

QUEENBOROUGH & RUSHENDEN MASTERPLAN APPROVED

19 November 2009

The masterplan for the £400m regeneration of Queenborough & Rushenden on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent was formally 'adopted' by Swale Borough Council at a meeting last night (18 November). It sets out a vision for up to 2000 new homes, 2 million sqft of employment space, new healthcare and education facilities, a marina and new public open spaces.

Led by South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), in partnership with Kent County Council and Swale Borough Council, the project is to be realised over the next 10-15 years, creating around 3000 jobs with many more generated throughout the construction process.

SEEDA's Senior Development Executive, Nick Young said: "The masterplan is the result of five years of detailed site analysis, planning and extensive consultation with the community and key stakeholders. Its formal approval brings us a vital step closer to realising the vision for a revitalised Queenborough & Rushenden - bringing jobs and boosting the local economy, connecting neighbourhoods, improving education and local amenities, as well as enhancing the area's historical and ecological qualities."

Queenborough & Rushenden Regeneration is one of the largest planned development schemes in Swale, made possible by the completion of the Sheppey Crossing.

Swale Borough Council Leader Andrew Bowles said: "The masterplan has attracted much public interest and achieved wide community support and its adoption is good news for local people who are keen to see the proposals become a reality.

"We are very pleased with central Government's continuing interest in and commitment to the area, demonstrated most recently by a visit from Shahid Malik MP. Mr Malik was impressed with progress to-date and applauded the ongoing involvement of the community, including local schools, which has from the outset been at the heart of the project."

(more)

The new Rushenden Link Road, a critical component of the masterplan, is currently under construction. Due for completion in 2011 it will connect the A249 with Neats Court - the main employment area identified in the scheme - and redirect heavy goods traffic away from residential areas, providing a much safer and healthier environment.

Local residents and businesses are invited to view the final masterplan for Queenborough & Rushenden and talk to the partners involved on Thursday 3 December. Two 'drop-in' sessions are taking place at The Gateway Community Centre, Rushenden Road, one at lunchtime (12pm to 2pm) and the other in the evening (6pm to 8pm). For further information contact Austin Clays 01795 668 029.

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For media enquiries, please contact: Linda Stevens on 01892 775 777 or 07774 164 837 or by email linda@stevensassociates.co.uk or visit the project website www.qrregen.co.uk

Notes to Editors

The initial stages of regeneration project have been funded by a cash injection of £7million from the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) 'sustainable communities plan', now Communities and Local Government (CLG), and £3million from the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA).

SEEDA is the Government-funded agency responsible for the sustainable economic development of the South East of England – the driving force of the UK's economy. Through supporting businesses, encouraging innovation, developing skills and engaging with public and private partners, we aim to create a successful, sustainable future for the region.

SEEDA's support helped deliver the following over the period 2005-2008:

- 17,500 jobs created or safeguarded
- 32,500 people helped to get work
- 10,000 businesses created or attracted to region
- 137,500 businesses assisted
- £638m investment, 45% levered from private sector
- 200ha Brownfield land remediated
- 148,500 people assisted in skills development

Queenborough & Rushenden Regeneration

Queenborough & Rushenden comprises 161 hectares of land and buildings on both sides of Queenborough Creek, the existing residential and business communities at Rushenden and the employment land at Neats Court. The area has been in steep decline for many years and a combination of poor transport connections and declining employment has resulted in a high degree of deprivation. Despite this, the area benefits from a rich history, attractive setting and a great deal of unlocked potential.

The 'vision' for the masterplan creates a mixed use development which has the potential to support up to 2,000 new homes, split 50/50 between family housing and apartments, all rated as Eco-home Excellent; up to 180,000 sq m of new employment space with the ability to support over 3,000 new jobs; up to 20 hectares of brownfield land; 180 berth Marina and community water space facility; Improved public realm; Provision of new Community/Educational Facilities; 1.5km of new strategic infrastructure; and Development of a Combined Heat & Power Plant (CHP).