

Jake Milner

Teesside University

DTA Future Societies Researcher

Where did all the justice go?

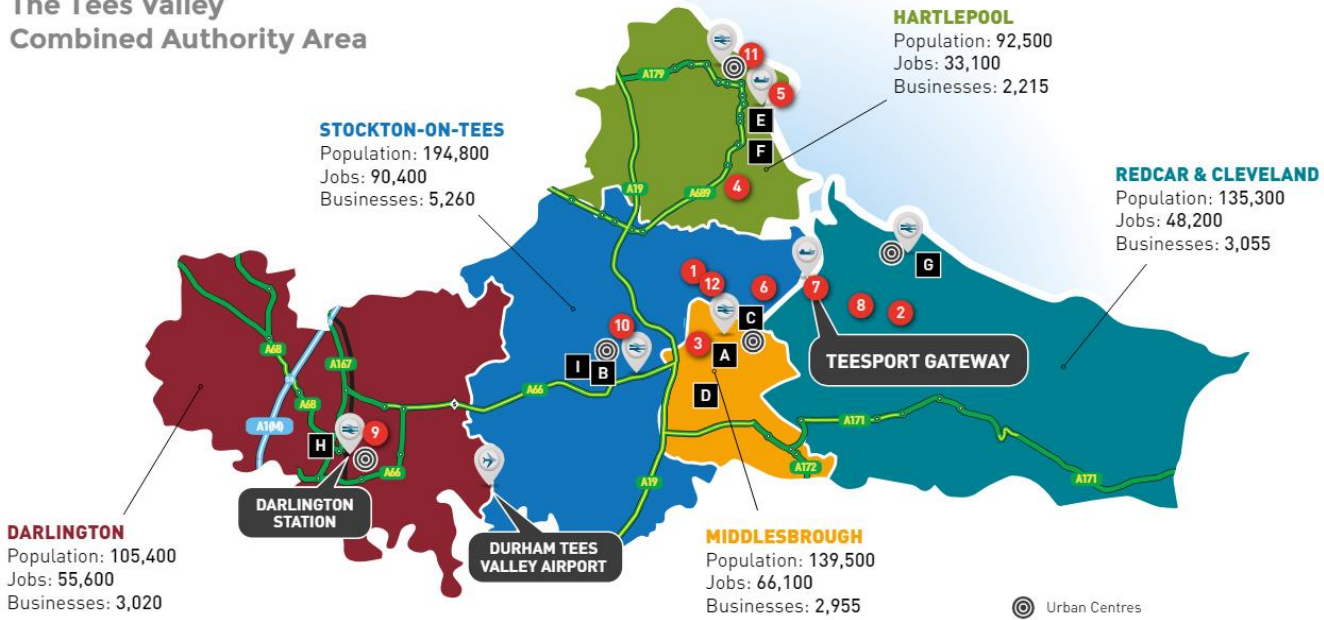
Industrial Heritage in the Green Economy and the case of the Dorman Long Tower

**LEVELLING
— UP —
IS HERE**



Teesside's Geographic Profile

The Tees Valley Combined Authority Area



Industrial Change on Teesside

A solar farm, a Starbucks drive-thru and hundreds of homes: The huge plans to be decided in 2023

Councillors will have to make decisions on whether to grant planning permission to a string of significant proposals

Hopes to create new 1,000 job 'clean energy campus' in North East

Work starts on the South Bank quay set to create UK's 'premier offshore wind hub'

Ben Houchen: Teesside is no longer seen as an old industrial heartland in decline

Teesside identified among UK's net-zero jobs 'hot spots'

The green economy is supporting nearly 20,000 jobs and worth more than £2bn to the regional economy, the CBI report says

Bright light of hope in electric arc furnaces

Teesside set for world's biggest waste-to-SAF plant

News

A new £1.5bn Teesside plant that will convert up to one million tonnes of household waste into jet fuel each year is planned to be operational in 2028.

After demise of steel, Teesside strikes back: Green energy powerhouse with billions from BP rising from ashes

CONFIRMED

BATTERY STORAGE



TEESWORKS

EOS ENERGY OPTIMISATION SOLUTIONS

Teesside's Industrial History

- The area has been at the apex of deep, long term historical trends for the last 50 years.

- This has included mass economic upheaval however has also left a legacy of the area being 'left-behind'.

- Globalisation



- 1980s saw over 20,000 job losses in steel and 15,000 in chemicals.

- Deindustrialisation



- Unemployment in Cleveland exceeded 20 percent.

- Rise of the service economy



- Over 100,000 heavy industry related jobs replaced by low pay, precarious service sector employment.

- Green economic transition.

