9th November 2010
Thames Gateway Parklands
Greening the Gateway Kent & Medway
South Essex Green Grid
East London Green Grid

Thames Gateway Parklands

Delivering Environmental Transformation



London

In London the Thames Gateway Parklands Projects are supported by 'London's Great Outdoors', the Mayor of London's vision for improving public spaces.

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Essex

Parklands Investments respond to Local Open Space Assessments and Green Grid Strategies.

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Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership
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Kent

Parklands Investments respond to Local Open Space Assessments and Green Grid Strategies.

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Foreword

I often hear people asking why we seldom create places where we'd really like to live. One fundamental reason, often overlooked, is that not enough attention is paid to the landscapes and townscapes that give towns, cities and villages their special character.

I like to call landscape the 'primary infrastructure' – to emphasise its importance and to remind ourselves that it is fundamental to creating a sense of place and a feeling of belonging. A coherent, connected landscape across the Thames Gateway will help to create a character and identity for the estuary which is as distinct and recognisable as the Peak District or the Norfolk Broads.

The Parklands programme has already made great strides in transforming perceptions of place on the ground as well as the quality of life. All over the estuary new high quality landscapes are being created. These will have a lasting impact on the estuary's potential as an engine room for growth in the Greater South East. Continuing support for Parklands is a critical part of maintaining London's status as a World City. It will also ensure that the region as a whole can compete successfully in an increasingly competitive world.

This booklet describes the exciting projects that form the first round of Parklands investment. I have been delighted to see the progress being made over such a short period.

Each project celebrates various aspects of the Gateway's human history and natural environment; and each one contributes another bit of the connected Parklands landscape. Together they are an impressive illustration of the change-making power of landscapes.

I hope you will be inspired by this outstanding piece of work and that you will support it in the future.



Sir Terry Farrell CBE

Design Champion for the Thames Gateway

Working together in partnership, we know that the re-development of the Thames Gateway will only succeed if we create a network of green open spaces to enrich existing and new communities, attract investment and raise spirits.

Boris Johnson

Mayor of London

Peter Martin

Leader of Essex County Council

Kevin Lynes

Regeneration and Economic Development Portfolio Holder Kent County Council

Rodney Chambers

Leader of Medway Council

About Parklands

A Tangible Success

From East London to Southend in Essex and Sittingbourne in Kent, people are starting to enjoy new and improved urban greenspaces and better access to superb countryside.

This is the work of the **Thames Gateway Parklands** programme being delivered through three local Green Grid partnerships in East London, North Kent and South Essex. We hope you will find it informative, that you will want to know more , and that you will help to support the continuing success of Parklands.

Parklands is one of the Thames Gateway's most tangible successes. The current programme involves 15 major projects offering 267,000 sq m of new or enhanced greenspace, 95 km of additional footpaths and cycleways, 10 km of improved watercourses, five brand new visitor/ education centres, and much else besides.

All this is being delivered in just three years through the three local partnerships and is on track for completion on time and on budget by March 2011.

Working with local organisations and communities, they have more than doubled an initial government investment of £32m to nearly £70m through match funding.

An Exceptional Landscape

As Sir Terry Farrell said:
"an exceptional landscape that transforms perceptions of place"
by:
– making a connected landscape via 'green grids', the Thames Estuary Path and visual and environmental improvements along major transport corridors;
– improving access to urban and rural landscapes for new and existing neighbourhoods;
– renewing and developing urban environments as places of culture and social interaction;
– recognising the value of enhancing agricultural and 'blue' landscapes as key economic, environmental, recreational and cultural assets;
– promoting a clear identity and interest for each locality via investment in regenerated historic environments.

This is not about creating a pleasant environment for its own sake. It is a hard-headed recognition that, in the words of the Gateway's Champion, Sir Terry Farrell:

"A high quality of life is needed to attract people to want to live here, work here, visit here, and for existing residents to want to build their futures here."



A key area for East London Green Grid and East London Green Enterprise District

£69m Programme £32m HCA Funding

– **637 ha** of new greenspace

– **2,013 ha** of enhanced greenspace

– **95 km** of new and upgraded foot and cycle paths

– **7 km** of new links to the Thames Estuary Path

– **10** new bridges

– **10.3 km** of watercourses and canal restored

– **5 new** sustainable visitor centres with associated learning programmes

– **110 ha** of SSSI improved

– **118 ha** of new and enhanced habitats

– **275 ha** of brownfield land remediated

– **1,070 properties** at reduced risk of flooding

– More than **400,000 extra visitors** expected

– **25 jobs** created, **10 jobs** safeguarded, and a new 9 hectare green business park developed

Parklands Backing Growth

Sustainable Growth

Vigorous and lasting economic growth in the Thames Gateway is crucial for the UK's prosperity and to maintain the world-class status of London and the Greater South East. It has therefore been a major priority for successive governments.

This ambition, recently refreshed by Sir Terry Farrell's Core Vision for the Gateway, recognises that, for growth to be sustainable, major economic, social and environmental change is essential. This agenda includes the need to:

– re-make East London
– renew Estuary Towns
– improve connections
– enhance education and skills
– promote low carbon growth and innovation
– create a high quality, high value Parklands landscape.

Stratford City Olympic developments, Canary Wharf, Ebbsfleet and the London Gateway port, along with world-class transport links like Crossrail and the High Speed 1 rail line, are the flagship drivers of this transformation that will deliver new homes, jobs and community facilities across the Gateway.

But achieving the Gateway's full potential also needs a big change in perceptions of the area. So, alongside economic and social change, a dramatically improved environment is essential.

Environmental Change

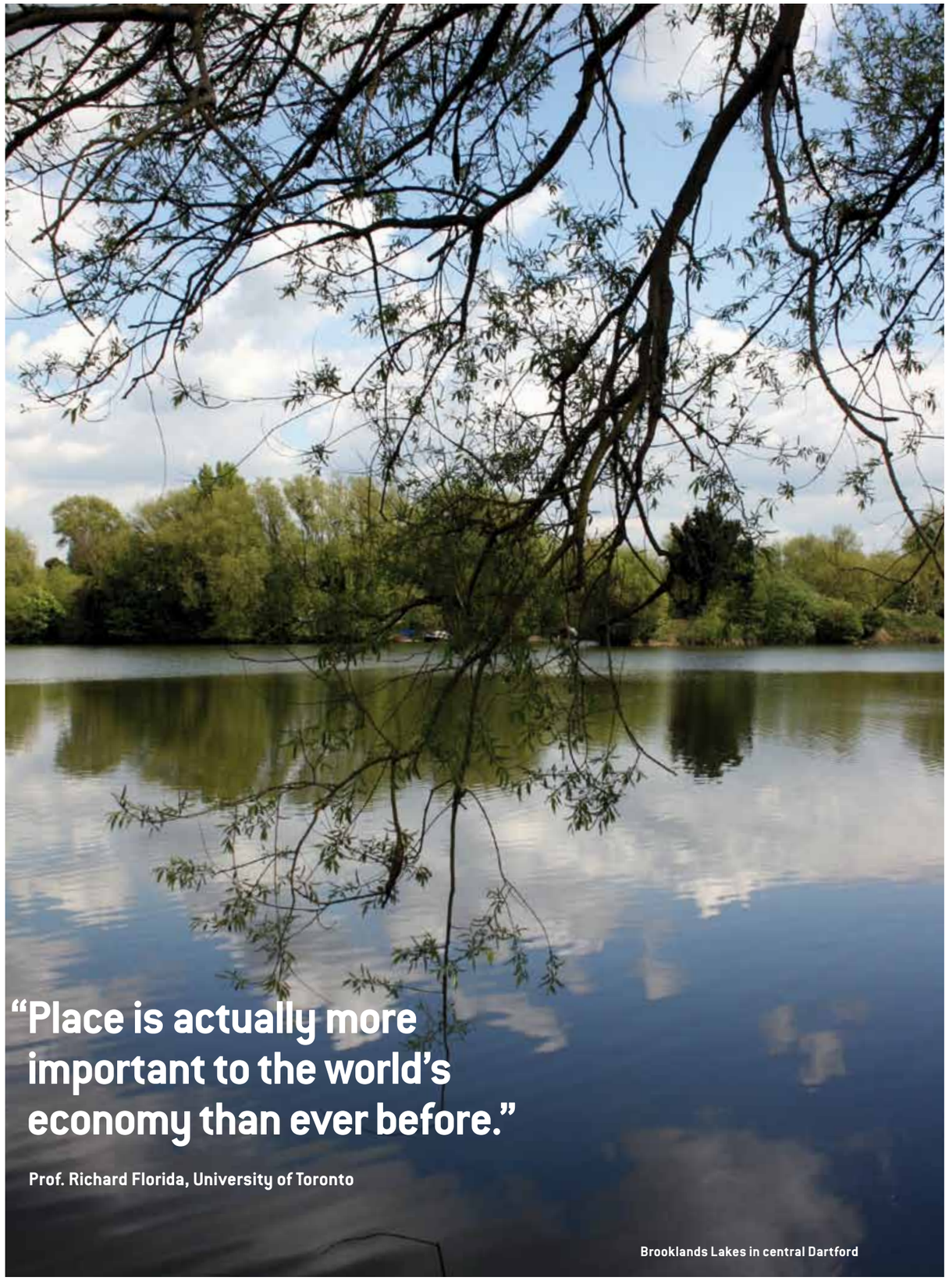
Evidence for the catalytic ability of high quality, accessible green spaces and networks to deliver economic, social and environmental benefits is now recognised throughout the world.

