

Green Cluster Studies

Hoo Peninsula Technical Report



March 2008

Executive Summary

The Green Cluster studies set out an ambitious vision for the Green Grid public realm and provide an Action Plan to support its delivery across north Kent. Seven Green Cluster Studies have been undertaken to date, and a further Cluster Study is planned for the Isle of Sheppey. Each one focuses on areas of intensive regeneration and change where there are superb opportunities to create strategically sited new greenspaces which will raise expectations, add value to existing investment and create high quality green infrastructure for future development.

The Cluster Studies have adopted a partnership approach to co-ordinate discussions amongst key stakeholders in each cluster. Many are engaged in developing ideas and drawing up plans for individual sites and the Cluster Studies' workshops have provided a valuable opportunity to focus attention on the relationships between projects and the wider landscape setting.

The Hoo Peninsula shelters the River Medway, forming a buffer and distinctive landscape setting for Medway City. The wide ridge at the core of the peninsula is a solid backbone flanked by the vast, flat open Cliffe Marshes and Cooling Marshes to the west and the more secluded wetlands of Yantlet Creek to the east. Beyond Yantlet Creek, the Isle of Grain seems separate and remote, despite the constant stream of heavy lorries servicing the industry and container terminal there. It is an exceptionally large-scale, exposed rural landscape, where domestic, rather 'urban' villages and open farmland are juxtaposed with expansive coastal marshes and clusters of huge industrial buildings.

The Green Cluster Studies' vision for the Hoo Peninsula draws together and expresses a common vision for the Cluster as a whole. It will create a more distinctive, valued landscape which will be attractive, popular and accessible to local communities, urban dwellers from nearby urban Medway and visitors alike. Key stakeholders responsible for leading and influencing the ongoing projects and activities in the Hoo Peninsula Cluster include Medway Council, Medway Renaissance, Natural England, the Environment Agency, RSPB, Kent Wildlife Trust, Medway Swale Estuary Partnership, Sustrans, Groundwork Kent & Medway and the Friends of the North Kent Marshes.

The Hoo Peninsula has long been perceived as a location for heavy industry and local communities typically have low expectations and low morale. Yet this is a key part of the Thames Gateway with superb wetland landscapes, a planned major beacon nature reserve (at Cliffe Pools) and a strategic location close to motorways and major urban populations. The vision framework makes the case for targeted investment in the Green Grid places and connections which can unlock the potential of the Hoo Peninsula. Investment in large scale landscape restoration projects, new cycleways and gateway destinations will enhance the legibility and accessibility of local landscapes, transforming people's perceptions, bringing economic benefits and creating a distinctive, popular destination.

The Green Cluster Vision for the Hoo Peninsula Cluster is accompanied by an Action Plan for its delivery. The Action Plan demonstrates how the delivery of various components of the vision can be facilitated - by Greening the Gateway Kent & Medway and by a range of other partners. It also sets out broad capital costs for the investment required to achieve the vision and an overall timetable for its implementation which demonstrates the inter-relationships between proposed and ongoing projects throughout the cluster.

