

County Durham Economic Partnership – a message from the Chair

June 2022

Fellow Business Leaders and Owners

As promised in my last open letter, I wanted to tell you about the recent County Durham Economic Partnership Board meeting.

Before I do so, though, can I thank everyone who got in touch after my last note and in particular those who contributed to the Econ-versation, showed support for the Durham 2025 bid or who have become involved with Durham County Climate Change Agreement. It is really important that the voice of business is heard. County Durham Economic Partnership provides leadership to develop and deliver the strategy for economic development and regeneration which addresses the opportunities and challenges across our County and is the voice for County Durham in regional, national and international discussions. I am proud to be able to do my bit, as Chair, to make sure that business involvement in this remains strong and continues to be heard

Our recent Board discussions centred around one of business's current most pressing problems - recruitment and skills. We heard from Durham Works, which provides huge amounts of support to young people aged 16-24 who are not in education, employment or training and also supports residents across County Durham who continue to face significant barriers to entering work as a result of the long-term nature of their disability, or the potential impact of deteriorating mental health, so that they are ready to join the workforce. DurhamWorks is there to help you with your business growth needs, supporting you to fulfil your current vacancies, apprenticeships or work experience opportunities. You can find out more at <https://durhamworks.info/employers> and <https://www.facebook.com/DurhamEnable>

We also heard from New College Durham, and their partner Enterprise Made Simple, who promote an increase in the skills level of the employed to at least the next level up, to encourage progression within the workforce and increase the number of people with technical and job

specific skills, to progress them into education, employment and apprenticeships to support business growth. Drop me a line if you would like more details on this.

Business Durham gave us some very specific intelligence into where Durham businesses experience skills shortages – both now and in the future, and highlighted the challenges we face in overcoming these; challenges that range from the more mundane but very real issue of travel within the County to the fact that technology moves so much more quickly than the curriculum. You can read more at <https://www.businessdurham.co.uk/how-we-can-help/information-support/>

We will shortly start to become involved in thinking about how best to use public money to support skills in Durham. I would love to hear from you with your thoughts. Please get in touch with me by dropping me a line to economicpartnership@durham.gov.uk

It would be great to hear from you on these, or any other topics.



Glyn Llewellyn
Chair, County Durham Economic Partnership