For example, these key assets help to create a 'sense of place'. This in turn encourages neighbourhood pride, tourism and investment, and provides opportunities for participation in learning, social and cultural activities, sport and healthy exercise.

Open space can make vital contributions to addressing climate change issues. These include flood risk, loss of habitats and biodiversity, carbon reduction and water stress. They can also help reduce the need for expensive 'grey' infrastructure like roads and sewers; and play a key role in sustaining clean air, water, and natural resources.

"Investing in green infrastructure is not a luxury: it is an essential ingredient for the Thames Gateway's success."

Nerys Jones, Strategic Greenspace Consultant
Advisor to Government on the Greening the Gateway strategy 2005



Brooklands Lakes in central Dartford

“I can think of no other place with more potential to tackle the climate change agenda than here in the Thames Gateway.”

Peter Head, President of the Institute for Sustainability

The RSPB Outdoor Education zone at Rainham Marshes, part of the wider Wildspace project

Adding Value Through Partnership

Parklands Partnerships

The Thames Gateway Parklands project is being implemented by three local partnerships:
– East London Green Grid www.designforlondon.gov.uk
– South Essex Green Grid www.greengrid.co.uk
– Greening the Gateway Kent & Medway www.gtgkm.org.uk

The development of the three Thames Gateway Parklands Business Plans was undertaken in association with, and signed off by the local authority Leaders.

The East London Green Grid is part of a wider programme of public space improvements, entitled London's Great Outdoors. This forms part of the Mayor of London's Manifesto for Public Space and is supported by two practical guides. The one relevant to this leaflet is Better Green and Water Spaces.

The North Kent and South Essex green grid partnerships are part of the wider regeneration programme for the outer gateway area, with work closely aligned to the North Kent and South Essex Gateway partnerships.

A History of Success

The three local initiatives and their partners (such as Natural England), local authorities and government have an excellent track record of working and succeeding together.

For example, the RSPB's flagship reserve at Rainham Marshes and a 600 acre green cluster in North Kent around Shorne Woods Country Park, Jeskyns Farm and Cobham Park's Grade II* landscape are among several superb partnership projects that pre-date Parklands.

This legacy of working strategically throughout the Thames Gateway provided a firm foundation for planning and delivering the major Parklands programme.

Adding Value and Impact

The three local partnerships unite the work of a range of bodies and local organisations, adding value and strategic impact by:
– bringing a strategic approach to locally informed planning, targeting and delivering investment;
– providing a link between policy and action at both national and local levels;
– drawing together extra financial leverage;
– working with local partners to involve communities;
– identifying opportunities, joint projects and synergies;
– providing vehicles for promoting and celebrating the natural heritage and historic environment.
– helping the delivery of projects on the ground.

For example:
– **match funding** has more than doubled the £31.76m allocated by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) for the current Parklands programme;
– research and planning by the partnerships has made **identifying priorities** and implementation much easier, helping secure value for money;
– **the planning system is better placed** to deliver key parts of the programme. For example, the award-winning East London Green Grid Framework now forms part of the London Plan as Supplementary Planning Guidance. Joint work with planning authorities across North Kent and South Essex has helped inform and integrate Green Grid, open space and countryside strategies as key elements of Local Development Frameworks and Local Investment Plans;
– **working together on pan-Gateway issues** through the Greening the Gateway Partnership. Chaired by Natural England, this enables a coordinated approach and provides important channels for dialogue with government, local authorities, and the commercial and charitable sectors;
– **encouraging the development of supporting projects**, such as Artlands North Kent programme, a contemporary arts programme to complement Parklands investments.

Parklands South Essex

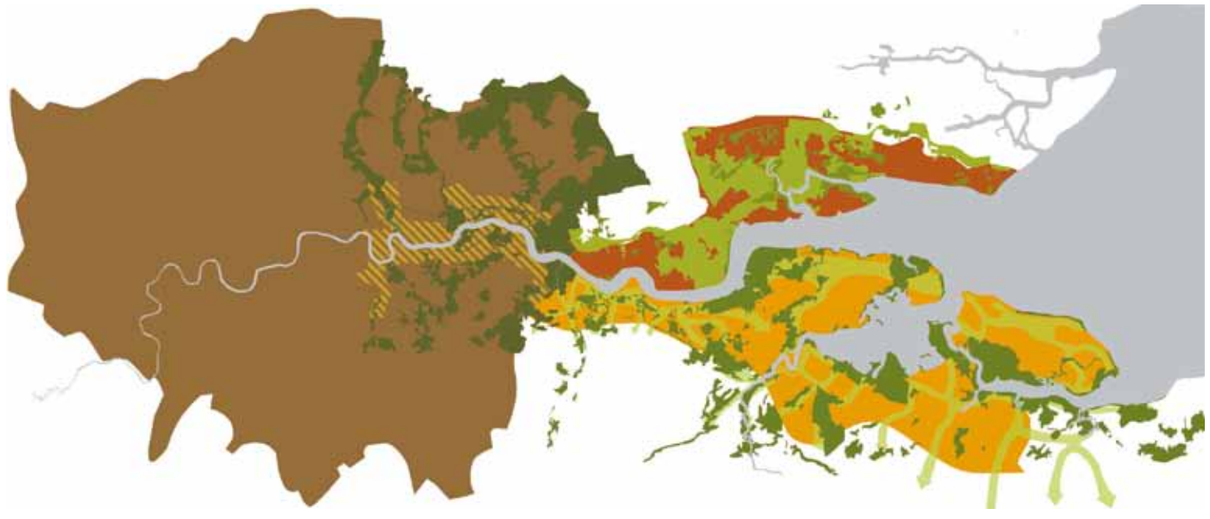
East London Green Grid

Greening the Gateway KENT AND MEDWAY

Local, Flexible and Cost-Effective

This strong track record and **locally-based, flexible approach** means the three Green Grid partnerships have been **well placed to work with government** and to assist delivery on the ground in new and imaginative ways.

In challenging economic times, they offer a highly cost-effective way to transform the environment of the Thames Gateway that is so essential for future growth and prosperity.



Existing Projects

Fifteen major projects are now under way across the Thames Gateway. They are all part of a three year investment programme funded jointly by government and a range of partners, including commercial, charitable and local organisations. Many of the East London Green Grid projects are funded through the Great Outdoors and its overarching programme of public realm works.

These projects demonstrate the many economic, social and environmental benefits of investing in greenspaces. Importantly too, they put in place **crucial pieces of the green jigsaw** that is gradually taking shape across the Gateway. We hope you will enjoy reading about them.

