

£200m Durham Gate scheme on track

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DEVELOPERS of one of the North East's biggest new commercial and residential schemes say interest from potential tenants is strong.

Building work on Durham Gate, near Spennymoor in County Durham, is due to begin early next year and planning approval for £8m of improved transport infrastructure work is expected within weeks.

The scheme on the A167, five miles south of Durham, will see the construction of 440,000 sq ft of offices, a hotel and family pub, 20,000 sq ft of restaurants, 9,500 sq ft of retail and 376 houses.

The Carillion Arlington Real Estate (CARE) Partnership, which is behind the £200m development, expects to have funding for improved transport links on the A167 tied up by the end of October.

The funding for these is coming from both the partners' own investment, and from agencies such as One North East and Durham County Council.

A CARE spokesman said: "Since planning permission was received earlier this year, the partnership has received significant interest from businesses both in the North East and those who are looking to invest in the region.

"Significant discussions are ongoing with a number of potential tenants, looking for units ranging from 25,000 sq ft to 100,000 sq ft."

Allan Cook, director of Hartlepool-based Arlington Real Estate, one of the CARE partners, said: "The very solid interest in this site is coming from inside and outside of the North East, and from large corporations as well as public bodies who are all keen to place themselves at the heart of County Durham.

"What places Durham Gate at the forefront of the county is that we have continued to use private investment to drive forward through the current economic climate in preparation for a more positive future. This is a destination for the future and we are confident that this investment is and will continue to be worthwhile."

Neil McMillan, development director at Carillion Developments, the other partner, added: "Durham Gate has generated a lot of excitement in the county and the enthusiasm from those in the area is definitely being reflected in the potential tenants we talk with.

"The work we have done to date on Durham Gate has shown Carillion Developments the potential of the North East, as it was our first venture into the region, and it has inspired us to take further steps to enhance our operations here. It really is an exciting time to be developing in the North East, particularly in County Durham."

Ged Parker, business development executive at the County Durham Development Company, said: "Durham Gate is now the key regeneration priority for Durham County Council, which itself is the largest unitary authority in the North East and one of the biggest in the country with an annual revenue of £1.2bn, so this is a hugely significant site.

"We are working closely with the CARE Partnership and are confident that it has what is required to be a successful regeneration scheme, bringing jobs and investment to the region."