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Partner agreed to transform town

THE thumbs up has been given to the council's preferred partner to transform Sittingbourne.

Cabinet members agreed on Wednesday that Swale council should work with the Spirit of Sittingbourne Consortium so the £1 billion regeneration scheme for the town centre can become a reality.

Proposals include a public square in front of Sittingbourne train station with a hotel and cultural facilities, a new health centre, retail and new residential accommodation.

The Spirit of Sittingbourne is made up of Essential Land, which is developing the old paper

mill site, property developer Cathedral Group and financial fund managers Alyton.

Hearts

The consortium was unanimously chosen by the council's regeneration interview panel because its approach is 'most likely to achieve long-term regeneration in the way the council wants'.

Cathedral Group's chief executive Richard Upton said: "Our creative approach to the scheme will enable us to instill a new spirit in the hearts of those who will live and work in Sittingbourne's vibrant

new town centre."

An extra recommendation added to the report on the night will ensure the council continues to discuss with all parties how non conflicting proposals can be best taken forward.

Cllr John Wright, portfolio holder for regeneration, said: "It's to send a message out that just because we have selected a development partner others don't have to hang their hats up and walk away. We need to talk to them and discuss with all proposed partners how best they fit in together."

Minutes of the meeting will go to full council on February 23.

