



The purpose of this newsletter is to highlight some of the key issues of relevance to Tees Valley Unlimited, which have been prominent over the previous month. It is not intended to provide a comprehensive discussion of everything happening, but provides a brief review of the most salient issues, offering comment where appropriate. It is produced by the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit, which supports the work of Tees Valley Unlimited.

## CONFERENCE GETS A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE FROM THE MINISTER



Minister John Healey  
photograph courtesy of the Evening  
Gazette Teesside

*'I talk about the Tees Valley a lot in other areas of the country...the foundations which you have laid in your Multi Area Agreement, the strengths of working relationships and strengths of your shared goals.'*

That was message from Local Government Minister John Healey when

he delivered the keynote address to the first annual Tees Valley Unlimited Conference staged at Wynyard Hall. The event, which attracted around 240 key figures from the public and private sectors, along with regional and national organisations, was aimed at highlighting the progress already made in driving forward the area's economy - and the bid to become a pilot for the Government's new 'City Region Forerunner'.

The Minister has been closely involved in the development of the Tees Valley Multi Area Agreement (MAA) - the partnership between Government and the area's local authorities, co-ordinated by Tees Valley Unlimited, which is aimed at speeding progress on key regeneration projects, housing and transport.

Summing up the benefits of the MAA programme, John Healey said "Real issues that affect everyday lives, such as getting a job, new skills or somewhere to live or getting from place to place do not stop at council borders. Nor should efforts to boost the economy.

"That's why areas such as Tees Valley, through Multi Area Agreements, have the potential to achieve more together than alone, whether this is to transform rundown areas, boost transport or provide housing to help economies ready for the upturn."

This partnership theme was strongly echoed by Tees Valley Unlimited Chairman Hugh Lang, who told the Minister that the progress made over recent years was the result of the decision taken a decade ago by all key players in the area, of the need to work together to tackle the enormous economic, environmental and social challenges resulting from years of decline.

Hugh Lang said "That commitment to partnership is what has enabled us to make giant strides in recent years - and which means that, despite the very real short-term difficulties we currently face, I believe we are in a strong position to maintain the drive forward to the vision for the Tees Valley agreed a decade ago...somewhere that people will want to live, work...and do business. It is also what has put us at the forefront of delivering the Government's local regeneration agenda."

## HOLDING ON TO THE VISION...

A pledge that the economic downturn will not distract the Tees Valley from achieving its vision for the future was given by Darlington Borough Council Chief Executive Ada Burns when she spoke at the conference about the achievements and ambitions of Tees Valley Unlimited.

Stressing that there was much to be confident and optimistic about, she pointed to evidence such as the halt in the population decline, 16 per cent more businesses since 2000, a big rise in tourism along with major investments and improvements in our town centres.

Success in the bid to become a 'City Region Forerunner' would enable a move forward to the next stage of strengthening local decision-making, planning and investment.

The Homes and Communities Agency is charged by Government with investing billions of pounds in delivering new housing and regeneration projects across the country and its corporate director, Hartlepool-born Eamonn Boylan, told the conference that the immediate priority had to be maintaining delivering of schemes during the financial downturn.

At the same time, he said "It is essential that we hold on to the long-term vision. We support you in delivering that and we will work on helping you deliver that vision."

## TALKING TO BUSINESS...

The conference also involved panel debates, a number of workshops and provided delegates with the opportunity to go on a range of tours to see at first hand development across the Tees Valley. In the evening Wynyard Hall provided the magnificent setting for the first of a series of Business Dinners which are to be held across the sub-region with the aim of enabling Tees Valley Unlimited partner organisations to engage with a wide range of business interests.

After dinner speaker was Nils Blythe the well known BBC Radio 4 business commentator. As well as Tees Valley businesses a range of public sector representatives also attended including the

Homes and Communities Agency, the Learning and Skills Council, Business and Enterprise North East and One NorthEast.

The second in the series of dinners will be held in the second quarter of the year.



photograph courtesy of JSU



photographs courtesy of the Evening Gazette Teesside

## IT'S A FACT...

The Tees Valley Unlimited Conference was also used as a platform to launch the 'Notes on the Tees Valley' DVD, showcasing people's view of the area, the high quality of life, and the various benefits the Tees Valley has to offer not only for business and investment opportunities but also in terms of lifestyle, sport and tourism.

As well as the DVD a 'business card with a difference' has been produced highlighting ten 'top facts' about the Tees Valley past and present including:



- 1) Stockton and Darlington railway was the catalyst for the launch of the entire railway system the world over.
- 2) Teesport is the UK's third largest port, handling the largest amount of outbound traffic of any port in the UK.
- 3) The Angel of the North was made by Hartlepool Steel Fabrications.
- 4) Britain's tallest building, Canary Wharf Tower, was built with steelwork made in the Tees Valley, designed in Tees Valley and fashioned in the Tees Valley.
- 5) Tees Valley has the largest integrated process-industrial complex in the UK and the second biggest in Europe.
- 6) A recent Government study of the Creative Industries found that the University of Teesside is considered one of the best for computer software design courses.
- 7) The Tees Valley start-up business rate is higher than all other regions, bar the South West.
- 8) Lonely Planet described the area around the River Tees as 'the most exciting, beautiful and friendly region in the whole of England.'
- 9) Yarm was voted as having the best high street in the UK in a BBC News poll.
- 10) The Tees Barrage is home to an international standard white water rafting course and hosts major canoeing and other events.

A free copy of the DVD and business card are available by contacting: **Sally Bainbridge**, Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit, Melrose House, Melrose Street, Middlesbrough TS1 2XF

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**Further information relating to the Conference including programme, delegate list, presentations, etc. can be accessed via the Tees Valley Unlimited website:**  
<http://www.teesvalleyunlimited.gov.uk>

## WE'RE READY TO LEAD THE WAY ON 'CITY REGION' PLANS

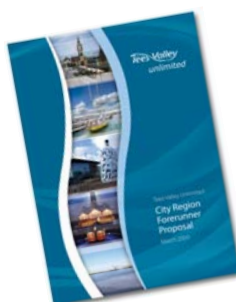
The Tees Valley is "ready to take the next leap forward in working with Government to make our area one of the economic success stories of the Twenty First Century".

That is how Hugh Lang, Chair of the Tees Valley Unlimited partnership, described the bid to become one of the areas to pilot the ambitious new 'City Region Forerunner'.

The proposals, which run to over 200 pages, stress that Tees Valley is 'one of the UK's economic powerhouses' with the potential to help lead the country out of recession. With the largest heavy industrial complex in the country, it contributes £9.6billion to the national economy and has world-class businesses in petrochemicals, steel, renewable energy, biotechnology and engineering-together with one of the country's largest port complexes.

The City Region Forerunner blueprint sets out arrangements aimed at giving the Tees Valley a much greater influence over all key areas affecting the area's potential, especially in the management of public funding. It also envisages strengthening arrangements to tackle issues such as employment and skills, business and enterprise and strategic transport planning.

Hugh Lang says that "The move to become a 'City Region Forerunner' would be a natural development of all the work which has gone on over the past decade and we believe that our track record makes us a very strong candidate".



The Chancellor Alistair Darling is set to announce in April's Budget at least two areas which will be offered the chance to act as 'Forerunners' for the initiative.

**A copy of the proposal submitted can be downloaded from the Tees Valley Unlimited website:**  
<http://www.teesvalleyunlimited.gov.uk>