

OAK HOLDINGS

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YES! project to benefit the local environment in Yorkshire

The YES! project, the £300m entertainment resort planned for South Yorkshire, will bring positive environmental benefits, says the company behind the ambitious project. YES! will feature various sporting and leisure facilities including an Olympic-standard canoe slalom, extreme sports, a live music venue and many other attractions.

The joint venture of AIM-listed developer Oak Holdings, and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council is developing the scheme, which will be located at the former coal mine, Pit House West, next to Rother Valley Country Park, on the Rotherham and Sheffield border.

Steve Lewis, chief executive of Oak Holdings, explains: "YES! will bring significantly enhanced environmental benefits to the area. The site, as it stands now, is contaminated and has spoil contamination in the deep trenches. We will remediate the contamination as part of the development and ensure the scheme respects the existing contours of the landscape and fits in well with the local vernacular."

"Furthermore, the development has a platform with a footprint of less than 30 acres (12 ha) which is actually less than one tenth of the 328 acre (129 ha) site. This means that most of the site will remain natural habitat and, in fact, will allow the public greater access through the expansion of jogging routes, footpaths and the cycle network."

The scheme intends to fully integrate the Rother Valley Country Park which will in effect create a comprehensive 'green lung' of over 1000 acres (405 ha). Oak and RMBC will retain and improve the natural habitat and the existing landscape including water courses, reed beds, ponds and other water features. Furthermore, groundwater heat pumps will be used and low carbon-emission policies are being pursued, whilst car-parking will be cleverly disguised through innovative planting.

Adam Wilkinson, from Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, comments: "The project has to go through the normal planning process, but Oak and RMBC have worked closely together to

ensure that the development will be to the highest architectural criteria, greatly exceeding the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method's standards. This is a voluntary system for rating environmental impact."