

Infrastructure and Regeneration

North Kent

Dartford

The Borough of Dartford is situated at the heart of the Thames Estuary growth area in northwest Kent. It stands at a pivotal point between Greater London, Kent and Essex. It has excellent connections to central London, the rest of the south-east and UK and the continent via the strategic road and rail network crossing the Borough. The intersection of the A2 and M25 and the Dartford Crossing provide a unique locational advantage helping attract investment interest and drive strong growth in the area.

Dartford has one of the fastest growing populations in England. Economic indicators highlight the Borough's strong economy, with Dartford in the top 5% of the country for the employment rate of the working age population. Dartford's economic strengths are also demonstrated by its ranking in the national top 20% for GVA per head, workplace earnings and job density.

Reflecting this, Dartford railway station is now the best used station in Kent. The station is also set to benefit from the connection with Crossrail (Elizabeth Line) tube services at Abbey Wood with a 12 minute journey time from Dartford and serving Canary Wharf, the West End and Heathrow. The first Elizabeth Line services are due to start next year. Working in partnership Dartford Borough Council (DBC) is lobbying to build on this connection with the proposed 'C2E' (Connectivity to Ebbsfleet) project, with the government overseeing the development of a Business Case in support of scheme delivery.

New A2 Bean and Ebbsfleet junctions have now been approved, with work on site underway. The improvements

will serve the new demand generated by major development at Ebbsfleet Garden City, including the Whitecliff site (the former Eastern Quarry), Ebbsfleet Green, Ebbsfleet International Station and the proposed large mixed use development at Ebbsfleet Central. It will also ease access to Bluewater, the regional shopping centre. The Borough will also benefit from the upgrade to the national road network that will occur with the proposed Lower Thames Crossing (completion due 2027). The new highway will cross the river east of Tilbury and Gravesend, linking the M25 near North Ockenden, Essex, with the A2/M2 near Shorne. It will relieve the Dartford Crossing and increase the resilience of the surrounding road system.

Particular progress has been made in taking forward private and public investment in Dartford Town Centre. The Dartford Town Centre Framework sets an expectation for a high standard of development as the town centre grows, identifying improvements to the town's accessibility and environment. The opportunity for around 5,000 new homes will significantly support the future vibrancy of the town.



Proposal for Market Square, Dartford.

Private investment on key sites providing new leisure and retail facilities is being complemented by £12m of public funding for transport and public realm improvements:

- a much enhanced and pedestrian friendly new square for the town. This work will be complete in autumn 2020 creating an attractive landscaped area linking the High Street with Central Park and revamping of the High Street
- further phases of environmental improvement works to ease movement into the town centre are scheduled to commence in January 2021.

Dartford was successful in its initial bid for Future High Streets Funding, opening up the opportunity to share in the £675m pot. The Council is focused on complementing the existing programme of improvements with repurposing surplus retail space for other town centre uses and working closely with partners to ensure the success of the final stage bid.

A comprehensive mixed-use redevelopment to significantly enhance the town centre's leisure and retail offer has been put forward for the Westgate/Hythe Street site by Muse, on the site in the heart of the town centre jointly owned by HCA/DBC. A cinema, hotel, range of commercial uses, residential and community space is proposed, with the planning application received in early 2020.

Residential development immediately to the north of the town centre continues at the award-winning Langley Square and Phoenix Quarter sites. There is strong developer interest in this area and further sites are expected to be brought forward.

On the southern edge of the town centre, at Lowfield Street, construction is well underway on the first two phases at 'Copperhouse Green' comprising 1,500m² (16,146ft²) of retail and community floorspace, offices, around 550 new homes overlooking Central Park and a micro-brewery and café facing on to the new public square. The uptake of properties for sale in the new Copperhouse Green, encouraged Bellway to put forward further proposals to continue the regeneration of the east of Lowfield Street. This will extend the development to approximately 700 new homes in total and support the continued rejuvenation of Dartford town centre.