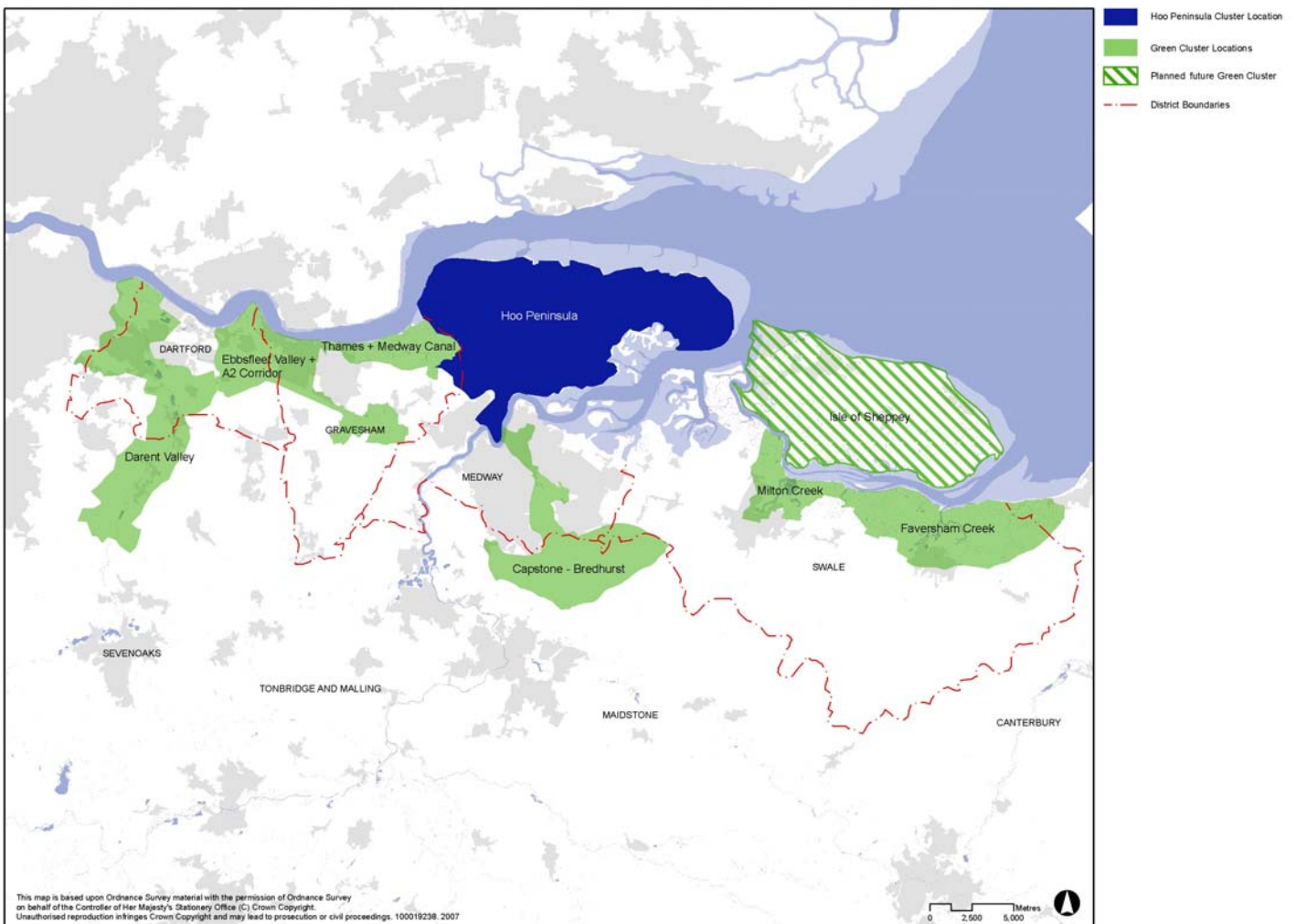


1 What are the Green Cluster Studies?

The Green Cluster studies set out an ambitious vision for the Green Grid public realm and provide an Action Plan to support its delivery across north Kent. Seven Green Cluster Studies have been undertaken to date, and a further Cluster Study is planned for the Isle of Sheppey. Each one focuses on areas of intensive regeneration and change where there are superb opportunities to create strategically sited new greenspaces which will raise expectations, add value to existing investment and create high quality green infrastructure for future development.

'Clusters' or groupings of planned and aspirational green space projects were identified during the Green Grid stakeholder workshops held in Kent Thameside, Medway and Swale in 2007 and the areas selected for the Green Cluster Studies take account of this earlier work. The Green Cluster Studies have:

- identified a coherent sense of place for each cluster area
- captured what is already happening
- identified stakeholder aspirations and updated existing studies
- identified inter-dependencies, gaps and opportunities
- articulated a common vision for each cluster area
- developed an outline action plan which set out actions, governance and phasing for delivering the vision
- made the business case for investment



Green Clusters



The Cluster Studies have adopted a partnership approach to co-ordinate discussions amongst key stakeholders in each cluster. Many are engaged in developing ideas and drawing up plans for individual sites and the Cluster Studies' workshops have provided a valuable opportunity to focus attention on the relationships between projects and the wider landscape setting. Two workshops were held for each cluster: the focus of the first workshop was to collate information, define objectives and understand stakeholder aspirations; the second workshop was a creative session in which the stakeholders worked together to develop a common vision for the cluster.

The overarching Green Clusters vision for the Hoo Peninsula Cluster captures stakeholder aspirations and visions and inspires an ambitious and creative approach. It is not a proposal or a bid, but is intended to be a helpful tool to prompt creative discussion and joined up thinking in future discussions between stakeholders as the various projects in the cluster are taken forward. Ultimately the Green Cluster Studies will increase confidence, make the case for investment and provide a lever to bid for further funding.



2 Hoo Peninsula Green Cluster

Sense of place



village core - orchards - church - clustered community - set against vast skies and shores



barricade - elemental - solitary tracks - remote - brutal - looming gigantic blocks - secret



The Saxon word 'Hoo' is thought to be a reference to a 'heel' of land and the shape of the Hoo Peninsula does seem to conform to this description. The peninsula shelters the River Medway, forming a protective 'buffer' and a distinctive landscape setting for Medway City.

The wide ridge at the centre of the peninsula tapers until it meets the coast as a cliff at the village of Allhallows. It is an undulating, relatively open farmland landscape of large arable fields and occasional orchards enclosed by hedgerows, shelterbelts and several large blocks of woodland. The clustered villages of Allhallows, Chattenden, High Halstow, St Mary Hoo, Hoo St Werburgh and Cliffe Woods are well dispersed along the ridge and often have relatively exposed sites, with prominent historic churches. Despite their rural setting, these villages have a rather disjointed character and often seem oddly unrelated to the surrounding countryside.

The ridge forms a solid backbone flanked by the vast, flat open Cliffe Marshes and Cooling Marshes to the west and the more secluded wetlands of Yantlet Creek to the east. Beyond Yantlet Creek, the Isle of Grain seems separate and remote, despite the constant stream of heavy lorries crossing the bridge to service the industry and container terminal there. The peninsula formed a key part of the system of military fortifications along the Thames Gateway and the ruined coastal forts at Cliffe, Allhallows (Slough Fort) and Grain date from the 1870s.

On the edge of the marshes, Northward Hill is a popular RSPB Reserve with panoramic views across the marshes towards London. It is one of the few accessible viewpoints on the Hoo Peninsula, from which it is easy to understand and appreciate the character and distinctive qualities of the local landscape.

