

Rochester

Rochester Riverside

The economic downturn continues to slow progress at Rochester Riverside due to the risk averse nature of developers and financial institutions. Officers have continued to work with the HCA and Crest Nicholson, the preferred developer, to bring forward development opportunities at Rochester Riverside which have been hindered by the economic climate.

Hotel and Commercial Quarter

Following the appointment of RHWL Architects Ltd in March 2009, a concept masterplan is due to be completed by the middle of June 2009. This will illustrate a proposed 173-bedroom hotel and associated parking with conference facilities along with a commercial area and public realm. The engineering aspects and costs will then be reviewed and a financial appraisal completed to assess if the scheme is financially viable and whether the site could be remarketed.

Management Company

Officers continue to consider what corporate form the Management Company will take to enable the most tax efficient form of company structure and how the Council can retain a long term controlling stake in any chosen vehicle, should it so wish, without there being a financial burden on the Council.

Professional financial advice has been sought to develop a matrix of options on how the replacement of the river wall can be funded in 75 years time in the most financially advantageous way (tax, etc).

Publicity and Communications

The Mid Kent College Construction Training Facility on Rochester Riverside at Gas House Road has now been completed. The official opening is expected to be at the beginning of July.

The riverside walk continues to prove popular to the general public. The new security contract came into effect from 1 April so the opening hours are now dawn to dusk and will continue as such.

Corporation Street

Architects have been appointed to develop a Public Realm Code for Corporation Street that will help achieve consistency of public realm in the area and improve the quality of the pedestrian environment and public realm and work is currently progressing.

Consultants, Mott Macdonald are currently progressing design work on the Quality Public Transport Corridor (QPTC).

Eastgate House

Medway Renaissance are leading an application to the HCA for funding to bring forward Public Realm improvements at Eastgate House. An application to the HCA for funding is expected to be submitted in July 2009.

Strood

Strood Centre

Strood Centre Infrastructure

Homes and Communities Agency allocated £400,000 in November 2008 to be spent in the financial year 2008-09 on preparatory work for improvements to Strood's infrastructure. The objective is to improve the public realm as well as improvements to accessibility through the congested town centre.

Consultants were procured and appointed. Their brief was to prepare designs to RIBA Stage D level and a Stage D Engineering Study to confirm the feasibility and viability of a series of environmental and infrastructure improvement proposals. Stage D is design development and in detail is equivalent to detailed planning permission.

The consultants have completed their commission on time and within budget. Their recommended interventions to improve the town centre environment are currently being appraised by officers.

Strood Masterplan

The Local Planning Authority has commenced the preparation of an overall masterplan for the central area of Strood. The masterplan is required to:

- Inform and act as an inset to the emerging LDF Core Strategy for Medway.
- Compliment and inform the regeneration activities within and adjoining Strood town centre.
- Inform and guide development decisions and the determination of planning applications in the area.

Temple Waterfront

An outline planning application has been submitted. Lafarge, Medway Council and Morgan Timber jointly own the site.

The application further develops the development brief for the site adopted by the Council as a supplementary planning document in October 2006. The application is for 620 residential units, new buildings for a re-configured timber yard, new commercial space, local leisure and retail facilities and enhanced open space. Morgan Timber will remain on site in improved premises and their business will continue without interruption.

The application is the first in the Thames Gateway to use a planning performance agreement (PPA), a new system designed to simplify and speed up large-scale development proposals. It is a voluntary agreement, drawn up

between developer and local authority, formally setting out what is expected from all parties throughout the planning application process.

The PPA does not affect residents' right to be consulted about the application. Public consultation has been carried out by the Local Planning Authority in the normal way and the planning officers will have time to properly consider all views before reporting to the planning committee.

Chatham

Phase 2 Road Scheme

The phase 2 works include the flyover demolition, and construction of the new public transport route, junction improvements at Gibraltar Hill, Union Street and widening of the Brook. Progress is being made with acquisitions required to facilitate Phase 2 prioritising land at Union Street and along the Brook. Two further sites have now been acquired on the Brook (nos 85 & 87) these are residential properties and these will be let short term until required for the scheme. The car sales site at Union St has also now been acquired, with vacant possession expected at the end of June 2009.

