

Creating Cultural Opportunities: A Methodology for Strengthening Cultural Infrastructure in Thames Gateway South Essex

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1. Introduction

This report works to position culture at the heart of processes of development and urban change in Thames Gateway South Essex. It identifies practical ways forward for planning and economic development professionals to engage with culture as a key ingredient of successful and sustainable communities and vibrant, distinctive and confident places.

The report also presents lessons and recommendations for the first pilot study within the national programme of Creating Cultural Opportunities (CCO). Led by the Department of Communities and Local Government (as part of the Investing in Communities Programme), the CCO Programme seeks to ensure culture is embedded in the sustainable communities agenda at a local level through a focus on: **Place-making, Prosperity, Communities.**

As the first pilot of the CCO Programme, an opportunity exists for TGSE to operate at the forefront of conceptual development that recognises the centrality of culture and identifies practical ways to maximise the value and effectiveness of this cultural dividend. With such a process of change underway in TGSE, including the development of nearly 40,000 housing units and significant demands on creating new jobs (55,000) and improving the dynamics of the

economy, it is absolutely correct that this sub-region leads the way in thinking through and acting on culture as a key ingredient of planning, economic and social policy.

This report has three main functions. These are:

- To provide an introduction to the importance of situating culture at the heart of planning, especially in an area of such transformation
- To provide an overview of how current policy and practice is situating culture in the TGSE
- To provide a set of guidelines for cultural planners and those tasked to deliver on local development and sustainability to follow so that the positive impacts of culture in place-making are maximised.

Overall, the report introduces a set of practical guidelines for culture-led change and development, structured against 5 key policy themes. It also introduces a proposed mechanism that ensures delivery of these guidelines and requires strategic partners and stakeholders to 'ask the cultural question' across 'mainstream' policy areas such as learning and skills, planning, health, and economic development.

1.1 Methodology

Tom Fleming Creative Consultancy and Noema Research and Planning have been commissioned by the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership (TGSEP) to lead the pilot project. To achieve such aim a qualitative and 'process-based' methodology was developed. This focused on consolidating and improving the local intelligence base, identifying opportunities for growth development and support, and building strong strategic ties among key partners. This approach was based on a set of principles. These were to:

- Delineate and describe the opportunities for culture in the sub-region within the context of the regeneration and growth agendas of the greater Thames Gateway area, and across the needs and aspirations of existing communities
- Describe and understand the economic, social and cultural relationship of the TGSE to London and the Eastern Region, as well as a set of internal relationships within the cultural infrastructure of TGSE
- Emphasise and promote stakeholder engagement at a local, regional and national level
- Liaise with the national CCO project to ensure consensus around methodology, aims and objectives
- Produce a set of guidelines and identify practical actions that position culture at the heart of the processes of change in TGSE.

Since the development of local Cultural Strategies, the launch of the DCMS's Cultural Pathfinders in England (providing evidence of the role of culture in cohesion, economic

development and community building), and the development of ACE's place making and sustainable communities agenda, cultural planning¹ has developed in the UK as a way of enabling policy-makers to think strategically about the application of the distinctive cultural resources of localities (from heritage, to creative industries infrastructure and potential, to local place perceptions and images, life styles, sub-cultures, urban fabric) to a wide range of public authority responsibilities (including planning).

Key to cultural planning is an understanding that places carry a deep cultural meaning and contain their own individual cultural ecology, which needs to be understood and mapped out before policy can intervene.

What the CCO project signals is that there is a need to shift planning priorities away from their physical orientation towards an understanding of the dynamics of places and of how people perceive their environments. This implies greater attention to people's lived experiences, aspirations, expectations and their well-being rather than to infrastructure and buildings.

Awareness of this context, and a strategic understanding of the values of culture in both local development and sustainable communities enabled our team to develop a highly bespoke methodology for the pilot commissioned by TGSEP. In particular, the methodology was developed to connect to the TGSE CCO pilot theme of *embedding culture in growth areas*, with a focus on:

¹ Defined by Bianchini and Ghilardi not just as 'the planning of culture', but a 'culturally sensitive' understanding of urban planning and policy.

- *Current cultural profile*
- *Current priorities*
- *Existing strategies*
- *Existing mechanisms of delivery*
- *Key projects currently undergoing in the TGSE and showing cross-sector work and the potential of having a cross boundary remit, or a regional/national profile and capacity to contribute to the overall sustainable communities and place making agenda.*

Guiding the research and consultation were the following questions, each of which provides evidence for the above policy themes:

- "What is the role of culture in and for a growing and changing TGSE"?
- "What examples are already there (in the TGSE) of using culture for local development"?
- "What lessons can we draw from existing activity on the ground"?
- "How can we help the TGSE to position culture more prominently at the heart of place-making and local development"?
- "In what way can the TGSE's stakeholders maximise the opportunities offered by key national and local policies and plans"?

The cultural potential and the projects currently undergoing across the TGSE were analyzed and assessed against a set of cultural planning key policy themes.

These are:

- *The cultural infrastructure (broadly defined to include arts, heritage, leisure and sport)²*
- *Economic development and skills*
- *Recreation and healthy living*
- *Planning for distinctiveness*
- *Planning for growth.*

These themes provide the strategic focus and framework for the development of the cultural planning guidelines for TGSE. These are introduced in detail in Section 4.

Cultural planning is a process and as such it tends to follow different patterns depending on local conditions, aspirations, and resources. Cultural resources need to be placed in time-dated frameworks where catalyst actions that can create an impact are identified. Places that successfully apply cultural plans take controlled risks have strong but devolved leadership, and a clear idea of where they are going. This is why added to the *Guidelines* is a commentary (with examples of good practice) on which mechanisms of delivery are needed to embed culture in planning and growth in the TGSE.

² In response to client guidance, we have not emphasised sport to a significant extent in this report. This is due to the extensive existing research and the many best practice models already available and understood in Essex.

1.2 Why Culture: The Context

Creating Cultural Opportunities (CCO) is a project jointly funded by the Communities, and Local Government (CLG) and the Investing in Communities (IiC) programme. The stakeholders involved are a collective of partners³ whose main aim is to create a Toolkit (a set of guidelines and principles) for best value relating to the assessment and development of cultural needs within the context of new or growing communities.

Key aim of the project is to enhance the sustainability and well-being of both new and existing communities across England by facilitating the efficient development of and enabling access to, a diverse, vibrant and creative local culture. By providing the planning system with guidelines for cultural and leisure planning, the Toolkit will also ensure that facilities necessary to support a vibrant community are provided and fit for purpose - thus enhancing quality of life and quality of place.

A key strategic objective of the Cultural Planning Toolkit is to support the work of the authorities and delivery organisations tasked with managing areas undergoing population growth and change, including the priority areas defined in the Sustainable Communities Plan. This is why a Steering Group consisting of regional and sub-regional partners was set up to manage the delivery of the project in TGSE.

Culture is at the heart of TGSEP's ambitions for the area and is integral to the delivery of its aims and objectives. TGSEP consider the Toolkit as an opportunity to go *'beyond bricks*

³ CCO partners are: Thames Gateway South Essex; Milton Keynes South Midlands; Black Country Consortium; Culture East Midlands; Culture South East; Living East; South East Museums, Libraries and Archives Council; Arts Council England.

and mortar' by assisting in developing people, skills and institutional capacity building.

In addition, TGSEP consider the Toolkit as providing ways of embedding culture in the development framework for the whole of the Thames Gateway. In their response to the draft Strategic Framework for the Thames Gateway, TGSEP highlighted the importance of investment in capacity building within the cultural sector for key projects to be taken forward. For example:

"South Essex has the opportunity to participate in the Cultural Olympiad in a manner that will secure long-term benefits for local communities but only if investment is made into grass roots activity and long-term masterplanning".

That culture can contribute to local economic, social and urban development is a notion familiar to all those involved in the delivery of cultural services and activities for the past twenty years in both this country and elsewhere. This is because since the 1980s there has been an increased recognition of the importance of the many direct and indirect ways in which the presence of cultural institutions and sports activities carry widespread benefits, especially in enhancing the image of towns, cities, even rural areas.

1.3 The Argument for Culture

Over the past twenty years, the disappearance of local manufacturing industries, periodic crises in government and finance, and an increasing realisation that the convergence of technology and content provide high growth and distinctively competitive market positions, have made culture and creativity

an increasingly key focus for UK regions and cities: providing the leading edge for their tourist industries, offering a 'creative brand' to attract inward investment, and providing new skills and identities that are hoped will bring with them a unique, competitive edge.

This creative focus accelerated during the 1990s, as the 'network society', 'experience economy', 'creative cities' and 'globalisation' were used to define new modes of production and consumption within the 'new economy'. Today, the availability and quality of the local cultural resources and offer can determine whether or not people think their area is a 'good place to live'. This is why culture and the provision of a good sports infrastructure are increasingly associated with *quality of life*. In addition, place-making strategies tend to focus on their cultural offer and on the presence of artists, creative people and industries. This means that by helping to create positive images the cultural sector has a direct impact on inward investment.

Culture's role in tourism is key, with tourism offers now increasingly focused on what is distinctive in a place. Tourism is one of the main sources of economic growth for some countries (or regions, cities, etc.) with evidence suggesting that tourists are increasingly interested in niche destinations and activities. So today we can say that it is the distinctive environmental, leisure, cultural, ethnic and life style features of a place that tend to attract visitors. More and more destinations are using the label 'cultural' to highlight their offer and cultural tourism represents an average of 6% to 8% of nation's GDP in Europe. This means that a good cultural tourism strategy can make a direct contribution to economic development, as well as in some cases act as catalyst for the improvement of the cultural infrastructure.

In addition, if culture has an economic impact through the multiplier effect it produces, then *the creative industries* have a direct economic impact as a high growth economic sector in its own right.

The last decade has seen the rapid rise of the Cultural and Creative Industries⁴ in the UK as a recognised major growth sector with enormous significance for employment, productivity and the balance of trade (DCMS 1998 & 2001; GLA 2002); as a construct for redefining and re-visioning places; as a progressive sector with huge scope for advancing social agendas (PAT 10 1999). It is useful here to consider the creative industries as an economic output of the wider cultural ecology of a place. The *cultural ecology* provides the lifeblood of the creative industries by providing the ideas, energy and career opportunities upon which a successful, growth-orientated creative economy depends. It also provides opportunities for otherwise marginalised individuals and communities to actively produce and consume culture and creativity and helps to motivate social enterprise activities⁵. It provides vital energy in establishing a strong creative economy

⁴ Referred to in this chapter as the 'Creative Industries' for reasons of continuity. The Creative Industries sector is an aggregation of a complex collection of industrial and creative sectors and sub-sectors, and its 'boundaries' are thus often contested. The term used here is based on the definition employed by DCMS Creative Industries Task Force (1998):

"Those activities which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent, and which have their potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property. These have been taken to include the following key sectors: advertising, architecture, art and antiques, crafts, design, designer fashion, film, interactive leisure software, music, the performing arts, publishing, software and television and radio."

⁵ For example, the 2002 Department for Trade and Industry document, 'Social Enterprise: A Strategy for Success', highlights the linkages between the Creative Industries and Social Enterprise sectors by profiling a number of social enterprises working in areas including design and the performing arts.

with major social benefits, it provides elements of inspiration – indeed ‘R&D’ – for commercial creative activities, it can play a major role in attracting creative businesses to a place, and many activities have the potential to provide direct economic value through the injection of entrepreneurial and commercial practice.

However, some policy-makers and analysts rightfully question how intervention can simultaneously satisfy social, growth and cultural agendas, and point to the need for a clear rationale for each intervention, with actions and plans positioned to complement each other within a broader strategy capable of traversing different policy areas. Thus, the establishment of a *coherent landscape of intervention* is key. This is a key feature of the ongoing Creative Economy Programme – a national review of Creative Industries policy, led by the DCMS⁶. Here, emphasis is placed on establishing a fabric of cultural infrastructure that links a strong emphasis on cultural planning to the successful generation of growth orientated creative industries activities.

This is also why towns and cities in the UK and elsewhere increasingly choose to use cultural activity as a tool for local regeneration. But in order to succeed, there is a need for more inclusive, transparent and accountable forms of delivery mechanisms. In particular, integrated approaches to culture, planning and place-making are what policy-makers are increasingly turning to.

The argument situated at the heart of the CCO Programme is that, in order to be effective, local cultural plans must be *joined up* to all the different aspects of agendas such as

⁶ See: www.culture.cep.gov.uk

planning, quality of life and economic development. The assumption here is that culture should not be viewed only as products to be consumed but also as processes and systems that are integral to the life of a community and for a successful economy. This requires a previously unseen level of connectedness where a fabric of cultural infrastructure – seen as both physical and non-physical - both overlays and underpins wider processes of place-making.

1.4 Key Themes: The Framework for the TGSE Cultural Planning Guidelines

As mentioned above, we believe there are 5 key cultural planning policy themes, which are at the heart of sustainable communities and place making. These provide the development framework for the Guidelines, which are introduced in Section 4. Here is why we have chosen to focus on such themes:

- **Cultural Infrastructure**⁷ – is important because the presence of cultural institutions and activities bring widespread benefits in enhancing the sense of wellbeing and image of places. A lively cultural scene is considered to be a key factor in people's decision to relocate to places, to stay in places, and to actively seek connection to other people. Strategies that support arts and cultural infrastructure to develop sustainably (by integrating them into the rest of the economy) are very much at the core of making places more competitive and communities more confident. In relation to broader social benefits, cultural facilities and activities can be invaluable resources to

⁷ Broadly defined as including a connected fabric of arts, heritage, leisure, the creative industries and sport.

encourage participation, a sense of identity and place and a general sense of belonging to a dynamic and viable community. For example, cultural programmes can turn anonymous urban 'spaces' into special *places* by encouraging strategies for the management and custodianship of community assets and heritage.

- **Economic Development and Skills** - Culture has a strategic role to play in supporting the growth and development of the Creative Industries, as well as adding value to other sectors such as tourism. There is widespread evidence that participation in cultural activity can raise the potential of individuals to acquire new skills and the ability to access pathways to creative economy activity. A fabric of infrastructure that connects the cultural ecology to new and incoming businesses in the creative economy is thus a vital underpinning to a competitive and distinctive place.
- **Recreation and healthy living** – Cultural and leisure activity provides a fundamental pathway to happiness and healthy living. Due to advances in telecommunications and transport, businesses and individuals are increasingly mobile and selective when choosing where to locate. Quality of life may be the most important relocation consideration. Those cities, towns or regions with the greatest liveability will gain an economic advantage due to shifting priorities in location decision-making processes. For example, the quality of parks and public spaces, sports facilities and the attractiveness of the urban fabric and housing make a difference to the liveability of places. *As an economic indicator* quality of life has now become an important unit of measurement.

- **Planning for Distinctiveness** – Cultural resources play a fundamental role in all those elements that create a sense of 'community' - individual affirmation, identity, communication between individuals and between groups, participation, and a sense of place. With more and more places engaging with a cultural approach to attend to agendas that range from the economic to the social, it is critical that a distinctive approach to culture is devised. This means engaging with the distinctive mix of existing cultural assets (such as the diversity of the local population, the particular strengths of the arts sector, or the utilisation of the physical environment), and seeking to attract new types of cultural activity and infrastructure that set a place apart from other places. It is those places able to identify, engage with, promote and sell a distinctive fabric of cultural infrastructure that will be the most attractive and competitive.
- **Planning for Growth** – Too often planning for growth is driven by housing or economic policy – rarely both. Culture provides an opportunity to connect these policies: more houses will only be occupied if there is a desire to live in a place. This requires that a place is deemed attractive, safe, clean, vibrant. Culture plays an obvious role in securing these conditions. Houses will also be occupied if new jobs are available locally. Many of these jobs will only be developed if the conditions listed above are introduced, plus additional conditions such as the availability of a skilled and entrepreneurial workforce, good supply chain relationships, access to specialist support. It is clear that culture offers a bridge between housing and economic policy and that a robust approach to cultural planning can operate as a means of building both markets for housing and jobs.