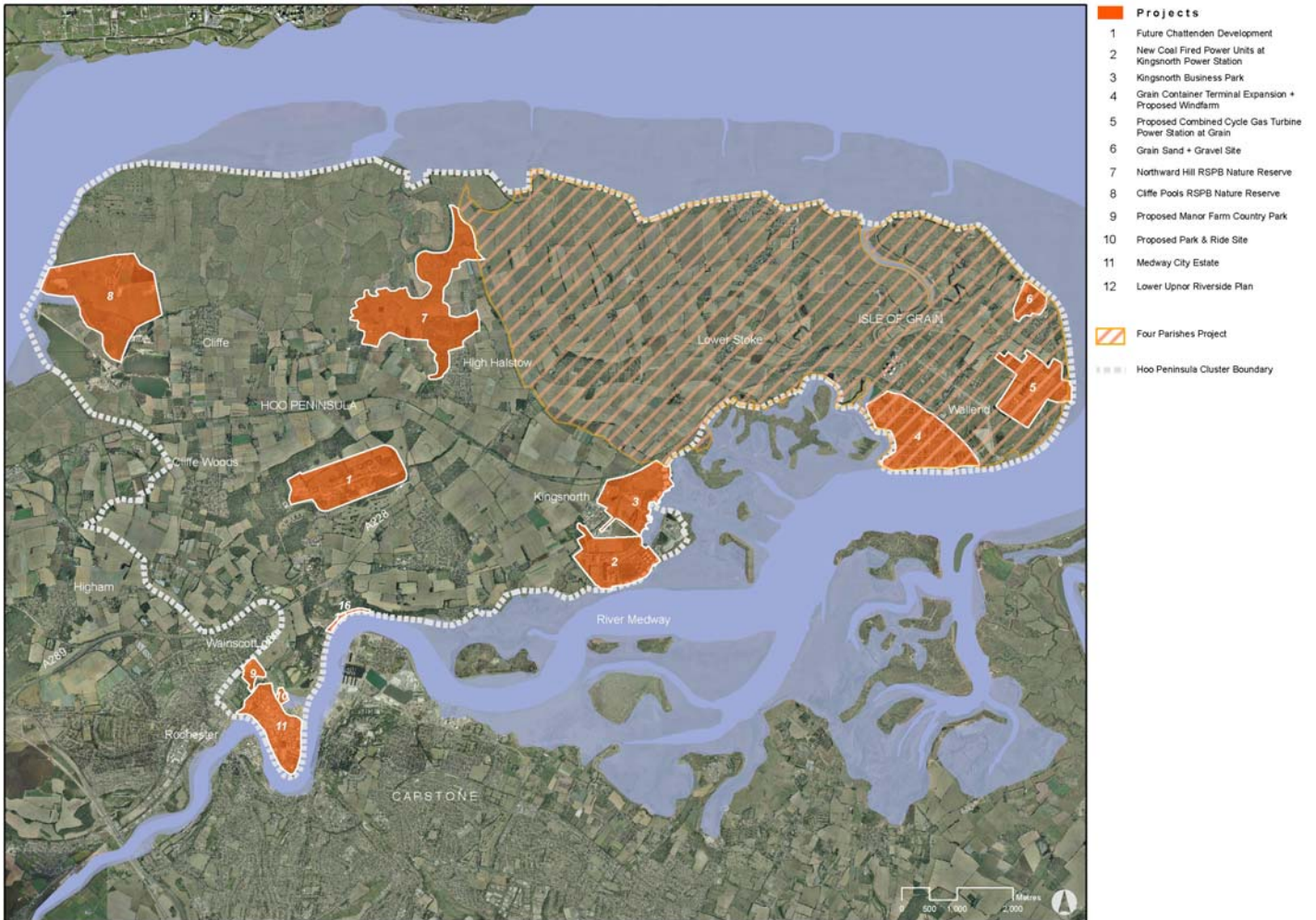
This is an exceptionally large scale, exposed landscape. The expansive grazing marshes have a wild, natural character but this contrasts with the massive industrial buildings on the skyline in views to east or west. The area has long been a focus for heavy industry and the cement works at Cliffe, the power stations at Kingsnorth and Grain and more recently



the large container terminal at Grain are huge pieces of industrial infrastructure. The small settlement of Grain is completely dominated and surrounded by industrial installations and security fencing, but elsewhere the industrial buildings seem more distant and strangely fascinating.

The juxtaposition of domestic farmland and villages with exposed coastal marshes and vast industrial buildings is fundamental to the Hoo Peninsula's very distinctive sense of place.

Forces for change - existing proposals, projects & activities



Existing proposals, projects & activities

The Hoo Peninsula supports a major industrial area and centre for employment and these activities continue to expand. New replacement coal-fired units have just received planning permission at Kingsnorth power station and the existing power station at Grain is also due to be replaced by a newer model. The Grain Container Terminal is expanding and will be served by a major new natural gas pipeline, which is due to be constructed in 2008.

Elsewhere two major projects are potential catalysts for significant change. Plans for a major new settlement in the Chattenden area are under discussion. If this development goes ahead, it would be a new gateway to the Hoo Peninsula. On the western shore of the peninsula, the new RSPB Reserve at Cliffe Pools is an exciting new beacon project which the RSPB is promoting as the gateway to the North Kent Marshes. The project will transform the pools associated with the former cement works into a national centre for wetland habitats. The profile of the pools is being reworked to provide wetlands with varied depths of water, islands and shallow margins for nesting and roosting birds. The reserve will also provide interpretation for visitors, who will be able to experience the North Kent wilderness spectacle of thousands of roosting and feeding birds at very close quarters.



The RSPB is also undertaking environmental enhancements at its popular Northward Hill Reserve, where overhead power and phone lines will be buried to enhance the panoramic views across the adjacent Cooling Marshes.

The villages of Hoo St Werburgh, Hoo St Mary and Allhallows are the subject of ongoing community action planning and a 'Four Parishes' project is planned to explore and co-ordinate proposals for environmental projects with a focus on biodiversity and community engagement. At Lower Upnor, Groundwork Kent & Medway have prepared a masterplan for the public realm and walkways along the riverside, which includes proposals for new path surfaces, signage, interpretation, benches, fencing, gates, lighting etc.

