

Introduction and keynotes (Day 1)

The event kicked off with Mark Easton, who described the waves of positivity sweeping through Sunderland. Having spent a large part of his career reporting on home news for the BBC, throughout the UK, he described Sunderland as place on the edge.... the cutting edge. Full of determination, ambition and optimism – busily focused on seizing the opportunities of the future.

Councillor Graeme Miller, leader of Sunderland City Council, welcomed delegates to City Hall for the forum and encouraged everyone to have a great couple of days and enjoy the great line up of business and industrial leaders who have given up their time to be here.

He outlined Sunderland's vision: A place to have the best education, home and life... We can and will be better as a smart city, with the best healthcare, education and employment opportunities... We'll 'charge headlong into undiscovered land' to ensure Sunderland is the best medium-sized city in the UK.

Patrick Melia, chief executive of Sunderland City Council expanded on creating opportunities for everyone in a connected, international city. Bringing communities with the city on its transformational journey. Providing a great offer for families to enjoy life and thrive. He said he hoped the event would be an opportunity to learn – for everyone. "We think we're doing very well, but we're open to being challenged... we want to create a city of the future in which all of our residents are happy with where they live."

Ed Whiting, director at Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, talked about the 'ingredients' needed to deliver growth and change and the current levelling up priorities that will support cities like Sunderland. He described a range of interventions that will boost local growth, as well as 'place partnerships', supporting cities to realise their potential.

He said that everything starts with a local plan, and that it is about working together to get the best out of each other. "Cities succeed when there is a clear plan and when cities work to that. Plan plus persistence."

"You can't build a growing economy without jobs, and we're working with all kinds of partners about how to build a successful city centre, like is happening here in Sunderland.

"Economic growth, transformation of place, levelling up – this is all about growth and creating local opportunity. It all starts with planning. Plans that look five, ten, 20 years ahead – we've heard about how that is happening in Sunderland.

Michael Palin, executive director for markets, partners and places at Homes England, said that the cities that succeed should meet five tests: 1. a clear vision and leadership; 2. those that adopt a partnership approach; 3. where there is an alignment of effort and investment; 4. that it is flexible over the lifetime of delivery and 5. that it brings together capacity and capability.

"Sunderland has exceptional leadership, excellent partnership working, alignment of effort in everything it does – all joined up in a coherent plant.

"Sunderland was one of those places where greatest opportunity could be found. If you want a place that typifies great leadership, Sunderland is it. Whatever a future city might look like, this feels like it to me."

Robert Denton, director, local government at Microsoft, explored the ways in which Sunderland is embracing digital and technology to connect to
“The way the economy is growing in Sunderland, there are so many opportunities for us to create those pathways to employment.

“The work done to create connectivity is enabling the transformation of the digital economy in the city. It will enable businesses to develop - digital start-ups and existing businesses that want to tap into it. And it will enable residents to connect and to learn and grown. That smart transformation – all of those pieces - will lead to prosperity and opportunity, delivering the best quality of lives for people living here.”

Session 2: Delivering regeneration at scale and pace

Joanne Gordon, homes and development director at Gentoo, said: “The region’s got its act together and it feels like this is a moment of opportunity for the city to get this right.”

Mary Parsons, national regeneration and partnerships director at Lovell, said: “Regeneration is never just about housing. It has to be so much more.”

“For housebuilders, it needs to be about developing a solution for the place you’re working in. And blockers to this are people – communities. It has to be about working in partnership with them.”

John Tatham, finance and investment director at Thriving Investments, said: “I came back to see the city after working here over ten years ago and I wondered, how has this happened? And it’s about civic leadership. About ambition and vision that gives organisations like Legal & General the confidence to invest.”

Mike Coplowe, head of development partnership at Legal & General, said: “We could see a clear link to the businesses sitting outside the city and its ability to grow. We believe that regeneration is about delivering good places to work, great houses to live in and vibrant places to entertain and enjoy. Our investment is about unlocking that.”

Darren Lawless, development director at PlaceFirst, said: “Sunderland has a clear vision and one of the things we clearly saw was that this is a place that wants to lead urban regeneration. There is a desire from the local authority to work with us. It’s not rocket science but you need that vision and commitment.”

Session 3: Creating Successful Places

Nicholas Boys Smith, founding director of Create Streets, said: “If anyone is thinking good design is subjective, can you stop thinking that – it’s wrong.”