2. Positioning Culture at the Centre: A Strategic Context for TGSE

Thames Gateway South Essex sits at the forefront of regeneration and development agendas for policy makers at both a regional and national level. This is for a variety of reasons, but chiefly they relate to two factors: the location of sub-region as part of the largest regeneration and growth area in the UK and the proximity of the sub-region to the Capital. The essential policy challenge for the Gateway is to balance the desire for growth with the need for sustainable development. How can 160,000 new homes and 180,000⁸ new jobs be created by 2016 in a way that both enhances and regenerates the Gateway through improving the existing infrastructure on all levels while ensuring that development is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable for the future?

2.1 National Strategic Context

At a national level, policy and strategy work relating to TGSE can be grouped into three main areas: growth and environment, culture and wellbeing, economic prosperity and skills. Each of these areas is not mutually exclusive with many cross cutting themes, such as sustainability and active communities as well as a plethora of issues that are held at a cross-departmental level, such as the creative industries and wellbeing.

⁸ DCLG Thames Gateway Interim plan 2006.

2.1.1 Growth and Environment

This policy area is driven by two Government departments, DCLG and DEFRA. For TGSE, the key strategy work here relates to the designation of the sub-region as a 'Growth

Area'⁹ and the desire at a national level that such areas should demonstrate new and good practice in regeneration, sustainability and community building. In addition to the government, several other organisations play a key role in policy making in this field including CABE and the Academy of Sustainable Communities. Chief among the policy concerns in this category are:

- **Planning:** Expressed through policy documents such as PPS1 Sustainable Communities¹⁰ and through series of Planning Policy guidelines (PPGs) and Planning policy Statements (PPS), these seek to ensure that planning takes a more inclusive approach encompassing a broad set of parameters including transport, health, and culture; and that planning considerations are underpinned by notions of sustainable development. These planning guidelines are then used as the basis for the Regional

⁹ Definition of growth area: "The four growth areas announced by the Government in the Sustainable Communities Plan 2003 are being taking forward further to Regional Planning Guidance for the wider south east (2001), and are based on proposals by regional and local partners. They were identified because of their potential to take on further growth more sustainably, with less environmental impact, and to exploit major transport and economic investment." Yvette Cooper 16 June 2006.

¹⁰ PPS1 ODPM Consultation Paper on Planning Policy Statement 1: Creating Sustainable Communities (2003).

Spatial Strategy (RSS) which is the responsibility of the Regional Assembly in each region.

- **Sustainable Development:** As expressed by PPS1, the strategic concern here is to ensure that new developments take into account factors related to the “social fabric of communities”. Developments should “seek to reduce social inequalities; address accessibility (both in terms of location and physical access) for all members of the community to...leisure and community facilities; take into account the needs of all the community, including particular requirements relating to age, sex, ethnic background, religion, disability or income; deliver safe, healthy and attractive places to live and support the promotion of health and well being by making provision for physical activity.”
- **Built Environment:** Strategy here tends towards the creation of places with a rooted and distinctive sense of identity. For example, CABE’s publication *Things Happen Here* sets out a vision for the built environment in the Thames Gateway: “it should be about four things: reasserting individualism, redefining the way we work, reconnecting with nature, and reinventing our identity. These key ideas should now inform planning policies, design decisions, and investment strategies across the region. In this way, new development will be rooted in a strong, coherent identity, which responds to the enduring, historic qualities of the region¹¹.”
- **Transport Infrastructure:** Policy here is driven by ensuring that transport infrastructure provides the necessary capacity for predicted economic and social growth. Here in the Gateway its primary goal is to seek to

provide the necessary infrastructure to ensure that the greater vision objectives for the region are met. The policy is defined thus: “to seek to create the conditions to achieve high levels of sustainable development of housing and employment within a framework of regenerated communities and broad-based urban renaissance.”¹²

2.1.2 Culture and Wellbeing

Culture and wellbeing are singled out as one of three national policy areas of particular relevance to TGSE not only because of the cultural planning remit of this study but because they are increasingly seen as playing a pivotal role in growth areas and regeneration generally. Policy and strategy work here is led by the DCMS with the DCLG leading on the community angle. Key stakeholders such as Arts Council England, and Museums Libraries and Archives Council have also played a prominent role in raising the importance of the social impact of culture on communities and defining the role that culture can play in tackling wider social issues. Relevant national themes include:

- **Public Value:** Assessing the public value of culture provides a major focus for funders and policy makers. Issues here revolve around the relationship between individuals, cultural organisations and economic and social impact. John Holden’s work for Demos¹³ in which he explores the Intrinsic, Instrumental and Institutional value of culture to individuals, organisations and communities has been crucial in developing a new language to express and test previous assumptions. More recently this argument has expanded to cover the democratic legitimacy of culture and the role of personalisation.

¹¹ CABE, launch of *New Things Happen*, November 2006.

¹² DFT website.

¹³ John Holden, *Capturing Cultural Value*, Demos 2004.

- **Inclusiveness:** Promoting and facilitating inclusiveness and community cohesion are seen at a national level as one of the major assets that culture brings to communities. Previous Culture Secretary, Estelle Morris, summed up prevailing thinking on this area by placing community cohesion alongside the more traditional impacts of cultural organisations: “Museums are central to networks of knowledge, engaging with people locally, nationally and internationally. They support learning and skills, community identity and cohesion and the economy and open up worlds of creativity and new experience for all¹⁴”.
- **Active Communities:** Policy in this area relates to the development and facilitation of active participation in the life of the community and the encouragement and facilitation of social capital in individuals. Active Community policy is seen as vital to the encouragement of social mobility and the creation of fairer and more inclusive communities. This is particularly relevant to TGSE with its complex mix of new and old communities and the challenge of ensuring that all sides of the community can contribute in the development of a place.
- **Participation in Physical Activity:** Although a cross-cutting issue, policy around participation in physical activity is driven by a simple target set by the DCMS: a 1% increase in physical activity per year the years 2005-2008. The background of this is the positive physical and mental benefits that participation brings both individually and for communities. The PSA target focuses especially on target groups including black and ethnic minorities, women, and those on low incomes. In TGSE the

challenge is particularly keenly felt in those areas with a historically low level of participation.

2.1.3 Economic Prosperity and Skills

This is perhaps the most critical agenda of all in relation to TGSE: without a growing, competitive economy and a shift away from low pay and low skills, the other strategic imperatives for the Thames Gateway cannot be realised. This key area is led by three government departments, the DBERF, DCSF and DIUS with the RDAS leading the agenda at a regional level. The interlinked policy areas leading this agenda include:

- **Growing the Knowledge Economy:** Ensuring that all regions in the UK benefit from the growth of the knowledge economy and that its benefits are not just retained by London is central to Government policy: “(U)neven or centralised geography of the knowledge economy in Britain has profound implications – such as ‘brain drains’ that undermine capacity building, graduate under-employment and local bottlenecks for people with intermediate qualifications¹⁵.” Linked to the development of the knowledge economy is policy around the Creative Industries, which are increasingly seen as vital not only for the economic prosperity they bring but their spill-over influences across the economy and the creative life of the nation: “The more creative and vigorous the core of our national creativity, the more creative and vigorous are likely to be the creative industries and the wider economy and society¹⁶.”

¹⁴ Estelle Morris, 2003.

¹⁵ DTI, A regional Perspective on the knowledge economy in Great Britain, , 2003

¹⁶ The Work Foundation, Staying Ahead: the Economic Performance of the UK's Creative Industries.

- **Young People and Skills:** Providing young people with the skills necessary to succeed and compete in the rapidly evolving jobs market of the future is essential and policy in this area focuses on ensuring that there is ever greater connection between the supply and demand: between the needs and ambitions of young people and the needs of employers. In areas such as the Thames Gateway where skills levels and academic attainment are relatively low, the concern is that businesses and jobs from the knowledge economy will not move to the area unless its skills profile matches those of other sub-regions competing in the same market place.

- **Innovation:** The new Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills signals the importance of innovation within the economic growth agenda. Innovation policy nationally seeks to ensure that we benefit more fully from our knowledge strengths in academic research and development and create more efficient means of unlocking this knowledge for commercial benefit. Greater linkages between Universities in both the hi-tech and creative sectors and business is a major priority and ensuring that business have the skills base with which to benefit from this is vital.

2.1.4 Spatial Planning and the Opportunity for Culture

The current UK planning system is based on three tiers national, regional and local. It is mainly at a regional and local level that there exists opportunities to ensure that proper provision for culture is enshrined and recognised in planning provision.

Tier	Main strategic planning tools	Relationship to other strategies	Opportunities for culture
National	Planning Policy Statements National policies on land use in the UK		Strategic national policies – Cultural planning in relation to major infrastructure decisions
Regional	Regional Spatial Strategies Broad guidance on planning at a regional level for next 10-15 years	Fed into by all regional strategies such as Regional Economic strategy and Cultural strategy	Culture as a major cross cutting theme Cultural strategy as a key regional driver of regeneration Culture and creativity as key to regional economic development
Local	Local Development Frameworks Consisting of: Local Development Scheme Statement of Community Involvement Development Plan Documents (including the Core Strategy) Supplementary Planning Documents	Sitting alongside the Sustainable Community strategy. From the LDF emerges the Local Development Plan	Specific guidance on spatial planning at a regional level – Section 106 agreements Cultural amenities Clustering and area focus Designated land use agreements Community consultation Supplementary planning documents

The introduction of Regional Spatial Strategies announced through the Planning and Compensation Act 2004 and the shift they represent in planning policy towards a more integrated and strategic spatial approach has opened up the opportunities for culture to be properly reflected at a regional level. As the act stated, 'spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function'.¹⁷ These policies, while primarily referring to the Regional Economic Strategy, include the Regional Cultural Strategy. The East of England Plan¹⁸ in its section on culture cites five policies which will help enhance the life of the region through enhancing existing cultural provision or creating new facilities. These five areas are:

- **Cultural development** – ensuring that 'development plans and wider strategies of local authorities should contain policies that seek to support and grow the region's cultural assets appropriately'. In doing this it asks that local authorities liaise with Living East, take account of the role culture can play in regeneration and introduce safeguards into planning permissions that will ensure the proper and timely provision of a range of cultural facilities.
- **Location of strategic facilities** – It suggest that regionally or nationally significant leisure, sport, recreation arts or tourism facilities will be supported as long as they meet the sequential test, are built in towns or on brown field land, relate to regional interchange

centres to encourage multi-modal transport access. It particularly stresses that facilities in regeneration areas will be given particular support.

- **The Arts** – the plan stresses that local authorities 'will ensure that the potential of the arts to promote social inclusion, generate community cohesion and drive regeneration' is recognised. It suggests that public art strategies and design strategies should be in place and that appropriate steps are taken to ensure that 'sustainable levels of activity' in new cultural facilities are maintained.
- **Sporting facilities** – the plan encourages liaison with appropriate sports bodies such as Sport England as well as extensive consultation with local community groups before new provision is built.
- **Recreation** – This policy concentrates on ensuring access to sites and facilities and the maximisation of natural resources in the region

As Regional Spatial Strategies provide guidance at a regional level and are not site of place specific at a local level, it is **Local Development Frameworks** which provide the greatest opportunity to ensure that provision for culture is a key component in decision making on planning and development. Local Development Frameworks have to take into account of relevant local strategies, they must 'have regard to other relevant policies and strategies at local and regional levels, particularly community strategies. The Local Development Framework should be informed by an assessment of the land use implications of other relevant policies and programmes including economic development,

¹⁷ OPDM, 2004.

¹⁸ EERA, 2004.

regeneration, education, health, crime prevention, waste, recycling and environmental protection.’¹⁹

The Sustainable Community Strategy, which is produced by the Local Strategic Partnership(s), is not defined in the same statutory way as a Local Development Framework and the nature of each one can vary greatly depending on local need and priorities. However as the LDF is required to pay particular attention to the community strategy, it is here that the foundations for ensuring culture is included within the LDF can be laid down. For example, Southend’s recently published Community Strategy²⁰ describes the town’s vision ‘To be recognised as the Cultural capital of the East of England’. The strategy sets out a set of outcomes for culture over the next decade. Part of the role of Southend’s forthcoming LDF will be to reflect on the spatial planning implications that these outcomes have. One of the critical components of Southend’s outcomes for culture is the extent to which they cut across other agendas – in this case education, economic regeneration, health and wellbeing and diversity – and the fact that ensuring they are delivered will involve a cross-departmental commitment to culture as a key component in the regeneration and development of the town. The outcomes are worth printing in full as they show how varied the spatial planning implications of culture are at a local level:

- Development of the cultural hub / educational quarter to secure improved learning opportunities and a higher level of skills within the local workforce.
- Significant investment in the broader cultural infrastructure to secure increased economic benefits to the

town as a result of an increase in both the value and volume of tourism.

- Increase physical activity levels across key target groups to support improved health outcomes including a reduction in obesity levels.
- Increased cultural opportunities for people (particularly young people) at risk of social exclusion.
- Capital investments secured to redevelop the cultural infrastructure and provide sustainable revenue systems in order to make
- redeveloped / new facilities financially viable.
- Improved offering and the successful promotion and utilisation of cultural facilities and activities, having taken into account the needs of all equality groups.

¹⁹ DCLG, Creating Local Development Frameworks A Companion guide to PPS12.

²⁰ Southend Borough Council, Community Strategy July 2007.

Figure 1 Policy and Strategy Matrix for the Thames Gateway South Essex

At a National Level, the TGSE is at the vanguard of three main policy areas. While these policy areas affect all areas in the UK their influence is magnified in the TGSE due the speed and scale of change.

Growth and Environment

Led By: DCLG, DEFRA

NDPBs/Others: CABE, ASC,

Key themes: planning, growth, built environment, urbanism, communities, sustainable development, infrastructure, transport, climate change

Culture and wellbeing

Led By: DCMS, DOH

NDPBs/others: ACE, Sport England

Key themes: role of culture, inclusiveness, active communities, participation in physical activity, equality, happiness

Economic prosperity and skills

Led By: DBERF, DCSF, DIUS

NDPBs/others: LSC, SSCs

Key themes: knowledge economy, competitiveness, job creation, entrepreneurship, educational attainment, skills, opportunity, lifelong learning

The Thames Gateway Interim Plan, launched in 2006, sets out the 8 key strategic priorities for the area as a whole. These 8 priorities are where the main opportunities and challenges relating to growth for the region are located. As TGSE is also part of the East of England, the priorities of EEDA and EERA need to be put into the context as well.

8 key priorities of the Interim Plan

- The 2012 Olympics and Paralympics
 - Economic growth
 - Skills and Worklessness
 - Environment
 - House building
 - Building Strong communities
- Investing in Transport infrastructure
- Delivering Regeneration and growth

8 Strategic goals of the Regional Economic Strategy

- A skills base that can support a world-class economy
- Growing competitiveness, productivity and entrepreneurship
- Global leadership in innovation in science, technology and research
 - High quality places to live, work and visit
- Social exclusion and broad participation in the regional economy
- Development of international gateways and national and regional transport corridors
 - A leading information society
 - An exemplar for the efficient use of resources

At a sub-regional level these themes are encapsulated in a distinctive vision and a series of goals that drive local policy and positioning.

