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# Strood Waterfront

## Appendix 2: Illustrative Masterplan

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2018



*View from former Civic Centre site across to Rochester*



# 1.0 Illustrative Masterplan

*An Illustrative Masterplan has been prepared to test viability and parameters for the purposes of providing guidance for future proposals.*

The Illustrative Masterplan serves as a vehicle to test:

- The deliverability of development;
- Confirm that the requirements of this Development Brief will be commercially attractive and viable;
- That likely impacts will be acceptable; and
- Confirm development parameters for development quantum and mix; building scale, height and massing; car parking and servicing; and open space provision.

These parameters form guidance for development proposals contained in preceding chapters in this document. It should, however, be noted that development proposals will need to be informed by further detailed studies, consideration of market appropriate uses, and design to comply with the council's ambitions set out through the planning and design principles / guidance in this document.

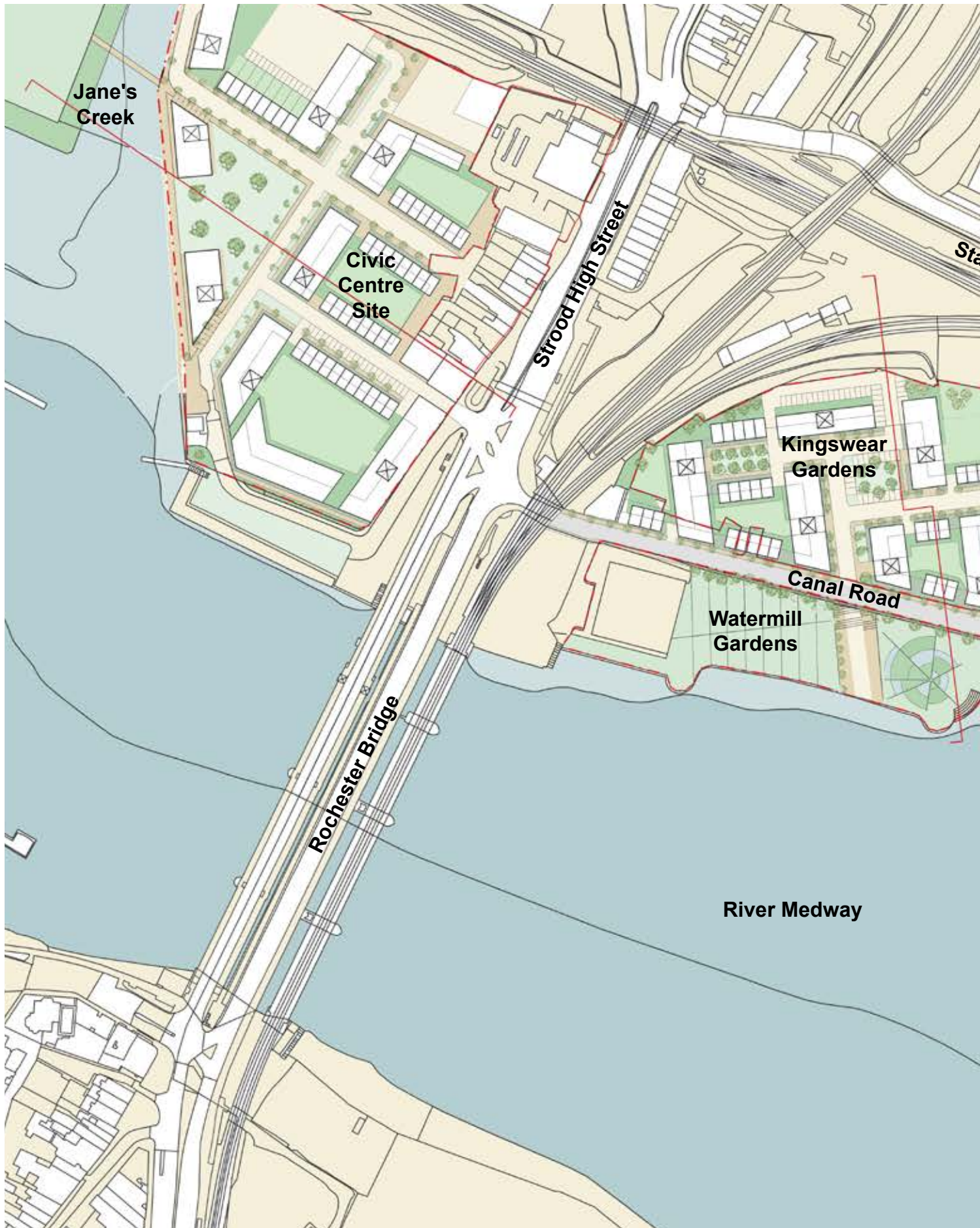
The Illustrative Masterplan makes the following assumptions:

