
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) **Darlington Local Development Framework : Local Development Scheme** –The outline, contents and timetable of the Council’s first Local Development Scheme, a three year project plan for the production of Local Development Documents which would progressively replace the existing development plans for the Borough has been approved. The statutory deadline for local authorities to submit their first Local Development Scheme is 28th March, 2005.
 - (b) **View : Shaping the North East – Consultation Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the North East** – Approval has been given for the submission of various objections and statements of support as part of the current consultation process on the Consultation Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the North East which highlighted the key implications for the Council. In doing so we also endorsed new procedures introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 which related to the preparation of sub-regional strategies.
 - (c) **Hundens Lane Allotment Relocation** – In order to progress the Central Park development between Yarm Road and Haughton Road, Cabinet gave approval for the allotments on Hundens Lane to be relocated to both Lascelles Park and Arnold Road. Consultations with tenants of the allotments and residents in the vicinity of the proposed sites have taken place and twelve months notices were served to tenants in March.
 - (d) **Building Futures** – In order to encourage training opportunities for the unemployed of Darlington to gain entry level skills and experience within the Construction Sector we endorsed the Tees Valley Building Futures Project and in doing so entered into a Service Level Agreement with Hartlepool Borough Council as lead authority and accountable body for the initiative.
 - (e) **British American Tobacco (BAT) Legacy Fund** – To enable the British American Tobacco (BAT) Legacy Fund to be made available to support Darlington businesses and employees of BAT to take advantage of the Legacy now that the BAT plant has closed down, Cabinet endorsed the proposed arrangements for the BAT Legacy Group to determine the scope and spend of the BAT Legacy from 2004/05 to 2006/07.
 - (f) **Neighbourhood Renewal Fund Consultation** – Cabinet supported options put forward by the Government for the distribution of the Neighbourhood Renewal Funding post 2005/06 to local authority areas with one or more Super Output Areas

among the three per cent most deprived nationally.

- (g) **Darlington Local Development Framework : Statement of Community Involvement in Planning** – Cabinet considered the comments made in response to consultations on the draft Statement of Community Involvement and our comments were forwarded to Council. The Statement of Community Involvement would provide clarity to all about the community engagement that will take place in the production of the Local Development Framework and the Planning Inspectorate requires the Council's prompt response to representations made on the submitted Statement of Community Involvement.
- (h) **Regeneration Programme 2005/06** – To allow projects to proceed and maximise the amount of external funding available to the Borough, Cabinet approved the release of capital funds secured from the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) and Single Programme for 2005/06 together with the release of other external funding and Council contributions to SRB and Single Programme Projects. The projects to gain are Learning Intranet, Town Centre Initiative, Faverdale East Business Park, Town Centre Pedestrian Heart and Faverdale East Business Park.
- (i) **New Memorandum of Association With the North East Community Forest** – In order for this Council to help establish community forests in the Darlington Borough Cabinet recommended to Council that the new Memorandum of Association of the North East Community Forest (MOA) be approved, that this Council becomes a founder member and that an elected Member be nominated to be a Director of North East Community Forests.
- (j) **Darlington Developments Showcase 23 February 2005** – Investment in Darlington worth more than £350m was demonstrated to a national audience of more than 50 developers, retailers, agents, leisure interests and the press at the Darlington Developments Showcase event held in London at the Chartered Institute of Surveyors. Darlington was portrayed as a prime opportunity for investment in the North East.

The audience were told about the developments taking place at Faverdale East Business Park, Morton Palms, and Lingfield Point, as well as the potential development opportunities at Central Park, Durham Tees Valley Airport and Commercial Street. Private sector investors already in Darlington, including Marchday plc, City & Northern, Peel Airports and Argos Retail Group, generously praised the Council for its “can do” approach and recommended to the audience that Darlington was a Council that was serious about attracting investment to the town.

They all recommended to the audience that the combination of accessibility, quality of life, skilled workforce, housing, offices and leisure opportunities made Darlington and the Tees Valley an attractive area to locate new business. The event was hosted jointly by Darlington Borough Council and Tees Valley Regeneration, including sponsorship from British American Tobacco, (BAT) and the European Regional Development Fund, (ERDF).

- (k) **Pendle Borough Council visit** – Building Control Section and Darlington Association on Disability (DAD) organised, with various Council officers and Members, a visit for Pendle Borough Council officers and Members to look at how Darlington addresses Access for All issues, particularly in relation to the Council’s own buildings. The Pendle visitors were impressed with the systems which have been put in place to ensure access issues are addressed, and by the close working relationship between many parts of the Council and disability groups. The Council is increasingly becoming known as an example of best practice in this area and other local authorities have requested visits.

Councillor David Lyonette
Regeneration and Planning Portfolio