PROVIDING JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

Fourteen young people have the chance of a bright future thanks to City Challenge’s support of the Teeside Manufacturing Challenge, and their provision of sponsorship for a four-year programme of engineering training.

The programme is promoted by Teeside Tomorrow and based at the Engineering Training Authority’s Centre in Billingham, where the trainees will be employed by local businesses and trained as apprentices in engineering craft and technical skills.

Ian Sinclair adds, “A prime objective of City Challenge is to improve skills and open employment opportunities. For several years small companies haven’t been able to meet the high costs of engineering training. After four years, the trainees will have nationally recognised qualifications and the Manufacturing Challenge will benefit local employers and the youth of Stockton.”

Richard Fawcett explained that the full cost of the four-year apprenticeship is £27,000 per trainee. The Manufacturing Challenge aims to help local employers by providing over half of this amount from City Challenge, Task Force, and Teeside TEC funding. The remaining costs are met by employers.

ENDEVOUR ARRIVES AT CASTLEGATE QUAY

Restoration of Stockton’s Castlegate Quay is one of the most exciting projects in the town’s £150 million City Challenge programme. It aims to create a riverside attraction of regional significance which, combined with investment in the High Street, will put the lifeblood back into the town. It is based on a partnership between City Challenge, local businesses, youth groups, Teeside Training and Enterprise Council and the Teeside Development Corporation at an overall cost of more than £5 million.

The project includes a tourism and heritage centre, celebrating the birthplace of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, Stockton’s Medieval Castle and Captain Cook heritage. It will also promote the better use of the River Tees for recreation and leisure purposes, made possible by the construction of the River Tees Barrage.

City Challenge has “kicked started” the initiative by putting up £500,000 towards the construction and fitting out of a full-scale replica of Captain Cook’s Bark Endeavour, which arrived at Castlegate Quay on 21st September, proudly dressed overall in City Challenge colours.

Endeavour has been built by a local workforce on the Tees at AYECO, and will be fitted out at Castlegate Quay in the next 18 months by trainees from the City Challenge area, working with local tradesmen. It represents the collier ships built extensively on the Tees and used in the early days of the Stockton and Darlington railway to receive coal from trucks at this precise location. When finished, it will provide:

- A static sailing training “mother ship” for use by youth groups, offering residential courses for up to 40 young people.
- A visitor centre for paying tourists.
- A place for corporate entertainment and a base for river trips.

John Sifton, City Challenge Chairman, said: “By investing £500,000 in the replica and its surrounding quayside development, City Challenge will help to provide a fascinating attraction on the River Tees. In creating an echo of the region’s great past, we are signalling the start of a multi-million-pound programme for Stockton which brings the prospect of a new future to thousands of local people.”

“We’re proud to launch our City Challenge programme with a real flagship project.”

The Endeavour project is being managed by the Castlegate Quay Trust, set up by Mr. J. Atkinson, a local building society merchant. Mr. Atkinson said, “Although this project is a celebration of Stockton’s illustrious past, its prime aim is to pave the way for the future. It will become a national training school for all types of water activities. One of our key aims is to develop leadership and initiative skills in boys and girls from the area.

“City Challenge has provided the momentum – and some of the finance – to float the project. It would have been impossible without the help of the City Challenge team and the many others who have helped us to put the plans together.”

The Leader of Stockton Council, Cllr. Bob Gibson, said he was delighted that City Challenge was under way after years of preparation. He believes that the Castlegate Quay project will have an enormous impact on Stockton and complement the many schemes which are transforming the river.

“This is an excellent project and will be a huge asset for the Borough. As she is fitted out, local people will be able to watch the ship taking shape at her moorings. It will be a tremendous attraction and bring a great many people into an area of the town which is close to the High Street.

“The training element is particularly important; I think the ship’s name, ‘Endeavour’, is a very fitting name for the first City Challenge scheme.”

Cook enthusiasts from Sweden, Canada and Ireland have already visited Endeavour. One of the group, Ron Thrall from Victoria, Canada, announced: “Endeavour will be a centre for the international Captain Cook Study Group in the future. This is a marvellous project.”

Aron Pox, the group’s secretary, said: “This exciting development in building a full-scale replica of Endeavour will soon be known throughout the world, when it will be highlighted in our quarterly circular, “Cook’s Log”, which circulates in 15 different countries. There is no doubt that this will attract international attention.”

The improvements will include communal facilities and closed circuit television with a 24 hour concierge. “Our staff have been excellent, especially the local housing officers who have consulted us in every way of the way. I am looking forward to returning to the newly refurbished flats,” says Residents Group member, Laurie Aston.

The modernisation of the tower blocks is one of the schemes in the City Challenge objective to regenerate the Queen’s Park area of Stockton. City Challenge Chairman, John Sifton, was delighted with the project. “This flagship scheme shows what can be achieved when residents, the Council and City Challenge Partnership Board work together. This project will make a contribution to the regeneration of the Queen’s Park area and bring an improved quality of life to residents,” he said.
CITY CHALLENGE PROGRESS

In 1992, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council submitted a bid for City Challenge funding. The bid programmes were drawn together by a team of representatives from the community, industry, commerce and the local authorities. We are proud of the fact that our bid was one of the 20 successful bids out of the 60 submitted, and Stockton City Challenge was awarded £37.5 million of government money, at a rate of £7.5 million for the next 5 years. This is an enormous opportunity for the regeneration of Stockton! Programmes which include housing improvements, training, development of job opportunities, environmental improvements, reclaiming derelict land and buildings, supporting local businesses, and reducing crime and vandalism have been drawn up.

The whole basis of City Challenge is to develop mutually beneficial partnerships; in this way the £37.5 million of government money will be increased to give a total investment of about £150 million. So how are we getting on? In the first 30 weeks, since April 1993, 66 projects worth over £8 million have been approved, and £1 million spent. Strong links have been made with other agencies, including Stockton and Thornaby Task Force. Two consultative forums, the Community Forum and the Town Centre Forum, are in operation and five City Challenge panels have been set up.

This newsletter is intended to help you to keep up to date with the progress on our programmes since we became operational. We plan to issue it 3 or 4 times a year, so that you can continue to follow our progress. We hope that you will find it useful and informative, and that you enjoy reading it.

Linda Dawson is the new Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator for the City Challenge Area. Stockton Borough Council and Stockton Police have a target that everyone in the Borough will be covered by a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in the next five years.

There are already 650 schemes in operation. Ian Searle, the Project Officer at Stockton Borough Council notes, “Current figures show an urgent need for further Neighbourhood Watch Schemes in the Challenge Area. This will play a major part in involving the local communities in working together to reduce the crime levels.”

Linda will work with Stockton Police and Stockton’s Crime Prevention Panel to establish, co-ordinate and support Watch Schemes throughout the City Challenge Area.

Newsletters will be produced and a “answerphone” system will give up-to-date news on relevant issues and developments. She says, “Neighbourhood Watch has benefits in reducing crime in the Challenge Area, and also in the community spirit the Scheme creates. By 1998, all 8,000 houses in the Area will be covered by a scheme. Anyone wanting information can contact me on Stockton 302355.”

The total cost of the scheme is £125,000 over 5 years, with £77,000 coming from City Challenge and £48,000 from the Police and private sector.

SAVING FURNITURE - MAKING JOBS

26-year-old Norman Pitt from Stockton couldn’t believe his luck when he landed a job as a driver on the FRADE project. After being unemployed for nine years, he felt worthless and had nothing to look forward to, but according to Norman, “That has changed and life looks good, all of a sudden.”

All this has come about through FRADE, Furniture Reclamation and Delivery Enterprise, who have teamed up with Stockton Home Safety Association to provide the Community Recycling and Home Safety Scheme, using money from City Challenge. FRADE receives donations of furniture from individuals and business when they no longer need it, and gives it to families in need in the area.

FRADE check thoroughly all the items and educates its recipients in how to avoid and deal with the dangers of fire, and issues smoke alarms with all pieces of furniture. Thanks to this scheme, many people have benefited either through receiving furniture or, like Norman Pitt, through finding a job. FRADE also provide a loan scheme for childcare safety equipment like stair gates, and gives advice on all aspects of home safety. Some electrical equipment is also supplied, after a thorough check by an independent qualified electrician.

TOWN CENTRE OPENS ITS DOORS TO WHEELCHAIR USERS

In the first project of its kind in the North East, Stockton Town Centre will become easily accessible to people with restricted mobility with the provision of a wheelchair escort service and a powered vehicle hiring facility. The free escort service will be manned by volunteers and trainees. Shopmobility Manager, Angela Macsens said, “Thanks to City Challenge and the High Street pedestrianisation scheme, Stockton Town Centre is now being opened up to hundreds of people throughout the region who previously only had a limited opportunity for shopping.” The Service, which will be used by an estimated 200 people a week, will be promoted by a high profile publicity campaign involving sponsorship through advertising, leaflets and posters on vehicles.

Dave Adams says the scheme also caters for people who are permanently house-bound by offering a home visiting shopping service, CEDEMP, the charitable organisation which works with people with disabilities, has an excellent reputation of expertise in this field, and will oversee the running of the project.

Sir George Young, Minister for Inner Cities, housing new location in 11 Silver Street. Sir George was welcomed by Board, Councillor Bob Gibson, the Vice Chairman, and City Challenge, Manager, and his team, briefed Sir Ge City Challenge.com.

In particular, City Challenge’s developments in education and training initiatives, and community developments, with its strong dependence on partnership, were stressed, as well as progress on physical regeneration projects. Sir George then visited a number of major projects in the Challenge Area.

He was shown High Street pedestrianisation, part of the £85m regeneration programme, followed by a visit to Stockton Railway Station, where a 40 unit sheltered housing scheme for the elderly, and landscaping of the platforms, is proceeding. Sir George also saw other regeneration schemes in t: Queens Park area, housing regeneration of Hame and Nol Houses, and the site for t: industrial development at Community Park in Primrose Hill.

Finally, James Atkinson welcomes Sir George to Castlefield Quay, as described plans and progress on t: building of the replica of Endeavour and future plans for the Rivers Heritage Centre.