- Illustrates the potential of including development on land controlled by third-party owners where this could be delivered;
- Has been designed so as not to compromise future change on adjacent sites including Strood station and at the High Street;
- The enhancement of Watermill Gardens will contribute towards necessary open space for the new development.

A 3D Massing Model has also been prepared to test potential visual impacts and the legibility of the Illustrative Masterplan. This exercise assisted in refining guidance on how views and building heights should be considered. The Massing Model is not intended to convey the desired architectural character of the future development.

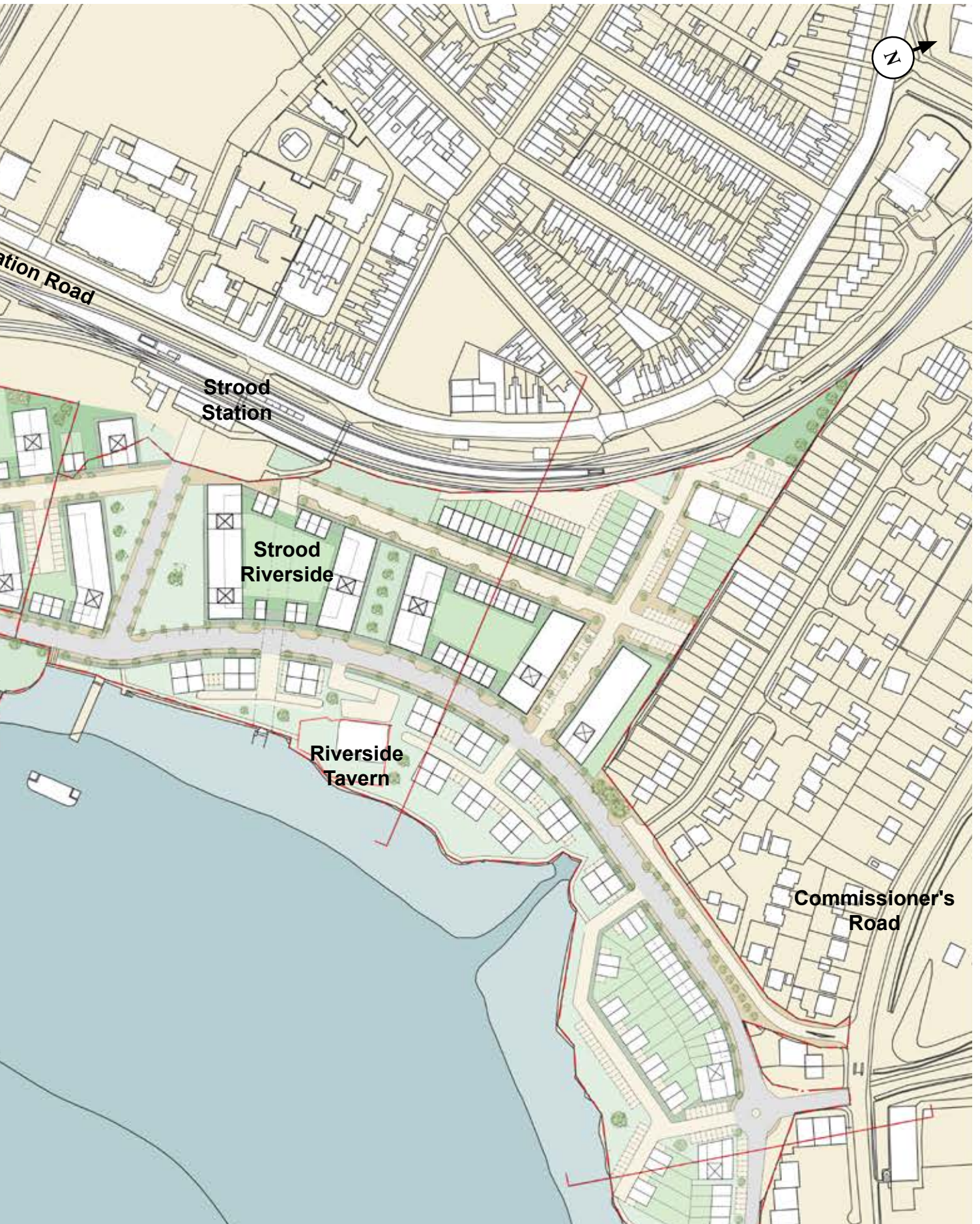
The Illustrative Masterplan includes a complementary mix of uses, which is broad enough to test the principles above and form part of the building blocks to create a high quality environment for residential living. The Masterplan assumes the following:

