



GLOBAL WORKS: LOCAL GROWTH AND LOCAL DIPLOMACY IN GLOBAL BRITAIN

**The Thames Estuary roadmap to
investment, trade and innovation**



The UK's number one government-backed growth opportunity

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FOREWORD:

MINISTERIAL CHAMPION FOR THE THAMES ESTUARY

Long before London was a global services hub, it was a manufacturing and trading one. And it was the River Thames that helped make it so.



For centuries, this great waterway has brought goods into our capital city from every corner of the globe, providing the materials for a host of metropolitan manufacturers in the City of London and beyond. The giant docks carved into the river's banks in the Georgian and Victorian eras made trade ever more efficient, but with the advent of containerisation, London's Docklands fell into disrepair and struggled for a new role.

The regeneration of those Docklands into the vibrant financial services hub of Canary Wharf since the 1980s has been one of our nation's best examples of urban transformation. But the fantastic potential further downriver, in the Thames Estuary, has never been unleashed in the same way.

The opportunity is immense. And the work has begun. Once abandoned areas are being brought back to life. Traditional industries are being reinvented. A new Freeport is being established. New communities are being formed. A new Thames Crossing will join north and south. And the drive, energy and potential of local people remains.

It is the task now of the Thames Estuary Growth Board to deliver that same productivity, dynamism and global reach, stretching from the heart of London and connecting out to the world – to create an Estuary

for the twenty-first century, restoring London's great industrial and trading past by giving it an exciting new future. In doing so, economic opportunity will be delivered not only to left-behind communities within the Thames Estuary but for the whole of our country, creating a new exemplar of local and national levelling up. A new green and growing place with fairness at its core.

Government investment will always play a vital role in supporting local economies, but it can never be enough on its own. Private, institutional and international investment combined with the energy and drive of local leaders, entrepreneurs and world class businesses is what will truly deliver the growth and innovation we need. This roadmap shows how the Thames Estuary will secure such investment. It identifies the growth opportunity of working with estuaries around the world, the historical hotbeds of growth. The epicentres of global connectivity.

The Thames Estuary will play a central role in "making the UK the undisputed top investment location in Europe"¹ and the Global Works programme takes a decisive step in this direction.

As its Ministerial Champion, I stand ready to promote the Thames Estuary both at home and abroad and am passionate about the continuing role it will play in our national growth story.

I congratulate Kate and her team on an excellent international plan; much more importantly, I look forward to its delivery and the investment it will bring to the world's greatest Estuary.

Julia Lopez MP

Ministerial Champion for the Thames Estuary

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/trade-secretary-my-top-five-priorities-for-trade>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: GLOBAL WORKS

This document sets out a roadmap and action plan for the Thames Estuary Growth Board to coordinate international investment activity and to enhance the Estuary's Global Britain presence. It is a programme to secure international investment, trade and innovation.

Intended to be a bespoke, focussed, and high impact action plan grounded in evidence and wide learning it offers a fresh, strategic approach and a clear programme with tangible aims and outcomes to:

- **Accelerate growth** and **increase opportunities to innovate**.
- **Boost trade and investment through new and complementary partnerships**, including the "Global Estuaries Network".
- **Embed entrepreneurial and flexible ways of working between regions and communities nationally and internationally** to deliver economic and community growth and levelling up.
- **Forge a new approach to international partnerships** through the five strands of the "Global Works" programme as a defining feature of the Estuary approach - and thus add value to Global Britain policy to support investment, trade and innovation.

In setting out to deliver this ambitious vision, Global Works combines with the Thames Estuary's **INVESTUARY** inward investment platform to raise global awareness of the Thames Estuary as a "go to" place to invest and an effective ally to partner regions across the UK.

Building on the wide-ranging research, the roadmap define 5 strands of action:

Envoy outreach: Shaping and driving engagement with investors and international partners through a carefully curated and targeted outreach programme for the Government-appointed Thames Estuary Envoy.

The Global Estuaries Network: Bringing together estuaries and estuarine cities around the world to boost investment, trade and innovation.

Board outreach: Deploying the international strength, reputations and networks of Thames Estuary Growth Board members to raise profile and help develop new international investment opportunities.

Local Diplomacy: Reviewing market intelligence, securing support from Ministers and departments and working with emerging businesses to ensure the continuing dynamism of the programme.

INVESTUARY: Maximising the impact of the new Thames Estuary inward investment platform to be launched at the UK Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum (UKREIFF) later this year.

Too many international strategies get diverted – this roadmap is evidenced based, distinctive, and firmly focussed on investment and growth. Success will be measured against the investment it secures.

GLOBAL WORKS: LOCAL GROWTH AND LOCAL DIPLOMACY IN GLOBAL BRITAIN

1. INTRODUCTION: KATE WILLARD, THAMES ESTUARY ENVOY

From the businesses and private/public partnerships I have led, I know economic success lies in being intensely local in our responsibilities *and* profoundly global in recognising the opportunities that lie before us.



As Thames Estuary Envoy, it was never going to be lost on me that the Estuary sat at a nexus of internal relationships and that these linkages would be vital to our success.

In the Thames Estuary, we trade with every part of the world and welcome publicly listed companies from every global continent. We are home to universities that collectively reach over 150 countries and to diaspora communities rich in talent, international links and potential. Our businesses, airports, ports, higher education institutions and diverse communities mean that the world is here - and we are always touching the world.

But to fully unlock our potential to attract substantial new international investment and trade and to create a step-change in innovation we need to go further, deeper and faster.

Global Works: Going further, deeper and faster

Meeting business leaders and ministers over the last year I have told them how, when I visited the US in February 2022, I saw the opportunity to make this happen in concrete terms. As Thames Estuary Envoy I became convinced of the essential role of the Thames Estuary Growth Board in grasping the innovation in the US and making it happen here. With fabulous support from the British Consulate and officials from the Department of International Trade

- and the personal encouragement of then Trade Minister Penny Mordaunt - I set out to explore the potential of forging new international partnerships with areas sharing common interests and opportunities. Our thinking on hydrogen and greater use of the river for freight was, for example, immediately aligned with that of Chicago and Detroit.

Drawing on this experience and real-world analysis of what competitors were doing through "local diplomacy" I announced our intention to mainstream across all our programmes a fast paced, can-do engagement with a new "global works" initiative as a differentiating feature of our overall approach.

Responding to international opportunities

Since then, further opportunities and synergies have been presenting themselves and we have responded proactively. The Thames Estuary Growth Board is engaging with London's diplomatic community to explore shared opportunities. This has opened new possibilities in North America following fruitful conversations with Mexico's Ambassador and pathways to other global regions. The State visit of South Africa's President created the conditions for us to be able to agree and plan new collaborations with the South African national and regional governments, private sector organisations in both countries and our own partners, Teesside, around the investment, innovation and advanced manufacturing opportunities of hydrogen.

We have begun to promote to prospective investors and innovators our "hydrogen living labs" initiative - shared industrial prototyping, testing and micro-manufacturing facilities for early stage technologies thematically linked into the Estuary's unique characteristics around maritime, logistics and aviation with our founding partners, Ikigai and the Manufacturing Technology Centre. In parallel, we have moved forward plans to develop and launch with international investors and placemakers, Arcadis, a Global Estuaries Network as a business-led initiative enabling practical collaboration, mutual support and new ideas. To be launched in spring 2023, our planned investment platform **INVESTUARY** will support both those estuarine cities and our own Thames Estuary to collaborate and win new investment.

Developing a new, global approach

Being ready for “global works” means understanding the competitive environment better, a new approach and a concrete plan with a creative commitment to collaboration at home and abroad.

Building on our interim report published last year, this new plan for innovation and growth records subsequent learning and sets out a roadmap. As a major gateway to every region in the UK, this will put the Thames Estuary in a unique position to champion its needs but also to help drive value and resources to all Britain's regions and nations – putting levelling up into practice.

Local works are global works; and local growth backed by international investment flows from their interaction. This is the very nature of the potential bound up in all the Estuary's communities, institutions and ventures.