At the southern 'urban' gateway to the peninsula, the Medway City Estate is the subject of a visioning project and is likely to experience a major programme of investment and environmental enhancement. A new park and ride scheme is planned and there are preliminary ideas for providing improved connections across the River Medway to the Chatham Maritime area. Immediately to the north of the Medway City Estate, there are plans for a small country park centred on a disused chalk pit and the historic complex of farm buildings at Manor Farm.

On a much larger scale, the Environment Agency's Shoreline Management Plan, currently in the process of being finalized, advocates a medium-long term strategy of managed realignment and the TE2100 flood risk management plan, currently under consultation, suggests that there may be scope for flood storage and intertidal habitat creation on the coastal grazing marshes. Both of these long term strategies would lead in time to a more natural, less defended coastline, with enhanced nature conservation value.

The location of these major proposals, together with a range of other ongoing activities and forces for change, are shown on the aerial view.

Stakeholders

Key stakeholders within the Hoo Peninsula Cluster are:

Medway Council - planning and delivery of forthcoming developments on the Isle of Grain, at Kingsnorth and in many of the Hoo settlements. Medway Council also leads on the rural community action projects in the Hoo villages and is a partner (with Kent Wildlife Trust) in the forthcoming Four Parishes project. Within Medway Council, the Medway Green Grid Forum has a key role in delivering the Green Grid public realm.

Medway Renaissance - The Medway Renaissance Programme is set to transform Medway into a city of 300,000 people over the next 20 years. The Hoo Peninsula is recognised as a key environmental asset which forms an integral part of the setting and hinterland of Medway City and Medway Renaissance has an interest in promoting high quality sustainable development and green technologies, and in co-ordinating regeneration activities, securing investment and integrating existing and new communities.

Environment Agency - responsible for shoreline & flood management, recreation & waterfront access, protection of controlled water quality, fisheries and contamination. The Thames Estuary 2100 Project encourages additional flood storage capacity on the Hoo Peninsula grazing marshes and the Environment Agency's Shoreline Management Plan for the foreshore between Allhallows and Grain promotes a medium and long-term policy of managed realignment. The Environment Agency has also provided information on the status of the landfill sites along the creek, with timescales and criteria for remediation.

RSPB - The RSPB Reserve at Northward Hill attracts 20,000 visitors per year. A range of environmental enhancement projects are planned for this popular reserve, including undergrounding the overhead power lines which intrude on the panoramic views across the Cooling Marshes. The RSPB is also developing a new flagship reserve at Cliffe Pools. The site is internationally important for wintering wildfowl and breeding waders and the new reserve will include a range of wetland habitats, trails, view points and interpretation features. The reserve is within easy reach of hundreds of thousands of people and will raise the profile of the North Kent Marshes as a destination within the Thames Gateway.



Kent Wildlife Trust is a key partner (with Medway Council) in the planned Four Parishes project, which will identify and co-ordinate a range of environmental enhancement projects in the Hoo parishes which focus on biodiversity, access and landscape enhancements, informed by a programme of community engagement.

Natural England - an overarching interest in promoting public access to the natural environment and in the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity throughout the cluster.

Sustrans - The Heron Trail, Regional Cycle Route 18 provides a detour onto the peninsula from National Cycle Route One (which crosses from Higham to Strood). From Higham Station, the Heron Trail follows rural roads and minor tracks to link Cliffe, High Halstow and Hoo, before rejoining National Cycle Route One at Chattenden.

Medway and Swale Estuary Partnership (MSEP) - addresses issues affecting the economic, environmental and social well being of the estuary. Recent and ongoing relevant MSEP projects include installation of an information panel and benches on the Saxon Shore way at Cliffe Fort and a publication which promotes 6 circular walks on the Hoo Peninsula (based on existing public rights of way).

Groundwork Kent & Medway - Groundwork is a specialist in community-led masterplanning and has recently developed a masterplan for the Upnor Riverside. Past projects on the Hoo include the design and installation of interpretation and signage on the foreshore at Grain, plans for environmental improvements in the centre of Hoo, the Cliffe Charnel House Restoration Project (HLF bid) and a community engagement project (with Friends of the North Kent Marshes) in the village of Cliffe, which resulted in the preparation of a CD and walking guide for heritage walks in and around Cliffe.

Friends of the North Kent Marshes - A voluntary local action group which works to raise the profile of the marshes, encouraging local pride, interest, understanding and involvement. The group encourages improved, but sensitive access to the marshes and campaigns for funding and political support for appropriate projects. Recent projects include the Cliffe History & Heritage Project.



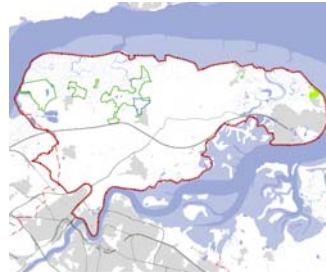
3 Policy Context

The context maps have been prepared using GIS data. They illustrate our current knowledge of the cluster area and highlight key potential influences which should be taken into account in planning future activities.

The mini-maps below provide an indication of the range of context maps available; the full set of maps (at a larger scale) is available separately.



