

Sustainability in the public realm: Chatham Waters

Located on the River Medway in Kent, the Chatham Waters regeneration project spans over a unique 26-acre site. The site, formerly used for scrap metal storage and manufacturing, is now being regenerated to create a truly vibrant, mixed-use development that will enhance the local area by providing a new place to live, learn, work, socialise and relax.

We recognise the value of working alongside communities to understand how development plans can incorporate and reflect the priorities of local people. At the outset of the project, we held exhibitions which were attended by over 500 people. The overwhelming feedback was very supportive (over 90%), and local residents and other stakeholders

showed a strong willingness to see development of the site for the proposed mix of uses. As a result of the consultation with local residents and other stakeholders, our plans for Chatham Waters have focused on creating a range of accessible spaces in the public realm.

Having a high-quality public realm provides a setting for community life, increasing use of public space, enhancing safety and encouraging greater participation in community or cultural activities. There has been significant focus on pedestrian movements and paths, promoting full access throughout the site, encouraging people to feel integrated and connected. The public realm in-between the new buildings act as the 'glue' that knits the scheme together and provides spaces for informal play and recreation.

Sustainable design and climate resilience also form an integral part of the project and improvements to flood defences and storm water attenuation have already delivered significant environmental benefits.

Connecting people with nature in the public realm of Chatham Waters



The main public realm spaces are:

A central parkland



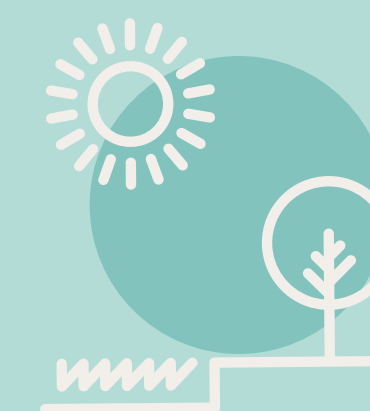
A promenade along the waterfront



A series of public squares



Dockside gardens



Biodiversity in the public realm

Enhancing biodiversity and creating habitats for a range of wildlife has been a key focus throughout development at Chatham Waters. Environmental stakeholders, including Natural England and the Environmental Agency, identified the site as having the potential to add value to the local habitat and act as an additional wildlife link between inland greenspaces and the estuary.



An open water wildlife corridor provides a habitat that helps to connect bird life to the estuary

The following features are planned for Chatham Waters, and some have already been introduced:

- Creation of an open water habitat area which is an important resource for plants and animals.
- Tree and plant species will be selected based on their prevalence in the surrounding local area.
- The planting of wildflower meadows, grasslands, sensory-based and fruiting plants will be explored in order to encourage insects, birds and small mammals to the area.
- Residential roof gardens have been incorporated to encourage biodiversity in harmony with the built environment.
- Wildlife corridors will be planted and could take the form of tree avenues or linear meadows.

The future looks bright for biodiversity at Chatham Waters - we look forward to seeing the end results!