

**TOWN CENTRE FORUM**  
**18th June, 2004**

**PRESENT** – Councillor Williams (in the Chair); Councillors Hartley, D.A. Lyonette, Richmond and S. Robson. (5)

**Officers in Attendance** – Richard Alty, Assistant Director, Development and Regeneration, Gwenda Lyn Jones, Economic Regeneration and Tourism Manager, Louise Payne, Town Centre Manager and Richard Baker, Town Centre Assistant.

**Town Centre Representatives –**

Mr. A. Atkins, Grange Road Traders Association;  
Mr. R. Blair, Covered Market;  
Mr. D. Brown, Latimer, Hinks, Solicitors;  
Ms. V. Bulman, Ottakars;  
Ms. D. Chadwick, Boots the Chemist;  
Mr. A. Christian, Darlington Citizens;  
Ms. S. Clarke, Iceland;  
Ms. M. Coates, Manpower;  
Mr. G. Dawson, Darlington Building Society;  
Mr. S. Dunstone, Quakers Coffee House;  
Mrs. P. Eastwood, Senior Citizen, GOLD;  
Mr. M. Elliott, Coopers Coffee House;  
Mrs. T. Elliott, Coopers Coffee House;  
Mr. J. Fitzpatrick, North East Chamber of Trade;  
Mr. R. Fleming, St. Martins/Queen Street Shopping Centre;  
Mr. K. Gibson, Rosebys;  
Ms. L. Glenning, Argos;  
Ms. A. Haire, Cleancare Dry Cleaning;  
Ms. B. Hankin, Guru Boutique;  
Mrs. E. Hoy, Senior Citizen, GOLD;  
Mrs. L. Hutchison, Darlington Open Market Traders;  
Ms. G. Johnson, House of Fraser;  
Mr. N. Lyonette, Barclays Bank;  
Ms. V. Marsh, Elm Ridge Gardens;  
Ms. D. Milburn, LDS Recruitment;  
Mr./Ms. L. Mitchell, Toymaster;  
Mr. T. Monaghan, Kings Head Hotel;  
Ms. M. Murphy, Urban Chaos;  
Mr. R. Musgrove, Music Zone;  
Mr. J.D. Orme, Local Citizen;  
Mr. C. Pitchford, O'Briens Irish Sandwich Bar;  
Mr. K. Poskett, Arriva;  
Mr. D. Preston, Darlington Partnership;  
Mr. G. Pybus, Darlington Association on Disability;

Mr. L. Rankin, Rubber Sole;  
Mr. A. Small, Cornmill;  
Mr. M. Sowerby, Abbey National Building Society;  
Mr. T. Stevens, Arriva;  
Ms. L. Stewart, Card Store;  
Ms. S. Stainsby, Dixons;  
Ms. J. Wallin, Carver Commercial Chartered Surveyors;  
Ms. H. Williams, F. Hinds;  
Ms. S. Young, Cornmill;

**APOLOGIES** – Councillors Mrs. Brown, Long and Wallis.

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS** – The Chair, Councillor Williams, welcomed Members of the Forum to the meeting and gave a brief overview of the reason for the meeting and the procedure to be followed.

**2. ROLES OF THE TOWN CENTRE FORUM AND THE TOWN CENTRE BOARD** – The Assistant Director, Development and Regeneration gave an explanation of the organisational structure of the Town Centre Forum and Town Centre Board. He stated that this was the first meeting of the year and had been called to steer the way ahead for the Town Centre. The role of the Board was to prepare the Business Plan for consultation and implementation.

**3. TOWN CENTRE BUSINESS PLAN** – The Director of Development and Environment submitted a report (previously circulated) that introduced the draft Darlington Town Centre Business Plan and Annual Action Plan (both also previously circulated) for consideration by this Forum.

The submitted report detailed how the Plans had been formulated, highlighted the key issues and consultation programme and stated that it was based on a three year period.

A report on the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the Darlington Retail Study 2004, which made particular reference to the health check of the Town Centre, was also circulated for information.

Louise Payne, Town Centre Manager, gave a presentation to Members that gave details of Business Plan for the period 1998 to 2001 and highlighted Darlington's situation today. The aims of the Business Plan were also outlined together with Darlington's vision for 2010, which included the Commercial Street Development and the Pedestrian Heart Scheme. The Darlington Town Centre Business Plan was scheduled to be launched on 7th October, 2004

**IT WAS AGREED** – That the thanks of this Forum be extended to Ms. Payne for her informative presentation.

**4. DISCUSSION GROUPS** – The Forum thereupon dispersed into six groups for discussion and consideration of the Town Centre Business Plan.

**5. FEEDBACK** – Following a period of 45 minutes the Groups reconvened and one representative from each Group gave a presentation to the Forum Members on the findings, concerns and suggestions for inclusion of each Group.

**IT WAS AGREED** – That the Forum Members be thanked for their input into the Town Centre Business Plan.

**6. CLOSING REMARKS** – The Assistant Director, Development and Regeneration, thanked those present for their comments and input to the Business Plan and stated that there had been some useful ideas put forward for consideration. He stressed the need for more regulation consultations and the need to further engage the independent sector. The Town Centre Manager was available if Members of the Forum needed further consultation or had fresh thoughts after this meeting. Finally everybody was encouraged to attend future exhibitions for the Pedestrian Heart Scheme.