

Estuary Envoy appointed to spearhead ambitious Thames Estuary growth plans

- Kate Willard has been appointed as first Estuary Envoy and Chair of the Thames Estuary Growth Board
- The new Thames Estuary Growth Board will be backed by £1 million of government funding

Kate Willard, Director of Partnership Development with Stobart Group, has been appointed (30 October 2019) as the new Estuary Envoy by Thurrock Council on behalf of all Estuary partners.

Acting as an advocate for the region, she will forge positive relationships with local businesses, communities and local authorities and work with the government to increase prosperity and opportunity for local people.

The first Estuary Envoy will act as the Chair of the Thames Estuary Growth Board which will receive £1 million of government funding to drive economic growth plans in the area.

The announcement follows the government's response to the Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission report in March 2019, which saw the government back the Commission's ambitious plans to create 1.3 million new jobs and generate an extra £190 billion for the local economy.

New Estuary Envoy, Kate Willard said:

I am honoured and proud to have been appointed Chair and am much looking forward to starting this journey with you and to delivering and reporting on our successes.

The Thames Estuary Growth Board has the opportunity to provide a clear and coherent voice to drive sustainable growth across this dynamic region.

We will work to ensure we are listening to the communities, private and public sector partners who make up this great place and deliver cohesive leadership that helps shape an even more brilliant and shining place with international resonance.

Chair of the Association of South Essex Local Authorities and leader of Thurrock Council, Rob Gledhill said:

We congratulate Kate on her appointment as Envoy for the Thames Estuary. Across South Essex we have demonstrated a strong track record with major projects, and working with Kate we look forward to building on this to position the Estuary as a great place to

live and invest.

We have real ambition for South Essex, so we look forward to working with Kate to bring this to fruition.

Leader of Bexley Council, Cllr Teresa O'Neill OBE said:

I am delighted that Kate has agreed to take on the role of Envoy as I'm sure her enthusiasm will show her to be a great advocate for the Estuary.

Having a strong voice into government speaking on behalf of the whole Thames Estuary corridor will be very powerful.

Chairman of the Thames Gateway Kent Partnership, Rob Bennett said:

We welcome Kate's appointment as Envoy and hope that she can help us to accomplish our ambitious plans to accelerate economic growth, create jobs, improve the environment and attract investment for physical and social infrastructure.

North Kent has the potential to play a critical role in the UK's economic success, with an impact not just on the region but on the rest of the country.

We are keen to work with Kate and with government to get on with the job.

The Thames Estuary Growth Board and Estuary Envoy

Realising the ambition for growth in the Estuary will require stronger, more streamlined governance via a new Thames Estuary Growth Board.

The Board's purpose will be to help stimulate growth in the economy across the Estuary by: championing and shaping the vision for the region with key stakeholders; acting as a critical friend to local and central government on delivery; and driving Thames Estuary priorities.

It will be a voluntary partnership between local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships, universities, businesses and civil society.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) will support the Partnership by providing capacity funding and supporting the appointment of an independent Estuary Envoy.

The Estuary Envoy will chair of the Thames Estuary Growth Board and will be crucial to its success. Thurrock Council is accountable for the appointment of the Envoy. The appointment panel was made up of representatives from MHCLG, Thurrock Council, Bexley Council and Dartford Borough Council.

To find out more about the government's ambitious vision and delivery plans for the Thames Estuary read our [response \(25 March 2019\) to the Thames Estuary Growth Commission report](#).

Read the full [Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission report](#)