



A new chapter

for the **town centre**



DARTFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Peter Barber Architects

Westgate site

Over the past few years, we've been exploring a better future for this well-known town centre site – one that puts local people, not developers, first.

Developers and investors have come and gone, but it seems to me their plans often asked the wrong questions:

How many homes can we squeeze in? How tall can the buildings be? How much can we cut costs?

That's not good enough for a site as important as this – right in the heart of our town and surrounded by businesses and communities that deserve the best. We believe it's time to create something we can all be proud of.

So we've taken a bold step.

Dartford Borough Council has bought the site from Homes England (the government's housing and regeneration agency), giving us much more freedom to shape something that works for Dartford – not just for profit.

The government still has some conditions. The site must include housing, but now we can focus on **quality over quantity** – asking questions about community, design and long-term value, rather than how many units we can fit.

To help shape the vision, we've been working with

Peter Barber Architects, known for designing small, vibrant neighbourhoods. Their ideas focus on **public spaces, human-scale buildings, and places that bring people together.**

We're now ready to share those plans with you and hear what you think.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeremy".

Jeremy Kite, Leader
Dartford Borough Council



The approach we're taking

- Leading with design quality and a responsible environmental approach
- Delivering the solidly-built, modern homes local people need, with a particular focus on families
- Creating a new neighbourhood centred around green space, good living, and community
- Including leisure and community facilities (commercial and public) to anchor the development
- Appointing Peter Barber Architects, known for imaginative and human-focused housing
- Ensuring ongoing community involvement at every step

Our vision & plans

Welcome to a **new neighbourhood** with homes prioritised for Dartford people

This project offers the chance to create something exceptional in Dartford: a thoughtfully designed neighbourhood that provides quality homes, green open spaces, and places to gather, eat, shop, and enjoy.

Key features of the masterplan include:

Homes for All

- 30% houses with private gardens
- 20% affordable housing (rented and shared ownership) with a priority for Dartford people
- Prioritised sales to Dartford residents
- A safe, walkable environment
- Energy-efficient homes designed to exceed legal standards by 70%
- A strong focus on comfort, fuel economy and sustainability

Retail, Culture, and Entertainment

- The council will retain ownership of key business premises to prioritise community needs over profit, and ensure the right mix of shops.
- A vibrant mix of independent shops, restaurants and small businesses
- Lively community spaces for events
- Attractions to support the evening economy and local nightlife



“We are creating a neighbourhood for Dartford people that feels rooted, welcoming & proud.”

Jeremy Kite, Leader Dartford Borough Council



Benefits for local people

This is more than just a development project – it's an investment in Dartford's future.

New spaces to live, work, and thrive

- 69 new homes, with the first 25 delivered within two years of planning approval
- Accommodation (social and private) **prioritised** for local people
- Flexible retail units for a mix of local businesses and national names
- Community event space to bring people together

Supporting the Local Economy

- £35m construction investment
- 100 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs per year during construction
- 100+ permanent jobs through new commercial and leisure spaces
- Bringing new customers to support existing businesses

Jobs & Skills

- Apprenticeship and training opportunities during construction
- Local trade and supply chain prioritised
- A major long-term boost for the town centre economy



High quality design & construction

We're taking a community approach. Council ownership means this scheme won't be driven by commercial developers but by good design and local need.

To ensure lasting quality, we've prepared a full Design Code, setting out exacting standards for materials, landscaping, and construction. This code will set the tone for any future development to follow, ensuring consistency and excellence across the area.

Design Priorities:

- Lower-rise, street-based design that respects the character of Dartford
- Robust, high-quality materials, traditional construction
- Phased construction to minimise disruption and maximise community benefit
- Homes built to last and designed with pride
- A strong visual identity with people at its heart

Next steps:

- **Phase 1:** Revitalising the listed facade and the site of the former Co-op building in Spital Street
- **Phase 2:** Development of a new low rise neighbourhood in Hythe Street (from Copperfields to Orchard Street)





Sustainable design that retains town centre parking

We've designed the scheme to be pedestrian friendly and environmentally sound but taken a common-sense approach to retaining the town's valuable existing car parking.

The focus of the scheme has been to promote car-free living but some new residents may choose to pay for parking at Westgate. We will take steps to protect local residential streets and existing neighbourhoods

We want to ensure Westgate Car Park continues to fully support local shops, cafés, restaurants and businesses so we have been looking at how we can improve the way car park works.

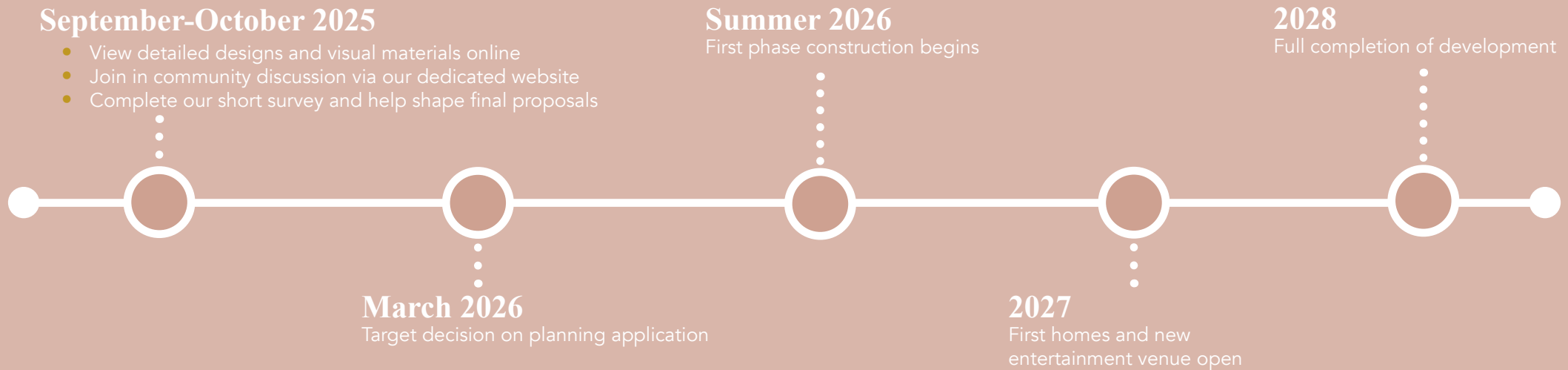
We propose:

- A pricing structure that encourages short to medium stays
- Actively discouraging long-stay and commuter parking
- Convenient and affordable parking for the evening economy

“We’re not losing the car park – we’re improving how it works for local businesses and visitors.”

Next steps

We're aiming to submit a planning application in October 2025.



“Buying this site
for the *public* is a
game-changer”

Jeremy Kite, Leader Dartford Borough Council

With developers out of the picture, your voice matters more than ever. This project is for Dartford – and it will only succeed with your support and feedback. Please take a moment to explore the plans and share your thoughts including any ideas for a name for the development. Help shape the next chapter of your town centre.

How to share your feedback:

- Visit our online platform
- Fill out the short community questionnaire
- Email or write to us with your views