

09 April 2026

Dear Stephen,

Thank you for your letter on behalf of NE1's business members and accommodation providers.

I would firstly like to echo your view that the Gateshead Quays Arena will be transformational for the area. I am delighted to be able to support this project, which will bring in much welcomed creative and cultural experiences for local residents, as well as attracting tourists into Newcastle and Gateshead from further afield.

As you will be aware, following the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, initial plans to develop a larger International Conference Centre and Arena in the Gateshead Quays area were reviewed to ensure they would continue to offer the best value for money, alongside securing the greatest impact for local residents. The Strategic Outline Case produced as a result of this review provides a clear, evidence-led conclusion that the best option currently for the region is to pursue a market led arena model. For this reason, I have supported the investment of £24million into the Gateshead Arena project, so we can get spades in the ground as soon as possible and give our region the state-of-the-art venue it deserves.

This is only the start of my ambitions for the region. Over the next three years I will also be investing £13million into commissioning and delivering an ambitious events programme across the North East, which will support communities, champion our culture, creative and sports industries and turbocharge visitor numbers. As well as larger-scale festivals, sports events and concerts we will also be looking to include everything from conferences and conventions to village shows and town markets into our plans, to ensure we build a sustainable and impactful events programme that benefits residents, visitors and businesses alike.

I will continue to make the case for more investment and bigger projects in my conversations with private sector partners and government. I am grateful for NE1's support and direction so far and I look forward to continuing to work together.

Regards,
Kim



Kim McGuinness
North East Mayor