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**LEADER'S OVERVIEW**

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**Regional and Tees Valley Updates**

1. Since my last report to Council the Tees Valley Combined Authority has considered some important issues. The initial Investment Plan was considered at the Board meeting on 22 March 2017. I believe that the themes and proposed approach reflect the key investment priorities that we have agreed in Darlington, namely town centre regeneration and office development; events and attractions supporting our rail heritage and culture strategy; development of clusters such as biologics; and skills programmes such as Foundation for Jobs. I welcome the participation of our Members on the Scrutiny Committee that will ensure that the opportunities for growth are realised.
2. The Board continues to work with Peel to support their plans for commercial development that can sustain Durham Tees Valley Airport. I attended a meeting of the Shadow South Tees Development Corporation Board Meeting on 17 March 2017 and, with the Chief Executive, I have responded to the consultation on the constitution for the Mayoral Development Corporation. The Corporation has a key role to support the economic opportunities and challenges posed by the closure of the SSI steel plant.
3. The election of a Mayor for the Tees Valley Combined Authority, who will chair the Board, takes place in early May and I would encourage all Members, within their newsletters and local meetings to encourage participation in the election. The Mayor will hold considerable influence and it is important that the people of the borough have their say on who they want to represent them.
4. Members of Council are reminded that Tees Valley Combined Authority Board papers can be read on <https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/>.

**Key Cities**

5. Following the establishment of an all-party Parliamentary Key Cities Group on 8 February 2017, I attended the full Key Cities Leaders meeting. The cross-party group will act as an advocate for Key Cities in Parliament, working to ensure the challenges facing cities are understood and addressed. Key Cities was founded in 2013 and seeks to promote cities as engines of economic growth and ensure local authorities are empowered to deliver better opportunities and public services for their residents. I represent the Tees Valley on the Board.

## Transport and Growth

6. Events in London and Darlington were organised to launch 'A vision for Darlington 2025: A modern rail hub for a modern economy'.
7. The vision has been developed jointly with partners and the rail industry and the events were planned to initiate debate and a campaign to secure the resources needed to achieve our goals.
8. This vision complements the success and investment already happening with some £200m invested within 10 minutes walk of the station over the last five years. The £120m required to remodel the station is a modest sum within the overall Department for Transport rail investment programme, but can be transformational for rail passengers on the east coast, east west and local services.
9. In addition the station works can create the uplift in land values to unlock private sector investment in the 12 development sites within the radius of the station.
10. Our aim is to see Darlington station honour its heritage but present a welcoming comfortable environment suited to the needs of the leisure, commuter and business traveller of the 21st Century.
11. In doing so, it has the potential of unlocking:
  - (a) 2,000 net direct jobs at full impact;
  - (b) 1,100 indirect jobs at full impact;
  - (c) £130 million annual GVA (gross value added) at maximum impact (2038);
  - (d) £939 million (discounted) net lifetime GVA; and
  - (e) Strong value for money with an expected BCR (benefit to cost ratio) of 10.2.
12. There will also be significant catalytic impacts through securing of inward investments on sites across the Tees Valley as these are better connected to the national rail network.
13. I recently attended a roundtable discussion to discuss HS2 and the productivity challenge and meetings of the Consortium of East Coast Main Line Authorities, Darlington Stage Growth Hub Launch, Transport for the North and Rail North Limited Association.
14. Following its success in 2015 and 2016, a third UK Bus Summit was held in February. It has become the central platform for a national policy discussion on issues facing the bus sector. Discussion focused on the crucial role that buses play in supporting society and stimulating the economy; the range of successful technologies available for tackling pollution; and, the scope for improved ticketing and information to enhance the passenger experience. The event also provided a forum to analyse and debate the strengths and weaknesses of the contrasting delivery models.

## **General Updates**

15. The ceremony to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day was held on 30 January 2017 at the Dolphin Centre, to mark the 72nd anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. The theme of this year's Holocaust Memorial Day was 'How can life go on?'. The ceremony included a welcome from The Mayor, a testimony from the Chair of the Darlington Hebrew Congregation, contributions from Carmel College, readings, music and dance.

## **Darlington Partnership**

16. I attended the Darlington Partnership Board meetings in January and March. It was agreed that work would be started to understand what progress has been made in delivering the Partnership's strategy, One Darlington: Perfectly Placed. The Strategy aims to achieve eight outcomes covering issues such as children getting the best start in life and ensuring people have enough support when needed. Each of these outcomes will be reviewed in turn by the Board with the Best Start in Life being the theme for the next meeting. This discussion will contribute to the development of the new Children and Young People' Plan.
17. Following the success of last year's event plans are underway to hold The Festival of Ingenuity again. This year the Festival will be held on 22 and 23 September which colleagues in schools and colleges advise will be of more use to their students but it will also be centred around a Business Week.
18. I attended the 'Make a Difference – Darlington Volunteering Fair' on 2 February. The event was hosted by Darlington Partnership and provided an opportunity for local voluntary and community groups to meet people from Darlington who are considering becoming volunteers. The event was well attended and provided opportunities to share knowledge, skills and experience. There were 57 different voluntary and community groups represented at the fair. A survey of exhibitors after the event revealed that 106 people who attended the event had signed up to volunteer. The survey also revealed that there is a strong appetite to repeat the fair and work is underway to determine how frequently they should be held.

## **Community Safety**

19. Since my last report the Darlington Community Safety Partnership Board met on 28 February. Issues included :-
  - (a) Update on domestic abuse, multi-agency data sharing and action plans.
  - (b) A presentation, 'Behind Closed Doors' which raised awareness of the importance of being 'inquisitive' - i.e. noticing signs of potential child sexual exploitation, human trafficking, stolen or counterfeit goods and counter terrorism.
  - (c) The Board received an update report on Hate Crime. In Darlington, the Police have seen an increase in the total number of incidents reported as hate incidents compared to the previous year. This is similar to the national trend

which has seen a rise in hate incidents, particularly with reference to the recent EU Referendum.

- (d) Partners have worked together in the Problem Solving Group to agree an action plan to address anti-social behaviour in the Town Centre.

**Bill Dixon**  
**Leader**