More than 8600 Hectares 11% of the land area of the Thames Gateway's is

protected by national or international nature conservation designations. It's historic churches, fortifications, docks, piers, urban and village centres all tell of its key role in the nation's history and as the world's gateway to London.

As Sir Terry Farrell has said: "It is a coherent natural landscape: it is the saltwater tidal part of the Thames estuary. Its defining character has been recognised by poets, painters and writers including Hopkins, Turner and Dickens. It has a very strong identity, just like the Fens, or the Lake District, or Dartmoor. Though this is no longer obvious, it could be made so through implementation of the Parklands vision."



Parklands Projects

Thames Path

1. Lea River Park: Three Mills Green





Olympic cultural and environmental legacies at a green crossroads

Three Mills Green is a small park on a unique island setting in the midst of the River Lea. Located in a conservation area close to the medieval Three Mills Complex, the park is currently an underused facility. The park has a wide catchment and pressure on the landscape will increase with the development opportunities in the area at Sugar House Lane, Three Mills Green and Bromley by Bow and the Olympic Site.

A multi-use recreation, sport and events space will form a key element of the project, and provide opportunities for community events and recreation activities. A programme of activities, play and leisure make up the western edge of the green.

The scheme will enhance the ecology of the site and introduce a more diverse range of plant and tree species. In addition to its social, cultural and ecological offer, and its setting for an important heritage attraction, Three Mills Green is a key link in the 26 mile chain of sport and leisure facilities, heritage sites, gardens, nature reserves and riverside trails that comprise the Lea River Park between Ware in Hertfordshire and the Thames.

Lead Partner: **LTGDC**
HCA funding: **£1.5 million**
Match funding: **£5.0 million**



Lea River Park framework plan

2. Waterlink Way and Deptford Loop





Enhancing a green route to reduce flood risk and link communities

The development of Waterlink Way will connect community landscapes and reduce the risk of floods. A series of new wetlands, backwaters and planting will also enhance wildlife habitats and improve amenities. Forming part of a 12 km footpath along the Rivers Pool and Ravensbourne, the project is delivering upgrades to the pathway and signage. It will also provide a public square where the Rivers Quaggy and Ravensbourne meet in Lewisham town centre.

Spurring off from this pathway, the Deptford Loop links a string of parks and open spaces in a circular route from Deptford Bridge DLR station to the Thames waterfront at Pepys Park.

This Parklands project provides key links to the rest of SE London's 'Green Chain'. With nearly 20,000 people living within 300 m, these improvements will also create a safer and more attractive path to stations and retail centres in areas of Deptford and Lewisham, currently deficient in open space provision and access to nature.

Lead Partner: **LB Lewisham**
HCA funding: **£2.0 million**
Match funding: **£3.8 million**



Proposals for Ladywell Fields

3. Erith Marshes and Belvedere Links



London's Great Outdoors – New boardwalks giving access to historic grazing marsh

Improving the business and visitor environment

Erith Marshes, with its medieval dykes and World War II pill boxes, forms one of the last remnants of grazing marsh in South London. This is also where visitors can find one of the icons of Victorian engineering: the Grade I listed Crossness Beam Engine House.

Improving 156 hectares of the marshland landscape and access to the Thames Path are key elements of the Parklands Project. It will capitalise on these natural and heritage assets to improve the appeal of an area of low skills and high unemployment.

The landscape improvements provide an enhanced setting for the Belvedere Employment Area and support greater biodiversity. The creation of sustainable drainage systems will increase the area's already crucial flood storage capacity.

Supporting both jobs and visitor numbers, a total of 4.3 km of upgraded pedestrian and cycle routes offer better links between Abbey Wood and Belvedere stations, the employment area, the Thames Path and the Beam Engine House.

Lead Partner: **LB Bexley**
HCA funding: **£1.9 million**
Match funding: **£0.7 million**



Erith Marshes project plan

4. Dagenham Washlands



London's Great Outdoors – Flood storage areas for the Beam River will be opened up with bridges connecting housing areas

Enhancing flood prevention works to re-connect people to the Thames

Dagenham Washlands will reconnect 40,000 local people to the Thames for the first time in 90 years. Its 4 km of new and improved foot and cycle paths will create the final link in the green network along the Beam Valley.

The project is part of a wider partnership with the Environment Agency and the Land Restoration Trust (LRT) to enable regeneration and development. A new 430,000 m^3 flood storage area will reduce flood risk to £1.5 bn worth of commercial property. It will also provide 53 hectares of multifunctional green space near the Ford Dagenham plant.

There will also be on-going opportunities with the LRT for volunteering, training and employment.

The Parklands project, which used an innovative maintenance dowry, was the last piece in a complex funding jigsaw. It has built confidence and unlocked over £12 m worth of investment for an area facing significant social and economic difficulties.

Lead Partner: **The Land Trust**
HCA funding: **£2.0 million**
Match funding: **£2.0 million**



5. Wildspace: Rainham to the River



London's Great Outdoors – Photomontage of ramped 'Trackway' to connect Rainham with the Marshes over High Speed 1

A flagship for green tourism

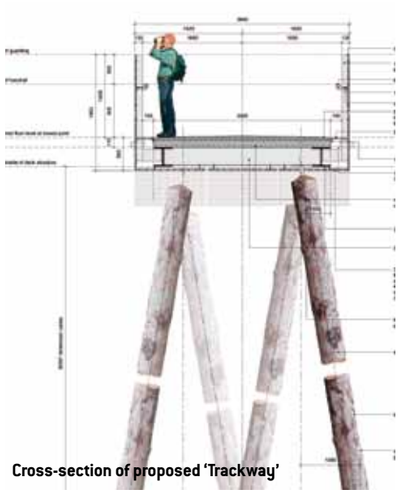
The vast landscapes of Rainham, Wennington and Aveley Marshes form 'Wildspace' – a new conservation park that is vitally important for wildlife.

Large parts of the park, which covers more than 1,000 hectares, date back to medieval times. A great place to visit, being just 30 minutes from the City of London, it is expecting up to 100,000 visitors a year by 2012.

Straddling the boundary between London and Essex, 'Wildspace' involves working with the RSPB, Natural England, Environment Agency, LB Havering, Thurrock Unitary Authority, Cleanaway Ltd, and the Port of London Authority. This is a great example not only of partnership working across boundaries, but also the importance of a long-term vision that ensures each individual project contributes to a coherent whole.

Parklands funding is supporting the restoration of historic Rainham Hall's gardens, the design of a new public square by the station, the restoration of 81 hectares of SSSI grazing marsh on Rainham Nature Reserve and new paths to the Thames.

Lead Partner: **LB Havering**
HCA funding: **£2.8 million**
Match funding: **£2.3 million**



Cross-section of proposed 'Trackway'



Proposals to bring out the heritage of Rainham Village and Rainham Hall Gardens



Rainham to the River project plan

6. Thurrock Wildspace



Parklands funding created the Veolia Mardyke bridge allowing Purfleet residents easy access to the RSPB reserve and transforming the Riverside as a result

A flagship for green tourism

The Essex and Thurrock part of the Wildspace project includes Aveley marshes and the Purfleet gateway to the RSPB nature reserve. Historically the marshes were used by the MOD as a firing range and the local communities had no access. Now, the Wildspace project has opened up the marshes, the Thames Estuary Path from Purfleet to Rainham and created an award winning visitor centre which attracts up to 60,000 people a year.

A powerful partnership of private and public sector agencies working with the local Purfleet community has successfully extended the influence of Thurrock Wildspace to include Purfleet's heritage museum, riverside walk and train station. Critically the residents of Purfleet have now adopted Wildspace in large numbers and with great enthusiasm.