Site	Houses	Apartments	Other Uses	Open Space
Former Civic Centre	52 (4-bed)	512 (1, 2 & 3-Bed)	Retained / reprovided existing Council CCTV facility and Ambulance Service crew facility. Uses that drive community access to the waterfront, support or increase vitality and make the best use of the waterfront including the remarkable views. For the purpose of the Illustrative Masterplan, these include commercial, commercial leisure and retail uses	1.38 Ha
Kingswear Gardens	27 (4-bed)	418 (1, 2 & 3-Bed)	None	0.33 Ha
Watermill Wharf	-	-	Employment	-
Watermill Gardens			Enhanced space which could include seating, cafe, public toilets, play equipment	0.87 Ha
Strood Riverside	134 (4-bed)	468 (1, 2 & 3-Bed)	Station-related retail	1.55 Ha
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>1,398</b>		



Map 1: Illustrative Masterplan









## 1.1 Design Approach

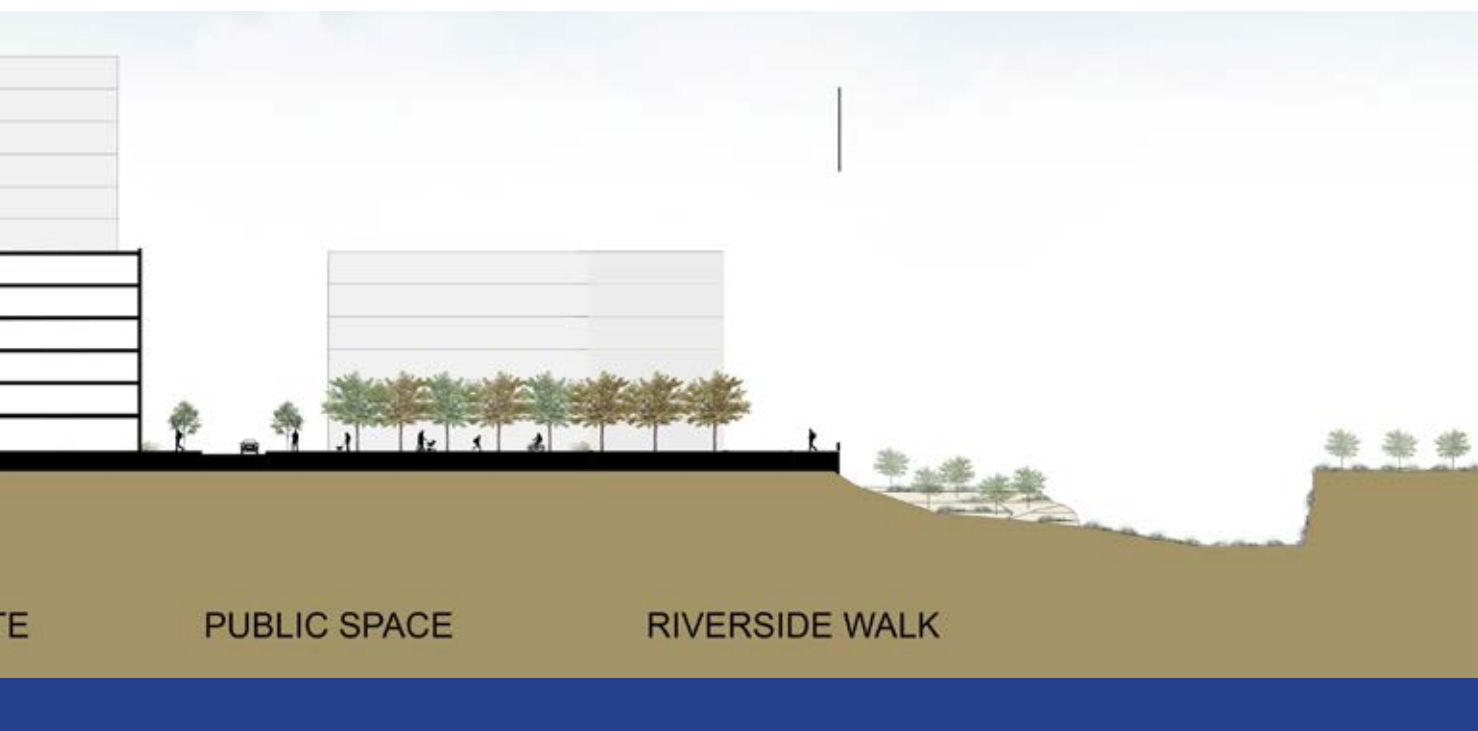
Key to the design approach is wider context and the strategic ambitions for Strood and the authority as a whole. Development proposals scoped out in isolation of the wider vision have the potential to undermine and conflict with the strategic vision for the authority making the delivery of vital infrastructure unfeasible and thereby impacting on the quality of space and the development, e.g. walkway along the riverside will require contributions from developers to deliver this key piece of infrastructure which could be a missed opportunity if each proposal were considered in an uncoordinated way. Proposals and ambitions for Strood District Centre and the opportunity areas identified through the Local Plan must also be taken into account. It is therefore vital that proposals for development of this area are consistent and complementary to the strategic vision captured in the Local Plan and through regeneration initiatives in the Regeneration Strategy 2035 as well as within this guidance document.