A wintry personal trip to the US confirmed what I had always known from those communities and my own leadership experience, namely that the opportunity to drive new growth, investment and innovation is an opportunity ready to be seized.

Recognising the Estuary's existing relationships and its ability to make connections internationally this is a plan to seize that opportunity for the Thames Estuary – and for the UK.

2. THE GLOBAL OPPORTUNITY OF LOCAL DIPLOMACY OR ‘GLOBAL WORKS’

Britain is a trading nation. It is part of what has made us great.

Nationally, global trade, investment and innovation remains central to the UK's economic success. The Government's Global Britain policy aims to maximize the advantages of a post-Brexit Britain and seeks to ensure our continuing status as a leading destination for global investment by supporting opportunities for new trade and collaboration.

But there is also a need to act locally to build our global profile. Local diplomacy² - what we have termed “global works” - is the way that innovation and collaboration between localities internationally can be supported to unlock investment. The focus here is on that potential for growth.

This roadmap is distinctive in responding to this new environment, one in which Britain is reimagining and redefining its role and impact, and where a new commitment to local growth is becoming *de rigueur*. It seeks both to explore, learn from, and begin to navigate new patterns, and crucially to describe, create and propose a concrete and deliverable roadmap and action plan for “Britain's best investment opportunity” - the Thames Estuary.

2 'Local Diplomacy' is a widely used term in North America The Future of Diplomacy Is Local (afsa.org), Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Local diplomacy has achieved many important results, contributing to the overall success of the country's foreign affairs (vietnam.vn) and more. China has forged over 2000 'Sister City' relationships, often in support of its economically significant Belt and Road initiative, in addition to its national diplomacy. Our use of the term here is to root our understanding of engaged outreach for economic growth and investment for the TEGB in competitive context. See also D. Shambaugh (2020) (ed) *China and The World* OUP: Oxford and D. Shambaugh (2013) *China Goes Global* OUP: Oxford

It reflects on aspects of the learning to date and sets out a concrete path of action to:

- Frame the Thames Estuary's strategic plans to step up its global outreach for local growth.
- Mainstream and lever that commitment across all its programmes of activity.
- Enable the Estuary to make a sustained contribution to driving the profile of its geographies - and those of its partner UK regions - as key differentiating assets and agents within Global Britain's enhanced presence in the world.

It is a call to action, reflection and growth through "global works".

Global Opportunity: Britain's New Direction

The Government first started using the phrase "Global Britain" soon after the EU Referendum in 2016 but it is most clearly defined in 2021's "Build Back Better: our plan for growth" White Paper.³

The UK's prosperity, it argued, is built on its integration into the global economic and financial system. Following the UK's exit from the European Union, we could also hope to take advantage of opportunities that come with our new status as a fully sovereign trading nation. The Government's aspiration was that the UK should be a role model for free and fair trade, ensure that Britain remains a leading destination for global investment and support opportunities for trade and collaboration.

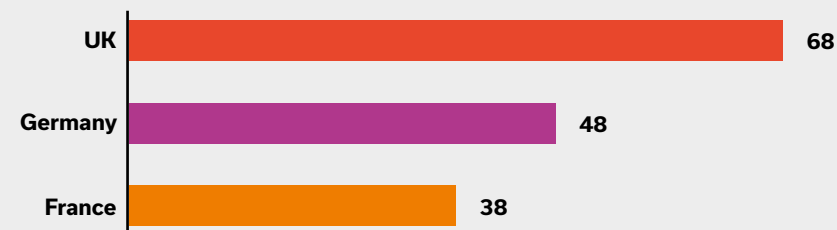
3 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/build-back-better-our-plan-for-growth/build-back-better-our-plan-for-growth-html>

UK
Germany
France

The Government's Integrated Review took this further, setting the Global Britain policy in the context of the UK's security, defence, and foreign policy with a "values driven" trade policy. This would be based on the core principles of democracy, human rights, free enterprise, and high standards in areas like the environment, food, animal welfare and data. It identified key global regions with whom Britons might work.⁴ There were synergies here with the government's Levelling Up White Paper which had a mission to boost pay, employment and productivity and saw each area of the UK as possessing a "globally competitive city."⁵

The upside of this combined strategy is its potential. And that potential is strong. Most investors in 2022, for example, reported that the UK government's levelling up policy would affect their location decision—showing that both national and local governments can demonstrate the value and importance of the regional distribution of investment.⁶

Figure 2: Average job creation per FDI project in the UK, Germany, and France



Source: EY European Investment Monitor (EIM) 2018-21

4 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/global-britain-in-a-competitive-age-the-integrated-review-of-security-defence-development-and-foreign-policy/global-britain-in-a-competitive-age-the-integrated-review-of-security-defence-development-and-foreign-policy>

5 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1054769/Levelling_Up_the_United_Kingdom_accessible_version_.pdf

6 EY (2022) Attractiveness Survey EY: London

More than this our localities need scalable private sector investment targeting their local growth sectors and recombining the efforts of firms, investors, entrepreneurs, innovators, airports, universities, and public sector “anchor institutions” and agencies in fresh and new ways.

Recent analysis published by the Thames Estuary Growth Board further reinforces the significant potential for inward investment growth outside of London. Indications are that overseas money is currently going to a smaller number of big projects clustering primarily in the capital. While jobs figures soared by a third, this was despite a 3% fall in projects and a 32% reduction in overseas investment in the last 5 years reflecting the impact of the pandemic and the instability in global markets. Active localities, levelling up and the Government’s drive for inward investment and trade can combine to help address this.

UK Foreign Direct Investment⁷

Foreign Direct Investment (UK)	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Total projects	2,213	2,265	2,072	1,782	1,852	1,538	1,589
Involved projects	1,731	1,859	1,682	1,436	1,449	1,131	1,174
New jobs	82,650	75,226	75,968	57,625	56,117	55,319	84,759
Safeguarded jobs	33,324	32,672	15,063	6,998	9,021	18,187	7,765

7 Thames Estuary Growth Board/iNHouse Communications DIT inward investment results - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Global Opportunity: Decentralising Global Outreach

As reflected in the Levelling Up White Paper, the UK Government recognises that by many accounts Britain is one of the most centralised nations in the developed world. In recent years this innate constitutional and policy tendency has generated a lively debate centred around decentralisation, city deals, county deals and the role of cities and especially of the nations for domestic policy and growth.

Less attention though has been paid to the way that the UK’s habits of external international outreach, especially for investment, have been conditioned by the same centralisation: traditional diplomacy has nestled in elite networks, trade policy been significantly shaped by the search for “national” trade post-Brexit and so the agency of firms, institutions and local leadership has at times been under stated. One former very senior FCDO official told us, “we are always getting better but we are not completely tooled up to support local outreach”.

By contrast this has happened at a time:

- When China has deliberately used the power of its cities and regions to connect, attract and disburse investment, technology, and partnership at the sub-national level.
- Where European cities have been able to protect their economic and legal security by using their skills to mitigate risks of cross border crime and trafficking from North Africa by working with African city leaders. And
- Where US cities have actively sought to shape policy and trade globally in a collegiate way during periods in domestic politics that have signalled partisan turbulence. More than this there are examples, in the US, where subnational innovations in global outreach have ended up improving or being the basis for national efforts.⁸

8 See Shambaugh (2013y) and (2020) and L. Booth Smith and F. Davis (2017) A Disability Sector Deal Localis: London; <https://www.theguardian.com/public-leaders-network/2017/mar/28/rebuilding-libya-local-councils-eu-cities-public-services>; <https://www.csis.org/analysis/csis-urban-legends-series-us-cities-foreign-policy-leaders>

This step change in mobilisation of every part of a country's pathways to the world can in part be because of constitutional powers written into federal government structures. But more often than not, they are the product of pro-active, local strategic leadership choices and the external recognition of opportunities, capacities and assets to be harnessed and engaged. These efforts are sustained not only by being part of global networks of cities and regions but in very concrete ways by addressing pressing common challenges and opportunities.⁹ 'Local diplomacy,' broadly defined, consequently becomes the new normal.