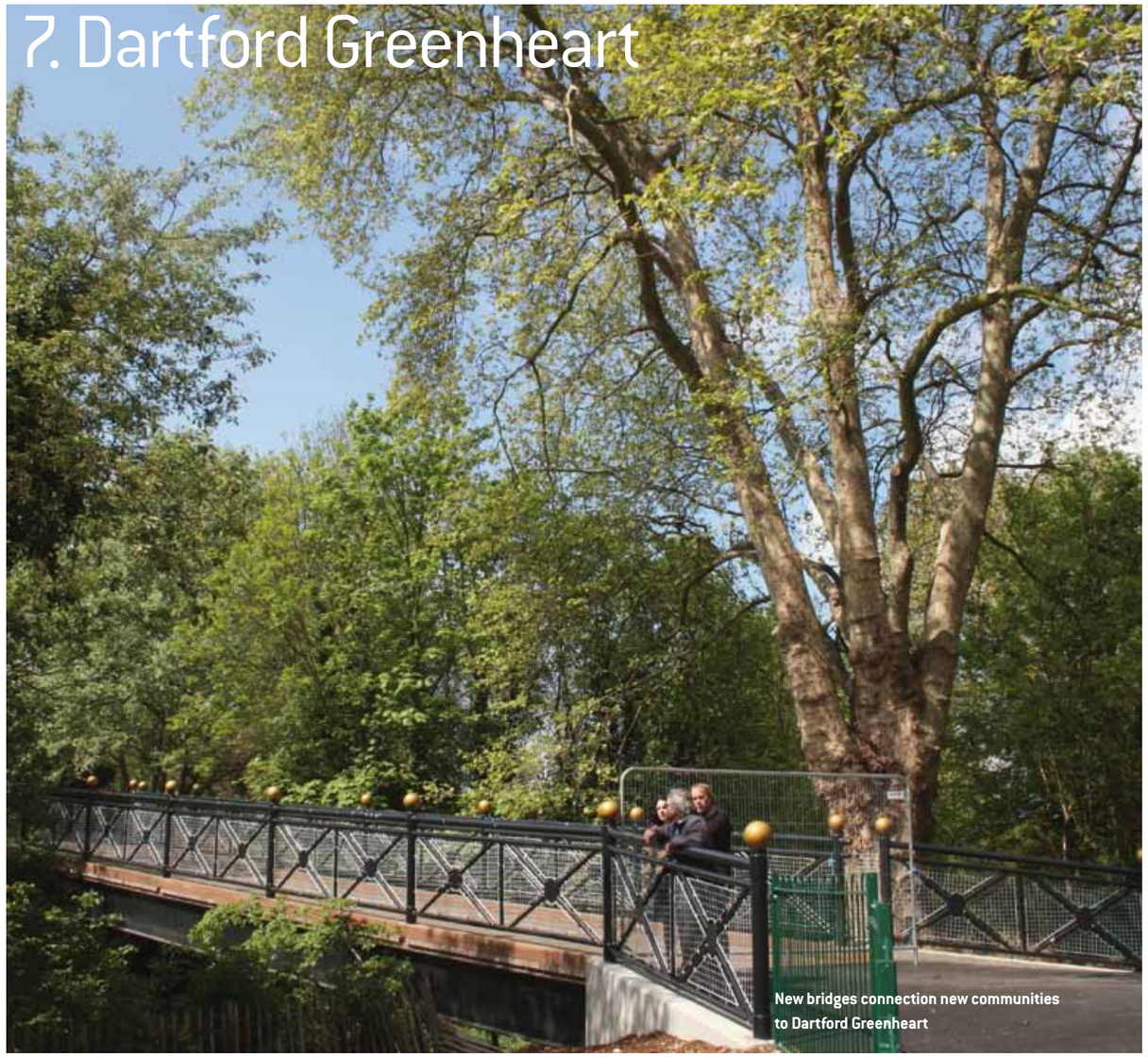
In Thurrock, Parklands funding supporting the construction of a new bridge over the Mardyke has put another link in the Thames Estuary Path and transformed a 'dead end' into a riverside promenade, giving easy access to the RSPB reserve for Purfleet residents and visitors alike. Nearby, a new Marshland Discovery Zone showcases the area's natural and cultural heritage, while a new sand martin bank and 400 hectares of enhanced reedbeds and marshes all add to local biodiversity, flood alleviation and the visitor experience.

Lead Partner: **RSPB**
HCA funding: **£1.4 million**
Match funding: **£1.1 million**



Award winning RSPB Visitor Centre

7. Dartford Greenheart



New bridges connection new communities to Dartford Greenheart

Putting the countryside in the town's shop window

Inside the threshold of Dartford's bustling and historic town centre, Dartford Greenheart provides a magnificent green gateway linking the town's Central Park directly with the bucolic landscapes of the Darent Valley.

This Parklands project adds more than 13 hectares of previously inaccessible greenspace to the town centre public realm, and habitat improvements along 2.5 km of the River Darent. It is also a key green transport hub, providing 3.5 km of new and improved connections to over 13 km of existing paths via new bridges and gateway entrances.

With 55,000 people living within 2 km, and developments being planned for 2,500 new homes nearby, Dartford Greenheart is an important place for local people to relax and enjoy. It is also a destination with a wide range of events for more than 50,000 visitors a year. Well served by public transport, including the new Fastrack rapid transit buses, a key feature of the Greenheart is a visitor centre and café for information and other services.

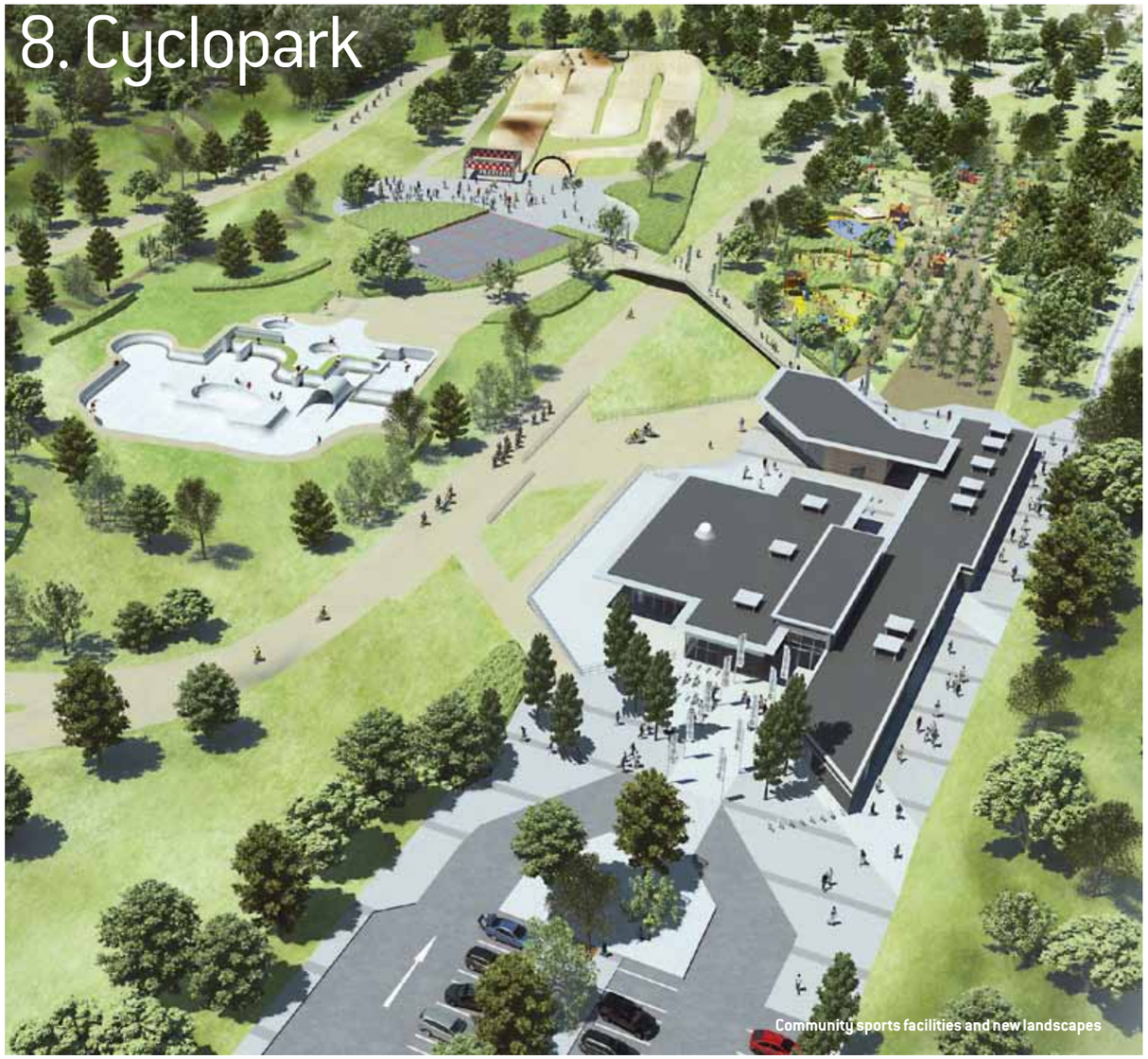
Linked by earlier award-winning access routes to other greenspace projects along the Darent, it is a great starting point for explorations out to the Kent Downs or to the Thames Estuary Path.

