
LEADER'S OVERVIEW

Cabinet

1. I have chaired two ordinary and one special meeting of Cabinet since my last report to Council, at which a number of issues were discussed, including the adoption of a Disability Equality Scheme by the Council. The special meeting was called to consider a request from Peel Airports Limited for to an extension of time to enter into a Southside Development Agreement at Durham Tees Valley Airport under the Subscription and Shareholders Agreement.

Let's Get Cracking

2. The 'Let's Get Cracking' scheme, an innovative scheme responding to residents' calls for improvements to be carried out to streets across the borough, is now well under way. Residents identified the areas that they particularly felt were in need of extra maintenance. Many of those schemes are now complete with many more scheduled to take place over the next 18 months.

Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor

3. The Council has secured Government support for the Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor project, which will link Haughton Road to the A66, helping to ease traffic congestion on key routes within the town. The Department for Transport has conditionally approved £12.04m of funding for the scheme, with this Council contributing a further £460,000. The road, the most important highway project since the construction of the A66 bypass, will provide a dedicated access route to the expanding Lingfield Point business park and the £170m Central Park development, and help relieve traffic on Haughton Road, Yarm Road and McMullen Road.

Town Centre Board

4. I chaired the meeting of the Town Centre Board held on 23rd November, 2006, at which a number of issues were considered including Town Centre Crime, Town Centre Cleanliness following the introduction of Street Scene, Key Performance Indicators, the Feethams proposal, an Action Plan to support the Independent Sector, car parking initiatives and promotion over the festive period. A presentation on the proposed plans for the Commercial Street development was also given.

Appointments Panel

5. I chaired the Appointments Panel, which interviewed for an Assistant Director, within the Children's Services Department. Andrew Dunn was appointed to the post and he will be taking up his appointment on 11th December, 2006.

Darlington Partnership Board

6. I attended the meeting of the Darlington Partnership Board held on 8th November, 2006, at which a number of reports were considered under the theme of Improving Health and Wellbeing, including an update on the Community Strategy Action Plan relating to Health Improvement and Reducing Health Inequality; the Alcohol Strategy; the annual report of the Director of Public Health; and a report on a number of Key Issues relating to the Improving Health.
7. In addition to attending the Board Meeting, I visited the House of Commons on 1st November, 2006, with the Darlington Partnership and many of our private sector partners. The visit was hosted by Alan Milburn MP and was considered a great success by all concerned.

Meetings/Presentations

8. In my capacity as Leader I have attended a number of meetings including the Darlington Assembly, official opening of the Coleridge Centre in Skerne Park, informal consultation on the Disability Equality Scheme, Durham Tees Valley Airport Board, the Council's 4 Star Awards Ceremony and the launch of Pioneer Court at Morton Palms.

John Williams
Leader