Global Opportunity: Trade and locality deals

By global standards, the UK is playing catch up to this regional drive for international investment and growth. This catch up is underway and gaining momentum through the work that has emerged from new attempts to do new 'State Level' trade deals at the sub national level in the US. It is underpinned and extended with immense creativity by some of the habits and plans of the devolved administrations and city leaders we have interviewed from Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and across England, not least in some new steps by the Core Cities to act directly to influence the agenda of the G7.¹⁰ The total focus here though is on investment and in that regard, we not only need to catch up but engage and differentiate from international competitors.

9 Feedback from our interviewees suggests that UK local bodies belong to a myriad range of international networks not always specialising in growth and sometimes where their focus or potential value is not fully clear.

10 As part of the preparation of this publication we ran round tables with those leading on economic outreach from several English cities and regions and Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland as well as the Local Government Association.

UK Trades Deals and US-UK State deals

Since leaving the EU, the UK Government has signed three new trade deals to support international trade by reducing restrictions on imports and exports, together with a range of rollover deals and agreements in principle with some seventy one countries in total and one with the EU¹¹. Further negotiations are underway including jointly through the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnerships (CPTPP) and with individual countries including the US, Canada and India

For local areas, a major development is the emergence of locality deals – Memoranda of Understanding aimed at creating a shift in local trade relations by liberalising regulations and increasing partnerships in key growth areas.

Led by then Trade Minister Penny Mordaunt, the first of these deals was struck with US State Indiana in May creating "a framework to remove barriers to trade and investment, paving the way for the UK and Indianan businesses to invest, export, expand and create jobs". Green trade is to be at the heart of the deal with both sides looking to accelerate clean tech development, with a particular focus on electric cars and low emissions technology solutions. Improved procurement processes, strengthened academic collaboration and recognition of respective professional qualifications will all be part of the agreement.

A second trade and economic Memorandum of Understanding has now been signed with North Carolina – looking to tackle unnecessary barriers to trade, cut costs and slash paperwork so British and North Carolinian businesses can work together more efficiently – and further State level deals are planned.

How best then for British regions, nations and localities seeking good green growth, innovation, investment and inclusion to reinvent their international skillsets and strategies so that every part of every community has, or should have, the possibility to contribute?

11 <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9314/CBP-9314.pdf>. Further sources for this document are available from the authors. Email francis.davis@roehampton.ac.uk

The UK government has announced important first steps in answer to this question by defining five critical elements to its approach.

These include mobile investment and trade policy, a new £14bn Global Britain Investment Fund, a new central Office for Investment to have a presence in each part of the UK and a commitment to partnering with "city region, mayors and growth companies to foster local investment opportunities in all corners of the UK". The Government's now largely abandoned "Growth Plan 2022" presented a series of measures to drive economic growth including new Investment Zones to be delivered with local areas. This work now needs to go faster and deeper.

Most recently, Secretary of State Kemi Badenoch set out her 5 priorities for economic growth¹² and for securing the most conducive global trading environment to deliver this:

- Remove trade barriers – DIT will knock down 100 unnecessary blockers standing in the way of helping UK businesses sell more and grow more, creating new jobs and paying higher wages.
- Grow UK exports every year until we hit our 'Race to a Trillion' - selling over a trillion pounds of goods and services to the world a year by 2030.
- Make the UK the undisputed top investment destination in Europe, attracting new investment into communities and helping to level-up the country.
- Seal high quality deals with India and CPTPP - they have a combined population of nearly 2 billion consumers - opening exciting opportunities in fast-growing markets for years to come.
- Defend free trade and make the world more secure by strengthening supply chains and standing up to protectionism.

Conversations with Department for Business & Trade officials confirm the Thames Estuary's emerging Global Works approach aligns closely with these priorities and the ambition for the UK to be "most attractive place to invest in Europe, enticing companies from across the world to put their money into communities across the country"¹³.

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/trade-secretary-my-top-five-priorities-for-trade>

¹³ Ibid

3. GLOBAL BRITAIN: LEARNING THROUGH RESEARCH INTO ACTION

Over the last six months we have:

- Listened to investors to learn about their "customer journey" in choosing a locality and sector to invest in amidst global competition which is reflected in the development of the **INVESTUARY** inward investment platform and our focus on optimising investor journey.
- Engaged with UK Departments for Business & Trade, Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC), the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and local government representatives in UK, North America, Europe, and Asia.
- Met with representatives of over ten nations comprising Ministers, diplomats, investors and firms.
- Listened to the experience of businesses, diplomats, consuls, and envoys in other international contexts as well as engaged with think tanks and city leaderships in several continents.
- Organised a public meeting with stakeholders on the fringes of the government's party conference with Minister Paul Scully and a private roundtable with senior officials from the regions, cities and nations in the UK.

The feedback encourages a fresh reading of the new patterns of geo-politics and local diplomacy, the need to address and build away from the gaps in the UK debate and to do so by stressing the Thames Estuary's unique assets and competitive advantage as an entry point to its own communities and the UK as a whole. The learning informs practical action already under way and is not intended to be a think piece.

Learning globally: Assessing the New Geo-Politics and Local Diplomacy

The UK Government's Integrated Review notes with clarity that one key challenge for the UK is to recalibrate its position after Brexit and amidst the changing dynamics of the global arena.

In an era where national diplomatic, technological, and economic security has been described as 'the weaponization of everything' and where opportunity and risks can emerge outside simple lines of central planning and policy, regions and cities can be an important feature of this recalibration.¹⁴

European and mainland Chinese cities, for example, have been intensely pro-active. In a recent collection edited by US foreign policy specialist David Shambaugh, China's multi-layered, multi-regional and often city led outreach in search of local allies and investment and sales is set out with some nuance. China has used its cities and investment zones to reach into Africa and Latin America, for example. These collaborations often go ahead of central governments preparing the way for longer term partnerships around infrastructure, technology, manufacturing and more. The main "city diplomacy" website is Chinese led and in November 2022 Dongying sought to host a World Estuarine Cities Conference focused on participation from across China's Belt and Road geographies

The umbrella group Core Cities UK have adopted a pro-active approach in their response to these new times. Drawing on language from the EU's Council on the Regions, the Core Cities plan to "Use City Diplomacy to extend our UK-wide and global reach, boost Trade & Investment creating a 'whole-UK'" (approach by) working with cities internationally, through Eurocities and the G7-U7 (Urban 7) dialogue. The G7 (Urban 7) coalition of cities and Mayors, founded by the Core Cities and funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, seeks to advocate to G7 states *"raise awareness, especially among national governments on the importance of cities and municipalities (to growth)..as well as the strengthening of liberal democracy"*.¹⁵

14 F. Davis (2022) Diplomatic Leadership Development after the 'Weaponisation of Everything' in Review of FIA 20:4 68-79.

15 Core Cities UK Soft Power Report | corecities.com

Most notably, the United States have indicated their own distinctive commitment in this regard through the passage of the 2022 Cities and States Diplomacy Act which is intended to identify support from the US State Department for any town or city with more than 100,000 residents seeking to play its part in promoting America. Bi-partisan in origin and support this Act builds on work undertaken with Honda's North American HQ, Los Angeles' creation of a Deputy Mayor for Internationalisation ahead of hosting the Olympics in 2028 and research detailing how diaspora communities are powerful two way portals for trade and other exchanges.¹⁶ One commentator has observed that this will be pivotal for US India policy given the sheer variety of sectors and populations found on the Sub Continent.

The combination of learning from these insights suggests that in a moving, complex world regions such as the Estuary are realising that they have an increasingly important role as an agent of British economic outreach and real world honest investment brokerage: they can act as agents to facilitate commercial deals as big as some treaties, work on the frontline of debates and investment regarding technological innovation and cyber-security, act as pioneers in the search for net zero; and as the home and nexus for distinctive pathways to and from Britain through investment, trade, major ports, airports, international student and diaspora communities among others. As such they are part of the UK's sometimes hidden capacity to act in the world.

