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**OVERVIEW OF RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO**

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1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work under my Resource Management Portfolio :-
  - (a) **Darlington and Stockton Partnership for Support Services – Leading Edge** – As you will be aware, as part of the Leading Edge Programme, the Council is looking at innovative ways of increasing the efficiency of the services its provides, underpinned by the need to achieve significant cost reductions within the Council’s Medium-Term Financial Plan. One of the areas identified as an area of potential efficiency was the provision of support services and we have received an update on the work undertaken to date on a potential partnership arrangement with Stockton Borough Council for the provision of these services and we have given our approval to move the proposals to a design stage. The proposed partnership has the potential to deliver significant benefits for Darlington and will enable the Council to learn from such an approach with the potential to extend the practice of partnering into other areas of service to gain further benefits.
  - (b) **Prudential Indicators Update and Treasury Management Half-yearly Review** – In accordance with the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, we have received an update of the Prudential Indicators and a half-yearly review of the Council’s Treasury Management borrowing and investment. The Council’s return on investments has been satisfactory for the first six months of the current financial year and based on the first six months of 2005/06, the Council’s borrowing and investments is forecast to produce a saving of £0.385 million on the 2005/06 approved budget.
  - (c) **Revenue and Capital Medium-Term Financial Plan, Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2006/07 – Timetable** – We have agreed a timetable for consideration of the Medium-Term Financial Plans and the production of this Council’s 2006/07 Revenue Budget, Council Tax and Housing Revenue Account.
  - (d) **Red Hall Community Association** – We have authorised the Director of Corporate Services to undertake the financial monitoring of Red Hall Community Association’s refurbishment and extension project. The Association have secured funding of £473,000 from various sources to refurbish the centre which is leased to them by the Council and there are a number of benefits to the Council in monitoring the finances of this project.
  
2. Other areas which might be of interest are :-

- (a) **Dolphin Centre Refurbishment** – In order to allow the proposed Dolphin Centre refurbishment to proceed we have accepted the surrender of the lease of No. 23 Horsemarket and authorised the taking of appropriate action to terminate the lease of No. 16 Horsemarket.
- (b) **Schedule of Transactions** - A number of transactions, provisionally made by the Director of Development and Environment, have been approved.
- (c) **Revenue Budget Management – Monthly Monitoring Report** – Each Director presented to Cabinet projected expenditure for the year compared with approved budgets.
- (d) **Capital Programme – Monthly Monitoring Report** – We have considered the current position of the spending and resource levels of the Capital Programme.
- (e) **Audit Services – Annual Audit Plan 2005/06** – We have received a progress report against the 2005/06 Annual Audit Plan in accordance the Audit Services’ role and terms of reference which indicates that the Council continues to operate within a control environment that is generally sound.
- (f) **Renewal of Insurances** – We have accepted the renewal terms form Zurich Municipal, our insurers, and extended the contract until 31st March, 2008. A tendering process will be undertaken to seek tenders for our insurances from April 2008.
- (g) **Land at Ridgeway** – We have agreed to acquire land at Ridgeway from the Crown Estate and to subsequently dispose of it to adjoining land owners to enable them to extend their gardens.
- (h) **Church Row – Lease of Accommodation** – A one year lease of an office at Church Row has been granted to us by the Darlington Council for Voluntary Services to enable a temporary community development worker, employed by this Council to be based there.
- (i) **Orange Mast – Land at Salters Lane South** – A 10-year lease has been granted to Orange Personal Communications Limited to enable a 12 metre pole mounted telecommunications installation with associated equipment to be installed on an area of land on Salters Lane South, to the North of its junction with Nightingale Avenue.
- (j) **Morton Palms** – The next phase of development by City & Northern is now underway, referred to as Pioneer Court, which, when built, will offer a mixture of office units varying from 3,000 sq ft – 16,250 sq ft.
- (k) **Commercial Street** – The Development Agreement with Discovery Properties Ltd and Bowmer & Kirkland has been signed, committing the developer to construct the new shopping centre, with department store, large shop units, multi-screen cinema, housing and car park, provided certain conditions are met. This represents significant progress towards the achievement of this development.

- (1) **Faverdale** – Conditional contracts have been exchanged with Easter Developments Ltd for the development of 170,000 sq ft of industrial space on land to the southeast of Argos. Subject to planning permission, works are due to start in spring 2006.

**Councillor Don Bristow**  
**Cabinet Member with Resource Management Portfolio**