

Volume 1

Masterplan

Adopted October 2010



Sketch of Swale Park area

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Volume 2: Project Delivery

A separate volume detailing the contributions, management and phasing strategy

Supporting Volumes:

Separate volumes detailing supporting elements to the masterplan documentation

Masterplan
Produced by: RD (PA)
Checked: PA
Date: 18.10.07
Updated: 20.09.10
Adopted October 2010

- Statement of Community Consultation
- Sustainability Appraisal and Non-Technical Summary
- Sustainability Charter
- Appropriate Assessment

Executive Summary

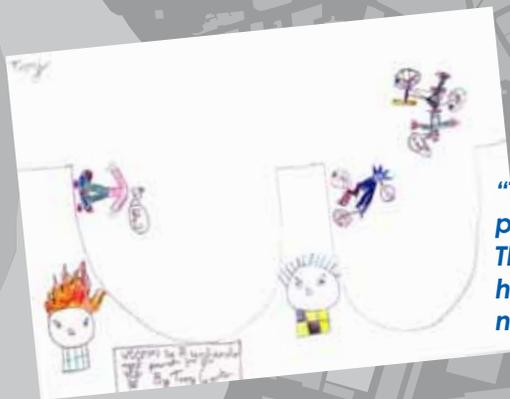
The Queenborough and Rushenden Regeneration will provide new houses and flats for a wide range of people, community facilities and services, a school, jobs, employment space, new open spaces, pedestrian parks and a new marina. It will be located between Queenborough and Rushenden, on the former Caradon Works site and on Sheppey Industries land (Klondyke)

Regeneration is not just about new houses. The aim is to bring about change the whole area, improving education, employment opportunities, local services, the natural environment and the transport system. This will create an attractive new neighbourhood based around a 'Town Square' which will include some shops, a new Primary Care Trust building, and a school, as the heart of the new community. All this will be connected to the existing communities of Rushenden and Queenborough so that the whole area can be better served. The marina will serve visiting yachtsmen, giving a boost to the boat repair and service industry but it will also provide opportunities for community use as well as providing an attractive and distinctive 'destination' for the development. To the east the Rushenden Relief Road will bring much needed access improvements and open up the Neatscourt area for employment related development.

Sustainability will be a key aspect of the Regeneration as the houses must have a minimal impact on the environment. Energy, including renewable, water and waste management, and the way that roads, footways and cycle paths are used will all be carefully considered at a detailed stage. The aim is to make it possible to live in the new regenerating area and be able to walk or cycle to the shops, the doctor's surgery, the station or the school without using your car.

Our vision for the project is of a 'multifaceted' regeneration, using the highest standards of design; an urban scheme which is respectful of the history and character of Queenborough, where new houses complementing the old will revitalise the area, bringing money into the local economy, improving education and services, and putting a 'value' on the visual, historical and ecological qualities that the Isle of Sheppey enjoys. The new regenerated Queenborough and Rushenden will be a very attractive place to live and work.

Introduction



"The plan is good because they are building the bridge so when people going off the bridge they don't have to walk a long time. They are building houses and job centres so people can live here and not go off the island to work. They are building new roads to the bridge"

Leah Chambers age 9

"More kids for me to play with now but later on lots of jobs"