Lead Partner: **Dartford Council**
HCA funding: **£2.3 million**
Match funding: **£5.9 million**



Brookland Lakes part of Dartford Greenheart's offer

8. Cyclopark



Community sports facilities and new landscapes

Promoting active lifestyles

Cyclopark boasts 10 km of traffic-free paths and a cyclying activity centre of national significance. It is an entirely new 43 hectare community park of exceptional quality. Seizing the opportunity created by the re-alignment of the A2 south of Gravesend, Cyclopark stretches for over 4 km along the land between the old and new routes.

With 50,000 people already living within 2 km, the park provides local communities with new opportunities for healthy exercise and relaxation. It also provides a superb green link between the strategic growth point of Ebbsfleet, the major greenspace cluster around Shorne, Cobham and Jeskyns, and the wider countryside beyond. Including 10 hectares of new woodland and the increasingly rare grass chalkland habitat to improve biodiversity and aid wildlife movement, the new park has transformed the visual amenity of a previously degraded transport corridor.

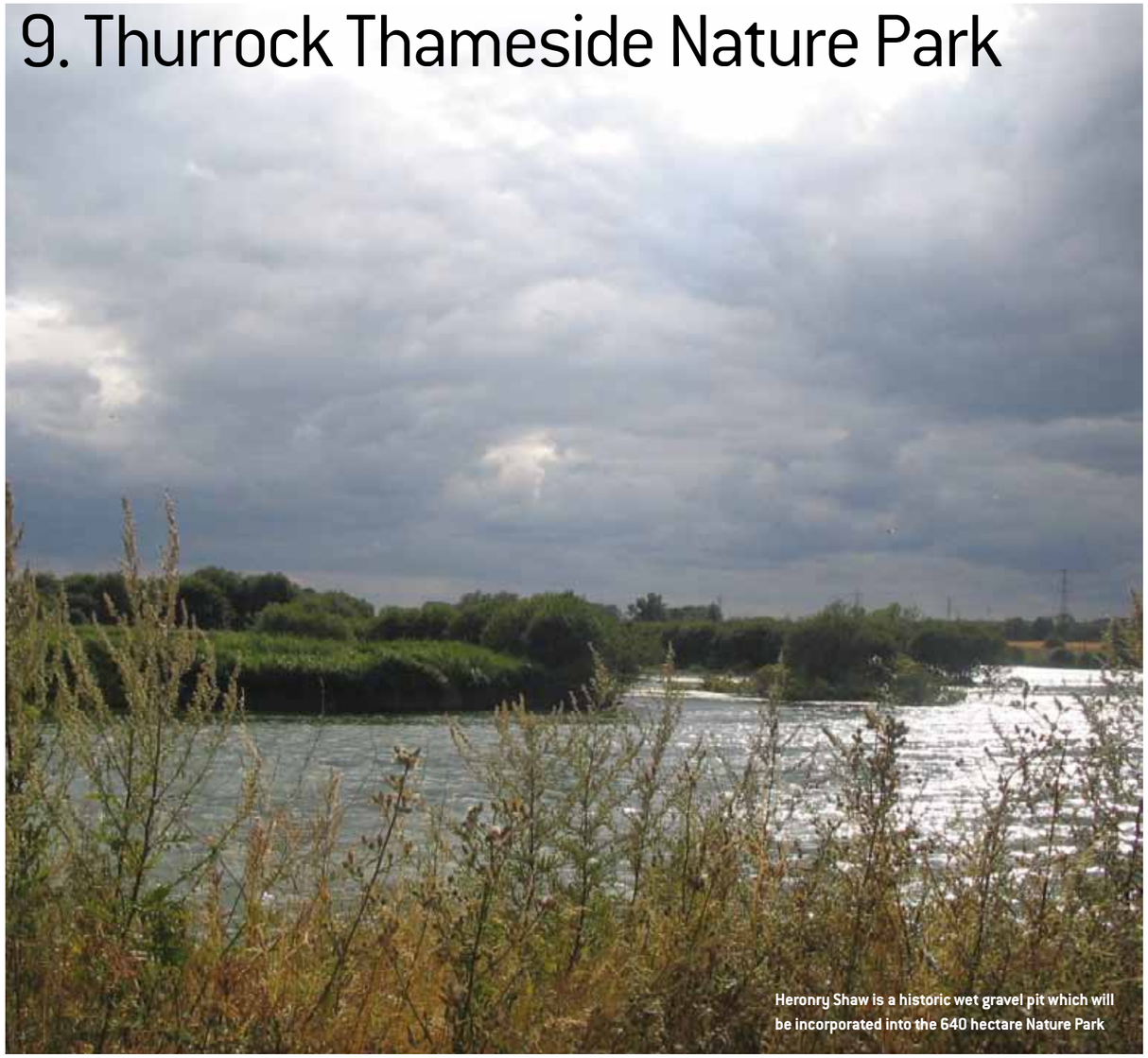
It has also added exciting new sporting facilities of both local and national importance to enhance the Olympic sporting legacy.

Lead Partner: **Kent County Council**
HCA funding: **£1.8 million**
Match funding: **£2.3 million**



New Pavilion due to open on May 2012

9. Thurrock Thameside Nature Park



Heronry Shaw is a historic wet gravel pit which will be incorporated into the 640 hectare Nature Park

Nature re-connecting communities

Offering extraordinary panoramic views across the estuary and directly down-river to Southend, a former refuse tip at Mucking is being transformed. Together with nearby lakes, marsh and scrape, the old tip is part of the new Thurrock Thameside Nature Park.

In a partnership between Essex Wildlife Trust and Cory Environmental Ltd. the park is creating five new jobs, a low carbon visitor centre with superb education and training facilities, and over 640 hectares of wildlife habitat and accessible green space for South Essex people to enjoy.

Linked by the Thames Estuary Path to the military heritage of Coal House and Tilbury Forts to the south, and the magnificent wildlife and visitor interest in and around Wat Tyler Country Park to the east, this important nature park provides a new strategic link in South Essex's developing greenspace network.

With nearly 18 km of footpaths, cycleways and bridleways, including a new bridge, the park links previously separated local communities and enhances their recreational opportunities enormously.

Lead Partner: **Essex Wildlife Trust**
HCA funding: **£0.7 million**
Match funding: **£1.8 million**



New Visitor Centre

10. Great Expectations Thames and Medway Canal



1 km of restored canal



New Community Facilities along Gravesham's waterfront

Linking town, nature and heritage

The Great Expectations project is conserving and restoring some key features of an historic landscape to provide a context for attracting private investment around the eastern gateway to Gravesend town centre. Abandoned for nearly 80 years, a 1 km stretch of the Thames and Medway Canal is being restored for safe water-based recreation. Both National Cycle Route 1, which takes the canal towpath, and the nearby Thames Estuary Path are being upgraded to offer great waterside trips across internationally-important wetlands out to Higham and to the new beacon RSPB Reserve at Cliffe Pools.

At the canal's western end, 6.56 hectares of town centre waterfront greenspace provide the setting for a new commercially-sponsored outdoor gym, which will help to support the Olympic legacy.