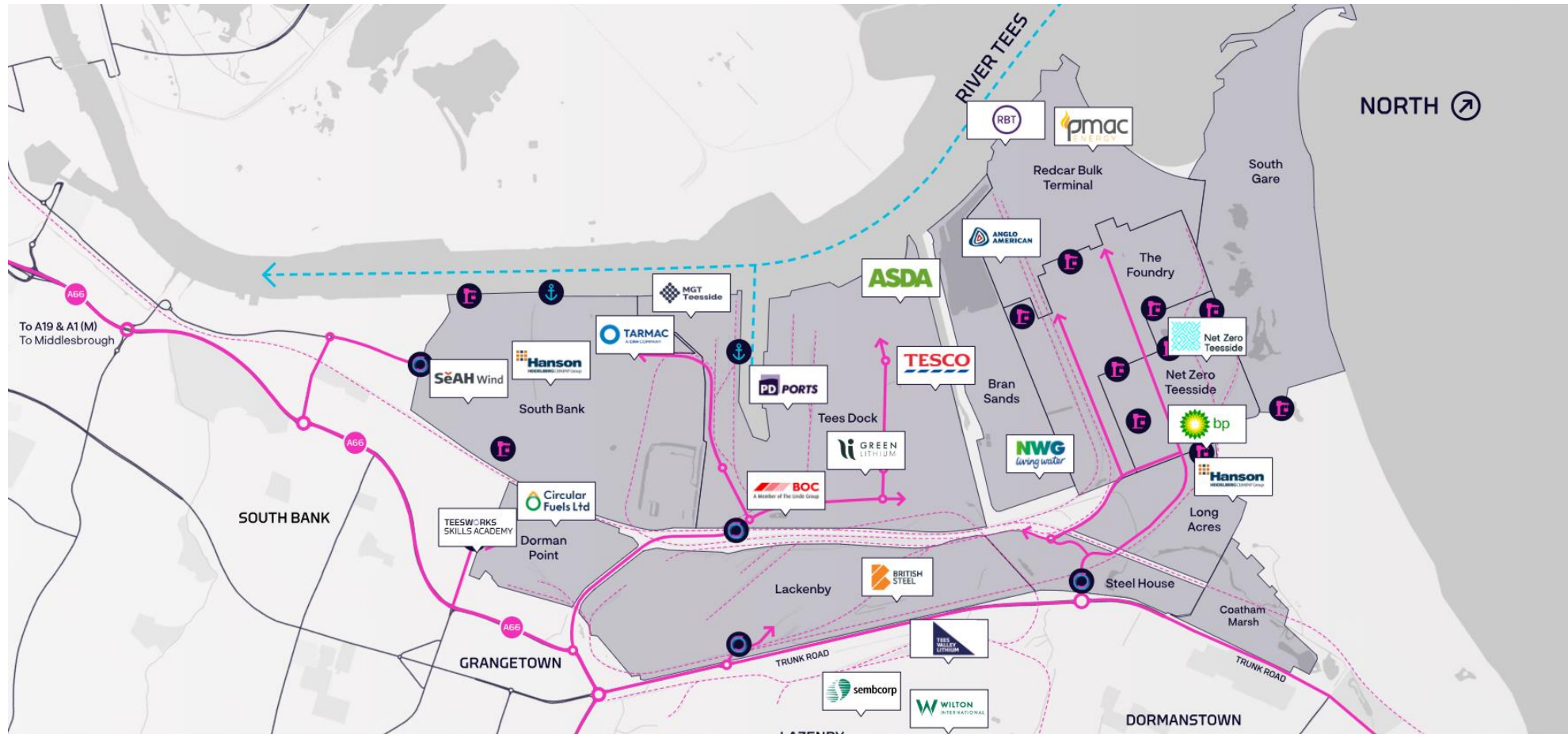


- World first decarbonised industrial cluster by 2030



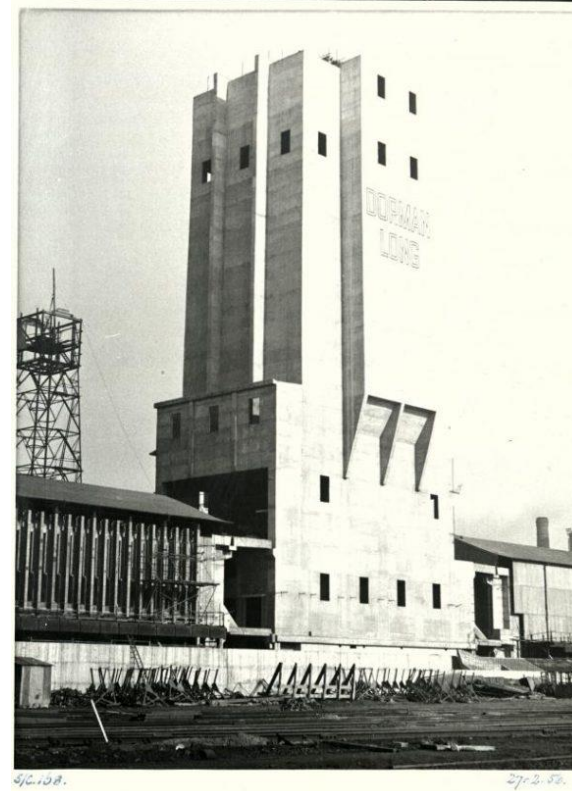
Undated, Ironmasters District, British Steel Collection, Teesside Archives

Teesworks Today: Green economic development as a solution?