A planning application has now been submitted for the road improvements at Union St and the Brook. Work has also begun on progressing a compulsory purchase order (CPO) for the land required for the Phase 2 road scheme. Whilst much of the land required is either already in Council ownership, or is expected to be purchased by agreement, there are some sites where a CPO may be necessary to secure the land needed. A report was taken to Cabinet on 24 June 2008 when cabinet agreed the phase 2 road scheme and to using CPO powers if necessary to acquire the land required. A report was considered by Cabinet on 31 March 2009 and by Full Council on 16 April 2009 in this regard. Work has now commenced on preparation of the Order.

Contractors (Breheny) are now appointed for the flyover demolition and bus route construction, and work is well underway on the construction of the temporary bus route. The flyover will close to general traffic on 29 June 2009 and demolition of the flyover is expected to start in early July, with the central span of the flyover being removed on 11 and 12 July 2009.

A PR and engagement exercise providing information about the timing of the works and routes affected is ongoing. Customer First and a number of Council departments have been briefed on the proposals so they are prepared to take enquiries. Regular updates are provided in Medway Matters and on the Council's and Medway Renaissance's websites. The second issue of the newsletter to provide information on the date for closure of the flyover is due to be circulated in June.

The mobile exhibition which took place during March was generally well received with over 1700 visitors. A further mobile exhibition is proposed for later this year, in advance of the works at Union St. This activity forms part of a wider public engagement programme to provide information on the development brief as well as the bus station and road scheme, as proposed in the paper considered by Chatham Members Board on this matter in September last year.

Development Briefs

The Chatham Centre and Waterfront Development Brief was adopted August 2008 and printed copies have been widely distributed. An eight page summary of the document was produced in February 2009 and is available free of charge.

A brief is now being prepared for the next stage of masterplanning work proposed for High St/Best St and Gun Wharf areas

Dynamic Bus Facility

On 24 June 2008 Cabinet agreed to the revised location for the new bus facility on Globe Lane.

Since Cabinet approval in June 2008, work has progressed on the design of the bus facility and the preparation of a planning application. The planning application includes the whole of the area of the Paddock and Military Road, providing details of the new landscaped area, including the extension to the Paddock and the public square outside of the Pentagon Centre. It is proposed that the area around the new bus facility will be completely remodelled and will provide an improved public realm, providing better pedestrian routes to the bus facility and the waterfront, and the planting of additional trees to replace those lost through the location of the bus facility. Landscape architects Gillespies have now been appointed to work alongside bus station architects D5 on these proposals.

The planning application is under consideration and a decision is expected in the summer.

Chatham Waterfront

Discussions continue with landowners to bring forward a scheme in compliance with the approved development brief and meetings with Southern Water to explore the potential for implementing the scheme which has been prepared for the undergrounding of the Rats Bay Pumping Station, which it is hoped will be able to be carried out as part of the Waterfront Development scheme.

In order to free up the waterfront land for development it is necessary to divert sewers from that area onto Medway Street. Mott MacDonald have now been instructed to progress design work for a new interceptor sewer on Medway St, and these works are now included in the programme, as they need to be carefully timed around the road scheme works and bus station construction. The Council's legal department has now been instructed to prepare a S185 agreement for these works.

Public Realm

The improvement of public realm in Chatham Centre is a priority, and the first area of work over the next three years is to engage landscape architects to develop a public realm "code" for Chatham Centre. This will be used in the implementation of the phase 2 road scheme and for all other developments in the town centre including the bus station. Burns & Nice have been appointed who are an established firm of urban designers and landscape architects with extensive relevant experience including producing the "Barking Code" for London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and similar documents for City of London and elsewhere. As part of their commission they

will also produce the detailed design for priority areas within the phase 2 road scheme, such as the pedestrian crossing where the High Street will cross the new bus route at Sir John Hawkins Way.

In order to improve the pedestrian environment in Chatham we are keen that the design follows examples of good practice elsewhere and where possible seeks to remove guard rail, and providing direct crossing points.

The first of the two detailed designs, for the new pedestrian crossing to be created on the High Street where the new bus route will be constructed is complete, and will be implemented as part of the same contract as the flyover demolition and bus route construction. The other detailed design is for Union Street and again this will be implemented alongside the road scheme works.