Strong economic development interest in Dartford is highlighted by plans moving forward for a state-of-the-art storage and distribution facility for Amazon, with floorspace in excess of 200,000m² (2,152,782ft²), on the site of the former Littlebrook Power Station and granted permission in June 2020. The supply and take-up of new business and industrial premises is still growing rapidly. Major new units have been recently completed at key locations such as The Bridge and Questor Industrial Estate. Construction activity continues for additional space at Crossways and Littlebrook. At Bluewater, the centre has permission to provide an additional 30,000m² (322,917ft²) of floorspace, helping to maintain its status as one of the UK's premier shopping centres. Early phases have been implemented providing larger retail units within the centre.

Opportunities in the Borough are assisted by an up-to-date Local Plan guiding development, maintaining a consistent future 5 year housing land supply and a well-developed Infrastructure Plan. Funding mechanisms, including CIL, are in place to bring forward the infrastructure required to support new development.

For further information:

www.c2ecampaign.com

www.discoverdartford.co.uk

www.dartford.gov.uk

Thames Estuary

The Thames Estuary Growth Board comprises 20 members, drawn from private and public sectors, including Local Authorities and led by Estuary Envoy Kate Willard. The Board has been established following the Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission report in March 2019 which set out ambitions for 1.3 million new jobs and a £190bn boost to the local economy.

A new action plan, The Green Blue (green growth using the important blue waterway of the Thames) was launched on the 21 July by the Thames Estuary Growth Board. A 3-minute launch video can be viewed at www.thamesestuary.org.uk.

Key targets are increasing freight & passenger transport by 25% and 50% over a 5 year period. The document sets



London Resort Masterplan: night-time image of proposals for a theme park on Swanscombe Peninsula.

out plans for the next two years and looks ahead over the next ten, with 30 projects in development across sectors including transport, infrastructure, leisure and culture. A bid has also been formulated to establish a Freeport in Kent which would provide different customs rules to other UK ports as well as planning reforms, funding for infrastructure improvements and innovation incentives.

For more information:

thamesestuary.org.uk

London Resort

A recent consultation exercise by LRCH has set out their plans to create the resort on Swanscombe Peninsula. The main elements of the proposals include a Leisure Core (comprising two theme park gates) with themed rides and attractions, entertainment, dining and retail; four large hotels; a Conference Centre, Water Park and eSports centre.

A Development Consent Order application for the 465ha (1,150 acres) proposals is due to be submitted directly to central government by the end of 2020 and with a phased approach, Gate One will open in 2024, followed by Gate Two in 2029.

In 2019, PY Gerbeau was appointed Chief Executive of London Resort Company Holdings (LRCH) and a new partnership was signed with Paramount Pictures, to join existing agreements with BBC Studios and ITV Studios.

Infrastructure and Regeneration

Continued

Gravesham

Gravesham is located at the heart of the Thames Estuary growth gateway and is poised to benefit from major infrastructure, leisure and regeneration projects in the advanced stages of planning and to be delivered over the next 5 years and beyond.

With more than 600 new homes granted full planning permission in the summer of 2020 and a mix of new commercial space in the pipeline for Gravesend's riverside town centre, the Borough is well-placed to retain local talent and attract young businesses to its revitalised urban areas by tapping into a shift towards home working and less regular commuting into the capital.

High Speed One rail services direct to Kings Cross/St Pancras in 23 minutes and Stratford in 17 minutes further boost the proposition for Kent's closest town to London by journey time – comparable to Underground Zones Three and Four. Crossrail's extension to Abbey Wood is scheduled to open in the Spring of 2021, which will further improve connections.

A key opportunity for local businesses is the development of new-build commercial space at Northfleet which is in the advanced planning stages, marking a joint venture between Gravesham Borough Council and Ebbsfleet Development Corporation. This is expected to provide around 3,253m²(35,000ft²) of flexible new business units of a range of sizes, to meet demand from SMEs. The scheme will also be able to accommodate training & innovation space to meet opportunities associated with major infrastructure and leisure projects in north Kent.