Statutory Designations



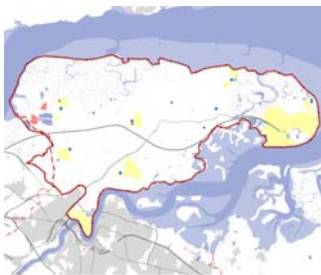
Accessible Greenspaces



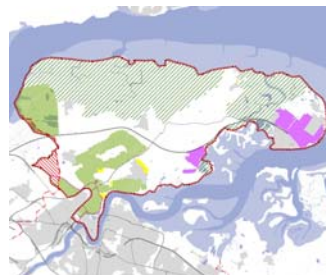
Cultural Heritage



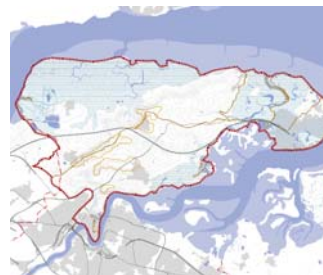
Ecological Network



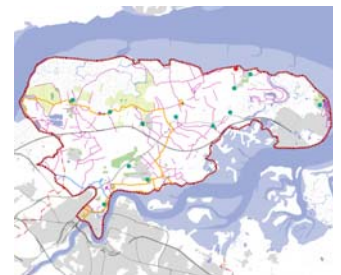
Land Use



Planning & Policies



Topography



Destinations & Connections

Key issues to note from the context drawings are:

- **Planning & Policies** - the Cliffe Marshes and the wider Yantlet Creek area are designated a Special Landscape Area in the Medway Local Plan and the area around the future Chattenden development and the Hogmarsh Valley to the south is designated as an Area of Local Landscape Importance
- **Statutory designations** - The grazing marshes on the Hoo Peninsula are all of exceptional ecological value. They are designated as part of the South Thames Estuary Marshes Special protection area (SPA) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); part of the North Kent Marshes Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) and a Ramsar site (wetlands of international importance). The wetlands surrounding Yantlet Creek include fen and swamp habitats, as well as grazing marshes and wet meadow
- **Ecological network model** - The woodlands on the central ridge to the east of Cliffe Woods and on Northward Hill are semi-natural ancient woodlands
- **Cultural Heritage**
 - Cooling Castle (1380s) and the remains of the military forts at Cliffe and Grain (1870s) are scheduled ancient monuments
 - Manor Barn Frindsbury dates from the early 15th century and is the longest medieval barn in Kent. It is listed grade I

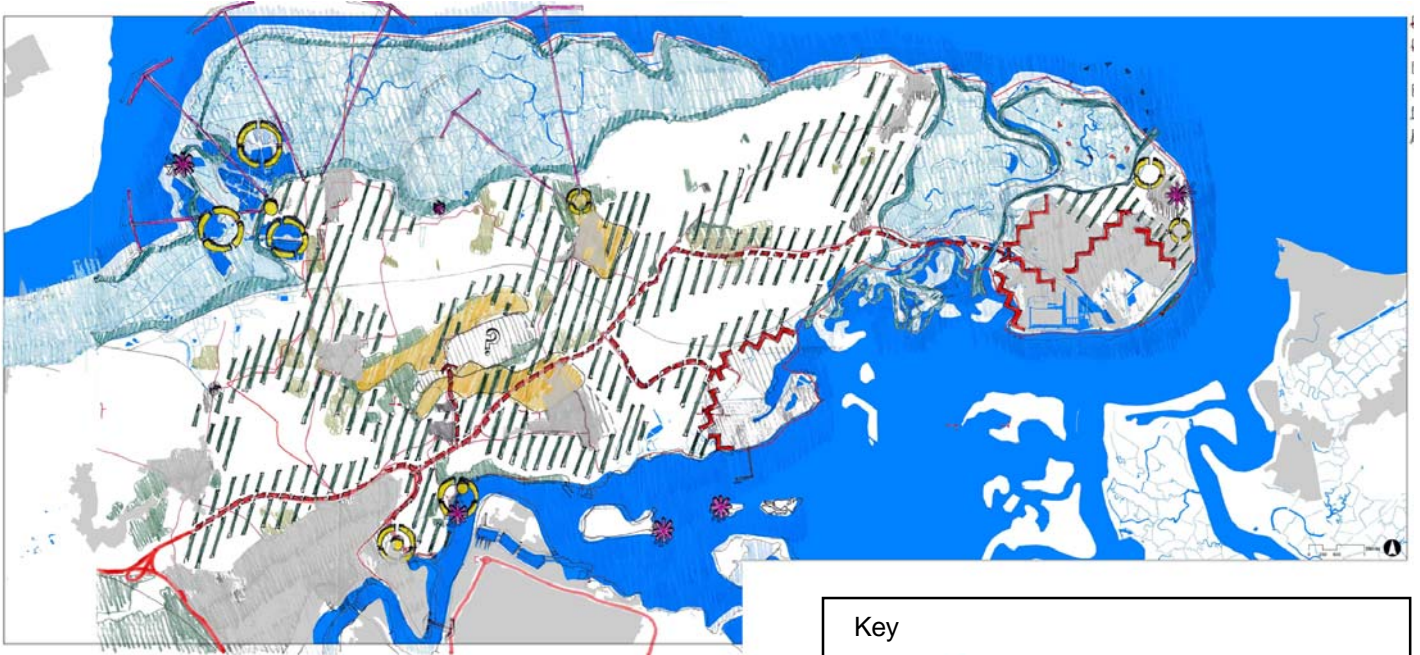


- **Access**

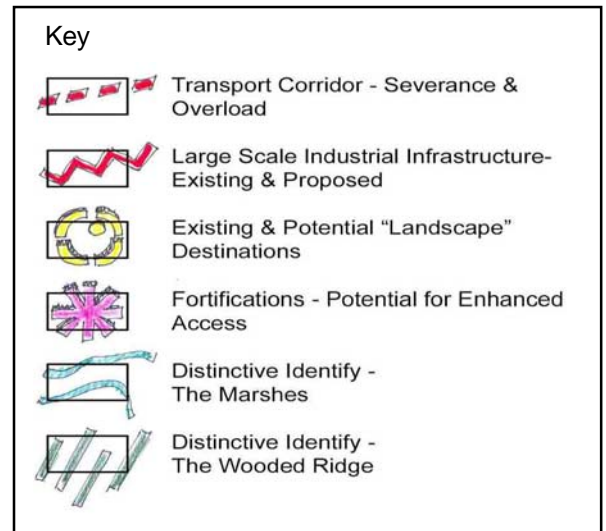
- The Saxon Shore Way turns inland from the coast near Cliffe Fort and follows a series of tracks, green lanes and minor roads through the villages of Cliffe, Cooling, High Halstow and Hoo St Werburgh, before rejoining the shores of the River Medway at Upnor
- The Heron Trail (regional cycle route 18) follows a similar route, providing a loop up onto the peninsula from National Cycle Route one, which connects Higham to Strood.