The Thames Estuary has the potential to be, and is working towards becoming, an agile local diplomatic agent with distinctive attributes: it links London, towns and the coast; combines London's unique position as the 'first port of call' for inward investors with active links to the wider Thames Estuary geography and other English regions, and is home to a uniquely significant river and one of the most socially and ethnically diverse range of populations of any region.

16 <https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-economic-growth-energy-and-the-environment/the-secretarys-office-of-global-partnerships/the-special-representative-for-subnational-diplomacy/> ; <https://www.csis.org/blogs/adapt-advance-refreshed-agenda-us-india-relations/subnational-diplomacy-pivotal-tool-bidens>

Learning by collaboration: Detroit, Chicago, Stellenbosch, Mexico

One of the Estuary's working theories is that there are synergies to be concretely unlocked between nations as there are between UK regions and cities. With this in mind the Thames Estuary Envoy and Growth Board have actively visited and sought to engage in new ways with international partners who have made their way to us or where an opportunity to engage emerged linked to other workstreams

As the plan for this publication began the Thames Estuary Envoy and Chair visited Chicago and Detroit in February 2022. Instantly she recognised The Estuary's future use of hydrogen and greater use of the river for freight was immediately aligned with that of Chicago and Detroit. The regions shared major companies like Amazon and Ford. Water and port geographies offered their own unique opportunities as gateways for innovation.

While major attention is focussed on investment and trade, the opportunity to accelerate innovation through international partnership is therefore significant, in particular where the competitive domestic element within a sector may be removed by working across continents.

During the South African President's State visit to UK in November 2022, the Thames Estuary Envoy met with Ministers, business leaders and representatives of the Universities of Teesside and Stellenbosch and began to prepare a joint 'Living Lab' for Green Growth.

Stellensbosch: Learning from the Global South flowing to the Global North

Discussions with national and regional representatives from Stellensbosch in South Africa identified strong potential for international collaboration:

- Sharing of best practice and innovation – including the Thames Estuary Growth Board's links with Teesside and the links between Teesside and Stellenbosch.
- Learning from other industries such as mining in South Africa.
- Deployment of emerging technology in real life applications – many shared applications across a range of uses.
- Development of approach to regulation in shared sectors – clear shared interests in maritime and the decarbonisation of shipping.
- Shared sectors – maritime, heavy road transport, aviation – wide range of potential collaboration across these sectors given shared challenges.
- Potential import and export links – fuel, technology, vehicles, and equipment, recognising that the Thames Estuary will become a net importer (whether from other regions in the UK or internationally) of green hydrogen
- Development of replicable "Living Lab" concept and shared fund approaches to advance innovation in both countries.
- Shared challenges over ensuring all parts of the community benefit from the investment and growth, and ability.
- Shared areas of interest including 5G and the use of data for optimising use of energy and enabling decarbonisation through smart network solutions.

A meeting with Mexican Ambassador to the UK in London emphasised the strength of operating in a global city with the world represented. Highly constructive discussions with the Thames Estuary Envoy identified the common interests and opportunities around estuaries and estuarine cities and the shared priorities for growth with ambition to increase trade through relationships between the two countries.

Learning From Interviews: Global Britain

Especially in conversations outside the UK a number of recurring themes emerged as we sought insight: These included advice to:

- **Recognise how active other country's sub national actors already are** and the contrasting ways they are used.
- How in some contexts (e.g. Los Angeles) **city mobilisation had created the conditions for national trade and environmental trade deals long before the centre added support.**
- That when entering a new geography or country it was **important to work with the Department for Business & Trade and FCDO** because 'we have had horror stories of UK cities arriving under prepared and under-connected thinking they could do it alone'.
- **Recognise too that the Department for Business & Trade and FCDO are on a learning path in championing localities and regions too** and, as one former FCO Permanent Secretary put it this focus, *"doesn't play all of the time and in all places to their comfort zones yet"*.

Importantly one senior UK representative abroad advised that:

"Policy in London tends to get driven by what we see on the ground here" rather than "only by London's view" and so **"working with Whitehall but also our global offices is essential...if you want to get true leverage."**

Feedback in turn included the strong advice to **"be understanding that a UK region or city that doesn't play for several UK areas looks narrow minded round here ...where the UK's economy is perceived as small (from the**

US West coast)....and where procurement processes can be immensely frustrating for investors who need scale to legitimate their interest."

Other crucially Important learning and questions that have also emerged include:

Know Thyself: Linked to above, know your strengths and play to them – be focused and targeted. Recognize your assets e.g., how is the Freeport clearly part of the offer? How are you leveraging your relationships with your major companies? Estuaries or river-cities have an immediate affinity and understanding based on their physical assets – and shared opportunities such as hydrogen and river freight.

Compare Connections: What are the demographic, cultural and sector connections that could increase bilateral trade? What other links do you have – could be individual or diaspora. Close local or personal connections have been behind major deals. Also need institutional understanding – where are decisions made and who makes them?

Work at Scale: Two factors drive competition for investment and lower costs - scale and ability to compete. Anything that can be done to enhance or preserve scale will only increase commercial attractiveness. There is a need to look at how real estate offer can be packaged to give large investors a pipeline. To compete, what can be done to preserve scale to have sufficient appeal for investment, but not add complexity of bureaucracy?

Cherish Every Talent: In pace-filled lives it is easy to overlook powerful local assets which are sometimes considered "outside the economy" and yet play vital roles. Diasporas, universities, creative and cultural innovations, the health sector, and enterprises founded and owned by disabled people or targeted at inclusive tourism are just a few examples of making every local strength work.

Leadership (and Politics) Counts: A single voice is essential to promote a region with clear focus and ambition. Pitch should be a one-stop-shop but recognizing trade and investment will flow to individual local opportunities.

Learning from Great Estuary Cities: The Urban- Estuarine Competitive Advantage¹⁷

The Levelling Up White Paper indicates the earliest known urban settlement was Jericho around 10,000 years ago – its position on the river Jordan enabling it to become a hub for commerce, trade, people, skills, and finance. Similarly, London's location on the deepest and second longest river in the UK granted the Romans military mobility and trading access across their new province in A.D. 47 - and it remains the pre-eminent global city we know today. It is estimated that now "no fewer than 21 of the world's largest 30 cities are estuarine".

Estuaries have been central to growth through history and continue to be so. World cities including London, New York, Hamburg, Rotterdam and Tokyo are all longstanding ports, a factor which has significant influence on their development. Indeed, innovative policy makers are now focusing in on rivers to reimagine the "estuary potential" over and above longstanding traditions: Le Havre's Port aligns to Paris through the length of the Seine, Singapore has reinvented its river sides as economic, housing, and environmental zones of innovation and regeneration. There is more.

Critically for current policy, Estuaries offer economic scale and distributive capability in taking growth further into both their own regions and as pathways to the wider country. An OECD study into European ports found that on average one tonne of port throughput is associated with 100 USD of economic value added. At the same time, a working paper from the study, analysing Eurostat data, found that the port clusters of Amsterdam and Rotterdam had a 'multiplier' effect on industries in other regions - where a sector can benefit from connectedness, the multiplier effect of the port increases.

Connectivity: Estuaries are already internationally linked. They are trading cities and areas with active import and export routes, providing immediate opportunities for global growth. Consideration of major import and export destinations confirm their international reputation. The establishment of Freeports provides further exciting potential.

¹⁷ London is one of a small number of elite world cities around the globe, competing economically with New York and Paris rather than Birmingham and Manchester.

Import and export figures for Port of London, January - June 2022

Place	Import %	Import (£m)	Place	Export %	Export (£m)
Germany	16.1	2130	Belgium	11.5	132
Netherlands	9.12	1210	Turkey	10.2	116
Belgium	8.28	1090	Nigeria	7.57	86.4
Turkey	6.84	905	Russia	5.65	64.5
China	6.55	867	Mexico	4.91	56.1
Italy	5.63	745	Spain	4.71	53.8
Spain	5.03	666	Bangladesh	4.71	53.8
Romania	4.24	561	Germany	4.33	49.5
France	4.12	545	Finland	3.9	44.5
Kuwait	3.45	456	Netherlands	3.04	34.7

Source: Observatory of Economic Complexity

Commonality: Estuaries share issues, there is immediate affinity and understanding. Initial work for the Arcadis Global Estuaries Network has confirmed shared concerns for physical and environmental management issues and an appetite for collaboration on investment and trade. Analysis of "path dependency," comparing the development of port cities and the different institutions that have developed around them informs the potential for joint working on shared issues e.g., decarbonization where different approaches have emerged.

