

**COUNCIL
30 JANUARY 2020**

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

Medium Term Financial Plan

1. I was pleased to present a four-year balanced MTFP for consultation, the plan allows for further investment in the Futures Fund and provides funding for both the capital and revenue costs of refurbishing and running the Crown Street Library.
2. Following consultation, Council will consider the MTFP at the Special Council in February.

Council Plan

3. I was pleased to present, the first Council Plan of the new administration, for consultation with the public. The plan sets out a vision for what we would like to see Borough of the Future, together with key actions to be taken to achieve the vision. Following consultation, the plan will come to Council in March for consideration.

Towns Fund

4. I reported last meeting that initial work was undertaken and that an advisory Town Fund Board required establishing, this has been done and it is due to have its initial meeting before 31 January 2020. The Board will develop plans to submit to government for up to £25m. Cabinet will have the final sign-off of the bid, as the accountable body for the bid and if successful, the delivery of the plan.

Darlington Partnership

5. I attended the last Darlington Partnership Board held on 4 December 2019.
6. The Partnership received a report on the Northgate initiative and agreed to:
 - (a) Support this initiative
 - (b) Encourage the participation of partner agencies
7. A report on the activity of Darlington Cares was welcomed by the Board. In 2019 Darlington Cares organised 15,000 hours of volunteering from the employees of its members making a significant impact across its three areas of focus: education, social justice and environment. The target for next year is 20,000 hours.
8. As the responsibilities of the Partnership grows and changes it was agreed that its shape and structure should be reviewed. A meeting with its funders will be called early this year.

Strategic Transport

9. The Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan (STP) has been consulted upon and the final document will now be presented to TVCA Cabinet with a recommendation to adopt the plan and the supporting documents that focus on Road, Freight, Rail, Bus, Walking & Cycling specifically. The STP will be supported by Local Implementation Plans (LIPs) produced by each of the local authorities. These plans will set out local responsibilities and priorities but will align with the overarching STP to ensure a consistency of approach.
10. In terms of Major Road Projects being progressed by TVCA an Outline Business Case (OBC) was submitted to Government for the New Tees Crossing seeking funding for the project and work continues to refine the Strategic Outline Business Case for Darlington Northern Link Road following feedback from Government.
11. Work continues to progress an Outline Business Case for Darlington Station Improvements and it is the intention to submit this to Government early in 2020 to secure commitment to the development of the project.
12. I attended a meeting of Rail North and Transport for the North in my capacity as portfolio holder with Tees Valley Combined Authority where the main issue was the appalling record of Northern Rail and Trans Pennine Express. Both companies tried to blame others for the cancellations which were not accepted. A strong message was given particularly to TPE that improvements had to be made by the end of March. I continue to lobby on behalf of Tees Valley and Darlington Station.

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