A more considered approach is also required in the creation of a high quality environment and public realm. A user-friendly and attractive public realm is essential in creating a desirable, cohesive place to live and address health issues prevalent in the authority. Providing public access to the waterfront forms part of this vision and which will also address other deficiencies.

The former Civic Centre site is a key site in a prominent and prime location on the waterfront with stunning views of the idyllic Rochester Castle and cathedral. The design approach therefore seeks to emphasise and prioritise this site, encourage public access to the waterfront through the choice of uses; provision of walkways, public realm and design. The former Civic Centre site is about enclosure - the inside and the outside, and about commanding views out across the Medway. It is about creating a point of interest to attract visitors and the public, a space for social interaction, leisure activity and/or commercial business. It's a site that can provide a catalytic change to the entire waterfront and must take full advantage and appreciation of its location.

The Illustrative Masterplan assumes delivery in phases (starting with the Civic Centre site, then the Riverside followed by Kingswear Gardens), each with a distinct character. This will create a coherent waterfront prospect when viewed from Rochester and Rochester Bridge as well as longer views up and down the Medway.

The design of the Illustrative Masterplan takes inspiration from the two, contrasting building forms represented by Rochester's historic sites: the Castle, with enclosed keep, towers, and castellation overlooking the Medway; and the Cathedral sitting as a free-standing object against the backdrop of the



surrounding townscape. The designs of the Riverside and Kingswear Gardens sites are about a series of objects against a backdrop of urban blocks.

## 1.2 *Former Civic Centre*

The Illustrative Masterplan features a central public space, located at the meeting of routes from the High Street and Knight Road into the site, partially enclosed by new homes and opening up to provide views across Jane's Creek and framed views across to Rochester Castle.

The riverside walk links a series of uses including a potential commercial use with café and restaurant, new homes and public spaces. Alongside Jane's Creek, the riverside walk widens with buildings set back 10m from the river wall to provide additional public space for the general public to explore and enjoy the waterfront.

A new footbridge could link across Jane's Creek to extend the riverside walk, access existing open space and provide potential for further extension of walking routes to Temple Marsh. This would provide further opportunity and expand the existing options for the public to enjoy walking their dogs, going for a leisurely walk or run and general enjoyment of the waterfront, which would facilitate the improvement of people's health and wellbeing whether visitors to the area or residents in the surrounding area. Connectivity with Temple Marsh

