

# BLUH LOOKS TO FUTURE



MAJOR projects in Swindon will not be derailed by the gloomy economic climate of the next 12 months, says the council leader.

Councillor Rod Bluh gave an optimistic presentation on Swindon Council's plans for 2009 to a council committee.

But he admitted that the next budget was proving to be the most difficult tackled by his administration.

Coun Bluh said the council was still committed to its regeneration projects and added that other projects were due to be signed over the next 12 months.

He said: "We are in unchartered waters and there are certainly going to be problems thrown up that we will have to deal with.

"The signing of the Modus deal shows there is confidence in Swindon and shows that it is seen as a place for the future.

by James Wallis  
Political reporter

[jwallis@swindonadvertiser.co.uk](mailto:jwallis@swindonadvertiser.co.uk)

"In terms of the Regent's Place development we are hoping for a fairly early movement forward in the new year.

"We are also looking at clearing in on the housing deal at Pickard's Field. Kevin McCleod is getting a lot of attention in the public eye as an advocate for Swindon.

"If the economic crisis proves to be as difficult as is being predicted then this type of sustainable housing will become increasingly important."

Coun Bluh reiterated his support for a town centre location for the library and defended the council's decision to oppose the Swindon Gateway Partnership's application to build on land near Coate Water.

Coun Bluh said. "The application for Coate was one of the worst applications the planning committee has ever seen and I feel it was right to oppose it.

"We have a clear policy of opposing any development at Coate that does not include a university."

On plans for a town centre university, Coun Bluh said: "We have made it very clear that we want a town centre site.

"We put the old Coate's site forward, but it's down to the University of West England as to whether they accept it."

Lib Dem leader Coun Stan Pajak asked Coun Bluh about his "fantasy" of putting a canal through Swindon and if any progress had been made on the project.

Coun Bluh said: "It may be a fantasy at the moment but hopefully it will become a reality. The more this gets talked about the more it makes sense.

"It is based on the principle that if we are serious about regeneration it is all about more than just buildings. It is about public realm and I think this scheme would make a substantial difference to how Swindon is viewed."

Coun Bluh summed up with a positive message for a worrying time, saying: "A crisis usually brings out the best in people and we have to make sure that is the case in Swindon."

## Major regeneration news

A MAJOR announcement about development in the centre of Swindon is expected today.

Moves have been going on behind the scenes to secure a developer for a major town centre regeneration scheme.

And today it is expected that a firm will announce it has won the contract, which

will involve the regeneration of a huge part of central Swindon, to the London Stock Exchange.

Check the Advertiser website [www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk](http://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk), today for updates on the announcement and see tomorrow's paper for a full report.