4 Analysis

As a first step toward defining an overarching vision for the Hoo Peninsula, the Analysis drawing begins to focus on the way the area is perceived, by pedestrians, cyclists, residents, visitors and those who work in the area. It analyses the public realm, highlighting connections, gaps, barriers and the inter-relationships between existing projects and activities.



Hoo Peninsula: Analysis



Hoo Peninsula Cluster - SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Superb wetland habitats of international importance
- Distinctive juxtaposition of wetlands, grazing marshes, an elevated farmed ridge and heavy industry
- Panoramic views from 'edge landscapes' such as Northward Hill
- Relative proximity to motorways, London and the rest of Kent (in terms of fast access by road)
- Northward Hill as a central destination - visitor centre & trails
- Distinctive landscape features - ancient woodlands, orchards
- Strong heritage interest (military forts, Cooling & Upnor Castles, historic churches, Manor Barn)
- Active community engagement

WEAKNESSES

- Relatively degraded and nondescript landscape character on the core ridge at the centre of the peninsula
- Low quality built environment in most villages - most 'turn their back' on their local landscape setting
- Local communities tend to have poor knowledge of the local environment
- A large-scale landscape - tough for pedestrians to appreciate
- Narrow, winding, busy roads and a fast dangerous through route (A228) - all unsuitable for cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders

OPPORTUNITIES

- Cliffe Pools Reserve - a future beacon Thames Gateway Destination
- New Chattenden development, which will be a gateway at the centre of the peninsula with sufficient critical mass to attract significant investment in environmental projects
- Environment Agency's plans for a more natural shoreline - TE 2100 and the Shoreline Management Plan - enhanced landscape and biodiversity
- Ongoing major industrial and employment development projects, which should result in significant large-scale environmental investment
- Investment and ongoing environmental enhancement at the Medway City Estate, along with plans for enhanced connections across the River Medway
- New green technologies

THREATS

- Ongoing, rumbling threat of major infrastructure projects - Lower Thames Crossing and a new 'London' airport
- No overarching organisation with a remit to deliver environmental projects at the scale required to 'make a difference' on the Hoo Peninsula



The analysis drawing highlights opportunities and constraints. The farmland on the central ridge is intensively farmed; many hedgerows have been lost and woodland cover is reduced. The farmland has a relatively degraded, nondescript character, with little diversity and a predictable landscape pattern. The majority of the Hoo villages seem to be sited 'on' the landscape - there is a poor relationship between buildings, village layout and the local landscape setting. The village of Grain has an exceptionally degraded local landscape, which is dominated by derelict land. Yet Grain has a dramatic coastal site, a superb ruined military fort and adjacent wetlands which together could create a positive and highly distinctive, public realm. There are similar opportunities in all the villages, if investment in the public realm could be designed to reflect, enhance and in many cases create distinctive local landscape character.

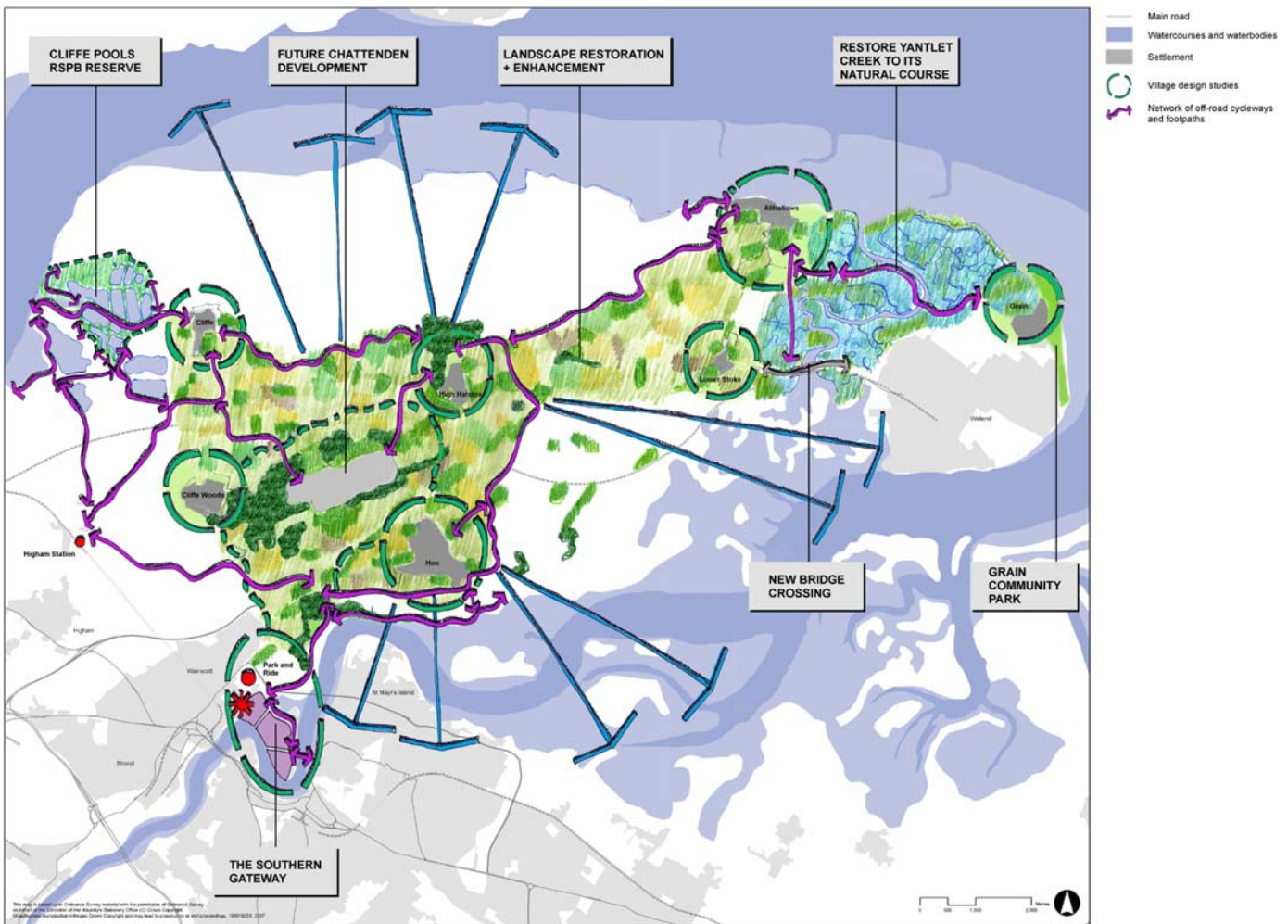
The extensive wetland and marshland habitats represent a superb environmental asset, which is protected and managed via a series of national and international designations. The Environment Agency's plans for managed realignment and the TE 2100 proposals for the area to be used for flood storage together suggest that this coastline will have a more natural character in the future.

