



Campaign to Protect  
Rural England

**A CPRE report**

# Focus on the Thames Gateway

10 key statistics highlighting environmental, social and economic performance in the Thames Gateway Growth Area

August 2006

- Unemployment rates
- Educational attainment
- Land use (Housing)
- Land use (commerce and industry)
- Access to local amenities and services
- Town centre renewal (retail, office and leisure)
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In 2001, the Government published the Sustainable Communities Plan, undertaking to see 120,000 new homes built in the Thames Gateway by 2016. That undertaking is backed up by commitments to create up to 180,000 new jobs, improve the urban and rural environments and improve access to local services and amenities. The Government's stated objectives are to promote urban regeneration, protect environmental assets and create places where people want to live and work, now and in the future.

CPRE supports the regeneration objectives of the Communities Plan. Making urban areas attractive places in which to live and work, and bringing derelict land back into use will help reduce the pressure for sprawling new housing estates and other development which damages the countryside and generates traffic.

But, five years on, how closely is the reality matching up to the Government's promises? This report - the first in a series - examines the record for each of the 18 district and unitary local authority areas in the Thames Gateway. It uses data from official sources to show how well the aspirations of the Communities Plan are being achieved in order to protect the environment and meeting the needs of local people.



1 Principally, the data has been provided by local authorities in respect of the Core Output Indicators required by the Government for the purpose of the Local Authority Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) 2004/05 (covering the period 1/4/04 - 30/3/05). Where 'Not given' is indicated, this means that the required data was not provided by the local authority in the AMR. This is likely to be due to the fact that the indicators in question are relatively new and the authority has not yet been able to collect the data in the required form.

**Table 1: Unemployment rates**

Ultimately, the successful regeneration of the Thames Gateway will require a step improvement in the economic fortunes of the area. The unemployment rate is a key indicator of a successful economy and, of course, a key indicator of quality of life. Table 1 shows the unemployment rate in Thames Gateway boroughs. Unemployment rates are relatively low in the 'outer' Thames Gateway. The figures below suggest that, generally, the more urbanised areas - within and close to London - have the greatest need for economic development.

Gravesham	2.5%
Castle Point	2.9%
Havering	3.5%
Thurrock	3.5%
Bexley	3.7%
Southend	4.0%
Dartford	4.9%
Basildon	5.0%
Swale	5.3%
Rochford	6.1%
Medway	7.0%
Lewisham	8.1%
Greenwich	8.3%
Waltham Forest	8.8%
Newham	9.4%
Barking & Dagenham	9.6%
Hackney	11.3%
Tower Hamlets	13.2%
<b>Thames Gateway boroughs</b>	<b>6.5%</b>
<b>London</b>	<b>7.0%</b>
<b>Essex</b>	<b>4.0%</b>
<b>Kent</b>	<b>3.8%</b>
<b>GB</b>	<b>4.8%</b>

Source: April 2004-March 2005 NOMIS – official labour market statistics. Percentage of economically active unemployed people.

**Key conclusion**

Investment in new jobs is most urgently required in the more urbanised areas within and close to East London.

## Table 2: Educational attainment

The Thames Gateway will not meet its full regeneration potential unless the economy receives a substantial boost. But the economy will be held back until the relatively poor level of educational attainment in the area is improved. Table 2 shows the percentage of working age population achieving qualifications at NVQ level 3 or higher: the rates are below the national average in almost all of the Thames Gateway.

Lewisham	46%
Rochford	42%
Greenwich	42%
Tower Hamlets	41%
Waltham Forest	39%
Hackney	38%
Gravesham	38%
Swale	37%
Bexley	37%
Southend	35%
Medway	34%
Havering	32%
Dartford	31%
Basildon	30%
Newham	30%
Castle Point	29%
Barking & Dagenham	27%
Thurrock	27%
<b>Thames Gateway</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>London</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>Kent</b>	<b>42%</b>
<b>Essex</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>GB</b>	<b>43%</b>

Source: March 2003-Feb 2004 NOMIS – official labour market statistics.