Regional Vision for TGSE

- Make South Essex an attractive place to live and work, which is affordable, safe, healthy and clean
- Become a centre of excellence for technological research and development, futures development, expertise and skilling, building on existing business clusters such as automotive and medical research
 - Be a flagship ecological and environmental community, specialising in sustainable new technologies and development
 - Make South Essex the place where businesses will look to first for investment, and promote the development of local businesses
 - Break down the barriers to opportunity caused by inequality
- Promote urban and social renaissance in South Essex through intelligent and targeted investment, and investment in local communities.

2.2 The Thames Gateway: Eight Strategic Themes

Figure 2: Map of the Thames Gateway



The Thames Gateway Interim Plan²¹, launched by DCLG in November 2006, provides the overall strategic framework for the TGSE sub-region. This plan sets out the eight key opportunities and challenges which will effectively determine the success of the Thames Gateway as a region. It is described as being a plan which “addresses failure and unlocks potential”. The eight areas it describes effectively are strategic ‘ever-presents’ in any consideration of the context for activity in the region. They are:

²¹ DCLG, Thames Gateway Interim Plan November 2006.

2.2.1 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

etween now and 2012, hosting the Games is forecast to provide at least 7,000 jobs and bring some £525 million of additional income to East London alone. The London 2012 Games will be focused on Stratford, which is one of the major development and regeneration locations in the Thames Gateway. However the plan makes clear the need to extend the benefits of the Games - jobs, skills, health, culture, environment, transport and confidence - more widely to the whole Gateway. Overall, the report describes how the major

impact of the 2012 Games to the wider area will generate investment interest and business opportunities across the Gateway, particularly in transport, business services and tourism. Additionally, if the right investments are made, they could be used as a catalyst to increase participation in sport and promote more healthy lifestyles.

2.2.2 Economic Growth

The economic future of the Thames Gateway is dependent on its relationship to London. Primarily the Gateway “offers the opportunity to support London as a Global City by providing the people and space for continued growth”²². It states that the three regional RDAs estimate that if 180,000 jobs were created in the Thames Gateway, it would add a further £12bn per annum contribution to the UK economy.

The Plan describes the ways that job growth is anticipated to occur. Primarily this will be through the planned scale of population growth in terms of retail, health, education and other public services. Secondly, the scale of regeneration and the building of the Olympic venues will drive expansion in the construction industry with new opportunities in sustainable construction methods. Thirdly the Plan sets out ‘four transformational economic opportunities’ which will have an impact across the Gateway:

- Canary Wharf is the fastest growing employment location in the UK.
- The Gateway ports cluster – Tilbury, Purfleet, Thamesport, Sheppey and Shellhaven (subject to planning consent).
- The new commercial centre at Ebbsfleet Valley that links with the international Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL), services stopping at Ebbsfleet Valley International Station.

²² Ibid.

- Stratford City will host the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and be at the heart of this major new business centre also linked by CTRL.

The three Thames Gateway RDAs are developing a network of enterprise hubs and related programmes to help new and existing businesses grow. The sectors/clusters that it believes show potential for biggest growth in the Gateway include:

- Financial and business services
- Creative industries and cultural sector (including the sport economy)
- Environmental technologies and services
- High-value-added, technology-led manufacturing
- Transport and logistics
- Sustainable construction.

2.2.3 Skills and Worklessness

The plan describes in stark terms the extent of the gap between the skills of the Gateway’s residents and those the Gateway will require in the future. Without concerted action, this gap will widen and some existing communities will not benefit from the new opportunities. In addition it shows how the lack of skills in the Gateway is a consequence of low aspiration and confidence and how skills vital to the creation of cohesive and prosperous communities are in short supply.

Over the past five years, investment in educational facilities has led to significant improvements in many communities in the Gateway. This is resulting in higher participation in learning post-16 and more highly qualified entrants to the labour markets in most areas. However, the Thames Gateway Further and Higher Education Advisory Group (TGFHEAG) has identified that this progress is

not fast enough. It has a number of proposals to meet the needs of the Gateway's employers such as:

- Extend the 'Train to Gain' offer of both level 2 and level 3 qualifications being piloted in London across the Gateway
- Develop a Guarantee of Assured Progression - the Gateway learning entitlement
- Provide better services to provide Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG) on training and employment for young people and adults
- Expand further and higher education provision across the Gateway in facilities shared by different types of education provider in order to enhance choice and maximise progression.

2.2.4 The Environment

A sustainable, high quality environment will be critical to the success of the region. The Gateway's environment and environmental infrastructure is changing for the better, but that many investors, house buyers and companies are put off by their perception of the Gateway as characterised by degraded environments.

The environmental strategy the Plan sets out for the Gateway has three major elements:

- Create the Thames Gateway Parklands to build on the success of the green grid networks and address wider issues of urban design and sustainability
- Establish the Gateway as a low carbon region and develop the area as a new model for the management of waste and water resources
- Work with the natural environment to minimise and manage flood risk.

The plan shows that 'The Thames Gateway Parklands' is 'more than just a new label or name', but a set of principles that should run through the core of everything that is being done in the Gateway by encouraging partners to:

- Celebrate the character, identity and history of each community
- Improve the public realm
- Protect, enhance and create a mosaic of bio-diverse habitats
- Encourage active, healthy lifestyles
- Integrate management of flood risk, water supply, and water quality
- Contribute to the Gateway's low carbon status
- Link communities through excellent foot and cycle paths and public transport
- Promote locally grown food that enhances soil fertility and biodiversity.

2.2.5 House Building

In the Sustainable Communities Plan, the government initially envisaged 120,000 new homes would be provided in the Gateway between 2001 and 2016. This has now been revised upwards to 160,000. The implication is that building will have to occur at a faster rate, alongside the supporting social and transport infrastructure. To aid with this process it suggests that a task group should be put in place to advise TGSP on how best to accelerate completions across the Gateway.

The Plan also describes how "(C)reating mixed communities across the Gateway will continue to be a challenge. A broad range of housing at different densities - for rent and sale - and to meet the needs of different households including elderly and vulnerable people and families with children, will be required. Further to that, and in light of the severe housing

shortages facing those on low and moderate incomes in the Greater South East, government has indicated that across the Thames Gateway a total 35% of new homes should be affordable housing for rent and sale, although this varies from sub-region to sub-region".²³

2.2.6 Building Strong Communities

Building strong communities in the future is key: "There are many strong communities in the Gateway, where there is pride and harmony, a culture of community enterprise, and an active community sector. However, regardless of their existing strengths, all of the Gateway's communities are undergoing major changes, not just through new developments, but in response to global economic, social and environmental challenges. These changes naturally generate anxieties. We need to build from our strong cohesive communities and inspire, involve and revitalise others".²⁴

2.2.7 Investing in Transport Infrastructure

Investment in transport infrastructure is a must have in the Gateway. In line with the Government's vision as set out in 'The Future of Transport: a Network for 2030', and to improve the capacity of existing networks to meet unmet and forecast demand, it describes how Government has already committed over £1.8 billion to transport infrastructure in the Gateway.

It sets out a series of requirements for transport in the region:

- A good road and rail spine along the north and south bank providing good access to Canary Wharf and London, connectivity to the national and international road and rail

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

- system, and good internal access to the key employment centres within the Gateway
- Cross river connections at strategic points in the system to expand business and employment catchments and widen economic and social opportunities at growth locations
- Local public transport capacity and connections serving major growth locations, to promote a modal shift to public transport and limit the impact of growth on traffic congestion
- Removing specific bottlenecks which have an exaggerated impact on important strategic movements.

Large-scale strategic opportunities focus on the ports in Essex and Kent and the road and rail networks serving the ports, which are the UK's main gateway to Europe. The Gateway will play an even stronger role with the planned expansion by Dubai Ports World at Shellhaven. The Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) international and domestic services will also transform travel between London, the Gateway, and Europe.

2.2.8 Delivering Regeneration and Growth

The Plan describes how the various delivery organisations in the Gateway need to work more closely and effectively together. The DCLG has started reviewing delivery arrangements and its emerging conclusions are that:

- Local authorities and local strategic partnerships should play a stronger role in setting regeneration priorities and in partnership working across administrative boundaries and agencies
- UDCs for London and Thurrock and the URC for Southend should continue to be the lead delivery bodies in their areas

- Sustainable Communities Strategies and Local Area Agreements should feature the regeneration outcomes from each delivery partnership. Government Offices will work with Communities and Local Government on this work.
- English Partnerships/the Housing Corporation should be strategic regeneration partners for delivery partnerships across the Gateway
- Recent efforts by the three Greater South East RDAs to accord higher priority to the Gateway and to define pan-Gateway economic programmes are a key step forward.

2.3. The East Of England – Space for Ideas

Running alongside the eight strategic considerations of the Interim plan for the Thames Gateway, is the policy and vision for the East of England as a whole, which is the responsibility primarily of EEDA and EERA. In terms of cultural planning, there are two major policy considerations: The Regional Economic Strategy (and related policy) and the Regional Spatial Strategy.

2.3.1 The Knowledge Economy

Together with key strategic partners such as Living East, Arts Council England East, Sport England and other regional cultural bodies EEDA is setting an agenda for the region which recognises the importance of culture and creativity to its economic and social prosperity. It seeks to establish:

“A leading economy, founded on our world-class knowledge base and the creativity and enterprise of our people...to improve the quality of life of all who live and work here.”
(EEDA – Regional Economic Strategy).

The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) for the Eastern Region could not be any clearer: culture and creativity sit at the heart of plans for the East of England's future economic growth, prosperity and quality of life. This is a commitment to ensuring creativity and culture can be seen across the ‘premier league’ strategies relating to the region, including the Integrated Regional Strategy²⁵, the Regional Spatial Strategy, and the Regional Cultural Strategy. The depth of this commitment to the role of culture and creativity can also be seen in the region's successful branding and marketing campaign, which positions the region as the ‘Space for Ideas’, linking the creativity and knowledge economy agendas.

The RES, which is currently going through its three-yearly updating, has 8 Strategic Goals which have a special relevance for the Thames Gateway as EEDA seeks to redress the social and economic challenges faced by underperforming parts of the East:

- A skills base that can support a world-class economy
- Growing competitiveness, productivity and entrepreneurship
- Global leadership in developing and realising innovation in science, technology and research
- High quality places to live, work and visit
- Social exclusion and broad participation in the regional economy
- Making the most from the development of international gateways and national and regional transport corridors
- A leading information society
- An exemplar for the efficient use of resources.

²⁵ Sustainable Futures - The Integrated Regional Strategy for the East of England EERA, 2005.

These Goals provide the underpinning for the general economic growth of the region, through helping to address the 'crucial issues' identified by the Integrated Regional Strategy – such as inequality, sustainability, workforce skill levels, access to services and rural issues.

The link between the RES's Goals and agendas for culture and creativity is provided by the joint Arts Council England EAST/EEDA Prospectus – 'Creative Collaborations – Delivering Change'. This matches the priorities of ACEE with the 8 Goals to produce 3 Shared Strategic objectives for both organisations:

- A globally competitive Creative Industries sector
- Fostering sustainable and inclusive communities to create vibrant places
- International partnerships and promotion

This Prospectus provides a clear focus for on investment priorities for two leading agencies in the region and indicates where projects and initiatives in the region should be focused to achieve maximum effect.

The Prospectus defines what success for the Region might look like, with a clear focus on establishing distinctive, high-quality, partner driven, cultural provision rooted in particular places. It sees "Centres of excellence of regional, national and international significance" that will "identify, harness and nurture talent, both indigenous artists and creative entrepreneurs and those attracted to the region". Centres of excellence that both parties have and are investing in include Luton Carnival Centre, Aldeburgh Music, Firstsite, DanceEast, Metal Culture and the production Campus in Purfleet. It wants "Regional towns and cities that are internationally known for

their creativity, openness and quality of life", which are "Characterised by high quality design, public art and shared sense of place." Furthermore, the Prospectus stresses how ACE and EEDA are committed to investing in Regional Cities East²⁶ as the key places in driving forward the national city-regions agenda and as the natural locations for creating high impact "national centres of excellence".

The other key strategy document for culture and creativity at a regional level is the Regional Cultural Strategy prepared by Living East. "A Better Life – the Role of Culture in the Sustainable Development of the East of England" complements the ACEE/EEDA Joint Prospectus, and is particularly concerned with the role of culture in growth and development. It has four key themes, which it hopes will provide a focus for investment and decision-making over the next 10–20 years for funders and the broader cultural community. These are:

- Embedding culture in growth and regeneration: increase investment in culture-led growth and regeneration to make the East of England a leading light for the rest of the country
- Developing creativity: become the creative workshop of the UK by offering the best opportunities to creative people and businesses in the country
- Growing cultural tourism: become recognized as a premier cultural tourism destination in England by 2020

²⁶ Regional Cities East comprises Peterborough, Luton, Ipswich, Norwich, Colchester and Southend.

- Capturing the benefits of the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games: maximise the positive impacts of the Games coming to London in 2012.

The first three of these themes are of most relevance to the TGSE suggesting as they do the critical relationship between culture, place and regeneration; or as the Strategy has it, 'People, Place and Prosperity'. The Strategy sets out clearly the transformative role that culture can play in a place, going as far as to say that it can "transform a collection of houses and businesses into a living entity, making places where people want to live and build their futures."

'Space for Creativity'²⁷, the Regional Development Strategy for Creative Industries, provides further underpinning for the importance and role of Creative Industries across the region as key drivers of economic growth. This strategy explores how the growth trajectory for the Creative Industries in the region is not uniform across all sectors but that, with particular relevance to Southend, media and digital industries (including computer games) have the most potential to grow. To achieve this growth, the strategy states that there are a series of challenges that must be overcome, including:

- A higher profile for the sector
- Better access to finance
- Greater access to broadband
- Better communications within the sector
- Improved business support and workforce development.

²⁷ 'Space for Creativity', EEDA 2005.

2.3.2 Infrastructure for Growth

The East of England Plan²⁸, currently being revised by EERA, is the overarching spatial planning document for the East of England. It provides the direct link between the Policy guidelines provided by central Government and the Local Development Frameworks produced at a sub regional level which determine local policy around planning. The Plan encompasses economic development, housing, the environment, transport, waste management, culture, sport and recreation, mineral extraction and more. Key proposals include:

- planning for up to 421,500 new jobs across the East of England up to 2021, to meet future economic growth needs and in particular to meet the regeneration needs of less prosperous areas.
- provision of 478,000 new homes by 2021 (over 100,000 have already been built since 2001 and, of the balance, more than half already have planning permission or are allocated in existing development plans).
- a major increase – more than doubling – in the supply of social rented, key worker, and other forms of affordable housing, to address housing shortages in the region (someone earning £25,000 a year can afford to buy a property in only 7 out of the region's 48 districts).
- ensuring that at least 60% of all new development takes place on previously developed ('brownfield') land.
- proposals for more sustainable forms of transport, seeking to reduce the rate of growth in car and lorry traffic and promoting public transport, walking and cycling.
- proposals for environmental and social measures, such as more energy/water efficient development, investment in education,

²⁸ EERA East of England Plan – Draft Revision Winter 2006/7.

The main area of debate over the Plan is the extent to which central government funding will be available to fund the key proposals, with EERA currently in discussion with central government because it believes without commitments to infrastructure improvements and funding the plan cannot not achieve its stated objectives in areas such as sustainable development and social housing.

