

LEADER'S OVERVIEW

Regional and Tees Valley Updates

1. As Vice-Chair of the Association of North East Council's (ANEC), I attended and spoke at an event on 11 June 2014, organised by FUSE (Centre for Transitional Research in Public Health) highlighting the potential public impacts in the North East of the welfare reform programme. A number of guest speakers spoke at the event, focussing on ANEC's Welfare Reform research report which was published in July 2013.
2. I was very pleased to attend the official signing of Tees Valley's 'City Deal' which took place on 16 June 2014. The event was attended by Greg Clark, Minister for Cities, together with MP's and Leaders and Mayors from throughout the Tees Valley.
3. To support our transport goals for the Tees Valley, I have sought a meeting, with Middlesbrough Borough Council, with the Department for Transport. I also represented the region at the first meeting of the Government's Electrification Working Group.
4. The prospectus for growth in the East Coast Main Line (ECML) was officially launched on 15 July in Edinburgh and 17 July in London. This is the culmination of work by the East Coast Mainline Authorities Group of which Darlington is an active member.
5. I continue to attend a number of Tees Valley and Regional meetings on behalf of the Council including Durham Tees Valley Airport Board; Tees Valley Unlimited Rail Briefings; Tees Valley Leaders and Mayors; and the Association of North East Council's Leaders and Elected Mayors' Group.

General Updates

6. I continue to hold 'Meet the Leader' sessions; to take part in short monthly videos to talk about local and Council issues that affect the Town, known as 'Bill Buzz'; quarterly meetings with Durham Police; and to engage with businesses on a one to one basis, giving them an opportunity to discuss any pressing matters where the Council may be able to offer assistance. In this regard, I recently met with Colin Fyfe the new Chief Executive of the Darlington Building Society and Steve Kim from Whessoe.

Cabinet

7. Consideration was given by Cabinet at its meeting held on 1 July 2014 on partnering with the Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group (DCCG), in order to give people better health and care services, and to make sure our money goes further. A Proof of Concept on partnering with the DCCG was approved, together with changes to the Council's Chief Officer Structure, with further work continuing to develop the implementation model.

Health and Well Being Board

8. I chaired the last meeting of the Health and Well Being Board held on 15 July 2014, at which a number of issues were discussed, including collaboration between this Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group; the Dementia Strategy; an update on the Health and Social Care Strategy; CCG Annual Report and Five Year Strategy; End of Life Care; County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust Clinical Strategy; and Co-commissioning. A presentation was also given to the Board on the outcomes of the Darlington Health Behaviour Surveys 2013.

Darlington Partnership

9. At its meeting in March 2014 the Partnership Board agreed that its Action Priority for 2014/15 would be mental health. In particular the focus of its action would be encouraging Darlington employers to support their employees' mental wellbeing.
10. I have agreed to chair the steering group that would develop the initiative with the following membership:
 - Catherine Parker (Public Health);
 - Lisa Boyd (Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust);
 - Gary Emerson (MIND);
 - Katie Johnson (HR Deep Ocean);
 - Tom Ross (TUC);
 - Katie Blundell (Darlington Cares); and
 - Seth Pearson (Partnership Director).
11. The group met for the first time on 6 May, and agreed its role was to propose to Darlington Partnership Board an initiative with the aims of:
 - (a) increasing awareness of mental health with employers and employees;
 - (b) reducing the stigma associated with mental health; and
 - (c) significantly increasing the number of employers who support mental wellbeing amongst their workforce.

12. A number of potential options for supporting employers were considered. It was agreed that local employers would be surveyed to get an understanding of what would help them best.
13. A workshop was held with local employers at the Darlington Cares Board on 17 June. The helpful views expressed will be taken on board as the initiative is designed. It is anticipated that an initiative will be ready to roll out in the autumn.

Policing and Community Safety

14. A hate crime event was hosted by the Police and Crime Commissioner, where an update was given regarding the progress of the Hate Crime Action Plan, which demonstrated that a great deal of work had been done since the hate crime conference was held twelve months ago. The Safe Places scheme for adult victims of hate crime was launched at the event. There are currently seven organisations signed up to be safe places and work is ongoing to recruit more.

Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT)

15. A Substance Misuse Joint Commissioning Stakeholder meeting was held on 12 June 2014, which I attended, to enable the DAAT to input into the current substance misuse services review process.
16. The Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) continues to work closely with colleagues, partners and providers across all sectors to reduce the harm caused by the misuse of drugs and alcohol. Steady progress is being made, with a continued fall in Alcohol Related Hospital Admissions in 2012/13, as well as maintaining the year on year reduction in young people's substance misuse (via the Social Norms Survey) achieved over the last five years. Current work plans include a Durham Constabulary force-wide roll out of Test on Arrest in Custody Suites around substance misuse; and the ARIES (Alcohol Related Intervention, Enforcement and Support) project work with the Alcohol Harm Reduction Unit and providers to reduce underage drinking and associated antisocial behaviour.
17. Young people's substance misuse providers are working with colleagues in the Police and Trading Standards to address growing concerns around the increasing availability and promotion of Novel Psychoactive Substances locally. Following the implementation of the adult integrated drug and alcohol Connected Recovery treatment service in 2012, came the successful launch of the Recovery Centre. The Centre is now thriving, offering peer support, training, and reintegration opportunities, for service users who achieve abstinence. It is managed by Recovery Staff from the treatment service and service users in recovery.

Bill Dixon
Leader