Complexity: Economic orthodoxy has long held that the complexity of economies is a key driver of economic growth. In export terms this means gaining competitive advantage through increasing the complexity of products exported. Estuary economies are perfectly placed to deliver this, with Freeports providing the potential to develop this further.

Product complexity can be linked explicitly with economic development levels, with high-income and highly developed countries the major exporters of complex products and low-income, less developed countries the major exporters of less complex products.

It is increasingly recognised that social complexity is a relatively unrecognised asset which adds to this mix: diaspora communities bring talent and resources to Estuary cities. With universities, health economies, the distinctive impact of airports and familial relations they also connect those regions to markets, investment, friendships, and innovative and dynamic ideas not least in the global regions the Government has identified as critically important.

Learning in dialogue: Opportunities in the UK Debate

The RAND corporation has observed that while cities have been more active in the international system it has taken a while for related policy to catch up.

Reviewing several important UK studies though, a more mixed approach emerges. There have been proposals to:

- (i) Focus on the macro tax incentives for inward investment with passing references to the local.
- (ii) Celebrate London's unique dominance and encourage English cities, regions, and the nations to open 'Embassies' in London.
- (iii) Affirm London's dominant position and look to it to provide a 'national hub' with 'regional spokes'.
- (iv) Challenge county councils to do more.
- (v) Drive major cities to the heart of the conversation to shape and co-ordinate how FCDO, DCMS, DIT, BEIS and DLUCC might better work together to support local growth. Indeed, one study proposes that *'in the future towns and cities across England should be given new powers to drive growth and there should be an economic growth or prosperity plan for every town and city owned by Councils, Mayors, towns, and cities working in partnership.'*¹⁸

18 Our universities: generating growth and opportunity – a regional perspective - London Higher; Centre for London | Levelling Up in London – Phase 2 Report: London's Contribution in the UK; Why Choose Britain? - The Centre for Policy Studies (cps.org.uk) ; Core Cities UK Soft Power Report | corecities.com; EY-Global-Britain-Global-Counties-Attracting-Foreign-Direct-Investment (1).pdf

But across these and other studies there are still gaps which provide opportunities in the UK debate.

A **first gap** is that the UK debate to date is significantly constrained by silos that have been built up between the centre and localities, cities-towns and coastal communities, between sectors, and by the constraints that Covid presented on collaborative innovation. Current moves to address these are welcome.

A **second gap** identified is the positive learning that comes from the US of how towns and cities have been able to go through a step change in their international work for investment when experienced officials have been seconded to them from the State Department to build their capabilities in these regards. New UK investment hubs, for example, in Darlington, Cardiff, Edinburgh and Belfast are helpful in beginning to build local capacity but more can be done.

A **third set of gaps** seems to rest in some cases in the comparative lack of attention to the potential of local agency in all its forms, and on the other on the lack of a concerted effort to explore growth with regions as dynamic partners with strengths to share rather than defined by London's assets alone. Aberdeen and Teesside, for example, are in many regards ahead of the pack on hydrogen innovations with some specific actions on hydrogen infrastructure for industry and mobility and Aberdeen moving forward with offshore hydrogen production; learning from the Thames Estuary's work on river and water - based water-based freight has transferable value: rather than metropolitan Embassies and hubs and spokes for proud nations, cities, regions, new collaborations and richer relationships for more sustained wins are needed.

The **fourth gap** – and the one most critical to the Thames Estuary – is that the power of Estuary Cities and regions in policy making are under recognised.

Potentially addressing these gaps further, at the time of writing, the Local Government Association was commissioning urgent research to ***“analyse... the distribution of roles and responsibilities for growth and prosperity in England held by local, sub-national and national government ... agencies and an overview of how these different activities are funded and accounted for, highlighting areas of local good practice or innovation”*** for the sector as it seeks to make sense of its statutory duties, the integration of former Local Economic Partnerships into Combined Authorities and as areas consider the possibility of devolution deals becoming standard by 2030.¹⁹

Applying the learning: The Thames Estuary Growth Board and its role in a changing world

The Thames Estuary includes landscapes that have inspired Charles Dickens, John Constable, and popular musical bands such as Dr Feelgood. It has a population of four million – larger than the West Midlands or Greater Manchester and stretches from the City, Port and City Airport of London to the coast and the sea.

The Thames Estuary Growth Board was established by the Government in 2020 to drive growth and inward investment in the Estuary. It is responsible to the Secretary of State for that economic growth, investment and for facilitating innovation to enable the Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission’s vision of increased productivity, high value jobs and high-quality homes for local people.

The Thames Estuary Growth Board champions projects for investment; convenes local agencies and partners, works to remove obstacles and is also an investment partner, investing itself in early-stage projects as a catalyst for significant new private sector investment.

Already, the Thames Estuary is acting on the global stage: the delivery of the Thames Freeport, the development of a Hydrogen Ecosystem and the Estuary’s international approach to promotion and investment confirm both its presence and potential.

¹⁹ LGA : The Purchaser is issuing this Invitation to Tender in connection with the Procurement of Services to support the project ‘Councils’ Future Role in Driving Growth and Prosperity’ Accessed 22.12.22

Hydrogen Valleys: An Estuarine USP

Our work has already led us to engage with other global locations facing challenges and presenting relevant opportunities like those in the Thames Estuary. Internationally, these locations are referred to as ‘hydrogen valleys’ and have four core features:

- Large in scale;
- Hydrogen has a best use case to more than one sector;
- High-value chain coverage; and
- Geographically defined scope but with fragmented decision making.

Initial research has identified a group of projects and regions, common priorities and scope for collaboration²⁰. These will be explored further through the Global Works programme building on existing international collaboration workstream and aligning more closely in defining priority partnerships.

The Thames Estuary Growth Board then has consciously been shaped to embed this international outlook and the synergies of relationship and connection between those skills and networks are beginning to bear fruit. Both “can do” in culture and entrepreneurial in ethos, to turn the Global Britain opportunity into tangible and long-lasting local outcomes, the Thames Estuary Growth Board is drawing together this learning to develop its own distinctive approach to international relationships between regions - one which will boost trade and investment through new and complementary partnerships.

The next section describes how the Estuary Growth Board will build agile capacity to attract investment, how it will act as a partner to investors and with other parts of the UK and how it will accelerate the search for investment.

²⁰ See Appendix 3

4. THE GLOBAL WORKS PROGRAMME: 'MAKING STUFF HAPPEN'

The Thames Estuary Growth Board will continue to learn and draw policy and leadership insights nationally and internationally but most importantly it will use that learning to attract investment. The Global Works Programme will drive this process.

The Global Works Programme will be overseen by the Thames Estuary Envoy as a central feature of the Thames Estuary Growth Board's work.

With acute priority setting it will comprise:

- **Envoy Outreach**, deploying the unique capacity of the Thames Estuary Envoy.
- **The Global Estuaries Network**, bringing together estuarine cities around the world.
- **Board Outreach**, recognising the international profile and potential of Thames Estuary Board members.
- **Local Diplomacy**, focussing nationally on profile, connections and next generation step changes.

These will be underpinned by tailor-made client and relationship support and triaging including through new fintech inspired web-based investment platform **INVESTUARY**.

Global Works Strand One: Envoy Outreach

The role of Thames Estuary Envoy established by the Government creates a unique opportunity to promote growth and investment into the Thames Estuary.

Thames Estuary Envoy and Thames Estuary Growth Board Chair Kate Willard will spearhead Global Works, working across all the five strands of the Global Works Programme and leading it as a central integrated framework for action and investment results.

This leadership role will include shaping and driving the engagement with, and contribution of, the whole Thames Estuary team, investors and other partners. It will also include a programme of carefully curated personal activities.