Catherine Payne age 9



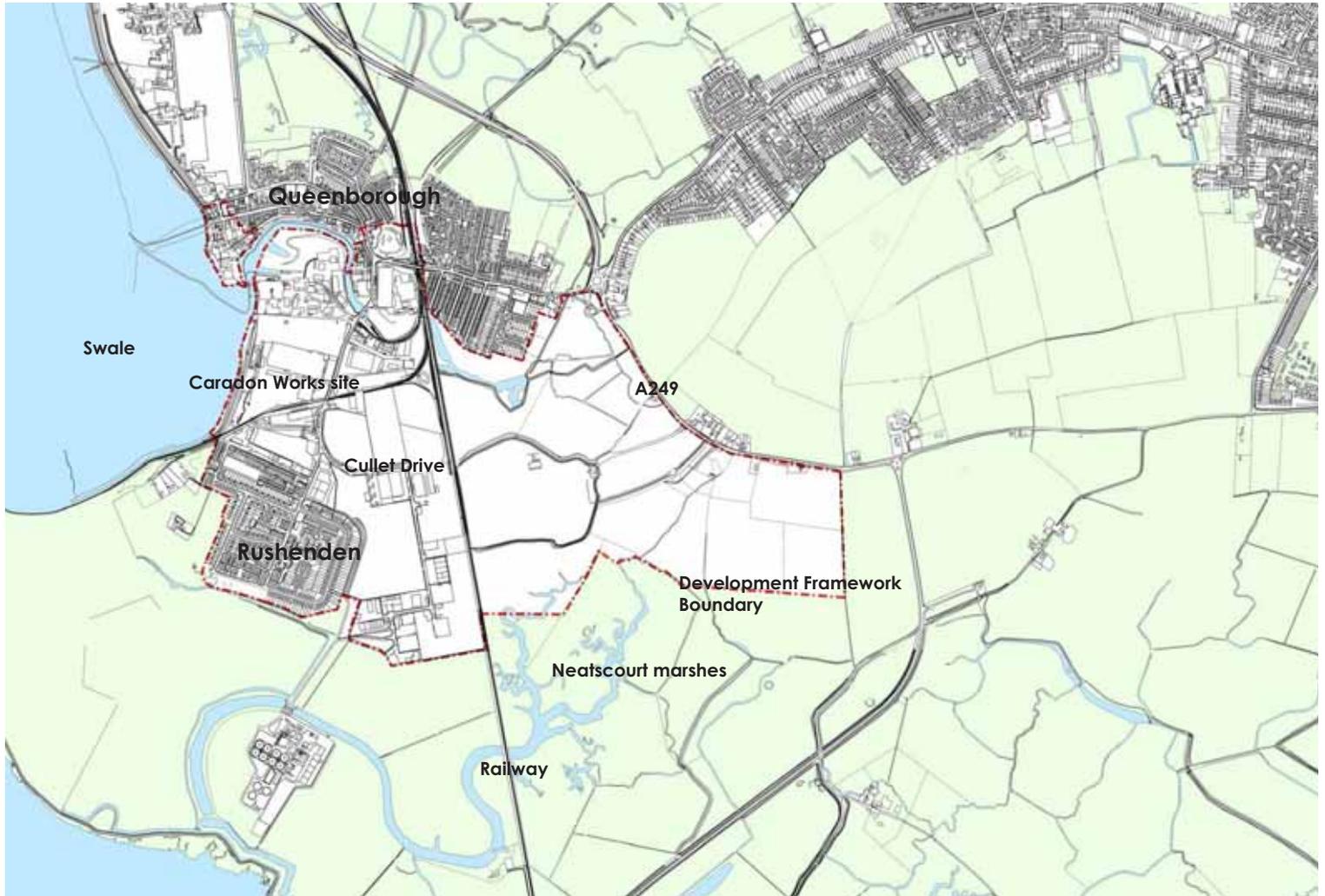
"I think it will affect my future by having more houses and more people coming to live on the island. I hope that there are parks and play areas for little children to play"

Jasmine Ye age 8



Queenborough First School pupils have made a huge contribution to the masterplan. They have built three superb models for consultation events, become a major feature at the 2005 Thames Gateway Forum and taken David Miliband (Secretary of State for Environment Food and Rural Affairs) on a tour of the area. The following words represents their concerns about Queenborough & Rushenden as it is and their hopes for the future:

Introduction: Study Area Analysis



Plan 1.1 The Queenborough & Rushenden Development Framework Boundary

The Queenborough & Rushenden regeneration study area is defined by the Development Framework boundary shown above. It covers an area of some 168 ha. This can be broken down to the west of the railway (Caradon Works and around) at 77 ha and east of the railway (Neatscourt) 69 ha. The area has a number of key characteristics and these can be broken down into Queenborough, Rushenden, Employment and Water

Purpose of Masterplan

Introduction

Queenborough and Rushenden has suffered over the years from under investment, declining historic employment and restricted access. The Queenborough and Rushenden Regeneration project is important for the Isle of Sheppey, being 'rounded' in its approach, considering a broad range of issues and proposing solutions. The masterplan is a framework for detailed design later, but major issues have been addressed in an integrated way.

The Queenborough and Rushenden initiative should not be seen in isolation, within the area of the Area Action Framework, but should be viewed as a catalyst for the continued revitalisation of the Isle of Sheppey. With a new bridge and infrastructure leading to Sheerness, (itself about to embark on a regeneration process), the potential for major residential, employment and cultural and educational change gives the opportunity to:

- raise design, environmental and general standards
- use the potential of inward migration and spending power
- reconsider the 'big picture' creatively using new industries like ecotourism rather than relying on the primary industries of the past

The proposals will improve the environmental standards throughout the Queenborough area and enhance the valuable SSSI/SPA/Ramsar status of the land outside this initiative for local people and visitors. The extraordinary ecological richness of the surrounding area should be used to raise the Isle of Sheppey's profile as an ecotourism destination which will not be at odds with development as quality in both of these is complementary.

