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**OVERVIEW OF LEISURE AND LOCAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO**

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1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work undertaken under the Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio.

**Stonebridge Strengthening Works**

2. Following the successful strengthening element of the project the final phase has commenced. This was scheduled for Summer and involves shot blasting and paint system to protect the remaining steel beams that were not replaced. This requires scaffolding all the way underneath the bridge on the two outside spans. This has meant that the road has had to be restricted to buses exiting Stonebridge only.
3. The scheme also involves the repainting of the balustrade and replacement of the lighting on the bridge. The scheme is programmed to be complete by the end of September 2016.

**Central Park South Junction and Spine Road**

4. The construction of the spine road commenced in March 2016. Initial work involved the removal of the top surface and disposal. Works are also ongoing to provide the infrastructure to enable further development. This is programmed for complete by the end of February 2017.

**Beaumont Street and Feethams Improvements**

5. This scheme has been delivered over a number of phases to coordinate with construction works around the cinema and multi-storey car park. The first three phases are now complete and involved the creation of a permanent one-way system around Beaumont Street, provision of a level access from the Multi-storey car park to the town centre via Chancery Lane and the provision of pedestrian improvements around the Feethams/Beaumont Street junction.
6. Further works are proposed to the footways around Houndgate and Feethams.

**Sustainable Travel Transition Year Funding**

7. The Tees Valley local authorities have successfully bid for £0.994m from the Department for Transport's Sustainable Travel Transition Year Fund for the delivery of a programme of sustainable travel measures. This includes the delivery of the Personalised Travel Planning and Marketing programmes by Darlington Borough Council across the Tees Valley. The objectives are to increase levels of walking and cycling and to support sustainable access to employment, with a focus on

travelling by train and bus.

### **Local Growth Fund – Sustainable Access to Employment**

8. The first three projects of this Tees Valley programme have now been approved following the due diligence process and these will be delivered this financial year. The projects are the John Street cycle route; further pedestrian and traffic management improvements in Feethams/Houndgate; and pedestrian/cycle improvements in the Parkgate area. These projects are all linked to growth location and improving access for sustainable modes of transport.

### **Highway Maintenance Schemes**

9. Recently completed scheme:

- (a) Estoril Road – Carriageway reconstruction

10. Ongoing schemes :-

- (a) Minors Crescent – Patching prior to Carriageway Micro Asphalt
  - (b) Witton Crescent - Patching prior to Carriageway Micro Asphalt

11. Schemes due to start:

- (a) A167 Croft Road Phase 5 – Carriageway resurfacing
  - (b) Church Lane Middleton St George – Channels and Patching prior to Carriageway Micro Asphalt
  - (c) Footway Micro Asphalt Surfacing Contract 2016
  - (d) Carriageway Micro Asphalt Surfacing Contract 2016
  - (e) Alliance Street/Otley Terrace/Ann's Terrace – Carriageway Resurfacing
  - (f) A1150 Stockton Road – Inbound Duals Carriageway Resurfacing
  - (g) A167 North Road – Carriageway Patching Scheme
  - (h) Hopelands, Heighington – Carriageway Resurfacing
  - (i) Roundhill Road/West End/The Green, Hurworth – Carriageway Resurfacing
  - (j) A67 – Sadberge Road, Mill Lane and Airport and A6072 School Aycliffe Lane – Roundabout Carriageway Retexturing

### **Objections to Traffic Regulation Orders**

12. Cabinet gave consideration to objections received to the proposed amendments to the residents' parking schemes in Cleveland Terrace and Rockingham Street.
13. Cabinet agreed to set aside the objections and officers are progressing with the proposed changes.

### **Update on Covered and Open Market Partnering**

14. As agreed at Cabinet on 11 February 2016 the market traders of the Indoor and Outdoor Market were offered the first option to come together and make a proposal to buy or lease the market, however, following discussion with the representatives

of the traders, it was confirmed that they did not wish to put forward a proposal but will work with the Council to find an appropriate partner.

