

Councillors welcome investment in Durham's future

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As a new cinema opens its doors in Durham City, councillors have spoken of the important role private sector investment plays in boosting the economy.

The new Odeon Luxe cinema

Cllr Simon Henig, Leader of Durham County Council, and Cllr Carl Marshall, Cabinet member for economic regeneration, have welcomed the opening of the O Luxe.

The cinema has created 38 jobs and is part of The Riverwalk, a £40 million development, which is also bringing 23 refurbished retail units, 35,000 sq ft of new restaurants, 253 student accommodation rooms and a Lane7 bowling alley to the Gates shopping centre site. Owned by Clearbell Capital, it is set to be completed this summer.

Just across the road, a major transformation of the former HM Passport Office site is also underway by the Arlington Richardson Development Partnership. The £150 million Milburngate scheme is set to bring restaurants, bars and leisure opportunities to the city, along with a 92-bedroom hotel and 153 high-quality apartments. The development is expected to create 400 jobs, with phase one scheduled to be completed in early 2021.

County Durham as a whole is also bucking the trend in terms of investment with more than £3.4 billion committed across the county. A range of exciting opportunities are coming to fruition with the largest distribution centre in the UK due to start on site at Bowburn, just off the A1, and significant investments at Jade, Seaham and Forrest Park, Newton Aycliffe.

A great place to live, work and visit

Cllr Henig said: "We are committed to ensuring Durham is great place to live, work and visit, with a thriving economy, good job opportunities and plenty of places for residents and visitors to relax and enjoy themselves.

"A combination of public and private sector investment is crucial to achieving this, which is why we are delighted to see the Odeon Luxe opening its doors as part of the wider redevelopment of Durham's riverside."

Cllr Marshall said: "It is important we do what we can to attract new retailers to the city, as part of a wider ambition to encourage investment across the County. By providing an environment where both high street names and small artisan retailers can prosper, we will attract more people to our historic city, boosting the takings of new and existing businesses alike.

"There is so much to celebrate in Durham right now, with the opening of new hotels and restaurants adding to the city's leisure offer. The £190 million investment across The Riverwalk and Milburngate sites is an investment in Durham's future and it's vital that we build on this success."