

**COUNCIL  
25 MARCH 2021**

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**OVERVIEW OF LOCAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

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

**Transport Programme**

2. A report providing details of works, achievements and performance during 2020/21 was presented to Communities and Local Services Committee and Cabinet. The report also sought approval for the 2021/22 programme and the framework for a new Darlington Transport Plan that will be consulted upon later in the year.

**Highway Maintenance Schemes**

3. Highway Maintenance schemes ongoing:
  - (a) C182 Longfield Road: Footway Reconstruction (0.113km).
4. Highway Maintenance schemes due to start:
  - (a) Stanhope Road South/Coniscliffe Road, West Street: Carriageway reconstruction (0.260km).

**English National Concessionary Travel Scheme**

5. During March 2021 over 14,000 bus passes reached their expiry date. Ahead of the expiry, pass holders in receipt of the Older Person's Bus Pass were asked to update their personal details and renew their pass through a new online system. Telephone support has been available to those who did not access to the internet or who do not have an email address. Disabled Person's and Disabled Companion's Bus Pass holders were sent their pass automatically in February. The new online system is available for new applications of all pass types going forward.

**Woodland Road/Duke Street Walking and Cycling Route**

6. Tees Valley Combined Authority has completed the consultation on the initial design for the new cycling route on Woodland Road, Outram Street and Duke Street. Overall, there was a high level of support for the scheme, in particular for the 20mph speed limit on Duke Street, which is currently in place on a temporary basis. Detailed comments from stakeholders and the public are being used to finalise the scheme design and a funding agreement should be signed by the end of March for the scheme to be implemented by March 2022.

**Rethinking Victoria Road**

7. The section from ring road to Clifton Road junction is programmed to be completed by the end of March 2021. At this point the footways on both sides of Victoria Road will have been improved and the carriageway will have been resurfaced and

relined. The phase between Clifton Road and Darlington Station will then commence.

### **Head of Steam**

8. The museum is still working to engage with visitors digitally whilst the building remains closed. A new online exhibition featuring the work of local railway artist, Stephen Bainbridge went live on Saturday 13 February, remaining online until 26 March 2021.
9. Museum staff are working on an outdoor event plan for 2021 dependent on current COVID-19 rules and restrictions.
10. The museum hosted a virtual Station Scamps Make Along event via Zoom on Friday 19 February with the possibility of hosting other virtual family events.
11. The museum continues to be used as a community testing hub until the end of March 2021.

### **Creative Darlington**

12. Darlington based music organisation Tracks have received support from Arts Council England and Creative Darlington to promote a Back on Track programme between January and April 2021, which includes Noisy Daughters workshops, Big Little Gigs concerts for parents with young children and Hark the Sound of Stories events, combining music and literature.
13. A Skerne focused music programme is currently taking place in schools including the Education Village. The project is expected to generate a short film and involves Durham Music Service, Orchestras Live, Creative Darlington and Darlington Hippodrome, The Discover Brightwater Landscape Partnership and Opera North.
14. Theatre Hullabaloo have applied to the Thriving Communities programme co-ordinated by Arts Council England with support from Creative Darlington. If successful, Theatre Hullabaloo, Foundation UK and Groundwork NE & Cumbria, the core partners in the proposal, would work with other parties including The Dolphin Centre and Darlington Library Service to offer a variety of activity and support to parents in Darlington on social prescription up to the end of March 2022.

### **Libraries**

15. The library is currently operating on a Select and Collect basis, whereby customers can order their books online or over the phone and collect them from our doors. The library continues to offer free home deliveries to those aged 60 and over, delivering to 275 households each month. The online library continues to offer members eBooks, eAudio, digital magazines and newspapers to read from their device at home.
16. Libraries have introduced "5 Recommended Reads", a bag which customers can collect and borrow from the door containing staff picks based on themes such as Crime and Thriller, Romance, Teen and Young Adult.

17. To support Children's Mental Health Week, libraries created and lent over 70 free Wellbeing Bags. Each bag contains a book to borrow for an adult and child to support positive mental health, along with a bath bomb containing a toy, mindful colouring activities and information about the campaign for families to keep.

### **Darlington Hippodrome**

18. A second submission has been made to the Arts Council's Cultural Recovery Fund requesting an additional £500,000 to cover overheads, staff costs, marketing re-launch campaign and purchase of cinema equipment. Art Council England are aiming to contact all applicants with their decision no later than 31 March 2021.
19. The online programme of events, engagement activities and classes continue to attract audiences. The weekly quiz has been the runaway success of the closure period attracting 170 households to the quiz on Facebook Live and regular weekly views of 1500.

### **Environmental Services**

20. Staff in Street Scene and particularly those working on refuse and recycling collection have worked continually throughout the recent winter weather events ensuring residents' bins were collected and emptied.
21. Since December, which was the start of the cold weather period, Winter Maintenance staff have been out regularly gritting the highway network ensuring residents who needed to travel can do so safely. It was particularly challenging in late January/early February with road temperatures consistently below zero as well as a number of snow events to cope with.

### **Climate Change**

22. In my transport report to Cabinet earlier this month, I outlined the street lighting LED programme that has generated a significant saving in both electricity costs and carbon reduction and that this year, signs would be changed to either LED or reflective types to further reduce our carbon footprint. Similarly, this year more recycling work will be undertaken as part of the highway maintenance programme. A significant project is being promoted seeing over 8000 tonnes of recycled material being re-used from the site and from other sites across the Borough. This saves on material going to land tip and the amount of newly manufactured material being required. A significant proportion of the budget is allocated to sustainable transport and road safety activity and further funds have been secured for sustainable travel initiatives from Tees Valley Combined Authority, which will help promote greener and healthier travel.
23. Work is currently underway to develop a campaign to encourage residents to reduce contamination within recycling bins by placing rubbish in the correct bin and increase the amount of waste recycled. A study of the Council's fleet of vehicles has recently been carried out with a view to moving to a more sustainable fuel source over a period of time as vehicles become due for replacement. Whilst unfortunately there was some vandalism to the trees on some sites, overall, the tree planting programme was a success as a result of the great work from the army of volunteers, and planning has now commenced for next season's planting.

**Councillor Andy Keir  
Local Services Portfolio**