Against the background of industrial decline on the Island there is a need to raise aspirations, improve social conditions and employment potential, undertake physical regeneration and the remediation of contamination, and help nurture the seed of cultural richness by providing or encouraging community facilities. All of this will be enabled by providing a mix of houses and flats, a school, employment, water and open space, as well as a quality public realm, created over a period of time

appealing to a range of segments of the market. The infrastructure which is needed to construct and deliver this new residential and employment project on SEEDA and privately owned land, will also solve a range of transport issues related to the volume of heavy vehicles currently using what is essentially a residential street network, to allow the development of considerable new employment space. All of this, of course, builds upon the recent opening of the Sheppey Crossing, providing a fast link between the M2 and Isle of Sheppey (linking the Island efficiently with the national highway network).

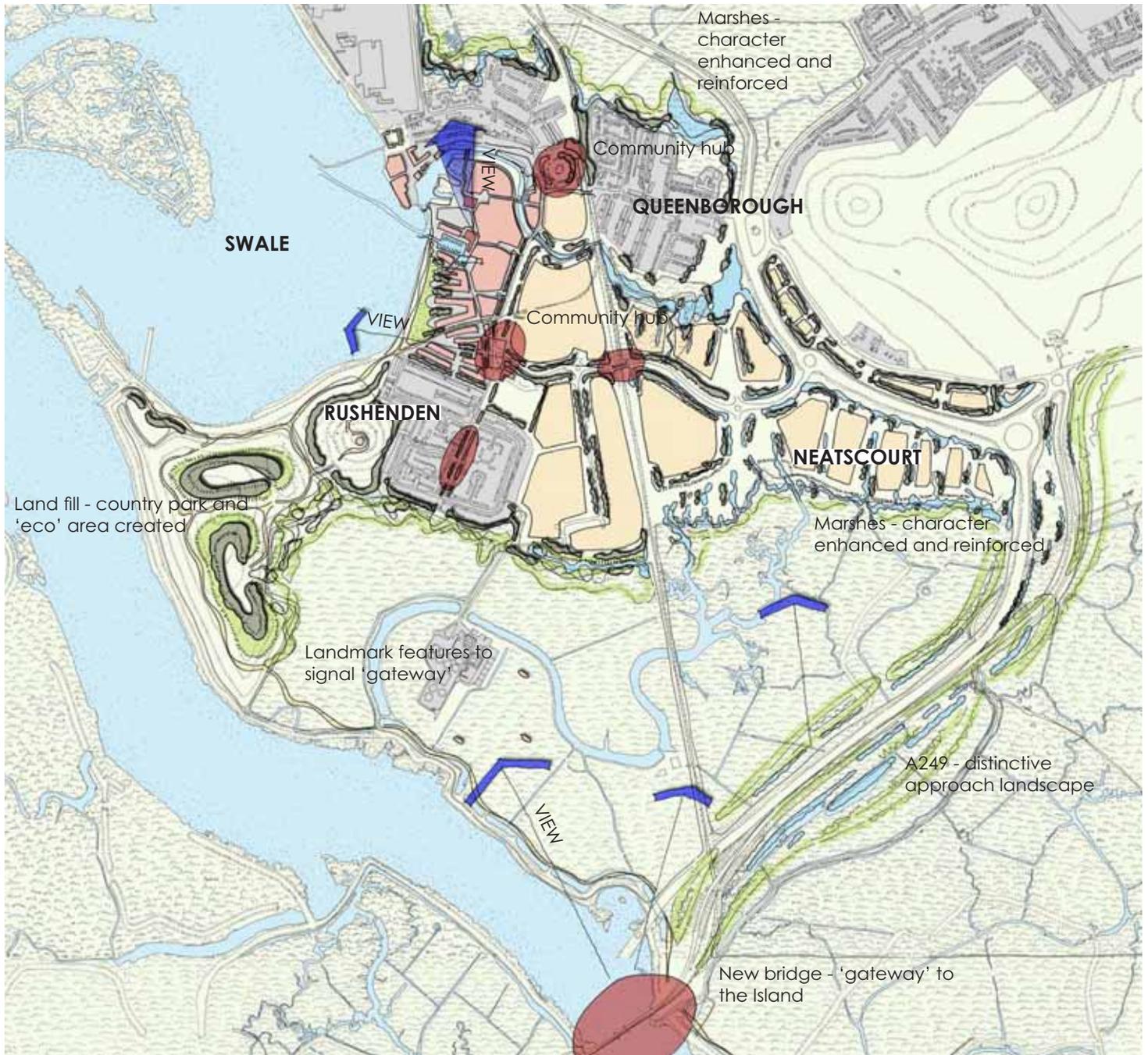
Queenborough and Rushenden appear to be separate communities, physically set apart by former employment/ industrial land known as the Caradon works, home of Twyford's sanitary ware until 2003, and the Sheppey Works which have been in continuous industrial use for centuries. The masterplan has been arranged to be progressively implemented over time, so that if other land is to be converted from primary industrial to residential or related uses, the location of open space, important roads, schools etc. will still make sense; indeed we would argue that further consolidation and growth as the Regeneration gets underway would strengthen the plan by making community facilities, for example, central to the whole regeneration rather than being located towards one edge of a long thin site. This consolidation would also provide more 'customers' so that a bigger range of facilities, shops and services could be supported.

