

Durham Constabulary Crime Prevention Unit

Designing out Crime, Creating Safer Places



February 2019

Design out Crime Considerations for the Redevelopment of Victoria Road, Darlington

With reference to the public consultation commissioned by Darlington Borough Council in relation to improvements to the public realm in Victoria Road, Darlington, I would like to make the following comments which are based on the principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design.

The consultation has identified a number of issues, appearance and access being two of them.

In relation to access, our Traffic Management Department has reviewed the proposed options, they have no comment to make other than they expect a detailed assessment to be made by the Local Authorities Highways Department before the final design is approved.

The issues around appearance are readily apparent, the footpaths are in poor repair and many of the shop fronts are in need of renovation, this run down appearance can help create a fear of crime.

An analysis of Police reports for the last five years is encouraging, suggesting that crime is not a significant issue, the table below shows the locations which generated the most calls over a five year period.

Locations with largest amount of incidents: (anonymised)

Supported Living - 132

Public House - 75

Supported Living -36

Supported Living - 32

Retail Unit - 20

Other - 18

Food Outlet - 13

As a general rule these incidents did not involve serious crime or violence.

Between the Railway Station and St Cuthbert's roundabout there are 3 buildings providing supported living accommodation, 11 fast food outlets and a public house, all of which have the potential to generate nuisance in the form of litter and loitering, this could potentially undermine any investment in improving the street scene, for example, grease from spilt food accumulates and is very difficult to clean.

Careful consideration will need to be given to providing seating areas; the 'bull ring' on Church Row (next to the Boot & Shoe) in the town centre is an example of problem seating. In Victoria Road people from the supported living accommodation and customers of the food outlets could dominate seating areas.

Improving the street lighting will be important; a uniform level of light with no dark spots will help people feel safe, it should achieve a minimum Uo value of 0.25.

Nuisance from cyclists speeding across the pedestrian precincts in the town centre is a long term problem, to prevent this being replicated in Victoria Road deterrent paving should be used to break up any potential desire lines, channelling cyclists onto the dedicated routes.

I suggest an example of good design is the Linear Park which runs along the side of the river to the rear of the town hall; the uncluttered and open aspect appears to have discouraged loitering and so far it has proved to be free of anti-social behaviour, a similar approach to Victoria Road may prove successful.

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