“Gentle density is your friend. This is about places being resilient and prosperous. If we introduce green spaces – places that are more pleasant – we get out more and walk – so we’re healthier and we get to know our neighbours. It creates a denser web of friendship. Beauty really matters – where there are really clear patterns, our brain sees them more.

“We need to accept that regeneration doesn’t always work. We seek to create a virtuous circle of regenerative change. And creating a framework – which is easy for others to get involved – is important. We need to set a vision that recognises that place is emotional and well as practical.

Lots of the poorest places have fast urban road through them. Restitching towns is important.”

Sarah Allan, head of architecture at DLUHC, said: “It’s about thinking about development in a completely different way. This is about locking in value.”

Matthew Morgan, director at the Quality of Life Foundation, said: “To seek ‘beautiful places’ is divisive and subjective – it can’t be measured. I prefer to focus on health and wellbeing, both of which can be measured. In Sunderland, the local authority wants to increase the life expectancy.”

Neil Murphy, director at Town, which is working on a development in Sunderland, said: “We’re working on an astounding asset in Sunderland and we want to build on the really good things that are in that area. Creative industries, music, arts. The sum is lesser than the parts in the area. It’s a great partnership project with PlaceFirst who will own the homes at the end of it. It’s about a development philosophy of community led housing. That whole stewardship – embedding yourself into the community – will create something that has traction.”

Tim Crawshaw, MRTPI, Past President of the Royal Town Planning Institute, Chair of Nature Partnership - Royal Town Planning Institute, said: “The imperative to weave green spaces and technology into our places, has never been greater.

“We need to integrate back into our places, opportunity. We need to bring streets back to places for people. Not cars.”

He added: “Well done Sunderland. I am blown away with the vision – the simple, rational plan that Sunderland has.”

Session 4: Sustainable communities

Sarah Jones Morris, director at Landsmith, said: “We need to put nature on an equal footing to ‘us’ – people.

“You need to provide ownership and belonging, but also hope.

“Sunderland has an aging population and high amount of unpaid carers, 70% are women. We need to design not for but with. Women need safe affordable travel, accessible safe nature spaces, quiet spaces for respite and all of the positive health outcomes that are associated with nature.”

Michael Chang: “Everyone benefits if you create healthier, more sustainable communities.”

Arthur Smart – Associate Director, Cities Planning and Design, Arup, said: “I don’t think it’s just about housing. It’s about how nature is integrated into cities, river corridors have become more and more important.”

Dr Chloe Sutcliffe, sustainability fellow at the Royal Horticultural Society, said: “Urban environments are inherently stressful, but by developing greater connection with nature we create opportunities to help encourage deeper engagement with nature and make people feel better.

“Traditional approaches to providing green spaces in urban development we provide them as islands like public parks and private gardens. In the future we need to go beyond this and connecting up green spaces is essential. In the context of climate change, more meaningful; natural infrastructure reduces to impacts associated with climate change.

“How do green spaces become green places? We need to create green spaces that reflect and area’s identity, we need to attract wildlife so that requires food and water, we need ongoing

maintenance plan, is there budget for engaging people in this space and make it somewhere they exist, enjoy and take ownership of.”

John Dales, director and head of transport at Urban Movement, said: “The challenge we have is that transport is not the answer to getting people moving around. It should be approached as a city plan – not a transport plan – but how does transport help.

“When we are asking people to change how they travel, we are asking them to change how they live and most people don’t really want that. Public transport needs to be considered a public utility and invested as such. If public transport works well, a city works well.”

Session 5: Healthy homes and lifestyles

Richard Williams, architectural development manager at Velux, said: “We are the indoor generation... we spend 90pc of our time indoors.

“If you are a 50-year-old, you will have spent 45 years indoors. We need to create spaces that respond to that.”

David Birkbeck, director from Design for Homes, said: “It is really important that the quality of our streets and the way they are laid out is considered.

“If you look at what we’re aiming to create, you can see straight streets, so people can see where they’re going. And use of different paving, that can be used to calm traffic – so it’s about thoughtful. We have a big problem in the UK in the fact that you can’t convey the ownership of a parking space on a street with a property and it’s something we need to tackle to allow us to adopt better street design.”

He added: “If we turn places that people wouldn’t use into walking routes – places people can access and enjoy – then we can start to change the city.”

