
OVERVIEW OF LEISURE AND LOCAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

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

Schemes of Work

2. Highway maintenance schemes due to start:
- (a) Greenbank Road - Woodland Road to Gladstone Street - carriageway refurbishment
 - (b) Greenbank Road - Woodland Road to Gladstone Street – carriageway refurbishment
 - (c) Portland Place and Larchfield Street to Duke Street – carriageway refurbishment
 - (d) School Summer Holiday schemes – carriageway refurbishment
 - (e) Inner Ring Road - Northgate Roundabout – carriageway refurbishment
 - (f) B6275 Piercebridge Phase 1 – through the village – carriageway refurbishment
 - (g) C46 Haughton Road Phase 2 - McMullen Road to Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor (DETC) – carriageway refurbishment
 - (h) Hollyhurst Road – Woodland Road to Orchard Road – carriageway refurbishment; and
 - (i) Tubwell Row/Crown Street Roundabout – carriageway refurbishment
3. Highway maintenance schemes currently ongoing:
- (a) A167 Croft Road Phase 6 – carriageway refurbishment
4. Highway maintenance schemes recently completed:
- (a) Bates Avenue Phase 1 – footpath renewal; and
 - (b) A6072 Redworth Phase 1 – carriageway refurbishment

Central Park South Junction, Link Road and Car Park

5. The main works are now complete. The traffic signal controlled junction will become fully operational in the coming weeks. This will create the highway infrastructure required to enable the commercial sector of Central Park to be delivered. Two premises are already in operation – Business Central and the National Biologics Centre. Two further developments are in the pipeline – National Horizons Centre and the Healthcare Futures Centre.

A68 Rotary Way Improvement Scheme

6. Works have now commenced on the main section of this scheme with a completion date towards the end of November 2017. The scheme involves the widening of the dual carriageway approach to the roundabout to accommodate a third lane. The circulatory lane of the roundabout will also be widened. The works are funded as a result of a successful bid of £1.01m to Highways England.
7. The scheme requires the closure of the south bound carriageway of the A68 in order to facilitate safe working conditions. The traffic is being managed through a contraflow system. There will inevitably be some additional delay whilst the works are ongoing.
8. This forms part of a package of works to increase capacity on the A68 in order to accommodate the additional development trips from the proposed extension to the West Park Garden Village and commercial development at Faverdale. The further works include a link road from Edward Pease Way to Newton Lane and improvements to Cockerton roundabout and Woodlands Road roundabout. The net effect of these schemes will be to improve traffic flow in the area in the short to medium term.

John Street Cycleway

9. The John Street cycle route will be formally opened in September. This completes the missing link in the Harrowgate Hill Cycle Route, which links the north of Darlington to the town centre. It provides a quiet route taking in quieter streets and off road sections. The new route also opens up access to the historic Skerne Bridge also known as the £5 Note Bridge and which has significant connections with the inaugural passenger train journey in 1825. A gateway feature will be added to the entrance to the route off Northgate in the coming weeks to signpost the route from the Head of Steam Museum and North Road Station. It is hoped that the route will be well used by walkers and cyclists both for leisure and commuting purposes.

Riverside Park

10. This scheme was completed at the end of June. There are large areas of ground that have been seeded and additional seeding will take place in the early autumn to ensure that the grass does take.

Public Transport

11. From May, Arriva has been offering the new 'Twilight' fare, which is a £1 anywhere in Darlington Town Zone single evening fare to encourage more people to make use of evening bus services. The Council has worked with Arriva, Vue cinema, Prezzo and Mangobean to provide special offers to those travelling by bus in May. Arriva are continuing to trial the £1 evening fare and will then assess its impact on revenue and ridership. Early indications that the new fare has been successful are promising with 1254 cinema vouchers being redeemed in May; however the impact

on ridership needs further analysis.

12. As part of the Access Fund work we targeted 2967 residential properties north of North Road, Darlington to receive Personalised Travel Planning on the doorstep. Within this allocation of households was a control group of approximately 500 houses from which we will draw baseline data to compare against our full Personal Travel Planning (PTP) process. In total 896 residents had a conversation with a Travel Advisor, with 595 residents agreeing to a revisit in three months to assess whether any travel behaviours have changed. The main mode of transport in this area was car at 55.5 per cent, second was bus with 21.3 per cent, whilst third was walking at 12.6 per cent. Promotion of the upcoming John Street Cycle Path was prioritised throughout the residential conversations and it is hoped that in three months the number of residents cycling will have increased from the 1.9 per cent recorded on the doorstep.
13. During engagement at Darlington Job Centre we spoke with 206 jobseekers, helping them plan travel to interviews and plan journeys to possible employment sites. 150 Jobseekers thought the information/resources given would help them to find more work and training opportunities. 155 Jobseekers are happy for us to follow up in three months to see whether we have helped them to find employment or training.
14. A workplace step challenge has been running at EE over the past four weeks with good staff engagement. This is the start of a number of initiatives to help develop an up to date travel plan over the course of the next year. EE at Darlington hope to get the travel plan accredited and build a sustainable transport culture into the workplace.

Active Darlington Project – Extension Funding

15. The project has delivered 137 different sessions in a range of sports and a total of 3378 sessions, equating to 4411 hours of delivery. Over a period of three years the project managed to engage 3197 people; 1573 males and 1624 females. We have had a throughput of 23000 visits. The project was so successful we received a further year's funding of £37,516 to continue the project from April 2017 to March 2018.

Sportivate Funding Bids

16. The Darlington Move More team had 14 successful Sportivate bids accepted by Tees Valley Sport worth £4000; for delivering sport and physical activities. These activities will be put in place over the next year.
17. Junior Gym, Back to Netball and Junior Football sessions have all been delivered on site at Eastbourne Sports Complex already, engaging 75 young people aged 11-16.

