

# 'England's maritime gateway to the world'



## South East Vision

### The vision for the south east marine plan area in 2041.

As a prosperous international gateway, a diverse maritime economy thrives in the south east marine plan area with locally and nationally important ports.

The tidal Thames facilitates more sustainable passenger and freight transport and access. Sustainable activities and diversification within the ports and shipping sector has enhanced the marine economy and environment where an increase in local employment has benefited the greater Thames area.

The important role of mitigating climate change in the marine and estuarine environment has made substantial progress.

Pressure from an increasing population is being managed using the ecosystem approach to promote sustainable activities and development.

## How will the south east marine plan area look in 2041?

### A sustainable marine economy

The south east hosts a diverse and rich marine economy including some of the country's busiest ports including Felixstowe, London, Sheerness and Dover. The sustainable development and diversification of ports has opened trade to new markets enhancing their strength in a global market. The tidal Thames continues to be a key transport corridor with more passenger, freight and waste transport than ever before. Waste transfer and the landing of marine aggregate in London and Ipswich continue to support construction and infrastructure development.

Sustainable fisheries, shellfisheries and aquaculture activities are flourishing in the greater Thames Estuary area especially at Leigh-on-Sea. Supported by the local economy, high quality seafood is being produced, including Whitstable and Essex oysters, Thames estuary cockles and whelks, flatfish, rays and herring.

Renewable energy production and subsea cables provide sustainable energy for the country which supports the local skilled workforce. The potential for future nuclear energy development at Bradwell B has been established.

### A healthy marine environment

The marine environment for the south east marine plan area is continuing to be conserved and enhanced for the benefit of all in line with the environmental net gain principle. A network of marine protected areas, along with managed sustainable development ensures a healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystem.

The water quality in the south east's network of rivers has improved and estuaries continue to be essential migration routes for birds. Fish nurseries in estuaries continue to support diverse habitats and species for North Sea fish populations.

Extensive salt marshes and mudflats continue to be preserved on the greater Thames estuary, Essex and Suffolk coast. Sandbanks in the outer Thames continue to be vital for habitats and species, including flatfish, shellfish and the Red-throated Diver. The coast and Essex saltmarsh play an important role in mitigating and having capacity to adapt to the ever increasing threats from climate change. A diverse Kent coastline including continuous coastal chalk continues to support nationally important birds and marine life.

For the whole plan area, ecosystem services, cumulative and in-combination impacts will be understood and addressed appropriately, with time given for ecosystem recovery following any significant developments.

### A strong, healthy and just society

The diversification of the tourist industry has enabled those living in coastal communities with opportunities to seek new employment in coastal resorts and new development has increased local employment outside of the major cities.

As a result of improved knowledge and education those who live, work and visit the south east marine plan area will have an increased awareness and enjoyment of the marine environment as well as increased health and wellbeing benefits it brings. This is also supported through enjoyment of the Thames through good riverside access and an increased involvement in events and recreational activities.

Historic assets such as ship and plane wrecks, including those from the Second World War, continue to be preserved for future generations. In Essex, saltmarshes, mudflats and estuarine islands provide a distinct sense of remoteness and wilderness. This contrasts the vibrant Essex coastal resorts, Greater London and Kent giving a distinctive sense of place across different parts of the plan area. The white cliffs of Dover and extensive coastal chalk are internationally important for their iconic views.

Public authorities including the forty one planning authorities are utilising the plan and working efficiently together for transboundary issues.