In addition to this central leadership role, the Envoy will commit to:

- Undertake three well planned key strategic high value outgoing visits to target cities per annum.
- Drive forward a rolling programme within the UK themed "The world is here – here is in the world". This will be a proactive outreach programme to target Embassies and international organisations and their constituencies with a focus on investment adding special value to the local diplomacy strand described below and building the profile, connections and step changes required to drive the Global Works programme.
- Sustaining high profile advocacy for the value of Global Works to the Thames Estuary and of Global Works to UK's national and local investment efforts.

- In leading this activity, the Thames Estuary Envoy will:
- Work closely with the Ministerial Champion for the Thames Estuary, drawing the Minister into meetings and negotiations as appropriate.
 - Work with the UK’s other pan-regional partnerships where common interest is identified.
 - Shape the programme according to measurement data on the impact of Global Works.

Global Works Strand Two: The Global Estuaries Network

Recognising this potential for economic growth from shared objectives and collaboration, the Thames Estuary Growth Board and international design and engineering consultancy Arcadis – itself a major UK inward investor - are combining to launch the “Global Estuaries Network”.

Carefully designed to ensure the right levels of seniority, influence, and strategic concerns among its members the Global Estuary Network will link major estuary areas across the world to work on common challenges and opportunities to boost investment, trade and innovation.

Scoping undertaken as part of the preparation of this roadmap and action plan has begun to evidence that the international appetite for the Global Estuaries Network is already strong.

Thanks to Arcadis’ extensive international relationships and global corporate network, the table below indicates those estuaries where initial interest in the Global Estuaries Network has been confirmed.

Arcadis Global Estuaries Network: Initial interest/membership

Boston	Amsterdam
Rotterdam	New York
Hong Kong	San Francisco
Hamburg	Teesside
Singapore	Bristol

Membership will grow reflecting the dynamism of regional and national economies including the Global South.

The Global Estuaries Network will be a focus for knowledge sharing, the development of joint initiatives and commercial and economic collaboration between major estuaries and their communities around the globe.

An initial analysis of priority sectors for the Thames Estuary Growth Board has been undertaken by Arcadis, mapping the activity of selected estuaries in hydrogen, river freight, creative and digital. The table below sets out examples of strongly expressed shared concerns.

Emerging Shared Priorities

Collaboration on investment propositions	Net Zero
Saltwater management	Levelling Up
Rising water levels	Knowledge exchange
Hydrogen	Transformation
River Freight	Scalability
Post Covid development	Lessons learnt and networking

Already backed by experts at Thames-based institutions such as the Universities of Roehampton and Oxford, the Arcadis Global Estuaries Network is intended to develop as an innovative new contributor to local growth and learning, local diplomacy and innovation and global growth and impact.

Next Steps and Global Launch

Work is now under way at pace to prepare the Network's detailed initial prospectus. Work is in part being linked to emerging thinking within the Thames Estuary Growth Board around international "Hydrogen Valleys."

The Global Estuaries Network will be launched in June 2023 in New York City and will form a major strand and focus of the Thames Estuary Growth Board's international and trans-regional outreach, collaboration, and impact programmes.

Working in powerful partnership with Arcadis, the Global Estuaries Network will enable us to draw together some of the great estuaries of the world to identify collaborative niches, distinctive shared challenges and fresh approaches to unlocking value.

Global Works Strand Three: Board Outreach

The Thames Estuary Growth Board is deliberately designed to be led by a private sector dominated board which itself has significant international reach.

As private and public sector leaders, Thames Estuary Growth Board members are themselves substantial figures connecting with investors, making new connections and engaging internationally as part of their everyday lives.

Several are already regularly invited to participate in key investor gatherings, with Estuary Cities globally and contribute as business leaders in their own right.

In harnessing all the talents and assets Thames Estuary Board Outreach proposes the integration of relevant interests, networks and time of Board members into the overall approach.

As part of an integrated work plan Board members will be fully involved by

- Identifying overlaps and synergies each Board member has with current priorities and between these and the overall Global Works programme.
- Involving Board members in support of the growth of the Global Estuaries Network and agreeing with each Board member participating a 'target partner city or geography' for collaboration and investment.
- Starting with a soft target of around twelve keynote addresses by board members at strategically identified investor/ally building focused events/conventions. Opportunities will be taken here to showcase the **INVESTUARY** inward investment platform as a powerful tool of information sharing.

Board outreach will be supported through the development of an integrated event calendar identifying major national and global events and opportunities at which the Thames Estuary should be represented or where investment opportunities may be developed.

Joint working with member councils and their investment promotion agencies and activities will also be essential in co-ordinating and strengthening the case for investment. Board members will have a central role in promoting joint working and providing ongoing oversight.

Global Works Strand Four: Local Diplomacy

The Thames Estuary Growth Board makes good things happen and is intensely focused on concrete successes. Its purpose is not to act as a think tank, and it is little interested in "thought leadership" as an end in itself. All the same it will have new approaches to share and a voice to speak up, so that the wider economic, investment, leadership and policy environment within which it operates and to which it can look in the future is as amenable as possible. This takes strategic effort and focus.

Over time this could include making the case for new freedoms and fresh powers to leverage every opportunity that the Thames Estuary could create or encounter (eg skills as the hydrogen ecosystem needs more effective support). An enabling Global Works Strand will be rolled out here.

As part of this “Local diplomacy”, the Estuary’s profile and next generation work will:

- Identify priority cities to so as to be able to secure support from the Department for Business & Trade and FCDO and other Government departments to engage with Embassies, Consulates, Ministerial Visits, and other outreach in a seamless plan for each focus city.
- Move forward day to day engagement with relevant UK ministers- with “global” and “global investment” and (inter)national and “new industry” HE/skills responsibilities.
- Support day to day outreach to local councils and parliamentarians with international oriented briefs/duties, including the Prime Minister’s appointed Trade Ambassadors.
- Champion entrepreneurs, and new contributions from Estuary communities whether that be in the supply chain for river freight, in making the most of the Thames Path as an international visitor attraction or in accelerating good green growth.

As such, Local Diplomacy will strengthen ways of working with Government, providing a conduit for support and communication both from Departments to the Thames Estuary Growth Board, and from the Board to Departments and Ministers, helping to co-ordinate and support the UK’s international outreach.

This strand of the overall “Global Works” programme then will keep the Estuary in the public, the business leaders’ and the policy maker’s eyes at home and abroad as it works to shape the context as well as deliver targets on investment, trade and innovation. It will also enable it to identify and champion the next generation of Thames Estuary leaders for local growth and inclusion.

Global Works Strand Five: INVESTUARY

The **INVESTUARY** inward investment platform will unite all the ‘good green growth’ investment opportunities and infrastructure developments within the Thames Estuary.

With an inspired design, the **INVESTUARY** platform will not only showcase the only the best investment opportunities and innovations in the Thames Estuary, but it will also facilitate direct inward investment through a single point of contact for a smooth investor journey. It will also provide scale to reach the critical mass – something that both investors and local authorities have said is a priority and what they need from the Thames Estuary Growth Board.

INVESTUARY supports partners/promoters in many ways:

- **Product Development:** It can help package up flagship sites and opportunities into viable investable “products”
- **Promotes key sites:** It can provide a platform for local authorities and promoters to showcase their key sites for investment and raises the profile of each
- **Lead Generation:** It will sit alongside existing local initiatives to support these investable opportunities, providing new leads to project owners
- **Business development tool:** Available for all local authorities and partners to use at events, when networking, or in meetings with potential investors
- **Problem-solving:** It will present investable solutions that will overcome ‘chicken and egg’ infrastructure barriers to growth in the Thames Estuary
- **Supporting high value investment:** The platform will bring in high value single or portfolio investments at a minimum threshold of £1m
- **Managing the investment journey:** It will support investors throughout their investment journey from first point of contact to completion or bring them to project owners to manage at a local authority level – whatever works best
- **Free of charge:** It will provide a cost-free service to all local authorities within the Thames Estuary

INVESTUARY will launch with a networking-focused marketing campaign targeting global investors at the UKREiFF Real Estate Forum in May 2023, where the Thames Estuary Growth Board will have a major presence. The ongoing marketing campaign will promote the platform, drive awareness of the region and traffic to the platform and be continuously improved to support inward investor needs.

