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**OVERVIEW OF REGENERATION AND PLANNING PORTFOLIO**

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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) **BAT Legacy** – We approved the release of £300,000 revenue expenditure from the British American Tobacco (BAT) Legacy Fund for Year 2 together with submission of an application for European Social Fund, with the Council acting as Accountable Body. The Legacy Fund was established to support job creation and economic development, following closure of BAT's Darlington plant in 2003 and during the first year has supported several projects including, marketing Darlington as a business destination, the D2E e-commerce project which has allowed 37 Darlington businesses to become e-enabled, Skills for Success project and the Falchion Fund. The Year 2 proposals have been agreed by the BAT Legacy Fund Panel which are to include supporting business development and expansion, improve skills within businesses and improve job prospects with training funds for unemployed residents and form BAT employees. The Fund has also been used to promote Darlington as an exciting business destination and will continue to do so in 2006/07.
  - (b) **Central Park ERDF Funding Application** – Approval was also given for the Council to apply for European funding for the Central Park development and also to act as the accountable body for the European Funds. The Central Park project requires funds towards master planning, site assembly, introduction of infrastructure and drainage, acquisition of land and properties, road junctions and project management. The costs of the development are to be met from One North East, English Partnerships, the value of the Council's land at Haughton Road, Local Transport Plan funds and European Regional Development Funds with the remainder to be acquired from the developer when appointed.
  - (c) **Independent Retail Programme** – A bid has been submitted to the Learning Skills Council to access European Social fund to support the independent retail sector in Darlington. A programme of £100,000 of business support has been developed funded by £45,000 European Social Fund and £55,000 British American Tobacco. The Learning Skills Council will announce which projects have been successful in the autumn.
  - (d) **Tees Valley Works** – The Tees Valley Works project works with unemployed people to provide assistance and training to support them into employment or further education. The project is being delivered across the five Tees Valley authority areas. Project staff have been appointed. In Darlington the YMCA will deliver the scheme.

- (e) **Buddy Group** – The Darlington Buddy Group, set up by Business Link in partnership with Darlington Borough Council, aims to assist women to establish a new business or to improve an existing one. The Darlington BUDDY events have been the most popular in the Tees Valley and the programme will be repeated in 2006/07.
- (f) **Building Control Forum** – A Building Control Forum was arranged on 1 February 2006 at which 18 of our customers attended, including architects and surveyors, and gave positive and useful feedback on the work that we do.
- (g) **Building Control Seminar** – On 1 March 2006 an All Day Seminar of the Durham and Tees Valley Building Control Group was held at the Darlington Football Club Stadium. The Seminar covered the significant changes that are due to come into force on 1 April 2006 to the Building Regulations relating to ventilation, conservation, fuel and power. 100 architects, builders and surveyors from the whole of the Durham County and Tees Valley area attended.
- (h) **West Park** - The West Park development has won a prestigious national award. The Sustainable Communities Awards are organised by the Local Government Chronicle and Health Service Journal, and sponsored by DEFRA. West Park was judged to be best in the category of Constructing Sustainable Communities, from an outstanding group of projects including the Greenwich Millennium Village. The Council prepared the entry on behalf of the West Park Partnership - Bussey and Armstrong, County Durham and Darlington Priority Services NHS Trust, and the Council. In handing over the award, broadcaster John Humphries commented that “...the partnership's vision addresses major social, economic and environmental challenges. At the heart of the success is committed partnership working with real community involvement.”

**Councillor David Lyonette**  
**Regeneration and Planning Portfolio**