### Key conclusion

Tertiary educational attainment is generally well below the national average and well below the respective county or London averages.

### Table 3: Land use (Housing)

Allowing new housing to be built outside the existing urban area undermines urban regeneration, generates traffic and damages the greenspace around towns, including loss of designated Green Belt. Table 3 gives the proportion of new housing land that was built on previously developed ("brownfield") sites. Given that the Thames Gateway has been identified as an area for growth largely because of the pressing need and opportunities for urban regeneration, CPRE believes that, throughout the Thames Gateway, 100% of new housing should be built on brownfield land.

Barking & Dagenham	100%
Bexley	100%
Greenwich	100%
Hackney	100%
Southend	100%
Tower Hamlets	100%
Waltham Forest	100%
Dartford	96%
Thurrock	96%
Medway	94%
Gravesham	92%
Havering	91%
Castle Point	73%
Rochford	61%
Basildon	59%
Swale	52%
Lewisham	Not given
Newham	Not given
<b>London</b>	<b>95%<sup>1</sup></b>
<b>England</b>	<b>73%<sup>1</sup></b>

Source: Local Authority Annual Monitoring Reports 2004/05. Core Output Indicator 2b: Percentage of new dwellings completed on Previously Developed Land

#### Key conclusion

Several boroughs outside London are failing to support the Government's target<sup>2</sup> that 80% of new housing should be built on previously developed sites.

<sup>1</sup> Land Use Change in England: Residential Development to 2005(LUCS21) DCLG, May 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Target published in *Sustainable Communities: Delivering the Thames Gateway* (OPDM, March 2005)

### Table 4: Land use (commerce and industry)

As in the case of housing, allowing offices, shops and factories to be built outside the existing urban areas has serious social and environmental consequences both for town and country. Table 4 gives the proportion of land used for such development ('employment land') that is classified as 'previously developed'. Most of the brownfield sites in the Thames Gateway have become available because of the decline of 'traditional' industries, especially manufacturing. Where it is in appropriate urban locations, this land should be re-used by ensuring that, throughout the Thames Gateway, 100% of new commercial and industrial development is built on brownfield land.

Barking & Dagenham	100%
Bexley	100%
Castle Point	100%
Dartford	100%
Greenwich	100%
Southend	100%
Tower Hamlets	100%
Swale	98%
Basildon	91%
Gravesham	Not given
Hackney	Not given
Havering	Not given
Lewisham	Not given
Medway	Not given
Newham	Not given
Rochford	Not given
Thurrock	Not given
Waltham Forest	Not given

Source: Local Authority Annual Monitoring Reports 2004/05. Core Indicator 1c: Proportion of floorspace developed for employment, which is on previously developed land.

#### Key conclusion

Where data is being collected, a relatively limited amount of greenfield land is being lost to commercial and industrial development, but the general picture is unclear because only half of Thames Gateway boroughs are collecting the data.

**Table 5: Access to local amenities and services**

For the Thames Gateway to become and remain an attractive place to live, housing must be located within easy reach of shops, services and amenities. This helps reduce reliance on car travel and also helps maintain the viability and vitality of urban centres. Table 5 gives the results for the only such indicator that is currently in common use: *Amount of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of: a GP; a Hospital; a primary school; a secondary school; areas of employment; and a major retail centre.* This is not an especially demanding standard and CPRE believes that 100% of new developments should comply. A more stringent standard should be developed which addresses convenient accessibility by foot and bicycle.