Nearby, the historic New Tavern Fort is now being conserved and access improved. Substantially altered by General Gordon, but dating originally from the 1780s, this is one of several key fortifications along the Thames in Kent and Essex that were crucial to London's outer defences from Tudor times to WW2.

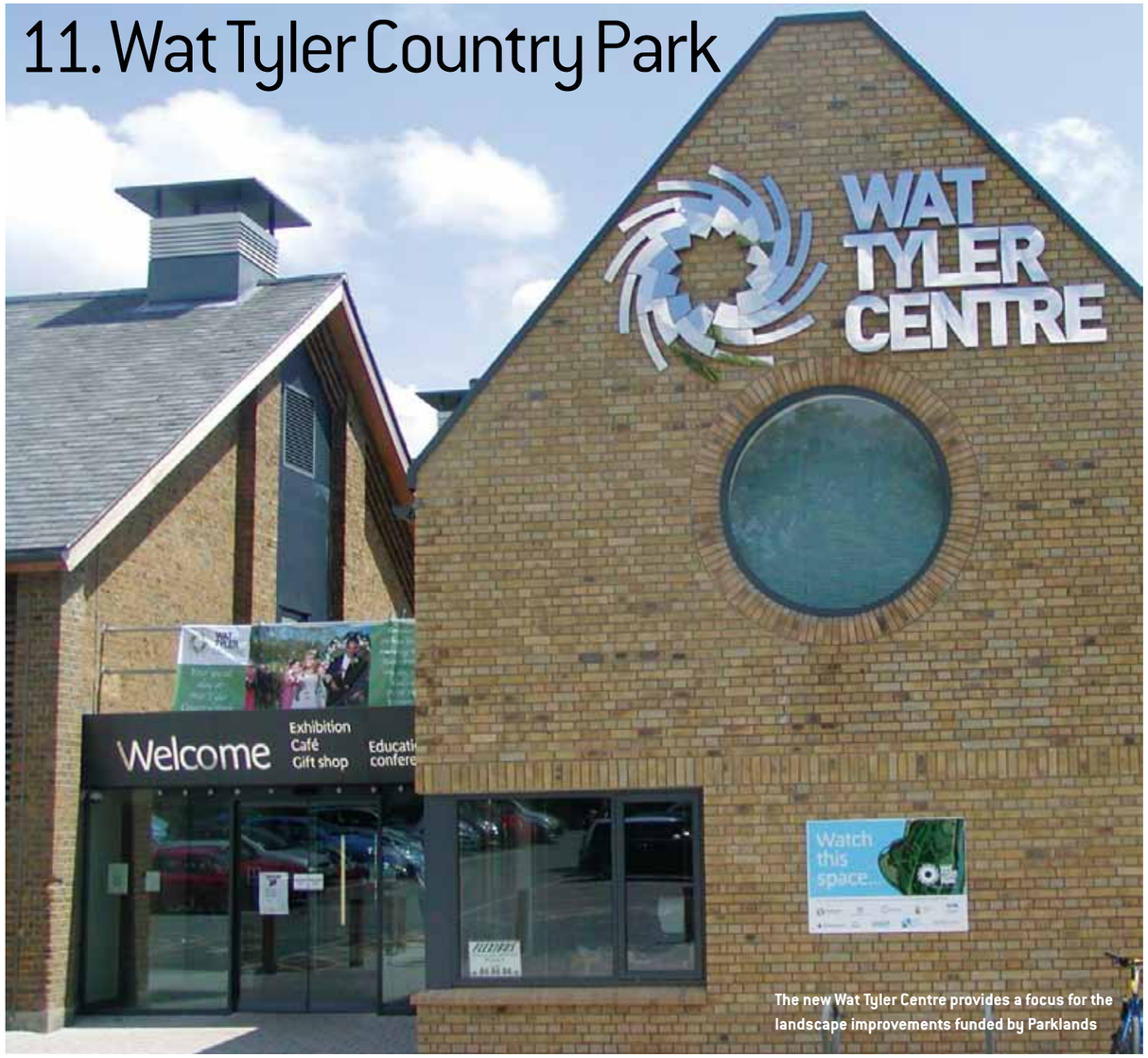
In addition to enhancing Gravesend's offer, these improvements help to promote the fascinating natural and military heritage shared on both sides of the river and linked by the Gravesend-Tilbury ferry.

Lead Partner: **Gravesham Council**
HCA funding: **£2.0 million**
Match funding: **£0.05 million**



Shorne Common and Marshes

11. Wat Tyler Country Park



The new Wat Tyler Centre provides a focus for the landscape improvements funded by Parklands

Engaging people with nature

Once the site of an explosives factory and key defence installations, the Wat Tyler Country Park already boasts an exciting range of nature conservation, heritage, artistic and fun attractions for people of all ages. Adding to the interest, a Green Centre (opening in 2011) will explore both local and global sustainability issues.

The RSPB visitor centre at the country park attracted nearly 30,000 visitors in its first week of opening in 2010. It inspires children and adults to learn about wildlife through its state-of-the-art education and training facilities, including CCTV cameras that bring nature's secrets live to the screen.

With new walkways connecting to the Thames Path, the country park and surrounding marshes offer schools, families and visitors a first-hand opportunity to explore the area's wildlife and history.

Lead Partner: **Basildon Council**
HCA funding: **£1.6 million**
Match funding: **£1.1 million**



Wat Tyler Landscape Masterplan

12. Central South Essex Marshes



RSPB are using Parklands funding to create high quality wetlands on West Canvey and Gifford Marshes to extend work already carried out on Vange Marsh

Engaging people with nature

Surrounding the Country Park are the Central South Essex Marshes – a landscape steeped in history and one of the most important wildlife havens in Europe. Using innovative conservation and land management practices, an awesome 930 hectare RSPB nature reserve is emerging on what were once refuse tips and arable fields. Enhancing flood storage capacity and providing habitats for birds, water voles, brown hares, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates and plant communities, this is a genuine wilderness just 30 miles from Piccadilly Circus.

The two Parklands projects at Wat Tyler Country Park and The Central South Essex Marshes are great examples of how, by working together, partners can develop mutually-advantageous projects to the benefit of both people and wildlife. Between them, they have created nine new jobs and are expected to bring more than 200,000 extra visitors a year.

Lead Partner: **Royal Society for the Protection of Birds**
HCA funding: **£5.3 million**
Match funding: **£7.0 million**

"We want children to catch the conservation message while they are still young. If we fail to act now, we will miss the chance to nurture the environmental champions of the future."