15. Cabinet has released £200,000 from the £500,000 capital budget set aside for the Covered Market to carry out essential repairs to the structure of the Covered Market.
16. This investment will assist in keeping the market viable in the short term and will enhance the opportunity of attracting a partner.

### **Sports Development**

17. A preferred contractor has been selected to redevelop the Artificial Grass Pitch at Eastbourne Sports Complex following the successful application to the Football Foundation that secured funding of £412,000. This scheme commenced in July and will be completed in September 2016 for the new Junior Playing season. Key partners benefiting from the redevelopment will include Middleton Rangers JFC, Darlington Youth JFC and Darlington 1883 FC as well as St Aidan's CE Academy.

### **Funding Award**

18. The Sports Development Team secured a £65,000 award for Darlington Parks Bowls Association from Sport England towards refurbishing the playing surfaces at North Lodge and North Park and upgrading the ancillary facilities. This will support the development of bowls throughout the town and ensure that the participants have a higher quality experience and will hopefully support an increase in participation at both venues.

### **Darlington Residents More Active**

19. The number of people who regularly take part in sport in Darlington is rising. Sport England has published the results of its Annual National Survey, which charts participation in Sport and Physical Activity Results, confirming that Darlington is ranked 2nd out of the 12 North East Districts in terms of adults regularly participating in sport, taking part in at least 30 minutes activity per week. Darlington's Sports Development Team has played a pivotal role here, generating more than £2m of grant funding to improve sports facilities in recent years, setting up satellite sports clubs, engagement programmes and growing the number of clubs and volunteers.

### **Number of Sessions Delivered in the Community**

20. During the last three months the Sports Development team has delivered 1887 community sports sessions with an average contact time of 6.5 hours per participant. The throughput so far is 9689 visits with a total of 2090 hours of delivery. This was through various projects including the Active Darlington Project, after school clubs, sheltered housing project, school sport, community outreach sport, physical activity provision and holiday activities sessions.

## **School Sport Partnership**

21. The School Games Sports programme engaged 94 Young Leaders who helped at a variety of festivals, officiating and coaching.
22. The team was successful in gaining coach bursaries from Tees Valley Sport for local clubs and community groups. Successful applications included three bursaries for Headlanders Netball Club, one for Darlington Table Tennis Academy and Mowden Park Rugby Club and one for Darlington Move More Team. All of the bursaries are towards level one and level two national governing body coaching qualifications.

## **Sheltered Housing Physical Activity Programme**

23. Phase 2 consultation has taken place, all schemes within the Sheltered Housing programme have now been met and 81 residents are regularly attending sessions with a throughput of 430 total attendances since the project began with 92 per cent Female and 8 per cent Male. Of all of the service users engaged to date 37 per cent have a disability. 149 sessions have been delivered with 262 contact hours since the onset of the programme. Partnership work has been established with a local choir who continue to offer regular performances in the venues, Head of Steam, Locomotion, Shildon and Darlington College.

## **Best of Darlington Awards**

24. The Best of Darlington Awards took place on 6 May 2016 celebrating everything positive the people, businesses, individuals and voluntary organisations of Darlington have achieved.

## **The Round 50 Mile Cycle Ride**

25. The Round 50 Mile Cycle Ride on 5 June 2016 kick started the first of four rides taking place over the following four months. It was perfect weather conditions for the 96 cyclists who participated and completed the ride.

## **Race for Life**

26. On 5 June 2016 just fewer than 2,000 females participated in this year's Race for Life in aid of Cancer Research held in the South Park. Local running clubs, traffic management, stewards and Council events staff provide Cancer Research with numerous volunteers to enable the event to take place.

## **Civic Theatre**

27. The refurbishment works to the Civic Theatre commenced as planned on the 13 June. The first phase of work will be to carry out the removal of asbestos containing materials prior to the commencement of the main demolition and clearance work.

