

£175m waterfront facelift plan unve

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REVISED proposals have been revealed for a £175m urban renewal project in Yorkshire, one of the largest in the country.

Plans for the Waterfront Quarter Development, in Huddersfield, have been amended following extensive public consultations.

The scheme will occupy almost one mile alongside the River Colne and the Huddersfield Narrow Canal at the gateway to the Colne Valley.

Ramsden and Colne Developments' scheme will provide 817,000 sq ft of mixed-use buildings and it has been estimated that up to 2,000 jobs could be created.

The revised scheme has been submitted for planning approval and is scheduled to be considered by the planning sub-committee of Kirklees Metropolitan Council on September 21.

The plans were revised following a two-day public presentation, together with further consultations with British Waterways, English Heritage and Huddersfield Civic Society.

Paul Sheen, of Ramsden and Colne Developments, said: "The original scheme was warmly welcomed, and 98 per cent of the comments at the public presentation were hugely supportive.

"However, a few issues arose which have been addressed in the revised planning application."

The issues of concern were the desirability for the

Huddersfield Narrow Canal, which is presently in a tunnel through the site, to be opened up; the sensitivity that the height of some of the buildings might impact on properties on Manchester Road; and the need for the public square at the heart of the development to be repositioned.

Mr Sheen added: "These suggestions all made perfect sense. There is no doubt that their incorporation into the overall development will enhance it.

"This is one of the most important developments in the recent history of Huddersfield and it is crucial that we get it absolutely right."

The revised planning application features almost 300,000 sq ft of state-of-the-art offices and 460,000 ft of residential space, together with a hotel, gym, crèche, cafés and restaurants.

The major part of the site is presently occupied by Sellers Engineers, whose chairman, David Armitage, is also chairman of Ramsden and Colne Developments.

Plans are now well advanced for Sellers to relocate to purpose-built premises in the Huddersfield area.

The Ramsden and Colne team, which includes Knight Frank property consultants and DLG Architects, are working with Kirklees Metropolitan Council which also owns and occupies part of the 12-acre site.

Mike Dove, a partner at Knight Frank in Leeds, said:

"This showpiece project is of regional and national significance.

"The Waterfront Quarter will provide a destination comparable to the very best regeneration schemes already undertaken at Leeds Clarence Dock and Sheffield's Heart of the City.

"We know there is massive pent-up demand for better quality employment, residential and leisure accommodation close to the facilities of central Huddersfield.

"The Waterfront Quarter will address this appetite at both local and inward investor levels.

"It will be perfect for successful West Yorkshire companies and public sector organisations wishing to expand or relocate."

Andrew Gardner, a partner at DLG Architects, said: "The Waterfront Quarter is in many ways the perfect regeneration opportunity and we are delighted to bring our resources and experience to such an exceptional project.

"The design proposals will complement the unique setting of this development and will act as a catalyst for wider regeneration in this south-west sector of the town centre."

Subject to planning approval, it is expected that work will start on site in spring next year and is expected to take between three and four years to complete.

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An artist's impression of the plans for the Waterfront Quarter in Huddersfield