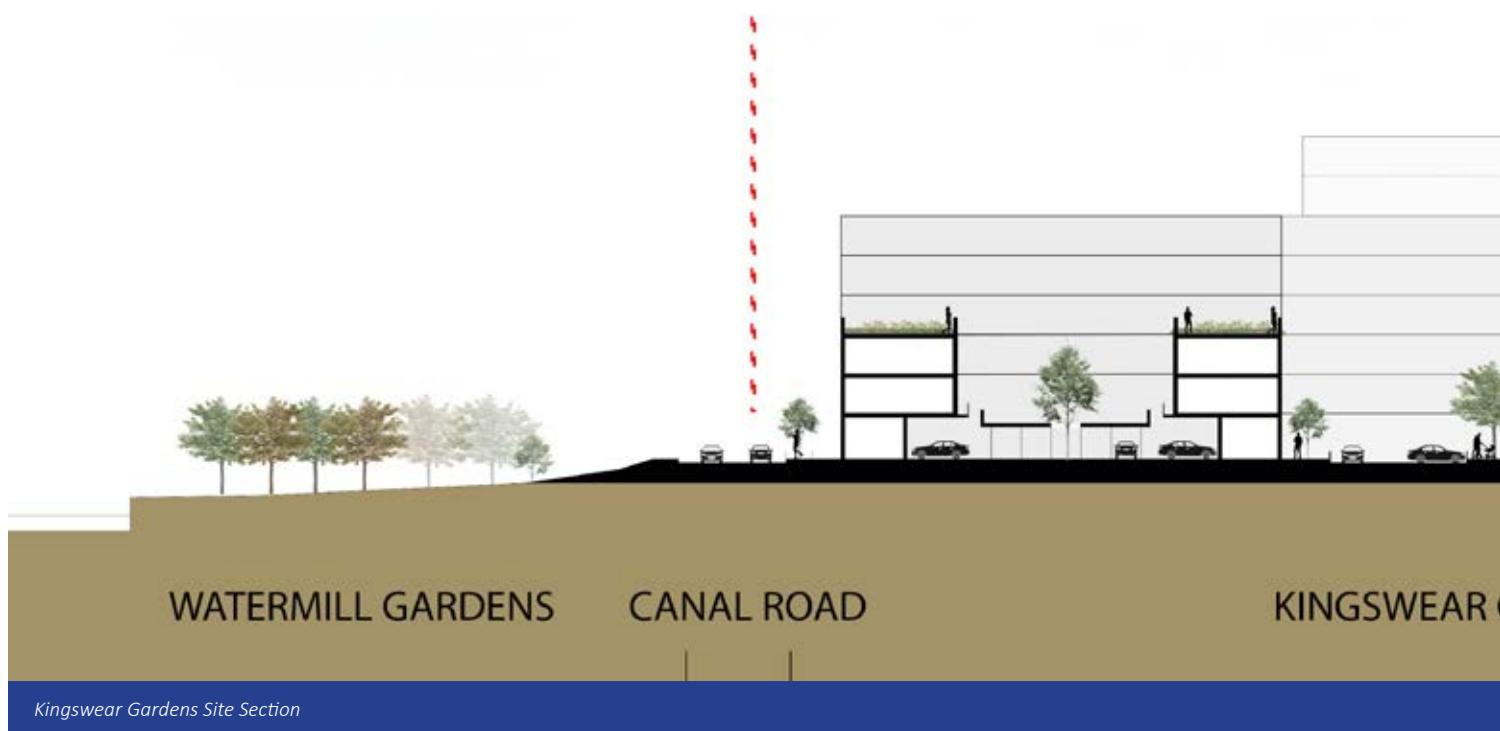
residents will encourage social cohesion and interaction and create a greater degree of permeability.

Buildings help to shelter the central space from prevailing winds. This arrangement also means that the majority of homes have views of either the water (direct or oblique) or landscaped space.

A mix of 4-11 storey apartment buildings and two and three-storey town houses sit along shared surface access lanes to create more intimate street spaces, while residents' parking is mostly kept out of view at the rear of the buildings.

Communal amenity spaces with informal provision for children's play are created between residential blocks to create semi-private space for the residents and ensure passive surveillance. Some blocks have communal spaces above car parking. These spaces include seating and planting and are shown in the sections with apertures to provide natural light and ventilation to car park areas as well as providing opportunities to include larger trees.

Small shop units are included at the junction of Esplanade to connect the development to the existing shopping parade along the west of the High Street. As an alternative to residential uses, commercial uses could be included facing onto Rochester Bridge with more active commercial leisure uses (cafés and restaurants) on the ground level looking across the river to further enliven the central public



space and this stretch of the High Street, and help attract people across from Rochester.