The aim throughout this process has been to connect Queenborough and Rushenden together by producing a third, new, integrated community so that all three gain in the process. Old Queenborough gains by the inclusion of a new population with possibly a greater disposable income and by the inclusion of a new school, Primary Care Trust facilities, services etc. in the new development. Rushenden gains in that it will become physically linked to old Queenborough, and Rushenden Road will become Rushenden 'Street,' a tree lined, overlooked, safer, more attractive connection to the station and beyond. The new community will become part of a settled population

with its ambience of attractive old buildings, quaysides and small port-related activity; the Regeneration seeks to meld the new with the old in a way which is respectful of the heritage and social fabric, but stimulating in its power to attract new people, resources and facilities.

There are two key issues in bringing about this mix, and it is essential to create a credible urban mix of land uses, open spaces, residents, and facilities. The quality of space between buildings will be at least as important as the design of the buildings themselves. The character of the public realm (lively/ contemplative/ green/ hard/ active for play or quiet for relaxation) which includes the design of the roadspace will determine the urban quality. Our aim is to create a new 'place,' not just a collection of houses served, and probably separated, by roads. Roads are a prime determinant of the quality of our towns and villages, and recently the previous Guidance enshrined in Design Bulletin 32 has been withdrawn to be replaced by the 'Manual for Streets'. These principles, of shared space where appropriate, of design for slow speed rather than high speed through wide road spaces with extensive sightlines, of the creation of 'real' streets with social interaction, overlooking for security and play, will be paramount to the Regeneration. Related to this is the pedestrian/ cycle connection tying the three existing communities together. Rushenden Street, the Swale-side path, and the central path, connecting Town Square to the marina, important public spaces and on across the Creek to Queenborough and ultimately the station, will be key ingredients in the success of the scheme. In the process the pedestrian permeability and connection will create small-scale regeneration opportunities off-site in Old Queenborough.

Introduction - The Vision



Plan 1.2 The Vision for Queenborough & Rushenden

The Vision

Creating 'places'

The production of successful places, as opposed to mere housing estates, is partially dependant on the creation of an 'address.' It is important that places have a specific identity and quality which potential and current residents find attractive. A marina is included in the masterplan because there is demand in this location for a conveniently placed marina as a staging post for onward journeys to the south coast and the Thames estuary from, say the northern European coast and this has been established through studies commissioned by SEEDA. Secondly, the marina, which is designed as two basins for operational and placemaking reasons, will give this piece of currently unattractive brownfield land a specific identity investing the basin edges in particular with a strong character. The inner basin will become a sheltered and safe waterspace reserved for community activities such as sail training and supervised water activities.

Residential densities are highest in the marina area to create a lively, publicly accessible water edge where visitor and 'resident' boats form a backdrop to a high quality public realm, overlooked by apartments, a limited amount of B1 space, some specialist retail and limited A2 uses. The 'Café Curve' is included at a specific highly visible and strategic corner, overlooking the dock; a common criticism of yachtsmen using the Queenborough moorings is that the waterspace is very fine but there are no facilities for visitors. The marina has the potential to improve the destination for visitors, give an address as the focus for the residential development, raise land values in the vicinity to produce quality development, and make a lively venue for residents, new and old alike. This is not in conflict with the environmental regeneration of the creek, and it would support the last vestiges of the boat repair industry still present; 180 boats could provide a useful economic stimulus to chandlers, repairers and craftsmen in Queenborough.

