
LEADER'S OVERVIEW

1. I was formally appointed Leader of the Council at the Annual Council meeting held on 19 May 2011, for a four year term of office, following the retirement of the former Leader John Williams. One of my first decisions was to appoint the Deputy Leader and the Council's Cabinet, which now consists of myself and seven other Members, and each of those Members have been allocated a specific Portfolio.
2. In my role I will continue to provide leadership of corporate strategy for the Council; represent the Council on Regional and Tees Valley bodies, including the Association of North East Council's and Tees Valley Unlimited; and take the lead on Transformation, the Council's Business Model, Policing and Community Safety.
3. The main agenda for me over my four-year term of office will continue to be the finances of the Council to ensure that the Council continues to provide quality services to the residents of the Borough, through the current difficult financial climate. Other aims for my first term of office are to change how Members interact with their ward residents and build on the Council consultation such as the 'Talking Together' process.

Celebrating Success

4. I, along with thousands of Quaker fans, turned out to celebrate their victory in the FA Trophy at Wembley in May. The Team met the fans in the Market Place, where the Trophy was on display. Following the welcome, the players were invited to a Civic Reception, organised by the Council and sponsored by Teesside University and TFM Radio.
5. I am very proud to have been awarded an M.B.E. in the Queen's Birthday Honours list this year, for my services to local government in Darlington and County Durham and in particular for my work helping to reduce crime in Darlington through the Darlington Crime and Reduction Partnership, Darlington Drug and Alcohol Action Team and the Darlington Youth Offending Service.
6. A ceremonial handover of keys to Teesside University Darlington took place on 13th June, 2011, which I attended. This ceremony marked the end of the building work on site and I am looking forward to the continued success of the University in Darlington.

7. The third Armed Forces Day 'Fly a Flag for Our Armed Forces' ceremony was held on Monday, 20th June, 2011. This is an annual ceremony, and enables the whole nation to show their appreciation for the contribution made by all those who serve, or who have served, in Her Majesty's Armed Forces. The flag was raised over the Town Hall at 10.30 a.m. followed by a prayer, read by the Reverend Robert Williamson from St. Cuthbert's Church. The ceremony was welcomed by all those veterans in attendance.

Policing and Community Safety

8. In October 2010, the strategic assessment again identified that anti-social behaviour (ASB) should be a key priority for the Safer Darlington Partnership. Public and stakeholder consultation highlighted the fact that anti-social behaviour was a high priority for the local community.
9. Operation Staysafe (the Anti-Social Behaviour Team, Police and other agencies working together to tackle underage drinking and anti-social behaviour) has continued to be a success. In 2011 alcohol related youth anti-social behaviour has reduced by 22 per cent compared to 2009/10 figures.
10. In 2011 anti-social behaviour has reduced across the board and the figures show an overall reduction of 15 per cent compared to 2009/10. Successful campaigns such as the one above have all contributed towards the success of achieving a downward trend in anti-social behaviour. Agencies continue to work hard to further improve this success.

Transformation and Business Model

11. I continue to liaise directly with officers and Cabinet Members in respect of the Transformation Programme to provide strategic leadership. A number of programmes have reported to Cabinet recently and there will be more to follow in the Autumn.

Regional and Tees Valley Updates

12. Representing the Council on the Association of North East Council's (ANEC), I recently attended meetings at which Edward Twiddy from the Local Government and Regions, HM Treasury and David Rossington, Chair of the North East England ERDT Programme Management Committee were in attendance, to discuss issues and implications including the review of Local Government finance.
13. I am grateful for the Deputy Leader representing me at the TVU Leadership Board on the 8th June when the Board considered a proposal for the Tees Valley Enterprise Zones. The Board endorsed the proposals and these were subsequently considered and endorsed by Cabinet on the 21st June 2011. The TVU Leadership Board reviewed the proposals on the 28th June 2011 and submitted them to the Government for their consideration. The proposal will bring a focus to encouraging digital industries on land at Central Park, close to the new University facility.

General Updates

14. I attended the meeting of the Darlington Partnership Board held on, 22nd June, 2011, at which a number of issues were discussed including the review of the Partnership, the development of strengthened community engagement and the developing clinical strategy for the Darlington Memorial Hospital as a part of the Foundation Trust.
15. I welcome the lead the Health and Well Being Scrutiny Committee are giving to consultation on the review of stroke services. I find it of considerable concern that the main centre of population for County Durham and Darlington is not the obvious best location for key stroke services.

Bill Dixon
Leader