



PRESS RELEASE

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EBBSFLEET GARDEN CITY TO CO-LOCATE CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGH INCLUSIVE CO-DESIGN

A multidisciplinary consortia led by collaborating architects RCKa and AOC have been appointed by Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) to develop a best practice approach to the co-design and co-location of cultural and community infrastructure for Ebbsfleet Garden City. The work is part of Creative Estuary, an ambitious programme to transform 60 miles of the Thames Estuary across Essex and Kent into one of the most exciting cultural hubs in the world, putting culture at the heart of placemaking.

Over the next 12 months, focusing on two key development zones within the Garden City and adjacent neighbourhoods, the consortia will work with local residents, key stakeholders, and creative professionals to develop proposals for a range of high quality, exciting and innovative community buildings. The aim is to co-locate a range of cultural facilities alongside civic uses, in order to maximise usage, viability and sustainability. Concept designs for a building in each zone will be co-produced to RIBA stage 2. The results of the cultural co-location project will be used to develop a Cultural Infrastructure Prospectus for Ebbsfleet to attract creative businesses and facilities to the area, maximising on its strategic location and supporting the ambitions of Creative Estuary. The architectural-led consortia will also share lessons learnt during the project through a best practice guide for national and international cultural developments in the future.

Taking this holistic approach will move development away from siloed thinking and single-use assumptions, and establish an ambitious, city-wide vision for cultural infrastructure, co-located with a range of civic functions. Additionally it will support Ebbsfleet in developing a strong cultural identity and engage more people in arts and culture as audiences, participants and makers.

EDC ran an open tender process which attracted exceptionally high quality and innovative responses. Along with **RCKa** and **AOC**, the winning consortia includes: Landscape Architects **Studio ONB**; cultural placemaking, destination development and business experts **Fourth Street**, specialist creative sector planning consultancy **Planning Lab** and affordable studio providers for the creative sector **Studiomakers**. The consortia will work collaboratively with the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation team, stakeholders, residents and other creative and technical professionals to deliver this inclusive approach to developing new civic infrastructure.

RCKa Director Dieter Kleiner says *"RCKa, AOC and our exceptional team are thrilled to have been selected for this unique commission, which brings together masterplanning and strategic placemaking with community participation and economic regen expertise, with an ambition to realise meaningful buildings and places that respond to local need. It's a fantastic opportunity to work with forward-thinking organisations like EDC and Creative Estuary across a fascinating area at a critical moment in its transformation. We're looking forward to getting stuck in!"*

EDC's Head of Strategy and Place-making Kevin McGeough says *"EDC are committed to delivering on our Garden City principles by developing community buildings for local people with local people and to offering a wide range of opportunities in Ebbsfleet for residents to get involved in creative activities when they arrive. We are delighted to be working with Creative Estuary and our partners in Purfleet to develop a fresh approach to the development and delivery of community and cultural infrastructure. Our partnership was delighted by the high calibre of bids we received to work with us and we are excited to see the output of our commission."*

Creative Estuary's Project Director Emma Wilcox says *"Embedding arts and culture into the design, development and DNA of our communities is fundamental to the Thames Estuary's future. That is why we are embarking on this ambitious project to establish best practice in ensuring art and culture play a key role in civic planning and placemaking. Cultural co-location involves finding holistic ways to integrate cultural infrastructure into community buildings and outdoor spaces, facilitating more places for creative activity, from flexible artist studios to larger scale performance and exhibition spaces. Through this project, research and innovation will allow us to create a new strategy for embedding culture into new communities, developing best practice models with national relevance."*

Ebbsfleet's cultural co-location project, along with partners in Thurrock working on the regeneration of Purfleet Town Centre, is one of a number of workstreams which make up Creative Estuary, which together will drive forward the creative and economic evolution of this unique region.

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Notes to Editors

About Ebbsfleet Garden City:

Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) was established by the Department of Communities and Local Government in April 2015 to drive delivery of a 21st Century Garden City in Ebbsfleet, North Kent. The administrative boundary covers an area of 1026 hectares, within which EDC are seeking to bring forward the vision of a new connected and vibrant city. This includes the creation of up to 15,000 new homes across 4 urban districts; a vibrant mixed-use city centre providing up to 30,000 jobs, community and cultural facilities, and a world class Health, Education and Innovation Quarter (HEiQ). 2 new secondary schools, 8 primaries and 7 new city parks are planned, along with significant investment in utilities, highways, public transport, cycle and walking routes. The Garden City site represents a complex and challenging area with significant potential, not least because of the existing road and international rail connectivity, strategic location in the South-East and unique landscape character created by former quarrying industries and the River Thames.

The first new Garden City in a hundred years and the first New Town in 50 years, Ebbsfleet is building on the legacy of Ebenezer Howard's original Garden Cities, and learning from the challenges of existing New Towns, to create a place founded on quality placemaking developed through and with communities. Extensive local consultation and best practice research is informing how to create a great place to live and work.

Engaging existing and new communities in the development journey is fundamental to how Ebbsfleet Garden City is evolving. Quality of civic life and place are considered equally important factors. More than just building the built environment, EDC wishes to develop new approaches to the design of public buildings and spaces through collaborative co-production processes with communities, stakeholders and specialist professionals. EDC believes that if buildings and spaces are collectively imagined and designed it will result in more accessible and well-connected places that attract people to regularly participate, interact, work and play. This will contribute to community wellbeing, cohesion, shared values and identities.

More information can be found on the Corporation's website at: <http://www.ebbsfleetdc.org.uk/>

About Creative Estuary:

CREATIVE ESTUARY - Launched in 2019, with an ambition to transform 60 miles of the Thames Estuary across Essex and Kent into one of the most exciting cultural hubs in the world, the £6.5m Creative Estuary programme will transform the visibility, identity and future of the region's creative production infrastructure, supporting more than 400 new jobs, delivering new skills, qualifications and apprenticeships for 300 people.

Stretching from Southend to Margate, the Thames Estuary is a region of untold creative potential. A network of fishing towns, heritage sites, imposing dockyards and post-industrial communities, it is home to some of the fastest growing regions in the UK and benefits from unprecedented levels of regeneration investment.

In early 2019 the University of Kent was awarded £4.3m from the DCMS Cultural Development Fund on behalf of the partners who include the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), Kent and Essex County Councils, the Greater London Authority, 11 local authority areas represented by Thames Gateway Kent Partnership and Opportunity South Essex, South East Creative Economy

Network (SECEN), University of Essex, Locate in Kent and cultural organisations, Metal and Cement Fields.

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More information can be found at www.creativeestuary.com