The proposed residential densities have recognised recent government policy but have balanced this against the need to create communities which 'fit' within their locality. Within Queenborough and Rushenden there is now a wide range of density with, generally, the highest densities in the part of old Queenborough which is most admired for its urban characteristics and quality of architecture, and the lowest density in the mainly two storey 1950s development at Rushenden. Highest densities are proposed around the marina, gradually reducing to the north and south reflecting the preponderance of family houses respecting the smaller scale of existing buildings in these locations. A range of densities is proposed to produce an overall range which is no higher than that of Old Queenborough now. The change of scale of buildings and density will create different 'quarters' within the masterplan, will produce real urban quality in the centre, and will provide a variety of dwelling and tenure types.



The proposals have been subject to extensive public consultation over a number of years, both at one-off events and on a continuing basis through arts initiatives and the Planning for Real process. Issues such as scale and density, the need for community facilities, the marina, schools and the link road have all been discussed and many useful proposals have been put forward. School children at the Queenborough Middle School have made three large scale models of the Regeneration, one of which was exhibited at the Thames Gateway Conference in 2006, and has been used in a practical way ever since. The results of this consultation process are set out elsewhere in this report, but we believe it has proceeded in step with the proposals over the last three years, so that, in principle at least, there should be very little which is 'new' to the community.

Community engagement and involvement has resulted in tangible change and activity in advance of development. Several groups meet to discuss issues such as crime, management and potential development issues on a regular basis. Arts initiatives have involved significant parts of the community and government ministers including David Milliband have taken a personal interest in the proposals. The Gateway facility, located in a former trade counter building, runs skill training courses, hosts various events and is becoming the focus for local community activity and as an information centre for the regeneration. These activities and initiatives have resulted in the creation of place and community before any significant physical development has commenced and this is a unique and positive place for a regeneration initiative to be in.

Introduction - Delivery

Delivering Planning Policy Objectives

The regeneration objectives of the Masterplan are described throughout this document. It will be seen that there is a direct correlation between those objectives and the strategic and local planning policies identified above. Specifically, the Masterplan will:

- Provide for major new infrastructure to support development in the area, in accordance with the objectives of Thames Gateway, and specifically in accordance with Local and Structure Plan policy;
- Provide a location for major new development, including residential, business, and community uses, to both meet local needs and the wider requirements for growth in the sub-region;
- Lead to the creation of a more balanced and sustainable community, with better access to local jobs and services, and with the breakdown of physical and psychological barriers between Queenborough and Rushenden, in accordance with the objectives of the Sustainable Communities Plan and Thames Gateway strategy;
- Will assist in bringing substantial areas of previously developed land back into active use, in accordance with national and sub-regional priorities;
- Deliver significant new employment opportunities to assist in the regeneration of the area, in accordance with the priorities of Thames Gateway;
- Will assist in the creation of a more balanced and prosperous community, in accordance with strategic planning objectives.
- Ensure development is consistent with national and European legislation to protect wildlife and the environment and improve biodiversity in the surrounding area. Specifically, the recommendations of Swale Borough Council's Appropriate Assessment will need to be recognised.

Adoption Procedure

Swale Borough Council resolved to adopt the Masterplan as a Supplementary Planning Document on 18th December 2009, following a formal consultation process and subject to the completion of a separate "Appropriate Assessment". It will therefore be a material consideration in the determination of any application for planning permission within (or affecting) the Masterplan area.

The Masterplan has been prepared in the context of government guidance in Planning Policy Statement 12 on the adoption of SPD. It has been the subject of extensive public and stakeholder consultation, details of which are set out in the Supporting Volume: Statement of Community Consultation. The Masterplan has been the subject of Sustainability Appraisal, and the findings of this are reported in the accompanying report.

The specific policies upon which this SPD has been based are identified in the Planning Policy Context section.

Appropriate Assessment

The land covered by the Queenborough and Rushended Masterplan lies close to areas identified as being of international importance for their ecological interest, and designated as Special Protection Area/Ramsar sites under the relevant European Directives. Before the Council approve any such plan or project that may impact on such designated sites, it is required under the 1994 Habitats Directive to undertake an "Appropriate Assessment" (AA) of the potential impacts of the development upon those protected areas.

A report to inform that Assessment has been undertaken by consultants on behalf of SEEDA, in conjunction with the relevant statutory parties. The Council has reviewed this in partnership with relevant consultees and satisfied itself that the proposals set out in the Masterplan will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the protected habitats. This is based on a set of assumptions that will need to be assessed against up to date survey information as identified within the AA recommendations.

Since the Masterplan sets out a broad framework for development, rather than detailed development proposals, it is likely that in due course development proposals brought forward to implement the Masterplan will require their own further Appropriate Assessment, before planning permission is granted. Potential developers should seek advice from the Council and Natural England on the potential need for Appropriate Assessment before the submission of major planning applications."