Northfleet is also set to benefit from a significant new leisure scheme. EUFC Elite Ltd has received planning approval at

the former Bowater Leisure site at Nelson Road for six new playing pitches and a multi-use clubhouse and gym.

Gravesham's rural towns and villages sit astride the North Kent Downs and bridge the gap with west Kent and Sevenoaks. There is interest in new housing and rural business schemes.

Gravesend Town Centre Regeneration

The two-year partnership between Gravesham Borough Council and Reef Group continues to deliver much-anticipated progress on a major mixed-use transformation of the town centre. The masterplan is phased over a number of years and will deliver 102,193m² (1,100,000ft²) of new space.

Following completion of a multi-million programme of refurbishment and improvement works at St George's Shopping Centre in 2019, Gravesham Borough Council and development partners, Reef Group, submitted a full planning application for The Charter. This is a related scheme of 242 new homes in what was formerly referred to as Gravesend's Eastern Quarter, with quality landscaping that will provide an accessible and improved network of routes and spaces which integrate with the neighbouring Gravesend Borough Market Hall. It is believed to be Kent's largest Build to Rent scheme. Construction is due to commence on site early in 2021.

Proposals for St George's Phase II have also recently been revealed and include a 8,733m² (94,000ft²) office building



Proposal for The Charter, Gravesend.

CREDIT: REEF GROUP

which will incorporate a new Civic Centre and public service hub, 500-seat digital theatre/cinema space, 88-bed hotel and a further 155 residential units.

Quinn Estates gained planning approval for Clifton Slipways in July, a contemporary mixed-use project on West Street in Gravesend which promises to ensure that a long-awaited riverside regeneration becomes a reality and is intended to act as a catalyst for further investment in the town centre. The scheme comprises 227 riverside apartments and the adjoining West Street Pier will be refurbished to create Pier Works, a start-up business hub and café.

For further information on Gravesend's development opportunities please contact:
Economic.development@gravesham.gov.uk

Maidstone

Maidstone, the county town and business capital of Kent has a thriving economy. Proximity to major motorways, London and the continent are a few of the reasons businesses continue to choose the borough as its base.

Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) is continuing to invest in the town to ensure that it remains a vibrant and attractive place to work, shop and visit. It is part of a substantial capital programme being delivered by the Council demonstrating its confidence in the Borough, creating jobs, and leveraging in both public and private sector investment.

As the business capital of Kent, Maidstone is open for business and welcomes opportunities to partner with the private sector to deliver housing, commercial space and place shaping initiatives.

Town Centre

Lockmeadow Leisure Complex

MBC secured the head lease of the Lockmeadow Leisure Complex in November last year as a commercial opportunity. It has enabled the Council to actively manage the centre, refresh the complex to help attract and retain tenants and make the venue an attractive and compelling destination for residents and visitors.



CREDIT: G2-ARCHITECTS

Proposal for Maidstone Bus Station after the improvement work.

Refurbishment work to improve the visibility and appearance of the complex is underway. This will give the complex a more modern look, open up the surroundings, and link it to the adjoining Medway riverside area. Lockmeadow has an Odeon multiplex cinema, 18-lane bowling alley, a trampoline park, restaurants and a two-level David Lloyd swimming pool and gym complex.

Maidstone East Railway Station

A refurbished and extended railway station at Maidstone East is currently under construction together with a new landscaped forecourt including wayfinding and public art. Network Rail, together with South Eastern Railways, Kent County Council and Maidstone Borough Council have been working together to transform this gateway site to the town. Due to be completed later in the year, it promises to catch the eye with a 4m (13ft) high Iguanodon steel statue facing the new station, celebrating the discovering of the dinosaur in a local quarry in 1834. The refurbishments to the station include improved cycle parking facilities as part of a £330,000 project to encourage rail commuters to incorporate cycling into their journey. Additional cycle parking spaces have been installed as part of a new cycle hub, as well as CCTV, lighting and repair stands.

