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# CONSORTIUM'S VALENTINE'S MESSAGE

# Our secret admirer

# has high ambitions

THE consortium given the task of regenerating Sittingbourne used Valentine's Day to kick-start its programme with a romantically-inclined flypast.

A mystery plane was spotted by many townspeople circling overhead trailing a large banner, on which was written: We love Sittingbourne.

The identity of the town's secret admirer didn't remain a mystery for long and the Spirit of Sittingbourne consortium soon owned up to the stunt.

Richard Upton, chief executive of Cathedral Group, one of the consortium members, said: "We wanted to begin our regeneration activity as early as possible, if not on the ground then definitely in the air, and Valentine's Day seemed like the perfect time to show our commitment to the town.

"We are already working hard behind the scenes and believe the regeneration process will need to be far more engaging than the delivery of new buildings and spaces.

"We feel it is about how these spaces are used and occupied and how involved people are that will determine the success of Sittingbourne town centre over the next six years while develop-

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ment is taking place."

Proposals to regenerate the town centre have been around in some form since 2004. The ideas to be developed by the Spirit of Sittingbourne Consortium, with a current price tag of about £110 million, include a new station square, intended to improve visitors' arrival into the town with a 'shared space'.

## Interchange

It is hoped this will accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, taxi drop-off, and a bus and rail interchange.

Proposals also include a completely new cultural quarter with an eight-screen multiplex cinema and flexible performance venue.

The cultural square will also be used for weekend and special events such as markets, performances and sporting occasions.

A new civic quarter will see among other things a new library,



**HIGH AND MIGHTY: A Valentine's Day message to the town**

cafe, community rooms, health centre and the Swallows leisure centre. Later phases of the development will include residential and large format retail developments at other locations in the town centre.

The Spirit of Sittingbourne consortium includes developer Cathedral Group, property con-

sultants Essential Land and fund managers Altyon.

The group was selected by Swale council to redevelop the town centre over the next six years, beating Spenhill, Tesco's regeneration arm, and St James's Investments to secure the project.

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