2.4 The Sub-region: Thames Gateway South Essex

“On London’s doorstep, playing a significant role in the UK’s economic powerhouse, Thames Gateway South Essex is vibrant, bursting with pride and alive with opportunities”²⁹

‘Thames Gateway South Essex - a Vision for the Future’³⁰, sets out the specific agenda for the Thames Gateway South Essex (TGSE) sub-region. It contains a set of common goals for the area as well as a specific vision for Basildon, Thurrock, Southend, Castle Point and Rochford. The common goals for the sub-region as a whole are to:

- Make South Essex an attractive place to live and work, which is affordable, safe, healthy and clean
- Become a centre of excellence for technological research and development, futures development, expertise and skilling, building on existing business clusters such as automotive and medical research

- Be a flagship ecological and environmental community, specializing in sustainable new technologies and development
- Make South Essex the place where businesses will look to first for investment, and promote the development of local businesses
- Break down the barriers to opportunity caused by inequality
- Promote urban and social renaissance in South Essex through intelligent and targeted investment, and investment in local communities.

There are specific visions for each of the districts with the TGSE:

- In terms of **Thurrock** it emphasizes the Borough’s reputation as an ‘exemplar for community development, learning and enterprise’. It aims to ‘raise aspiration, confidence and skills through lifelong learning and quality employment opportunities for all’. In terms of growth it sees Thurrock’s future as being in supporting ‘a sustainable European logistics industry’ and the creation of a world port at Shell Haven and Tilbury which connects London and South Essex to Europe and the world’s trading centres.
- The vision for **Southend and Rochford** draws on the area’s inherent strengths. Its primary goal is to ‘transform Southend into a thriving cultural hub for South Essex, by developing its cultural strategy, beach facilities, resort and tourism facilities and leisure attractions, and the overall environmental quality of Southend and its environs’. Underpinning this will be the development of university facilities and improving accessibility to Southend and Rochford by road, rail and air.

²⁹ TGSE Strategic Framework Submission, 2006.

³⁰ TGSEP October 2001.

- The vision for **Castle Point** and **Basildon** is that they will become centres of business excellence in in South Essex supported by excellent infrastructure, skills, training and education, and quality business environments and facilities. There will be a leading business support centre in Basildon to serve all of South Essex, both new and existing businesses. It recognises the need to improve the local transportation network, in particular access to and from Canvey Island and along commuting routes into Basildon, including better

2.4.1 Delivering Growth

In terms of what is expected to be delivered in the region TGSE between now and 2011, the key drives are the number of dwellings that are expected to be built and the number of jobs to be created. These figures are set out below as they appear in the Regional Spatial Strategy – the East of England Plan.

Table 1: Number of jobs and Dwellings to be created in the TGSE³¹

Area	Jobs			Dwellings		
	2001-2011	2001-2021	<i>Total Jobs</i>			<i>Total Dwellings</i>
Basildon	7,000	4,000	11,000	5,000	5,700	11,700
Castle Point	1,000	1,000	2,000	1,500	2,500	4,000
Rochford	1,000	2,000	3,000	1,600	3,000	4,600
Southend	5,000	8,000	13,000	2,750	3,250	6,000
Thurrock	16,000	10,000	26,000	8,500	10,000	18,500
TOTAL	30,000	25,000	55,000	19,350	24,450	43,800*

*Of these, only 37,000 will be built in the TGSE area of the districts.

³¹ EERA EAST of England Plan 2004.

Each of the districts within the TGSE is currently developing a **Local Development Framework** - now the main planning tools at a local level, replacing the old local plan. The LDFs will include the following documents:

- The Local Development Scheme
- The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)
- The Strategic Environmental Assessment & Sustainability Appraisal and the following four Development Plan Documents (also known as DPDs)
- The Core Strategy DPD

- The Development Control Policies DPD
- The Gypsies and Travellers DPD
- The Site Allocations DPD

The main reason for dividing the new LDF into separate sections is to enable planning authorities to review and revise a particular section of the LDF independently of the other sections. This will enable planning authorities to respond to any need for change more quickly and easily than was possible with the old Local Plan.

3. TGSE Local Area Profiles

This Section introduces a set of area profiles for each of the local authority areas in TGSE. It provides a set of reflections on the current status of culture and indicates how culture can play a more strategic role in attending to the 5 cultural planning policy themes. This is not intended as a detailed

cultural audit, but as a brief introduction to the role of culture at a local level. **Section 4** builds on this through the provision of the Guidelines. This includes reference to balance a local and sub-regional approach to cultural planning, with a sub-regional approach in most cases the most suitable for maximising the role and value of culture in TGSE.

3.1 Basildon

Basildon district lies in the southern part of Essex and covers some 42.5 square miles including the towns of Basildon, Billericay and Wickford. Some 70 per cent of the District is rural with large areas of open farmland and scattered rural developments with a population of about 165,600 located in the three main towns. Compared to the national average, there are more young people under 25 and significantly less people over 65 in the District, and ethnic minorities make up 3.1 per cent of the population. Basildon enjoys particularly good transport links with London, and many commute for employment to the capital. Basildon is also one of the principal locations within the Thames Gateway: within Basildon District, the latest draft of the East of England Plan proposes some 10,700 new homes and the creation of 11,000 new jobs by 2021.

Examples of the cultural infrastructure	Examples of Economic development and skills	Examples of Recreation and healthy living	Examples of Planning for distinctiveness	Examples of Planning for growth.
<p>Active Arts Development role within the Council, aimed mainly at supporting the voluntary sector, but also supporting the arts activities of young people through arts in education.</p>	<p>Links between the arts and learning are well developed, with Thurrock and Basildon College providing BTEC level diploma courses in the fields of: Art and Design, Fashion and Textiles, ICT, Interior and Spatial Design, Media and Photography, Media Makeup, Travel, Leisure and Tourism.</p>	<p>The Fold hosts a number of local club activities and provides an entertainment programme of both amateur and professional concerts, plays, films, exhibitions and lectures. Courses are also offered in drawing, painting, pottery, dance, drama and sculpture.</p>	<p>Public Art was recently given a boost in Basildon through the creation of an "Arts Trail" of 14 pieces of public art in the Town Centre. In addition, The EEDA and ACEE funded Art U Need public art programme sought to address the lack of Public Art in the area.</p>	<p>The Basildon Town Centre Development (part of a broader plan for the regeneration of Pitsea and Laindon Town Centres). The Basildon Town Centre Development Framework sets an ambitious programme for change with new retail, leisure, commercial and cultural space planned³³. This</p>

		<p>Festival Leisure Park is a key commercial entertainment and leisure site, providing for a wide range of popular commercial culture, including cinema, ten-pin bowling, night clubs, health and fitness, hotels and restaurants. The only competitor of the same type is Lakeside Leisure Park, however it is a smaller park with fewer tenants.³²</p>		<p>is an opportunity to ensure that the quality of the design of the new public spaces is high and that such places are imaginative, well connected to transport, housing and other functions, and that they are attractive spaces which provide opportunities for temporary cultural and public art activity.</p>
<p>Provision of accessible cultural resources is relatively under-developed, yet a thriving local voluntary arts (and crafts) scene exists, with many amateur clubs and societies providing activities from amateur dramatics and painting, to crafts such as doll making.</p>	<p>Creative Partnerships is an important asset for the District because it provides innovative examples of creative learning programmes implemented through sustainable collaborations between schools and cultural and creative individuals, organisations and local communities.</p>	<p>The Council has launched an arts marketing and promotion magazine, "Buzz", which has been expanded to promote all leisure activities</p>	<p>There are 125 Listed Buildings in the District, ranging from historic houses to modern buildings such as Brooke House built in 1965. Basildon Park houses an 18th century country house set in parklands. There are no municipal or town museums, although there are "themed" collections, such as the Motor Boat Museum, the Cater Museum, the Barleylands Farm Museum and the Plotlands Museum.</p>	<p>Investment in the Basildon Enterprise Corridor, the largest business area in the Thames Gateway outside of London, home to 45,000 jobs and over 5,000 businesses, including Ford, Selex, Visteon, Case New Holland, First Data Europe, International Financial Services Limited, RBS, and Starbucks.</p>
<p>There are over 80 Arts organisations ranging from professional to voluntary and community groups. The Billericay Arts Association operates its own Arts Centre,</p>	<p>Media production is relatively strong in the District - mainly through the presence of the television production and training company <i>South East TV</i>. As well as producing</p>	<p>The Library Service for Basildon is provided by Essex County Council, which supports 7 libraries. The Library Service is keen to promote cultural partnerships</p>	<p>Events and Festivals play a role in attracting local people and tourists to the District. The largest event organised by Basildon Council in the cultural calendar is the annual</p>	<p>The creation of a £35 million new Sporting Village (along with and improvements to playing pitches and sports facilities throughout the District to make Basildon the</p>

³² Community Strategy and Action Plan for the District of Basildon, 2003.

³³ Included in the Framework are proposals for: 3,650 new homes; 2,500 new jobs; 49,000m2 of retail/leisure space; 55,000m2 of office space; a new railway station; an improved bus interchange and new public spaces.

<p>The Fold, with Council support.</p>	<p>TV shows for some of the new cable and satellite networks, South East TV also provides a media training facility for young people in Basildon, with support from the Community Fund. A local company, <i>New Town Films</i>, produced a 90- minute feature film, "New Town Original", based on the experiences of young people in Basildon. The film won an award at the London Film Festival.</p>	<p>with the District Council and other partners to promote literature and reading.</p> <p>One example of this successful collaboration is the Basildon Literary Festival which has been held annually in the autumn with support from BP. In addition, the libraries at Basildon, Billericay and Wickford have spaces for the display of visual arts and a selection panel, including local artists, determine the display programme for these sites.</p>	<p>Basildon Festival held in Gloucester Park. Over 35,000 people attend the Festival over a summer weekend. Countryside sites host some 27 events each year and parks and open spaces are venues for sporting events, fairs and circuses. Leisure centres also host non-sporting events, such as craft fairs, flower shows etc.</p>	<p>Centre for Sport in South Essex) is key. The Village is designed to be a centre for sporting excellence and help to raise Basildon's profile using sport as a catalyst for regeneration (see Section 4). This will provide affordable access to sports facilities for the whole community in a wide range of sports. This is a unique opportunity for both high profile and local community regeneration through Sports initiatives and to maximise the close proximity to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games³⁴.</p>
<p>The appointment of a musician in residence at Woodlands School, and contemporary music events, such as the "Battle of the Bands", "Band Train" and "Performance in the Park" demonstrate an active local music scene.</p>		<p>An example of joined up work between the arts and community development and learning is the Space for Sports and Arts scheme. Here the Bardfield School project will concentrate on arts within the school and local community, whilst the Briscoe School project provides dance and studio facilities for both school and community use.</p>	<p>Day visitor tourism is well developed in Basildon, with sites such as Wat Tyler Country Park attracting some 200,000 visits annually. The Festival Leisure Park also draws large numbers into the district for evening visits. However, the main source of staying visits is business tourism and the area is well supplied with "Travel Lodge" type accommodation, targeted at the business visitor market.</p>	<p>The £3,5 million transformation of the Wat Tyler Country Park in Pitsea into a major centre for education, heritage and nature. The 125-acre park, owned and run by Basildon Council, is linked to the River Thames by Vange Creek right in the heart of the Thames Gateway.</p>
<p>In the Visual Arts, the Basildon Arts Trust Gallery</p>		<p>The Council provides and maintains 667 hectares of</p>	<p>The Billboard Project is an innovative creative</p>	

³⁴ The scheme also builds on a number of existing Sports and Health programmes, Healthy Schools Programmes and a partnership between the Council and the Basildon PCT which is showing great interest in the potential of using the culture to tackle issues of health. Clearly, the Sporting Village will not be just about sport, but it will deliver wider benefits to the local community. In particular, through its activity, it will generate a virtuous cycle of improvements in education, wider access, increase in participation and better employment prospects. The project in addition will improve the area's profile thus also contributing to the delivery of the Basildon Town Centre Regeneration plan.

<p>has become the permanent home of The Basildon Arts Trust Collection, a portfolio of Modern Art exhibits. However, the gallery is undergoing refurbishment, and the collection is on display at the Townsgate Theatre. In practice, this means that there is no permanent gallery in the District.</p> <p>The Performing Arts are less well developed, although there are a number of local amateur drama, dance and choral groups. The Townsgate Theatre consists of a versatile auditorium which can seat 550 in traditional theatre style or almost 800 on a flat floor layout. This is supported by the Mirren Studio, which can seat 180 as a studio theatre for smaller productions.</p>		<p>Parks and Open Spaces, including 266 play areas and 94 sports pitches/courts etc. The most frequently used parks are Gloucester Park, Lake Meadows and Wickford Memorial Park. The District has a remarkable variety of diverse habitat sites, including woodland, coastline and fresh water, with an eighth of the land made up of the nationally threatened Thameside Grazing Marsh, a habitat which is unique in Europe and of international importance. The District is home to a variety of rare plants and animals. There are 46 County wildlife sites covering 920 hectares and 6 SSSIs (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) covering 638 hectares.</p>	<p>regeneration project built around a partnership of between Creative Partnerships Thames Gateway, Futurecity, Basildon District Council and Southend and Thurrock with media partners Channel 4/Talent. The basic philosophy of the project is that through strategic joint investment (Billboard is supported by ACEE and EEDA via their shared prospectus) the power of the creativity to transform the social, economic and material conditions of local people and communities will be harnessed.</p>	
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The cultural ecology and economy of Basildon is characterised by a relatively basic level of facilities and support services, not much public visibility of the cultural form but some submerged, amateur or part-time activity. We can also evidence of an emergent Creative Industries sector albeit no dedicated support scheme or strategy and a general perception that to grow a creative business, location in London or at least connection to the networks, supply chains and support environment of London (and to a lesser extent different parts of the Eastern Region), is required.

However, if we take Basildon's cultural landscape from a broader cultural planning perspective, there are opportunities and resources, which, if sufficiently developed, could bring both economic benefits and positive impacts on external perceptions, the image and overall identity of the District. Basildon is one of a number of "New Towns" developed in the 1950's and early 1960's to accommodate the overspill population from the post-war redevelopment of inner London. Today, though economically prosperous, the area is facing some of the issues other 'new towns' (Stevenage, Bracknell, Basingstoke and Crawley) face, namely the obsolescence of

much of its urban infrastructure, the challenges of economic competitiveness and a growing gulf between the skills the local people can offer and those that Basildon's new generation of employers require.

Far from arguing that culture alone can solve such problems, we are nevertheless able to identify a number of distinctive 'cultural' features in Basildon which could be used as opportunities for future development. The 1950s 'new urbanism' heritage of the District (but also of the broader Thames Gateway South Essex) is a particularly relevant feature. The Essex landscape is covered with pioneering examples of modernist design (from Ove Arup's Canvey Island seawall restaurant, to the Bauhaus-designed Bata shoe factory, and Brooke House) which stand as a reminder of the importance of good design and architecture in fostering identity, ownership and sense of place.

This is a powerfully distinctive resource, which needs to be acknowledged as a source of inspiration for other new forms of thinking in the economic, urban, sustainable living and quality of life fields (more on this in the Guidelines section). If Southend is a 'Cultural and Learning Hub' of South Essex³⁵, by turning weakness into strength and by thinking more creatively about its resources, Basildon can become the 'New Urban Living Hub' and a testing ground for new forms of holistic thinking around issues of health, housing, place making and the integration of culture into all aspects of quality of life (see **Section 4**).

