

COUNCIL
12 MAY 2022

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL OVERVIEW

Strategic Transport

1. Tees Valley Combined Authority have been awarded £310m from the City Regional Sustainable Transport settlement. This is a 5-year investment programme on sustainable transport schemes to improve rail, bus, walking and cycling infrastructure and contribute towards the decarbonisation of transport. The programme is high level series of options and potential schemes that will all require further development and consultation.
2. Tees Valley Combined Authority are the Local Transport Authority, and we are working with them to address the current issues with bus operator performance in the town. Councillor Keir and I have written jointly outlining concerns and seeking improvement.

Climate Change

3. We are working with the Tees Valley Combined Authority on a new Net Zero Strategy for the region. This will be a high level region-wide approach bringing the Tees Valley to net zero by 2050.
4. The Cross Party Working Group had a presentation from Kent County Council on a system developed to gather the financial, social and environmental costs of severe weather events. The system has enabled Kent to make savings and leverage funding and we will be learning lessons from their experience.
5. I am delighted to see that the new Junior Member of the Youth Parliament and the Deputy Junior Member of the Youth Parliament have environmental issues as key parts of their manifestos. We will continue to work closely with the Youth People's Involvement Officer to ensure that young people's voices are heard.

Darlington Economic Campus

6. On the 11 April I attend an event hosted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the progress of the development of the Darlington Economic Campus (DEC) as the recruitment drive hit a major milestone with over 110 Treasury members of staff in post. Alongside the Treasury, DEC will house teams from the Department for International Trade, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the Office for National Statistics and the Competition and Markets Authority.
7. The Chancellor also held a Q&A session with Darlington Economic Campus staff, local businesses, stakeholders and students on the positive impacts of the relocation.

8. Chancellor Rishi Sunak later unveiled the two remaining sites for the permanent locations for the Darlington Economic Campus. The two remaining contenders are Brunswick Street and Central Park with the Brunswick Street site as the preferred final location. The Treasury is now in the final stages of the Government Property Agency's (GPA) procurement process.
9. GPA continue to fit out and carry out works on the Feethams Office with the Campus likely to occupy late May/early June.

Towns Fund

10. The Towns Fund Investment Plan continues to progress with works ongoing within the Yard's, together with improvements and enhancements to both the public realm and properties continuing to develop along Skinnergate.
11. Also progressing is the new TLevels facility at Darlington College, which has been out to tender for the works contractor, and the proposed Adult Skills facility, which is to be provided within the newly acquired Northern Echo building in Priestgate. Design and development is now underway for this exciting opportunity, which will lead the way for the future use of the iconic building.
12. Following acceptance by government of our business case summaries, significant capital and revenue funding has now been received for the programme in Darlington, which enables the progression of all nine Towns Fund interventions.
13. Darlington has been selected for participation in the Southampton University '*Feeling Towns Programme*'. This is a project which has a focus on understanding and developing meaningful metrics for 'pride' ("*people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community*"), linked closely with the Towns Fund and levelling up.

2025 Bi-centenary Celebrations

14. The Head of Steam, Darlington's Railway Museum, was the host venue for the launch of an exciting new film project that will play a role in bi centenary celebrations of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. The project tells the incredible story of north east innovation and enterprise and is a partnership between Darlington and Stockton Borough Council's, with support from Barclays and the Northern Echo.
15. Lonely Tower film and media have been commissioned to produce the film, called, 'Iron and Steam - The Dawn of the Stockton and Darlington Railway', which will be ready for premiere by the end of 2023 and play an important role in profiling the 2025 programme of celebration.

Appointments

16. In addition to Councillor Brian Jones, who is the Veterans Champion, Councillor Mike Renton has been appointed as Heritage Ambassador and Councillor Scott Durham has been appointed as Autism Ambassador. These Councillors will work with the relevant community groups to ensure their views are taken into account when decisions are made.

Councillor Mrs Heather Scott OBE
Leader of the Council Portfolio