

**COUNCIL**  
**26 SEPTEMBER 2019**

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**LEADER OF THE COUNCIL PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW**

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**Darlington Partnership**

1. I attended the Darlington Partnership Board meeting on 10 July 2019 as Leader of the Council. I outlined our vision for Darlington, highlighting how we recognise the importance the environment and community safety are to residents and they will therefore be our priorities. We will be seeking to maximise investment in Darlington including from the Tess Valley Combined Authority. I also emphasised how we aim to make sure the Council is more open and transparent.
2. The Partnership, in close collaboration with the Council, is taking forward the Fairer, Richer, Darlington programme. Progress is being made under the three work streams: 'Basics', 'Resilience' and 'Causes'.
3. Under 'Basics' a steering group has been established which is looking at the issues of access to food and financial stability. Under 'Resilience' an initiative is being explored to help people with the cost of living. In addition there is specific focus on Northgate under development. Under 'Causes' the Centre for Local Economic Strategies are just completing a study into the Council's spend and how it and its public sector partners could gain more for Darlington through a greater focus on social value in their procurement.

**Strategic Transport**

4. The Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan has been launched and events are scheduled to take place across the Tees Valley. The plan is an overarching strategy that will be supported by a number of documents that focus on Road, Freight, Rail, Bus, Walking & Cycling specifically.
5. Views are being sought on the plan over the coming months and these will be considered and used to form a final version that will be adopted later in the year. The Cornmill Centre hosted the Darlington event to seek views and Place Scrutiny Committee have received the plan to enable them to provide feedback.
6. I have supported the Tees Valley Mayor at the Transport for the North and Rail North Board, where we have a unified voice for more investment in the North and we press specifically for investment in our Tees Valley Strategic Transport priorities.
7. The East Coast Mainline Authorities group are a collective group of authorities along the length of the line pressing for investment in the East Coast Mainline to improve connectivity. I attended the meeting to continue to press the case for Darlington station as a key building block for both the East Coast Mainline and to improve train services across the Tees Valley.

### **Cabinet in the Community**

8. The first 'Cabinet in the Community' meeting was held at Firthmoor Community Centre, which seemed to be very well received by the public, and I intend to continue to arrange such meetings on a bi-monthly basis across the town

### **Summer Events Programme**

9. The Summer Events Programme has been well supported with visitors from across the region as well as Darlington residents, and with the excellent attendance at the Hippodrome and Proms in the Park it has been a most enjoyable season.

**Councillor Mrs Heather Scott OBE**  
**Leader of the Council Portfolio**