Blocks are arranged to allow for future regeneration along the High Street and retain the potential for new and enhanced movement connection to the High Street.

### 1.3 Riverside

The illustrative layout responds to views into and out from the site including views from Canal Road to the Medway and from the station to Strood Pier and All Saints Church, which is further enhanced by the creation of public spaces in the appropriate locations. A new public space creates an enhanced sense of arrival at Strood station by opening up views to the Medway and making interchange with bus services along Canal Road more legible. A series of other public spaces are created, all with a visual connection to the river.

A riverfront walk and cycle route is suggested, connecting between an improved Watermill Gardens and the existing public footpath up to Frindsbury. This route relates to a shoreline of more natural landscape treatment along the eastern end of the Riverside site.

The connection of routes allows for a continuous access to the valued waterfront, sustainable travel option and provides options for people to undertake leisurely activities encouraging healthier lifestyles. This is quite important in this

area given the limited provision of open space and options for sport and leisure. A new north-south route through the site connects to the existing underpass to Station Road and creates a vista aligned on All Saints Church, Frindsbury.

To maximise the number of homes with a river view, let in sunlight to courtyards gardens and create long views across the site, apartment blocks are orientated perpendicular to the river. This also creates a waterfront prospect with the buildings' slimmer end elevations on view.

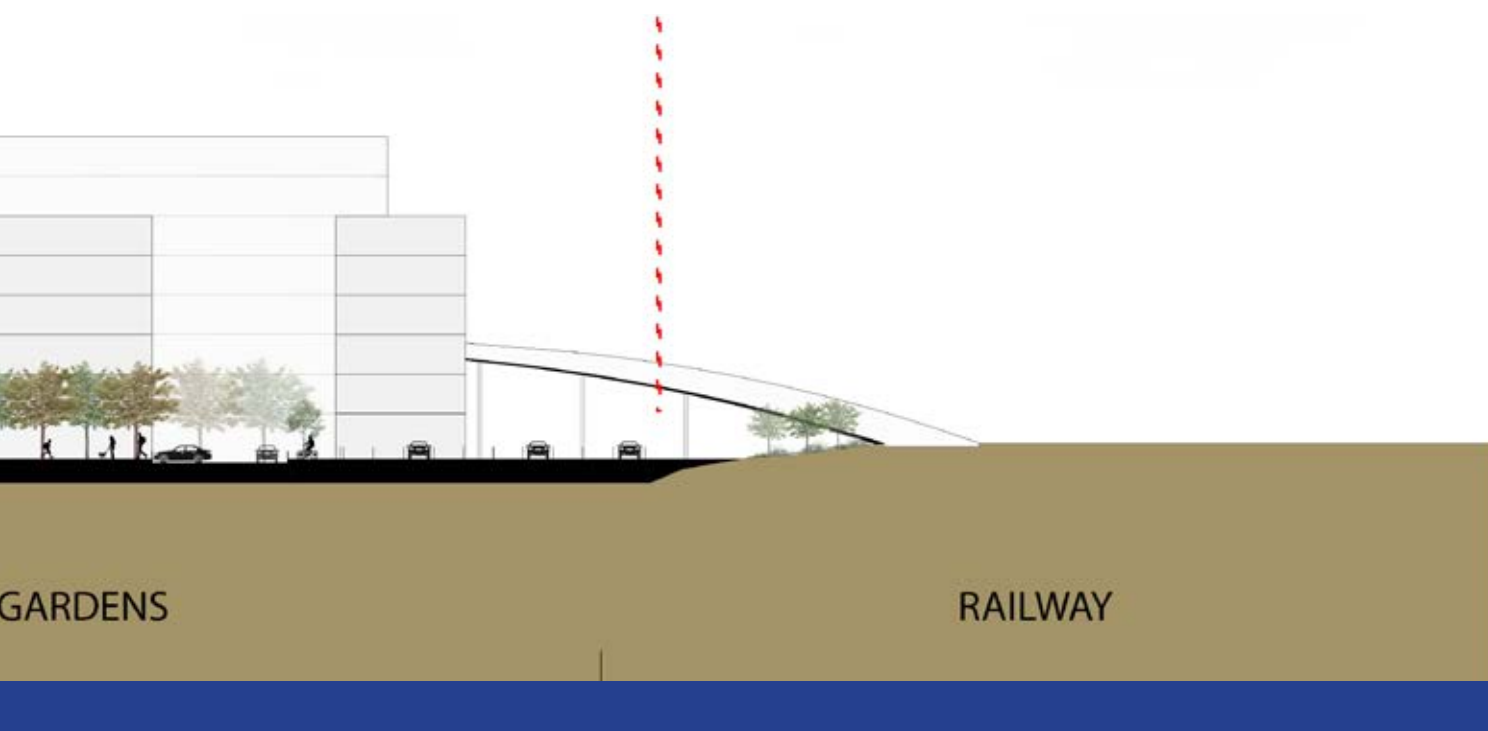
To provide diversity and choice, a variety of residential building types are suggested, in addition to apartments, town-houses and house groups of two or four homes are arranged as 'pavilions'.