Sir George viewed the promotion video for this exciting project f: Stockton and heard about the plans for developing sponsorship.
INISTER VISITS Y CHALLENGE

A Community meeting

The first meeting of a new partnership group has taken place in the Georgian Theatre in Stockton. The Stockton Community Forum has been organised through City Challenge to bring together all community groups involved in the City Challenge area. Members of the Forum will meet to discuss the progress of City Challenge schemes, and discuss issues before they are considered by the City Challenge Board, and exchange views and ideas on community matters within the Challenge area.

Jean Johnson, a member of City Challenge Board, who chaired the first meeting said, "We are all very positive about this important development. The Community Forum will build on community structures already in place in Stockton. We intend to publicise the Forum to every community group so that they can get in touch with them, and we hope to improve the two way communication between communities and City Challenge which is vital to its success." Alan Harcourt, a Community Representative, said, "We are excited that the City Challenge Community Forum has now had its first meeting, and we are all keen to develop it. For the first time, residents in our communities will have a means of raising points about City Challenge projects in their area and gaining a better understanding of projects. The community will have a direct link through to the City Challenge Board, and can influence their decision when schemes are approved."

The first Forum has been set up by City Challenge, aimed at improving and developing good consultation. The Town Centre Forum has now been operating for three months. Members of the Community Forum comprise representatives from Bluebell, Ryhope, Ponteland, Tynedale, Victoria estates, Queen's Park, Primrose Hill, Mount Pleasant, Parkfield, the central area, the Ethnic Community, Voluntary Sector, and Churches Together in Stockton.

The Community Forum Representatives are each initially nominated by their interest groups. Any future representation will be agreed by the Community Forum.

NEW COMMUNITY FORUM MEETS

STOCKTON HIGH STREET PUBLIC ART ON VIEW

One of the many interesting features in Stockton’s Centre is the old atmospheric shaft running off the High Street. As part of the High Street regeneration, six artist blacksmiths were invited to produce design features to highlight the entrances to the Hambletonian Yard and Ship Inn Yard. Commisioners have been gathered following an invitation to Stockton townsmen people from City Challenge to come and see the drawings and to give their views.

Jim Johnstone says, "This is the first of several opportunities for the people of Stockton to express their views and help choose features which will become part of Stockton’s future landscape." The Public Art Programme is a major part of the High Street Regeneration. Links have already been established with schools to design themes to be hung on newly placed columns in the High Street.

Other schemes which are progressing are the Sheepscapes Mosaic, small scale sculptures, and a large scale sculpture of international importance. City Challenge is contributing £130,000 to these schemes which will attract other grants and support to give a total of about £550,000.

Construction, has visited Stockton City Challenge at its Chair, John Sifton, O.B.E., Chairman of the City Challenge members of the Board. During the visit, Chris Oldershaw, on the £1m worth of projects approved by the Board since opened in April this year.

George remarked, "City Challenge should be complimented on the large amount of progress that has been made on City Challenge projects in the first 20 weeks since it came into operation in April."

Cllr. Bob Gibson with Sir George Young

FROM DERELICT RAILWAY STATION TO SHELTERED HOUSING

Work has now started on the conversion of Stockton's derelict late Victorian station, following completion of the new footbridge and closure of the subway in April. The station will be redeveloped as a 40-unit sheltered housing scheme for the frail, elderly and disabled. The work is being managed and the £1.43m finance provided by the Housing Association and Benefits Fund, and British Rail. City Challenge is providing £275,000 renovation scheme.

CAMERAS REDUCE CRIME IN THE INDUSTRIAL ESTATES

Firms on the Portrack and Ross Road Industrial Estates have joined together with City Challenge to combat criminals who cost them £300,000 per year through theft and vandalism, by installing cameras and surveillance equipment throughout the estate. City Challenge is funding the cost of the equipment and installation. Running costs will be paid by the firm themselves.

The project illustrates a partnership between City Challenge, Stockton Borough Council, Portrack and Ross Road Industrial Association and Stockton Police. The grants element of the project forms the basis of a fund following the Council's Industrial Site Initiative, providing grants up to 50% of the cost of a site. A spokesman for Stockton Borough Council, says, "This scheme will bring real benefits to everyone. Experience of a similar scheme for Cowpen Lane Industrial Association proves the effectiveness of installing security." Before the cameras were installed, businesses on the site lost £282,500, with 132 reported crimes during the previous 12 months. In the 12 months following installation, this figure has fallen to £44,500, with only 43 reported crimes. "Less money lost to crime means more money for re-investment and growth and, of course, increased job opportunities. It is good for business and good for local people."
RIVERSIDE DESIGN COMPETITION

Visitors to Stockton’s City Challenge offices in September saw designs that could begin to transform Stockton’s riverside before the end of the year. The City Challenge team invited the public to view the seven entries by local and regional architects in the Riverside Design competition and make comments on the proposals.

The seven designs were judged in October and all comments taken into consideration by the judges. The architects were asked to put together designs for improvements costing around £650,000, that would make the riverside site more attractive and reduce the visual impact of the dual carriageway.

Ideas for the site, which lies between the Princess Diana Bridge and Castlegate Quay, include the terracing of the slope for seating areas, adoption of the bridges, and the creation of a landscaped area to make a focal point for the Riverside Festival.

James Usher says, “This is an important part of the environmental improvements we identified as a major objective in City Challenge. It focuses on our major natural asset, the River Tees, and will complement the Castlegate Quay Leisure and Heritage Centre and the development of leisure activities on the river made possible by the Tesco Barrage.”

COMMUNITY EXCHANGES

Two City Challenge community exchanges have taken place during the last few months. In June, a group of community representatives visited Bootle to share experiences of involvement in City Challenge, and exchange ideas. The visit was returned in July by residents from Bootle, culminating in a reception in the Town Hall by the Deputy Mayor of Stockton-on-Tees, Councillor Keith Robinson. As a result of these visits, children from Stockton City Challenge took part in a tournament in Liverpool, evolving four City Challenge teams from around the country.

STATION REFURBISHMENT ON THE RIGHT TRACKS

A £170,000 scheme of renovation at Stockton Station is set to start with the aim of improving the whole appearance of the building and making a much more pleasant environment for users of the station and visitors to Stockton in particular. James Usher at City Challenge says, “The several years, the station has looked run down, been plagued by vandalism and generally made pedestrians feel insecure. We are now aiming to begin a phased project to restore pride and a sense of importance to the station.” Eventually, the project will tackle the Western platform, the station wall, land immediately to the north of the platform to the new foot bridge, and south to the rail bridge over Bishopston Lane. He adds, “We aim to use the remaining architectural qualities of the station.” The main design elements are: refurbishment of the west wall, planting of trees and shrubs, provision of railings, seating and improved lighting. Funding has been provided by City Challenge in partnership with British Rail and Stockton on Tees Borough Council.

The next stage is planned for 1994/95 where similar work will be carried out on the Eastern platform.

THE STOCKTON CITY CHALLENGE TEAM MOVES OFFICES

Stockton’s City Challenge Team has now moved to new offices in 11 Silver Street. “We are very happy to move into these premises,” said John Phillipson. “The offices were specifically identified because of their ease of access by the public, their close proximity to the Town Centre, and the facility it will give us for permanently displaying information on City Challenge projects. We have a clear target to improve our communications with the people of Stockton-on-Tees and we intend to generate an atmosphere where people feel that they can call in to see the displays, find out about the latest City Challenge news and talk ideas through with the project managers. We hope people will call in to see us or call us to arrange an appointment, on Stockton 622126.” The Team is shown outside the office in Silver Street: from left to right: Julie Danske Programme Manager, Andrea Dalton Personal Assistant to City Challenge Manager, Talga Ibusy Clinical Assistant, Richard Fawcett Employer Liaison Manager, Jim Johnsons Economic Programme Manager, Chris Oldershaw City Challenge Manager, Dave Adams Community Programme Manager, James Usher Housing and Environment Programme Manager, John Phillipson Partnership Manager, Jan Sinclair Employment Programme Manager, Joyce Malden Response Team.

REG WELCOMES SANTA!

City Challenge has approved £200,000 to develop an events and entertainment package for Stockton Town Hall over the next five years in partnership with Stockton Council’s Community Leisure Department. Already, the £83,000 earmarked for this year’s Stockton Riverside Festival brought in even better quality acts and raised still further the profile of the region’s biggest street entertainment festival.

Now it can be announced that Reg Holdsworth of Coronation Street will be here on Stockton High Street on Friday, 26th November to switch on the Christmas lights at the Town Hall at the Radio TPM Road Show at 6.30 pm.

Reg will give a big welcome to Santa, and will be taken to Santa’s sleigh drawn by real reindeer, to open the CEDEMP Shopmobility Centre in the Castle Centre at 7pm.

So make a date! Come and welcome Reg, and Santa and his reindeer, who are already in training for their big delivery job at Christmas! 

CITY CHALLENGE CASH FOR PRIMROSE HILL PARK

The Primrose Hill Park site

The next stage to transform a massive derelict site into one of the most impressive parks and industrial areas in Teeside, is set to go ahead with the announcement of £320,000 from City Challenge. The seven hectares at Primrose Hill are currently being reclaimed under a Derelict Land Grant and now, with the announcement of Department of the Environment approval for City Challenge cash, the second phase began in October.

Phase II work to transform the former railway sidings, will include landscaping to create a public park, fencing, lighting, drainage, planting of trees and shrubs. A wildlife nature study area, developed by the British Trust for Conservation, with the participation of local community groups, schools and residents, will create a pond, boardwalk, picnic areas and woodland. The third phase of landscape works will continue the development of the park and include further planting, footpaths, drainage and fencing, with the final phase of play equipment and a warden service programmed for 1994/95. 

The park has been designed by consultant Landscape Architects employed by Stockton Council, in close consultation with local residents who have put forward ideas on what they would like to see in the park. Proposals include adventure play areas, on all weather sports pitch, a children’s maze, and a mountain bike course. “This is extremely good news for the community in the Primrose Hill area,” said Chris Oldershaw. “City Challenge will provide the means to deliver a community asset which would have been caught in a shortage of public open space, and bring with it a major environmental improvement.”

