THE THAMES GATEWAY

The Thames Gateway is Europe's largest regeneration areas, up to 70km long and 32 km wide and covering 200 000 hectares of land, stretching 40 miles along the Thames estuary from Canary Wharf in London to Southend Essex and Sittingbourne in Kent. The area was once important for manufacturing and trading but started to decline in the 1960s. After its rapid decline as a production centre due to the loss of heavy industry and changes in shipping, some of the areas in the Gateway are being managed by Development Corporations and in other areas, by Partnership Agreements with several organisations. The London Thames Gateway Development Corporation, which was set up in 2004, is a 10-year programme to regenerate areas of the London Thames Gateway to the North and East of the London Docklands. They aim to tackle housing supply issues in the south-east and deal with issue with unaffordable housing.

In 2007 the Thames Gateway Delivery Plan was published. For the programme they proposed to spend £500 million for regeneration and £100 million for local transport improvements. They aimed to strengthen the economy – for example, through the regeneration of a former oil refinery to provide Europe’s largest deep-water port. The owners are investing £15 billion in the port to create 14,000 new jobs by 2025. They also plan to build a new learning centre for ports and logistics to create a skilled workforce. Part of the plan is also to improve the quality of life there and improve the environment to tackle climate change. Parklands and nature sites will be developed throughout the area to achieve this and recycling facilities are also being established. Over the last few years, £34 million has been spent on improving green spaces, including Rainham Marshes. We have also seen improvements in the housing development at Ebbsfleet Valley, and there are new flood defences and land rising at Rochester Riverside.