The current Strategic Plan and implementation policies of the Thames Gateway South Essex³⁶ already stress the importance of joined up actions between Leisure, Environment,

Community Development and Urban Renaissance. They also observe that culture (and cultural resources) are vital to the delivery of a balanced and integrated community where policies for leisure, employment, environment, transport, and housing are holistically linked throughout the area.

Among the other resources of Basildon relevant to cultural planning is the entrepreneurial and 'can-do' attitude of its people (Basildon has been identified as the 'Business Hub' of South Essex). Partly inherited from a long tradition of Essex-born iconoclasts and non-conformists, this is another important resource, which can be mobilised and translated into new opportunities and innovative business ideas. Taking this background into consideration, it is possible to make a connection between the past and current concerns about the environment and link eco-living, new urbanism, health care services and health products into a 'niche' cluster of activity, which Basildon could specialise in. In this case, Basildon's contribution to cultural planning is in the ability of local strategic plans to see culture as integral to leisure, sport, economic development (and entrepreneurship) and quality of life. The lessons learned from the implementation of this holistic way of thinking could then be disseminated across South Essex and beyond.

Currently, throughout Basildon there are major developments planned, estimated to total investment of nearly £2 billion. These range from business and entrepreneurial support and development, to improvements in the leisure provision (which will have impacts on the local quality of life), new research and learning initiatives and town centre improvements. The task now is to extract the cultural planning lessons from such developments (and from the implementation process) relevant to other places in the Thames Gateway South Essex and

³⁵ See TGSEP: 'A Vision for the Future' and 'Delivering the Future'.

³⁶ *ibid*

elsewhere (i.e. in growth areas) and to suggest ways of embedding culture and creative activity in such developments.

Creative Industries in TGSE

A strong, distinctive and vibrant Creative Industries sector requires a strong, distinctive and vibrant context in which it can flourish. This means that a strong approach to cultural planning can provide the conditions for a dynamic Creative Industries sector. However, little data and intelligence is available on the Creative Industries in TGSE, undermining confidence in how to support a dual 'cultural ecology' and 'cultural economy' approach to the sub-region. Therefore, as a complementary approach to this CCO Cultural Planning Toolkit, TGSEP commissioned NMP to undertake a Creative Industries Mapping research to gauge the scale and scope of the sector in TGSE. The headline findings of this research show that:

- There are 1,874 Creative Industries businesses in the TGSE area
- There are 5,000 full-time equivalent employees
- £252 million turnover in the last 12 months
- 37% enterprises seen increase in annual sales turnover in past year
- 64% anticipate sales will increase over coming 5 years
- 55% looking to take on new permanent staff and
- 68% new freelance / temp staff over the next 5 years
- 17% looking for new business premises over the coming years.

Barriers to Growth:

25% or more businesses identified the following as barriers:

- Limited market for my goods and services
- Access to finance
- Underdeveloped creative and cultural infrastructure.

This final point is significant because it relates directly to the quality and reach of the cultural infrastructure.

3.2 Southend on Sea

Southend is situated 35 miles east of the London near the mouth of the Thames. With a population of 159,000, and over 325,000 in the wider functional economic area, the town is the largest urban area in Essex. It has the seventh densest population of any area in the UK (excluding London). Its population is predominantly white with only 4.55% of residents coming from non-white minorities and like many seaside towns has a high proportion of over 65s.

Southend has approximately 6,500³⁷ businesses employing 84,000 people. 16.5% of the working population or 13,440³⁸ people commute daily to London for work.

Examples of the cultural infrastructure	Examples of Economic development and skills	Examples of Recreation and healthy living	Examples of Planning for distinctiveness	Examples of Planning for growth.
<p>Visual arts in Southend are represented by two key organisations - Focal Point and the Beecroft. Focal Point gallery, part of Southend Museums Service, has a national reputation as a pioneer in photography and digital arts. Its runs a year round series of exhibitions as well as a busy and varied education programme. Currently the gallery is located within the central Library, but it is looking for a new home to give it more exposure, space and freedom to operate. The Beecroft gallery is home to the Thorpe Smith Collection of paintings and prints dating from the early 19th century. It too is looking for a new home, due</p>	<p>Mongrel and the Media Shed have an international reputation in Digital Arts. The MediaShed is a pioneering initiative to bring the concept of free media to Southend. Together with a range of partners they are pioneering innovative approach to working with young people in a range of ground breaking projects across the Borough.</p>	<p>In terms of Museums and Libraries Southend can boast one of the busiest library services in the country, lending more books per head of population than any other library service³⁹. The central Library is a thriving well used asset, though its building and location (near the Council offices on Victoria Avenue) are not ideal for a 21st century institution. The Central Museum on Victoria Avenue houses a collection of local archaeology, wildlife and human history. It is also home to Southend Planetarium and the discovery centre an interactive centre opened in 2000. The Priory Museum in Priory Park is 12th century Cluniac Priory, later</p>	<p>The most significant recent piece of Public Art in Southend is Life Lines by Vong Phaophanit and Claire Oboussier located in the Pier Hill redevelopment as a piece that links the town with the seafront</p>	<p>This is demonstrated by the important that Renaissance Southend the urban regeneration company tasked with leading the physical regeneration of Southend places on culture. Southend's cultural ecology lies at the heart of its mission of ensuring that Southend becomes a "vibrant coastal town and a prosperous regional centre where people enjoy living, working and visiting". It believes culture should be encouraged to flourish across the town and sees seafront music bars and open air performances as having as important a role to play as traditional elements of cultural infrastructure such as theatres or museums.</p>

³⁷ Southend-on-Sea, *Economic Growth Aspirations 2001-2021* (2005).

³⁸ University of Essex *Vision 2012*.

³⁹ Southend Borough Council website

<p>to the extensive repairs and access difficulties experienced at its current seafront location.</p>		<p>concerted to a house and restored as a museum in the 1920's. Southchurch Hall Museum, Southchurch Hall Gardens is a 14th century moated manor house, set in a small park.</p>		
<p>Performing arts in Southend have along tradition dating back to the town's Victorian seaside resort heyday. Currently there are two main theatres, the Palace and Cliffs Pavillion, managed on behalf of the Council by HQ theatres. They both run a commercial programme of mixed entertainment as well as providing the venue for other activities, such as weddings. The Empire theatre, currently run by a trust, is actively used by schools and community groups as a performance and rehearsal space for amateur productions. The arrival of East 15 to Southend as part of the University of Essex, will ensure that the town's reputation as a home of performing arts is reinforced and energised.</p>	<p>The Cultural Hub represents a way of ensuring that the development of the University is matched with the needs of the town, however as it has developed it is clear that the Cultural Hub concept has the potential to deliver far greater benefits than this for the borough, sub-region and region. At its core the notion of a Cultural Hub that can play a catalysing role in social, economic and cultural regeneration is based on two areas: cultural content and cultural connections. Central to these is the development of a unique cross-departmental and cross-disciplinary curriculum offering developed by the University of Essex combining previously separate academic offerings such as the Schools of Business and Entrepreneurship with the School for Creative and Cultural Industries. This is complimented by a phased approach to establishing educational facilities, incubation space, and cultural</p>	<p>Southend has an extensive range of leisure and entertainment facilities as would be expected of a seaside resort. These include the famous Golden Mile of amusement arcades and attractions, the Kursaal, the 1.2 mile long pier, Westcliffe gardens, the sea life centre and much more. Southend United Football Club, though recently relegated to the first division, is an important and popular asset that is currently looking for a new and improved home.</p>	<p>The establishment of Metal in Southend in 2007 means that the Borough now boasts one of the country's leading specialists Collaborative and community arts. Through its work in Liverpool and London Metal has pioneered new forms of engagement with artists and communities focussing around collaboration and experimentation, new initiatives by established artists and collaborations with international artists, debate and the moral and ethical search for the artist's truth.</p>	<p>Other major development sites/projects include a new football stadium for Southend United – including a hotel development, residential and retail space; and the development of the airport.</p>

	production and consumption space for the and South East Essex College; plus the consideration of new additions to this footprint, such as a new base for East 15 Acting School, Focal Point Gallery, and a new central library for Southend.			
In terms of Video and Film , Leigh Film Society has established a strong reputation as on of the leading local film societies in the country. It is looking currently to expand its work in Southend, but requires facilities for digital projection.		Considering its density, Southend has a large number of Parks and Open Spaces , though the town centre in lacking in green open space. The largest parks are Belfairs Park, Chalkwell Park and Priory Park. Belfairs Park and Nature Reserve has a large range of visitor attractions as well as a site of special scientific interest in its 304 acres. Both Priory Park and Belfairs were recently awarded Green Flag status.	In terms of its Tourism offer, Southend attracts around six million visitors a year ⁴⁰ with an associated spend of £177,960,000 per year. Conversely overnight tourists have never been a dominant force in Southend compared with other seaside resorts which means there is a lack of adequate hotel and conference facilities.	

⁴⁰ Southend on Sea *The Economic Impact of Tourism* (2004)

As fits a town that aspires to be the Cultural Capital of the East of England by 2010 Southend has a rich and varied cultural ecology. The Cultural Strategy for Southend expresses eloquently the individual nature of that ecology and the degree to which it combines traditional concepts and definitions of culture with more modern and fluid expressions of individual identity:

“(C)ulture’ comprises scientific creativity and thought in addition to artistic creativity – it’s the sweaty and the cerebral! Put simply, it means that for us that the football team we support is as much a part of our cultural identity as is whether we visit the ballet or opera. The bright lights of the ‘Golden Mile’ and the theme park excitement of Adventure Island are every bit a part of Southend’s cultural identity as are its theatres & museums and its parks & gardens.”⁴¹

The value of Southend’s cultural ecology is well understood at a local level where it is seen as playing a vital role in the regeneration of the town. The borough council takes an active role in supporting and championing the value of culture to the town, as expressed not just in the cultural strategy, but in the way that increasingly culture is seen as having an active role to play in economic and social development of the Borough.

As a Borough, Southend has considerable potential to benefit from a broad strategic cultural planning approach. It is now gaining the joined-up thinking and leadership required to ensure that culture is being written across the economic and social regeneration agendas. Recent research for the University of Essex and partners into the establishment of a Cultural Hub in the borough highlighted five major challenges

⁴¹ Southend on Sea, *Making Culture Count*.

relating to the cultural and creative ecology of Southend.⁴² These five challenges represent the main area that need to be addressed from a cultural planning perspective:

A) The underdeveloped nature of Southend’s Creative Economy and the lack of depth and breadth in activity. Southend’s creative economy lacks the sector dynamism that might be expected in a town this close to London. It is noticeable that there is a lack of clustering activity, beyond the concentration of activities provided by Mediashed/Mongrel and that which occurs in Leigh. The town centre is not recognised by creative businesses as an attractive place for business development and the fragmented nature of the place means that networks are not as strong as they should be. Added to this is the small scale nature of creative enterprises in the town, coupled with the associated problems of talent attraction and retention. The lack of a real strength in any sub-sector means that creatively Southend does not stand out. The emergent and growing strengths in film and media and the evidence of some successful design companies indicate that this is starting to change.

B) An underdeveloped Creative Ecology with weak networks and under-connected infrastructure. The town’s cultural assets including museums, theatres and galleries are not currently embedded within the wider creative economy and ecology which would help create a genuine ‘creative sense of place’.

C) Low self-confidence and negative stereotypes. This represents a long-held challenge for the town that has had a detrimental impact on learning and skills attainment, business

⁴² For more detail on these challenges see Tom Fleming Creative Consultancy, *Developing a Cultural Hub in Southend* (2007).

start-up rates, inward investment, visitor/tourist profiles, and social mobility.

D) Southend has lacked strategic leadership and effective partnership. Until recently, strategic partners in Southend have not recognised the role of culture and creativity as a critical transformer of the town's and sub-region's fortunes.

E) Southend provides a challenging physical terrain for the development of high energy, deeply concentrated

cultural and creative activity. It is situated at the end of a railway line, thus lacking 'passing opportunities'; it is circumscribed by water to the east and south, by rural marshland to the north, and urban development to the west; it is a linear settlement with developments most intensive along arterial routes and thus spread across the town rather than concentrated at its heart; and the town centre suffers from a generally low quality public realm of piecemeal developments and a long, thin high street.

Essex Design Initiative (EDI)

The EDI is a programme to improve the design quality of the built environment and to create genuinely sustainable communities. The Initiative has three principle strands:

1. A high profile campaign to promote better quality, sustainable development
2. Production of an Essex Design Guide, Urban Place Supplement (UPS)
3. A learning programme

In partnership with the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), EDI aim to engender a positive culture of planning and development. The EDI campaign and learning programme will influence the development sector, housing providers, the community and local authorities to work together collaboratively to create and deliver quality.

The UPS provides detailed guidance on the integration of renewable energy technologies in all new developments, and ensuring that biodiversity and water conservation measures are incorporated in the design of buildings, streets, and open spaces. A key strand of the UPS is the need for developers to carry out a 'Context Appraisal' which will be expected to be done in the very early stages of any project to ensure that the proposed use, layout and design of a development meets the needs and conditions of the locality and is truly sustainable.

The policies in the UPS will help to provide a socially and environmentally acceptable solution to the problem of accommodating the large numbers of new houses required in the county. Through the careful consideration of the location of new development in relation to community facilities such as schools, health facilities, shops and workplaces, and through a re-emphasis on improved public transport, cycle routes and walking the UPS aims to encourage the development of more vibrant communities in centres of urban activity in Essex.

In recognition that the emerging policies will require a new approach to how roads are used, the County Council's forward-thinking Highways and Transportation Group has sanctioned the introduction of two types of new road in the county: the Mixed-Use Street and the Play Street. These will give developers greater flexibility in meeting some of the key objectives set out in the UPS. The Play Street, for example, would create an active communal space where users share that whole road space on equal terms.

The main points of the Urban Place Supplement:

- **Creation of compact, walkable neighbourhoods**
- **Incorporation of sustainable energy sources**
- **Introduction of Context Appraisal methodology**
- **Accommodating the car** in a way that will benefit the space around buildings
- **Sustainability** - The UPS sets criteria for new development that will minimise waste, reduce pollution, use sustainable construction, be energy efficient, conserve water and use sustainable drainage
- **Introduction of new road types:** the Mixed-Use Street and the Play Street
- **Quality of public realm** – The UPS examines the factors that contribute to the quality of the public realm and call for a re-emphasis of design effort and capital investment in favour of public space as opposed to private amenity.
- **Biodiversity** The UPS provides a Green Points system for ensuring that biodiversity is kept at the forefront of development proposals.

3.3 Thurrock

Thurrock covers an area of 64 sq miles, with a population of 143,000. There are 4,000 businesses in Thurrock, with the majority employing less than 10 people. It is a distinctive place, combining urban settlements such as Grays, Purfleet and Tilbury, with a mix of villages, rural land and intermediate 'rurban' landscapes. It is an important centre for industry, including a historical focus on logistics, docks and light engineering. However, it suffers from issues such as obsolete/derelict land, a poor urban environment lower than average educational achievement and wider issues of low confidence and the lack of a strong local 'brand/identity'. The Thurrock Sustainable Community Strategy states that: "Thurrock will be the location of choice – a place where people thrive and prosper; where you can access services that will make a difference; and where development is sustainable and supports our new and existing communities as they grow".

