
**DARLINGTON RAILWAY CENTRE MUSEUM
IMPLEMENTING THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**Responsible Cabinet Member(s) – Councillor David Lyonette,
Regeneration and Planning Portfolio**

Responsible Director(s) - John Buxton, Director of Development and Environment

Purpose of Report

1. To update members on the progress made with the plans to redevelop Darlington Railway Centre and Museum (DRCM), and to seek Cabinet approval for the release of funding that has been secured through the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for initial project planning work.

Information and Analysis

Background

2. In 2002 a Development Plan was produced for Darlington Railway Centre and Museum, which outlined a vision for developing the site over a five-year period, to achieve 80,000 visitors per annum by 2007. This was approved by Cabinet on 12 November 2002. Proposed work at the site includes the refurbishment of historic buildings; re-display of heritage items; new interpretation; linking the site into the national rail network and improved visitor facilities.
3. Following the Development Plan, considerable work has since been progressed on the project, with a Feasibility Study having recently been commissioned and completed. The Feasibility Study considered the various issues and options available to DRCM, which would enable the site to be developed into a major tourism and visitor attraction for Darlington, the sub-region and the region. The Feasibility Study concluded that the preferred option for DRCM would be the development of the whole site, which would produce a step change in the quality of the attraction, and also enhance and protect the historic buildings on site. It was highlighted that without the momentum of a major scheme, a significant increase in visitor numbers would not be achieved and the DRCM site would, year on year, be likely to diminish.

Current Position

4. The Feasibility Study has highlighted a number of issues that require more detailed investigation. Conservation is a key issue that will affect the future development of the DRCM site. A Conservation Plan has therefore been commissioned in order to identify what will and will not be allowed in relation to the historic buildings on site. The Conservation Plan has been funded using some of the money that has already been allocated by Darlington Borough Council for the overall re-development of DRCM.

5. Simultaneous to the commission and development of a Conservation Plan, the HLF has assessed a Project Planning Grant application that was submitted for DRCM in March 2004. The Project Planning Grant application requested funding from the HLF for a number of project plans that have been identified as necessary in order to inform the overall redevelopment of the DRCM site. The following plans are required:
 - (a) Access Plan - to enable DRCM to identify barriers that limit/prevent people from visiting and enjoying the site.
 - (b) Audience Development Plan - to provide DRCM with a framework for reaching its target audiences.
 - (c) Railway Development Plan - to enable DRCM to carry out detailed analysis into linking the heritage site to the national railway operated by Network Rail

Funding

6. The total cost of the project planning work is £40,000. The Heritage Lottery Fund will provide 90% of this cost; therefore Darlington Borough Council will be required to contribute £4,000 from the money that has already been allocated for the overall redevelopment of DRCM. This report seeks approval for the release of the £36,000 HLF funding.
7. The Feasibility Study estimated that the total cost of the full redevelopment of DRCM would be £2,400,000, although this may increase to £2,700,000. The potential funding sources that have been identified for this are as follows:

Source	Potential Contribution
Heritage Lottery Fund	1,400,000
European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)	750,000
ReDiscover	600,000
Darlington Borough Council – remaining match funding	120,000
Total	2,870,000

8. The contribution from Darlington Borough Council was originally for £200,000 and was agreed under the Capital Programme in September 1998. Due to the need to fund certain pieces of work in preparation for the larger funding applications, some of this money has now been spent. The current uncommitted balance is £120,000. To enable preparatory work to begin, Cabinet confirmed the release of £100,000 from the £200,000 Capital Programme funding in February 2001 (Min Ref C283).

Timetable

9. The timetable for the DRCM project planning work is as follows:
 - (a) Conservation Plan to be completed by July 2004
 - (b) Access Plan, Audience Development Plan and Railway Development Plan to be completed by September 2004.

10. Following the completion of the project plans in September 2004 the next steps to be taken are as follows:
 - (a) Submit ERDF application as soon as possible, should it be agreed by Government Office North East that the project can be put forward.
 - (b) An application will be made to ReDiscover in October 2004 providing that the match funding timescales are not an issue.
 - (c) Submit Stage 1 HLF application along with an application for a HLF Development Grant in September 2004. A decision on this will be received 6 months later in March 2005.
 - (d) Should the HLF approve the above applications, detailed architectural designs will then be produced by June 2005.
 - (e) The Stage 2 HLF application will then be submitted in June 2005, with a decision expected in October 2005.
 - (f) Once funding has been secured, the capital works will commence in October 2005.

Outcome of Consultation

11. Consultation has been ongoing throughout the development of this project. Meetings have been held with various officers of Darlington Borough Council; discussion has been ongoing with the groups located on the DRCM site; and there has been close liaison with funding bodies, network rail and advisory bodies such as North East Museums, Libraries and Archives (NEMLAC). Further consultation will be held with key stakeholders and the wider community throughout the production of the project plans and the development of funding bids.

Legal Implications

12. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

13. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

14. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework

Decision Deadline

15. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter

Key Decisions

16. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, this matter is classed as a key decision and has been advertised in the Forward Plan.

Recommendation

17. It is recommended that :-

- (a) Members note the progress made in relation to the redevelopment of DRCM.
- (b) Members approve the release of £36,000 following approval from the HLF of the DRCM Project Planning Grant application.

Reasons

18. The recommendations are supported to enable Darlington Borough Council to tender for the project planning work, which is a key stage in the overall development programme for DRCM that will allow work to start on site.

John Buxton
Director of Development and Environment

Background Papers

Darlington Railway Centre and Museum: Development Plan 2002 – 2007

Darlington Railway Centre and Museum: Feasibility Study 2004

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