

COUNCIL
25 NOVEMBER 2021

OVERVIEW OF LOCAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

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

Highway Maintenance Schemes

2. Highway Maintenance schemes ongoing:
 - (a) C38 Sadberge Road / Middleton Road: Carriageway Recycling (1.927km);
 - (b) Hewitson Road: Carriageway Recycling (0.3km).
3. Highway Maintenance schemes due to start:
 - (a) Greenhill Road, Heighington: Footway Reconstruction (0.320km);
 - (b) The Wayside Hurworth: Footway Reconstruction (0.541km);
 - (c) Clifton Road: Footway Reconstruction (0.432km).
4. Highway Maintenance Schemes completed:
 - (a) A68 West Auckland Road: Carriageway Reconstruction (2.330km);
 - (b) A67 Merrybent -Phase 2: Carriageway Reconstruction (0.561km);
 - (c) Carriageway Micro-Asphalt Contract (52 locations, 11.124km).
5. Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP)
 - (a) Woodland Road: Construction of Construction of a segregated cycle lane adjacent to the footpath on both sides of the road commenced on 15 November;
 - (b) Duke Street: Consultation on the scheme to formalise the existing one-way system with a contraflow cycle lane is ongoing in order to accommodate as many requests as possible.

Head of Steam

6. The museum has engaged with over 200 children during the period 30 September to 25 November.
7. Darlington Stitch & Create have launched a new exhibition at Head of Steam.

Handover of Class 37 Locomotive

8. On 14 October 2021, Sir Peter Hendy CBE, Chairman of Network Rail, officially handed over BR Class 37 D6898/37198 to Darlington Borough Council for the Railway Museum's

collections in a ceremony at the Head of Steam. The locomotive, a diesel-electric built by English Electric Robert Stephenson & Hawthorns in Darlington, was the final locomotive to leave the works before it closed on 28 April 1964. The locomotive was renumbered to 37198 in 1974.

Creative Darlington

9. The 'Semaphore as Metaphor' activity was led by Anton Hecht and colleagues on Friday 24 September in the marquee on Darlington Market Square and at the Head of Steam Railway Museum on Sunday 26 September. Filming in additional Darlington locations also took place on Friday 29 October by Anton Hecht to create a new artwork, which will be shared online and in arts festivals.
10. A Grand Constructions programme, celebrating engineering in Darlington, was shared as part of Darlington Arts Festival 2021 with 40 people creating their own cardboard model of Darlington Clock Tower using a template designed by Cabinet of Curiosity Studio.
11. Glacial Plains, a new exhibition by Darlington Association of Photographers exploring landscapes, historic industries, townships and villages was shown in the gallery at Darlington Library until Wednesday 17 November 2021.

Climate Change

12. Two highway maintenance schemes are utilising recycling techniques, the details of which were reported at the last Council meeting. These contribute to reduced impact on the environment of repairs and maintenance activity.
13. The Council has an ongoing programme of improving street lighting assets to reduce carbon emissions. A programme is underway to upgrade the remaining fluorescent tubes in sign lanterns to LED signs. This will produce a carbon saving of over 25 tonnes per year.

Libraries

Crown Street Library Refurbishment

14. Work has now started on the restoration of Crown Street Library with scaffold going up around the building week commencing 29 November 2021. The work will include repairs to the roof and structure of the building, upgrading the mechanical and electrical installations as well as restoration of the interior of the library. The work will take between 12 to 14 months to complete.

Cockerton Library

15. Our popular branch library has undergone a modest refurbishment and reopened mid-November with a new team of dedicated staff. The new-look library will begin work to engage with local schools by offering exciting drawing workshops with local illustrator, Liz Million, where children and families will be introduced to all their local library has to offer.

Summer Reading Challenge

16. The Libraries Reading Rollercoaster received 2391 entries from around 700 children this summer. A prize giving evening saw children aged between 1-13 years being given fantastic prizes, including a Nintendo Switch, Fitbit Watch and Harry Potter themed Lego sets.

Darlington Hippodrome

17. The Hippodrome held a panto press launch on 30 September which attracted some positive media attention. Our pantomime producers, Crossroads (Previously named QDOS), informed us that the Hippodrome is currently one of their bestselling venues this year, with ticket sales currently outperforming the 2019/2020 panto. Cinderella runs from Friday 10 December – Friday 31 December.
18. Volunteer welcome hosts at the Hippodrome returned to their positions in November 2021. The welcome hosts provide a friendly greeting to visitors and their contribution enhances the customer experience. Volunteers feel valued as part of the extended Hippodrome team and they are pleased to be returning after more than 18 months away.

Town Centre Partnership and Events

19. September saw the return of the R'n'B festival with bands performing in locations across the town centre; this was supported by extra funding from the Festival Recovery Fund from Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA). The team also supported Darlington 4 Culture with Darlington Arts Festival on the square that provided a space for local artists to showcase and sell their creations; the response to this was extremely positive.
20. 'OctoberFEAST' was a new initiative designed to help promote the town centre's food and drink offer. A range of publicity was programmed including videos, specialist food bloggers and advertising to welcome people into the town centre.
21. The events and town centre team are currently programming events in the lead up to Christmas 2021 and planning for 2022.

Environmental Services

22. The subscription-based Garden Waste Collection Service has once again proved very successful and coming towards the end of the season (December) has over 9000 subscribers. From Monday 8 November the booking system was removed from the HWRC as we continue to relax the covid restrictions. The impact of removing the booking system will be monitored to ensure the site can be accessed safely and there is minimal impact on the highway.
23. The winter maintenance season for 2021/2022 commenced on Monday 4 October. All staff, vehicles, equipment, forecasting services are prepared in readiness.