

£200m scheme heading in the right direction

Apr 7 2010 By Peter McCusker – The Journal

APPROVAL has been given for an £8.5m funding package to upgrade the highways at the entrance to a proposed £200m mixed-use County Durham scheme.



The first phase of the Durham Gate project near Spennymoor will see old buildings on the site knocked down.

This follows the approval of an £8.5m funding package by the developers, One North East, Durham County Council and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).

The scheme on the A167, at the site of the former Black & Decker factory, will see the construction of

440,000sq ft of offices, a hotel and family pub, 9,500sq ft of retail and 376 houses.

The reshaping of the highways around the site will tackle a years-old problem in the area, which has seen congestion and delays on the A167 Great North Road, as well as other routes which cross it south of Durham city at Thinford.

The first stage is to double the size of the main roundabout on the A167, creating an additional spoke that will be the main entrance into the site.

Other developments, including a new roundabout where York Hill Road meets the A167, along with further related work, are aimed at making it easier for traffic to access Spennymoor from the north without having to use the existing roundabout at Thinford.

Neil McMillan, director of Carillion Developments, a partner in Durham Gate, said: "The highways congestion has been an issue for some time and we have always been aware that the roads need upgrading before we can make Durham Gate a success.

"One of the first things we resolved to do was to enable that work to be done and we have joined with One North East, Durham County Council and the Homes and Communities Agency to do that as the first phase of the development.

“We appreciate that this work will take some time and it will not be without disruption for motorists. However, we will do everything we can to ensure people in the area are as well- informed as possible and to keep the inevitable disruption to a minimum.”

Allan Cook, director of Arlington Real Estate, the other partner in Durham Gate, said: “This agreement is an exciting step forward, not only for Durham Gate, but for the area as a whole, because it will resolve a major transport issue. Since planning permission was achieved last year, work has been non-stop behind the scenes and this funding will allow the first visible signs to take place for the outside world to see.

Coun Neil Foster, portfolio holder for regeneration at Durham County Council, is sure the scheme will have a positive impact.

He said: “Durham Gate is the most significant regeneration in County Durham and this highways work is of vital importance for the area, so we are very excited about what has been agreed to tackle the traffic issues.”

David Cramond, director of capital development at One North East, said: “We are supporting infrastructure development at Durham Gate that will open up 26 hectares of brownfield land for high-quality business accommodation, with associated retail, leisure facilities, a hotel and new residential development.”