Queen Street

Work is now progressing to prepare an outline planning application for a mixed use development of the site. Pre application discussions have commenced with the Council's planning department, and a programme of public and member engagement is proposed before the planning application is submitted.

Update on Other Proposed Chatham Developments

Meetings also continue with the owners of the Pentagon Centre, Tesco and Network Rail to further develop investment opportunities.

CIF Projects

(Community Infrastructure Fund, a Communities and Local government programme)

Gillingham station

CIF funding has been secured for improvements at and around Gillingham station. Network Rail and South Eastern trains have also allocated funding for station improvements and the total sum identified is in the region of £3 million. Medway and Network Rail have been working in partnership to bring forward options for the Station building and the forecourt area to the front of the station. Proposals are being developed for a new glass fronted canopy to the main station entrance as a well as improvements to the second entrance and the public realm area to the front of the railway station. It is proposed to widen the pedestrian footpath on the opposite side of the road by slightly re-aligning the main highway along with improved surface materials. It is anticipated that a planning application will be submitted by Network Rail later this year, following consultation.

Quality Public Transport Corridor

Chatham Hill bus priority and cycle route scheme - at outline design stage and

to be completed by end of June.

Corporation Street bus and public realm improvements - discussions have taken place with Whitelaw Turkington (WT) about their public realm and materials design and how this is to inform the bus priority and pedestrian measures and the wider Corporation Street Project; bus and pedestrian measures at safety audit to be completed by late June; WT/Motts to knit the respective proposals together; further regular internal meetings to follow with the planned stakeholder consultation late July/early August
North Dane Way bus, pedestrian and cycle improvements - member consultation carried out on 5 June.

Strood Riverside Sustainable Transport Link - currently being safety audited and to be completed by late June; planning application has been submitted and it is proposed to be presented to Committee in late July/early August.

Electronic Ticket Machines - tender is to be re-issued subject to the resolution of some legal issues.

Real Time Passenger Information - tender for bus stop displays has been issued and is due back at the end of June.

Bus Shelters - tender in preparation, planned to be issued by the end of June/early July.

UTMC (Urban Traffic Management Control)

Options and designs are being progressed and programme will include databases, air quality management, UTC/SCOOT upgrade, Control room works and the purchase and installation will be complete by December 2010.

A228

CIF A228 – Fenn Corner – Officers are preparing the design and tender which is expected to be completed in the next two months.

Stoke Crossing - Design is in progress and we have made good progress on the environmental side.

Parklands

WHS/Great Lines Heritage Park

The draft Nomination Document for Chatham Dockyard and its Defences was launched for public consultation on 9 June, at a meeting of the Chatham World Heritage Partnership. This meeting drew over 160 participants. Membership of the Partnership has now risen to over 560 stakeholders. Consultation is open for eight weeks until 4 August.

A Great Lines Heritage Park project officer started on 8th June, to oversee the delivery of the £2m investment from CLG's Parklands fund. A client team has been established to support the delivery, and consists of representatives from the Capital Projects team, Green Space Services, Design and Conservation,

English Heritage, Fort Amherst Heritage Trust, Greening the Gateway Kent and Medway and Chatham World Heritage.

Black Lion Centre (Medway Park)

The Medway Park project is making good progress. The work covers three separate strands of activity all of which are being tackled together. First, the work on extending the main Sports Hall, perhaps the most significant aspect of the work, has commenced with earthwork to allow the laying of new foundations. This strand will benefit from being tackled over summer 2009 when the weather should allow significant progress to be made.

The second strand concerns the construction a new running track on land adjacent to the main Sports Hall and with all the earthwork completed the contractors have reached the final stage of laying the running track surface layers.

Finally, the third strand involves a number of unconnected smaller projects aimed at re-vamping and improving the existing hall and its facilities. This has involved new roofing, changing rooms, toilets, cafe and catering, offices and improvements to the existing swimming pools. The car park has also undergone some improvements and plans are afoot to improve the reception areas and the approach to the building. The project is running on time and within budget constraints and there is great interest in the media on the opportunities the new centre will offer high profile sporting events in the future - naturally including the Olympics in 2012.