
OVERVIEW OF ECONOMY AND REGENERATION PORTFOLIO

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work undertaken under the Economy and Regeneration Portfolio.

Darlington Local Plan Consultation

2. Work on Stage 1 of the new Local Plan is underway and details are available on the micro-website at <http://microsites.darlington.gov.uk/local-plan/>. Consultation on the Strategic Issues and Scoping paper will continue until 15 August with a range of opportunities for local groups, organisations and individuals to get involved. A cross-party Members Reference Group has been established to oversee the process, act as a sounding board for officers preparing the plan, monitor progress against delivery of milestones and review risks.

Scotch Corner Retail Development

3. The Planning Inquiry at Richmondshire District Council, dealing with the planning applications called-in for determination by the Secretary of State for Designer Outlet Centre (Class A1 Non-Food) with Restaurants (Class A3) and Associated Landscaping, Car Parking, Servicing and Access Arrangements commenced on 4 May 2016 and lasted for seven days. It is expected that the Inspector will submit his report and recommendations to the Secretary of State during autumn/winter 2016. After consideration, a formal report will be issued with the Secretary of State's decision.

Year End Housing Completion Starts for 2015-16

4. 298 Net additions delivered on 22 separate sites
74 per cent were on previously developed land; and
22 per cent of all completions were affordable housing
5. The top six sites, accounting for 72 per cent of all completions, were:
 - (a) Central Park;
 - (b) Eastbourne School;
 - (c) Lingfield Point;
 - (d) Former Beaumont Hill School Playing Field;
 - (e) Former Hopetown House; and
 - (f) West Park
6. 93 per cent of completions were on sites within or adjacent to the main urban area.

7. Net completions for 2015/16 (298) are lower than for 2014/15 (479), but the 2014/15 figure included 117 reconciliations from previous years.
8. Also, starts during 2015/16 (208) were lower than completions and completions from affordable housing are not expected to be sustained at this level in 2016/17.
9. For reference, the challenge that starts now is 500 new homes this year and every year for the next 20 years.

Economy Team Update

10. Darlington Economy Team held a business summit event at Teesside University, Darlington campus on 18 July 2016 to reflect on Darlington's economic strategy and to consider the ambitions moving forward, following recent regeneration activities.
11. Since January there has been 44 Business Engagements recorded by the team, 37 of these are new enquiries with a further seven ongoing from last year. These include a combination of 1-1 meetings; dealing with specific issues or queries, training support etc.
12. Since January 2016, twelve new hot prospects have been identified with a further four being updated by the team. Hot prospects are classified as the projects which will have the biggest impact on jobs and economic growth in the Borough and within a timescale of 6-12 months.

Enterprise Zones

13. Central Park has been successful in securing Enterprise Zone (EZ) status in the new round of Enterprise Zones. The new EZ status will allow eligible companies (Small Medium Enterprise companies in either the Digital or Biologics/Biopharma Sectors that meet the EZ's growth/investment eligibility criteria) that move on to Central Park before 31 March 2022 to benefit from up to c.£55,000 per annum business rates relief for up to five years. Central Park is one of three sites across Tees Valley to form part of the new round of Government Funded Enterprise Zones and which will continue to deliver benefits to both Darlington and Tees Valley.

Feethams Complex Development

14. The Feethams Leisure Multiplex, operated by Vue Cinemas, officially opened on 23 June and was followed by 'Feethams Fest' on the weekend of the 25 and 26 June. A variety of entertainments and activities launched the event and established the Feethams Darlington as a great place for entertainment and leisure with a regional profile. The restaurants are opening in phases with only two units remaining, which are the subject of significant developer interest.

Blackwell Housing HE4 Consultation (former Blackwell Golf Course)

15. The Planning and Development brief was approved by Cabinet on 12 July 2016. Officers are now preparing all necessary documents to place the site on the open market. Public consultations were undertaken by the Council and the responses received and the Council's feedback is contained within the Cabinet report.

