



# Question & Answer

## Coatham Links Regeneration Project

Over the last 7 years, the Council has been working towards the delivery of a major regeneration project at Coatham Links.

During that time, we have secured a development partner - Persimmon Homes Ltd - and assembled an £85million funding package of public and private resources to deliver hundreds of new homes, a new indoor and outdoor leisure and sports facility with swimming complex, new coastguard/lifeguard station, and high quality open space. The Masterplan also includes a health village and opportunities for other commercial opportunities such as public house/restaurant, a children's nursery and further leisure facilities including extreme sports.

The scheme will bring major benefits to Coatham and Redcar as well as the wider Borough.

As a major regeneration project the scheme has the potential to create 200 new jobs and boost the local economy with increased visitor spending. This will provide opportunities for local people - in training and employment and benefits to local businesses.

In further detail, the scheme will include:

- A new public Leisure Centre – with competition swimming pool, leisure and children's pools, fitness suite, performing arts space, indoor sports hall for a range of activities , outdoor 5 a side courts, and beauty treatment facilities. A dance floor of similar size to the current provision in the existing Redcar Leisure Centre will be incorporated.
- High Quality Public Open space – the improvement works currently being completed at the Boating Lake is an advanced element. Piazzas, boulevards and promenade including any necessary additional sea defence works will be completed under the scheme.
- Extreme Sports Village – development of the current business operated by Enterprise West Ltd operating the Mungle Jungle/Rkade. The Council is working with them to achieve this.

The following 'Question & Answers' provide an update on the work being undertaken to deliver the scheme.

**Q. When was planning permission for the new scheme given?**

A. May 2007.

**Q. Can I see the designs for the scheme?**

A. The Coatham Links Masterplan showing the location of the facilities and visual design concepts will shortly be on the Council's website [www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk](http://www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk)

Information on further design detail will be given on the Council's website when this becomes available.

As detailed designs are developed these will be made available to the public, elected Members and staff.

**Q. The Council has often been asked why do we need the housing?**

A. A mix of housing and leisure is essential to provide the range of facilities and benefits that we can achieve through the scheme and secure the necessary finance.

Developing some of the land for housing will help to pay for the leisure facilities by enabling the Council to access capital receipts and Grants that otherwise would not be available.

Persimmon will pay the Council a £5.6million capital receipt for the land allocated for housing and the Council will receive Grants totalling £11.3million. This will contribute to the cost of the new sports and leisure centre, highways and high quality public open space improvements.

Despite the current downturn generally in the housing market across the UK there is still demand for more housing in Redcar

Without the housing, the development would not include the new sports and leisure facilities or the swimming complex.

**Q. When will the Coatham Development start and finish?**

A. Following a legal challenge planning permission for the scheme is in place  
The start date on site will be affected by the outcome of ongoing legal action by protestors to register the land for development as a Village Green. Unfortunately the timescale when this will be known is not within the Council's control, however, a decision is expected imminently.

The earliest start envisaged is later this year, this would mean completion of the whole development by mid 2012.

**Q. Who owns the land often referred to as Coatham Common?**

A. The Council owns the land; its title is registered with the Land Registry

**Q. Is the site being sold at its commercial value?**

A. The site was independently valued before the Council signed the Development Agreement with Persimmon Homes Ltd.

**Q. Have any planning conditions changed without permission?**

Suggestions have been made that one of the Environment Agency planning conditions was changed without permission.

The planning conditions outlined in the formal response from the Environment Agency were taken into account when the planning application was determined. One of the conditions was strengthened to ensure that any necessary works to the sea wall are implemented before the buildings are occupied. This change was made with the proper authority.

**Q. What leisure facilities will be available to the public at Coatham when construction starts?**

A. Construction on site will take place in managed phases in order to minimise disruption to local residents and other users of the site.

One of the first elements to be constructed will be the new Leisure Centre. The current facility will remain open for as long as possible but will need to be demolished to make way for a new Leisure Centre. Interim arrangements are being explored to maintain a level of the sports facilities currently available at the Redcar Leisure Centre. People will be notified when this is known.

The facilities offered at Mungle Jungle/Rkade will still be accessible.

Other factors that will be considered are minimising disruption to local residents and businesses, vehicle and pedestrian routes, and parking.

**Q. How will increased traffic be dealt with?**

A. A number of improvements will happen. Improvements at the Trunk Road junction have already taken place with additional filter lanes on the east and west approaches. A Traffic management plan will be submitted to the Council by Persimmon to maintain traffic flows through the site during construction. Traffic calming measures have been proposed for High Street West to avoid 'rat runs' although some local people are opposing this.

**Q. How many parking spaces are to be provided?**

A. The current plan envisages around 660 spaces including allocations for motorcycles, disabled people, horse boxes and coaches subject to final design detailing.

**Q. Will sailors, windsurfers, kiteboarders and other users still have unrestricted access to the beach?**

A. It is important to facilitate these users and access will still be permitted for a whole variety of uses and a Beach Management Plan is being drawn up to enable users to enjoy

the beach in a safe manner while recognising the need to ensure by law the safe protection of wildlife and the environment.

**Q. What is the current position on the Village Green application submitted by protestors to the scheme?**

A. We understand that representatives of the Friends of Coatham Common have submitted an appeal against a decision by the Legal Services Commission to refuse further legal aid.

The protestors' purpose is to pursue an appeal to the House of Lords to register the land allocated for development as a Village Green. This follows unanimous decisions by Appeal Court judges to refuse previous appeals by the protestors using legal aid against the Council's decision to reject this second Village Green Application.

**Q. Did the Council engage a Barrister to provide a legal opinion about the Restrictive Covenants associated with the scheme and then keep this confidential?**

A. The Council has a responsibility to balance a number of often conflicting interests in contractual matters such as the Development Agreement in place between the Council and Persimmon Homes Ltd. In applying the public interest test to this specific matter, the Council has concluded that the public interest in maintaining exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing this information. This is covered by Access to Information Procedure Rules.

**Q. Did the Council pay for legal and consultancy costs incurred by Persimmon without a Section 106 Agreement?**

A. The Council is only paying for legal and consultancy advice which it directly benefits from. The fact that there was no Section 106 Agreement is not of any consequence as we have a contractual relationship with Persimmon in our Development Agreement and this incorporates many of the benefits normally incorporated in a Section 106 Agreement.

**Q. A minority of protestors to the scheme have made allegations of corruption within the Council in relation to this scheme.**

A. A minority of protestors have alleged there is corruption within the Council in relation to this scheme and that it is being driven forward against residents' wishes.

These allegations have been investigated by the Police, Courts, Audit Commission, the local Member of Parliament and the Ombudsman – all of which has confirmed that the Council has done nothing wrong.

We urge the public not to be taken in by these allegations. They are nothing more than a spoiling tactic to try to thwart the scheme.

**Further information**

If you would like further information about the Coatham Links Regeneration project please contact:

- Alan Logan, Regeneration Project Manager ☎ 01642 444235
- Lydia Spiller, Regeneration Specialist ☎ 01642 44435

May 2009