Sir Graham Wynne, Chief Executive, RSPB

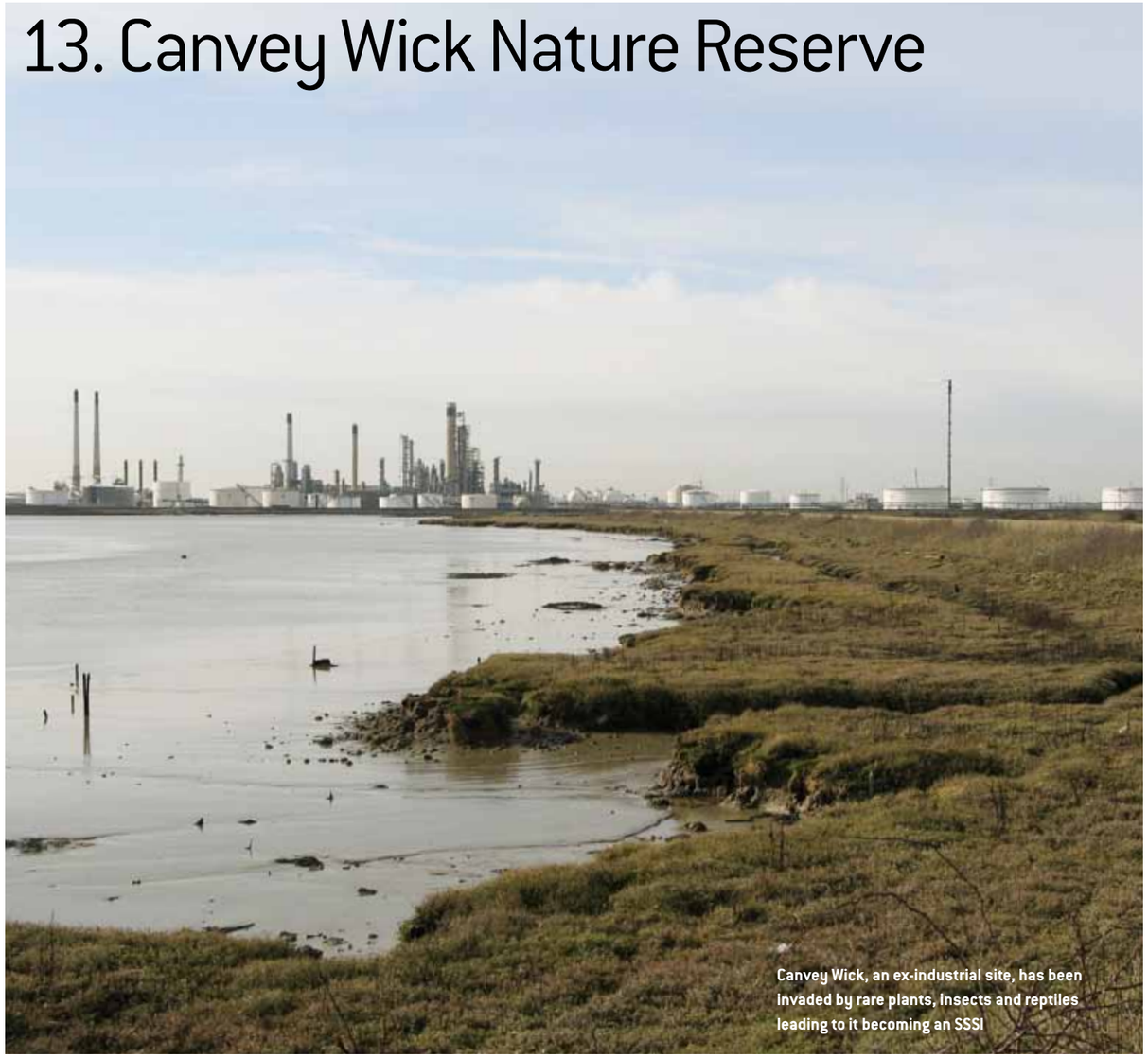


Parklands funded a new Visitor Centre and Education Zone, to make the most of visitors to the country park.



New Salt Marshes are part of the restoration scheme

13. Canvey Wick Nature Reserve



Canvey Wick, an ex-industrial site, has been invaded by rare plants, insects and reptiles leading to it becoming an SSSI

A green business park in the first brownfield SSSI

As the country's first 'brownfield' SSSI, Canvey Wick Nature Reserve is astonishingly rich in plant, animal and insect life.

This 100 hectare site in the west of Canvey Island was planned as an oil refinery but never commissioned; so nature has fashioned its own extraordinary reserve over the past 40 years.

Now, whilst carefully preserving the key wildlife habitats, the Land Restoration Trust is creating and upgrading 9 km of foot and cycle paths, together with a small education centre, so that schoolchildren and visitors can learn more about this spellbinding place.

And, to provide employment and training opportunities for local people, a 9 hectare business park is being created in one corner of the site. Using sustainable construction techniques, this will provide new business opportunities in a very special setting.

Lead Partner: **The Land Trust**
HCA funding: **£2.6 million**
Match funding: **£1.2 million**



14. Great Lines Heritage Park



New boardwalk and footbridge to Fort Amherst

Engaging people with heritage

Chatham's military legacy is of exceptional national and international importance – placing it on the shortlist for World Heritage Site status. Parklands investment is enriching that legacy with an exciting project to enhance and showcase one of its key elements – the Great Lines Heritage Park.

Sitting above and behind the renowned Historic Dockyard, the park provides 75 hectares of outstanding greenspace in and around the massive defensive ramparts of the Chatham Lines. It offers spectacular views across Chatham town centre and its waterfront.

Six new flagship entrances will emphasise the grandeur of the setting and 3 km of new and upgraded access routes are bringing more than 10 hectares of land into public use for the first time. With habitat enhancements to 30 hectares of chalk grassland – among the UK's most species-rich botanical communities – the park is also conserving its natural heritage.

As part of this transformation, community engagement continues to be a major strength in helping to "unveil" the revitalised park. In association with the Chatham World Heritage Partnership, it will also inform and excite a wider public about this astonishing place.

Lead Partner: **Medway Council**
HCA funding: **£2.0 million**
Match funding: **£1.4 million**



15. Milton Creek Gateway Landscapes



New community park and landscaping

Reconnecting a with town its creekside heritage

This Parklands project is a key element in giving confidence to investors involved in the creation of a new waterside district for Sittingbourne around the head of Milton Creek. Based on plans developed through detailed consultation with local residential and business communities, Church Marshes Country Park is being extended south along the Creek. Its 52 acres of greenspace will create a new green heart for the town centre.

Providing a strong landscape setting for future developments, and with 10 km of new foot and cycle paths, it provides a valuable link between the town, its northern suburbs and the modern facilities of the Eurolink industrial estate.

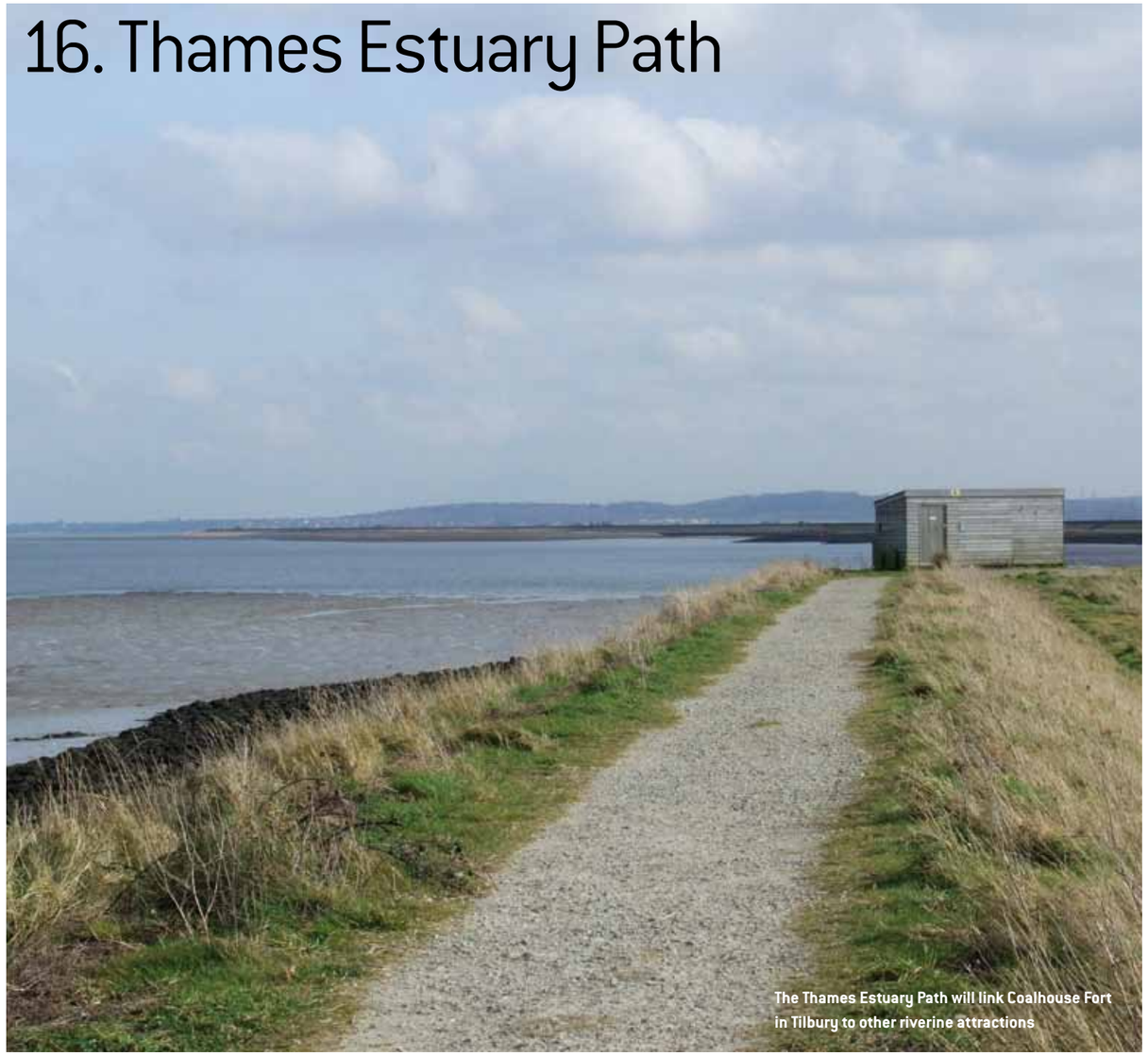
This project forms part of a wider vision for the conservation and renewal of valuable creekside greenspace and wetland habitats. Including a re-alignment of the Saxon Shore Way and National Cycle Route along the Creek, it is a key step in re-connecting Sittingbourne with its waterside heritage and enhancing journeys of exploration out to the big estuary skies for local people and visitors alike.

