

# SALISBURY VISION

Proud of our past...forging our future

## Conference sees first step in regeneration of Churchfields

16 January 2009



**MAPPING OUT THE FUTURE 1: from left, Churchfields conference speakers Lord Jonathan Marland, Graham Gould, Alistair Cunningham and Peter Le Count at the Guildhall in Salisbury**



**MAPPING OUT THE FUTURE 2: Cathy Eastham of chartered surveyors Cameron Commercial and Neil Philpott of Signs in Motion and chairman of Churchfields Business Action Group**



**MAPPING OUT THE FUTURE 3: some of the delegates from businesses on the Churchfields Industrial Estate who gathered for a workshop conference at the Guildhall in Salisbury**

**A CONFERENCE involving businesses from Salisbury has marked the first step in the regeneration of the Churchfields Industrial Estate.**

**More than 90 businessmen and women, many from the 81-acre site, attended yesterday's (Thursday, January 15) event at the city's Guildhall.**

**Their feedback will help towards the creation of a master plan for the city's largest employment centre, where 4,500 people work for 165 firms.**

**Graham Gould, the director of Salisbury Vision and one of the speakers, said: "Today's conference marks what can be regarded as the first step in the regeneration of Churchfields."**

**Delegates heard how Churchfields could be transformed into a mixed-use scheme, with a four-star hotel and conference centre, offices and affordable homes, as a regeneration centrepiece of the Salisbury Vision.**

**They took part in a series of workshops and round-table discussions at the conference.**

**A key part of the event, organised by the Salisbury Vision, was the setting of three tasks in order to provide useful pointers for planners.**

**Delegates listed:**

- Potential barriers to the redevelopment of Churchfields;**
- What alternative locations would suit their type of business best;**
- How they would envisage the lay out of Churchfields as a mixed use development.**

**Local businessman and resident Lord Jonathan Marland, who chaired the event, said: "It was clear from this well-attended and constructive conference that everyone feels committed to developing a future for Salisbury and future generations."**

**Councillor Peter Edge, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Tourism at Salisbury District Council, said: “The feedback from delegates will be analysed by the council’s forward planning team as they look towards drawing up a masterplan for Churchfields.**

**“This is no easy task because there are so many different land owners and issues.**

**“However, despite the complex process ahead of us, today showed there appears to be a groundswell of support from businesses for relocation in order to free up prime land that will help Salisbury strengthen economically in the years to come.**

**“It is also important to state that all parties affected by potential relocations will be closely consulted going forward, including residential groups. Nothing is set in stone.”**

**The conference heard from fellow panel speaker Peter Le Count, chairman of South Wiltshire Economic Partnership and managing director of Wilton Carpets, that Salisbury could decline unless it responds to growing economic competition from Southampton, Winchester and Andover.**

**Regeneration specialist Alistair Cunningham, Director Economy and Enterprise, Wiltshire County Council, was the fourth member of the panel, providing valuable insights.**

**The morning conference was rounded off with a question-and-answer session.**

**No timescale on the redevelopment of Churchfields has been given yet.**

However, should the Government give approval to the Local Development Framework (LDF), work could begin on alternative employment sites in 2010 in readiness to accommodate relocating businesses.

An LDF is a local plan that guides future developments.

Three months ago business leaders in and around Salisbury called for the nettle to be grasped over the city's pressing need for new employment land.

They warned that the local economy will decline, with businesses leaving and jobs disappearing, if the "critical" issue isn't tackled soon.

Salisbury Vision comprises 24 projects that, if successful, will help the city prosper and grow and, as a result, improve the well-being of 45,000 residents, hundreds of businesses and 1.5 million annual visitors.

#### **Churchfields – the Salisbury Vision's case for change**

- Access to Churchfields and many of the individual businesses is difficult, particularly for heavy goods vehicles (HGVs).
- The only HGV-accessible route to the estate runs through a part of the medieval city centre. HGV vehicles using this route have a detrimental impact on the city's historic buildings and streets. They also cause air and noise pollution and congestion and pose a safety hazard for residents and visitors.
- There are no public transport routes serving the estate; 73% of employees and visitors to the estate arrive by car and it is estimated that more than 560 cars are parked on the estate roads every day.

- **Due to the confines of the River Nadder and the railway line, Churchfields cannot offer future growth.**
- **There is a government requirement that the Salisbury and Wilton area provide 8,700 new homes, around 435 a year, as part of the government building target of three million homes in the UK by 2026. Churchfields could provide up to 500 homes, many of them affordable.**
- **Official figures estimate 13,500 new jobs being created within the next two decades. If south Wiltshire is to have a thriving economy there should be enough employment land so that existing businesses can expand while attracting new ones.**
- **It is widely accepted in the business community that Salisbury requires a conference centre, as well as more quality offices, in order to attract inward investment.**