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**Seeing the Masterplan come to life in town centre**

Written by Julia Horsman, Luton BID Manager

One of Luton BID’s strategic objectives is to support and promote growth, development and investment in Luton.

To that end we have been working very hard alongside our key partners, as a number of exciting developments come to fruition in the town centre.

Last year, Luton Borough Council approved a new Town Centre Masterplan setting a bold long-term vision to ‘reimage’ what the centre of Luton should be, and it is great to now see so much activity taking place in the town to make this vision a reality.

One of the first and most exciting parts of the masterplan is the opening up of the River Lea on the corner of Bute Street and Silver Street on the former car park site, which was originally home to Victorian pubs and industry, such as hat making.

A small pocket park will also be installed in this area, featuring a stepped terrace down to the uncovered river, which will help to improve one of the town’s busiest pedestrian streets and one of the main walkways into town from the station.

The work is being undertaken by a Lutonian contractor – Ryebridge Construction – and it is great to see the changes as the work progresses.

Another project set to become a reality is the regeneration development in Bute Street Car Park, as part of the Government’ ‘Levelling Up’ fund, and a crucial element of the Town Centre Masterplan to level up Luton’s income inequality.

The project is the first step of redevelopment of the area around the train station and will see the creation of over 370 homes, retail and business space, a community space with an auditorium, and a cycle hub, along with plans for improved public spaces. The redevelopment will support the growth of businesses in various sectors, creating local employment opportunities, skills, and training.

The £20 million funding was secured last year, and the council has commenced some initial ground works in the area – with main works due to start in 2023.

And of course, we are very excited about Luton Town Football Club’s Power Court stadium coming into the heart of the town centre. We look forward to watching the work in Power Court as it progresses, and are thrilled to be able to support key town centre projects such as these.

The Luton BID has a real say in the shaping of these project representing the interests of businesses across the town centre. We know how important all these developments are to Luton and to achieving the BID’s aim of ‘Supporting business growth and investment in the town centre and building pride, loyalty and positive perceptions of Luton as a whole.’