

Case Study - Dartford Park

This major redevelopment and regeneration aims to:-

- Utilise damaged and previously used land
- Recognise the opportunities to combine economic regeneration with environmental improvement
- Create a vibrant and sustainable community
- Reduce the need to travel
- Reduce the reliance on London for jobs
- Contribute to the supply of new housing for the Borough and Kent Thameside
- Create a "flagship" mixed use development with a high quality business and residential environment
- Create new wildlife habitats and recreational resources integrated with the retained features of environmental importance

The Council's vision is "to make Dartford the place of choice, a place where people choose to live, work and enjoy their leisure time."

Its priority themes include regeneration, improved housing and employment together with a Green-Grid Network providing an enhanced environment. This development shows the Council's commitment to these themes and demonstrates how one project can meet many corporate objectives.

The North Dartford project was first proposed in 1989. Planning permission was granted in March 2003.

The final master plan was affected by a number of events in the years up to 1998, including original proposals for a Business Park and Science Park in 1990. The proposal was extended to include Joyce Green Hospital and also University of Greenwich Campus relocation in 1992.

In 1995 the transfer of land was agreed and a final report from the consultants was received. This coincided with the transfer of land from the Secretary of State for Health to the University of Greenwich. In light of these proposals a series of unsuccessful bids was made to the Millennium Commission as doubts were expressed about the commercial viability of a Science Park development over the whole 242 acre site.

The Council was approached about the acquisition of Joyce Green Hospital in September 1996. Member approval was given as the purchase would assist in pursuing the Private Financial Initiative (PFI) on the proposed hospital at Darenth Park and enable the Council to consolidate its land holdings at North Dartford.

In 1997 the purchase of the first tranche of land from the Hospital Trust was completed, giving the Council overall control of the site. A demand study and marketing strategy of the proposed development was undertaken.

In 1998 a draft Planning brief was produced but the same year the University of Greenwich decided not to proceed with its campus development and an opportunity was lost.

In 2003 the Council entered into a Development Agreement with Prologis Developments Limited to progress the development. Planning permission was granted, subject to conditions, in March 2003 and a Section 106 Agreement was signed in October 2003.

The Council has worked closely with Prologis both in its role as landowner and separately as the local planning authority to ensure the Council's original objectives continue to be met.

The overall development concept fits in with the Government's agenda of mixed-use development and the Council's own Local Plan

The Master Plan accommodates:-

Approximately 62 hectares of development land, a range of business space including Science Park with Innovation Hub and Business Park; 1500 new dwellings, community facilities including local centre and primary school, hotel/leisure and sports facilities, dedicated public transport (Fastrack), new and retained landscape and wildlife framework based on creative conservation techniques including a series of Green and Blue ways.

This is supported by Employment, Housing, Environmental and Landscape and Transport Strategies.

Fastrack:- a high quality local public transport system - enables development potential to be maximised while avoiding a corresponding increase in traffic on local roads. Highway improvements give priority to Fastrack vehicles and promote efficient, safe reliable and convenient access for everyone living within, working at or visiting the site.

The development requires the provision of Fastrack from Dartford Town Centre, through the site, to Bluewater. This will bring benefits to the local community as well as the new development.