Dorman Long Building

- After the Steelworks' eventual closure in 2015, what to do with the land has become a controversial issue.
- A 'masterplan' was devised that would put the land at the centre of a sustainable industrial cluster. Land was sold to private investors.
- Dorman Long building, a former coal bunker for the steelworks, was listed at the last minute before its demolition – there had been a plan for a heritage walk.
- However, listing was revoked by then Culture Secretary Nadine Dorris and the building was demolished anyway to make way for green investment.
- Has led to controversy and a discursive discussion about the region's identity and regeneration.



The controversy:

- “The Dorman Long tower is one of UK's best examples of brutalist architecture and a proud symbol of Teesside's industrial heritage. This is just tragic” – Former Labour Mayoral Candidate Jessie Joe Jacobs
- “If people want to stand in the way of jobs and investment then they should leave Teesside because I’m not going to be apologetic for wanting to deliver a bright future for local people...our heritage does not lie in a rotting coal bunker, our heritage lies in the people that built this great region.” Ben Houchen to ITV Tyne Tees 19/09/2021.



Ben Houchen:

- Interviewer: “[You] said that [the region’s heritage] doesn't lie in a rotten coal bunker...and those people who didn't believe that should your words were to they should leave Teesside. So just wonder...where's the nuance there, do you think?”
- Houchen: **“Yeah. Well, I think [audible stuttering] I've said a lot of things over the last six years... [the quote] is probably slightly loosely worded, but I stand by the fact that heritage does not lie in old assets....**
- **...without getting rid of Dorman Long Tower, SeAH wouldn't be creating 2000 jobs that are going to help the offshore wind industry helping decarbonise the economy, which is exactly what the country and the world wants...”**
- **“the view is why should we punish future generations to get a job on a site that has provided jobs for generations before us? Just because some people want to remember by looking at a physical manifestation of that that it foregoes other jobs for other people”**
- Interviewer: “Is there anything you could have done differently in terms of the heritage of the iron steelworks?”
- Houchen: **“If I'm honest, no, I don't think there is. I don't think there is...”**

Issue 1: Not everyone in the local community accepts the narrative of disassociation

- Industrial collective memory is complex and fluid.
- The past is seen as valuable as well as simultaneously painful and Teesside's industrial heritage is seen as part and parcel of the local community's identity.
- As such, not everyone accepts the narrative of disassociation:
 - **"Its ideal for a museum because you've got the building. Its there, it's a square monolith building. You could have everything in there, and all the exhibits in there....it would have been ideal but nobody had a vision or the foresight to do that sort of thing... and its like, there's nothing in this country for steelmaking on that scale"**
 - **"could you imagine how much people would want to come to see that sort of thing...you go to see Killoch Mine and its only a wheel isn't it, you walk so far in for a minute and back out again but how many people go there every year. This would be massive and interactive. It would be brilliant."**
 - **"An act of vandalism"**.

Issue 2: As such, this has affected how people *perceive* Teesside's green transition.

- It is critical that green industry and infrastructure projects have public buy in.
- There is strong animosity from a large section of the community that believes:
 - 1) The local community is being ignored, is not consulted adequately, and decision makers have little respect for the area's history and heritage.
 - 2) This feeds into a historical narrative of Teesside (and the north east more generally) being disproportionately affected negatively by economic change and a failure to regenerate the area.
 - Investment: **"We we need the investment and whether we'll get it or not is another matter. We need investment and we need to be treated with respect, which I don't think we are, but I'm not sure that any government from London is really that bothered about the North East"**.

Issue 3: There is nothing dichotomous about industrial heritage and green economic transition.

- Houchen framed the issues as though you can only have one or the other.
- This seems to be rejected by community members.
 - There is a strong desire for new industry, wealth, jobs, opportunities etc.
 - Yet there is also a strong desire to preserve the region's historical industrial identity.
- The same participant who stated 'vandalism' earlier also said:
 - **“More times we went back and seeing getting a little bit less, a little bit less than the last and just got sort of like just used to it. It's just like even with they started to knock it down. Yeah, it's got to come down now because, it's, we need to do something else. So it's more of like just a relief. To get it down and now start again do something different. It was just like cause to leave it there was just like a, it's like a taunt, you know. This was your steelworks but its not anymore. Its just a wreck, so it's no good there so just get rid of it.”**
- Mining heritage, green futures project.

Conclusion



It is my contention that the process of green industrialisation is inevitably impacted by the process of deindustrialisation that occurred prior.



Historical unjust transition continues to have an impact on the way our current energy transition is perceived and understood.



Without adequate consultation and tangible (and, significantly, *just*) distributional benefits public buy-in to green industry is not guaranteed on Teesside.



Both the preservation of industrial heritage and new green opportunities are perceived to be desirable, and the local community sees this through no binary framework.