
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) **Commercial Street** – Consideration was given to the terms negotiated by the Council’s chosen developer of Commercial Street, Cobalt Estates (Darlington) Limited, in respect of the proposed sale and leaseback arrangement between the council and a third party for site assembly purposes.

Significant progress is being made with The Oval development, with the commitment of Debenhams to the scheme being announced and further lettings expected shortly.

- (b) The Final Draft of Darlington’s Rights of Way Improvement Plan has been released by the Council’s Countryside service for consultation purposes with the aim of producing the final document for consideration at Octobers Cabinet.
- (c) **Central Park** – On Wednesday 27 June the developers who will transform the £200 million Central Park masterplan into reality were announced. The consortium consists of Commercial Estates Group, Yuill Homes and Keepmoat plc. The launch, held at Darlington College was a successful event, attracting many key investors and agents from the area.

Now that two of the allotment sites have been relocated and the third is planned to commence shortly, the next step is to progress the planning application for the relocation of the council depot to Yarm Road. Meetings are being held with the developer & Council representatives to develop the design. Work is also progressing on agreeing the Development Agreement.

- (d) **Fact finding visit to Leeds** – At the meeting of the Town Centre Board - Feethams and the Markets Working Group on 19 April, it was agreed that a visit be arranged, attended by representatives of the Group. The purpose of the trip was to explore regeneration ideas from Leeds that may be transferable to Darlington Town Centre. The trip looked at two main areas [1] Holbeck Urban Village, a mixed-use area targeted at SME’s and creative industries and [2] The Calls, riverside regeneration.

The trip provided an opportunity to meet architects involved in the delivery of both the regeneration projects. Peter Vaughan [Leeds City Council] met the group at the Round Foundry in Holbeck, giving an introductory briefing to the background of the project, their approach to regeneration with a guided walk around the area. Over lunch the group met local architect Ian Tod and had a brief introduction to the contrasting ‘reactive’ approach to planning for The Calls area along the course of the River Aire and the Leeds-Liverpool canal as they pass through the city centre.

The visit generated a range of lessons/discussion points related to both planning process and implementation which were reviewed and discussed at the subsequent Working Group meeting on 5 July.

- (e) **Morton Palms** – Lettings are progressing well and discussions are taking place on further phases of development.
- (f) **Tees Valley Unlimited** – I chaired the first Regeneration and Planning Board meeting on 10 July 2007, which considered the work programme of the Board, Regional Spatial Strategy, an Enterprise Initiative and issues for Chemical and Process Industries, amongst other things.

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Regeneration and Planning Portfolio