Dr Faye Sedgewick, KTP Research Associate at Building Design [Northern] (BDN), said: “We love our communities in the North East and we want to stay put. So how do we develop homes that allow us to do that? How do we develop resilient living?

“Longevity homes and age-friendly principles are about inclusivity of people in communities. Multi-generational communities respond to different types of housing. And a future city is all about including all.

“We need to think about right-sizing. It’s exacerbating the housing crisis and it should be about thinking about those in need. RIBA has said that inclusive design should be embedded from the start of projects to ensure we are proactive in finding solutions to this challenge.”

Professor Ray Sandbach OBE, Professor of Population Health at Newcastle University, said: “There is a need to be inclusive of age because it comes upon us.”

“There isn’t always the evidence-based knowledge that allows you to create a solution and vision that is holistic. I think options is the word I would use. ”

“We might hope that older people want to move to smaller places, but some don’t. There are hardly any who do. We just need options. We need some people to look at it as a positive thing, to move. Not everyone has to.”

"We should build with the future in mind. Leadership is one thing that has really come together in Sunderland, and I celebrate this as a place that is close to my heart. That quadruple helix of the University, Local Government, community groups and businesses... they are having structured conversations in this city and that now needs to become embedded as a single mission. There should be a mission for better living – a strategy for it. That's something everyone can get behind."

Gwyn Roberts, principal at BRE Group, said: "It costs the NHS over £1bn to treat people who are affected by living in poor quality homes. That can be things like mould, but it can be trips and falls at home."

"There is an economic case to improve our homes. There are health benefits. There are sustainability benefits. There are wider societal benefits."

"Setting high standards is about more than just that though. It attracts investment."

Introduction and keynotes (Day 2)

Mark Easton's welcome reflected on a sense of belief that Sunderland can refashion itself for a new age, with a vision to write a new chapter in its proud story. Such vision requires genuine collaboration – which is today's theme.

Councillor Graeme Miller, leader of Sunderland City Council, welcomed delegates.

"Today's domain is very much about how the Council can work with local and national partners in the public and private sectors to drive transformation from an economy built on the industries of old into a global city, at the centre of the automotive industry with Europe's leading manufacturer of clean electric vehicles."

"We've put ourselves now at the leading edge of the industries of tomorrow. It shows we can do anything when we put our minds to it. The challenge now is how we take this remarkable transformation to the next level. How do we create more career opportunities, more social value, support business growth and unlock strategic investment to create new industries and redefine the future of our city"

He spoke of digital technology at the forefront and Sunderland's commitment to playing its part in the fight against climate change. The long-term partnerships with government, private sector, college and university leaders and local businesses will play a key role in helping shape the future of the city. And taking ownership of the things that matter most to our region, through devolution.

"We want a city residents can be proud of, where they can live happy, healthy lives and achieve their ambitions."

Expo Sunderland will culminate in the future of living in 2025, showcasing three key themes: future homes, future living and future city.

Patrick Melia, Chief Executive of Sunderland City Council spoke of huge investment and confidence being shown in the city across multiple sectors.

"Our smart city journey and ambition is to create the UK's most advanced smart city: By 2025, 97% of all premises (homes, business and schools) will have full gigabit connectivity. We are investing

£5million into world-leading digital connectivity in the stadium and esports and our partnership with Microsoft will see us utilise data better to become a real future smart city."

"We're working with SSC, Nissan and others to develop a microgrid around IAMP which will save 55,000 tonnes of Co2 every year in carbon emissions. It will also power our EV360 electric vehicle programme with Envision and Nissan"

"The port of Sunderland is benefiting from £100m from Wastefront for a world-first tyre recycling plant. Quantafuel is investing over £100m into plastic recycling and it is attracting investment from across the circular economy."

"HICSA – which will develop the skills required to build the homes of the future – will be key to attracting further investment and ensuring we have the skilled workers required to capitalise on the industries of tomorrow"

"Devolution will bring a £4.2bn package of investment and powers to our region, bringing our ports together to create a green super port, empowering us to make our own decisions and unlocking significant investment for our transport networks"

"I think we're in a great place but hopefully today will see us ask more questions of ourselves and help further refine and shape our plans to become a global smart city."

Sir David Bell, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive at the University of Sunderland described the university's role in helping to ensure the city is equipped with appropriately skilled graduates who want to remain living and working in the city.

