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**LEADER'S OVERVIEW**

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1. I continue to chair meetings of the Shadow Health and Well Being Board and two meetings have been held since my last report to Council. A number of reports were considered at these meetings, including a report on the proposed model for the statutory Health and Well Being Board for Darlington in advance of the public health functions transferring to this Council on 1 April 2013. The report on the statutory Health and Well Being Board can be seen elsewhere on this agenda.
2. I attended a presentation from Terrace Hill, the developer chosen to regenerate the 0.75 acre site of the former Feethams bus depot into a multiplex cinema development. The Developer also held a one day consultation event at the Dolphin Centre where members of the public were able to view the proposals. This is an exciting development for the Town and will see the development of a nine screen multiplex cinema, 80 bed hotel, a range of restaurants and bars, other leisure uses including a health and fitness club and a landscaped podium with a 80 space car park beneath. The development of this site will create in the region of 500 full and part time jobs with further jobs being created during the construction phase.
3. Leeds City Council hosted a meeting on 4 February 2013, to which all Leaders of Local Transport Authorities of the Northern and Transpennine rail franchises, were invited to attend. A prospectus, which was developed in response to the Government's proposals for greater decentralisation in decision making in rail, was discussed at the meeting together with proposals for future development of rail services covering the North of England and neighbouring parts of Scotland and the Midlands. The Association of North East Councils (ANEC) is working on a proposal that could give the North East greater autonomy within these arrangements and I attended the meeting to support this stance.
4. The Lord Lieutenant, Sir Paul Nicholson retired on 7 March 2013, after giving distinguished service. He will be succeeded by Mrs Sue Snowdon.
5. As a result of Darlington winning Britain's Favourite Market 2013, the National Association of British Market Authorities were invited to host a Roadshow in Darlington to promote 'Love Your Local Market (LYLM) 2013' to a wider audience. The Roadshow allowed the opportunity for those who attended to be brought up to date on a number of matters currently affecting the markets industry and to receive presentations on a number of topics including an evaluation of LYLM2012; support for new traders; social media, attracting new traders, involving partners and assessing impacts; and an update on 'Market Matters'.

6. I attended the launch, by David Curtis, Northern Regional Director of the Homes and Communities Agency, of the new build phase of the Cockerton Housing Investment Programme, on 4 March 2013. The Chief Executives from the two partner agencies, Endeavour Housing Association and the Esh Group, also attended the event.
7. I was very pleased to attend an event for the RIACT Team on 13 March 2013, to celebrate the fact that they had been shortlisted for a LGC Award. The team were not able to attend the Awards Ceremony due to the high costs involved and the event was arranged to enable the team to be congratulated on their success.

### **Darlington Partnership**

8. I attended the Darlington Partnership Board on 4 January 2013. Ron Hogg, the Police and Crime Commissioner introduced himself and outlined his priorities and objectives. He also accepted the invitation to become a member of the Board.
9. The Board heard in turn from each of the public sector agencies represented about their current and predicted funding position. All are impacted to a greater or lesser degree by the cuts to public sector funding and are making plans to adjust. It became apparent that the level of cuts that the Council is faced with is significantly greater than for any of the other public sector bodies.
10. The progress made on the current Partnership Action Priorities was considered. The Action Priorities for 2012/13 are:-
  - (a) vocational opportunities for young people;
  - (b) harm caused by alcohol; and
  - (c) the elderly.
11. The Board identified the factors which have allowed progress to be made more quickly towards particular priorities rather than others. The Board will reflect on these findings as it agrees its Action Priorities for 2013/14. Darlington Foundation for Jobs, which was developed and launched through the Partnership has had particular success, exceeding all of the targets it was set for the year and creating a significant number of additional opportunities for young people in Darlington.
12. The Board also heard from Katie Blundell, the Programme Manager for Darlington Cares. Darlington Cares is a partnership of leading employers committed to making Darlington a better place through employee-volunteering. It's membership includes eight of Darlington's leading employers:-
  - (a) Cummins;
  - (b) Darlington Borough Council;
  - (c) Deep Ocean Group;
  - (d) Marchday;
  - (e) Newsquest (The Northern Echo);
  - (f) NHS Foundation Trust;
  - (g) Sherwoods; and
  - (h) Teesside University.

13. Working with voluntary and community organisations an initial programme of activities has been agreed. The aim is to grow both the membership and range of activities. Work is underway to promote the volunteering opportunities to the Council's staff.

### **Regional and Tees Valley Updates**

14. Since January Council I have attended the meetings:-
  - (a) the Tees Valley Leaders and Mayors on Friday 18 January 2013 where we discussed City Deal; Rail; DTVA Update and Telehealth;
  - (b) the Tees Valley Unlimited Leadership Board on Wednesday 23 January 2013 where we discussed Rail Devolution; Local Majors Transport Fund – Assurance Framework; TVU Progress Report; and Oil and Gas Consultation – Industrial Strategy; and
  - (c) the ANEC Leaders and Elected Mayors Group on Friday 15 February 2013 where we discussed Transforming Rehabilitation – A revolution in the way we manage offenders; North East Smart Ticketing Infrastructure (NESTI) Programme Update; Rail Devolution; A Northern Voice – Proposal from the Northern Housing Consortium; Culture Update; and LEP Updates.
15. I am pleased that Tees Valley Unlimited's Expression of Interest in negotiating a City Deal with Government has been accepted, and I hope that through these negotiations the Government will genuinely allow more devolution of funding and powers to the Tees Valley.

### **Policing and Community Safety**

16. The impact of the new adult drug and alcohol recovery treatment service was considered at a special meeting of the Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee. The meeting was held at the centre to give members an opportunity to meet staff, managers, GPs and service users and review performance during the first six months. This was well received by Members who were impressed with progress made. The service has also drawn praise from partners including thanks from the Police for training of Custody Sergeants by the Arrest Referral Team and Pharmacists who commented, at a recent Pharmacy Network Meeting, on how many service users are now on programmes to reduce levels of medication. In addition, an unannounced Care Quality Commission (CQC) Inspection of the service has reported that all standards were met, with no actions or recommendations – the final report will be available on the CQC website.
17. Operation Staysafe – aims to tackle the problem of underage drinking in the streets both to protect vulnerable children and to prevent possible anti-social behaviour. Young people who are found to be drunk are taken to a place of safety and their parents are called and asked to collect them. A follow-up interview is then conducted by an Anti-Social Behaviour Officer to address any underlying issues. Operation Staysafe has been running for more than two years across the Borough

and will be stepped up over the holiday periods when incidences of youth anti-social behaviour can increase.

18. Crime continues to fall and has decreased by 16 per cent from this time last year, while anti-social behaviour has seen an even bigger reduction at 42 per cent, lower than the same period in 2012.
19. Neighbourhood Watch is one of the biggest and most successful crime prevention initiatives ever and now has 684 co-ordinators in Darlington. In total there are approximately 8,000 thousand residents involved with Neighbourhood Watch with 21.6 per cent of households in the town covered by the initiative and recruitment continues.
20. The implementation of Community Panels, which is part of rolling restorative approaches to dealing with offenders continues to progress and the co-ordinator should be in post during March and recruitment of volunteers can then begin.

**Bill Dixon**  
**Leader**