Maidstone Bus Station

Plans have been published setting out how the bus station will be transformed from a dark and unwelcoming tunnel to a light, airy and attractive place for bus users. Located under the Mall Shopping Centre, works should start later this year and plans include:

- opening up the concourses to provide more light
- the replacement of lighting fixtures with a new lighting system designed to make the station safer, brighter and to maximise efficiency
- new colour scheme throughout
- new flooring and soffits to the concourses
- new signage at the north and south entrances.

Public Realm improvements

Further work to improve the shopping experience in Maidstone was completed this year as the Council continues its public realm improvements. The pedestrian environments in Week Street and Gabriels Hill were radically improved with new high-quality block paving designs, junction features, landscaping, new seating and cycle racks.

Infrastructure and Regeneration

Continued

Town Centre Opportunity Sites

After detailed work with landowners and other stakeholders, five sets of planning guidelines have been produced and have been adopted as 'material planning considerations' with the objective of promoting and facilitating high quality redevelopment. The purpose of the planning guidance documents is to give a steer to landowners (present and future), as well as their agents and advisors, as to what type of development proposals the Council would favour. All the sites have regeneration potential for a mix of uses over differing timeframes at the following locations:

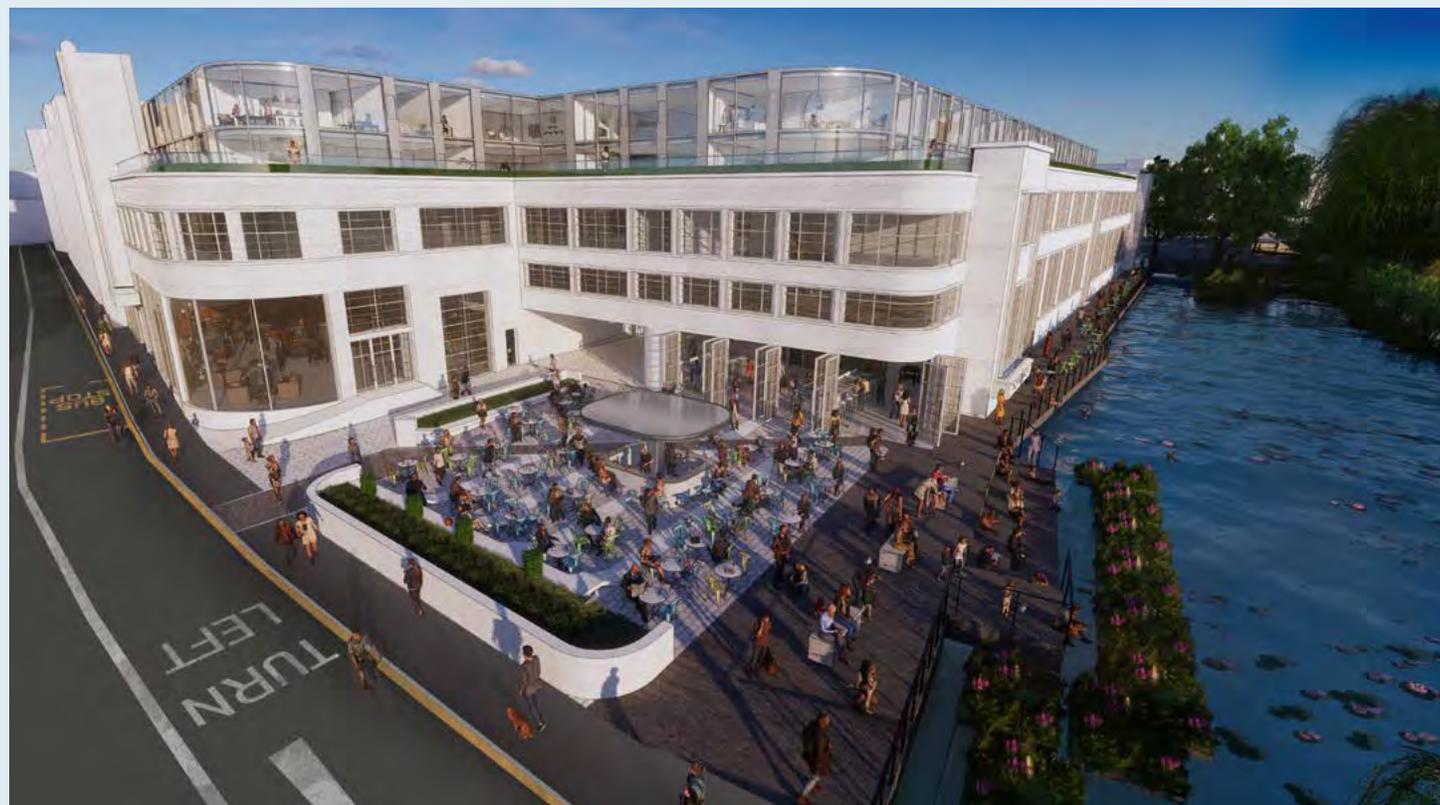
- Gala Bingo and Granada House
- Mote Road
- Len House
- Maidstone Riverside
- Maidstone West

