

## **LEADER'S OVERVIEW**

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### **General Updates**

1. This meeting takes place as the consultation on the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) nears a conclusion. While the availability of additional resources to add into the Futures Fund is still being worked through I have been pleased to see the level of responses and engagement in advising Council on where this could best be spent.

### **Darlington Partnership**

2. The value of our Partnership was evidenced yet again with a record response to the call for gifts and food for the Darlington Cares Christmas Appeal. While it angers me that such charity should be needed it is a measure of the Darlington community that so many people gave so generously.
3. The Partnership also launched a leaflet encouraging employers to understand and to respond effectively to incidents of domestic abuse within their workforce. This was a product of a discussion on community safety and with wide buy in once again shows what can be achieved with little money and a lot of collective goodwill.

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

4. The Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling, visited Darlington Station on 8 December where he was presented with the proposal for Darlington 2025, which is not just a rail project, but a wider master-planning approach that contributes to the Tees Valley Combined Authority's Strategic Economic Plan.
5. Darlington Station is the gateway to the Tees Valley, and the principal strategic rail connection for over 700,000 local people. The Station has a wide catchment area covering the North East and Yorkshire making it a regionally important Station. Unlocking constraints at Darlington is a priority to realise ambitions for the local, northern and national rail network.

### **Strategic Transport Planning**

6. Transport for the North's Strategic Transport Plan was officially launched for consultation in January with an event revealing the detail at Darlington Station. The Plan, which covers all of the North, recognises the Strategic Transport Priorities for the Tees Valley and the importance for residents and business of the Tees Valley of better connections right across the north of England.

7. The Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan is also being developed and I have chaired Tees Valley workshops to drive development of the plan which will be launched for consultation early in the New Year.
8. I recently attended one of eight Transport for the North events held across the North of England to seek input into three strategic corridor studies that will identify investment priorities in the short, medium and long term. The aim is to connect the key economic areas of the North to drive growth, improve access to jobs and ensure the North is a great place to invest and live. The Plan will inform how the Government, Network Rail, Highways England and High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd work with us to deliver investment in transport infrastructure.

### **Major Roads**

9. Propositions have been submitted to the Department for Transport to continue the development work of a new Darlington Northern Link Road and a new Tees crossing. Both of these schemes are Tees Valley Strategic transport priorities that will provide an improved road network across the Tees Valley to improve access to global markets, increasing capacity for growth and creating more jobs for the people of the region.

### **Community Safety**

10. The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Board met on 13 December and the agenda covered the key themes of the Community Safety Plan. The Board was particularly interested in a presentation from the 'Troubled Families' team, with a case study showing how early support can make a huge difference in helping a family resolve its problems.
11. The CSP Board expressed support for a joint public message about begging in the Town and informing the community of the options available to those in need. I very much support this campaign as sadly the public may be misled by those begging into thinking they have no home and no options. This is not the case and public generosity would be better served going to the fantastic charities that work with those in need.

### **Respect your Street**

12. Respect Your Street was launched on 2 December 2017. The aim of the new initiative is to encourage residents to take pride in where they live and to pull together with all of the agencies that can help.
13. Durham Police, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service and Darlington Borough Council joined forces to launch 'Respect your Street' which urges residents to take greater pride in their street and aims to help tackle anti-social behaviour, criminal damage, arson, fly-tipping and littering.

14. The initiative which is initially focused on Eastbourne Road and Brunton Street commenced with Police Community Support Officers and Firefighters engaging with residents around key issues that are affecting their quality of life. In conjunction with the launch a community litter pick was led by local Councillors, residents and street champions.

### **Rap and Hip-Hop Programme**

15. Darlington Community Safety Partnership has recently awarded a grant to the Youth Offending Service and YMCA for the provision of an educational programme of Rap and Hip-Hop which will be delivered to young people in Darlington during 2018.

### **Youth Referral, Intervention and Diversion Programme**

16. Since 1 January 2017, 360 people have been referred to the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Unit for intervention and diversionary activities. The rate of re-offending is 8 per cent when compared to 38 per cent nationally.

### **Meetings**

17. On 28 November I was delighted to attend a coffee morning at the Bradford Armoury.
18. On 30 November I attended the North of England Transport Awards with other members of the Tees Valley Combined Authority Transport Committee. Although the Tees Valley Combined Authority didn't receive an award, they were fortunate to have been shortlisted. John Cridland, CBE and Chair of Transport for the North was Keynote speaker.

**Bill Dixon**  
**Leader**