Southend	99%
Medway	90%
Castle Point	29%
Barking & Dagenham	Not given
Basildon	Not given
Bexley	Not given
Dartford	Not given
Gravesham	Not given
Greenwich	Not given
Hackney	Not given
Havering	Not given
Lewisham	Not given
Newham	Not given
Rochford	Not given
Swale	Not given
Thurrock	Not given
Tower Hamlets	Not given
Waltham Forest	Not given

Source: Local Authority Annual Monitoring Reports 2004/05. Core Output Indicator 3b: Amount of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of: a GP; a Hospital; a primary school; a secondary school; areas of employment; and a major retail centre.

**Key conclusion**

Despite being an important ‘quality of life issue’, this is still an emerging area of policy and almost all Thames Gateway boroughs have yet to establish systems for collecting the data necessary to illustrate their performance.

**Table 6: Town centre renewal (retail, office and leisure)**

Wherever possible, new retail, office and leisure developments should be located in or close to town centres so as to help regenerate and maintain the vitality of urban areas, avoid the need to travel by car and avoid the loss of greenfield land. Table 6 shows the proportion of total completed retail, office and leisure development that is located in town centres. Given the need to regenerate town centres in the Thames Gateway, CPRE believes that this proportion should be close to 100%.

Greenwich	100%
Barking & Dagenham	71% (1995 to 2004)
Castle Point	65%
Bexley	0% (no relevant developments)
Rochford	0%
Basildon	Not given
Dartford	Not given
Gravesham	Not given
Hackney	Not given
Havering	Not given
Lewisham	Not given
Medway	Not given
Newham	Not given
Southend	Not given
Swale	Not given
Thurrock	Not given
Tower Hamlets	Not given
Waltham Forest	Not given

Source: Local Authority Annual Monitoring Reports 2004/05. Core Output Indicator 4b: Proportion of total completed retail, office and leisure development that is in the Town Centre:

**Key conclusion**

Despite being crucial to urban regeneration, most Thames Gateway boroughs have yet to establish systems for collecting the data necessary to illustrate their performance.

**Table 7: Housing - Raising residential densities**

In addition to helping to meet a wider range of housing needs, maintaining adequately high densities is necessary in order to support shops, services and amenities close to people’s homes, to reduce reliance on car travel and to support public transport. CPRE suggests that, in urban areas in the Thames Gateway, average densities should be maintained at over 80 dwellings to the hectare (dph) close to public transport. Table 7 gives the proportion of new residential dwellings that are built at densities in excess of just 50dph.

Hackney	100%
Waltham Forest	99%
Bexley	78%
Greenwich	68%
Dartford	64%
Thurrock	61%
Basildon	48%
Barking & Dagenham	40%
Rochford	32%
Castle Point	31%
Gravesham	29%
Newham	27%
Swale	27%
Havering	Not given
Lewisham	Not given
Medway	Not given
Southend	Not given
Tower Hamlets	Not given

Source: Local Authority Annual Monitoring Reports 2004/05. Core Output Indicator 2c(iii): Percentage of New Dwellings completed at above 50 dwellings per hectare.

**Key conclusion**

The average density of new housing in several boroughs is falling well below acceptable urban densities that make efficient use of land, sustain public transport and reduce reliance on the car. If this trend continues, the Thames Gateway will not achieve its full potential for sustainable development, greenfield land will be unnecessarily threatened throughout south-eastern England and the provision of community infrastructure and public services will be at risk.

**Table 8: Environment (greenspace management)**

Access to good quality green areas is a crucial element of what makes urban living attractive. Too often, however, urban parks and other green spaces are poorly managed and cause users to feel unsafe. Table 8 shows the percentage of total eligible green open space managed to Green Flag Award standard. The Green Flag Award is the national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales. It is managed by the Civic Trust and supported by the Government. As long as a site is managed to the required standard, it does not actually have to have received the award to be identified within the data below. CPRE believes that local authorities should ensure that 100% of eligible space is managed to the Green Flag Award standard.