The first of these sites, Len House, has already come forward for development. Plans for the £30m transformation of this Grade II listed landmark have been unanimously approved by the Council. The proposals will see the restoration of Len House on Mill Street for a mix of commercial space and 159 new homes. Award winning architect Guy Hollaway was commissioned by owners, Classicus Estates to create high quality urban living and engaging public spaces.

Commercial

Maidstone Innovation Centre

Construction is well underway on the Council's flagship project to support entrepreneurship, start-ups and encourage small business growth and job creation. Situated beside the M20 at Junction 7, Maidstone Innovation Centre will provide 3,437m² (37,000ft²) of flexible office space, facilities and business support for SMEs operating in the life science, healthcare and med-tech sectors. Once completed, it is expected to support around 270 jobs and generate a further £120m of additional



CREDIT: HOLLAWAY STUDIO

Proposal for Len House. The former Peugeot garage will provide a mix of commercial space and 159 new 1, 2 and 3 bedroom homes.

gross value added to the local economy over the next decade. Works are due to be completed by July 2021.

New M&S Store in Maidstone

MBC has welcomed the new M&S Maidstone Eclipse as a new shopping experience bringing with it employment for 130 local people. Despite difficulties due to COVID-19 the large new concept store located at the Eclipse Park (M20 Junction 7) opened in August offering the community extensive clothing, food and home departments.

The new store is of a high architectural quality with a 'modernist' design yet utilises local materials, in particular, local ragstone. The building is finished to a high specification as are the landscaped surroundings which utilise 'green' technology. Delivering such a high-quality store has been a challenge in the current economic climate but effective partnership working has ensured completion.

Woodcut Farm Business Park

Clearbell Property Partners have acquired a 13.35ha (33acre) greenfield development site in Maidstone for £5m. The site benefits from an outline consent for a 45,430m² (489,000ft²) business park consisting mainly of industrial units with some office space. Located at Junction 8 of the M20, it offers excellent transport links to London and the South. It is also close to Aylesford, which is home to a number of well-established warehouse locations. Following the acquisition, Clearbell's development and project management teams will seek to bring the development forward at pace and embrace the latest green technology in their designs.

Residential

Union/Brunswick Street Residential Developments

The first market sale homes have been sold on the Council led development at Brunswick Street. MBC is in partnership with Purelake New Homes and mhsHomes to redevelop

both Union Street and Brunswick Street sites in the town centre. These two prominent sites will offer 94 units in a mix of market sale, private rent and affordable homes and will complete early in 2021. This ambitious redevelopment project has helped transform the local area by creating a portfolio of high-quality new homes available to communities within the borough. The new homes provide a modern, contemporary finish and offers enough space for couples and families. The work is part of the Council's substantial and ambitious £50m capital housing programme delivering high quality residential properties across the Borough, including homes for social rent.

