

Press release: Independent experts set out ambitious vision for the Thames Estuary

The Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission has today (25 June 2018) published its [report](#) which sets out an ambitious vision and delivery plan for north Kent, south Essex and east London up to 2050. . The Commission's analysis shows that the Thames Estuary could generate an additional £190 billion of Gross Value Added (GVA) and 1.3 million new jobs by 2050. It estimates that at least 1 million new homes will be needed to support this growth.

To unlock the area's untapped potential, the Commission proposes viewing the Estuary as a series of interconnected but distinct productive places. It identifies fifteen priority projects to deliver this vision, aligning with the following priorities:

- sectors – including expediting the delivery of the Medical Campus at Ebbsfleet
- connectivity – including extending Crossrail 1 from Abbey Wood to Ebbsfleet
- communities – including establishing a Great Thames Park to celebrate and maximise the value of the area's natural assets
- delivery – including developing statutory Joint Spatial Plans in Kent and Essex, and empowering ambitious local authorities to deliver housing at scale and pace

Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, Secretary of State for Communities, said:

The Thames Estuary has enormous untapped potential and we are determined to unlock this to drive both local and national economic growth.

The Commission has provided us with bold and ambitious set of recommendations, which we will consider in detail and respond to in due course.

Sir John Armitt, Chair of the Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission, said:

Without concerted action, there is a risk that the Thames Estuary will fail to achieve its potential, at huge opportunity cost to local communities and the national economy.

The resounding message from the consultation that the Commission has undertaken is that there is ambition in the Thames Estuary to deliver high-quality development and the best economic outcomes for people.

However, a 'business as usual' approach will not deliver growth at scale and pace; governance reform and new delivery models are needed.

Professor Sadie Morgan, Deputy Chair of the Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission, said:

I think we have created an inspiring but deliverable vision for the Thames Estuary. It reflects the interconnected, but distinct places that make up the Estuary, and is rooted in the ideas and priorities of its communities and leaders.

This part of the country is uniquely placed to meet the challenges of the 21st century – a tapestry of productive places along a global river.

This has been an incredible journey, and I would like to thank the many people who have helped us along the way and brought our vision to life.

The government will consider options for working with local partners to achieve long-term, sustainable growth in the Thames Estuary, including:

- boosting productivity by strengthening Local Enterprise Partnerships and agreeing Local Industrial Strategies that build on local sector strengths
- driving housing delivery by supporting more strategic planning approaches and exploring options for ambitious Housing Deals
- ensuring that communities benefit from expected growth, including promoting use of the river and enhancing the Thames Estuary's natural environment.

The government would welcome strong, coordinated engagement from local stakeholders as it develops its full response.

Since it was established in March 2016, The Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission has been working to develop an ambitious vision and delivery plan for North Kent, South Essex and East London up to 2050.

The Commission ran a call for ideas from July to September 2016. There were over 100 respondents, including public, private and third sector organisations, and members of the public. The Commission also held visits to the Thames Estuary, including along the river itself. Both the Commission and the government are grateful to all those who have provided input, and are committed to delivering a compelling vision and delivery plan in close collaboration with a wide range of partners.

Sir John Armitt replaced the former Government Advisor on Local Growth, Lord Heseltine, as Chair of the Commission in October 2017. His appointment and that of Deputy Chair, Professor Sadie Morgan, were announced at Budget 2017.

The Commission announced its priorities, which included equipping people with the right skills and providing high quality housing, in December 2017.

Sir John Armitt is Chair of the National Express Group and the City & Guilds Group, Deputy Chair of the Berkeley Group and the National Infrastructure Commission. He is a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering, the Institution of Civil Engineers and City & Guilds of London Institute. He was awarded the CBE in 1996 for his contribution to the rail industry and a knighthood in 2012 for services to engineering and construction.

Professor Sadie Morgan is a co-founding director at the award-winning practice, dRMM Architects. She became the youngest and only third ever-female President of the Architectural Association in 2013. In March 2015, Sadie was appointed as Design Chair for High Speed Two (HS2) reporting directly to the Secretary of State. She is also a member of the National Infrastructure Commission.