The City Challenge Team outside the new Silver Street Headquarters
Geoff Capes. Shoppers will have the choice to see some of the country’s strong men in action and you can have a go yourself - contact the Hotline on 0795 7656661, or the Special Events Team on 070007 ext 2744.

Kids Fun Clubs are also being run on three Sundays in the spring. These let parents have their children looked after while they have some free time to themselves to do their shopping.

And for the young at heart, a Pensioners Tea Dance is arranged with the Joe Griffins Band playing from 1 - 3.30 pm in the Four Seasons Suite at Stockton’s Shotton Hotel.

City Challenge have funded £32,000 of events during the year, to help draw people into the Town Centre and to compliment the Council’s programme. Dave Burton of Stockton Council Leisure Department said, "We’re committed to continuing the development of Stockton as a living, vibrant centre of entertainment. Following the success of Coronation Street Star Reg Holdsworth’s visit in Christmas, we have worked closely with City Challenge and the town centre retail group to develop more events, to provide exciting entertainment and bring shoppers to the town centre."

For event details ring 070007 ext 2744.

- Worlds Strongest Man
- North East regional heat
- Kids Fun Clubs
- Pensioners Tea Dance with the Joe Griffins Band

Jet and Hunter, stars of LWT’s Gladiators, were a giant hit with thousands of fans when they appeared as part of the City Challenge Events Programme in Stockton High Street with the TFM Roadshow.

Almost 200 youngsters took part in the McDonalds Challenge fun obstacle event in John Walker Square the day before Jet and Hunter’s visit. The eight fastest competitors, from 5-7 years and 8-10 years separate competitions, were treated to a slap-up meal in McDonalds with the Gladiators, together with winners of a competition run by the TFM Roadshow.

“There were between 2000 -3000 people there, a really good response,” said Council Community Leisure Offer Tracey Stillett. “The children who won the competitions couldn’t believe it when they met Jet and Hunter.”

And there is more good news. More muscles are on show when the UK Strongest Man North East regional heats come to the High Street, with a personal appearance and live commentary by international athlete and muscle man of a competition run by the TFM Roadshow.

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SOUTH COAST GLADIATOR S

Aid for local business
The Mission is a Safer Stockton

Help for local business
A new role for the Richard Hind School
£20 million invested in Stockton

Make Stockton a safer place by day and night - that’s the mission of Andy Stephenson, recently appointed as Security Manager with Stockton Council, thanks to funding from City Challenge.

Andy is responsible for managing the new CCTV Surveillance and Security Centre now being constructed between the Municipal Buildings and the town’s police station. 35 cameras will be located throughout the town centre, covering car parks, pedestrian and shopping areas and other roads and buildings, including the entire High Street and Castle Centre.

The system will be monitored continuously by the Council Security team. They will have direct and instantaneous links with Cleveland Police.

The £4.5 million scheme can also monitor fire, intruder and other alarms at commercial and industrial premises throughout the Borough and can expand its services to include properties in the planned town centre development.

Andy is quite clear about the benefits that a safer Stockton will bring. The safer people feel when they come into the town centre, the more likely they are to shop here and invest in the town. And a reduction in losses due to crime on the industrial estates again improves business success and invites investment in Stockton."
CITY CHALLENGE PROGRESS

The City Challenge Team have now been here for a year, implementing the regeneration plans drawn up in consultation with the people of Stockton by the Partnership Board, which formed the successful bid for £5.75 million of government funding.

The task has been to get things moving on the range of programmes, and to make the first year’s £5.75 million funding grow through partnership with other agencies and the private sector. City Challenge also had a clear target to set up constructive and positive channels for the people of Stockton to influence the Board when schemes are considered for approval.

So how have we got on in the first year?

An Education and Training Forum and a Business Forum are now operating in addition to the Community Forum and Town Centre Forum.

Significant progress has been made in the 5 flagship areas, including schemes at Castlegate Quay, Stockton Railway Station, Nolan House, and other initiatives, including the “Living over the shops” project at Tillyer and Portrack housing project, the Parkfield Community Training Centre project, Principal Park, the High Street Pedestrianisation development and the CCTV monitoring schemes are all progressing.

We know that statistics can be boring, but these are good news. City Challenge has generated over 150 jobs, 13,000 construction job weeks, 22 new business start ups, 5,000 training weeks, retraining of 23 hectares of land, 200 houses completed or improved, and over 1,500 dwellings and commercial buildings now have improved security.

The total investment in Stockton in the first year is £20 million, and more is coming. New projects include the start of the £33 million regeneration of Blue Hall, environmental improvements at Portrack, Black Path, Tillyer and the Great North Park, and a major education initiative, £17.7 million of EC funding will go to Raywood, Riverside, education, youth and community safety.

Total investment will be almost £6 million in the second year, giving a total of £55 million invested in the first two years of City Challenge. This reflects growing confidence in Stockton as a result of City Challenge.

That’s what regeneration is about!

The City Challenge Team

FIT FOR LIFE IS THE CHALLENGE

Stockton Mohawks basketball team, based at Stockton Sports Centre at Tillyer, are promoting the City Challenge “Fit for Life” programme.

And Mohawks 7-foot Chris Caronagh from Baltimore, USA, was introduced to the first seven women who received Royal Society of Arts Certificates at the end of their training.

Jean Woodhouse of Tees Health Promotion explained, “This is an important and exciting development in helping people to improve their general health and feeling of well-being. We are working in local communities with people of all ages. We are helping women with young families who find it difficult to attend sports and fitness courses, by providing facilities when they are on the course.”

“The look after yourself” courses last for about two hours per week, for ten weeks, and are free of charge. Nobody should feel that they aren’t fit enough to start the course. Jean explains, “The whole point is that each person will work at their own capacity, nobody will be put off too much.”

The Mohawk’s prime aim is to draw in young people from the City Challenge area to join the Mohawks Basketball Club and get themselves involved in the game.

Paddy Corcoran, Chairman of Mohawks said, “The high levels of fitness shown by the players are a target for any person who sets out to progressively improve their health and lifestyle. So we are particularly happy to help promote Fit for Life which will help all people make this improvement.”

City Challenge are providing £58,000 over the next five years. Partners are Stockton Council’s Leisure Department and the Teen Health Promotion Unit.

For details, phone Jean Woodhouse on 677701.

TRAVEL AND EDUCATION ON THE MOVE

A familiar sight on the roads of Stockton over the past few months is the City Challenger double decker bus, colour co-ordinated and driving on a 24-hour training course by Stockton and Billingham College of Further Education, and now proudly sporting Stockton City Challenge colours.

The City Challenger, operated by Billingham CPR staff, is full of information and advice on education ranging from existing classes to full time study. It is also fitted out with hi-tech computer equipment so that people can gain hands on experience.

Senior Officer, College Deputy Principal explains “Part of our education strategy is to engage education out into the community. Some people feel they want to get involved in training but don’t easily link with the college. This way, if the college can see us, we can take education out to them.”

So the great advantage of City Challenger is its flexibility and the opportunity it gives people who perhaps haven’t been involved in training and education to start again on their own path. This can help them to progress into other courses which will then lead to a vocational qualification.

Ian Sinclair, Employment Programme Manager adds, “City Challenger has already shown the importance of taking education into the community. There have been programmes set up, for example, in Blue Hall, Clarences, Osbridge, the International Family Centre, and with a group of travelers. In the first few months, over 350 training weeks and 400 advice sessions have been completed. So a lot of people have already benefited from City Challenger throughout Stockton.”

Any group who wants to discuss the use of City Challenger in their area should ring Stockton and Billingham College on 552107.

STOCKTON BENEFITS FROM EUROPEAN EXPERTISE

Thanks to funding from City Challenge, Antnette Nyland has been appointed as a European Assistant to work with small businesses and voluntary organisations. Antnette, who is linked with the County Council’s European Advice Centre, is based in Stockton Municipal Buildings.

Already, in the first few months of operation, 28 businesses from the City Challenge area and more from the larger Stockton area have contacted Antnette for advice. In addition, the first seminar has been held to help voluntary organisations apply successfully for European funding.

Says Antnette, “I think it’s been a good start, a good way to build on. Businesses are starting to understand that about 80% of legislation affecting business now comes from the EEC, so our advice is not only for companies actually exporting to EEC countries - it is also intended to help local business be aware of new legislation which might affect them here in their operations. Please call me for information and advice.”

Antnette can be contacted on 670067 ext. 2498.
BLATCH IS LED TO Y CHALLENGE

During the second visit, Baroness Blatch visited Shopmobility in the High Street, where she was welcomed by Vicky Andrew and George McKinley, Chief Executive and Chairman respectively of CEDEMP.

Baroness Blatch inspected the range of vehicles available as part of the escort service and hiring facility and tried out one of the vehicles.

City Challenge funding for Shopmobility is £123,000.

COMMUNITY TRAINING AND ADVICE CENTRE AT PARKFIELD

The first stage of the £2 million City Challenge project to transform the derelict Richard Hind School into a community and training centre in Parkfield has been completed. Thanks to City Challenge funding, the former caretaker’s house has been brought back to life and now houses the Parkfield Community Development Team, to serve the 15,000 residents of the Parkfield, Oshfold and Town Centre area.

And work continues on the refurbishment of the school buildings, into what Jim Marshall of Stockton Council says will be a very different community and training centre. The idea is to attract people for recreation, education and advice, crafts, keep-fit, domestic science, computer studies and music studies, with creche services.

Close involvement of local residents in the design and management of the project has been a major objective, and a management group formed from partners and residents has acted as a steering group for the project.

STOCKTON CITY CHALLENGE ANNOUNCE SUCCESS OF BUSINESS SUPPORT SCHEME

Stockton City Challenge has announced a major success in the operation of the Business Initiatives and Loans Scheme since it was announced in October 1993.

Fran Hughes of HANDS Business Support in Tarm Lane, who are managing the scheme, explained, “We have already advised well over 100 small businesses about the scheme, which has caused a lot of interest and 24 awards have already been made.”