For more information:

John Foster 01622 602394 or johnfoster@maidstone.gov.uk

Innovation Park Medway (IPM)

Innovation Park Medway will offer circa 100,000m² (over 1m ft²) of high quality, innovative commercial space in a prime location near M2 Junction 3. It will attract high value, knowledge-intensive businesses looking to grow and benefit from access to world-class research and development and highly skilled talent through the cluster of Kent and Medway based universities. Medway Council and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council have also developed draft Local Development Orders (LDOs) which will offer streamlined planning for businesses that locate to the site. These draft LDOs were taken to consultation in June 2019 and, subject to consultation, it is intended that approval to adopt these LDOs will be sought in late 2020. Innovation Park Medway was awarded £4.4m from the Local Growth Fund in 2016 for improvements to airport infrastructure. The second runway

has closed to release valuable commercial development land. A further award of £3.7m has also been made through the Local Growth Fund for access roads and utilities infrastructure on the first phase of the site, with a further allocation for £1.5m to deliver the second phase.

Medway Council will undertake enabling infrastructure works from 2020/21, maximising the Enterprise Zone (EZ) opportunity to reinvest business rates into the IPM site for 25 years. Acceleration will contribute to UK productivity and the quicker realisation of business rate yields, which are important for future Local Authority income streams, particularly with Business Rate Retention. This will accelerate delivery of high GVA jobs. Enabling works will make the site attractive to businesses looking to relocate to the South East. The council will actively market the site during construction, which will attract companies looking to self-build their own custom premises (subject to site design code compliance, but made easier through the Local Development Order (LDO) process). Harrisons have now been appointed to lead on marketing activity.

Medway Development Company

Medway Council has ambitious plans to regenerate and revitalise its urban areas and has therefore created Medway Development Company Ltd. (MDC) to deliver high quality developments and support its regeneration initiatives. The MDC projects include:

Chatham Waterfront

This high-quality, mixed-use development at the Chatham Waterfront site will act as a driver for further regeneration in the area. The focus has been to deliver an exemplar scheme and plans include 175 new homes, new commercial spaces for cafés, restaurants and offices alongside a new public realm to create a vibrant centre for Chatham. The enabling works phase is nearing completion in order to ready the site for foundations and superstructure stages.

White Road

This project will provide 20 family homes with a modern innovative design and built using the latest modular construction techniques. The driver for this scheme was to create high quality affordable homes that exceed statutory standards. The houses maximise light and provide spacious rooms which surpass the national prescribed space



Proposal for Innovation Park Medway.

Infrastructure and Regeneration

Continued

standards. The project will also deliver enhancements to the adjacent Community Centre as well as tree planting to the school playing field behind the site.

The project is progressing well on site and the groundworks are nearing completion, ready for the modular components to be delivered in August 2020. The works are expected to complete autumn 2020 transforming an area which has suffered antisocial behaviour into a high-quality residential scheme.

Whiffens Avenue

Planning permission has been granted to develop 115 new homes on Whiffens Avenue in front of the historic escarpment that provides defences to the buildings of Fort Amherst. The proposed development has a modern, contemporary design sympathetic to the character of the area. The Fort Amherst defensive structures that are covered by vegetation will be revealed to enhance this historic location. The scheme will also lead to significant improvements to the adjacent Town Hall Gardens and the Military Road area and opposite the Brook Theatre. This scheme has completed its enabling works phase and piling works are scheduled to start in September 2020.