Global Works priority setting: Developing a bespoke approach

Global Works outlines five major outreach programmes, but this work is ongoing – it is not a standing start. A series of international relationships are emerging and discussions with potential international investors and partners are already underway.

In addition to those where direct discussions have taken place, emerging and potential relationships include:

- Those with cities that have expressed strong interest in the Global Estuaries Network.
- “Hydrogen Valleys” with the potential for partnership in developing the hydrogen ecosystem in the Thames Estuary.
- The Port of London’s major import and export routes.
- Those countries identified with potential for **INVESTUARY** inward investment outreach.

Recognising this increasing interest and potential, a bespoke approach is intended to keep the Global Works Programme focused.

Supported by the five Global Works outreach strands three broad relationships will be developed:

- **The Global Estuaries Network:** Encompassing all contacts as part of a looser and growing membership grouping but with the opportunity for enhanced and more focussed participation in the Network, including the development of policy White Papers where common interests or concerns are identified and shared solutions sought.
- **The Priority Pipeline:** Recognising those regions where partnerships are developing or focussed on a single sector or strand of economic activity.
- **Innovation Partnerships:** Development of between 3 and 6 priority partnerships where investment, growth and innovation is most likely to be realised and which will receive greatest resource and focus.

These more focussed Innovation Partnerships will build on relationships already developing at speed such as those described above with US States, the Northern Cape of South Africa and Mexico.

To support this bespoke approach, initial criteria will be applied through the development of an “analytical tool” for prioritising opportunities as they emerge. This approach is likely to include the following questions in assessing the potential for mutual benefit through investment, trade and innovation.

Analytical tool: key questions to filter regions and sectors

Contacts: Envoy, Board, MP, other

Ambitions: The aspirations of where potential partners want to be

Geography: Alignment of physical geography eg estuary, coastal, etc

Link to priority sectors: Hydrogen, Waterborne Freight, Creative, Health

Synergies: Immediate and potential synergies across respective work programmes

Existing economic connections: Levels of trade are already in place. Major companies shared

Relationship body: What is it and what is its remit; who is involved; who leads it; level of seniority; authorising authority?

Wider connections:

- **Demographic, cultural and sector** connections that could increase bilateral trade?
- **Institutional understanding** – where are decisions made and who makes them?
- **Additional local assets:** Diasporas, universities, creative and cultural innovations, the health sector, and enterprises

Global Britain priorities and evidence base (plus warning signs e.g., no go areas): Alignment to UK national priorities

Link to UK Departmental priorities for support/engagement

Protecting the “anarchy window”!

Across each Global Works outreach strand the Thames Estuary Envoy and Growth Board will keep work focused and priorities under review – but they will also be tested in relationship to opportunities that emerge on an ad hoc basis, what is termed the “anarchy window” – unplanned, unexpected but potentially major opportunities identified or highlighted through the programme.

Recognising that new global networks and enhanced activity will such stimulate new opportunities to consider, it is vital the Thames Estuary Envoy and Board remain “fleet of foot” in responding to such possibilities and that programmes work and assessment does not hamper the innovation and creativity developed in the Thames Estuary Growth Board’s first years of operation.

Global Works and Levelling Up

Inward investment must also support levelling up within the Thames Estuary and links within the UK to promote economic growth.

The Thames Estuary Levelling Up Atlas identifies seven Priority One areas for Levelling Up in the Thames Estuary. Nineteen out of twenty local authority areas have housing affordability worse than the national average, some 29,000 people in the Thames Estuary would need to gain qualifications to reach the national average while some of the country’s worst performing local authority areas for mental health disorders are based here. Past economic opportunity has not reached all parts of the Estuary with the difference in GVA per job in places reaching some £62,000.

Through inward investment and growth, the Thames Estuary Growth Board aims to ensure future opportunities reach those areas and communities currently most distant from existing economic success. A major project on levelling up will support this.

At the same time, we believe investment and growth in the Thames Estuary as the gateway to the UK should have wider impact. Our partnership with Teesside and emerging relationships across the country demonstrate our ambition for growth and investment not to stop only within the Estuary but through shared economic interests and collaboration to spread across the UK.

5. GLOBAL WORKS: BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

This publication produces a roadmap for the Thames Estuary Growth Board to coordinate international investment activity and to enhance the Estuary's international presence.

Identifying the increasing and vital role of localities in attracting inward investment through a policy of local diplomacy and outreach, it sheds light on opportunities in the current UK approach and the potential for localities – with greater local agency – to strengthen the UK's global offer.

It is a programme to secure international investment, trade and innovation for the Thames Estuary and through this to support levelling up and sharing of opportunities within the UK. It is not – and is not intended to be – a think piece on the future of investment and trade policy or local government as a whole.

Drawing on national policy and international developments, the report identifies the potential for localities to play an active and highly important role in attracting inward investment and growth into the UK. It outlines a practical plan of action to build on existing links and geographical connections to raise its international profile to seek new global trade and investment.

Critically, it recognises a new way of working that has emerged internationally between the centre and regions through local diplomacy. This is seen most clearly in the US with legislation-backed federal support of individual states to reach out internationally in their drive for growth. At the same time, our own UK Government has pioneered new regional trade deals, the first with Indiana, demonstrating a new approach to regions and localities internationally.

The Global Works programme sees a strengthened relationship with Government, with greater connection and support for localities in a mutually beneficial arrangement: the leaders of the localities or regions providing a distinctive local offer globally in support of the national ambition for the UK to be Europe's most attractive destination for trade and inward

investment. With a dedicated Thames Estuary Envoy and the international reputations and networks of its Board members, the Thames Estuary Growth Board is perfectly placed to lead this new approach, putting learning into practice.

Regional partnerships provide a further important tool in this new local toolkit for investment and growth. But partnerships must always be focussed on investment, trade and innovation for mutual benefit and measured as such. These will be both international partnerships where common sectors, ambitions or interests provide fertile ground for growth, and UK-based partnerships ensuring that investment and growth in one part of the UK spreads benefit to other regions. The Thames Estuary relationship with Teesside is a first example. The Global Estuaries Network – itself developed by international investor Arcadis – will be the primary forum for the Thames Estuary's international networking, with several bespoke “innovation partnerships” developed with regions offering the best mutual growth opportunities.

Increasing local diplomacy will strengthen the ways of working between the centre and the locality – and the locality and the centre. The Ministerial Champion for the Thames Estuary and the strong departmental relationships with the Thames Estuary Envoy and executive team already in place exemplify the strides already being taken within Government and the potential to develop this further.

Critically the **INVESTUARY** inward investment platform will provide the scheme pipeline and opportunities supporting emerging relationships with international investors and businesses and provide the Growth Board Members and project owners with the tools they need when making initial contact.

The Global Works roadmap ties together existing strands and opportunities to produce a strong strategic framework for growth and plan for action.

The roadmap set out (and detailed in Appendix 1) shows how the Thames Estuary will raise its international profile and engage globally in promoting local opportunities for investment and growth.

This roadmap was written and produced by **Professor Francis Davis and David Godfrey** with research and operational support from Joe Fyans and Jonathan Werran at Localis and Katherine Reynolds and the entire team at the Thames Estuary Growth Board.

Sincere thanks are also due to Peter Hogg, John Batten, Jordan Flynn and teams at Arcadis for their work on the Global Estuaries Network.



Localis is an independent think tank for putting place at the centre of politics and policy. Its work promotes no-localist ideas through research, events and commentary, covering a range of local and domestic policy issues.



Arcadis is the world's leading company delivering sustainable design, engineering and consultancy solutions for natural and built assets. Arcadis is more than 29,000 people in over 70 countries dedicated to improving quality of life.



University of Roehampton is an established international higher-education institution providing a high-quality learning and research experience with the aim of developing personal growth and driving social change. It has one of the most diverse and thriving communities of students in the UK.



