

## Competition winners unlock £250m investment for Thames Gateway South Essex

<b>Date of issue</b>	24 September 2007
<b>Publication number</b>	155
<b>Embargo until</b>	immediate

Keys to unlock a £250 million regeneration package to transform skills and vocational learning for young people in Thames Gateway South Essex were handed over this week to the winners of two unique Competitions for Basildon and Thurrock.

Competition entrants had competed to find new ways of providing top quality local learning and vocational training in south Essex.

Both Competitions were managed by the Learning and Skills Council, Essex (LSC Essex) which is committed to transforming further education provision in the Thames Gateway South Essex. They announced the winning bidders this week.

The winners will be in the forefront of learning-led regeneration in the Thames Gateway South Essex. They are in line for learning contracts worth millions of pounds over the next five years.

The announcement of the winners paves the way for the construction of innovative new College buildings on two separate campuses with outstanding facilities to transform learning for 16-19-year-olds in Basildon and Thurrock.

It will mean thousands of young people in Basildon and in Thurrock can gain relevant skills to make the most of unprecedented opportunities presented by the creation of tens of thousands of new, highly-skilled jobs which are planned for the future of the Thames Gateway area.

Millions of pounds of new capital building money will be invested in building new further education facilities in Basildon and Thurrock town centres - with two new campuses to support high quality vocational learning.

These new buildings - which will complement existing provision - will sit at the heart of the regeneration of south Essex.

In Basildon, the winning Consortium will be led by SEEVIC College.

The Basildon winners will develop four centres of excellence for sport and recreation; health, social care and medical technologies; business administration and financial services; engineering.

The new capital cash boost will play a major role in the £1 billion regeneration of Basildon town centre, one of the largest regeneration projects in both the Thames Gateway and the UK.

In Thurrock the winning Consortium will be led by the South East Essex College.

It will focus on creative and cultural skills; retail and customer service; construction and the built environment.

Councillor Malcolm Buckley, Leader of Basildon Council, said:

"We are committed to raising education standards in the District and we are delighted to welcome yet more investment into the area. Raising standards and aspirations of our young people is vital to the future of Basildon.

"This investment will not only help to raise attainment levels and standards of education, it will also be a major catalyst in the £1 billion regeneration of Basildon town centre, and see the creation of a world class college campus in the heart of the town.

"Basildon is alive with opportunity, and it is for this reason that we continue to attract continued investment into the area, in key business services, town centres, and now education."

Jan Hodges, Principal and Chief Executive of South East Essex College, said:

"These new developments will help to raise skill levels, increase the career opportunities for local people and contribute to the ambitious and exciting regeneration plans for the area."

Geoff Arnott, Principal and Chief Executive of SEEVIC College, said: "The Basildon Consortium is delighted with the news that our proposals have been accepted. We can now look forward to working with our wider partners in

developing new learning opportunities for the young people over the age of 16 in Basildon District.”

Palmer’s College Principal, Mark Vinall, said: "We are delighted to be part of the successful consortium and look forward to developing new creative and cultural learning opportunities in Thurrock that will complement our outstanding Sixth Form provision."

Another outcome of the Competition will be to provide clear vocational learning routes into higher education and raise the status of vocational learning to match the more traditional academic routes into local universities. This will create opportunities for more young people to progress into High Education which can be delivered locally in Thurrock and in Basildon.

The cash boost will place the two communities at the forefront of the economic regeneration of the Thames Gateway South Essex.

LSC Essex’s Area Director, Janice Logie, says: “This week’s announcements of the winning consortia will make a positive difference to the FE sector for 16-19 year-olds who will now benefit from an exciting range of education and training in world-class facilities.

“The Competitions were a significant tool to help the LSC to address the skills agenda in the Thames Gateway South Essex, but they are just one part of a wider picture of investment and improvement.

“Those wider initiatives, together with the outcomes of the Competitions’ process, ensure a better future for the young people of south Essex and for the local workforce, both now and in the future.

“The announcement means the real start of things changing on the ground, with learning-led regeneration and unprecedented opportunities for young people in Thurrock and in Basildon.

“We congratulate the winning Consortia which can now look forward to a new and exciting future, bringing significant investment into local communities and enhancing the quality of learning, particularly in specific skills sectors. “

For further information and guidance, visit the website on [http://www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/EastofEngland/whatwedo/16-19\\_essexcompetition.htm](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/EastofEngland/whatwedo/16-19_essexcompetition.htm)

Or email [essexcompetition@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:essexcompetition@lsc.gov.uk) or phone 01245 550146

For press inquiries - contact Anne Sherer Broom on 01206 548100 or  
anne@mosaicpublicity.co.uk

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world-class standards. Our vision is that by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. Established in 2001, we work nationally, regionally and locally from a network of offices across the country