Jim Johnstone, Economic Programme Manager with City Challenge, adds, “We have already had 9 new businesses started, 68 contracts created and 60 jobs preserved. These have exceeded the original annual target in the first 3 months of the scheme. An investment of £807,000 in private sector money has resulted from the £42,000 of grants and loans which has been made to date.”

The awards have been made to businesses involved in operations ranging from woodworking, tappistry repairs and stores of the art embroidery machines to hi-tech environmental services.

Paul Halligan of Elizabeth Embroidery said, “We are delighted with the help we have been given. The grant has enabled us to relocate, expand our business and employ two more people.”

Donna Trayer of Waste Exchange Services Limited said, “The grant has allowed us to improve our database and hence the security of our operation - this was a sum we would not normally have been able to afford at this time.”

The Grants and Loans fund, which is targeted to reach £600,000 over a five year period will help support and develop new and existing small firms in the Stockton City Challenge and Stockton and Thornaby Task Force Areas, although businesses elsewhere in Stockton Borough can apply if they can show benefit to residents of these designated areas.

The training opportunities will be closely structured to user needs. St. Peters Enterprises will extend their present operations which are targeted towards young people with special needs. And Stockton and Billingham College will target their work towards adults, particularly the long term unemployed, single parents and women returning to work, geared around “First Step” and “Fresh Start” programmes developed by the college.

The total funding for the scheme is about £2 million with close to £1 million from City Challenge, and £1 million from partners including Stockton Thornaby Task Force, Teeside TEC, Stockton and Billingham College, St. Peters Enterprises and the local authorities.

Stockton Council will provide funds for running the centre.

LAUNCH OF LOCAL PURCHASING INITIATIVE

Early January saw the launch of the City Challenge Local Purchasing Initiative at the University College in Stockton.

The initiative is intended to help local businesses develop and grow by encouraging them to trade locally. City Challenge is contributing £31,000 over two years to fund Simon Dove, the project manager, who will coordinate the linkage of those who require goods and services and those who can provide them.

Simon remarks “The success of this project will clearly benefit the local economy. The initial response from both large and small companies has been supportive, and some companies have already benefited. However, there is a lot more work to do to change this general support into positive action.”
GREAT WORK BY ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, RAGWORTH

Joanie Parker is Stockton Council's Community Enterprise and Credit Union Development Officer, funded by City Challenge.

Joanie explains, "Community enterprise simply means local people coming together, talking about their needs, and providing the solution themselves, with my help. This can range from food cooperatives, child care in holidays or after school, to setting up a credit union."

A good example of this is the Mill Lane Croche Workers project, where local people identified the need for credit help, got together and organised it, and are now closer to a launch. A number of other projects are in the early stages of planning.

So what is a Credit Union? Joanie explains, "It's a cooperative bank, run by the community for the community, and which is owned by its members. The group of people who come together can vary from people who belong to the same workplace, or church, or who work for the same employer, or who live in the same neighbourhood."

How does it work? People save regularly, and they can then borrow money at a low rate of interest, which goes back into the credit union. The members elect their own Board of Directors each year to manage it.

There are already three credit unions in Stockton, in Blue Hall, St John's Parish, and Ragworth and Prieston Hill, 17 on Teeside, and over 400 nationwide. So do they work? Joanie is also developing the idea with community groups in Parkfield, Osbste, Town Centre and the Portrack and Thirley areas of Stockton.

Thanks to funding from City Challenge, the children of St John's the Baptist School in Ragworth are working on a number of exciting projects with specialist local artists. Bob Beagrie is an expert signwriter, Barry Stone an author, Graeme Hopper a blacksmith and Angela Heyward specialises in textiles.

Young writers who are producing a book on Ragworth life with Barry Stone are working hard to get the book ready for an April publication date.

And the St John's The Baptist pupils have made four superb colourful banners, made on silk, which will be on display in the school and used at special events.

All the banners are in full colour, and at the heart of one is the yellow flower which gives Ragworth its name. About 150 children have worked with parents and with Angela Heyward, who said, "St John's, Ragworth young artists are all capable, enthusiastic children. They are brilliant!"

Other work with the artists has produced designs for new gates at St John's School, and ideas for decorative additions to new lamp standards in Stockton High Street.

Julie Hawkesley, Deputy Headmistress of St John's the Baptist School says, "The enthusiasm of everybody involved in this work has been very high, and I would particularly like to acknowledge the involvement of parents who have given us a lot of support. We are very proud of the quality of work produced by our pupils at St John's the Baptist Primary School in Ragworth."

ART IN THE HIGH STREET ON VIEW

Stockton townspeople have had a number of invitations to view art features to be installed in the High Street. These include features to mark the entrances to the Hambleside and Ship Inn yards, ideas from local school children for decorative motifs to be attached to the newly-installed lamp posts in the High Street, and dresses made by Maggie Howarth, worked up ideas commented on by the public last April.

Models of four sculptures for a competition for a large sculptural feature to be sited at the west side of the Town Hall have also recently been on display.

And still to come is a competition for a human-scale sculpture which will attract international attention.

The overall scheme cost is £299,000, with a City Challenge contribution of £133,000. Public art is an integral part of High Street pedestrianisation. With the Events Programme, and the development of heritage and leisure facilities at Castle Quay, they will make a large contribution to regenerating the town centre.

HOUSING IMPROVEMENTS IN THE CHALLENGE AREA

The £7.5 million scheme to modernise and improve the security of Hulme and Nolton House which started in September 2002, is progressing as planned. Work on the first block, Nolton House, is well underway, with work on the first of the 130 flats nearing completion. Changes in the external appearance will soon be seen - these will also improve the energy efficiency of the flats by improving the insulation.

The scheme is mainly funded through Stockton Council’s Housing and Investment Programme, with £3.5 million funding from City Challenge.

At Portrack, the £1.83 million programme of modernisation and rehousing of 189 Council-owned properties is complemented by City Challenge, who have given £280,000 funding for environmental improvements. The 189 owner-occupiers will also benefit from these environmental improvements.

The conversion of empty properties above shops in Norton Road to provide new flats for local people began in early October. The scheme, which is part of the national "flats over the shop" initiative, will cost £125,000 over the next three years, and is a partnership between Stockton Borough Council, Cleveland and Teeside Housing Association, who will manage the flats, and City Challenge. It provides 35 new homes in unused space above eight shops in Norton Road, just a few yards from the High Street.

Completion of the first 12 flats is now imminent, and Stephen Swift of the Housing Association comments "We are already working on plans for the next stage of the programme for other properties in Norton Road." And a further allocation of £92,000 has been approved by City Challenge for design and site preparation on the Blue Hall regeneration project.

Following consultations with residents, consultants Price Waterhouse have made proposals and a steering group has been set up to comment and advise on these proposals.

The movement of families from Blue Hall prior to the Housing Association Development is well underway, and some demolition will be carried out soon.

The £42 million scheme, including £5 million from City Challenge, combines improvements to Council retained houses, housing associations building new homes for rent, and private development of low-cost houses for sale.
KEVIN KEEGAN TOASTS STOCKTON’S FUTURE

Kevin Keegan was in Stockton recently to re-open the newly refurbished Mulberry Tree pub at Maxwell’s Corner in the High Street, which has recently undergone a £200,000 refurbishment.

City Challenge has contributed £15,000 from its Commercial Improvement Zone Grants - one of 25 already approved by City Challenge for the improvement of properties in the Town Centre from a total budget of £1.1 million.

Kevin said that the City Challenge developments were top of the league. "I'm pleased with what I'm seeing here" said Kevin. "If we stand here again in two or three years' time it will be an even nicer place for the people of Stockton."

Alister Arkley, Chief Executive of Century Inns, based in Billingham, said "We are one of the first to invest money in this part of Stockton - I hope the reopening of the Mulberry Tree will be followed by others which will help breathe new life into the area.

City Challenge has funded a study by the Civic Trust which shows how the overall appearance of the High Street can be improved by making relatively small changes to the facades of each property. The suggestions can be viewed in the City Challenge offices. And there are good facades in Stockton - take a look at Finkle Street where some properties have also benefited from a grant - it shows what can be done!"

Improvements completed in Finkle Street.

ENDAVER CONTINUES

The full scale replica of Captain Cook’s Bark Endeavour has now been at Castlegate Quay for a year and much work has been in progress on the interior, including Captain Cook’s cabin. Externally, Endeavour now sports the first stage of her masts and rigging, and plans for installing the next stages are in hand. David Wheeler at Castlegate Quay is keen to show you what is happening. Tel: 638644.
City Challenge is now mid way into the second year programme and, as we started, about £14 million of Challenge funding and 100 projects have been approved. Many of the projects which were only an idea at the start of our programme are now well established. The charges can be seen more easily in purely physical terms, but all improvements in the quality of life relate directly to individuals, groups and communities.

A walk around the Queens Park area illustrates the physical improvements at Nolan House, Stockton Station and the Leech development of new houses, linked together with environmental improvements. Completion of the High Street pedestrianization now allows people to stroll with their families or sit and chat in the sun or browse through the market, and admire the lamp features designed by local schoolchildren. The Riverside now benefits from the first part of the Riverside Park development and Endavour now proudly sports her first masts and rigging.

The success of other programmes are felt more at an individual and community level. For example, the receipt of a Community Grant has been a major success for both individuals and groups, and has given them the chance to meet their aspirations.

The results of programmes aimed at improving training and employment prospects are building on the results of our first year, with people being given ‘a perk to life’ through their success. This is linking well with the development of community centers and their integration with schools, with the added bonus of encouraging parents to return to learning.

Stockton has just received the very good news that the Secretary of State has approved the £90 million shopping development in the Town Centre. We still await a decision on whether demolition of the Tabernacle can proceed without a public inquiry, but in any case this latest decision was vastly important in helping us to keep to our timescale, and for the developers to progress discussions with private funders of the scheme.

Of course the success of the City Challenge programme depends vitally on the work of the project officers, who come from the local authorities and the public and private sectors, and on the major part played by our 100 partners. Without their efforts and support we would never reach our regeneration targets and increase the £37.5 million City Challenge funding to over £150 million being invested in Stockton over five years.

