

Press Release

October 22nd 2008

Caption – The picture shows, from left to right on dry land is, Peter Rowley from Sport England, Councillor David Budd from Middlesbrough Council and Councillor Ken Lupton from Stockton Council, and from back to front in the boat is, Les Southerton of the Stockton Middlesbrough Initiative, Alan Slater of British Waterways and Alan Clarke, Chief Executive of One North East.

WHITE WATER VENUE ON COURSE TO BE TOP SPORTING VENUE

A WHITE water course is to undergo a £3.5m upgrade in a bid to secure its status as a top international sporting venue.

The Teesside White Water Course in Stockton could host Olympic athletes looking to train before the London 2012 Games.

In preparation, regional development agency One North East has approved £2.5m of Single Programme funding alongside £500,000 from Sport England, £350,000 from British Waterways, £100,000 from Stockton Borough Council and £50,000 from Middlesbrough Council which will allow:

- The height of the course's walls to be raised and new features and obstacles added;
- A new short course to be built, which will provide a much shorter but faster moving water run;
- The installation of four giant 'Archimedes' screws to pump the course with water when needed – enabling it to be used by participants from novice to elite level. These screws will generate electricity making it the only sustainable white water course in the world.

Press Release

When the upgrade is complete, the facility will be the best in the UK and among the top seven in the world.

Alan Clarke, Chief Executive of One North East, said: “This funding package will transform the Teesside White Water Course into a first class facility which can realistically compete to host top international sporting events

“The facility is already in LOCOG’s Pre-Games Training Camp Guide launched earlier this year, putting the venue on an international stage before the world’s sporting decision makers and top athletes.”

The Teesside White Water Course is currently tidally driven, which means it can only be used three hours either side of low tide, making its promotion as a leading sporting venue difficult.

Les Southerton, Project Director of Stockton Middlesbrough Initiative, said: “The new Tees course will be world class and involvement in top sporting events will really raise its profile as an asset to the region.”

Peter Rowley of Sport England Chairman of the North East Regional Sports Board, said: “We are very pleased to support the upgrade of the White Water Course which will improve access and extend the hours available to the local community. It will also provide a much needed resource for our elite performers. It is a true partnership approach and will provide a world class facility in Tees Valley.”

Councillor Ken Lupton, Leader of Stockton Borough Council said: “The course upgrade is a win-win situation for everyone. Capable of hosting world events, it can be converted almost at the flick of a switch to a venue suitable for the whole community.”

Councillor David Budd, Middlesbrough Council’s Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development, said: “The upgraded course will be the best of its kind in the UK, making it

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north east
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Press Release

a major centre for world class sportsmen and women.

“The facilities at the Barrage are an enormous asset to both Stockton and Middlesbrough and this region as a whole, ensuring visitors come to the Tees Valley from far and wide.”

British Waters River Manager Alan Slater: “British Waterways is delighted to be involved in this world class project which will put the white water course on the international sporting map and will bring enormous benefits. The upgraded course and further improved area will offer even more to local residents and those many people who visit every year.”

For more information please contact Leanne English in the press office at One North East on (0191) 229 6738, 07917 232678 or email Leanne.English@onenortheast.co.uk.

Notes to Editors

One North East is the regional development agency for North East England.

It is leading sustainable economic growth in the region through a targeted programme of investment of around £280m per year to get 70,000 more people into work and create 22,000 new businesses by 2016.