

PARTNERSHIP

Complex issues require organisations to work together to find better solutions. The Kent Thameside Local Strategic Partnership (KTLSP) brings together major public, business and voluntary interests representing community life in Dartford and Gravesham to focus on meeting local people's priorities to improve quality of life for everyone.

The Kent Thameside Local Strategic Partnership is made up of representatives of:



- Dartford Borough Council
- Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust
- Dartford, Gravesham & Swanley Primary Care Trust
- Gravesham Borough Council
- Gravesham Chamber of Commerce
- Groundwork Kent Thameside
- Kent County Council
- Kent Thameside Association
- Kent Thameside Chamber of Commerce
- Learning and Skills Council, Kent and Medway



- North Kent Police
 - North West Kent College
 - North West Kent Council for Voluntary Service
 - North West Kent Racial Equality Council
 - University of Greenwich
- Sevenoaks District Council and Swanley Town Council are observers on the LSP.

BACKGROUND

Kent Thameside's traditional towns and villages have a strong sense of history and identity of which local people are rightly proud. However, for some years, this heritage was interwoven with the legacy of industrial and environmental decline, with huge former industrial sites; an out-dated infrastructure, and some neighbourhoods hit hard by the resulting social and environmental difficulties and poorer health. That negative image is now changing fast and the next decade will see the pace of change accelerate. As a result we now have a rare opportunity to shape a new kind of physical, economic and social environment - combining the best of both old and new: a Futureplace.

WHAT SORT OF FUTUREPLACE?

We think most people in Kent Thameside would like it to be a place where people want to live; leading safe, healthy and fulfilling lives with excellent opportunities for personal and collective fulfilment –



KEY ISSUES

There are several key issues that need to be tackled to make this future possible.



a sustainable community. How well we succeed in achieving this will depend on how well all of us - local communities, business, and government can work together to deal with the key issues facing us.

LOCAL PRIORITIES

This is not a 'menu' where we can take our pick: they all have to be tackled together to ensure success. Through consultation we have found out the community safety and health appear to be the highest priorities in Kent Thameside, and so we must pay particular attention to these over the next few years.

PRIORITY COMMUNITIES

We also know that particular economic, social or environmental factors make it more difficult for some neighbourhoods and groups to share in the new



opportunities. We will therefore also pay particular attention to working with such communities to help find solutions that work for them.

AN AGENDA FOR ACTION

"Towards the *Futureplace*" is not a detailed blueprint – it is an agenda for action by all the partners in the KTLSP. In it, we outline where we aim to get to and the things we need to do to get there; we will also be setting targets by which you can measure our progress.

KEY ISSUES AND ACTION POINTS FROM "TOWARDS THE FUTUREPLACE"



Regeneration & Transport

- Enhance the **Thames Waterfront** as a major new public asset;
- Regenerate the **major sites** as sustainable communities integrated with established neighbourhoods;
- Ensure the continuing regeneration of Dartford and Gravesend **town centres**;
- Foster the continuing sustainability and identity of local **neighbourhood and village centres**;
- Promote a **high quality environment** of new and exciting public spaces, squares and gateways of outstanding design;
- Safeguard Kent Thameside's **outstanding countryside** and villages and create new recreational and landscape assets;
- Secure a dramatic improvement in **public transport**, including the Fastrack rapid transit network, upgrading existing rail lines, new cross-London services, improved bus services etc;
- Ensure the **road network** works for all with road improvements, measures to reduce traffic, and encouraging more use of cycling, walking etc.

