

Hope for 2,000 jobs at Waterside Quarter

Ian Briggs

A £200m waterside regeneration scheme in West Yorkshire has been hailed as "great news" for the region.

The run-down waterfront site in Huddersfield is set to be transformed into a mixed-use development which is expected to bring 2,000 jobs to the area.

The Waterfront Quarter, which is positioned alongside the Huddersfield Narrow Canal and River Colne, will see 75,000 sq ft of new development on the 12-acre site.

It will provide offices, restaurants, cafés, a hotel, a gym, apartments and a crèche.

DLG Architects has designed the project, which is being developed by Ramsden and Colne Developments (RCD).

The scheme has been welcomed by councillors in Kirklees after they were shown a presentation of what the project will look like.

Coun Andrew Cooper, leader of the Green Party in Kirklees and whose Newsome ward includes the development, said: "A project like this is great news for my constituents and will spectacularly transform what is presently an unremarkable stretch of land.

"Of course, my special interest is to ensure that this development embraces environmentally sustainable practice and features both in its construction and eventual operation."

Highlighting the potential for stimulating further investment in the area, Coun Mehboob Khan, leader of the Labour group at Kirklees Council, said: "This scheme has additional value, over and above establishing a striking waterfront quarter.

"A major transformational project like this puts Huddersfield in the same league as neighbouring cities, making the area an attractive investment proposition."

Council leader Kath Pinnock said: "Having listened to the presentation, it is clear to me that ambitious transformational projects such as The Waterfront are indicative of the widespread private-sector confidence which exists in Huddersfield.

"I truly believe that this flagship development, together with other schemes currently being discussed, will put Huddersfield firmly on the West Yorkshire

map, and secure our economic future for years to come."

However, Coun Nigel Patrick (Cons, Holme Valley South) was cautious about the impact on traffic flow in the local area.

"While we fully support moves to regenerate Huddersfield and the surrounding area, we need to make sure that we fully understand the impact a development of this nature may have on approach roads and the ring road," he said. Following a six month consultation process with stakeholder groups, Leeds-based DLG has developed the plans to include integrated landscaping with a public square at the heart of the scheme.

A new canal basin will provide the central focus and surrounding buildings will front on to the square to encourage use as a piazza.

DLG partner Andrew Gardner said he was particularly interested in how the project could act as a catalyst for further regeneration

He said: "Accessibility is one of the most important considerations when designing an area such as The Waterfront Quarter and we have really focused on ensuring that both pedestrian and vehicular routes link right through the site to provide an extension rather than a barrier to the town centre."

DLG was selected as lead architect for The Waterfront Quarter following a design competition in January this year.

Previous schemes include The Light in Leeds city centre, Park Street in Camberley and Broadway Plaza in Birmingham.

RCD will submit a detailed planning application for The Waterfront Quarter next month and, providing the relevant planning approvals are given, it is hoped to begin work on site at the start of 2007.