Examples of the cultural infrastructure	Examples of Economic development and skills	Examples of Recreation and healthy living	Examples of Planning for distinctiveness	Examples of Planning for growth.
<p>The Thurrock Cultural Strategy is an excellent document that positions culture across a range of strategic development objectives for the Borough, all based on the simple aim of 'Improving Lives': "Our vision is two fold. It is to enrich the quality of life for all our residents in the here and now. And it is to leave a lasting legacy for all".</p> <p>The Thurrock Cultural Forum plays a critical role in mainstreaming culture across agendas and connecting to local stakeholder concerns and aspirations. Umbrella Groups such as Thurrock Sports Council, Thurrock Arts Council and Thurrock Heritage</p>	<p>The proposed Royal Opera House Production Campus at High House Farm will bring a major cultural impetus to economic development and learning and skills agendas in TGSE. Its key elements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Production Facility to meet the set construction and fabrication needs of the ROH whose existing workshops are being relocated from Bow as part of the development of the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics. - A purpose-built 40,000 sq. ft production facility will allow the ROH to meet all present requirements as well as accommodating future plans. - The national hub of a National Skills Academy (NSA) which will attract technicians 	<p>The LAA 'Bringing People Together through Culture' action plan positions cultural development at the heart of approaches to 'sustainable development'.</p> <p>In addition, a Sports and Active Recreation Facility Strategy is being developed (with Sport Essex, Thurrock Council and TTGDC) – taking account of existing and future needs.</p> <p>Libraries are being repositioned as centres for flexible community-focused informal learning. A Modernisation Strategy is underway. The Thurrock Learning Plan contains a series of cultural elements on this theme. The recently redeveloped Thameside</p>	<p>The distinctive heritage offer of Thurrock (buildings, natural and cultural) is supported across a range of fronts, such as through the restoration of Coalhouse fort and annual Christmas events at Tilbury Passenger Terminal. Thurrock's Museum and Heritage Services plays an important role here. Key assets/projects include The Davy Down Trust, Tilbury Fort, Tilbury Riverside Project, Purfleet Heritage Centre, Essex Fire Museum, the State Cinema, Bata Village and the work of Thurrock Local History Society and Thurrock Heritage Forum. There are 125 listed buildings in Thurrock.</p>	<p>The Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation is responsible for actioning the growth and development requirements of Thurrock – outlined in 'Building a new Thurrock – Sharing the Vision'. Lakeside and West Thurrock will absorb much of the planned growth in homes for the Borough, with 2,300 homes planned plus 5,000+ jobs. The task is to consolidate existing activity, attract 'higher value' jobs and develop distinctive areas for new housing.</p> <p>Other areas of significance include Tilbury Docks, where 500+ new jobs are planned; Purfleet, where</p>

<p>Council, also have an important role to play in connecting communities to cultural planning agendas.</p> <p>Thameside Theatre and concert venue operates out of a high quality mixed-used cultural campus that includes a library, café and Thurrock Museum.</p>	<p>and craftspeople for training in the technical skills required to support the performing arts and live music sectors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High House Farm: the project will renovate these currently derelict Grade II Listed buildings. The buildings will provide a range of uses in support of the wider development including a reception area for the whole site; a Visitor Centre; areas for public events and activities; residential accommodation for visiting lecturers and students; and site services including a restaurant, coffee shop and visitor shop. - Accommodation for Small and Medium Enterprises within the ROH supply chain or associated production, craft and creative industries. 	<p>Library (with the theatre, museum, café etc.) is an excellent example of a well-designed multi-purpose facility that connects agendas and brings a distinctive and high quality cultural offer to Grays.</p>		<p>2,200 homes and 1,000 jobs are being planned for; Grays town, with 4,500 jobs and 5,000 homes; and Shellhaven, which will develop as Europe's biggest container port – 11th 11,600 jobs planned by 2021.</p> <p>These include the largest developments in TGSE and their success – balancing jobs with homes – requires a strong strategic position for culture if they are to move from logistical projects to progressive and sustainable place.</p>
<p>The Borough has a thriving cultural ecology, with many organisations and individuals working in performing arts, visual arts and music. It also has an emergent live music scene, with the 50 pubs playing an important role.</p>	<p>There are many approaches to informal learning with a cultural focus – such as the 'Connecting Culture to the Classroom' initiative that links with Creative Partnerships, young people's reading groups, homework support etc.</p> <p>A previous success story is the LPSA Target 2 – 'Raising aspirations and</p>	<p>Lakeside retail basin is one of the largest aggregations of retail space in Europe, offering a major site of consumption activities as well as providing a significant source of employment for the sub-region.</p>	<p>A strong commitment to events as a way of building profile and connecting communities – e.g. the music event on Grays Beach in supported by Redrow Homes</p>	

	<p>achievements for young people through access to culture' – where over 20,000 young people experienced top quality professional performances as audience members.</p>			
	<p>A Creative Industries Strategy is yet to be developed. This is much needed to maximize the impact of initiatives such as the ROH Production Campus.</p>	<p>Thurrock has a strong strategic focus on and asset base in sports – for example, it operates 4 sports and leisure centres; has a Playing Pitches Strategy; and operates a specialist Sports Development Team to encourage participation in sport. Greater connection can be made here to cultural agendas.</p>	<p>A popular location for TV and film shooting – showcasing the distinctive physical and cultural landscape.</p>	
	<p>A new University College is planned for Grays, providing a specialized centre for lifelong learning and skills development. Critical will be the way it connects to the wider learning and skills offer – such as at the Production Campus, and across the (current total of) 62 schools, 4 colleges, 4 adult education centres.</p>	<p>The Thurrock has a mixed urban and rural/rurban landscape. It has 2 areas identified as special landscape areas of regional and countryside importance; 10 Sites of Special Scientific Interest and there are 28 parks and gardens.</p>	<p>A strategic approach to public art is required – building on the success of one-off projects such as the Big Fish project, designed and built by local school children.</p>	

Thurrock will absorb approximately 50% of the projected housing and jobs growth in TGSE: 26,000 jobs out of a total of 55,000; and 18,000 houses out of a total of 40,000. Its fragmented physical landscape – of small towns, villages, and a mix of urban and rural landscapes – make this planning agenda particularly challenging. Key to success will be the ways new developments are knitted throughout existing developments and communities, to improve the existing situation while introducing new high quality economic, cultural and social outcomes.

Culture plays an important role here – a role that is being increasingly recognised by partners in Thurrock. For example, the Cultural Strategy is under constant review, being revisited and recast to explore the different parts of the planning process for which culture can have a positive, indeed essential, influence. Balancing the development of large-scale infrastructure with more nuanced place-making agendas, presents the major challenge for Thurrock: there is a danger that sensitive, connected approaches to place-making can be over-looked with the urgent need to develop infrastructure in transport, housing and industry/commerce. Critical opportunities here include:

- Positioning culture as a major cross-cutting theme for the Local Strategic Partnership – thus influencing the LAA and the performance of the Sustainable Community Strategy. Culture is currently one of the targets within the LAA, but ways of reaching this target and mainstreaming culture so that it impacts upon other targets, are very much under review
- The current review of infrastructure commitments across the Borough will show where S106 monies are being used and help to define where cultural

investment can be prioritised as a critical value-adder to developments and as an investment priority in its own right

- Thurrock Thames Gateway development Corporation can play a more active role in mainstreaming culture as an infrastructure requirement and/or consideration – e.g. when considering transport links and major projects (e.g. identifying the cultural elements that will ensure success with the proposed Grays Marina).
- The ROH Production Campus provides a major opportunity to galvanise the cultural sector in the Borough and wider sub-region, offering a level of quality previously unseen in a Borough that suffers from a deficit in high quality cultural provision and activity. The Campus will also provide new cultural employment and add value to existing and incoming firms across a mix of creative industries supply chain relationships. It is vital that the Campus connects effectively with the wider cultural ecology and creative economy across the sub-region, leading the way in linking economic, social and of course cultural agendas. The creation of a high profile cultural facility with a global brand and reputation in an area that lacks depth and breadth to its cultural provision, should be conceptualised as just one of the positive outcomes of the campus.
- The emergent creative industries sector of the Borough has the potential to provide for a significant proportion of the SME jobs required for a healthy and diverse economy. This included new jobs created through the Production Campus, inward investment from firms connected to the ROH, plus opportunities to

grow businesses through local and incoming creative practitioners who recognise the potential of Thurrock as a creative place to live and work. There is a need to develop a more strategic approach to supporting creative business development in the Borough if the potential of the sector is to be realised.

- The review of existing infrastructure – such as the Libraries Modernisation Strategy and Building Schools for the Future – provides opportunities to connect

cultural facilities to learning and skills and leisure facilities.

- A public art strategy is needed – to ensure a piecemeal approach to this agenda is avoided. This is critical because of the public art opportunities that will be brought as spin-outs from the Production Campus, and as a means of connecting the otherwise fragmented urban landscape of the Borough.

The Greengrid & TGSE Waterfront Strategy

(funded by the Government's Department for Communities and Local Government, the Heritage Lottery Fund, developers and other interested parties).

Over 128m government money has been pledged to help build sustainable communities in TGSE. The framework for action has been published in the *South Essex Green Grid Strategy*. Greengrid is an important part of the process of regeneration in Thames Gateway South Essex. It aims to encourage the development of a network of open spaces and green links throughout South Essex and will help to make the area a better place to live, benefiting local people, the local economy and the environment. The Green Grid South Essex will make significant change to: the quality of the environment the experience, image and visual quality of the landscape, townscapes and riverscapes connectivity of spaces and places, and to and through urban areas, the greenbelt, the countryside, the marshes and the estuary.

The long-term goal of the Greengrid is to provide access to green spaces, rivers or townscapes for every resident in South Essex. The idea is that civic squares, parks, gardens, green areas, sports grounds, play areas, allotments and public gardens, as well as streams, marshes, hills and farmland will be linked up to one another, providing a large network of 'green' areas across South Essex.

Key aims in South Essex:

- Connect new communities with existing neighbourhoods, the regenerated riverside, local attractions and the countryside, providing improved "access for all"
- Conserve and enhance existing green space and links
- Create high quality new green space and links in areas of opportunity and need
- Contribute to flood management, improved air and water quality and noise abatement
- Create a sense of place through enhancement of landscape character and heritage
- Enhance the image and confidence in south Essex as a quality place to live, work and invest
- Engage all communities in the planning, management and celebration of the network
- Plan and promote the network as part of a sustainable transport system
- Promote the network for recreation and tourism, education and healthy living.

The Royal Opera House Production Campus, Purfleet

This represents a major cultural opportunity for TGSE and a major test of the robustness of approaches to cultural planning and the strength of commitment of key partners. The overall vision for the Production Campus is:

“To create a national/international centre of excellence for production and professional development in the support services for the performing arts and live music (e.g. technical skills, crafts and production). This Campus will be located in the Heart of the Thames Gateway and will relate to – and raise the aspirations of – its local community and be led by a world class cultural institution.”

The Production Campus will deliver this Vision through the development of four complimentary elements:

- **A Production Facility to meet the set construction and fabrication needs of the ROH** whose existing workshops are being relocated from Bow as part of the development of the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics. A purpose-built 40,000 sq. ft production facility will allow the ROH to meet all present requirements as well as accommodating future plans. It will enable the ROH to bring work that is currently out-sourced back in-house, and create the storage and space to work most efficiently. The move to Thurrock also provides the opportunity to bring the ROH's extensive Scenery Archive and Costume Store out of storage and display it to the public.

- **The national hub of a National Skills Academy (NSA)** which will attract technicians and craftspeople for training in the technical skills required to support the performing arts and live music sectors. The Academy will provide training for entry level students as well as technical accreditation and professional development for the existing workforce. The Academy's emphasis will be on 'backstage' technical skills in areas such as lighting, sound and production management, along with training in the business and commercial aspects of the industry. Learning will be led by experienced industry professionals and work-based instructors, at a new state-of-the-art facility in Thurrock and via a regional network of employers operating in partnership with local colleges and universities.

- **High House Farm:** the project will renovate these currently derelict Grade II Listed buildings that include a walled garden and a scheduled ancient monument (the Dovecote) amongst other buildings laid out around two courtyards. The buildings will provide a range of uses in support of the wider development including a reception area for the whole site; a Visitor Centre; areas for public events and activities; residential accommodation for visiting lecturers and students; and site services including a restaurant, coffee shop and visitor shop.

- **Accommodation for Small and Medium Enterprises within the ROH supply chain or associated production, craft and creative industries.** In order to maximise the benefit of the ROH and the NSA, a range of accommodation for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) will also be provided on the site.

Key assets and strengths are:

The quality of the lead organisation and partners, with a brand and track record that will ensure delivery; the mix – with capital developments and a range of education, creative economy and cultural programming concerns that will connect the Campus outwardly from the outset; and the campus attends directly to skills gaps in production/fabrication and it will provide the platform for the development of new high quality practice that also adds value to the wider creative economy of Thurrock and TGSE. Also, the sub-region shows low levels of academic achievement, particularly relevant to the 14-19 agenda; there are issues of low aspiration and underdeveloped social mobility; the public realm is not of a high quality. Thurrock and TGSE need high profile projects of quality to contribute to addressing these issues, especially given the additional demands that will be played on social infrastructure through planned growth.

Key strategic issues:

Because this is such a major opportunity, it is critical to 'get it right'. Therefore, it is important that the 'Growth Agenda' is effectively addressed, including how new communities and businesses will be effectively engaged with; that strategic and delivery connections are made with other key capital culture-led projects in the sub-region; that cultural programming for the sub-region is developed more clearly and explicitly; and that Creative Industries development opportunities are more fully explored.

3.4 Castle Point

Castle Point, situated on the coastline of South-east Essex on the northern side of the Thames estuary, has an area of 17.3 square miles and a population of approximately 86,000 people. The Borough covers approximately 17 square miles and is unique in geographical terms, being comprised of two distinct areas: the mainland to the north, on which the major settlements of Hadleigh, South Benfleet, Thundersley and New Thundersley are located and Canvey Island to the south. The Borough's geography is characterised by its diversity, combining internationally important wetlands and nationally important areas of Scientific Special Interest with highly urban conurbations for its primarily commuting residents.

As with other areas of the Thames Gateway South Essex, Castle Point's key challenges for the future include tackling the problem of a low skilled workforce and dealing with an ageing population. Some issues are magnified within the Borough though: transport issues are a particular problem, caused partly by the fact that 62% of workers leave the Borough each day to work primarily in Basildon, Southend or London. Housing is another issue, with the area having the highest proportion of home ownership in the country, fuelled by the relatively high wages of the dominantly commuting work force house prices have risen steeply meaning that there are real issues around housing for non-commuting local residents (on lower wages) and first time buyers. Again due partly to the high-level of commuting, Castle Point's town centres are among those in the TGSE needing the most regeneration. Equally the main employment areas in the borough have tended to develop in an unplanned ad hoc manner, meaning they are not as attractive to potential incoming businesses and subsequently attracting economic growth and investment.

Castle Point does not have as rich or developed fabric of cultural infrastructure as other parts of the region, however it does have a strong network of community and volunteer cultural projects. In terms of **Heritage** Castle Point is home to Hadleigh Castle. Managed by English Heritage this is the most important Medieval Castle in Essex and the most significant heritage site on the Borough. Other museums in the borough include Castle Point Transport Museum, with a collection of over 30 buses and commercial vehicles, the Dutch Cottage Museum and the Heritage centre.

Visual arts and **public art** in the Borough is primarily represented by **UniCanvey** - an ongoing project that celebrates the unique qualities of Canvey Island's very strong and independent community. Devised by artist Richard Layzell in collaboration with Signals Media in Colchester, photographer Jason Wylde, Urban Initiatives and local people. A 40-minute film has been the main focus, which includes interviews with local people who live or work on the island and students from the three secondary schools: Castlevew. Cornelius Vermuyden and Furtherwick Park. In 2007 the battle of Benfleet was commemorated by the installation of sculptures commissioned by the Castle Point Arts development team

There are many examples of **Community arts** across the borough. All of a Buzz in Canvey Wick, a National Lottery funded scheme, involves the local community in the conservation and management of Canvey Wick SSSI, dubbed 'England's rainforest' on account of its incredible species diversity. The project includes practical conservation and education activities including bug walks, open days and training in wildlife site management. There is an established

programme of Community Art at the Tyrells Centre for older people in Thundersley.

