

## Press Notice

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01 AM – MONDAY 14 OCTOBER 2024**

London, 14 October 2024

### **Ambitious new plan to drive fair economic growth launches in Parliament**

The [Thames Estuary Growth Board's Five Point Plan for Fair Growth and Investment](#) was launched Monday, at an event at the Houses of Parliament, sponsored by Jim Dickson MP, featuring prominent speakers including Julia Prescott CBE, Jim Dickson MP, Will Snell, and Chris Paddock. This comprehensive action plan, combining in-depth socio-economic research with actionable strategies, outlines how the Estuary can tackle its challenges and unlock sustainable, inclusive growth that benefits everyone.



This report calls for a reimagining of growth in the Thames Estuary, focusing on fairness and inclusivity as core components of economic development, structured around five critical areas of work:

- **Better Evidence** – Committing to robust research to understand fairness and support impactful action.
- **Stronger Voice** – Amplifying underrepresented voices to foster trust and enable a fairer future for all Estuary residents.
- **Fairness First** – Ensuring fairness is a priority in all investment and partnership decisions across the Estuary.
- **Challenging Norms** – Removing barriers, promoting new approaches, and tackling issues like racial and generational inequality.
- **Empowering Grassroots** – Supporting community organizations to address unfairness with greater resources and fewer obstacles.

Despite its proximity to London, the Thames Estuary is home to some of the most persistent pockets of deprivation in the UK. In certain areas, nearly 30% of children live in poverty, and house prices have skyrocketed by 89%, putting affordable housing out of reach for many. Large sections of the population are cut off from essential services, with crumbling infrastructure and declining public transport making it harder for residents to access jobs and opportunities. While jobs have increased by 22% in the last decade, many of these are low-paid, insecure roles that don't provide a viable path out of poverty.

But the Estuary also presents extraordinary potential. As the UK's number one growth area, it boasts unparalleled proximity to London, a diverse and expanding population, and a rich industrial heritage. Towns and cities in the region have strong foundations—ideal locations for investors, developers, and innovators. The challenge now is to ensure that future growth is not just ambitious but fair.

Kate Willard OBE, Chair of the Thames Estuary Growth Board said: *"We know that economic growth is critical, but it has to be fair. The Estuary is brimming with potential, but unless we address these entrenched inequalities, that potential will remain out of reach for too many. This plan offers a way forward—a way to deliver growth that lifts up everyone, not just a few."*

Jim Dickson MP for Dartford said: *"I am immensely proud to support the Thames Estuary Growth Board's Five-Point Plan for Fair Growth and Investment. This report outlines a bold vision for our region, one that prioritises fairness and addresses the long-standing challenges that have held back areas like Dartford. By tackling inequality and fostering inclusive growth, we are building a brighter future not only for Dartford and the Thames Estuary but for the entire nation. Today marks the beginning of a transformative journey."*

#### **Key Statistics:**

- Nearly 1 in 5 jobs in the Estuary pays below the living wage, with certain areas dominated by low-paid, insecure work.
- 30% of children live in poverty in some parts of the Estuary.
- House prices have surged by 89%, far outpacing wage growth and making housing unaffordable for many residents.

The Thames Estuary Growth Board's Five Point Plan provides a roadmap for tackling these systemic issues, driving fair growth, and ensuring the region remains a top destination for investors, developers, and communities alike.

For more information on how to get involved and support this transformative agenda, visit [thamesestuary.org.uk](https://thamesestuary.org.uk).



**Kate Willard OBE, Thames Estuary Envoy and Chair of the Thames Estuary Growth Board - available for interview**

Kate Willard OBE, the government appointed Thames Estuary Envoy and Chair of the Thames Estuary Growth Board, is available for media interviews.

As a recognised leader in investment and growth, with a focus on driving fair economic growth in the Thames Estuary region, Kate is keen to talk about the work in this groundbreaking new report and provide insights on how it can deliver fair growth and attract much needed investment to the region.

For interview requests, please contact Hannah Staunton, Director of Communications at the Thames Estuary Growth Board

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## Notes to Editors:

### About the Thames Estuary Growth Board

The Thames Estuary Growth Board is dedicated to unlocking the economic potential of the Thames Estuary. By fostering collaboration, driving investment, and spearheading innovative development projects, the Board is committed to transforming the Estuary into a thriving, sustainable, and economically vibrant region.

The Growth Board works to engage national and international investors, showcasing the Estuary's potential as a prime location for investment. Through targeted initiatives, the board will highlight key development sites, foster investor relations, and drive forward the region's economic prospects.

The Growth Board remains steadfast in its commitment to driving growth that is not only economically beneficial but also equitable and environmentally sustainable. Through these strategic initiatives and the dedicated support of our stakeholders, we are setting the stage for a brighter, more prosperous future for the Thames Estuary.

An embargoed copy of the report is available for download here: <https://we.tl/t-erQWhL8kce>

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