Compensatory Land

As part of the Appropriate Assessment process it was identified that an area of land would be required to compensate for the land lost as part of the proposed development. This land has now been acquired by SEEDA, at Harty Marsh near Leysdown. Part of this area has now been reverted from its existing arable use to create new areas of grazing marsh, with the remainder being held in arable use until required by future developments.

Existing employment uses

The masterplan proposals will effect or impact a number of existing employment uses and sites. For instance the relief road will greatly improve access to Cullet Drive and Istil steel works. The intention of the masterplan is not to negatively impact any existing businesses and throughout the design and masterplan development process SEEDA has engaged with existing landowners and employers to keep them appraised of the developing scheme and to ascertain their ambitions and wishes for the future. Currently a number of scenarios are being carried forward including arranging the relocation of existing businesses in order to facilitate infrastructure and future development opportunities.

Sustainability

The aim of this initiative is not only to build houses but to bring brownfield land back into beneficial use as a regenerator for this part of the South East which performs poorly against most social indices. The masterplan proposes extensive residential and employment development, but it also explores the Arts, and the need to create this development sustainably.

A number of key targets are set out for water consumption, waste production, the use of renewable energy and resources generally. Clearly these carefully considered aspirations need to be made tangible through detailed design but broad principles are set out:

- the orientation of houses, in particular, to facilitate the use of solar water heating and passive insulation.
- the location and use of CHP using a ring main which will assist in increasing the contribution made by renewables for the apartments in particular.

- creative use of water within the scheme so that run off from roads, parking, roofs etc. can be used to foster biodiversity through the use of appropriately planted 'swales' as well as helping to give specific qualities to individual neighbourhoods

Naturally the buildings will be constructed to be minimum Code 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, but we expect that by the time the first houses are occupied there will have been significant changes to part F of the Building Regulations in the run-up to new residential development conforming with the requirements for carbon neutrality in 2016. The masterplan takes it as axiomatic that social sustainability will be enhanced by the regenerating effect that such a project brings indirectly as well as directly through new financial and social investment.

Much of the site is covered in concrete and some parts such as the Sheppey site to the north of the masterplan area contain 'hotspots'

of contamination. The system of creeks and swales has fallen into decrepitude and water quality is poor. Nevertheless the Regeneration Area is surrounded by Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites, and the masterplan aims to complement the status of these designations by producing a landscape of wetlands, new woodland structure and open space as appropriate to its location. Although the Isle of Sheppey is currently not wooded, it is likely that it would once have been covered by a matrix of willow carr and moisture loving plants on the low land, and woodland species on high levels such as Rushenden Hill. Quite possibly this cover was used as fuel when industrialisation at Queenborough started, or perhaps a sheep grazing regime altered the landscape to the openness commonly accepted today as 'natural'. Within the development area this masterplan proposes a new 'structural' landscape to address these issues and integrate the development and infrastructure properly into its landscape in a better way than is revealed in the view from the new road and the bridge, towards Rushenden.



Introduction - The Arts

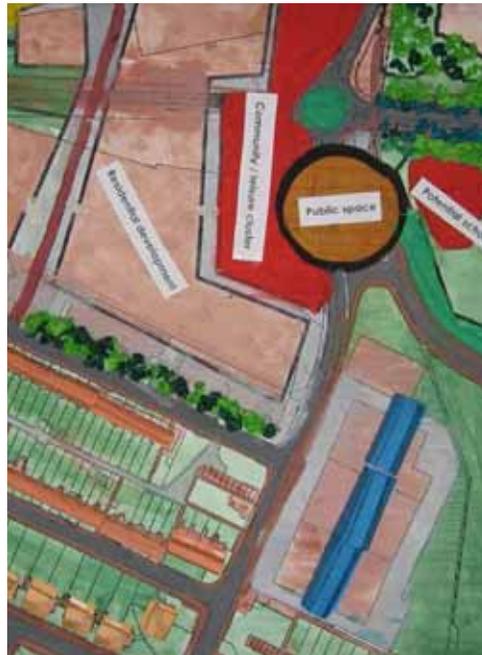
The Arts

At this stage it is possible to say that the potential for involving the Arts through lighting, pictorial art, sculpture or land art is great, and potential locations have been identified. The design team has worked with Arts at the Centre, funded by the Arts Council to explore the potential of Community and professional art contributions and these would be further explored at the next stage. Similarly the potential for archaeological interpretation and expression is strong; it is important in newly formed communities to connect people with the past; it is one of the 'layers' that give richness and meaning to a place. Queenborough is rich in history and archaeology, as well as industrial archaeology, well illustrated in the new report by English Heritage.

