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**LEADER'S OVERVIEW**

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**Regional and Tees Valley Updates**

1. Following the Tees Valley Mayoral Election on 4 May 2017, Ben Houchen has taken up his role as Mayor of the Tees Valley Combined Authority. One of Ben's first priorities was to meet with Leaders of the Tees Valley Authorities. I met with Ben on 18 May to share the opportunities that Darlington presents to the wider economy of the region.
2. Since his appointment, a Cabinet for the Combined Authority has been established with representation on various committees from Darlington Members. I continue to hold the Cabinet portfolio role for Transport, and am pleased to note that the Mayor is keen to support our transport priorities. We will work together to influence Transport for the North.
3. A number of new members have joined the Board of the Local Enterprise Partnership, and I am particularly pleased to see Angela Howie from EE, and Mike Mathews from Nifco join. Colin Fyfe from the Building Society joins the Audit Committee and I am sure will make an important contribution.
4. On 27 June the new Minister for the Northern Powerhouse, Jake Berry MP, visited Darlington where we had a useful exchange with a number of Tees Valley business leaders.
5. On 16 June 2017 I was guest speaker at a North East Devolution Conference to debate devolution in the North East Region and the impact of having an elected Mayor.
6. The sixth Tees Valley Business Summit, which was delivered by the Tees Valley Combined Authority, was held on 6 July 2017. The event was the biggest yet and attracted over 1,000 businesses and over 100 exhibitors. The Summit was free to attend and featured practical seminars, inspirational workshops, one-to-one support meetings, advice for individuals looking to start a business and networking opportunities.
7. Meetings of the Transport for the North (TfN) Partnership Board and the Rail North Limited Board were held on 15 June 2017. A number of reports were discussed at the TfN Board including an update on TfN Legislation and Governance Arrangements; the next steps for the Strategic Transport Plan; and updates on the Northern Powerhouse Rail and Integrated Smart Travel.

8. In respect of the Rail North Board meeting, a presentation was given on Northern Rail and updates were received on the Franchise, Fare Strategy and Stations transfer. A number of decision reports were also considered on Governance Matters; creation of TfN as a Statutory Body; Integration of Rail North; and Investment Planning.

### **Crown Street Library - Sole Trustee Meeting**

9. The first meeting of the Sole Trustee of the Crown Street Library was held on 19 June 2017, which I chaired. At the meeting a report was considered on the Trustee role and on the future of the Library. It was agreed that while a decision should be deferred pending the outcome of legal challenge, given the decision which has been made on the relocation of the central library service, the direction of travel for the Crown Street building was one Trustees could support. This included expressions of interest for alternative community uses for the Crown Street building and, in default, to market the building for sale, and that should the building be sold an Endowment Fund be established.

### **Darlington Partnership**

10. Darlington Partnership Board is taking each of the outcomes of One Darlington Perfectly Placed in turn and assessing what progress has been made and identifying emerging issues.
11. At the Board meeting which I attended on 10 May, the focus was on a Safe and Caring Community with the objectives of:
  - (a) understanding where we are in achieving the ambition of a Safe and Caring Community; and
  - (b) considering how we can collaborate to better address current and emerging issues.
12. Following a presentation from Adrian Green, Chair of the Community Safety Partnership and some lively group discussions, I was supportive of a proposal that the Partnership Board should focus its attention on domestic abuse. The intention is to work with employers to raise awareness, increase skills in recognising the signs of domestic violence and helping victims access what support is available.

### **Community Safety**

13. The Darlington Community Safety Partnership Board met on 29 June. Included in the items it considered was a report from the County Durham and Darlington Joint Group to tackle hate crime, and an update from the Darlington multi-agency Problem Solving Group.

**Bill Dixon**  
**Leader**