There are four **Libraries** located within the Borough in Canvey, Hadleigh, Great Tarpots and South Benfleet each of which is home to a large number of community activities involving young people. There are two public **Leisure centres** in the Borough, as well as Runnymede Swimming Pool and eight community halls and bars as well as Golf Course and Marina.

Events and festivals include Borough Show, Beer Festival and Firework Fiesta. Wish you were Here, the Essex-wide Cultural Tourism festival included performances this year at Hadleigh Castle. Authors who visited Castle Point in 2007 included as part of the Essex book fair included Barbara Nadel, Roma Tearne and James Runcie

3.4.1 Issues and Potential

The main issues and potential in Castle Point relate directly to the potential for culture to help in the delivery of the broader aims and objectives described in both the Corporate Plan and the Draft Community Strategy⁴³ (at consultation phase) as well as the currently being developed Local Development Framework which is currently under consultation. The vision for 2021 states that there will be:

“...opportunities for everyone in Castle Point to access 21st century education and health facilities, there will be more well paid jobs, affordable homes that meet local needs and improved access to our town centres. More people will be involved in community activities, there will be less fear of crime and people will enjoy good

⁴³ Castle Point *Draft Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2021*.

quality, open space and leisure provision, making them more active and healthy. The Borough will appear more sustainable, greener and cleaner.

In terms of Cultural Planning the main opportunities fall into three main areas:

A) The Natural Environment. Through initiatives such as the Green Grid there is considerable opportunity to improve and develop one of Castle Point's strongest assets, its natural environment. With its rich diversity improvements to the natural environment will boast both inward investment to the region, particularly in the field of environmental technology, while providing social benefits for local communities and encouraging more external tourism. As demonstrated through Canvey Wick improving the natural environment is very much a galvanising and cross-cutting issue for cultural planning which can work across many agendas include community development, recreation, tourism, travel and the built environment. The RSPB's purchase of West Canvey Marsh should provide an exciting opportunity to replicate some of the success that the society's centre in Rainham Marsh has had.

B) Regenerating town centres. There are currently a number of plans and strategies being developed to ensure the regeneration of town centres within Castle point and Canvey Island. Canvey island has a sustainable regeneration plan in place while master plans for Hadleigh and South Benfleet are currently under development. The Salvation Army's development in Hadleigh has been a model of the way that investment in an area can bring real benefits to the wider community. In particular, attention can be given to the role of culture in the development of the evening as well as the daytime economy in these areas to try and attract more spend from commuters.

C) 21st century Education. The proposal to demolish one of the existing three secondary schools in the area and replace it with an FE College and a new school building (leaving two schools) is an exciting opportunity for Castle Point. As it schools in the area provide much of the available infrastructure for cultural and sporting activity, so the chance to develop new and upgraded facilities is one that must be taken with proper consultation with local groups and people ensuring that right type of facility is provided.

3.5 Rochford

The Rochford District covers 65 square miles, situated as part of and as a connector to the larger urban areas of Southend and Basildon. Rochford District is predominantly rural with three larger urban areas and a number of smaller settlements. The District's towns and villages are diverse in character reflecting their history, location and size. The character, layout and form of groups of buildings, streets and spaces make a significant contribution to providing a sense of place and adding to the quality of life in town and country. Residents have a strong sense of identity with their own settlement. Home to around 78,500 people, the District is one with an ever increasing percentage of older residents. The District is considered to be reasonably affluent, except for a few small pockets of deprivation and has a low rate of recorded crime compared to the rest of the country. Unemployment is low at 1%1. The district has a workforce of 39,000, but only 21,000 jobs. Over two thirds of the district's workforce travel to work outside the district boundaries.

The Council's Community Strategy Plan set out a vision for the future. This Core Strategy takes account of the Community

Strategy and proposes a spatial vision for the next 5, 10 and 15 years to 2021. The Council has the following vision for the district:

"The Council's vision is to make Rochford the place of choice in the county to live, work and visit."

The Council has also adopted the following principal aims:

- Provide quality, cost effective services
- Work towards a safer and more caring community
- Promote a green and sustainable environment
- Encourage a thriving local economy
- Improve the quality of life for people in our District
- Maintain and enhance our local heritage.

3.5.1 The Cultural Ecology

Rochford has a characterful mix of rural and urban landscapes, including the historic Hockley Woods (the remains of a royal forest), the island of Foulness, internationally famous as a haven for wildlife, and the Roach Valley Conservation Zone. The District also has a large number of listed buildings, including Rochford Hall, one time home of the Boleyn family and The Old House in South Street, built in 1270. Rayleigh contains the site of a Norman castle, and Rayleigh Windmill, built in 1798. In 1016 the Danes, led by King Canute, met the Saxon army of Edmund Ironside in a very significant battle in the Crouch Valley between Ashingdon and Canewdon, Canute was the victor and later built a church at Ashingdon. There are 70 buildings or objects listed as being of special architectural or historical importance. One is Listed as Grade I, 2 as Grade II* and the remainder are Grade II⁴⁴.

⁴⁴ Rochford historic town assessment report (YEAR)

Leisure and recreation provision is strong for such a small District, with 3 golf courses in the District, the new leisure centre in Rayleigh, and sports centres in Hawkwell, Rawreth and Great Wakering. However, the key asset here is the miles of open countryside, footpaths, coastline, and woodlands - offering a great range of recreation activities. The new 100 acre Cherry Orchard Jubilee Park provides a leisure facility of natural woodland walks, lakes and bridleways, as well as creating a valuable ecological resource. Sailing enthusiasts can find much scope on the Roach and Crouch rivers, and there is a marina at Wallasea Island with over 500 deep water moorings. In this sense, the District plays a significant leisure provision role for the sub-region, offering open space and facilities for the residents of more urban boroughs and districts.

Other key assets include **Rayleigh Windmill**, which is used intensively as a community cultural centre, with regular exhibitions and events. The **Mill Arts and Events Centre** in Rayleigh provides an important multi-purpose role as an arts centre (with activities ranging from classes to band nights; exhibitions and children's parties). It is a vital connector of the **rich and varied community arts sector** in the District, which includes a strong focus on performing arts (such as amateur dance and drama).

3.5.2 Cultural Planning Opportunities

Rochford plays an important leisure role for the wider sub-region, containing as it does a large area of greenbelt land and a high quality rural landscape. This means that there will be increasing pressure on the District's assets as the

population of the wider sub-region grows. This is why a sub-regional approach to cultural planning is so important; just as it is important to connect agendas in sports/leisure and culture.

Other key projects and opportunities include:

- **Stambridge Mills**, is a disused milling complex on the north bank of the River Crouch. Opportunities exist to develop creative business and cultural activity use here, profiling a heritage building with a new economy use.

- **London Southend Airport** lies in the southern edge of the district. The Council has granted planning permission for a new terminal and associated facilities. The airport operator is looking to increase passenger flights from the airport, which had

previously been restricted due to runway length issues. This will bring new types of investment and tourism opportunities for the area – putting pressure on existing infrastructure – such as the accommodation offer.

- Close to the airport, work is underway on the construction of the first part of the **Cherry Orchard Way Business Park**. This site is being developed as a specialist area for car dealerships and repair and servicing facilities and there will be opportunities for further business development, including high technology businesses. With appropriate support, this could include creative businesses. Key here will be connecting support to other concentrations of activity – such as the Southend Cultural Hub, the Basildon Enterprise Corridor, and the Royal Opera House Production Campus.

4. TGSE Cultural Planning Themes and Guidelines: The Cultural Planning Toolkit for TGSE

Successful places are those that are able to make strategic connections across the **5 cultural planning policy themes** introduced in this report. They position culture at the heart of approaches to planning, economic and social development, and they ensure that a connected fabric of cultural infrastructure stretches to join together local and sectoral agendas. Critical here is the ability to connect local concerns and opportunities to sub-regional concerns and opportunities (such as those in TGSE), and in turn to regional and national concerns and opportunities. Comprehending the scale at which to appropriately act is a significant skill in cultural planning. If culture is to play a strong and meaningful role in TGSE, it is at a sub-regional level that the success of local approaches will be most determined and influenced.

However, before presenting Guidelines for planners and cultural strategists, it is important to look at the issues stakeholders face when approaching cultural planning implementation (not just in TGSE) so that a better understanding of the Guidelines rationale is gained. Overall:

- Cultural infrastructure is becoming increasingly important, though it is not yet a requirement (statutory); this is why, to be successful, cultural planning needs to be embedded into a long term local strategy. There is a need to establish constructive working relationships and to adopt a development team approach (need to act collaboratively and work across the local authority).

Cultural statements become reality only if embedded within policy documents and across real partnerships.

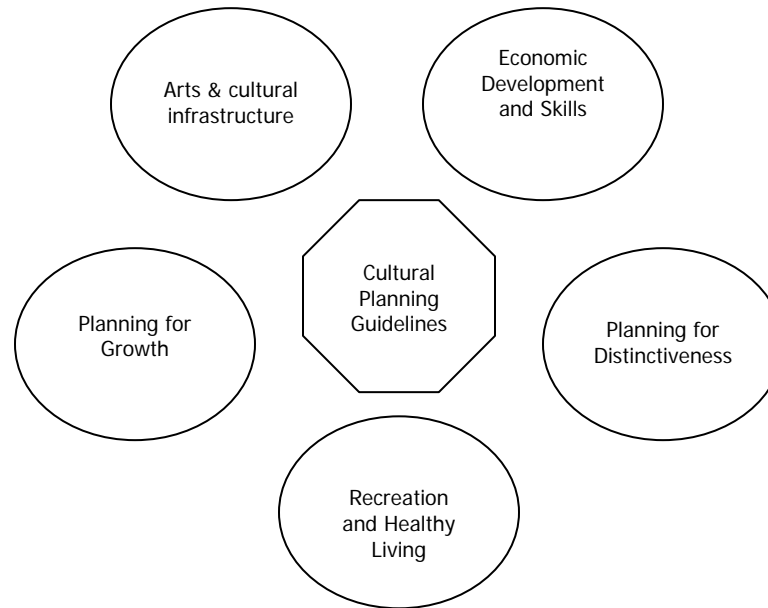
- A study of the incidence of obligations in London between January 1998 and January 2003 showed that while primary education featured 132 times, cultural infrastructure barely registered. This is why the local authority must continue to commit to funding outside contributions (and get into partnership to raise such contributions).
- Generally, there is lack of local authority resources to deliver on PPG17 – therefore culture becomes less of a priority. That's why more and better communication is needed between local authority departments (e.g. culture and planning). So far, there seems to be a persistent problem with a weak cultural sector lobbying to planning departments to maximise planning gain for the sector. Planning departments lack sufficient resources to initiate such lobbying.
- From the point of view of consultation and local participation in the decision making process, there is a need to educate cultural services decision makers and planning stakeholders to ask the community what they want and use this to inform councillors to prioritise policies, in order to use the LDF to maximise cultural planning gain.

- There is also an argument for the importance of making a better connection between service delivery and planning agreements so that all opportunities are seized. Again, if culture is to play a strategic role in local development, there is a need to engage with forward/strategic planners in addition to development control.

are intended as the *core tools* for positioning culture at the heart of the planning process in the sub-region. Each of the Cultural Planning Policy Themes is presented through 5 Cultural Planning Principles, each followed by required questions that partners must ask and possible interventions. Case studies are provided to give clarity and point the reader to good practice both within TGSE and elsewhere.

Bearing in mind the issues highlighted above, the following provides a set of Cultural Planning Guidelines for TGSE. These

Figure 3: Cultural Planning in TGSE



4.1 Theme 1: Cultural Infrastructure

Principle 1	Overall Policy Questions	Interventions	Links to Planning and Physical Development	Links to existing Plans/Strategies
<p>Strong, distinctive and connected cultural infrastructure is required for progressive, lively, sustainable communities and places.</p>	<p>Is cultural infrastructure established as a priority area across social and economic policy? How is this expressed?</p> <p>Is cultural provision recognised as key contributor to distinctiveness and a major opportunity for a place? How is this expressed?</p> <p>Is cultural infrastructure established as a priority area across social and economic policy? How is this expressed?</p> <p>Is there a strong and robust intelligence base that maps provision and shifting patterns in supply and demand?</p>	<p>Position culture as a priority within core policy areas for TGSE – to include economic and social policy (such as community plans) – as a top-level document in the spirit of the EEDA/ACE Joint Prospectus that joins together as the framework for a proposed TGSE Cultural Plan (see Section 5).</p> <p>Ensure Local Area Agreements and Local Development Frameworks across Essex include reference to the development of the local cultural infrastructure as a precondition for sustainable development.</p> <p>Establish joint-programming initiatives, signposting and resource-sharing based on a consortium approach of existing/incoming organisations and institutions.</p> <p>Improve approaches to the collection and presentation of intelligence on and cultural provision, including the</p>	<p>Ensure the mix of venues, services and projects are effectively connected across different localities in TGSE so that a balanced and unified cultural offer is provided. This includes a focus on transport connectivity: ensuring that investment in transport is safe, accessible, efficient and a key connector of cultural infrastructure (existing and future).</p> <p>Introduce a set of intercultural planning consultation methodologies – as recommended by the ASC and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. This includes asking a set of questions that explore how different cultural identities ‘read’ the landscape in different ways.</p>	<p>Write proposed interventions into each LAA and LDF.</p> <p><i>For example, do transport proposals link to cultural infrastructure considerations?</i></p> <p><i>For example, does the LAA show that strong and connected cultural infrastructure is a critical contributor to distinctiveness and social cohesion?</i></p> <p><i>New approaches to evidence collection and consultation should build on the Essex County Council Creative Consequences. It should also connect the recently completed Creative Industries mapping research to the wider cultural ecology, as initially intended.</i></p>

		adoption of new indicators in relation to satisfaction, aspiration and the relationship to non-cultural indicators.		
Principle 2	Overall Policy Questions	Interventions	Links to Planning and Physical Development	Links to existing Plans/Strategies
Strong, distinctive and connected cultural infrastructure (the cultural ecology) is required for a competitive economy where the Creative Industries can be fostered and people and capital are retained and attracted. Cultural infrastructure requires a mix of larger and smaller assets, a combination of production and consumption spaces/activities, flexible and networked platforms for delivery.	<p>Is infrastructure for the cultural ecology effectively connected to the cultural economy, such as through professionalisation opportunities for cultural practitioners and a mix of workspace provision for different types of cultural organisation and business?</p> <p>Do new workspace projects ensure for a mix across art-form and of production and consumption activities?</p> <p>Are virtual networks being implemented – connecting creative organisations and businesses and introducing ‘open-house’ infrastructure through wireless provision?</p>	<p>Develop targeted professional development schemes for cultural organisations and practitioners that support their commercial development potential. Also,</p> <p>Establish a promotional campaign for TGSE as a destination for creative businesses, based on the cultural ecology assets.</p> <p>Establish a set of cultural ecology and creative economy hubs across TGSE, with careful consideration given to the curation of the mix.</p> <p>Maximise the flexibility of existing and forthcoming workspace and activity space developments and establish a programme for the temporary use of under-used space across the sub-region (adopting a similar model to the Creative Space Agency in London).</p>	<p>Establish an appropriate cultural workspace mix for the Creative Industries, utilising S106 and/or planning gain(s) as a lever for new models of development. Establish a consistent approach to this across the sub-region.</p> <p>Establish ‘creative wireless zones’ in each town centre and key suburban centres, with an emphasis on public cultural buildings such as theatres and libraries. These should provide free wireless access to individuals and businesses subscribed to a TGSE Creative Virtual Network Platform – modelled on the forthcoming Sheffield Creative Business Club.</p>	<p>Ensure that new workspace – such as the Cultural Hub in Southend and the ROH Production Campus – provide a complementary mix of workspace and activity space provision, catering to different parts of the Creative Ecology and Economy.</p> <p>Position accessible and affordable creative and cultural workspace as a key feature of town centres and key development sites within each LDF. Utilise S106 and Planning Gain(s) to work with developers on projects that centralise culture and creativity through workspace, activity space and the way the developments are branded.</p> <p><i>For example, Basildon District Council utilised supplementary Planning Guidance to introduce business workspace into the Gardiners Lane South development in 2003. Such an approach can be extended to apply to creative and cultural workspace, establishing a strong mix of provision across the sub-region.</i></p>