"One example is the growth of our health related disciplines with thousands of students passing through our doors each year and ready to make a vital contribution to the NHS in Sunderland and beyond.

Our work has been growing each year, including the opening of our School of Medicine in 2014. Next summer is a highly significant moment as we see our first cohort of new doctors emerge in 2024.

I'm delighted to announce publicly that the university has submitted an audacious bid to central government to triple the size of our medical school, which if successful, will see us recruit 300 students every year as opposed to 100. Such an expansion will enable more opportunities for students from Sunderland and the North East to train as doctors, given they are scandalously unrepresented in medical school numbers across the UK. But we will also attract students from elsewhere in the UK and abroad who will choose to make Sunderland their home in the years and decades ahead. The five NHS trusts across the region and local authorities are also backing us.

So, if you want a definition of game-changing for the university or indeed the city, this is it."

A third research institute was launched this year and he believes that too will have a significant impact on the city, expanding their ecosystem of research and innovation.

"We train 800 teachers a year, social workers, police officers, youth and community workers, many who go on to work here. Our computer scientists, engineers, lawyers and future business leaders are all playing their part in enhancing the city's strengths. The new film studios will also complement the outstanding work our university does in TV & Film, which is often ranked among the best in the country."

Recent outcomes from the Government's Knowledge Exchange Transfer Partnership shows that the university is in the top 20%, recognising the practical impact of the work it does.

"A strong university needs a strong city and a strong city needs a strong university. In recent years, we can say in confidence, that together, we have been making that a reality.

Alan Johnson, Senior Vice President at Nissan said "The Expo is clearly going to be a significant and important series of events for the city and we're happy to be supporting it as Nissan"

His topic: public and private sector collaboration was typified by the depth of relationship between Nissan, Sunderland City Council and partners:

"I'm not exaggerating if I say Nissan wouldn't even be in the North East of England without the support of Sunderland City Council. Inviting a famous car manufacturer to set up here, in a city known for coal and shipbuilding, was as bold as it was forward thinking, and it was just the start... In almost four decades, we've gone from one to two production lines and we're now developing the first UK gigafactory"

He spoke of Nissan's investment in wind and solar farms - and their move towards sustainability long before the rest of the industry caught on.

"On behalf of Nissan, we're proud to be supporting Expo Sunderland and are very much looking forward to helping shape the future of the city."

Steve Davison, COO of Sunderland AFC spoke about the three global influences on the club's future. One is a government white paper, which if implemented properly, could futureproof football:

"Fundamentally, football is a broken business. Losses are at record levels. Just as an example of that, the championship owners spent more than the premier league clubs. We don't think it needs to be like that. The new financial regulations should go some way to ensuring football clubs are run far better in the future"

Sustainability and digital developments are at the forefront of their thinking:

"Just like any other business, we want to be net zero by 2028 and if successful, we will be the first football club to achieve this."

The challenge, he felt, was that as a football club, they're not specialists in digital or sustainability. But the current city vision is to be applauded, along with the council and all the other local stakeholders.

"Our collective job is to turn this into reality. We will help deliver this vision from a few different perspectives:

Through the club's 1 million+ attendance at matches and concerts last year (among the best in the UK). By embracing the future but also bringing the people with us.

We will be the first football club in the UK where you can go to a game and get connectivity on your phone, which will be essential to retain our position as a top 10 venue.

He concluded: "Football matters. We know the people of Sunderland care about the football club and of course we have to win. But we can also play a key role in creating a successful city. We think

we can add value beyond what we do on the pitch to support our city's ambitions. We can use our brand to accelerate behavioural change, improve event experiences and use the profile of football to proactively sell the city. It's amazing what great teams can achieve and we're proud to be part of Sunderland's team."

Session 2 - Creating Smart Cities

Rob Denton, Director, Local Government at Microsoft spoke about creating new pathways into jobs and attracting more people to the city.

"The ongoing investment shows how this is already happening. It's not all about having 5G at a football ground or embracing esports either, it will have a huge impact on social care and the lives of young people, drive investment and lead to increased productivity."

Liz St Louis, Director of Smart Cities at Sunderland City Council expanded:

"A smart city means better outcomes for people. It means next generation digital infrastructure and digital solutions that make Sunderland a better place to live, work and play."

Work to achieve this has been ongoing for four years now, with the council engaging heavily with residents to bring them on board.

