

Once in a Generation

By Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration, Medway Council

The architect Sir Terry Farrell, whose work features in some of the world's most famous skylines, neatly summed up the massive opportunity in Medway.

As our newly-appointed 'design champion', Sir Terry Farrell was taken on a tour of our key regeneration sites two years ago.

We told him about the closure in 1984 of Chatham's dockyard and Royal Navy base with the loss of thousands of jobs. We told him about the decline of Medway's traditional riverside industries, and more lost jobs.

And he said: "You've lost a lot. But you've also gained a once-in-a-generation opportunity. Because the loss of the Navy and river-based industry has released prime waterfront sites... it has released the best of Medway's land."

In his visionary report *Five Towns Make a City*, he argues that the river that gave us our rich history is now the key to Medway's future. He concludes: "Medway has an exceptional geography, a rich heritage, a dynamic creative population and a resurgent economy. These are powerful ingredients..."

Indeed they are. And Medway Council and its partners are determined to deliver that once-in-a-generation opportunity that Sir Terry was so quick to see. It's a transformation that will take a generation but we are now well into the 'delivery stage' of the programme.

The most dramatic evidence of this is our flagship regeneration site Rochester Riverside with its great views of the River Medway and Rochester's famous castle and cathedral. For years a scene of industrial dereliction, Rochester Riverside will become a striking new waterside community of 2,000 homes. Plans include two parks, a primary school and two hotels. A walkway and cycle path has given the first public access to the site's one-mile waterfront for over 100 years.

Rochester Riverside will set the highest design and sustainability standards for the wider regeneration of Medway, where massive private and public sector investment will produce up to 40,000 jobs and 16,000 new homes in a city of 300,000 people.



Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture for Medway Council (left) and Sir Terry Farrell

Robin Cooper
Director of Regeneration,
Community and Culture
Medway Council

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