Busy, winding and often narrow roads, vast distances and an exposed character mean that parts of the Hoo are rather inhospitable for pedestrians. But the panoramic views and distinctive, strong contrasts in character are attractive assets.



5 Hoo Peninsula - Vision framework

Large scale landscape restoration projects will enhance the legibility and accessibility of the Hoo Peninsula. The prominent wooded ridge will contrast with the restored wetland habitats at Cliffe, on the grazing marshes and at Yantlet Creek, where there may be scope to restore the natural watercourse so that the Isle of Grain is once again an island. Future development within the Hoo villages will be designed to enhance their landscape setting so that they function as gateways to the wider countryside, while a series of routes and viewpoints on the edges of the ridge will offer views over the coastal marshes. New destinations at Cliffe Pools, Yantlet Creek, Allhallows, Grain, the future Chattenden development and the Manor Farm Country Park will boost both community morale and the local economy.



Hoo Peninsula: Vision Framework

Key opportunities and components of the vision are:

- Re-create the 'wooded ridge' at the core of the peninsula** - this is a prominent, accessible and robust landscape, but one which has a relatively degraded, nondescript character. The remnant ancient woodlands provide a starting point for a landscape restoration programme which aims to connect woodlands, hedgerows and copses to create a more enclosed landscape, with a more diverse and distinctive landscape pattern. This approach will enhance biodiversity value, reduce pollution and provide the potential for future commercial timber production. Extensive woodland planting may be appropriate in some locations, but even small areas of woodland can have a strong visual impact if the planting is carefully sited to follow ridges, emphasise contours, frame views and integrate development. Leaving areas



to regeneration naturally, will also contribute to the mosaic. Woodland planting will be a key component of this programme, but targeted funding and landowner engagement will also encourage a wide range of other positive landscape management strategies, including creating wide field margins, unimproved grassland, wet meadows on river floodplains and the restoration of orchards and shelterbelts.

- **Restore Yantlet Creek to its natural course** - Yantlet Creek has been diverted and blocked from its natural confluence with the River Medway since Roman times and its restoration might be linked to a major wetland restoration scheme, with additional wetland habitat, improved access and interpretation. A programme of community consultation would be required, along with detailed feasibility studies to assess the ecological and hydrological consequences, but a restoration scheme would support the Environment Agency's Shoreline Management Plan (of managed realignment) and the TE2100 flood management strategy (currently being developed), which encourages additional flood storage capacity in this area. A new (A228) bridge would be required, but this could resolve the ongoing problems of road safety at a notorious 'blackspot' where road alignment is constrained by the surrounding highly sensitive ecological habitats.
- **Gateway villages** - many of the Hoo Peninsula villages have an industrial built character, with an undistinguished village centre public realm and a rather abrupt relationship with the surrounding landscape. This means that the approach to most settlements is neither impressive nor memorable and they rarely function as 'gateways' to the Hoo Peninsula. In addition, the village communities tend to have a rather 'urban' outlook as many residents are newcomers to the area, who are not used to living in a rural location. A series of individual village design studies can begin to tackle these issues. Beginning with a programme of community engagement and a detailed study of local history and landscape character, they will identify projects to enhance the existing public realm and will also explore opportunities for using heritage as a mechanism for community engagement, interpretation and promoting local village landscapes. There are particular opportunities to influence the design of future development on the fringes of villages, creating more distinctive gateway approaches, improving access to hinterland circular walks and integrating villages within their wider landscape setting
- **Distinctive local landscapes** - Many villages on the Hoo Peninsula have striking landscape settings and there may be opportunities for some large scale projects which aim to enhance landscape character, accessibility and interpretation. The village design studies will be a pre-requisite for this work, but possible examples include:
 - Allhallows on Sea, where there may be opportunities to encourage access to the wetland landscapes of Yantlet Creek via a cycleway along the disused railway line to the south, with circular trails, viewpoints and interpretation.
 - Grain, where the foreshore and ruined fort provide superb potential 'ingredients' for a distinctive community park incorporating opportunities for heritage, biodiversity, access and recreation, all in a dramatic local landscape setting
- **A network of off-road cycleways** - this is a large scale flat landscape, which is likely to be particularly accessible for cyclists. But the majority of the Heron Trail follows busy winding rural roads which can be narrow, quite dangerous and unsuitable for family cycling. A network of off-road cycleways (also suitable for pedestrians and horse riders) will boost the accessibility of the peninsula for local communities, the Medway urban population and visitors alike. New cycleway links will link all the villages, with information and viewpoints along the way. Higham Station, the new RSPB Nature Reserve at Cliffe Pools, Cliffe, Northward Hill, High Halstow, the new Chattenden development and Allhallows and Grain will be key 'hubs' in the network which will transform perceptions of the Hoo Peninsula.
- **The southern gateway** - the ongoing programme of environmental enhancement at the Medway City Estate, proposals for improved connections across the River Medway and the planned new park and ride to the north of the employment area reflect the strategic importance of this gateway location. The promoted development of Manor Farm and the adjacent disused chalk pit as a country park will provide a valuable public open space in a highly accessible location. The focus of this site will be environmental education, interpretation and habitat enhancement and the scheme also provides an opportunity for the restoration and sustainable long-term use of the 15th century grade 1 Listed Manor Barn (the longest medieval barn in Kent). To the north of Manor Farm, a river floodplain land management scheme along the small Hogmarsh Valley will extend the influence of the gateway along the principal access road to the Hoo Peninsula, enhancing biodiversity value and providing a positive gateway experience.



