
OVERVIEW OF REGENERATION AND PLANNING PORTFOLIO

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work that have been undertaken under the Regeneration and Planning Portfolio :-
 - (a) **Piercebridge Conservation Area Character Appraisal** – We approved the finalised Piercebridge Conservation Area Character Appraisal, a draft was approved on 30th August, 2005 which formed the basis for consultation carried out between 16th November, 2005 and 28th December, 2005. The Piercebridge Conservation Areas Character Appraisal is the first in a series of appraisals concerning the 16 conservation areas in the Borough and will provide a document to assist in the protection and management of the Piercebridge Conservation Area.
 - (b) **Job Centre Plus Co-Financing Community Reachout Project** – We gave our support to the submission by this Council of the Tees Valley Community Reachout Project 2006/08 for Jobcentre Plus Co-financing funding; and agreed to enter into a Service Level Agreement with the other four local authorities in Tees Valley with this Council acting as lead authority and accountable body for this initiative. If the bid for funding is successful, we also agreed to release the funding
 - (c) **Planning Excellence – Service Delivery Improvement Plan** – Cabinet endorsed the Planning Services Improvement Action Plan and approved the commissioning of specialist consultants to carry out a review of Development Control processes and procedures; and a review of consultation best practice and advise on a range of methods and techniques
 - (d) **Members Training** - Officers from the Planning Services Section carried out two training sessions for Members which explained the role of PAC Members in the decision making process, and outlined various recent changes to the Development Control process, as a consequence of the Town Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
 - (e) **Members Site Visits** - Members of the PAC and Environment Scrutiny Committee toured various sites across the Borough to assess the outcome and quality of recent developments. The sites included a range of development types and uses, covering business, retail and residential.
 - (f) **Faverdale East Business Park** – Marketing Campaign - A joint marketing campaign has been launched with Easter Group to promote Faverdale East Business Park to national and regional audiences. The Council has 4.3 hectares (10.6 acres) of land for sale, which is available for both owner-occupiers and inward investors. Easter Group is constructing up to 190,000 sq ft of high quality production/distribution units in sizes

ranging from 20,000 sq ft up to 100,000 sq ft.

- (g) **D2E e-Commerce Seminar Programme** - Following on from the success of last autumn's series of seminars a fresh programme of events has been organised for this year, funded through the British American Tobacco Legacy Fund. This first seminar was held on 15 September with an introduction to e-commerce. Further seminars will be held monthly in October, November and December and will cover topics such as Marketing and E-Marketing, Sourcing New Markets through E-Commerce and Protecting Your Business in 2007.
- (h) **Darlington Advantage** - Consultants "An Agency Called England" have now been appointed to work on the details of year 2 of the Darlington Advantage campaign. This national marketing campaign is supported by private sector partners City & Northern, Lingfield Investments, Easter Group, Sanderson Wetherall and British American Tobacco and will promote office and business premises available in Darlington to a wide audience of intermediaries and blue chip companies.
- (i) **Evans Easyspace** - A total of 24 office units and 2 workshop units have now been completed by Evans Easyspace at their site on Lingfield Way. The office units range in size from 450 sq ft to 1,100 sq ft while the workshop units are both 1,800 sq ft. The new development, which is to be known as the Evans Business Centre, has already welcomed its first business – Vortex Valves (see below).
- (j) **Vortex Valves** - Darlington has been selected by Vortex Valves Corporation, an American-based company, as the ideal location for its European Head Quarters. The company supplies dry bulk material handling valves to a worldwide customer base of original equipment manufacturers and process engineering specialists. It is anticipated that the company will create five jobs over the next three years at its new premises on the new Evans Business Centre.

Councillor David Lyonette
Regeneration and Planning Portfolio