These pavilions are formed of groups of four houses with roof terraces providing views across the Medway. They provide a rhythm of buildings along the waterfront and contrast with a backdrop of taller elements nearer the station and mediate with the scale of the retained Riverside Tavern.

Larger apartment buildings of up to seven storeys are set back from the waterfront to gain river views above the lower pavilions. The raised land levels created by the flood defence measures are exploited to provide discrete undercroft car parking below apartment buildings.

Massing of buildings is scaled down with a greater proportion of houses to the east of the site in order to mediate with existing houses along Cranmere Court and avoid interrupting views across the Medway from All Saints Church.





Allotment gardens are suggested to the north of the site alongside the railway.

#### 1.4 *Kingswear Gardens*

The Illustrative Masterplan envisages that the existing estate will be replaced and the site combined with third-party ownerships along Canal Road.

Blocks are arranged to create a clear definition of public, private and communal spaces, maximise views of the river and face onto landscaped spaces. The plan includes new public and communal open spaces which can include play equipment, and designed to accommodate sustainable urban drainage systems. It is also proposed that all homes benefit from private open space in the form of gardens, terraces or balconies.

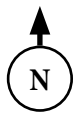
The blocks combine a variety of size and type of new homes. New development could combine 5-8 storey apartment buildings with three-storey town houses with roof terraces, grouped around landscaped communal courtyards at first floor level above residents' car parking.

A focal public space sits at the confluence of a route and vista across Canal Road to a re-landscaped Watermill Gardens providing views across and along the Medway, and a new route providing more direct access to Strood station.

The illustrative plan also suggests how a disused part of the station site could be developed in conjunction with council owned land to provide additional new homes (not included in figures above).

#### 1.5 *Watermill Gardens*

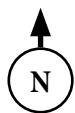
The Illustrative Masterplan proposes that the existing open space be retained but substantially improved with new landscaping and facilities to serve the increased population of Kingswear Gardens and the Riverside sites. Facilities could include new play equipment, a café, public toilets and drinking water fountain as well as places to just sit and enjoy the view.



- Private open space including terraces
- Communal open space
- Public open space



Map 2: Illustrative Amenity Space Provision



- 2-4 Storeys
- 5-6 Storeys
- 7-8 Storeys
- 9-11 Storeys



Map 3: Illustrative Building Heights Plan

## 1.6 Massing Studies

The Illustrative Masterplan has been modelled in digital 3D to test the likely visual impact of the Masterplan's height and massing to inform the appropriate guidance for future proposals. The Illustrative Masterplan avoids breaking the green ridge line that forms the backdrop to Strood in long views from the south and east and from important locations including Rochester Castle and Chatham and therefore confirms the maximum height guidance set out in Section 4.6.1.



*Massing Study - View from Rochester Castle*



*Massing Study - View from Chatham*



## 1.7 Car and Cycle Parking

The Illustrative Masterplan achieves a parking provision averaging 0.6 spaces per dwelling. Map 4 shows locations of a combination of on-plot parking, on-street parking, small group parking areas and undercroft car parking that makes the best use of site level changes resulting from flood defence works. An allocation of car parking spaces will also be reserved for car club vehicles and for electric vehicle charging.

It is assumed that all apartment buildings will be provided with secure communal bicycle storage with cycle washing areas, and cycle parking facilities for visitors.

To encourage sustainable travel, cycle loan hubs are proposed within the Riverside arrival space that links Strood station to the waterfront and within the former Civic Centre public space.

