

# News

18.01.12

## First phase at Union Square is given the go-ahead

The first phase of Muse's £350 million regeneration of Union Square in the centre of Swindon is to start in late spring following the approval of plans to progress the scheme today.

Swindon Borough Council's planning committee has approved a joint planning application by Muse and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). Forward Swindon, the company responsible for economic growth and development in Swindon, has facilitated the scheme on behalf of Swindon Borough Council.

Councillors approved plans for one residential building comprising 45 assisted living apartments and a high quality 850 space multi-storey car park. The apartments will be operated by locally based housing group GreenSquare who are funding the residential element with private finance and grant from the HCA and Swindon Borough Council. GreenSquare will own the new homes which will be managed by Swindon Borough Council initially for five years. The car park will be managed by Swindon Borough Council when complete.

Doug Finlay, development director at Muse, said: "This approval is a significant milestone for the project and will ensure a start on site in the late spring. The total build cost for this first phase is around £25 million, which will bring much needed investment into the town."

Peter Jones, HCA head of area, added: "This is a great result for the project and the regeneration of Swindon town centre. Now that planning permission has been achieved, the more visible work which will bring tangible benefits in the form of employment and investment in the town centre can start. Coming at a challenging time for the economy, I am sure this news will be welcomed by people in Swindon."

Chris Hitchings, director of development at Forward Swindon said: "This initial phase of development will begin to change the face of Swindon town centre and, around summer 2013, we can look forward to work at Union Square commencing on site. It's a great start to the year and everyone on the project is excited."

Cllr Garry Perkins, deputy leader of Swindon Borough Council: "This is further proof that the regeneration of Swindon town centre is moving ahead, and it's even more impressive and positive when the general economic background is considered. For us to have such a major development taking shape in the town at the moment is a real statement about Swindon's future potential, and it's great that it is now ready to start.

GreenSquare development director, Vic O'Brien, said: "We're delighted to be working with our partners to deliver much-needed, affordable and high quality accommodation for older people in Union Square near a wide range of facilities in the town centre.