So we want to take this opportunity to thank them for their work and contributions, and to acknowledge their success in the regeneration of Stockton-on-Tees.

THE CHALLENGE TEAM

Baroness Blatch, Sponsor Minister for Cleveland, visited Stockton recently to officially launch the new look High Street following completion of the £2.8 million pedestrianisation scheme. And school children from Ragworth St. John the Baptist School were present to take part in races across the High Street and to add to the festivities.

Lady Blatch said “The newly pedestrianised area will provide a safe and attractive area for people using the Town Centre and bring real benefit to parents with young children, where safety is paramount”.

Councillor Bob Gibson, Leader of Stockton Council, added “Stockton is already looking up. The town is now a pleasant, attractive place to be”.

There was dancing in the streets when almost two years of road works in the town’s famous High Street came to an end. The work has been supported by Stockton City Challenge, the Urban Programme and the European Regional Development Fund.

To mark the end of the road works, Samba bands, Latin American music, classical trios and Japanese drumming excitement to the month, taking on concrete mixers, v 1992.

And the crowds pilled open area around the sun and listen to...
STOCKTON New High Street

Eight partners have signed up for the £23 million Blue Hall housing redevelopment, one of Britain’s largest housing regeneration projects.

Representatives of Stockton Council, the Blue Hall Community Forum, the Housing Corporation, North British, Endeavour, Cleveland and Teesside and Bradford and Northern Housing Associations and Stockton City Challenge were present at the signing.

This marks the start of a four year transformation, and demolition of some properties has already taken place.

Over 700 homes will be refurbished or replaced, including a large investment in private housing and derelopment of over 800 council houses to the Housing Associations and a private developer.

Councillor Ken Crapps, chairman of Stockton’s Housing Committee said “I’m delighted for the residents who have waited for it. It’s a major partnership project and the eyes of the housing profession will be on Stockton. However, City Challenge is helping us to do much more than just rebuild houses at Blue Hall - there are huge landscaping, training and community projects on the way as well”.

Jan Sinclair of City Challenge said “Firms tendering for the big contracts will be invited personally to go through our Code of Practice to encourage contractors to take on local people”.

Sponsors Support Stockton

High Street stores, banks, building societies and other traders have contributed £10,000 to supplement City Challenge cash to help the growth and promotion of Stockton town centre.

John Ayres, the new Town Centre Manager, funded by City Challenge, has presented Partnership Certificates to the sponsors as a mark of their support.

John said “It’s a good start. We hope that others will join the Business Partnership once they see the success of this campaign. The cash will be used for advertisements and promotions specifically designed to get more people into Stockton more often.”

Businesses presented with certificates were Marks & Spencer, Boons, Castle Centre, Yorkshire Bank, Evening Gazette, Natwest Bank, Midland Bank and Northern Rock Building Society.

John Ayres adds “If you have views on the town centre, please ring me on 022124, or call in at the City Challenge Office in Silver Street. I will be pleased to see you and discuss your ideas.”

Educational projects are now well under way in schools serving the City Challenge area.

Jan Sinclair of City Challenge says “Our projects are built on experience showing that a community approach to education, involving young people, their parents, other adults, and training and employment agencies are more successful than a traditional piecemeal approach.”

The Ladder of Opportunity at Blakiston School is creating opportunities across primary, secondary and further education, leading to improved qualifications and job prospects for pupils of Blakiston and also for people in the surrounding communities in Blue Hall, Ragworth and Roseworth.

Mike Bell, Community Teacher at Blakiston School said “The beauty of this scheme is that individuals can get on the ladder at any level and climb it at their own pace. A community common room, I.T.

And English Partnerships has also announced an investment in a major housing project at Queens Park Leech Homes are building 50 houses for sale on reclaimed land very close to Stockton town centre, with the help of £347,000 from English Partnerships.

This is a further development in the regeneration of the Queens Park, a flagship area for Stockton City Challenge. It complements the £2.5 million refurbishment of Hume and Nolan Houses, the £9.2 million provision of 40 sheltered houses at Stockton Station and £1 million environmental improvements at Primrose Hill and Allison Street.

English Partnerships Chief Executive, David Taylor said: “This project forms part of Stockton’s City Challenge strategy and will play a vital role in regenerating this rundown part of the town. It will provide low-cost housing close to the town centre.”

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Elected Representative of the Congleton District Council
ENVIRONMENT GETS A BOOST

One of City Challenge's key strategic objectives is to improve the physical environment in the Challenge area. Funding of £3.76 million, including £306,000 of European Union cash, is available over five years. Work has already started at Stockton Station, on parkland development, improving the urban corridors, traffic calming and gardening and recycling projects.

The development of Environmental Education and Conservation in the Community is another major project, in partnership with Stockton and Cleveland Councils, local schools and the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, with Challenge funding of almost £500,000.

The B.T.C.V. have been presented with a new crewcab by City Challenge to provide transport for volunteers on conservation projects in the Challenge area. The handover took place at Newtowns Infants School, where City Challenge is funding a project to create a new nature garden for the children in the school playground and children have planted herbs and wildflowers in a garden replacing an area of tarmac.

At Norton School, pupils have built their own nature reserves on a formerly derelict plot of land leased on a peppercorn rent from British Rail. Trees donated by Stockton Council, City Challenge and purchased with a Forestry Commission Grant, will be planted by the children on the ten acre site.

Young school children from Tiley, St. John's and the Glebe, together with youngsters from Stockton's Mental Health Centre have been working with artists and blacksmiths, Graeme Hopper, on the design and fabrication of decorative work on lamp posts in the High Street.

So far four lamp posts have the children's designs displayed, with the themes of transport, the market, the River Tees and the Town Hall.

Graeme Hopper said "The children were marvellous to work with, they were so responsive and fresh with so many ideas."

Councillor Suzanne Fletcher noted "In years to come they will be able to point out how they played their part in bringing the High Street back to life. We have scope for further designs if we can get more sponsorship."

ALL ABOARD THE CHALLENGE PLAYBOOK EXPRESS

His Worship the Mayor of Stockton, Councillor Keith Dobinson, is seen here sending the City Challenge Playbook Express on its rounds to schools, parent/toddler groups, play schemes and play groups. The Playbook Express has been funded by £225,000 of City Challenge cash and the project is a partnership between City Challenge and the Library and Leisure Department of Cleveland County Council.

The specially fitted-out multi-coloured bus will be based at the Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre, and will visit schools, community centres, parks and play areas on a regular basis to ensure easy access, both in school terms and in holiday periods.

Dave Adams of City Challenge explained "The objective is to develop a familiarity and interest in books by young children, and also to encourage parents to join in with their children in finding out what a great source of education and relaxation books are."

JOBS LINK FORGES AHEAD

In the first quarter of this year, Jobs Link has helped over 50 people into jobs by offering assistance to employers who have a given training and jobs to unemployed people living in the Stockton City Challenge and Stockton and Thornaby Task Force areas.

Hal Jackson, the Council's Economic Development Worker at Tiley, reports that 11 local people have acquired full-time jobs with Tarmac Construction and their sub-contractors. In addition, 3 more local people and an apprentice are training under the Wimpy 'Training for Work' scheme.

Two brothers from Tiley, John and Stephen Rogan, are presently employed on the Tiley Housing Project after long periods of unemployment. They hope to stay working with Tarmac and are looking forward to a brighter future. Says John "This put a perk back into life - the future is looking up now.".

Total funding from City Challenge for customised training is £413,000 over five years, with over £285,000 from other funding agencies and £128,000 from private sources.

Partners in Jobs Link are City Challenge, Task Force, Stockton Council, the Employment Service and Tescade TEC, with cash support from the European Social Fund.

More training and experience opportunities exist now at Castlegate Quay, leading to NVQs in joinery workshop skills.

GRANTS SCHEME IS A WINNER

Good news is reported from individual and community groups who have been awarded City Challenge Community Grants.

Thanks to a grant, Norma's Community Cafe has now got a refurbished kitchen to help her carry on her good work in her local community.

And International Hockey star Nicola Pickering from Tiley has been helped with the expenses of playing for the England under-16 and under-18 hockey teams. Nicola is one of only two girls playing at national level from this area. Nicola said "Thanks to City Challenge funding I was able to attend training sessions around the country and play for England in Slovakia, where we came second, and I scored two goals for my country."

Further international success is reported by the Primrose Hill under-13 football team, who in their first season have brought home a European trophy from a competition in Holland. This included beating the hosts and favourites, The Hague. The team, made up from Blue Hall, Ragworth and Primrose Hill received funding from Bellis Stores and Stockton City Challenge.

It's anticipated that a total of £125,000 will be distributed over the five years City Challenge period. Stockton Council is a major contributor to the scheme.

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Housing Corporation backs £26 million project

Norton Grange not only took on a new name at the start of the year, it is also acquiring a new identity to go with it through a £26 million housing project, the biggest and most ambitious development in the region.

Please to get this support from the Corporation, especially the pre-allocations for future years which gives us the continuity which we are looking for.” The announcement of Housing Corporation support means that work can be started early in October and completed as soon as possible.

Scheme details

Cleveland and Teeside Housing Association will build 70 homes, and have been given allocations of £2,644,000 for 38 properties and pre-locations of £768,000 for a further 32 in 1996/97. Their Development Manager, Barrie Westrook, predicts “With all of our houses being built as one contract, the first tenants will move in by the middle of next year, and our phase will be complete in early 1997”.

Endeavour Housing Association, with plans for 50 homes, already have allocations and pre-allocations for 33 homes totalling £747,000. Development Manager, Ray Gibson, explained that this means that the 33 houses, bungalows and flats can be started as part of the same contract. “Work should start in November, with the first tenants getting their keys next summer. We hope to get an allocation for the remaining 17 homes at the end of the year, to allow us to complete our phase as quickly as possible.”

North British Area Development Manager, Paul Hillard commented “We are extremely pleased to be awarded long-term funding commitment so that we can start work earlier than planned. It is the first time in the region that awards have been made so far in advance. It means all phases of work by the various Associations can complement each other in a rolling programme.” North British will start their work next year, with plans to build 70 homes.

