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**LEADER'S OVERVIEW**

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**Regional and Tees Valley Updates**

1. I continue to work with my colleagues on the Tees Valley Combined Authority to progress our agreed economic strategy, and in my own portfolio to drive forward our ambitions on better transport and connectivity. The new Secretary of State for Transport has expressed continued support for Transport for the North as a model to support growth.
2. The Board has met and agreed to progress the establishment of the Land Commission, as a vehicle to make sure that unused land, especially that in public sector ownership, can be brought back to support growth and employment.
3. Consultation on the powers and functions of a Tees Valley Mayor has concluded and preparations are underway to seek Government consent to the Constitution. Reflecting public unease about the role, I have worked with colleagues to make sure that the Mayor will make his or her decisions in collaboration with the Council Leaders. The position of a Mayor was a condition of the Devolution Deal that promises new powers and resources to this Region and given the changes in Ministerial positions I and colleagues are seeking assurance that the Government remains fully committed to giving the Tees Valley a greater say and more resources to support our economic ambitions.

**Darlington Partnership**

4. Alongside Alasdair MacConachie, Chair of One Darlington Partnership, I opened the Festival of Ingenuity, the first event of its kind to be held in the town, on 8 and 9 July.
5. The keynote speaker at the launch breakfast was Richard Maudslay, fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering. He spoke of the importance of enthusing young people about engineering and applauded Darlington for celebrating its engineering companies.
6. A key feature of the event was the Foundation for Jobs 'Ingenious Engineering' workshop for over 100 year nine school pupils with representation from 5 of Darlington's secondary schools. Six leading engineering companies delivered interactive workshops in the Dolphin Centre with the students and Richard Maudslay judged an inter-school Mars Rover design competition.
7. The Festival featured a host of stalls and activities in a marquee on the Market Square celebrating the area's engineering heritage. Many of Darlington's largest employers in the engineering sector such as Cummins, Nifco, Deep Ocean and

Modus Seabed Intervention displayed machines and provided interactive activities for families. Volunteers from the Tees Pumping Station also put on a display and the A1 Trust provided guided tours of the Locomotion Works. Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service displayed fire engines past and present. Displays by Cleveland Bridge and Darlington Model Railway Club were also set up in the Dolphin Centre.

8. Around 200 school children from Darlington's primary schools came on guided tours and completed quiz sheets.
9. Darlington Credit Union organised an inter school robot drawing competition with pictures displayed in the Dolphin Centre.
10. In addition to the activity on the Market Square and in the Dolphin Centre, Darlington Building Society, the events' principal private sector sponsor funded a family entertainment area on the Feethams Leisure Scheme (podium level) on the Saturday. A road train provided rides around the festival connecting the different sites of activity. Darlington-born precision driver Paul Swift also gave a demonstration on the Town Square which was sponsored by Vauxhall and Sherwoods.
11. Twenty four organisations were involved in delivering the event, with the engineering companies not only providing displays and staff free of charge but also sponsoring the event.
12. The well attended event achieved its objectives of celebrating Darlington's ingenious engineering heritage and engaging young people and their families in engineering in a fun way. There has been a unanimously positive response from the organisations involved with many calling for the Festival to become an annual event.
13. The Partnership is now planning its next Assembly, which will focus on the aim of Building Strong Communities. There are now a number of powerful examples of cross agency work, and the Partnership heard from Colin Fyfe about the growing impact of Darlington Cares, with 126 Busy Readers and some 11,000 hours of employer supported volunteering already in the bank.
14. Business Engagement links continue with the meeting of the Director, Digital City, Rob Earnshaw. Rob and I discussed in detail ways to improve the quality of life in the Tees Valley through digital. The Digital High Street Report 2020 details how private, public and third-sector collaboration will future-proof high streets by using digital technology to generate additional revenue. Officers are following this up with Digital City.

## **Policing and Community Safety**

15. The Police, Crime and Victims' Plan 2016-2021 is out for public consultation, to be finalised in November 2016. The Darlington Community Safety Partnership Board considered the Plan at their meeting earlier this month. Comments can be made by an online survey <http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/2909219/Police-Crime-and-Victims-Plan-2016>

## **Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco (DAAT)**

16. This morning I chaired the final meeting of the current DAAT Board, following confirmation of the MTFP proposal to disband the strategic DAAT Team with effect from 30 September 2016. Key contracts, meeting and pieces of work have been handed over to colleagues in Public Health and/or partner agencies. The overall strategic lead for substance use, and the commissioning of prevention and recovery treatment services for drugs, alcohol and tobacco remains with the Director of Public Health. Partners will continue to meet as a substance use forum or network, reporting to the CSP Board to make sure we maintain a focus on this key area.
17. The implementation of the Recovery and Wellbeing Service and review of existing substance use pathways is now complete. Particular successes include the Prison Discharge Pathway for Planned Releases, which is now at the final sign-off stage. The final Pathways Project Report and the NPS Pathway Report were signed off by the DAAT Board today.
18. The Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS) Stakeholder Group continues excellent partnership working to address the harms caused by the emergence of the prevalence of psychoactive substances. Chief Inspector Sue Robinson of Durham Constabulary will take over as Chair from September 2016 to ensure this vital work is continued. Work continues with the Fire and Rescue Service on the wellbeing checks and the NECA Recovery and Wellbeing Service Manager will continue to sit on the Project Steering Group. NECA and County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust are working together to submit a funding bid for a Substance Use worker to cover Accident and Emergency and acute ward settings at Darlington Memorial Hospital.

**Bill Dixon**  
**Leader**