4.2 Theme 2: Economic Development and Skills

Principle 1	Overall Policy Questions	Interventions	Links to Planning and Physical Development	Links to existing Plans/Strategies
<p>A progressive mix of specialist and generic creative skills/learning opportunities is provided as a fundamental basis for a competitive creative economy and vibrant, confident, and inclusive cultural ecology.</p>	<p>Are key providers of creative learning and skills – such as the HEIs, FEIs, specialist schools and training programmes, and sports providers – working as a unified offer across the sub-region?</p> <p>Has the overall creative skills offer of the sub-region been mapped and tested for its relevance to industry needs?</p> <p>Is the planned Sector Skills Academy positioned to support creative learning and skills agendas across the sub-region?</p>	<p>Establish a creative learning and skills manifesto for the sub-region, articulating the overall offer and signposting clearly how to access different types of learning and skills opportunity.</p> <p>Undertake a creative learning and skills audit and mapping exercise as part of the overall cultural intelligence-building programme for TGSE.</p> <p>Creative new open approaches to incubation and knowledge transfer, with the Cultural Hub at Southend, the proposed Skills Academy at Thurrock, and a potential HEI at Grays providing a major opportunity to establish TGSE as a progressive centre of creative learning where education is truly embedded within the wider cultural sector.</p>	<p>Establish incubation and knowledge transfer as a planning principle for new public buildings in TGSE – from a library to a new HEI.</p>	<p>Position the proposed National Skills Academy and the wider ROH Production Campus as a step-change exemplar model of TGSE as a place of national importance for creative learning/skills.</p> <p>Roll-out the Southend Cultural Hub as an incubation and knowledge transfer initiative for the whole sub-region.</p> <p><i>For example, the strong recent history of creative learning in TGSE – such as through Creative Partnerships – offer significant opportunities.</i></p>

4.3 Theme 3: Recreation and Healthy Living

Principle 1	Overall Policy Questions	Interventions	Links to Planning and Physical Development	Links to existing Plans/Strategies
<p>The quality of leisure amenities (broadly defined to include sport, cinema, restaurants/bars, and other consumption facilities) is upheld as a major strategic priority, where they are well-maintained, safe, connected, imaginative and accessible.</p>	<p>Do leisure amenities provide spaces for cultural production and consumption alongside sport?</p> <p>Are amenities bold, innovative and distinctive in design?</p> <p>What is the overall quality of open spaces?</p> <p>Do open spaces have the potential for a strong cultural offer – such as by providing performance spaces, exercise routes and showcasing public art?</p> <p>Are there strategies for the improvement of existing open spaces?</p>	<p>Identify a distinctive niche of TGSE-specific leisure activities and promote them at the heart of the leisure offer.</p> <p>Encourage the co-location of amenities where possible – such as envisioned for Basildon’s Sporting Village.</p> <p>Conceptualise provision in health and recreation as a cultural opportunity: establish cultural space as a key feature of every possible development.</p> <p>Develop a ‘culture in the open’ strategy for TGSE that positions cultural activity within the overall TGSE Green Grid. Support Metal (based in a Southend Park) to showcase the role of culture in open spaces</p>	<p>Each LDF make direct links to cultural provision through their commitment to the improvement of the leisure and open space offer.</p> <p>Each LDF prioritise co-location of cultural and leisure services/facilities – basing this on guidelines developed through the National CCO project.</p> <p>Sports and cultural entitlement need to be enshrined as connected cross-cutting themes across agendas in planning, economic development, learning and skills, and sustainable communities.</p>	<p>An opportunity exists to develop the Green Grid at a sub-regional level and to prioritise cultural infrastructure and content as a key opportunity area for TGSE.</p> <p>Sport England’s Planning Obligation Toolkit can be used as an enabling tool for establishing cultural infrastructure in TGSE.</p> <p>Use the TGSEP Facility Audit to identify the current status of cultural provision in the sub-region.</p> <p><i>For example, the Sporting Village in Basildon has the potential to become a key hub for healthy living and quality of life that positions culture at the heart of its offer. Links to the priorities of Sport Essex and Sport England are key here.</i></p> <p><i>For example, Basildon has successfully used S106 agreements with developers to increase the provision of publicly accessible open spaces.</i></p>

4.4 Theme 4: Planning for Distinctiveness

Principle 1	Overall Policy Questions	Interventions	Links to Planning and Physical Development	Links to existing Plans/Strategies
<p>Position culture as a catalyst for engaging with this distinctiveness and as a platform for its expression.</p>	<p>Are cultural check-lists established in each planning decision-making process to determine how decisions are reached – e.g. characterisation and visioning exercises.</p> <p>How is consultation conducted – e.g. does it ask local people how their cultural aspirations should inform as TGSE is developed?</p>	<p>Establish context appraisal processes (focusing on the cultural context) and characterisation and visioning exercises to determine the outcome of planning decisions.</p> <p>Seek ways of promoting the distinctiveness of place in imaginative ways that connect the identities and aspirations of local people to the identities and aspirations of incoming people – e.g. an annual TGSE Cultural Programme/Festival.</p>	<p>Position these processes at the heart of the current and forthcoming consultation processes for the LDFs, the reviews of the LAAs, and specific projects (such as town centre masterplans). This would also be a useful addition to the ROH and Cultural Hub plans as they are refined.</p>	<p>Build on good practice in projects such as Billboard to inform new approaches to consultation.</p> <p><i>For example, the Thurrock Cultural Forum brings together partners in the local authority, cultural sector, plus a wider set of stakeholders/partners, to engage with issues of cultural distinctiveness as a basis for strategic decision-making.</i></p> <p><i>A sub-regional approach here would be welcome here – animating the 'Where People Come Alive' brand through a collaborative approach to cultural development.</i></p>
Principle 2	Overall Policy Questions	Interventions	Links to Planning and Physical Development	Links to existing Plans/Strategies
<p>Ensure that cultural activity is embedded to express the distinctiveness of place – such as through public art and the good design.</p>	<p>Have design features and public art criteria been set for the sub-region that are based on a set of locally determined considerations?</p> <p>Do economic and social</p>	<p>Commission public art projects for temporary and permanent work that express these characteristics.</p> <p>Introduce a local cultural tariff – based upon metrics</p>	<p>Prioritise the re-use of existing/heritage buildings in LDFs to ensure the distinctive landscape of the sub-region is retained and celebrated.</p> <p>Utilise S106 and Planning</p>	<p>Essex Design Initiative and Essex Public Arts Strategy provide guiding frameworks here, as do those of the unitary authorities. Emphasis should be made on connecting local strategies to a sub-</p>

	strategies feature local expressions of place (as identified above) as key to their successful fulfilment?	developed by the national CCO Programme.	Gain(s) to introduce a coherent approach to public realm development (to include public art) – to avoid piecemeal interventions. Work to the auspices of the cultural tariff – as directed by the national CCO Programme.	regional approach.
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4.5 Theme 5: Planning for Growth

Principle 1	Overall Policy Questions	Interventions	Links to Planning and Physical Development	Links to existing Plans/Strategies
<p>Address existing deficits/gaps in cultural infrastructure to establish a solid basis for growth. Also ensure that cultural infrastructure is considered as a critical 'offer' that builds a market for new housing and new jobs.</p>	<p>Is culture prioritised in S106 agreements and given equal status across the sub-region?</p> <p>Have specialist developers been engaged in TGSE – with a proven track record of providing mixed-use developments that contain workspace, activity space and housing?</p> <p>Are housing developers championing cultural infrastructure as necessary to improve the desirability of housing and increase the return on their investment?</p>	<p>Establish a Joint S106 Policy for Culture across the sub-region.</p> <p>Require new cultural infrastructure propositions (and wider propositions) to show in a technical and strategic sense how they will connect to and forge partnership with other parts of the cultural infrastructure landscape.</p> <p>Attract specialist culture-led housing developers and others with experience in developing cultural and activity space as part of the housing mix – as evidenced in locations such as Wembley and Peckham.</p>	<p>Establish a Joint TGSE S106 Policy for culture and introduce a Cultural Tariff – as defined by the national CCO Programme.</p> <p>Approach on a sub-regional basis a range of specialist housing developers with experience investing in cultural infrastructure to work in the TGSE area – such as Barrett, which has worked with ACME for the Peckham Galleria project.</p>	<p>The attraction of ACME to the ROH Production Campus shows the value a specialist, respected cultural workspace developer can have for the success of a wider cultural infrastructure development.</p> <p><i>For example, further opportunities include a commitment by Thurrock Council to commission a live/work studio space feasibility study (see Cultural Strategy Action Plan 07/08). Opportunities to negotiate strong developers' contributions are key here.</i></p>
Principle 2	Overall Policy Questions	Interventions	Links to Planning and Physical Development	Links to existing Plans/Strategies
<p>Recognise and plan for the potential of digital connectivity as a driver of growth.</p>	<p>Does all new infrastructure provide free high band-width access as a matter of course?</p> <p>Are there plans to develop public buildings such as schools and libraries as wi-fi</p>	<p>Establish all new cultural (and 'non-cultural') infrastructure as sites for free/cheap high band-width wi-fi access and brand the sub-region on these terms.</p>	<p>Establish 'creative wireless zones' in each town centre and key suburban centres, with an emphasis on public cultural buildings such as theatres and libraries.</p>	<p>The Regional Screen Agency and EEDA have advanced this agenda and should be consulted as lead partners on this agenda.</p> <p><i>For example, the</i></p>

	<p>zones?</p> <p>Is there a home-working strategy for the sub-region that seeks to connect small businesses through digital infrastructure and services?</p>	<p>Introduce digital infrastructure to these buildings – connecting them as part of the proposed creative wireless zones proposition.</p> <p>Connect home-based businesses to the proposed creative business networks/clubs.</p> <p>Encourage digital platforms for information dissemination, signposting and public art/design features – such as the use of plasma screens as part of a sub-regional cultural signposting initiative.</p>	<p>Ensure that high bandwidth broadband access is an essential planning requirement for new builds.</p>	<p><i>recommendations made to the Southend Cultural Hub emphasise the need to provide flexible wifi spaces accessible to local people and businesses.</i></p>
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5. TGSE Cultural Planning Delivery: Ensuring Success

The above Guidelines provide a means to engage with these themes in a strategic and partnership-driven way. Critical now is taking the agenda forward, establishing TGSE as a place recognised for its distinctive and high quality cultural infrastructure and for its dedication to culture as a primary factor in ensuring that Growth occurs sustainably and holistically. Currently, culture does not sit at the heart of the planning process in TGSE or many other places. This is a

major concern given the existing deficit of cultural infrastructure at a time of intense growth and change. It is therefore important that the Guidelines and their wider strategic implications are taken forward with strong and determined commitment from key public and private sector partners so that they are embedded as central to place-making in the sub-region. We also suggest that Guidelines are supported by the following Cultural Planning Checklist:

A Basic Cultural Planning Check List for Planners in TGSE

- Within your department, are the right skills and resources in place to make the links with sustainable cultural plans or broader cultural partnerships?
- Are outputs clear from the beginning? And revenue? How sustainable is cost?
- Cultural spatial planning cannot just be a 'top-down approach'. Some of the most exciting cultural projects and partnerships develop from unusual collaborations and grow in unexpected directions.
- Master plans should have an element of flexibility – they should be 'adaptive'. In other words planning creates a framework but it should also be an enabling tool to leave some space for creativity
- From the point of view of design and cultural leadership – have mentors and champions been identified?
- Section 106 is a package – there's a need to co-operate. Have Planning Gain + Section 106 opportunities identified with other partners and linked to culture? A major challenge is negotiating Section 106 agreements 3-5 years before anyone really knows what is going to be needed.
- Have you considered the possibility of implementing integrated multi-use facilities?
- Has the potential for affordable workspaces been mapped/identified
- Important to negotiate maintenance costs for the long-term from the beginning.

To carry this agenda forward, we are not proposing here the introduction of a new and complex layer of strategic delivery for the sub-region. Rather, we propose that existing organisations and partnerships work together, under the guidance of a new TGSEP Cultural Coordinator, to pursue the agendas outlined in this report. This is very much comparable with the implementation approach of Thames Gateway North Kent, where a small consultancy team has been appointed to take forward the recommendations and actions of their sub-regional Cultural Planning Toolkit. It is also comparable to a range of Creative Industries initiatives that are led by intermediaries – tasked with adding value to the policies of partners, leveraging new opportunities, offering a voice to the sector, and advocating/shaping change where it is not occurring as quickly as required.

We recommend that an appointment be made on behalf of TGSEP⁴⁵ for a Cultural Planning Coordinator role. This post will work on behalf of the partnership to lead on the translation of Guidelines to actions. This includes **making ongoing connections with the national CCO Programme to ensure that recommendations – such as for a Cultural Tariff – are fit for purpose in a TGSE context.** This post will not be charged with leading on actions: they will work to ensure that TGSEP partners develop appropriate actions and take a cultural lead for the sub-region.

Therefore, the first task for the post will be to work with TGSEP to build capacity, commitment and expertise in cultural planning. This includes reviewing whether a more forceful

strategic push for culture is required – such as the setting up of a TGSEP **Cultural Commission** and developing a sub-regional **Cultural Strategy** (building on this report). Put simply, the post should have a mediating and brokerage role, it is anticipated they will generate responsibility and commitment across the local authorities and strategic partnerships; but responsibility for the cultural planning agenda lies with TGSEP (i.e. it is not sub-contracted out through the creation of a coordinator post). In other locations where cultural transformation has genuinely been achieved – such as Toronto, the Rhur or Barcelona – step-change is not through the efforts of individual cultural coordinators but through a strong strategic (and political) steer from above: this is the task for TGSEP. If TGSEP does not effectively operate as a cultural planning partnership committed at every turn to mainstream culture as an economic and social necessity, the coordinator's role will not have been a success.

The job profile and roles/remit of the coordinator will need to be developed by TGSEP, but it is desirable the individual(s) has a strong background in local government and can effect change in planning and development. This is critical if they are to ensure a step-change in commitment from TGSEP and a dedication to cultural planning agendas from the local authorities, partner bodies such as ACE, EEDA, Sport England and Sport Essex, UDCs, and local delivery vehicles.

⁴⁵ Alternative delivery platforms can also be explored here – for example, Creative Partnerships has established a strong track record in the sub-region and, with its changing role, could be well-positioned to advance a cultural planning agenda on behalf of TGSEP.