At the same time, Stockton Council has already started refurbishing 400 of the existing houses, and plans are being drawn up for 119 new homes to be built by a private developer. Ann Hadton, Secretary of the Norton Grange Community Forum said “Tenants who have already had their houses refurbished by the Council are delighted with the work, and we are confident that the new housing will be of such a good standard that everyone on the estate will be happy. We are all excited by the project and can’t wait for the building work to get underway.”

Working in partnership

The housing and environmental improvements are, of course, vital in regenerating the former Blue Hall area. But the regeneration objectives have wider aspects than the improvements in bricks and mortar, and this is a flagship community partnership initiative.

The partnership Steering Group provides the main forum for consultation between Councillors, residents, Housing Associations and Council Officers. In addition, the Community Forum draws together all service providers in the area, including Stockton and Cleveland Country Services, the Police and Community Groups, and this Forum is resident-led. One result is hoped to be a “Secured by Design” status for the development.

It all adds up to exciting times in Norton Grange, with a real partnership drive for a better quality of life for the local community.
DETAILS ANNOUNCED OF THE £45 MILLION RETAIL DEVELOPMENT IN STOCKTON

Following Stockton Council's approval of outline planning permission last year, Swan Hill Development Solutions, developer of the Stockton Town Centre Redevelopment Scheme, has now submitted details of building layout and design, road proposals, car parking and landscaping. These have been worked up during the last six months by the developers in conjunction with Stockton City Challenge and Stockton Council Officers. The cost of the scheme is £48 million, including £9 million City Challenge funding, and with major support from Stockton Council and European Regional Development Funds.

Chris Oldershaw, City Challenge Manager said “This major flagship scheme will provide Stockton with a wider range of new shopping and parking facilities, complementing existing shops on the High Street, the historic market, and the £20 million investment in the Castlegate Shopping Centre which will be refurbished.”

The developers have had an exciting response from retailers wishing to come into the scheme and their requirements have been incorporated into the latest designs for the 170,000 sq. ft. overall development to the rear of Stockton High Street between Dovecot Street and Bishopston Lane.

John Selton, O.B.E., Chairman of the City Challenge Partnership Board said “The plan contains many imaginative features and will prove popular with retailers and shoppers”. Councillor Bob Gibson, Deputy Chairman of the Board and Leader of Stockton Council added “Interest from the retail trade has been very encouraging and we look forward to welcoming many new stores to Stockton”.

This submission will now set in motion the statutory actions which will enable a start on site in early 1996, and a date for the public inquiry into the demolition of the Baptist Tabernacle is expected soon. However, discussions between City Challenge and the Baptist Tabernacle congregation have already reached agreement in principle after the congregation overwhelmingly voted to transfer to a new Tabernacle building on The Square/Bishop Street, on the old garage site.

Town Centre Regeneration is a major objective for City Challenge, with 15 schemes valued at over £60 million attracting almost £14 million of City Challenge funding. These include Pedestrianisation, Public Arts, Endeavour, Shopmobility, Riverside Park, Improvement Grants, Town Centre Manager and High Street Events.

Councillor John Scott, Chairman of the Development Control Committee noted “This development is the biggest piece of the jigsaw which, when complete, will make Stockton one of the north’s most attractive centres by the turn of the century”.

The plans can be viewed at the Planning Department in the Municipal Buildings.

MAIN FEATURES OF THE SCHEME ARE:-

- 35 retail units, increased by demand from retailers.
- a partially covered mall, linking Dovecot Street to an open square at Wellington Street.
- a new entrance to Marks and Spencer from the mall.
- extensions to Littlewoods and Debenhams stores.
- a new clock tower near Wellington Street to reflect the existing Debenhams tower.
- a round tower design at the new mall entrance at Dovecot Street to complement the tower on the Yorkshire Bank on the High street.
- parking for 850 cars.
£71 MILLION INVESTMENT FOR STOCKTON

Forget about the lottery just for a moment - Stockton is already proving to be a mega winner with two recent announcements that will bring £71 million to the town.

Some £45 million - mostly private money - is to be spent redeveloping the shopping areas in the town centre. Another £26 million is going to be spent transforming the former Blue Hall Estate into Norton Grange, setting affordable housing standards now for the next century.

Thanks to Stockton City Challenge, Stockton Council and a whole host of partners, everyone in Stockton is a winner now!

SCHOOL FOR ALL

Millie Scarfe, Project Coordinator for the Family Literacy Project has reported on a successful first year which has involved St John's Ragworth, Mill Lane and Bowesfield Lane Primary Schools, together with three other schools in Cleveland.

Millie explained: "Experience shows that parental involvement and support in their children's education goes a long way to enhance the teachers' hard work. Learning support at home is vital for children's development."

An equal aim is to raise the standards of adult literacy and numeracy, helping adults to improve existing basic skills and acquire new skills. A major element is the support from the Adult Learning Basic Skills Unit, and Cleveland County Adult Learning Service. So, as well as helping to improve children's performance, adults are encouraged to start the first step on their own educational development.

The projects have been developed by each school to meet their own individual needs. At Bowesfield, family groups have made up their own books, and collected published material to build up a school library. At Mill Lane, ideas about learning were developed through games and joint activities. St John's Ragworth used crafts, reading, games and work on the community newspaper to develop literacy and numeracy skills. The children were enthusiastic about their families working with them. "It's good 'cos I can show her my class, and she helps me'. It's different from just lessons, it's special!"

Likewise, parents were grateful for the opportunity to become involved in their children's learning, and some felt able to start to work on accreditation of their own skills, in wordpower, numberpower, computer, German and keep fit. "I never thought I could do a City and Guilds, I'm thrilled to bits". "I know it's important to help the kids, but I'm glad I can do something to help myself".

Schools have seen improved relationships with the parents and their local communities. And teachers, some of whom are working on adult teaching qualifications have established good links with adult tutors.

City Challenge have contributed £48,000 over two years, in partnership with Task Force, Trelawny TEC, the Workers' Educational Association and Cleveland County Adult Basic Education Service. The Evening Gazette has supported this project through Newspapers in Education, which has also received £50,000 from City Challenge.

For details, contact your local primary school, or ring Millie on 248155.

FIT FOR LIFE

Now that Summer has finally arrived, the message from Tees & District Health Promotion service is 'be cool, stay covered'.

It is one of a number of educational programmes run in Community Centres and in Stockton High Street to help people get the most from life by adopting healthy lifestyles.

Jean Woodhouse explained: "Our programmes bring to people's attention that simple changes in outlook and lifestyle can significantly improve their health. City Challenge is contributing £64,000 to these projects. For further details on courses ring Jackie or Kathryn on Stockton 223845.
SECRETARY OF STATE ‘ON BOARD’

John Gunner, Secretary of State for the Environment, has recently visited us to view and discuss our City Challenge projects.

Mr. Gunner was welcomed by John Sefton, O.B.E., Chairman of the Partnership Board, Councillor Bob Gibson, Deputy Chairman and Leader of Stockton Council, and Chris Oldershaw, City Challenge Manager.

Following a presentation of the whole City Challenge Programme, Mr. Gunner visited a number of projects, including High Street pedestrianisation, Commercial Improvement Zone Grant buildings, public art, Stockton Station, and Endeavour on the river.

CITY CHALLENGE PROGRESS

Well, here we are in year three, and as we move towards the halfway point in Stockton City Challenge we can report that the programme has progressed strongly in our second year, and has built on our first year achievements.

Over £42 million of investment was attracted into our area as flagship schemes such as High Street Pedestrianisation, CCTV, the Richard Hind Centre, Stockton Railway Station and Nolan House all reached practical completion. Total investment in the first two years is now £63 million.

Particularly heartening are the employment successes, with 18000 training weeks, over 800 new jobs created, 480 jobs preserved, and 63 new businesses started.

The development of strong community partnership structures remains a major priority for us. Four City Challenge Forums, Town Centre, Business, Education and Training and Community, provide the formal structure for community involvement in City Challenge. Over 60 people now regularly attend these meetings, providing strong links with the wider Stockton Community. The Community Forums have now expanded to link 20 area liaison groups and associations with the Partnership Board. A further 35 people, including Partnership Board members and Counsellors sit on City Challenge Panels. These panels approved schemes and grants in excess of £450,000 in the year, as well as commending on aspects of design and public art.

We would also like to note some of the awards and rewards we have seen this year. We are particularly happy to report the TY Conservation Award made to the Norton Hill Community Action Group, and the Teeside TEC awards to the parents and children involved in school projects. We also have the news that the Aiming High Arts Event at University College Stockton, a highlight of the year. The large reduction in crime in the town centre is certainly rewarding. We even received an award for our Reporter Newsletter. And we are proud to report that the City Challenge Partnership was awarded Bank One status by Banners Blistch in recognition of the achievements to date.

None of this could have happened without the hard work and commitment of our Project Officers and our Partners, and so we all share in these awards and rewards. We look forward to reporting more in our third year!

NEW PLAY AREA FOR TILEY PROJECT

The first two phases of the Tiley Park project comprised a new bridge across Lustrum Beck and associated footpaths and lighting, together with large scale movement of earth and landscaping.

This has now followed by the planting of trees and shrubs and grassed areas, together with the provision of the Tiley/Portrack play area. Funding has been available for community involvement through the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers who carried out some of the planting.

Councillor Derek Cooke, Chairman of Stockton Council City Challenge Committee was on hand to open the new play area on a wet day which did not dampen local residents’ enthusiasm for the development. The play area is constructed with safety surfacing, drainage and dog proof fencing in line with Stockton Council’s Leisure policies.

The project links closely with Great North Park, and joins up the City Challenge Environmental Education Programme at Norton and Tiley Schools. The Tiley Park Steering Group which meets monthly to monitor the project, includes representatives from five local resident groups and officers from Stockton Council and City Challenge.

Total funding from City Challenge is £880,000.

Mike Mealing, Economic Programme Manager at City Challenge explained: “Each SME can have a free counselling session to discuss the needs of their business, target appropriate new systems, or identify better ways of using existing systems to reduce costs. In addition, a more complete free consultation service is available to oversee installation, implementation and training with new or existing systems”.

