

Denham launches North Kent Multi-Area Agreement

Communities Secretary John Denham MP chose The Bridge development in Dartford to launch the North Kent Multi Area Agreement (MAA) in September.

MAAs give groups of local authorities new powers to collaboratively devise their own plans and spend money as they see fit to tackle the most pressing issues in their regions and drive economic recovery.

John Denham said: "Councils increasingly need to join forces across their borders to mastermind regional solutions for getting more people back into work, raising skills levels, or developing new transport links. By joining forces through MAAs, councils will also avoid unnecessary duplication helping to ensure that taxpayers' money is being worked as hard as possible in the current climate."

Read more about the key targets for the [Kent region](#)



Kent Thameside gears up for high speed rail



Southeastern's successful high speed trains, already running preview services from Ebbsfleet International to St Pancras International in just 17 minutes, are due to be running full time from December.

Organisations are gearing up for the full launch of services with a campaign to promote the benefits to business of a 'high speed' Kent and Medway.

Investment promotion agency [Locate in Kent](#) is running the '[Kent. Closer than you think](#)' campaign alongside partners Kent Thameside Regeneration Partnership, Kent County Council, Ashford's Future, Medway Council and [Southeastern](#).

Anne Knight, Director of the Kent Thameside Regeneration Partnership, said: "High Speed 1 is set to transform Kent Thameside and we want companies to know that our area is the place to do business. With high speed connections to Europe and The City, Kent Thameside offers a lower cost-base than London. We have already attracted some major companies and many new and growing businesses and the new services will have an even greater impact on regeneration, the economy and employment."

Minister views progress of £2 billion regeneration in Kent Thameside

Shahid Malik MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, toured Kent Thameside in September to view some of the highlights of the £2 billion regeneration under way to deliver 25,000 new homes and 50,000 jobs in the area.

The Minister, accompanied by Stephen Jordan, Vice Chair, Kent Thameside Regeneration Partnership, travelled on the award-winning Fastrack bus rapid transit system to visit The Nucleus Innovation Centre at The Bridge, Dartford, a £500 million mixed use development by ProLogis in partnership with Dartford Borough Council.

Employ Kent Thameside's Employer Contact Consultant Viv French gave the Minister a presentation on the training and skills projects run at the centre before he moved on to The Observatory in Ebbsfleet Valley prior to returning to St Pancras International on the 17-minute high-speed train journey from Ebbsfleet International.



Kent Thameside Hosts Training Camp for Olympics' Rising Stars

As one of the Olympic Beacon authorities, preparation for the 2012 Games is well underway across Kent, and [Kent Thameside](#) will be playing a vital role in preparing Team GB and other competitors for the events.

Gravesham is expected to receive more than £300 million investment as a result of the Olympics. Some 7.7 million visitors are expected to travel to the East London Olympic venue, and with the High Speed 1 rail line connecting Ebbsfleet International to Stratford International in just ten minutes, Kent Thameside is expected to be a popular destination for those visiting from around the world.

Kent Thameside boasts several Olympic standard training venues. The Dartford Judo Club has been officially declared the training venue for Team GB. The MEAPA Gymnastics Club's international standard facilities make it a potential venue for Olympic team training and the Arrow Riding School is another local top standard sporting facility, with some of the best disabled riding facilities in the UK.



Waterstone Park homes launched



artists impression

Joint developers **Countryside Properties** and **Land Securities** have recently launched the final collection of homes at [Waterstone Park](#) in Greenhithe. The initial release of 3 and 4 bedroom contemporary houses was 80% sold out at launch, reflecting the undersupply of new family homes in the area.

Located in a seven-acre parkland setting, Waterstone Park is now an established community set in an outstanding environment. It has been awarded CABE's Building for Life Silver standard that recognises design and environmental excellence, and will on completion include 650 homes.

Tony Travers, Subsidiary Managing Director, Countryside Properties says: "We are delighted to have been able to build a new collection of homes at Waterstone Park despite the general economic conditions. Our new homes are in demand in the area and the quality of their design has helped us to weather the market slowdown." For more details visit: www.waterstonepark.co.uk

Kent Thameside invests in skills



Two major initiatives are now under way in Kent Thameside to improve employment and training prospects for young people in the area.

The Kent Thameside Economic Board has pledged a contribution of £100,000 to Employ Kent Thameside to fund NVQ Level 3 training for local people.

Local business, Britannia Refined Metals, part of the diversified mining group Xstrata Plc has also contributed a further £10,000 to Employ Kent Thameside's NVQ Level 3 scheme.

Bluewater has recently taken on six 18-19 year olds from North West Kent to undergo a 12 month apprenticeship in all areas of retail.

The scheme, developed by Bluewater and The Learning Shop (a partnership between Lend Lease, North West College and Jobcentre Plus), saw fifty applicants apply for the coveted places. The apprentices will receive an NVQ qualification on completion of the course and will be in a strong position to find employment among the centre's retailers.

Kent Thameside receives third Building for Life award

Countryside Properties' Stone Rise development at Greenhithe, near Bluewater has achieved a Building for Life Silver Standard reflecting the strong design and environmental qualities of the scheme.

This is the third Building for Life award for Kent Thameside, following Waterstone Park's Silver Standard in 2007 and Ingress Park's Gold Standard in 2005, and shows that the area's regeneration continues to be led by high quality design and sustainability.

Building for Life is the national standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. Stone Rise now goes forward into the Building for Life 2009 Awards that will be announced in December.

The 37 homes at Stone Rise were designed by PCKO Architects and



developed as part of the Design for Manufacture (DfM) competition administered by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).