

South East Local Enterprise Partnership

...creating the most enterprising economy in England

Local Major Transport Projects

Department for Transport

Great Minster House

76 Marsham Street

London

SW1P 4DR

2nd September 2011

Dear Sir/Madam

SOUTH ESSEX RAPID TRANSIT (*sert*): submission of the best and final bid

I am pleased to confirm that the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) fully supports the South Essex Rapid Transit (***sert***) scheme as set out in the Best and Final Funding Bid to the Department for Transport.

Our single goal for the LEP is to promote steady, sustained economic growth over the next two decades. Thames Gateway is the largest single regeneration area in Europe and the strategic focus of our wider LEP area. With DP World's new container facility and the Port of Tilbury in Thurrock, Ebbsfleet's fast rail services to Europe, and London Southend Airport, the Thames Gateway alone provides four key drivers of economic growth for our LEP.

As the nation's global gateway, the South East LEP is committed to working with government to take the necessary actions and make investments required to improve our competitive advantage including key transport improvements that address existing transport network congestion.

The growth planned in the Thames Gateway provides significant opportunities for new businesses in new sectors and new employment opportunities. In the next 10 years, over 19,000 new homes and 16,000 new jobs will be created in the South Essex area. While these will be exciting years for South Essex as the regeneration of the Thames Gateway gathers pace, a key challenge for all partners is to ensure growth is delivered sustainably while maximising the economic potential of the area.

As evidenced by London Docklands, the public transport links (both Docklands Light Railway and the Jubilee Line extension) were a major factor in turning this from a failing development into the

significant financial and residential centre that it is today. Similar considerations apply to Thames Gateway South Essex.

With more people travelling to and within South Essex, the already congested transport networks will inevitably come under pressure. We believe continued investment in the area's transport infrastructure is vital and are delighted that Essex County Council is leading the drive to secure funding for **sert**. The **sert** scheme will be an essential catalyst for achieving growth and mitigating the impacts of congestion in the area. **sert** represents an achievable and affordable scheme which encompasses a range of objectives. The scheme has the support of key local bus operators and will improve the travelling environment for both residents and attract more inward investment to the area through enhancing communications. Specifically **sert** will support the:

- Provision of a real high quality sustainable alternative to the private car in order to support the significant growth planned for the Thames Gateway
- Expansion of London Southend Airport providing up to 2 million passengers per annum and to support the 7,000 new jobs at the associated business park.
- Growth of the Lakeside Regional Shopping Centre for the South East.
- Multi million pound redevelopment and regeneration of the Basildon Town Centre.

The **sert** scheme promises to deliver improved connectivity and provide a viable alternative to the private car; this can only be of benefit to business and to those living and working in South Essex. The South East Local Enterprise Partnership wishes to continue to engage in the development of **sert** and looks forward to having the opportunity to further develop the schemes. Any scheme developed under **sert** should take into account the possibility of an eventual provision of a cross-Thames link with Thames Gateway Kent, perhaps via a third and lower Thames Crossing.

Yours,



George Kieffer
Interim Chair
South East Local Enterprise Partnership