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**LEADER'S OVERVIEW**

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**Cabinet**

1. I have chaired one meeting of Cabinet since my last report to Council at which a number of issues were discussed, including a report seeking views on the submission to the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review of proposals for the creation of a Tees Valley Metropolitan Economic Partnership and a Business Case for the economic development of the Tees Valley City Region.

**Town Centre**

2. A major consultation exercise is being undertaken, on the proposal by Tesco, to develop the existing Town Hall site and the bus depot at Feethams. The proposed development would involve the demolition of the existing buildings on the site to make way for a supermarket with car parking and housing and the construction of a new town hall on the Beaumont Street car parks. As part of the consultation exercise the proposals were considered at a special meeting of the Darlington Partnership Board on 6th September, the meeting of the Town Centre Board and the joint meeting of the Town Centre Forum and the Darlington Transport Forum, both held on 21st September, 2006.
3. Substantial progress is being made with the Pedestrian Heart works, with most paving works being done in Bondgate, Blackwellgate and the southern part of Northgate and the formation of the steps on the southern part of High Row. Considerable liaison is taking place with businesses to address as far as possible the difficult issues they inevitably face. A separate report on the agenda of this meeting deals with other Pedestrian Heart issues.

**Darlington Partnership Board**

4. I attended the meeting of the Darlington Partnership Board held on 13th September, 2006, at which a number of issues were discussed, including Raising Educational Attainment in Darlington, Tees Valley City Region and taking forward an Events Strategy for the town.

**Town Centre Board**

5. I chaired the meeting of the Town Centre Board held on 21st September, 2006, at which a number of reports were considered, namely the proposed development by Tesco's, Gating Orders, a Schools Initiative and Design Competition and the Darlington Town Centre Winter Programme 2006. An update report was also considered on the Darlington Membership Scheme.

## **Street Scene**

6. Street Scene, which was launched in July, aims to make Darlington a cleaner and more attractive place to live, work and visit. The scheme is also aimed at encouraging more people to care for their local environment and in this regard new projects are being set up to ensure people of all ages can make a real difference to their local environment.

## **Police Presentation**

7. Chief Superintendent Peter Davis gave a presentation to all Members of the Council on Thursday, 7th September, 2006. In his presentation the Chief Superintendent outlined Durham Constabulary's projected performance for 2006/07, based on current trends, and outlined a number of local initiatives which were currently ongoing focusing on issues such as criminal damage and vehicle crime.

## **Olympic Roadshow**

8. I attended the Olympic Roadshow, which is touring the country to promote participation in the 2012 games in London, when it came to Darlington on 21st July, 2006. The Prime Minister, Tony Blair, made an unexpected visit to the roadshow as it arrived in Darlington.

## **Education Village**

9. I attended the official opening, by the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, of the £37 million pioneering Darlington Education Village, on 21st July, 2006. The Village opened its doors to its 1,400 pupils in April and has been held up as a shining example of how a special school can be at the heart of education and it has received praise from the House of Commons' Education and Skills Select Committee for its inclusive approach to education. Following the opening, Mr. Blair had a tour of the school with Darlington M.P. Alan Milburn and the Executive Director of the village, Dame Dela Smith, where they met staff, parents and pupils.

## **Meetings/Presentations**

10. In my capacity as Leader I have attended a number of meetings including the Tees Valley Leaders and Mayors.

**John Williams**  
**Leader**