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### **New town centre partnership for Dudley**

**A new town centre partnership for Dudley launched today (24 Mar) at the Concert Hall in St James's Road.**

Dudley Town Centre Partnership, which consists of representatives from the business community, public sector and local people, aims to deliver a shared approach to town centre development through the implementation of the town's masterplan. The event, hosted by Dudley Council, was attended by local organisations from the private, voluntary and public sectors and local press.

Delegates heard how the partnership will help to access multiple funding and resource opportunities to enhance the town centre and engage with representatives from all aspects of the community to add real benefit to its future development.

The Townscape Heritage Initiative was also mentioned as one of the significant programmes for the town in the coming months. Dudley was successful in obtaining £4.3 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund, supported by Advantage West Midlands and work is well underway to identify key properties for refurbishment in and around the town centre.

The objective of the Townscape Heritage Initiative is to support schemes to regenerate historic environments in urban areas across the country.

The launch of Dudley Town Centre Partnership comes after the unveiling of New Heritage Regeneration Ltd in January, an independent company, which aims to bring about significant investment and positive change for the borough's four principal town centres and 16 local centres.

**Councillor David Caunt, leader of Dudley Council, said:**

"Dudley Council has continued to progress plans for the borough's future development and today we reach a major milestone in taking forward those plans for the borough and specifically Dudley town centre.

"Like all of our towns, Dudley has a unique character and one with significant tourism opportunities. We've done the necessary work to get us to this point and now we are ready to surge ahead with making those plans a reality."

**Bill Kirk, chief executive of New Heritage Regeneration, added:**

"I am delighted to be here today at the launch of Dudley town centre partnership and as the newly appointed chief executive for New Heritage.

"Our aim is to take forward the masterplan for Dudley - we want to make it happen. Some of the ways we will do this include increasing the number of homes, attractive offices, encouraging more retail and enhancing public spaces.

"I am excited about the future and I look forward to working with quality developers, retailers and investors."

**Notes to editors**

About Bill Kirk, chief executive of New Heritage Regeneration Ltd

Bill has a background in planning and surveying and started his career in local government, mainly in the North West of England, prior to moving onto English Partnerships (the National Regeneration Agency) in both the East and West Midlands. This culminated in his appointment as an executive director of the East Midlands Regional Development Agency (EMDA) where he was responsible for its regeneration activity ranging from major coalfield sites and communities through to regeneration vehicles in Leicester, Nottingham, Derby and Corby.

He also sat on the Boards of Corby URC, the Heart of the National Forest Company and the Meden Valley Housing Special Purpose Vehicle.

As chief executive of the Sheffield URC he played a lead role in the implementation of the city centre masterplan, the majority of which is now committed, under construction or completed. For the past two and a half years Bill has been chief executive of the regeneration company responsible for Derry/Londonderry and has overseen the assembly of investment programmes totalling £138m, secured £13m for an iconic bridge which addresses both a physical and a community divide, put in place strategic plans and masterplans ranging from integrated transport through to educational attainment and tourism, and built a strong team capable of delivery.

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