

Appendix E: Baseline of the Erith geographic region

The Erith geographic region is made up of the cluster of neighbourhoods within the following wards: Colyers, Erith, North End and Northumberland Heath. It is located in the Thames Gateway, Europe's largest area for regeneration. Part of the area is located within the Bexley Riverside Opportunity Area, a London Plan Designation, which highlights clusters of specialist industrial uses, along with residential areas where there is opportunity for renewal and environmental improvement. The town has significant scope for intensification and renewal, particularly for retail and leisure uses. It also has good accessibility to employment areas in Belvedere and central London.

Compared to the rest of the borough this geographic region suffers from high levels of multiple deprivation, particularly in North End ward. There is a need for environmental improvements, in the residential neighbourhoods, Erith town centre, industrial areas and riverside. Other issues include tackling congestion on the main roads, the need for railway station access improvements, addressing deficiencies in open space provision and biodiversity, and the need to improve green links and air quality. Tidal flooding issues, along with fluvial and surface water flooding, have been identified throughout the area and need to be addressed.

Erith town centre lies on the River Thames and is the main retail and service centre for the area, surrounded by a mix of residential areas of varying character and quality, and employment areas that provide a variety of uses from heavy industry to storage. Slade Green, to the east of Erith, is characterised predominantly by mainly poorer quality residential development, relatively high unemployment and poor health. There are issues of isolation, poor local amenities, traffic congestion and lack of accessibility, including a lack of crossing points at major transport routes, along with areas at risk of flooding.

There is a variety of jobs in the area with two large industrial areas in Slade Green although the Darent Industrial Estate is isolated by the Crayford Marshes and the River Thames and Darent. The green infrastructure of Crayford Marshes and rivers is a significant biodiversity asset. This land is also designated as Metropolitan Green Belt.

The baseline for the area is summarised in Table E.3. Map E.4 presents the boundary of the Erith geographic region and associated infrastructure.

Baseline information for Erith geographic region	
Population profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income: Earnings are generally less than much of the rest of the borough, with North End and parts of Colliers having the lowest incomes. • Deprivation: The area is generally characterised by very high levels of multiple deprivation. An exception to this is a small area to the west of the cluster. Many parts of the cluster have experienced an increase in multiple deprivation levels. • Location: The area is wholly located within the Thames Gateway, which is Europe's largest area for regeneration.
Physical characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topography: The focus of the area is the convergence of two different areas of marshland (Crayford and Erith Marshes) at Erith, where the heath land ridge meets the river Thames. Northumberland Heath is located in the heath land element. • Ground water: There are no Zone 1 source protection zones, which would impinge on future development. • Surface water: The whole area has the potential for sustainable urban drainage systems use. Some areas require pumping to keep water levels down (e.g. Europa Industrial Estate). There is also the potential for ponding to occur around North End, as well as Slade Green railway

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	<p>station.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flood zone: New development in Slade Green will face challenges regarding fluvial, tidal and surface water flooding. Significant areas of flood zone 3 are located north of the railway line and to either side of Erith town centre.
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rail services: There are two railway lines and three railway station serving the area at Erith, Slade Green and Barnehurst. • Public Transport Accessibility Levels: Generally, the maximum public transport accessibility levels in the area are in Erith town centre, and at Slade Green and Barnehurst railway stations, where level 3 is reached. This falls quickly away however, dropping to very low levels of accessibility for the rest of the cluster. There is no public transport to the Crayford Ness Employment Area. • Transport Modes: The main road route in the area is Bronze Age Way, which has significant volumes of traffic in both directions, particularly in the Erith area, where average traffic speeds also slow significantly. Transport initiatives would have a positive impact on traffic congestion levels in the North End area. • Strategic Rail Hub: 67 hectares of Metropolitan Green Belt land has been approved for a strategic rail freight terminal at Slade Green, close to the borough boundary. This development would also bring transport infrastructure improvements.
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenure: Private rent stock levels are relatively high when compared to the rest of the borough, with an increase in Erith having taken place between 2001 and 2008. • Price: The cluster is generally characterised by relatively lower housing prices, and this area has the lowest average house prices in the borough. • Housing suitability: Generally, this area has the highest levels of people in unsuitable housing in the borough, with up to 30% of residents being unsuitably housed. • Housing sites: There are a good number of potential housing sites in the area with 1252 potential units currently identified. The sites include some of the largest in the borough. Two-thirds of sites are likely to come forward in the latter part of the plan period. • Housing Association Properties: There are significant amounts of housing association properties in the cluster, and it also has the highest concentration of any area.
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Style: On the heath land properties are mainly inter-war, low-density semi-detached and detached family housing with comparatively large gardens. Extending south-west from Erith towards Northumberland Heath is a swathe of Victorian housing, ranging from large, detached, low density villas to higher density workers terraced housing. In low lying areas, a mix of older, high-density, terraced properties, and higher-rise, high density flatted development, as well as lower quality family housing predominates. Given the traditional nature of much of the industrial areas, particularly those which front the River Thames in Erith and Belvedere, there is a blend of expansive units and heavy industry. • Quality: Generally, the residential properties located in the cluster have not been built to high levels of sustainable design and construction. • Height: The vast majority of buildings are two-storied in nature. However, there are significant areas of higher rise development, including Lerner Road and Arthur Street, as well as parts of Erith, particularly along the River Thames. Even within the mainly two to three storied residential areas, there are pockets of higher rise flats.