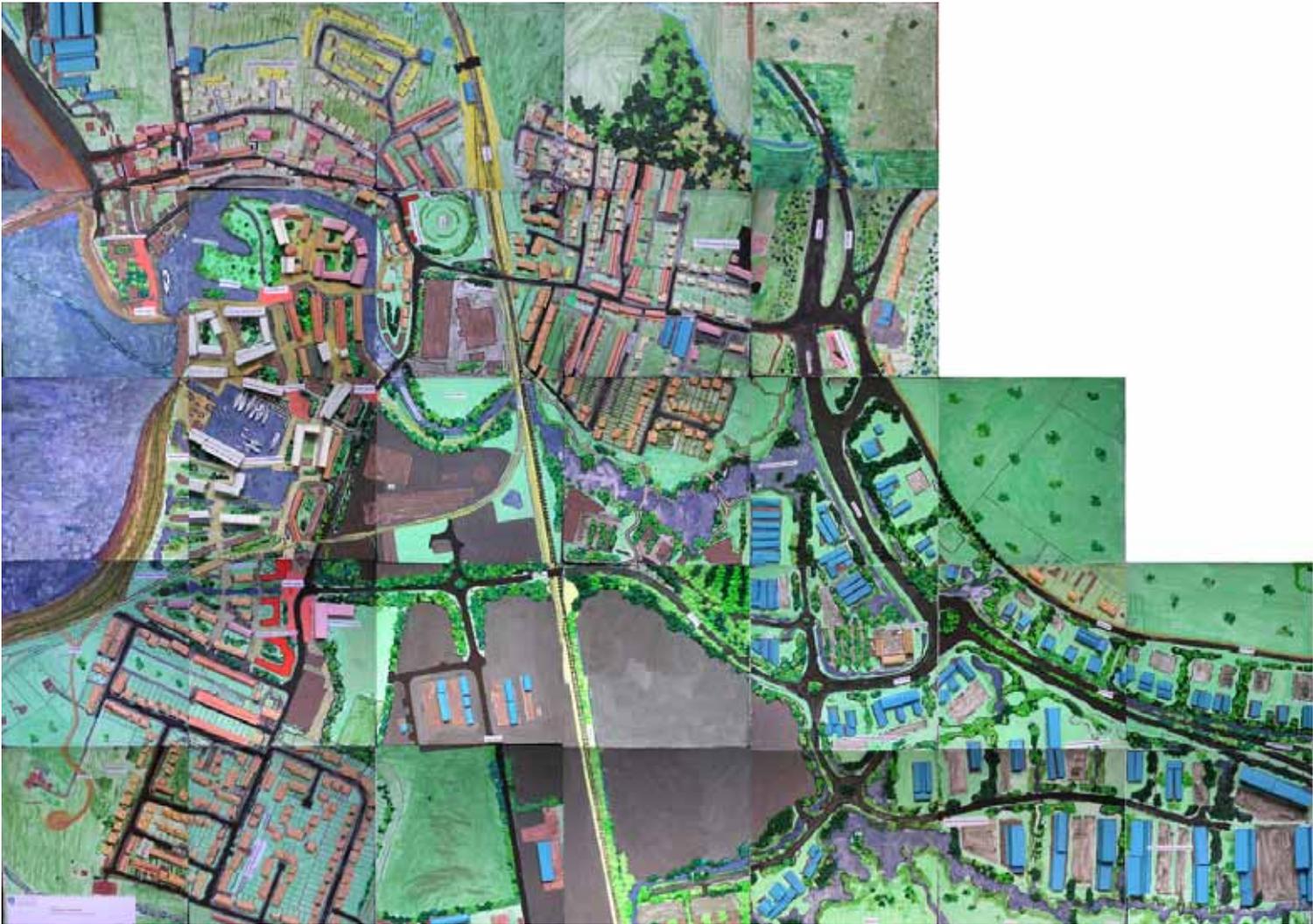
Art and archaeological initiatives are important in 'process' as well as finished 'product' terms and will be developed through the design process. However, all initiatives of this sort must be guided by the masterplan or the result will become incoherent, random, and ultimately meaningless. Art and archaeology should have relevance to the place, helping to explain it.

Likewise the artistic potential of water and transport infrastructure gives the potential to create 'land art' on a large scale. Think of new swales, road embankments, flood defences and spoil reuse. These could all be used to great effect to signal the Isle of Sheppey, and the special qualities of the Regeneration, and all at minimal cost.