"People need connectivity and having 5G connectivity underpinning everywhere will be the enabler to more development. We're installing wi-fi in our parks, enabling elderly and vulnerable people to lead healthier, safer lives and using it to tackle childhood obesity. The benefits of becoming a Smart City will affect the lives of absolutely everyone."

"From March next year we'll have self-driving vehicles running between the city centre, university and hospital which will massively enhance the lives of residents."

Charles O'Reilly, Commercial Director for Smart Places at Boldyn Networks talked about the destination beyond:

"Connectivity is fundamental to what we're doing and where we're going. There are things we'll be doing in the years ahead that we aren't even aware of now."

Matti Inkinen, CEO at Nomad Energy Solutions talked about how the digital challenge from a housing perspective: poor building data statistics, every property being unique and global challenges. Most solutions he says are national or local.

"Nomad activates historical data and tracks current data to help them plan and prioritise. Continuous monitoring and optimisation of energy demand and supply.

Through this, we are helping organisations (property owners) to decarbonise construction and optimise energy."

Session 3: Sustainable energy and circular economies

Keith Slater, Head of Environmental Sustainability at University of Sunderland said we need to move to a position where we're recycling more waste, reusing more materials and creating things that last longer and use less energy to produce.

"The global food system contributes 40% of global carbon emissions yet a third of that food goes straight in the bin. We must look at how we change behaviours. How do we collect and recycle it? How do we change the way people see food waste? Recycling however is only part of the issue. We must also look at where our food is grown."

Jordan Lacey, Business Development Director at Viridor Polymers spoke about plans at the Port of Sunderland:

"The new plastic recycling plant will be a UK-first and will recycle around 90,000 tonnes of plastic waste each and every year. It'll use new technology and produce new, raw materials which can then be used for new products."

Judith Sykes, Senior Director at Useful Projects talked about the way we design our homes and communities, which she feels must be reflected on a national level.

"I have been consulting with industry on how we can invest in infrastructure that benefits all. I've been working with the council on their energy and sustainability strategy and ensuring we have city-wide networks that will heat our green homes and the city is really leading the way on this.... making more sustainable homes is key to eliminating fuel poverty and ensuring our homes are affordable for generations of residents to come."

David Pierpoint, Chief Executive of Retrofit Academy CIC said:

"I'm incredibly excited to be here in Sunderland and seeing everything going on, it certainly won't be my last visit that's for sure...Sunderland – like many cities – has lots of housing that were built years ago and are unsustainable, so we must look at how we retrofit them and make them greener and more affordable."

He spoke of the enormous construction skills gap: "Most of the industry are on new build sites and huge commercial developers. It used to be a case of 'where do we get the money to build' now it's 'where do we get the people.'"

The academy has trained 5,500 retro fitters in the last five years.

Session 4: Inspiring and upskilling the next generation

Prof John Timmis, Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Sunderland posed the question: We graduate lots of students who go away, but how do we attract them back?

"They have the skills and experience but if the opportunities are being created here then they will come back.

We have a responsibility as a university to keep in touch with our alumni and attract them back here to live, work or even start their own businesses and I'm sure we'll see more do that as the city continues to develop and grow."

Claire Jones, Head of Skills at Nissan UK said:

"I was born in Sunderland, live here, went to uni here and work here. I'm very fortunate to have been able to see the opportunity and grow with Nissan. Collaboration is a key word and we do so much of it with the local community and the skills foundation."

"It's so important that young people can see the opportunities available to them within Sunderland. They must believe they can grow and prosper in the city and not be left behind."

The Nissan Skills Foundation has been in operation for almost ten years now and is massively engaged with the community. Nissan also has a school engagement programme.

"We've also recently started the Nissan Skills Academy with Sunderland College - a really exciting initiative. We're growing the skills and knowledge of young people as well as ensuring they have the right, positive mindset to achieve all they can.

We're showing young people career paths not just as Nissan, but the entire advanced manufacturing and engineering supply chain, securing the pipeline for the full industry."

Sara Cartin, Senior Training Manager at NHBC feels it's all about engaging with industry and working with key stakeholders to ensure they have the right curriculum to attract young people into the sectors that will shape the city in the future.

"We must get the message across to our young people that there are opportunities out there and real, exciting career paths in sectors like construction. We have to be really mindful that the homes of the future will be built differently, so ensuring we have the skills to meet the modern methods of construction will be central to ensuring Sunderland achieves its full potential."