The consultations are given by the Cleveland County Council CADCAM Centre. This has a priority to improve the competitiveness of SMEs by encouraging the uptake of design and manufacturing computer technology, and to bring new advances to the notice of SMEs as the systems develop and improve, so that they are always aware of the most modern equipment available.

The project aim is for all SMEs in the Challenge area to take part at least in the initial counselling, but already some firms have taken up the more detailed consultancy service offered.

Ricky Ward, proprietor of AI Graphics, said: “CADCAM have been very helpful in providing us with quality advice on the use of our computer equipment and in training our staff. And the view of Steve Embank of A B Wren Greetings Cards - “CADCAM have provided superb technical advice and helped my business greatly – they have a great team providing a real service too”.

Brian Rowland, Manager of the CADCAM Centre said: “We are very keen to help. We have started to contact all SMEs individually, but please don’t wait. Ring us on 01642 788221 for a free solution to your problems or to explore opportunities in a way that best suits your financial and operational demands.”

There are over 420 small and medium manufacturing businesses (SMEs) in the Stockton City Challenge area and it is recognised that the growth of SMEs is a vital part of Stockton’s regeneration by producing jobs and creating opportunities for the community.

As part of our Strategic Objectives ‘to support local businesses’, City Challenge are providing £84,000 for a consultancy support for computer use in design and information.”

BETTER BY DESIGN

Steve Embank of A B Wren Greetings Cards.

Ricky Ward with one of his teams at AI Graphics.
CRIME DOWN IN STOCKTON

Crime in and around Stockton Town Centre has fallen by more than one third since completion of the £4.5 million CCTV and security centre at the end of 1994.

The cameras biggest impact is on car thefts and thefts from cars which have dropped by 50%, and assaults and vandalism have also shown large reductions.

The Council security team who monitor the cameras have alerted the police to incidents, resulting in 50 arrests by the police in this period.

Councillor Barry Monkman, Chairman of the Council Licensing Committee, said "major progress has been made towards making Stockton the country's safest town centre". Chief Inspector Barry Monkman of Stockton police added "our officers are now free to carry out other valuable work. I believe that these crimes will continue to fall as the public becomes more aware of the system."

New display boards in town centre car parks are a further reminder that these areas are under 24 hour surveillance.

And the message that Stockton is one of the safest town centres in Europe is now part of Stockton town centre promotion headed by John Ayres, Town Centre Manager funded by City Challenge, and the Town Centre Business Partnership.

City Challenge funding for the scheme is over £1.5 million.

For details of the security scheme phone Andy Stephenson on 618294, and for information on promoting shopping in Stockton phone John Ayres on 622124.

WORK CONTINUES ON RIVERSIDE PARK

The second stage of development of Stockton's Riverside Park is nearing completion. The pedestrian bridge which links Silver Street with the Riverside Park has been refurbished with impressive results, and the surrounding area has been banked and reseeded.

The work has evolved from the Riverside Design Competition funded by City Challenge, which was commented on by the public before a decision was made, and which was aimed to achieve the widest range of ideas and opportunities for the site.

Stage one was completed in 1994, and included an improved car park, planting of trees and shrubs, and new ironwork fencing incorporating designs linked with the river.

James Usher of City Challenge said "This is an important part of our environmental improvements in linking the Town Centre with the river."

Total cost of the scheme is £470,000, funded by City Challenge and the European Regional Development Fund.

MORE ACTION AT RAGWORTH

Improvements to the Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre are being made through three projects costing £780,000, with City Challenge contributions totalling £196,000.

The environmental and security project which adds to improvements around St. John's School, has given a modern, fresh look to the building by upgrading lighting to pathways and roads, improving the nursery creche and car parks, and adding security measures including CCTV.

Better education and training facilities have been provided by the relocation of the refreshment and catering area, with improved office accommodation for training staff and training rooms with space to work with young people. The courses at Ragworth include basic skills, introductory and `raster' courses, office and I.T. and adult education for the local community. Additional support is given by the Training and Employment Access Point, and the courses give a progression route for parents involved in the Aiming High and Family Learning projects at St. John's School.

The work on the health, training and fitness gym which is nearing completion will be a major asset to the area.

Dave Adams, from City Challenge, notes "These projects have been discussed in the Ragworth Regeneration Forum and are a major contribution to the regeneration of Ragworth, including the exciting work at St. John's School."

And the pictures taken at the recent VE celebrations at the Centre show that the local residents are making good use of their improved facilities.

Partners in these schemes include Stockton and Billingham College, Workers Educational Association and Cleveland County Council.

For details of activities at Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre phone Pauline Beal on 607773.
NORTON HILL COMMUNITY GROUP WIN AWARD

City Challenge funding has helped the Norton Hill Community Action Group transform the former derelict Milburn Field allotment site between the Norton Hill and Norton Grange estates.

Since March, over 3,000 trees have been planted and the residents are currently undertaking a major beck clearance scheme with the assistance of the Cleveland Probation Service.

The Community spirit has so impressed officials of the BT Environmental Awards that the group have been awarded the North East prize of £500 for having the best project; this has been a major boost to the group.

Anyone wishing to assist with the beck clearance should “don your wellies” and join the group each Sunday where you will be welcomed with open arms. Ring Sharon Aylesbury on 0770067, ext. 2742, or call in to see John Agar at his shop in Beak Grange Road for details.

OVER £200 RAISED FOR RNLI

Since pedestrianisation was completed, bands, buskers and pavement artists have brought extra colour into the High Street. And the Royal National Lifeboat Institution have benefited as well as Stockton’s shoppers.

The International Happy Wanderers Puppets (owned by former Stockton High Street Toy Shop Proprietor, Leslie Brown) which performs every Friday in Stockton High Street has to date raised over £200 for the RNLI.

The Group have appeared in many European cities including Berlin, Bonn, Cologne and Amsterdam and all over the North East of England from the Metro Centre to the Saltburn Victorian Festival.

PUBLIC ART IN THE HIGH STREET

Two new features set in the newly pedestrianised High Street have now been completed.

Just south of the Town Hall, a multi-coloured mosaic which has been set in the flagstones by Maggy Howarth, has proved to be a talking point for shoppers in the High Street. Maggy, who has designed mosaic features throughout the country, personally installed her work of art.

Cleveland Arts, and the seats made by Preston Park Blacksmith, Pat O’beron, which surround the fountain have already become a favoured site for Stockton shoppers.

Councillor Keith Dobinson, who laid a plaque to mark the restoration in the presence of Keith Dodshon from Lazenby, great nephew of John Dodshon, said “I am delighted its back in the High Street”.

In complete contrast, Dodshon’s Fountain again stands proudly in the High Street where it returned after 100 years in Ropner Park. Built in the 1870s as a memorial to public benefactor and grocer John Dodshon, it was intended to give a good clean source of water to thirsty visitors to the High Street, but it finished up being used to wash fish, and was removed after only 15 years in position.

The fountain was restored under supervision from City Challenge are contributing £130,000 for High Street public art features.

CITY CHALLENGE WELCOMES THE BISHOP OF DURHAM

The Bishop of Durham, the Rt Rev Michael Turnbull was recently welcomed by The Worshipful The Mayor of Stockton, Cllr Dora Redican, John Sefton OBE, Chairman of the Partnership Board and Chris Oldershaw, City Challenge Manager, when he headed a tour of the City Challenge area by a group of the Church community from all denominations. The occasion gave the opportunity for members of all traditions to meet a large number of community representatives and to hear a presentation of the City Challenge programme.

This was followed by visits to a range of projects, including the Richard Hind Community Training Centre, Stockton Railway Station, the Endeavour, and housing projects at Primrose Hill, Queen’s Park, Norton Grange and Tilerley.

The Rev Canon David Whittington of Stockton Parish Church explained "the tour gave the Bishop a valuable opportunity to increase his knowledge of what local authorities are undertaking in partnership with their communities. The challenge programme addresses issues of great importance to the churches as well as to the communities at large. In areas like Stockton we are well involved in City Challenge initiatives. The churches are by far the largest voluntary organisations in any community with a responsibility to get involved where community issues are concerned."

"Many denominations are involved in this visit and we are particularly delighted that representatives of the local Muslim Community were able to be present".
ROYAL VISITORS AT STOCKTON STATION

Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh were recently welcomed at the newly regenerated Stockton Station on the way to officially open the new Samsung factory at Wynyard. Queen Elizabeth has arrived at Stockton Station once before - in June 1956 - when it was still a major station, resplendent with its Victorian glass canopy roof.

The station gradually fell into a state of dereliction over the intervening years, but since 1993 over £400,000 of Urban and City Challenge funding has spearheaded the station's regeneration. A new bridge has replaced the old subway, the station walls have been repaved and fitted with cast-iron features, the platforms and station entrance have been repaved with brick and stone - surfaces and large areas of shrubs and seating have been laid out.

This work has complemented the £2 million Railway Housing Association project, which has transformed and extended the station buildings into Hackforth Court, which has plush sheltered housing for 22 elderly people. About 180 residents, together with friends and relatives, were on hand to give a right royal welcome as The Queen and Prince Philip alighted from the royal train.

The fact that the royal train pulled into Stockton Station in October 1995 is recognition of the major improvements that have taken place there in the past few years. Together with new housing, refurbishment of Hume and Nolan Houses, Primrose Hill Park and many other environmental improvements, Queen's Park is now truly fit for a Queen and an area of which we can all be proud.

PRINCE VISITS ENDEAVOUR

On a sunny day in July, His Royal Highness Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh, visited Stockton to inspect the full-scale replica of Cook's Bark, Endeavour, which is fitting out at Castlegate Quay. The project is funded with £520,000 from City Challenge.

The Duke came up river to Endeavour following the official opening of the Tees Barrage, a structure which has transformed the River Tees into a stretch of water well fitted for sports and leisure activities.

As the Duke's personal standard was raised on Endeavour, Christopher Payne, Chairman of the Endeavour Trust, and other Trust members, welcomed Prince Philip and showed him round the ship. The Duke then viewed the displays of sailing, canoeing, rowing and water-skiing skills shown by groups on the river, whose brightly coloured equipment added to the scene.