Britton Farm Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT)

MDC were commissioned by the Council to project manage the conversion of an empty supermarket premises into new office accommodation to take advantage of MDC's detailed knowledge of this site through developing the adjacent residential scheme. KMPT, part of the NHS, specialise in providing mental health services and the scheme was completed in May. KMPT are now operational within the newly refurbished building. The project is an excellent example of two public sector organisations working in



CREDIT: GUY HOLLAWAY STUDIO

Proposal for Whiffens Avenue development, Chatham.

collaboration, under the One Public Estate programme, which provided funding to review the feasibility of the project.

The NHS service will provide more than 150 employees with new accommodation, allowing them to vacate two other buildings. KMPT's presence in Gillingham is expected to significantly increase footfall for the High Street, which will help support the local businesses in this area.

Britton Farm Residential

Britton Farm will provide 44 new homes with a modern and spacious design. It will deliver a high-quality scheme and forms part of wider regeneration initiatives being implemented in this area such as the KMPT finished earlier this year. Currently structural surveys are being carried out with enabling works later this year.

Chatham Waters – delivery progress 2020/2021

The £650m Chatham Waters development is situated on a unique waterfront location, on the site of the former naval dockyard. Boasting unparalleled views across the Medway Estuary, the Peel L&P regeneration scheme is ideally located with only a 40 minute train journey into central London.

Over the last five years, Peel L&P have invested over £50m into the first few phases of development at Chatham Waters with a further £600m investment in the pipeline. A further £80m has also been invested in the two residential developments.

Consisting of residential, commercial, retail, leisure and education, the dynamic 10.52ha (26acre) destination is already home to a University Technical College, Marston's family restaurant, Asda Superstore and an extensive public realm. To date, approximately 500 new full-time jobs have been created at Chatham Waters.

Working with Medway Council, Peel L&P have created a masterplan to ensure that the regeneration of this former brownfield site delivers a truly inspirational new destination that not only complements but enhances the surrounding area. The new development will form part of Natural England's Coastal Pathways scheme, opening up the waterfront of Chatham Waters for a public walkway and nature trail. Works will soon begin on further public areas for people to relax, socialise and unwind.

Two new exciting additions are being brought forward at Chatham Waters during 2020/2021 which includes around 400 new residential homes:

- Peel L&P's PRS (private rented sector) apartment scheme is to top out in September 2020 and is due to welcome residents in March 2021. Funded by private equity firm Long Harbour, it includes 193 one, two and three-bed apartments over two interconnected blocks linked by ground floor retail units on the waterfront boulevard.

- X1 Chatham Waters, developed by X1, will provide 199 apartments overlooking the Medway Estuary and Water Basin No.3 that will be welcoming residents in December 2020. X1 Lettings, appointed managing agent for the scheme, have a team onsite and are currently facilitating viewings in the show homes with rental interest being registered daily.

The scheme has the potential to deliver circa 176,580m² (1.9m ft²) of floorspace which is similar to the scale of Peel L&P's MediaCityUK development in Salford.



The £33.5 million apartment scheme at Chatham Waters.

Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) Scheme

In September 2017, Medway Council submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) an Expression of Interest for the Housing Infrastructure Fund (Forward Funds) called New Routes to Good Growth (NRGG) project. The £170m bid represented the funding needed to forward fund the transport and environmental infrastructure required to unlock potential new development on the Hoo Peninsula. Following a period of clarifications, MHCLG announced in November 2019 that the NRGG HIF bid was successful in securing Medway Council with £170m forward funding. The HIF funding is allocated across four spend areas:

- SEMS £14.35m
- Rail £63.94m
- Road £85.7m
- Core resource £6.01

With the HIF infrastructure, potentially 10,600 houses will be complete by 2035, meeting 38% of Medway's stated housing need. Due to the expandable rail capacity, the HIF scheme will provide the necessary infrastructure to support the potential delivery of up to 12,100 houses by 2043.

