

LEISURE DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR TEES BARRAGE RIVERSIDE

Ambitious regeneration plans for the picturesque riverside beside the £55m Tees Barrage in Stockton will begin in early September with a search for a developer to fully exploit the potential of three prime sites.

The vision for the land is to make the area around the Barrage a dynamic hub for water-based tourism with new activities and facilities such as a marina.

Leading the developers' search is the Stockton Middlesbrough Initiative (SMI), on behalf of its partners which own and manage the land - British Waterways, Stockton Council, English Partnerships and the Tees Valley Wildlife Trust.

Les Southerton, project director, SMI said: "We have an outstanding setting here at the Tees Barrage and we need to exploit it to attract new investment and more visitors to the area. With the white water course and all of the other water sports already taking place on the river, we have a great base on which to build an outstanding leisure location."

Ambitions for the largest of the three sites, which has superb views over the River Tees, include creating a major food and drink outlet, a small hotel, a water based leisure attraction, water sport/marine showroom units and residential/live work units.

The second piece of land has the potential to become a tidal marina along the line of the old River Tees which meets the main river corridor at this point. The site has been identified as a possible base for the Tees Valley Wildlife Trust's visitor centre and office headquarters and workspace.

Within the largest third site, currently a car park, SMI and its partners are also keen for the successful developer to create a major play facility which would appeal to families as well as upgrading the parking facilities.

The river and countryside around the Tees Barrage has already undergone a total transformation in recent years from its industrial past, with visitors enjoying seeing seal colonies, salmon and trout fishing as well as walking through nature reserves which host migratory birds and other wildlife.

ENDS

MEDIA CONTACT: Kay Wilson (0191) 536 0080.