
FINAL OUTTURN REPORT CENTRAL PARK SOUTH LANDSCAPING PROJECT

**Responsible Cabinet Member –
Councillor Mandy Porter, Resources Portfolio**

Responsible Director – Dave Winstanley

SUMMARY REPORT

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To report the lessons learned from the project and the final outturn in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules.

2. Summary

2.1 Central Park (South) lies between John Dixon Lane and Yarm Road, with the main East Coast railway line to the west and Hundens Lane housing estate to the east.

2.2 The site consists of approximately 5.88 Ha of previously brownfield land, of which a significant proportion has already been given over to business development in the form of DBC's Business Central and Innovation Central properties and the privately-owned CPI property. The area formed part of the initial DBC Masterplan from 2013, which identified it as an Enterprise Zone.

2.3 The aim of the project was to decontaminate and clear the previously rail industry site to create developable, serviced plots for future use as clean commercial, office and/or incubation space, set within a high-quality business park setting. £2,900,000 was invested in the Central Park Landscaping works.

2.4 This project quickly followed the construction of Innovation Central, and together completed two outstanding, priority projects on Central Park.

2.5 Para 43 of the Financial Procedure Rules requires that the final outturn of all schemes with a value in excess of £1 million be reported to Cabinet.

2.6 The report reviews the actual cost, timeliness and quality including lessons learned; to ensure a continuous review of capital planning, management and reporting, with regard to best practice, experience and opportunities for improving the Council's capital and asset management processes.

3. Recommendation

3.1 It is recommended that Members note the final outcome of the Project.

4. Reasons

4.1 The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:

1. To comply with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
2. To ensure a continuous review of capital planning, management and reporting, with regard to best practice, experience and opportunities for improving the Council's capital and asset management processes.

Mike Bowron – Capital Projects Manager

Background Papers

None

S17 Crime and Disorder	No direct impacts
Health and Well Being	No direct impacts
Carbon Impact	No direct impacts
Diversity	No direct impacts
Wards Affected	This project is in the Stephenson ward.
Groups Affected	
Budget and Policy Framework	No direct impacts
Key Decision	This is not a Key Decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an Urgent Decision
Council Plan	One Darlington: Perfectly Placed. This project contributes towards creating opportunities for businesses and jobs; and creating a place that will thrive economically and socially.
Efficiency	No direct impacts

MAIN REPORT

1. Information and Analysis

1.1 Central Park (South) lies between John Dixon Lane and Yarm Road, with the main East Coast railway line to the west and Hundens Lane housing estate to the east.

1.2 Central Park South consists of approximately 5.88 Ha of previously brownfield land, of which a significant proportion has already been given over to business development in the form of DBC's Business Central and Innovation Central properties and the privately-owned CPI property. The area formed part of the initial DBC Masterplan from 2013, which identified it as an Enterprise Zone.

- 1.3 The aim of the project was to decontaminate and clear the previously rail industry site to create developable, serviced plots for future use as clean commercial, office and/or incubation space, set within a high-quality business park setting.
- 1.4 It was necessary to carry out detailed site investigations to both identify any accessible material, which needed to be removed and to inform a document of the site's make up for future developers. This was carried out through the use of specialist consultants.
- 1.5 The Council was successful in securing £3.65m of grant funding through the Getting Building Fund (GTF) administered through Tees Valley Unlimited. £2.9m of the GTF monies was allocated to this project.
- 1.6 The pre-construction budget for the project was £479,000; with the total project cost being £2,899,721. It was originally due for completion in March 2022, but the main project works were completed in March 2023.
- 1.7 The project was designed by Gradon Architecture and works were delivered by Willmott Dixon Construction.
- 1.8 Para 43 of the Financial Procedure Rules requires that the final outturn of all schemes with a value in excess of £1 million be reported to Cabinet.
- 1.9 The report reviews the actual cost, timeliness and quality including lessons learned to ensure a continuous review of capital planning, management and reporting, with regard to best practice, experience and opportunities for improving the Council's capital and asset management processes.

2. Cost

2.1 The table below summarises the project budget and final outturn.

Original Approved Budget	Revised Approved Budget	Project Outturn	Variance	Variance (%)
£2,650,000	£2,900,000	£2,899,721	£279	0%

- 2.2 The increased costs were attributable to a rise in the costs of the new roads and infrastructure, additional contamination removal fees and remediation works on the site. The additional funding was from central government grant in the form of Building Better funding.
- 2.3 The increase also reflected the industry-wide impact of COVID on working practices, supply chains and material cost increases.

3. Quality

- 3.1 In terms of quality the project met all standards laid out in Planning and Building Regulations.

4. Time

4.1 The table below summarises the project timeline.

Original Planned Project Completion Date (CP1)	Revised Approved Project Completion Date	Actual Completion Date	Schedule Variation (days)
31 March 2022	31 March 2023	31 March 2023	0

4.2 The revised project completion date was attributed to post COVID conditions and uncertainty around the use of the site by Treasury North, which after consideration, is to be built on another site in Darlington TC.

5. Lessons Learned

5.1 The Asset Management and Capital Programme Review Board (AM&CPRB or AMG) has specific roles defined in the Council's Constitution. The Board shall maintain a continuous review of capital planning, management and reporting, with regard to best practice, experience and opportunities for improving the Council's capital and asset management.

5.2 The key findings and lessons learned from this project are summarised below:

5.3 Works carried out during the first covid restrictions slowed progress due to working requirements, particularly during site establishment. The team now have a better understanding of how to mitigate these risks should any similar restrictions be reintroduced.

5.4 Improvements in the design process and sequencing of works could be made. This will be addressed in future through project management process and oversight of the project board.

5.5 The time taken to resolve contractor's technical queries (TQ's) put pressure on the programme. Timelines for responding to TQ's to be established and agreed pre-start.

5.6 Financial management during the scheme was thorough and this demonstrates the need to regularly question and monitor cost information.

6. Procurement

6.1 The Construction Delivery agreement was through a Procurement Hub Framework. The main contractor was Willmott Dixon Construction.

7. Contract Management

7.1 In terms of contract management, the main contract was delivered in accordance with NEC4 Form of Contract 2017

8. Health & Safety

8.1 The Principal Designer role for the scheme was delivered via Fairhurst Consulting and the services were provided by Graeme Smith. There were no reportable accidents during the development.

9. Risk Log

9.1 The risk log for the scheme was regularly reviewed and risk which could be transferred onto the Principal Contractor were included within the main construction contract.

10. Communications

10.1 The communications strategy for the scheme was developed through the Central Park Board to regularly highlight risk and/or opportunity in each phase of the project in a timely manner.