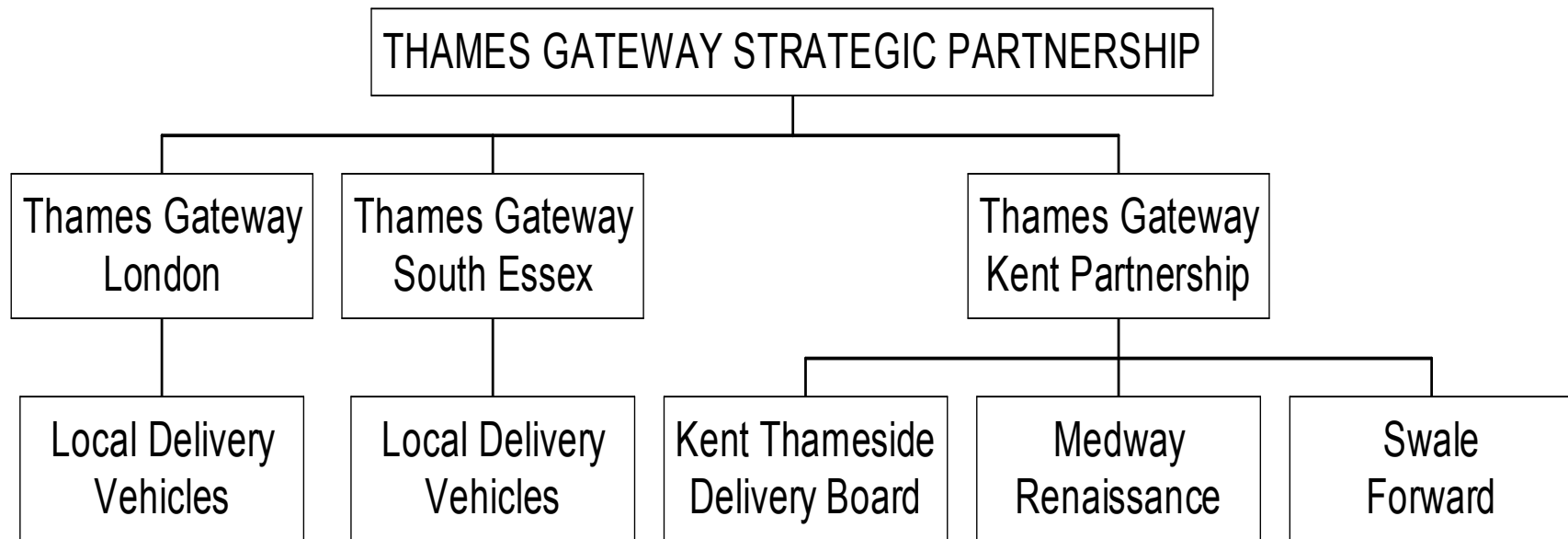


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**Appendix 2: Thames Gateway Partnership Structure.**



See map at Appendix 1 for Geographical Coverage