

# News

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## Agreement signed on £75 million Dartford town centre regeneration

Muse has signed an agreement with Dartford Borough Council and Homes England, to take forward the £75 million regeneration of Dartford's Westgate area. The scheme is supported by both the local authority and Homes England who are joint landowners of the site.

In October 2017, Muse were announced as the preferred bidder. The parties will now move forward on working up detailed plans for a mixed-use development which incorporates a six-screen cinema at the heart of a new social neighbourhood with bars, restaurants and family-friendly hospitality. The scheme will see the creation of a new public square, a 109-bed hotel, a multi-storey car park and up to 140 new homes.

Discussions are also underway with the local Clinical Commissioning Group to collaborate on the potential creation of a new health facility providing space for GPs, family healthcare, social care providers and mental-health services.

Cllr Jeremy Kite, leader of Dartford Borough Council, said: "Dartford is one of the fastest growing towns in England. The town's strategic position on the edge of London and the heart of the South East has been energised in the last decade by huge investment in national infrastructure, growth funding and massive capital commitments from private developers.

"We are attracting people with the financial means, ambition and aspiration to build new lives beyond urban London and with an already successfully established community, those of us who have longer roots in the town are enjoying the economic benefits too. A welcoming 'coffee shop' culture is changing the face of our High Street and summer festivals events, fairs and events are booming.

"There is a new energy to Dartford that's being driven by local demand. A new community has united with a decent and loyal existing community to change the face of the Town.

"That is why the Westgate Scheme is so important to us - a new leisure quarter with a cinema and a range of facilities that will further strengthen the town's offer.

"Muse Developments has a track record of delivering projects that harness arts, hospitality and leisure as major regenerative forces. We are very excited to be working with creative, energetic and successful partners to deliver great things for the people of Dartford."

Designed by architect and urban designer tp bennett, the scheme envisages a vibrant public realm with 37,250 square feet designated for restaurant and bar space. Up to 140 new homes - a mix of one, two and three-bedroom apartments above the retail uses - will be spread among four new buildings. A range of tenures will be offered for these properties, including affordable units.

Paul Kitson, general manager for the South East for Homes England, said: "At Homes England we're using our land, finance and expertise to speed up the delivery of new homes. As joint land owners we are pleased to be playing our role in making sure this land in Dartford town centre is used to bring a mix of healthcare, retail and leisure development and associated employment opportunities to the area alongside new homes."

John Robinson, development director at Muse, added: “Dartford is a forward-thinking Council that wants to bring real change to the town centre. It has been a pleasure working with them and Homes England over the last six months and we are delighted to have reached this key milestone.

“The site is very well-connected, being close to both the high street and train station, making it the ideal location for a lively and vibrant new community and cultural quarter. We now look forward to working with the wider community in developing our plans and delivering this exciting project.”

Public consultation events are due to be held in summer 2018 in readiness for submitting planning applications later in the year.

#### Key facts

Gross Development Value (GDV) £75 million.

The proposed scheme comprises:

- 6 screen cinema
- 109 bed hotel
- 5 bars and restaurants
- Up to 140 new homes
- A new public square.
- A multi-storey car park with 167 spaces
- 37,250 square feet for restaurant and bar space
- Potential healthcare provision