Lead Partner: **Swale Council**
HCA funding: **£2.0 million**
Match funding: **£0.6 million**



New benches at key entrances

16. Thames Estuary Path



The Thames Estuary Path will link Coalhouse Fort in Tilbury to other riverine attractions

A linking thread

People can already walk for nearly 300 km along the Thames Path from the river's source in Gloucestershire to the Thames Barrier.

The Thames Estuary Path aims to extend this route to join the coastal paths on both sides of the river.

Offering superb journeys of discovery, the extended Thames Path – several sections of which are already in place – will link up with other long distance paths that run inland to provide a tremendous range of itineraries for visitors to enjoy.

And, as it develops, new sections of the route are improving local networks of footpaths, cycleways and, where possible, bridleways.

Although this is not a Parklands project itself, several of the projects described in this booklet involve new or improved sections of the Thames Estuary Path or connections to it. This is a good example of a strategic aim being delivered through local action – so helping the overall vision to progress.

Lead Partner: **Sustrans / Thames Esturary Partnership**
More info: **www.thamesweb.com**



Tilbury Fort – South Essex

The Immediate Future

Change is Underway

As the first round of Parklands investment nears completion, the impact is increasingly visible.

This evidence of change on the ground; greater understanding of the case for environmental investment; Sir Terry Farrell's Parklands Spatial Framework and his work as the Gateway's 'Design Champion' are all helping to promote local pride and the confidence needed for investment and sustainable growth.

The three Green Grid partnerships have shown they can deliver an impressive programme on time and within budget.

The first 15 Parklands projects are a good start. But transforming the Gateway's environment is not the task of a few years. Nor can any one agency or funding source deliver the many hundreds of projects involved. Partnerships, diverse funding streams and delivery mechanisms are crucial. But above all, so is a strong vision, continuity and confidence.

A Flexible Approach

In the context of Parklands, this is where the concept of "one vision, a thousand projects" is so important. Like a jigsaw puzzle, the pieces can be put in place step by step.

It is a highly flexible approach that means the three Green Grid partnerships can work with their partners and funders to deliver national priorities and meet local needs at a pace to match available resources – while still keeping a sharp focus on the long-term vision.

As a result of past development work, the three partnerships have portfolios of projects. Working with government, these can be brought forward and/or adapted rapidly in response to changing circumstances to create flexible, locally-based delivery programmes.

Working with landowners, farmers, charities, government bodies and others, the partnerships also want to continue Parklands delivery by:

- enhancing the street scene and key transport corridors – e.g. through urban tree planting schemes, safer cycle routes, and sustainable urban drainage schemes;
- exploring all opportunities for Parklands delivery through transport, flood protection, farm improvement, land reclamation and other projects to create recreational amenities and accessible heritage;
- developing schemes that support local authorities and groups working to improve and safeguard the many valuable but unprotected green spaces and wildlife habitats in the Gateway;
- extending green grids within new developments, urban renewal and transport schemes.



Hadleigh Castle, Essex: a heritage site that will host the 2012 Olympic Mountain Biking event

Re-shaping Horizons

The economic crisis and the need to tackle debt have dramatically re-shaped everyone's horizons. Making public funds work harder is crucial to maximise their impact on the Gateway's success.

The three Green Grid partnerships are ideally placed to help in this task by seeking innovative ways to:

- develop and diversify Parklands investments from public, charitable and commercial sources at local, national and European levels;
- maximise the public and environmental value of new and existing greenspace investments e.g. through sporting and cultural projects to expand the Olympic legacy; and facilitate green tourism, health and educational activities;
- encourage continued growth in volunteer and 'friends' networks among organisations that care for natural and heritage assets to strengthen civic pride and citizenship;
- promote Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment's 'Grey to Green infrastructure' agenda among engineers, architects, planners, and developers – e.g. via green roofs, off-road green routes, sustainable drainage and natural shading;
- encourage use of the Green Infrastructure Toolbox, which helps to calculate the economic value of greenspaces, to increase support for investments in green infrastructure.

The three Green Grid partnerships have provided the vision, support , influence and and flexibility needed to assist government in realising the Thames Gateway core vision.

Given the support of government and key partners, a partnership approach could be best placed to take forward the Thames Gateway Vision into the future.



Sunrise on the Thames, looking westwards from the marshes into London

The Way Forward

Parklands success to date has rested on a partnership between government and local parklands groups, the securing of dedicated resources covering a three year period and a joint policy perspective.

The programme has delivered on the strategic objectives of the Thames Gateway project by creating high quality places where people want to live. As such the programme continues to be a catalyst for private investment, particularly in the housing sector.

The fact that London, Essex and Kent have supported parklands delivery is proof that they recognise its strategic value and is proof of parklands contribution to place making.

Parklands delivers on the localism agenda. It has established a network of reliable local delivery mechanisms which engage directly with communities and government.
To take Parklands forward over the next few years we would like to:

1) Strengthen the partnerships to further engage with the localism agenda.
2) Utilise funding to extract the full amount of value from the investment to date, as many benefits have still yet to be fully exploited.
3) Develop the investment strategy. In a time of reduced resources the partnerships will need to develop creative investment strategies to exploit new opportunities i.e. seeking to optimise EU funding and positioning the programme as an obvious adjunct to housing and commercial investment plans.

“The higher the quality of the green space, the more likely it is to be used.”

Urban Green Nation: Building the Evidence Base, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment

Delivery Partners

Adidas
Bexley Council
Barking & Dagenham Council
Basildon Council
Basildon Renaissance Partnership
British Waterways
Castle Point Council
Cleanaway Ltd.
Cory Environmental Ltd.
Dartford Council
Department for Communities and Local Government
East of England Development Agency
English Heritage
Environment Agency
Essex County Council
Essex Wildlife Trust
Forestry Commission
Gravesham Council
Greater London Authority
Greenwich Council
Groundwork
Hackney Council
Havering Council
Kent County Council
Kent Thameside Delivery Board
Land Restoration Trust
Land Securities plc
Lea Valley Regional Park Authority
Lewisham Council
London Thames Gateway Development Corporation
Medway Council
Medway Renaissance
Mid Kent College
Natural England
Newham Council
Olympic Development Authority
Port of London Authority
Renaissance Southend
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
South East England Development Agency
Southend Council
Sustrans
Swale Council
Swale Economic Regeneration Partnership
Thames Estuary Partnership
Thames Gateway Kent Partnership
The Mayor of London
Three Mills Studios
Thurrock Council
Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation
Tower Hamlets Council
Transport for London
University of Essex
Woodland Trust

GREENING THE GATEWAY PARTNERSHIP

LONDON DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

DESIGN FOR LONDON

MAYOR OF LONDON

Kent County Council

Medway Council
Serving You

Essex County Council