Our vision for the project is of a multifaceted regeneration initiative, produced to the highest standards of architecture, landscape and environmental design; however, design is only a means to an end and the result should be an exemplar of sustainable renewal, where new houses complementing the old stand next to a marina and public realm which will revitalise the area, bring money into the local economy, improve education, halt and reverse the environmental decline, putting a value on the particular qualities, visual, historical, and ecological which the Isle of Sheppey enjoys. The marshes are ecologically rich, but they also have a rare beauty in the crowded South-East of England. Combine this with good access, genuine high quality regeneration and the result will be a compelling place to live and work.



Arts & Community



Introduction - SEEDA

1. What is SEEDA, and what do we do?

SEEDA is the government funded agency responsible for the economic and social development of the South East of England - the driving force of the UK's economy.

SEEDA's aim is to create a prosperous, dynamic and inspirational region by helping businesses compete more effectively, developing a highly skilled work force, supporting and enabling our communities, whilst safeguarding our natural resources and cherishing our rich cultural heritage.

SEEDA aims to be a catalyst for change within the South East, working with partner organisations: businesses, education at all levels, local authorities, government agencies, voluntary and community organisations and many others - to produce clearly recognisable results.

The government also provides funds that enable SEEDA to invest directly in a range of economic and social development programmes, and we are in a position to help secure European Union and private sector investment for the region. Accountable to government, SEEDA is a business led organisation, governed by a Board whose Members have wide-ranging experience in industry and commerce, local government, education, trade unionism and voluntary service.

2. What is SEEDA's role in the region?

The regeneration of the Thames Gateway (Kent) is expected to deliver sustainable economic growth that can meet the social, economic and environmental needs of new and existing communities in equal measure. SEEDA will be instrumental in ensuring the sustainable physical regeneration of key sites and working with partners to ensure strategic planning addresses the needs of all stakeholders to create truly sustainable communities.



3. What is the history of the Queenborough and Rushenden Regeneration?

This is a very exciting time for Queenborough & Rushenden. After more than a decade of relatively little investment in the area, a major development project and investment in transport improvements are coming forward, which will begin the rejuvenation of the area as a whole.

The major expansion of the Neatscourt area for commercial development, the development of the former Twyford site and Klondyke area for creekside housing developments, a new marina, a new school, further community facilities and the implementation of the Rushenden Relief Road proposals represent a major commitment to the area by all involved.

The development proposals will improve the range of facilities that the area offers and change perceptions of Queenborough & Rushenden. The area will begin to fulfil its potential as an attractive, accessible, economically vibrant and culturally focused centre for the people of Queenborough & Rushenden and the Isle of Sheppey as a whole.

Since 2003 the Department for Communities, and Local Government (DCLG) and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) have invested around £18m, plus £14m from SEEDA, into the area to assist in the initial stages of this much-needed redevelopment. This cash injection has enabled the development of an Area Action Plan (Development Framework) completion of the Masterplan, acquisition of a number of strategic sites, completion of a series of enabling works and the provision of essential new infrastructure including the new Rushenden Relief Road.

The Development Framework sets out the vision and the design principles for the area and was adopted in December 2004 by Swale BC. The purpose of this was to establish a strategy for land use and infrastructure provision and provide Swale BC with a policy tool to direct future development and ensure that the appropriate physical and social infrastructure is provided.

The next step was to create a comprehensive Masterplan, which takes into account the agreed needs of the existing and new communities whilst maximising the land use opportunities presented. To arrive at these agreed needs SEEDA have involved all of those who live, work and provide services within the area through the "Planning for Real" and statutory consultation

process. Project partners recognise the need for consultation and dialogue at every strategic stage.

Both these documents have been completed in response to the Borough's relatively poor performance in social and economic terms within the region. Recognising the need for significant and co-ordinated change to address this, local and regional partners from the public sector have joined forces in forming the Queenborough & Rushenden regeneration project to deliver comprehensive change. The partnership which includes representatives from Swale BC, KCC, Swale Forward, Queenborough Town Council and representatives from the local community will provide a co-ordinated approach to achieving the physical, environmental, economic and social regeneration of the area; ensuring that the area is able to fully meet the needs and aspirations of the existing and new local community and stakeholders.

SEEDA's focus is now on a comprehensive programme for joint working between public, private and community members to deliver regeneration. Importantly, there is now a strong commitment amongst the team involved to bring about positive change to the area, to ensure that the Queenborough & Rushenden area fully realises its potential as one of the main regional economic drivers and becomes an attractive place to live, work and play.