Lifelong Learning

- Link learning providers through the Thames Gateway "**Multiversity**", a common network based in schools and colleges, to improve community access to learning at all levels; Promote access to learning at all levels from school to university;

- Create high quality learning facilities, '**Schools of the Future**', involving the whole community in learning, using innovative methods and linking to business and higher education;
- Give all children the opportunity of a better start in life, through **Sure Start** and other programmes, and support parents and provide first class childcare;
- Engage families in supported learning through **Family and Community-Based Learning Centres**, in and out of school, along with action to help people develop literacy, numeracy and other job related skills;
- Promote in **secondary schools** positive attitudes to learning; improving attainment at Key Stage 4; careers guidance and work with the most disadvantaged youngsters;
- Encourage **people over 16** to get more involved in learning to raise achievement levels, literacy and numeracy, and to improve the chance of them seizing opportunities that help them compete in the modern economy;
- Encourage employers, through schemes such as Investors in People, to become **Learning Organisations**;
- Create an **Information Exchange Bureau** for learning providers and strengthen community partnerships.



Jobs & Business

- Promote Kent Thameside as a **place to do business**;
- Create **world-class business facilities** with good transport links and green environments;
- Promote Dartford and Gravesend **town**

centres as locations for smaller and medium-sized enterprises;

- Create first class **business support, advice and aftercare** services;
- Promote **affordable and flexible workspace**;
- Develop **business-to-education** initiatives;
- Encourage **community enterprise** schemes;
- Encourage local **supply chains** to allow buyers to source products and services locally;
- Ensure **broadband infrastructure** and other ICT services are widely available;
- Promote University and/or company based **Centres of Excellence** for key industries;
- Establish **Technology Transfer Programmes** aimed at stimulating new products and services;
- Promote a **New Technology Institute** to develop ICT and new technology training and consultancy services.

The Environment

- The **Green Grid** will be a high quality network of open spaces with linked green corridors connecting new and existing communities with the surrounding countryside and the River Thames;
- Provide a framework that links with the Green Grid to manage and conserve the outstanding countryside and wildlife habitats of Kent Thameside's rural areas by establishing the **Thames and Medway Regional Park**;
- Reduce the number of **pylons**;
- Where **land damaged by past industrial or quarrying activity** cannot be dealt with through regeneration, take special targeted action;
- Promote action to improve **energy conservation** and **reduce harmful**



emissions in buildings, transport and equipment;

- Increase **recycling** through household collection schemes and other innovative measures;
- Co-operate with government and national agencies to work towards achieving the National **Air Quality** Strategy objectives;
- Focus on how **noise and light** can be managed better in both new and existing communities; and explore the creative use of light to improve security and a sense of place;
- Take steps to ensure that communities are not exposed to **flood risks**.

Housing & the Built Environment

- Involve **local people** in how to improve the physical environment and the quality of housing;
- Promote **high standards of design** and conservation;
- Ensure that all Council and Registered Social Landlord homes meet at least the “**Decent Homes**” standard by 2010;
- Work with property managers and owners of residential accommodation to ensure private housing meets **statutory standards** of fitness, fire safety, repair and amenities;
- Secure an appropriate level of **affordable housing** in new developments;
- Promote high standards of **care for the environment** in housing and building design;
- Secure good **quality housing advice** and assistance for the homeless and others in need;

- Ensure people from **ethnic minority communities** can access housing services easily;
- Secure adequate provision for people needing specially **adapted or supported housing**;
- Ensure **Housing Benefit**, grants and other schemes are administered efficiently and sensitively;
- Encourage **innovative solutions** to housing needs.

Health & Well-Being

- **Involve communities and patients** in the development and delivery of services;
- Develop a **Public Health Strategy** to address the key factors impacting on health locally;
- Involve a wide range of partners in **raising health awareness** among communities;
- Promote **healthy lifestyles** and easier access to healthcare services via community projects;
- **Regulate issues impacting on health** effectively - e.g. public health nuisances; food safety; workplace safety; care home standards and environmental protection;
- Provide adequate new and improved acute, community and primary **healthcare facilities** for Kent Thameside’s rapidly-growing communities;
- Secure and maintain the **best clinical care standards** in primary, community and acute healthcare services;
- Provide quicker routine diagnosis and elective surgery via new **diagnosis, treatment and advice centres**;
- Improve access to **hospital emergency services** and reduce waiting times for patients;
- Improve access to **out of hours GP services**;
- Promote improvements in, and work

closely with, all **public services** that impact on health across the board.