Marketing

18. Darlington Move More Team received funding for a marketing video which has been filmed via a Tyneside Cinema filming company on site, to promote facilities and partners. The funding from Tees Valley Sport will hopefully increase awareness of the site through social media platforms and via the website. The final video has now been completed and is being used for promotional marketing purposes.

Mass Dance

19. On 20 May, approximately 600 participants took part in this year's Mass Dance in the Market Square. The theme 'Tribute to the Services' attracted performers from the Mini Police and the NHS.

Race for Life

20. The DBC Events team worked in partnership with Cancer Research Race for Life, which was held in South Park. The Darlington event raised in the region of £10K for the charity.

Round 50 Cycle Ride

21. On 4 June, the first of the four tourist cycle rides took place attracting over 150 participants; one of the highest attendances for this particular ride.

Darlington Culture Volunteers (DCV)

22. The collaboration between the Theatre and Darlington for Culture is developing well. A website has been developed for DCV, with the help of the Council's web team, which will communicate volunteer opportunities as they arise, and share news, information and celebrate achievements. The website went live in July 2017.
23. Volunteers are currently undertaking training for archive research and capture, helping the Theatre to progress towards digitising the archive. The Heritage Learning and Engagement Officer has led some sessions with the volunteers who have been recording objects, documents and images for the archive. Work is underway to develop a complete chronological list of all the shows presented at the Theatre since it opened in 1907.

Master Skills Workshops

24. Master Skills Workshops are taking place, giving people an opportunity to learn more about the skills utilised to build and embellish the Theatre in 1907 and which are being used to restore the Theatre now. The workshops are led by specialist crafts people, including specialists from companies actually working on the Theatre. Workshops on offer include: 'Make an Inlaid Clay Tile', inspired by the inlaid 'encaustic' tiles found at Darlington Hippodrome during the restoration works; 'Make a Leaded Glass Panel', taking the stained glass of the Hippodrome as

inspiration; and 'Carve an Arts and Crafts flower in Stone.'

Theatre Town

25. The Theatre Town project, funded by the Council with the support of the Arts Council England, was launched on 22 May with a presentation on the forthcoming events and the work of the partners: Creative Darlington, Theatre Hullabaloo, the Hippodrome, Jabberwocky Market/Luxi and OddManOut Theatre Company. This was followed by the opening night of Early Doors, a place set in a pub which was presented in the Hole in the Wall on the Market Square.
26. Volunteers from DCV will have a significant role in delivering the Theatre Town project and will be receiving training in capturing evaluation feedback from the Audience Agency to support one of the aims of the project which is to capture audience data and to understand our audiences better.

Arts Theatre

27. Darlington Borough Council has secured and accepted a Grants for the Arts offer of £15,000 from Arts Council England for a proposal developed with Tin Arts to deliver activity within IncludFEST Tees Valley (South Park 15 July 2017), IncludFEST Durham and the Festival of Ingenuity in Darlington, where the grant will expect schools based activity and public activity on 22 September 2017.
28. A number of works were sold during the Darlington Society of Arts exhibition at Crown Street Library, running 25 February 2017 to 20 April 2017; recording 3711 visits, benefiting artists with the Council securing commission. The Community Arts Project exhibition which opened on 22 April, recorded 2,567 visits up to 12 June 2017, and was extended until 25 July 2017. The next exhibition in Crown Street Art Gallery will be 'Moving Forward, Looking Back: A History of Darlington Hippodrome.'

Families and Events

29. The vintage vehicle rally, held on 21 May 2017, was attended by 1900 visitors and attracted 161 vehicles; the most ever so far.

Dementia Friends

30. The Dementia Café, held on 19 May 2017, had 35 attendees (people with dementia and carers/care workers) with a great deal of positive verbal feedback received from participants supported by the Alzheimer's Society's Cupcake Day initiative.

Exhibitions and Collections

31. A new exhibition has been installed, 'A Railway History of Shildon', which charts the history of the town from 1825 to 2004. The exhibition features over 100 photographs, drawings and maps, and has been curated by our onsite users the

Libraries

32. Darlington Libraries celebrated National Bookstart Week with a big outdoor event in South Park. Working with partners the event attracted around 400-500 people. Every child received a free goodie bag from the Library.
33. Darlington Library is supporting the volunteer-led Heighington Village Library with donations of large print books.

Green Spaces Volunteers

34. Officers have been working with volunteer groups across the range of green spaces, as well as street cleansing. On 15 June, Darlington DOVES (Darlington Open Spaces Volunteers Environmental Scheme) was launched. This formed an overarching organisation to deal with all aspects of volunteering and in particular, the previously difficult issue of insurance; the Council will fund the insurance premium which then facilitates all members of DOVES to undertake volunteer work, safe in the knowledge that they are covered for insurance purposes.

Litter Free Durham/Darlington

35. I would like to pass on a big thank you to all those residents who were involved in Litter Free Durham and Darlington. 1070 volunteers took part in 58 events across Darlington, donating in excess of 1560 hours of their time to clean up streets, parks and green spaces. A huge 1099 bags of litter were collected, along with approximately 3 tonnes of bulky waste items.

Durham Wildlife Trust

36. Officers are finalising a partnership with Durham Wildlife Trust who will take on responsibility to manage and maintain The Whinnies Nature Reserve. Durham Wildlife Trust, in partnership with Durham Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Company, is also taking on responsibility to manage and maintain Geneva Wood, Brankin Moor and Brinkburn Nature Reserves. This presents an excellent opportunity to continue to maintain and enhance a number of nature reserves across the Borough. Officers continue to work with other organisations with a view to setting up similar partnerships for other sites.

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