Southend	100%
Bexley	47%
Greenwich	14%
Swale	2%
Castle Point	0%
Gravesham	0%
Havering	0%
Medway	0%
Rochford	0%
Barking & Dagenham	Not given
Basildon	Not given
Dartford	Not given
Hackney	Not given
Lewisham	Not given
Newham	Not given
Thurrock	Not given
Tower Hamlets	Not given
Waltham Forest	Not given

Source: Local Authority Annual Monitoring Reports 2004/05. Core Output Indicator 4c: The percentage of total eligible green open space managed to Green Flag Award standards.

**Key conclusion**

Very little regard is being had by Thames Gateway local authorities to the management of parks and green spaces to the national Green Flag Award standard.

**Table 9: Environment (designated sites)**

Given the scale of development that is proposed in the Thames Gateway, there will be substantial pressure on areas which are important for their wildlife, recreational and landscape value. However, the need to provide more homes and infrastructure in the Thames Gateway should not be allowed to cause the area's intrinsic environmental value to be harmed. Table 9 concerns sites that are designated for their intrinsic environmental value including sites of international, national, regional, sub-regional or local significance. Within such sites, it shows the proportion of the total area that has remained unaffected by development.

Bexley		100%
Dartford		100%
Gravesham		100%
Rochford		100%
Southend		100%
Thurrock		100%
Barking & Dagenham	Not given	
Basildon	Not given	
Castle Point	Not given	
Greenwich	Not given	
Hackney	Not given	
Havering	Not given	
Lewisham	Not given	
Medway	Not given	
Swale	Not given	
Tower Hamlets	Not given	
Waltham Forest	Not given	
Tower Hamlets	Not given	

Source: Local Authority Annual Monitoring Reports 2004/05. Core Output Indicator 8(ii): Change in areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value including sites of international, national, regional, sub-regional or local significance.

**Key conclusion**

Where data is being collected, designated sites appear to be adequately protected, but most boroughs are not collecting the necessary data so the general picture remains unclear.

### Table 10: Urban environment (Design quality)

The economic fortunes of the Thames Gateway - and the quality of life there generally - will not improve unless it becomes an attractive and desirable place in which to live and do business. The design quality of new housing and regenerated urban areas will be a key factor influencing the image of the area. Ensuring that developers and urban designers strive for high standards will require strong encouragement from the local planning authorities. On its own, Government policy - while welcome - is unlikely to be sufficient to improve standards in the face of the threat of appeals by developers against refusal of planning permission on grounds of poor design. Strong commitment and advocacy at a senior level within planning authorities is crucial. We believe that all local authorities should therefore designate a Councillor as the authority's 'Design Champion' to take responsibility for driving up the standards of design in all new developments. Table 10 shows the local authorities which have a 'Design Champion' designated at Councillor level (as at June 2006).

Barking & Dagenham	Cllr Sid Kallar
Bexley	Cllr Margaret O'Neill
Greenwich	Cllr Maureen O'Mara
Hackney	Cllr Bill Hodgson
Lewisham	Cllr Gavin Moore
Tower Hamlets	Cllr Michael Keith
Waltham Forest	Cllr Simon Wright
Basildon	None
Castle Point	None
Dartford	None
Gravesham	None
Havering	None
Medway	None
Newham	None
Rochford	None
Southend	None
Swale	None
Thurrock	None

This leaflet is published by CPRE Thames Gateway, which comprises CPRE London, Essex, Kent and National Office.

CPRE exists to promote the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of rural England by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country. We promote positive solutions for the long-term future of the countryside to ensure change values its natural and built environment. Our Patron is Her Majesty The Queen. We have 60,000 supporters, a branch in every county, nine regional groups, over 200 local groups and a national office in London. CPRE is a powerful combination of effective local action and strong national campaigning. Our President is Sir Max Hastings.

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For more information about CPRE's work on the Thames Gateway, contact:

Nigel Kersey (Director), CPRE London, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ

E-mail: [office@cprelondon.org.uk](mailto:office@cprelondon.org.uk). Tel: 020-7253 0300