Swale

Covering Sittingbourne, the Isle of Sheppey and Faversham and a large rural area, Swale has consistently been one of Kent's leading areas when it comes to the delivery of new, commercial space and a number of key sites in the Borough have helped drive this. Even in the uncertainty of 2020 there is still a mix of both occupier led and speculative development and interest, particularly in the industrial sector.

The regeneration project in Sittingbourne Town Centre is now also nearing completion. The retail park, delivered as part of Phase 1, was opened fully let in 2018, a new multi-storey car park was completed in September 2019 and the new Travelodge began trading in March 2020. The leisure quarter is nearing completion with the opening of the 8-screen cinema intended for October 2020, along with associated restaurants and now the possibility of 9-lane bowling alley, with plans having been submitted to Swale Borough Council by The Light Cinemas, the operator of the new cinema.

Infrastructure and Regeneration

Continued

Further town centre public realm improvements are being planned, not only for Sittingbourne, but across the Borough's three main town centres. The Council is looking for opportunities to diversify the mix of uses, including residential and a wider commercial mix, where appropriate.

Major mixed-use developments in Faversham are also well underway, at Perry Court and at Love Lane, with housing now being built and marketed. At Perry Court, planning permission for a new ALDI store and 84-bed Premier Inn was granted in October 2019 and construction is also well advanced. It is hoped that at both sites the remaining commercial elements can be bought forward quickly to deliver new employment and take advantage of both sites being well located in relation to the strategic road network, close to M2 Junctions 6 and 7 respectively.

Eurolink Business Park, Sittingbourne continues to be a focus and Phase 5 in particular has seen take up and development of available plots, with a number of significant owner-occupiers now operating from bespoke facilities. Speculative development also continues with Precision 2 Business Park, Eurolink Phase 4. This will bring 20 new light industrial and warehouse units to the market with a mix of sizes and is expected to generate strong interest, reflecting the success of other recent speculative developments.

Peel Port's London Medway terminal, which includes the Port of Sheerness, has expanded its capacity for timber products in the last year. Last summer, the Port achieved a key milestone in the Sheerness Masterplan by opening a new 2,415m² (26,000ft²) timber treatment facility on their Wellmarsh site which has been redeveloped over recent years from its previous purpose as a steel works. The overall £27m investment has made the port the leading terminal in the UK for bulk timbers (1.1m tonnes

of timber and forest products each year), as well as automotive and other sectors.

The Sheerness Dockyard Preservation Trust's project to restore the Grade 2* listed Dockyard Church successfully secured £4.2m from the National Lottery Heritage Fund last year. The project continues to make progress towards delivering a new enterprise centre, community hub, heritage space and event room for hire. The project is on track to start on site shortly.

Alongside the success of the Neatscourt employment development, the wider Queenborough and Rushenden Regeneration Project has seen the build out of the first phase of housing. Future phases are being supported by the injection of £5.1m from the Housing Infrastructure Fund, which will help with site remediation, assist with viability and accelerate delivery. Swale Borough Council has now been able to enter into the Grant Agreement and works are underway.

Whilst not without challenges for the Borough, Swale is also becoming a focus for energy generation. Wheelabrator Kemsley announced in July that they have begun full commercial operation. The waste to energy facility will generate up to 49.9MW (net) of electricity for Kent and the South East by processing 2.2m tonnes of non-recyclable household and commercial waste each year. A Development Consent Order has also been applied to increase output to 66MW (net) and process a further 657,000 tonnes of waste. There are also proposals for a new power station on an adjacent site, Wheelabrator Kemsley North which would process up to 390,000 tonnes of non-recyclable waste each year. Development consent was also recently granted by the government for Cleve Hill, which will include a solar photovoltaic array, electrical storage and connection infrastructure near Faversham across approximately 490 ha. The project is a joint venture project between Hive Energy Ltd and Wirsol Energy Ltd and will generate 50MW.

For more information:
www.swalemeansbusiness.co.uk



Wheelabrator Kemsley waste-to-energy facility.

CREDIT: WHEELABRATOR TECHNOLOGIES