

Arts Leisure & Culture Select Committee

A meeting of Arts Leisure & Culture Select Committee was held on Tuesday, 14th August, 2007.

Present: Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell (Chairman), Cllr Hilary Aggio, , Cllr Jim Beall (Vice Cllr Dick Cains), Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Mick Womphrey

Officers: T. Gibson, I. Robinson (DNS), P. Mennear, M. Jones (LD)

Also in attendance: A. Slater (British Waterways), S. Robson (Tees Valley Regeneration)

Apologies: Cllr Dick Cains, Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Jackie Earl, Cllr Mrs Kath Nelson

ALC 4/07 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no interests declared at the meeting.

ALC 5/07 **Minutes of Meeting Held 20th June 2007**

CONCLUDED that the minutes of the meeting held 20th June 2007 be agreed as a true record.

ALC 6/07 **Work Programme (plus project plan)**

The Scrutiny Officer explained that the Work Programme would be a standard agenda item, enabling the committee to be kept up to date on its progress.

The Officer informed that Les Southerton, Project Director of Stockton-Middlesbrough Initiative would be attending the next meeting on 29th August. There would be a press release circulated on 15th August regarding the Committees work, and the Officer would arrange a site visit to the River in conjunction with Alan Slater.

The Chairman requested that both the Police Authority and Licensing be invited to a meeting to discuss anti-social behaviour at North Shore and Tees Barrage.

CONCLUDED that the Officer would organise a site visit and invite the Police Authority and Licensing to give evidence at a future meeting.

ALC 7/07 **Scrutiny Review of River Based Leisure Facilities - To receive evidence from Sarah Robson, Lead Officer for North Shore Development, Tees Valley Regeneration**

S. Robson (Tees Valley Regeneration (TVR)) gave a presentation on the redevelopment plans for North Shore. North Shore covered an area adjacent to Stockton Town Centre, was south facing, something almost unique in development terms. The area was named North Shore to reflect its historical identity. The area had previously been a rural space until being turned into a heavy industrialised area and had been a very important part of the town as an economic driver. The scheme wished to transform the area into an economic driver again.

The previous masterplan for North Shore was a roll over of the Teesdale

development, which currently had 5000 people working on the site, with lots of car parking space. However, it was felt that this could be improved and the Benoy Masterplan replaced this, also extending the boundaries to include the former dairy and Kwikfit sites. S. Robson discussed how keen TVR were to link the Riverside area with the Town Centre and to link the buildings with the water. A team had looked at schemes in Japan and Europe and aimed to bring examples of best practice back to North Shore. The new masterplan included a residential and environmental area to the east, expansion of the university, and a commercial heart with a multi-storey car park which provided the same number of car parking places on the previous plan but maximising space and removing on-street parking.

The Water Playground area would be structured, and the area would become softer and ecological moving away from the town centre, until it was a naturalistic landscape in the eastern area. It was believed that there would be 57,750 m² of prime office space, 4,650 m² academic space for the university and 520 bed residential space for the university. A major part of the plan was the promenade and there would be a 1000 metre rowing course sitting in the river. TVR had a full JV with AMEC and Urban Splash to develop North Shore. AMEC had previously developed Newcastle Quayside, however the North Shore plan was not a copy of the Newcastle development. Urban Splash was a well known company, who had completed many award winning developments across the country. Outline Planning Applications would be sent to Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council within the next few months and the first area to be developed would be the former dairy site.

S. Robson confirmed that TVR were currently trying to acquire the Kwikfit site through negotiation.

The Teesdale development was discussed, with the committee noting that there were several issues surrounding car parking, anti-social behaviour and buildings built without consideration to the effects on other buildings in the area. It was agreed that the right balance between leisure and business was needed. S. Robson stated that it was important that the lessons learnt from North Shore would be bounced back to Teesdale and therefore benefit that area.

It was explained that the scheme was very open with lots of avenues to access the river. TVR were working with River Tees Users Trust, to make their centre a central part of the scheme and encourage more active use of the river. Possible use of leisure facilities on the river was discussed. Due to the footbridge, which was due to be completed in 2008, the scheme would be within a 10 minutes walking distance from Thornaby train station, and this would make it accessible to those from outside the town.

The residential part of the scheme was discussed, and TVR would be discussing this with the council. However, it was noted that the scheme had to be commercially viable if was to succeed. It had been found that by building 25% of housing stock as affordable housing reduces the value of the scheme by 30%. Therefore a right balance was needed.

There were concerns that the business coming to North Shore would be moving from other areas of the town, e.g. Teesdale, and therefore having an adverse affect on those areas. S. Robson noted that a variety of business would be

looking to move to North Shore, including new businesses and expanding businesses looking for more space. There would be a variety of office space available, some bigger and some smaller than that on offer at Teesdale. This type of space had an easy take up, and the development was a 10 - 15 year plan. S. Robson advised that while North Shore was seen as an extension of the High Street, it was not planned to attract High Street shops and night clubs from the high street. The retail facilities at North Shore would be more convenient retail for essential items and specialist retail complementing the leisure facilities available on the scheme. She described North Shore following the 'urban grain' of Stockton-on-Tees.

A query was raised regarding disability access and S. Robson assured that the developers would be working to achieve DDA compliancy, and indeed intended to go over and above these regulations. She added that the style of the scheme was very inclusive, the output would be of a high quality, and that the developers would seek to work with the right people to ensure it was designed in the right way.

Transport was discussed, and it was felt that there was a possibility to explore differing forms of public transport such as water taxis.

CONCLUDED that the information be noted.