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Town centres and retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erith is the area's main town centre, which is designated as a major district centre. There is a district centre located at Northumberland Heath. • Erith town centre has been subject to significant redevelopment in recent decades. It has capacity for additional convenience goods offering. The town centre suffers from high vacancy rates, and this has been an enduring situation over a number of years. By contrast, Northumberland Heath enjoys very low vacancy rates.
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2125 jobs are anticipated in the Erith cluster over the plan period, with most coming forward during the last five years of the plan. • This area includes traditional industrial areas that are adjacent to the River Thames. Accordingly, some of the highest levels of both industrial and warehousing jobs occur in these areas, while parts of the south west of the area have low levels of jobs. • Approximately 11,000 jobs are currently located in the cluster, which are distributed across the area and not focussed in any particular location. • The area is characterised by comparatively high levels of unemployment. Levels of unemployment are higher in areas located in the north-western part of the borough, however. • The cluster has the highest number of Primary Employment Areas. There are seven safeguarded wharves located in the cluster, and most continue to serve a key industrial role. • 67 hectares of green belt land is approved for a strategic rail freight terminal, which should boost employment in the area.
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although there are significant areas of open space in the cluster, there are still areas of open space deficiency and deficiency in access to nature. The main area is an arc beginning from Northumberland Heath and extending northwards toward the centre of the area (including much of Erith town centre) and then heading east and south along the River Thames. • A significant area of Metropolitan Green Belt is located in the east of the area, including Crayford Marshes. However, 67 hectares of this land is approved for a strategic rail freight terminal. Within the built up area, most of the open space is park land and playing fields. • The River Darent extends north-south along the eastern edge of the area. The River, along with Crayford Marshes and the River Thames has high nature conservation value.
Historic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are five Conservation Areas in the cluster, and 47 listed buildings, several of which are located in the Lesney Park Road Conservation Area, which is characterised by large detached and semi-detached villas with a landscape of mature trees. The major landmark within this Conservation Area is Christ Church and its imposing spire. • Between Slade Green and Crayford Marshes lies a Scheduled Ancient Monument, Howbury Moat, dating from c. 900, and the Grade II Listed Tithe Barn (c. 1600s). The moat originally surrounded the Howbury Manor House. • The area around Oak Road and Moat Lane near Slade Green railway station lies within a Conservation Area, and includes the locally listed Railway Tavern (1a Moat Lane). These houses and the tavern, recently converted into flats, were built by Smith & Sons of South Norwood around the year 1899, and were notable for being illuminated by electricity. • Significant parts of the east of the borough are designated for archaeological importance.

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Services and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area generally has sufficient levels of services and facilities, including a modern leisure centre. There is a lack of health facilities in the area, however. • Erith town centre offers a well established theatre, and there are three libraries in the cluster. • Erith Yacht Club is located in the River Thames, to the east of Erith. It aims to provide an affordable sailing venue to all ages and abilities, and to encourage development of sailing skills through training programmes.
Carbon reduction potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erith town centre and its surroundings has been identified as a location for a potential heat network with Erith Western Gateway acting as a hub. A potential heat network has also been identified in North End. • Wind turbines may be appropriate on Manor Road Estate and Holyhill Park, as well as Belvedere Industrial Area.
Thames-side	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area to the south of the Thames, including much of the area to the north of the A206 road, is designated as the Thames Policy Area. This designation recognises the important part to be played by this area in the economic development and environmental improvement of the Thames and of greater London. Of particular note in this area is The Saltings, where development is constrained given the importance of the remnants of the riverside salt marsh and pastures, with an associated dyke system. It supports a diverse wildlife, including several rare species. • Crayford Marshes are of particular London-wide nature conservation value.

Table E.3: Baseline information for Erith geographic region

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Map E.4: Boundary of the Erith Geographic Region, with Associated Infrastructure