University of Oxford
Supported by academics from Kellogg College, Oxford.

APPENDIX 1: GLOBAL WORKS DELIVERY PLAN

No	Actions	Deliverables/outputs	Milestones	Dates
1.	Launch Global Works programme	Proposal to Board outlining programme Global Works Report/Roadmap Publication of Report/Roadmap Media plan/coverage	Board agreement Completion of Global Works report Westminster launch with Minister(s) Joint media – Thames Estuary Envoy and Thames Estuary Ministerial Champion	Feb 2023 Feb 2023 Feb/Mar 2023 Feb/Mar 2023
2.	Identify/agree priority partnerships	Apply planning matrix to identify potential partner regions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify key opportunities based on commonalities eg geography, sectors Agree bespoke approach enabling partnerships to be escalated and flow between approaches according to potential: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Estuaries Network Pipeline potential Innovation partnerships 	Long list of partnerships and potential Bespoke partnership plan agreed for each identified region	Mar/Apr 2023 Mar/Apr 2023
3.	Scope and resource Estuary outreach programmes	Launch agreed outreach programmes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Envoy Outreach Global Estuaries Network Board Outreach Local diplomacy INVESTUARY 	Outreach programmes linked to agreed approaches above	Mar 2023

No	Actions	Deliverables/outputs	Milestones	Dates
4.	Implement Envoy Outreach mission programme	<p>Agree 3 major investment missions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MIPIM – Mar 2023 • New York/Boston/Detroit – June 2023 • Mexico/Japan/S Africa (tbc) – Nov/Dec 2023 <p>Report on achievements/outcomes and agree mission follow-ups and implement action</p>	<p>Objectives agreed, programme agreed</p> <p>Objectives agreed, programme agreed</p> <p>Objectives agreed, programme agreed</p> <p>Board report</p>	<p>Feb/Mar 2023</p> <p>Mar/Apr 2023</p> <p>Sept/Oct 2023</p> <p>Apr, Jul & Dec 2023</p>
5.	Launch London Embassies programme	<p>Launch the “world is here – here is the world” programme of targeted engagements to international embassies/missions based in London</p> <p>Agree targeted programme of engagement to support and develop international partnerships and opportunities as above</p>	<p>Ambassador events to launch at National Gallery private view</p> <p>Board report</p>	<p>Feb, Mar 2023</p> <p>Apr/May 2023</p>

No	Actions	Deliverables/outputs	Milestones	Dates
6.	Establish Global Estuaries Network	<p>Draft terms of reference, including measures</p> <p>Agree founder membership</p> <p>Initial meeting programme and locations proposed (for agreement at first meeting of Network)</p> <p>Launch in New York in June, the first “International Day of Great Estuary Cities” including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public launch • Investment, trade and innovation focus • Meeting schedule (6- monthly, alternating between in person/virtual) <p>White Paper programme and leads agreed for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hydrogen • Freeports and global free trade • Growth/Resilience – delivering good green growth and resilience eg from flooding <p>Also to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levelling Up • Decarbonisation • Best Practice <p>Further meetings and venues to be secured</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dec 2023 – In person • June 2024 – Virtual • Dec 2024 – In person 	<p>Board agreement</p> <p>Agreement from founder members secured</p> <p>Initial programme agreed with founder members</p> <p>Programme and event arrangements agreed</p> <p>White paper programme published</p> <p>Meeting schedule/ venues agreed/ booked to 2024</p>	<p>Mar 2023</p> <p>Mar/Apr 2023</p> <p>Mar/Apr 2023</p> <p>Apr/May/ Jun 2023</p> <p>Jun/Jul 2023</p> <p>Jul 2023</p>

No	Actions	Deliverables/outputs	Milestones	Dates
7.	Implement Board Outreach programme	Board members linked to partnerships (as appropriate) to develop relationships Major conference opportunities identified for Board attendance (recognising the many additional networks Board members are part of or can access)	Board report and support arrangements agreed Board report and support arrangements agreed	Jun 2023 Jun 2023
8.	Implement Local Diplomacy Programme	Further strengthen relationships with DIT, UK Consulate and other representatives Secure engagement from DIT and FCDO support to engage with Embassies, Consulates, Ministerial Visits, and other outreach in a seamless plan for each partner region Establish link with Government backed pan-regional partnerships Agree ongoing programme (potentially) including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day to day tracking of central departments advocating for enhanced support to TEGB and other levelling up priority areas Regular engagement with relevant UK ministers/officials with global and global investment and '(inter) national and new industry, HE/skills, etc responsibilities (as appropriate) Day to day outreach to local councils and parliamentarians with international oriented briefs/duties 	Brief on Global Works programme Brief Minister/officials on Global Works programme Agreement with DIT on joint working around trade missions and outreach Meeting with regional chairs Board report	Feb/Mar 2023 Feb/Mar 2023 Jun/Jul 2023 Feb 2023 Apr/May 2023

No	Actions	Deliverables/outputs	Milestones	Dates
9.	Launch INVESTUARY	Development of inward investment platform Identification and development of pipeline of investable projects	Launch at UK Real Estate Investment & Infrastructure Forum (UKREiFF)	May 2023
10.	Reporting and assessment	Assessment against agreed measures report to Board Inclusion in "State of the Estuary" public reporting	Board agreement	Mar 2024

APPENDIX 2: SUPPORTING DELIVERY

Function	Form	Finance
Development of Global Works and Local Diplomacy programme/policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of overall programme, oversight and management • Primary links to DIT, FCDO, UK Consulate, etc • Liaison with executive team specialists • Board reporting • Identification of global events • Advisor to Envoy, including international meeting schedule 	In-house and specialist support	Thames Estuary Growth Board Delivery Plan
Support of Global Estuaries Network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of events • Meeting programme and arrangements • Links with host Estuaries • Support of day to day relationships • Maintenance of database including monitoring of opportunities/developments 	Enhanced in-house capacity and/or agency	Thames Estuary Growth Board Delivery Plan
Support of Envoy Outreach programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Envoy travel programme and arrangements • Envoy meeting diary • Arrangement of Ambassador and London events 	In-house capacity	Thames Estuary Growth Board Delivery Plan
Support of Board outreach programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular briefing on linked Estuaries • Support of event attendance/presentations • Links to Board travel programme (as appropriate) 	In house capacity and specialist support	Thames Estuary Growth Board Delivery Plan
Development, launch and maintenance of INVESTUARY	Agency and in-house capacity	Thames Estuary Growth Board Delivery Plan
Media and public affairs support	Agency	Thames Estuary Growth Board Delivery Plan

APPENDIX 3: KEY CONVERSATIONS AND 'PIPELINE OPPORTUNITIES'

Existing Contacts/Anarchy Window	Global Estuaries Network	Estuary Valleys
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detroit and Chicago • South Africa • Stockholm • Hamburg • Mexico • Pakistan • Others?? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amsterdam • Boston • Bristol • Hamburg • Hong Kong • New York • Rotterdam • San Francisco • Teesside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finland • Rotterdam • Hamburg • Belgium • Northern Netherlands • Kobe/Kansai, Japan • Neom, Saudi Arabia • Freemantle, Perth • Bushveld and Platinum Valley Corridor, South Africa • Northern Cape Green, South Africa • Rio Negro, Argentina • California, USA
INVESTUARY Prospects	Major Import Routes	Major Export Routes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mexico • Sweden • The Netherlands • UK • USA • Japan • Germany • Singapore • Hong Kong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germany • Netherlands • Belgium • Turkey • China • Italy • Spain • Romania • France • Kuwait 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belgium • China • Nigeria • Russia • Mexico • Spain • Bangladesh • Germany • Finland • Netherlands



CONTACT

The Thames Estuary is the UK's number one Government-backed growth opportunity. Led by Kate Willard OBE, Chair and Estuary Envoy, the Thames Estuary Growth Board is a dynamic private-public sector Board who are driving Good, Green Growth at pace across the Estuary.

For further information, please visit:
[THAMESESTUARY.ORG.UK](https://thamesestuary.org.uk)

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