Alex Wilkinson, Head of LRG North at Microsoft continued the theme:

"As Microsoft, we need the skilled youngsters to survive ourselves! This is why we're working with educators and primary schools to teach the tech skills required to ensure our young people are work ready."

"We also have a huge focus on getting people who aren't tech savvy into the digital world and ensuring they benefit from the solutions we're delivering and that is something that will be embedded into our work here.

Chester King, CEO at British Esports realised 'early doors' that to have future careers, we needed future skills, which is why they launched their own eSports qualifications - with 16 colleges and universities now offering them.

"We're seeing incredible attendance rates at our colleges and universities. Be it esports business, esports production or esports events and we expect Sunderland to massively benefit from that. If we can use esports as a way to get young people into business, marketing and tech, then that would be great. It's all about ensuring they have the skills needed to fill the jobs that will be created here in the future"

"We have partnerships with Sunderland College and the University of Sunderland and have our first students now working with us in the city. We're also looking to work with the police to keep young people off the streets, and this is all happening right here in Sunderland."

Session 5:

Delivery & Empowerment

Henry Kippin, Chief Executive of the North of Tyne Combined Authority said devolution will deliver greater investment in housing, transport and technology. It'll be huge for the North East.

"We need people in Barnard Castle to be able to get to Newcastle and up to Alnwick that's easy and affordable. The devolution of transport will allow us to make changes like that."

He explained that, as with any council or public agency, there will be scrutiny agencies and public decision making; a published investment plan and engagement with the public around that.

"What we want to do as the new combined authority is hit the ground running and invest in projects which we can see immediately hitting momentum."

John McCabe, CEO of North East Chamber explained how much time and effort has been spent to ensure businesses have been involved in the devolution discussions

"ensuring we have the skills required to grasp the opportunities that the industries of tomorrow will present"

"The confidence you feel coming into this city today is amazing. All credit to the city council for making this event happen and for everybody coming today. Such an event shows the city's ambition and is great for the region."

Allison Thompson, Chair of Sunderland and South Tyneside NHS Trust said:

"The key is to bring communities on the journey with us. We are now attracting nurses to work in parts of the North East that we previously struggled with and the investment ongoing across the region will only make us more attractive"

The trust employs 8,500 people.

"It's a powerhouse on its own, but even we know this would not be possible without collaboration, such as Prof David Bell's announcement today that the University is aiming to treble the size of its medical school."

"The Eye Hospital on Riverside Sunderland breaking ground is also a real gamechanger for the city. Already we're beginning to attract even more experienced professionals and they're coming to live in the city as a result."

Faye Sedgewick, KTP Research Associate at BDN said:

"Bringing people on board with the Future City plans will be key to securing buy-in from the public and really unlocking its potential. The North East has some of the most deprived housing so we must ensure we use the funding we receive differently to address the real needs of our communities and partnership working will be key to this."

Patrick Melia – Chief Executive of Sunderland City Council concluded "The real thing for our communities is that they feel the benefit. Through devolution we'll have millions of extra pounds to spend on skills which can help address the manufacturing, construction and healthcare shortages we've heard about today.

By working with the business sector, we can help ensure we have the talent required to fill the roles of the future."

"Housing is a real issue too. We need great quality social housing and executive housing and we're coming forward with propositions to address that.

By embracing modern methods of construction, we can do that at scale. The funding from the combines authority will also help us to achieve our goals.

There's lots of other parts of the devolution deal that will make a difference but skills, transport and housing will be key. It will be transformational for the city."

Closing remarks

Patrick continued: "We've had lots of plaudits but also lots of challenging questions, which has been great for the city.

A huge thank you to everyone for turning up and taking part. It's really important for us as a city. We've spoken a lot about partnership and collaboration and while I've seen a lot of that over the last five years, this will only increase that.

Hopefully you've learned a lot about what we're doing as a city and will join us on our journey to making Sunderland a global Smart City."

Steve Davison, COO of Sunderland AFC said:

"It's been inspirational. We really have to grasp the opportunity to develop on this."

Creative thinking comes from diversity of thought and I think this event has really helped that. I've learned a lot today and I'm sure everyone else has too.

From the Expo team, a huge thank you to everyone who took part. Especially our speakers, who as Mark Easton said provided: "a really high quality of speaking and discussion – really plugged into what's going on."