

QUEENBOROUGH AND RUSHENDEN REGENERATION

Indicative Revised Land Use Plan: addendum to 2010 Adopted Masterplan, 2014



The Vision

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/purpose of the exercise

The Revised Indicative Land-Use Plan proposals have been prepared for a number of reasons. These include:

- Changing market circumstances and realisation that the original masterplan proposals may have been overly ambitious, and proven "challenging" to deliver on a financially viable basis, in the current market circumstances. In particular, the removal of the proposed marina is likely to have a major benefit to the financial viability of the overall masterplan proposals; and
- The need to reflect actual progress in the current and planned delivery of the Queenborough and Rushenden regeneration proposals, and other material changes such as changes in land ownership.

The revised land use plan represents a response to this changing context.

These changes have the potential to bring significant benefits and arguably represent an improvement, in urban design terms, upon the original masterplan. Chief amongst these are the creation of a more "integrated" development, which now includes residential uses on both sides of Rushenden Road and the removal of some of the employment uses which could potentially deter new investment and residential development. Similarly, the introduction of residential uses along the Rushenden Relief Road will help to create a more attractive environment in this location, creating enhanced linkages to the Neatscourt development which is now being implemented, and a more inviting "gateway" to the area.

The purpose of this Indicative Revised Land Use Plan is to act as an addendum the original Masterplan providing updated land use proposals to reflect changing market circumstances. The assumption is that much of the earlier document (which was adopted as SPD), will remain in place for Development Management purposes – this sets out Swale BC's expectations and gives design guidance on a range of matters:

Design concepts –

Creation of Place, Waterspace, Sustainability, Housing, Employment, Greenspace/public realm, Integrating Rushenden

Design Principles –

- Principle 1: Linking Queenborough & Rushenden
- Principle 2: Creating Legibility - Views & Landmarks, permeability
- Principle 3: Grain - Height & Massing, density
- Principle 4: Spatial Street Strategy
- Principle 5: Activity and Movement
- Principle 6: Greenspace & Landscape Strategy
- Principle 7: Art, Culture & Community
- Principle 8: Sustainable Development
- Principle 9: Waterspace
- Principle 10: Creating place and distinctiveness

Development proposals should demonstrate a commitment to urban design quality, and will be subject to scrutiny by the Council's Design Panel.

Key changes to the Land Use Plan

- The Marina proposals have been removed, and replaced by a new Primary School. This places the school in the heart of the new community;
- In light of the removal of the marina, the densities applied to development have been revised, and are arguably more in keeping with the local context. Potential exists, however, for greater densities adjacent to the creek and this is also reflective to the generally more "tight" urban grain of Queenborough;
- The proposals suggest the creation of a "Waterside Hub" to the South of Queenborough Creek – this could take the form of a visitor centre and/or leisure facilities; and
- Former ISTIL and Thomsett Way sites now included for potential residential development.

Revised housing numbers

- The original masterplan indicated circa 2,000 residential units.
- The indicative revised proposals would deliver up to 1,180 dwellings within the sites labelled 'higher medium density' and 'lower medium density' in the key, with the approximate number of homes for each area indicated in the adjacent annotations.
- While delivery of this quantum of new housing is likely to occur over a protracted timescale, reduced densities (relative to those originally suggested in the vicinity of the proposed marina) and a lower proportion of flats/apartments may be more in line with likely market expectations and perceived as less risky by potential developers.
- Affordable Housing will be required in accordance with the original Masterplan targets.

Key benefits of the changes to the Land Use Plan

- There is now much greater certainty regarding the delivery of the school, which represents a key element of new social/community infrastructure, given its new location on land owned by the Homes and Communities Agency. The school also now sits in the heart of the new residential community, and on a key new pedestrian axis, linking Queenborough and Rushenden;
- The revisions eliminate the potentially high risk/high cost marina;
- Given the loss of the employment/leisure elements potentially associated with the marina, any development should seek to deliver a "Waterside Hub", which would benefit from an attractive location adjacent to the Creek. While viability/marketing testing is required, potential uses might include a mixture of some or all of the following:
 - Public access must be provided both along the seafront and the south side of the Creek.
 - Visitor Centre (potentially covering environment, local history etc) - A waterside pub, restaurant or café
 - Limited water-related uses (possibly as part of the visitor centre) eg canoeing
 - Other active uses possibly in the form of youth provision eg bmx, skate park etc
 - Limited employment uses eg managed workspace, workshops, chandlery etc; and
 - Attractive public realm
- The inclusion of residential development on the Istil Mill and Thomsett site has significant urban design benefits. The removal of industrial uses from part of Rushenden Road helps to create more integrated development and improve the quality of the environment. Similarly, the introduction of residential uses along the new Rushenden Link Road will improve the character of this key gateway into Queenborough and Rushenden, and improve pedestrian linkages to the new retail and employment uses at Neatscourt.

Waterside hub

Leisure and community uses would benefit from the attractive waterside Creek location, integrating with existing marine activities and moorings which could be



Welney Visitor Centre in Norfolk could form a precedent for the waterside hub

Other development sites

Other development sites, potential for residential and mixed use development.

Community

Potential permanent location for new community facilities in close proximity to the new school to be confirmed following appropriate needs and viability assessment.

New housing site

The revised proposal shows housing here instead of a marina as in the original masterplan. A lower density of housing is proposed as the waterside apartments facing the marina in the original masterplan would no longer be possible. Additional leisure and waterside investment could be focused on The Creek and the Waterside Hub. Up to **220 units**.

Health facilities

A health centre is proposed here as part of phase one. The health centre could be at ground floor with housing above.

Phase one

A development brief for phase one is currently being drafted. This suggests a density of c.70 units/ha achieving up to **250 units** overall.



Higher medium density housing

Waterside housing environments such as Whitstable are viewed as a precedent of how housing can be built at higher-medium densities through smaller plots and narrower lanes whilst maintaining a predominantly low rise character. Up to **380 units**.



An example of higher-medium density housing - p.89 of the Queenborough & Rushenden Masterplan (2010)

Mill and Thomsett sites

The Mill and Thomsett sites have the potential to deliver new housing at a similar density and scale to phase one across Rushenden Road. The introduction of residential uses in this location will help to make Thomsett Way a more attractive environment and create linkages to the Neatscourt development. The sites could deliver up to **240 units**.



An example of higher-medium density housing - p.83 of the Queenborough & Rushenden Masterplan (2010)

Primary school site

In this location the school would be easily accessible from Rushenden Road and waterfront space would be preserved for residential development. This location may also help to integrate the two communities of Queenborough & Rushenden, and the school could potentially utilise the community facilities of the Phase 1 site. (c.2ha* site). Following discussions with Kent County Council the likely trigger for the school would be around 2018, after the completion of approximately 350 - 400 dwellings.



A new primary school forms a key part of the masterplan and is important for raising educational achievement in the area

* All measurements are approximations based on aerial photography and should be treated as rough estimates

Map is not to scale