28. The Theatre enjoyed excellent business during the last few weeks leading up to the closure for the restoration. Vincent and Flavia's 'Last Tango' was seen by 5000 people and took £140,000 at the Box Office, plus generating high secondary spend.
29. The last full week was 'Gangsta Granny' from Birmingham Stage Company, which was seen by just under 7000 people including 48 school groups. Three young people from the Theatre's ArtsSpark Youth Dance had a role in the cast while it was in Darlington. Audience feedback was excellent and the company are booked to return with another David Walliams title in the Theatre's launch season.
30. Young people from the ArtsSpark Youth Dance company took part in a workshop with Phoenix Dance Company on 4 May and also were chosen to take part in Northern Exchange, a prestigious training scheme which aims to nurture young choreographers, create stronger connections between youth dance groups across the north and offer choreographic professional development opportunities for Youth Dance Group Leaders.
31. The Theatre's House Manager and Audience Development Officer led a number of heritage tours for families and for schools, which have been very popular. Hard hat tours will be offered during the construction period so people can follow the progress of the works as well as a wide range of other engagement opportunities aimed at maintaining interest in the Theatre while it is closed and also supporting heritage learning.
32. The Theatre has begun research and development for a piece of site specific immersive theatre to be presented in the Theatre's launch season. The final event before the Theatre closed was 'Live at the Hippodrome', which was hosted by Christopher Biggins. The event which was a celebration of the Theatre's heritage and community engagement and was sponsored by The Friends of the Theatre, Rockcliffe Hall and MT Print. It was attended by 744 people and raised £12,348 in ticket sales and programme sales of £639 and a bucket collection of £312.42. All proceeds go to the restoration fund.
33. The event also launched a new film to be used for fundraising and also a campaign to sponsor seats in the new theatre which is fronted by actor Stephen Tomkinson, who also generously narrated the film. Although it is early days the seat campaign has already raised £5,975.
34. In May we received confirmation of a major grant of £100,000 for the restoration fund, from the Garfield Weston Foundation as well as an offer of £50,000 from the Gillian Dickinson Trust.
35. The Civic Theatre was handed over to the contractors for construction on 13 June. The Cornmill box office remains open and the remaining staff transferred to temporary office accommodation next door to the Dolphin Centre. A programme to retain and develop audiences is being developed while the theatre is dark and within a short period of time shows will be going on sale for the opening season.

## **Creative Darlington**

### **Strategic**

36. Creative Darlington and the Civic Theatre are supporting the development of a Grants for the Arts programme proposal focused on audience development for theatre and drama activity in Darlington, which will be submitted by Darlington Borough Council. Subject to successful application the programme will run whilst the capital programmes to renovate the Hippodrome and construct Theatre Hullabaloo are underway and leave a legacy in terms of audience development and the intelligence key agencies have around those interested in theatre and drama activity in Darlington. Proposed activity is expected to involve Theatre Hullabaloo, The Civic/Hippodrome, Jabberwocky Market and OddManOut and Audience Agency.

### **Audience Development**

37. Creative Darlington allocated financial support to the Durham Music Service led programme to bring the Hallé orchestra to Darlington to work with a number of local schools and the full Hallé Orchestra to deliver a schools concert and a public evening concert at the Dolphin Centre on 23 June 2016. The programme has also received financial support from Arts Council England through Grants for the Arts, Darlington Building Society, the Gillian Dickinson Trust and Orchestras Live. The evening concert sold out and the afternoon schools performance engaged 700 primary school children from across the Borough. There may be opportunities for Creative Darlington to further develop its relationship with Durham Music Service.
38. Creative Darlington supported the first IncludFEST programmed by Tin Arts in South Park, Darlington. Tin Arts are committed to leading the way in making dance accessible to all. Creative Darlington is supporting the promotion of IncludFEST Tees Valley in 2016, held in South Park, Darlington on 24 July 2016. IncludFEST 2015 feedback indicates the park is very well suited to support a free, inclusive arts festival, for children, young people and families, which especially welcomes and caters for those with disabilities or additional needs.