Further colour and a warm welcome was given to Prince Philip by members of young people's and voluntary organisations who joined a guard of honour. Many of these organisations will be able to benefit from the training facilities offered on Endeavour. The Duke spent time talking to each group before he left Castlegate Quay.

Details of the activities on Endeavour can be obtained from David Wheeler on 01642 676844.
KIDS LAUNCH STOCKTON’S NEWEST PARK

An area which was formerly rail sidings for the iron and steel industry, and which had degenerated into a “sea of mud”, has now been transformed into the £1.5 million Primrose Hill Community Park. City Challenge funding of £680,000 helped make the dream come true.

Council Leader, Councillor Bob Gibson, officially opened the park when he set off on a fun run for youngsters from the area. This was followed by a 5-a-side football game by teams from Newtown Junior School and other fun and games for the younger children.

Project Officer Tim Gibson of Stockton Council said “The new park has a range of facilities - play areas, a football pitch, mountain bike trail and a bandstand, complemented by newly planted tree and shrub areas. There has been close consultation with residents, schools, community groups and the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, throughout the project”.

Further City Challenge funding has supported the appointment of David Fox as Urban Park Ranger.

NEW FOCUS FOR WOMEN

The Centre Skills project at Norton Secondary School has a strong focus on the needs of young women with children aged under five. Participants are mostly former pupils at the school, who want to improve their skills so that they can enter the jobs market.

Task Force funding allowed a creche facility to be built and this is now registered with Social Services. All three creche workers are fully qualified, two of them are former pupils of Norton School.

Jenny Hathaway, the Community Education Manager funded by City Challenge, explains “Although we have a strong focus on young women, it has become clear that there is a wider need in the community for our services. Our groups have now expanded and are now drawing from the whole community.

“A range of ‘taster’ courses including flower arranging, cake decoration and toy making, are on offer to encourage adults back into the learning community. Some courses, such as BSL sign language and computer programmes, provide the chance for accreditation for those involved. Our success can be measured from the lists of adults waiting to start the courses.”

Norton School is also a centre for the Weekend College for employed people and plans for a GNVQ course in Manufacturing are now complete.

City Challenge funding for the Centre Skills Project is £100,000 and you can get further information by contacting Jenny Hathaway on 01642 679781.
HELP FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES

City Challenge has a target to help set up nearly 300 businesses, and has already helped 110 new businesses in Stockton to become established. Through nearly £2 million City Challenge funding of business support, community enterprise, inward investment and industrial estate development, over £17 million of investment will result.

A new “Guide to Business Assistance Schemes” has now been produced by the project partners, Midland Bank, Task Force, European Regional Development Fund and Stockton Council, with details of

- Security Grants
- Energy Efficiency Grants
- Business Grants and Loans
- CIZ Improvement Grants
- Capital Grants for Training
- European Advice
- Jobs Link
- Business Link
- CAD/IT design

Mike Mealing, Economic Programme Manager with City Challenge, said “We recognise that creating businesses is vital to sustaining and creating jobs. Stockton has an excellent Enterprise Centre which helps many new businesses, and we are proud to be partners in this process”.

Here are a few examples of new businesses which have been helped.

CPI Systems Ltd. were helped through the Business Grants and Loans scheme. The company is now the premier dealer for Olivetti in the north east, the number one Safe Development and Accounting Centre, and QA accredited. Chris Richardson of CPI said “We got excellent advice and assistance. Stockton is the ideal location for our business and we now have ten people employed here”.

Tony Lonsdale of Marsland Engineering was helped to purchase a paper finisher, which means he can now expand the jobs he can render for.

John Buckle and Andrew Thomlinson, who were unemployed, were helped to start B & T’s Peated Potatoes. The Stockton Grants and Loans Scheme worked in partnership with The Prince’s Youth Business Trust to help the new company which now employs two full time and two trainee staff.

Bob Westwick set up his flat-pack furniture business in 1991. He has been helped with relocation costs to move to larger premises and the extra space has enabled Bob to increase his workforce to five. The Jobs Link team has helped find the necessary recruits.

Romax UK was recently launched by Rob Green and Max Baker when they saw a gap in the market in the Stockton area. The new company offers a first class shot blasting and power coating service to fabricators. The help they received from the Business Grants and Loans Scheme has proved invaluable.

For details, telephone Fran Hughes on 022119, or call in to City Challenge’s Silver Street offices for a copy of the brochure.

HOUSING SCHEMES AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

Work on the first two phases of the £26 million transformation of the Norton Grange Estate has progressed so well that Stockton Borough Council’s Housing Department has been able to bring forward the next stage of the operation six months ahead of plan.

The news has been welcomed by members of the Norton Grange Community Forum who are pleased to see the four year programme, designed to convert their estate into a housing showpiece, advancing so quickly.

Councillor Win Hodgson, Chair of the Steering Group, said “Having completed phase one at a cost of £2.1 million and with work on the £1.8 million phase two well under way, we are making excellent progress.”

“Everything has gone so well that City Challenge has agreed to bring forward the cash to allow work to begin on the third phase, which will see investment of a further £1.2 million on home modernisation. We also hope that the fourth and final part of the programme to improve 48 houses will begin early in 1996.”

Ann Hatton, Secretary of the Community Forum said that everyone is pleased to see the modernisation of the Council property going so smoothly. She added, “What is even better is that work on the new housing to be built is also due to start in the near future. That will really mark the start of the renaissance”.

In addition to the 300 existing homes being refurbished by Stockton Council, the scheme involves almost 200 new homes for rent being built by Cleveland and Teesside, Endeavour and North British Housing Associations, and 122 new properties for sale by Wimpey Homes. City Challenge funding for the project is over £6 million.

Another partner, Bradford and Northern Housing Association, has a modernised scheme for the elderly already on the estate. Both Cleveland and Teesside and Endeavour will be starting work within the next few weeks, with North British following on next year.

IT’S GREAT OUTDOORS!

If you are interested in the great outdoors, you could help to gain qualifications and improve the environment at the same time.

Steve Mathewson is now employed by The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers to encourage local residents to get involved in conservation in the City Challenge area. Funding is provided by City Challenge as part of the £14,000 Conservation in the Community project.

Steve explained “The work includes improving landscapes, protecting threatened species and creating new wildlife habitats.

Volunteers can make a big contribution in these areas, and can also earn GNVQ qualifications in forestry.

Experience is not necessary, and we provide all tools and safety equipment, and will supervise the work. Please call me on 0191 383 2121 for more information.”
WORKING TOGETHER IN THE GREAT NORTH PARK

Great North Park is the long park area linking Primrose Hill Park and the Durham Road by-pass through Norton Grange to Tiley Park. The first phase between Ragworth and Norton Grange is completed. The main part of the park is now developing in the Norton Grange area, including realisation of the former Billingham branch line.

Involvement of the local communities and schools along the park, together with voluntary organisations, is a vital part of this work, which has a strong emphasis on wildlife conservation. The Great North Park Steering Group maintains contact with residents’ associations, local schools, the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, Cleveland Wildlife Trust, Probation Service and The Prince’s Trust.

The Norton Hill Community Action Group, North East winners of the B.T. Environment Awards, has worked each Sunday since March removing 20 skip loads of rubbish from the Ida Street allotment site and the beck. Cleveland Wildlife Trust has widened the beck in places and over 1,000 wild flowers have been planted.

Strong links with schools have also developed. The Mayor of Stockton, Councillor Dora Redican, recently presented prizes to pupils from Blakeston School for the best overall design for a skateboarding and BMX area in the Ida Street allotment site.

Artist Jim Roberts worked with children from Tiley and Norton primary schools and from Norton Grange, to develop ideas for gates to form the main entrances to the park. The designs have attracted a Teenside Arts Award from the Teenside Development Corporation. The pupils will be given the opportunity to see the gates actually being fabricated and to see sculptors working in a range of materials.

St. Joseph’s R.C. Primary School pupils are currently working with artist Richard Cairns to develop ideas for play sculptures and seating.

Graeme Hopper is working with schools to develop designs for gates and fencing along the former Billingham branch line. The footpath and cycleway, which is being constructed along this line, will form part of a national network of cycle routes.

Project Officer, Rebecca Whiten, a landscape architect with Cleveland County Council, said: “This project has proved to be a great way of involving local schools and communities in all aspects of the work. We are always keen to involve others - please ring me on 262442 for more information”.

The total cost of the park is over £700,000, funded mainly by City Challenge and English Partnerships.

CHRISTMAS IS COMING!

A great time is planned to make sure you enjoy your Christmas shopping in Stockton! Stockton’s Christmas lights - voted best in the region last year - will be switched on at 6.30 p.m. on Friday, 1st December.

Malandra Burrows, who is nationally famous as Kathy Bates in Yorkshire Television’s “Emmerdale”, will be on hand to switch on the lights and also will sign autographs at the Castlegate Shopping Centre.

This is another exciting start to the Christmas season organised by the Community Leisure Department of Stockton Council, with financial support from City Challenge and the Castlegate Shopping Centre. The team invite you to visit the Stockton High Street Christmas Fair, sing in the Christmas karaoke, sing carols in John Walker Square, meet Santa on his walkabout and be entertained by the Radio TFM Roadshow until 9 p.m.

Most shops and Stockton Shopmobility will be staying open until 9 p.m.

Shops will also be opening late on Fridays, 8th, 15th and 22nd December until 8 p.m. We all look forward to seeing you there!

SEE STOCKTON’S FAMOUS CHRISTMAS ILLUMINATIONS

ON FRIDAY 1ST DECEMBER

...the best Christmas Lights in the Region

6.30pm See top TV Soap Star Malandra Burrows illuminate Stockton’s famous Christmas Lights outside the Castlegate Shopping Centre

6.45pm Onwards meet Malandra Burrows and obtain her autograph inside the Castlegate Shopping Centre

SO MUCH TO SEE AND DO FOR CHILDREN AND PARENTS IN STOCKTON HIGH STREET FROM FRIDAY 1ST DECEMBER