6 The Bigger Picture

The **Thames Gateway Parklands Programme** is a strategic planning and development initiative, overseen by the Department for Communities & Local Government. It builds on the *Greening the Gateway Strategy* first set out in 2004¹ and aims to transform the identity of the Thames Gateway, increasing economic social and environmental value so that the area becomes a flagship for sustainable living.

In north Kent, the regeneration process is well underway, but there is much to be done to make the most of the current opportunities, raise expectations and articulate an ambitious vision to secure high quality environments for sustainable living. *The Greening the Gateway Kent & Medway initiative* (GGKM) is one of three partnerships engaged in promoting and delivering this vision in the Thames Gateway (the others are in East London and South Essex).

High level regeneration outcomes for the Thames Gateway: - The **Thames Gateway Parklands Programme**, providing the context for a network of accessible, high quality and sustainable landscapes and waterways, which capitalize on existing natural, built, historic and cultural assets, to support their conservation, enhancement and ongoing use, and boost the Gateway's rich biodiversity assets, strengthen character and identity, transforming perceptions and making it a great place to live, work and invest. *Thames Gateway Delivery Plan, December 2007.*

The Thames Gateway Parklands Programme offers new opportunities for investment which will be delivered via **five transformational themes**:

- *Thames Waterfront* - a new estuary path, which will eventually run along both banks of the River Thames, waterfront projects featuring public access and an improved river environment
- *Thames Gateway World Class Heritage* - finance for the bid for Chatham Historic Dockyard and improvements on other heritage sites
- *Thames Gateway Landscapes* - large scale public green spaces of regional importance
- *Thames Gateway Corridors* - environmental improvements to some strategic transport corridors, including key rail routes and A-roads to provide carbon offsetting schemes, easier travel and an enhanced first impression
- *Thames Gateway Squares* - two or three large urban squares with a focus on cultural, economic and environmental activities.

¹ DEFRA and ODPM, *Creating sustainable communities: Greening the Gateway, 2004*



7 Delivery

The Green Cluster Studies provide a framework for delivering Thames Gateway Parklands 'on the ground'. The vision expressed in this *Technical Report*, captures many of the individual visions and ideas being promoted by stakeholders, combining them all into an overarching vision for the Hoo Peninsula Cluster which all stakeholders recognise and can buy into. So far, we have a vision framework to help inform funding decisions, but it is only the starting point and will be followed by a rolling programme of consultation, planning, funding bids and, for some projects, design development and implementation.

Action Planning

This *Technical Report* is accompanied by a separate *Action Plan* which sets the broad agenda for the transformation of the Hoo Peninsula Cluster, emphasising the scope for delivery of green infrastructure. The *Action Plan* sets out the issues to be addressed and the type of funding required to achieve the Green Clusters vision. Greening the Gateway Kent & Medway will establish a Cluster Steering Group for each of the Green Clusters. The *Action Plan* will be a working document, which will identify (for each project):

- who will be the lead partner (champion) and how stakeholder involvement should be broadened
- how it will be taken forward, in terms of funding, consultation, resourcing and procurement
- a clear timetable for planning and implementation which takes account of all other relevant projects plans and revenue funding for ongoing monitoring and management.

8 References

Environment Agency, 2007, *Isle of Grain to South Foreland Shoreline Management Plan - Consultation Plan Summary*

Groundwork Kent & Medway, 2007, *Lower Upnor Riverside Masterplan*

Kent Wildlife Trust, 2007, *Four Parishes Project Brief (preliminary Proposal)*

Medway Council, 2005, *Allhallows & St Mary Hoo Vital Villages Plan - Report of Community Survey and Survey Findings (2005)*

Medway Council, 2005, *Hoo's Future, 2005 - a consultation of Hoo's residents & supporting organisations*

Medway Renaissance, 2006, *Medway Regeneration Framework 2006-2016*

Medway Renaissance, 2008, *Consultant's Brief - Employment Land Study - Medway City Estate Visioning*

National Grid, March 2007, *Isle of Grain to Shorne Proposed Natural Gas Pipeline - Non-Technical Summary*

RSPB, September 2007, *A New Future for Cliffe Pools*