Community Safety

- Work with local people to identify the **people and places most at risk from crime** and the factors encouraging, causing or contributing to crime;
- Build **community confidence** to work with the Police and others to fight crime and bring offenders to justice;
- **Prevent crime** by working to help design-out crime, remedy security weaknesses, and encourage vigilance;
- Reduce **crime against individuals** – particularly domestic violence, crimes on young people; racially-motivated and homophobic crime;
- Reduce **crime against property** – particularly burglary, vandalism and graffiti;
- Reduce **anti-social behaviour and nuisance**;
- Reduce **drug related crime**;
- Help **young people and families** to create alternatives to reduce the risk of them slipping into crime;
- Support the **victims of crime**;
- Provide **community-based rehabilitation** for offenders in suitable cases to reduce re-offending;
- Promote **safe and healthy neighbourhoods, buildings and homes**;
- Further **strengthen partnerships** between all those agencies involved in community safety.





Leisure & Culture

- Ensure a comprehensive network of good quality, safe and accessible **parks, open spaces and neighbourhood play spaces**;
- Secure outdoor/indoor recreation facilities for **young people**;
- Promote a wide range of quality indoor and outdoor **sports facilities** for participants and spectators;
- Promote modern, accessible and attractive facilities for **artistic, cultural and entertainment activities**;
- Facilitate a network of **neighbourhood and village centres** catering for family, social and community functions;
- Provide **allotments** to grow fresh produce in support of a healthy diet;
- Remove and **reduce barriers to the enjoyment of leisure** and cultural activities by a variety of means;
- **Encourage contributions** to recreational, sporting, and cultural life from all sections of the community;
- Promote **active participation** in social, sporting and cultural activities to help

prevent illness, reduce crime, develop skills and foster community confidence;

- Encourage **quality leisure, tourism and visitor businesses**;
- Promote the **imaginative use of public space** – e.g. for artistic, cultural and sporting events;
- Investigate the potential for a **key sporting or cultural venue** of regional significance in Kent Thameside.

STRONG AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Bringing it all Together

To make a lasting impact, the key issues and actions identified in the strategy must all be tackled together. Therefore, as well as focussing on the issues across Kent Thameside, we will also focus on the way they impact on particular neighbourhoods and groups of people.

Sustainable Communities

A key aim of the Community Strategy is to develop and support all the communities in Kent Thameside - because strong and sustainable communities are also successful communities.

Priority Communities

However, there are still some neighbourhoods in Kent Thameside which, when measured against national indicators, face significant disadvantages. If steps are not taken to help overcome these problems, it seems likely that these “Priority Communities” will not share fully in the area’s future prosperity. These areas are:

- Temple Hill • Northfleet High Street area • The area around Alamein Gardens, Stone • Northcourt • Tree Estate • Swanscombe • Christianfields & King’s Farm Estates • Westcourt Estate.

There are also some groups who are more likely to face difficulties wherever they live – whether because of their age, ethnicity, disabilities etc. As a result we will work with these neighbourhoods and groups to:

- **Involve residents, employers and others** in identifying barriers to improving the quality of life;
- Ensure that the work of all partners has a **special focus** on the issues facing these areas and groups;
- Develop and implement **co-ordinated Action Plans** to deal with these neighbourhoods;
- Ensure that we make **best use of existing programmes and resources** (e.g. Sure Start and the Urban Programme) to make a difference;
- Regularly **review the effects** of our actions to ensure they have a lasting impact.

The publication of this strategy is just the start. Over the next year the Partnership will produce action plans so that the objectives set out in this strategy can be achieved. This cannot be done just by those presently on the partnership - the knowledge, skills and energies of other organisations and communities need to be utilised to create real change. Therefore, over the next year the Partnership will be reviewing the way in which it works, with the aim of involving more people in making Kent Thameside an even better place to be.

To find out more about the partnership, or to obtain a copy of the complete strategy, please contact:

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The work of the partnership will be published at:

- http://www.dartford.gov.uk/community/kent_thameside/index.htm
- <http://www.kt-s.co.uk>