Feethams Office Development Site

16. Feethams Plot 1 site is now on the market. It is for sale by tender with a closing date of 8 September 2016. It is a prime development opportunity of approximately 0.46 Ha (1.14 acres) for prestigious offices and ancillary mixed uses.

Riverside Park

17. Design for the Riverside Park has completed pre application consultations with key stakeholders, neighbours and the Town Centre Board. Feedback on the pre application was largely positive and a planning application has been submitted. It is envisaged that the capital works will commence (subject to planning) in Autumn 2016 with completion by the end of the year.
18. Further funding was identified through Local Growth Fund and has been secured subject to planning. This will fund the sustainable transport link and will free up funding for Phase 2 works (in channel works).

Development Management

19. Significant planning applications for housing at West Park, Sherborne Close, Allington Way, Heron Drive, former Eastbourne School, land adjacent to the Oaktree Public House, Lancaster House and Durham Tees Valley Airport DTVA are currently being considered. Positive feedback has also been received from the consultation process that is undertaken with ward Members and members of the public, which reflects the responsibility of the Council as both land owner and developer.
20. In addition, two significant applications have been received from Dunelm Retail at Yarm Road and for two car show rooms at the former Torringtons site. Important work is continuing, engaging with developers to maintain a positive through put of future submissions.

Town Centre Board – Healthy High Street Initiative

21. Distinct Darlington, the business improvement district within the town centre, with support from the Darlington Economy Team, has submitted a bid to Business in the Community Healthy High Streets scheme.
22. The scheme aims to provide intensive support through consultant advice to help address and improve issues such as vacant units and decreasing footfall through better business partnership work.

23. Darlington's submitted application has support from Marks and Spencer and Boots, who are key corporate partners to the programme, as well as the Town Centre Board.
24. We expect to hear if we have been successful in our Bid by 27 July.
25. More information on the scheme is available on the website at <http://www.bitc.org.uk/programmes/healthy-high-streets>

Durham Tees Valley Airport

26. Cabinet received a progress report in relation to the proposals contained in the Master Plan for Durham Tees Valley Airport (DTVA) and, in doing so, accepted the package of support requested by Peel Group to secure a viable airport going forward with future investment, further contributing to its development.
27. The Master Plan contains a number of measures including diversification of its business activities to provide secondary income; re-investment of monies for a housing development, acceleration and attraction of new economic activity and prudent cost management. Peel has also requested that DTVA cease to be an admission body in the Teesside Pension Fund and that DTVA pension liabilities be transferred to the shareholding Local Authorities.
28. Delegated authority was also given to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to finalise and agree specific details of the Proposal and the basis upon which it is to be concluded and implemented, together with the authority to execute all necessary or appropriate legal documentation in that respect, on behalf of the Council.
29. DVTA is important for business as part of the local and regional transport infrastructure and in contributing to economic growth and development.
30. The transfer of pension fund liabilities to the Tees Valley Local Authorities, in proportion to their DTVA shareholding, will assist the implementation of the master plan and the prospects for DVTA continued airport operations and future development.
31. A planning application has now been received for 350 houses consistent with the DTVA master plan.

General Business News

32. 84 per cent of staff from Keepmoat's development on Central Park is from the local labour market (30 mile radius). This far exceeds the 10 per cent target required through Section 106. 30 per cent of labour has come from Darlington or a five mile radius of Darlington.
33. Darlington Borough Council's Economy Team reported the Town Hall pop up shop scheme had reached its first year anniversary with more than 85 pop ups being

held by more than 55 local businesses.

34. Morton Park Way Business Park has secured two new tenants due to inward investment.
35. Following a change in management structure, Cleveland Bridge UK Limited export success has resulted in its first profit in four years.
36. Increased demand for office space in Darlington has been reported at sites at Business Central and Lingfield Point.

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Economy and Regeneration Portfolio