### **William Shakespeare's Celebrations**

39. On 23 April 2016 Darlington library hosted a special 'Weekend for Will' to help mark the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare's death. Crown Street Library joined forces with Darlington Green Theatre and the Civic Theatre to host a weekend of Shakespearean events to celebrate his life and works over the weekend.
40. The library marked the anniversary with a display of books, including an eyewitness guide to the fascinating life and times of the man considered history's greatest playwright.
41. Darlington Green Theatre, well-known for its popular Shakespeare in the Park productions, staged two showings of an adapted version Hamlet in the Art Gallery. The following day, Infinite Jest Theatre Company presented Foolin' Around: Fun Shakespeare for Kids aged over seven in the Crown Street Art Gallery. The

children were invited to become an Infinite Jest actor as they explored the world of Shakespeare's Kings, Queens, villains and fools during an interactive workshop.

### **Zineo – Online Magazines**

42. Darlington Libraries is now offering a selection of free magazines and comics for adults, children and teens accessible via smart phones, computers or tablets. Library members can download or stream popular material from our website for free. There is also an option to sign up for free email reminders when the next edition comes out.

### **Crossing the Tees Book**

43. The book festival for the Tees Valley is now in its third year. In Darlington there was a range of events for adults and children held between 10 and 25 June, 2016. Highlights include sensory play and stories and 'Imagine Me' Under the Sea themed story sessions for National Bookstart Week.
44. Adults enjoyed talks about the history of the Iron and Steel industry on Teesside from Dr Joan Heggie. Divers and Time Team regulars, Bob Middlemass and Rolfe Michinson, talked about their archaeological finds from the River Tees complete with some artefacts to accompany the talk. History Wardrobe returned on 21 June with its Titanic themed event, with poet, Natalie Scott, leading a poetry/drama workshop to explore Titanic themed poetry.
45. Colin Pinney in character as Patrick, Father of the Brontës, told the story of his son Bramwell and daughters Charlotte, Emily and Anne.
46. The Charleston Charlies entertained everyone and those living with Dementia and their Carers were particularly welcomed. They sang and played instruments whilst wearing their top hat and tails, tea and scones were provided to help make sure everyone had a fabulous morning. An extra event was provided later in the day for Age UK, for the enjoyment of their regular users.

### **Centre for Local Studies**

47. For Local History Month in May, the Centre for Local Studies showed displays about the Darlington Grammar School and Darlington's Conscientious Objectors during World War I. The rare Darlington Local Tribunal photograph was also on display from the Local Studies collection for all to see.
48. Special events which took place to celebrate Local History Month included five library tours, talks about Beamish Museum, 5th Battalion DLI in World War I, the history of Darlington Grammar School, and Durham at War - the Downing Papers. Beamish Museum also had a display and stall in the Lending Library for an outreach session one Saturday.

## **Markets - Love Your Local Market Event**

49. Darlington markets celebrated the Love Your Local Market event with a specialist market held on 21 May. Twenty additional traders joined the regular Open Market having the chance to join in the experience of being a first time market trader. Live music and street entertainment, together with children's activities and games, were held along West Row and Joseph Pease Place which attracted many visitors to the town. The covered market had a busy trading day and it was commented that there had been a lot of 'new faces' visiting the hall with quite a number coming from Durham.
50. In addition to the street entertainment, the winners of the Town Clock Tour completion enjoyed their guided tour up the tower. Forty winners in total took part in the tours on 21 and 26 May 2016.

## **Winter 2015/16**

51. A particularly mild winter was experienced and whilst this was the case, gritting operations were still undertaken on 107 occasions throughout the winter period, using approximately 3000 tonnes of rock salt. No concerns or issues were raised during the winter period.

## **Street Cleansing**

52. The annual performance for the Street Cleansing Service 2015/16 financial year is now available and this shows, in relation to local environmental quality, that only 4.5 per cent of streets inspected (for litter, detritus, graffiti etc.) failed to meet the required standard. This is an excellent result, which is also supported by residents who regularly undertake litter picking in their area, and highlights the good work being undertaken by the Street Cleansing team.

**Councillor Nick Wallis**  
**Cabinet Member with Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio**