
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) **Affordable Housing Supplement Planning Document** – We gave agreement to the publication of the draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning document as the basis for public and other consultations. In doing so we also agreed that the document be applied as the basis for the Council’s decision making on planning applications where affordable housing is required as part of new development, until such time as a finalised Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document is adopted by the Council.
 - (b) **Launch of Pioneer Court and Darlington Advantage** - City & Northern developers of the Morton Palms Business Park launched Pioneer Court on 16 November 2006. Pioneer Court provides 12 units of quality office accommodation. City & Northern have invested over £9m in Pioneer Court. The event hosted by City & Northern also provided an opportunity for the Council, and private sector partners to launch the Darlington Advantage Marketing Campaign to agents, press and intermediaries.
 - (c) **Habitat Improvements** - Three sites received English Nature Licenses to allow for newt mitigation work at Brankin, Brinkburn and Firth Moor. This allows us to carry out significant habitat improvements on all these three sites, especially at Brinkburn where a new area of wetland is scheduled to be created to link up the existing wetlands and create a much improved level of biodiversity.
 - (d) **Bio-diversity** - The new guidance from DEFRA on how the Council ensures it has a sufficiently high level of local knowledge of where its biodiversity is located is now being implemented. A steering group has been established made up of Council officers and local experts to review the information we currently have and how to make sure in future it is at a level that helps aid the planning process, providing a detailed understanding of where important species are and how we can protect and enhance Darlington’s improving green environment.
 - (e) **Countryside Events** - The winter, countryside events programme has commenced with a very successful Halloween celebration event with over 100 people attending a damp, dark west park on the 27 of October to hear story telling, learn craft skills and undertake a spooky walking quiz.
 - (f) **The Rights of Way Improvement Plan** - The Rights of Way Improvement Plan enters a new stage with intensive consultation exercises being carried out with a series of focus groups in the coming weeks. This includes a wide section of the public such as those with equestrian interests, walking groups, disabled groups, the old, the young,

young mothers and so on. Producing a good ROWIP will put the Council in a strong position for the coming years to make significant improvements in the quality of countryside access, near to where people live.

- (g) **Access for All Awards** - Darlington Borough Council, in partnership with Darlington Association on Disability, give the 'Access for all' award in recognition of businesses, organisations or individuals who have gone that extra step towards providing accessibility for disabled people in the Borough. The closing date for nominations is 1 November and judging to take place on 6 November. The presentation of Access for All Awards will be conducted by the Mayor at the DAD AGM in the Dolphin Centre on the 23 November.

Councillor David Lyonette
Regeneration and Planning Portfolio