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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.

**Review of Decision to Relocate the Central Library Service**

2. At our request, we have reviewed the decision to relocate the Central Library from Crown Street to the Dolphin Centre and have agreed that Central Library be retained at the Crown Street Building, and to the development of plans for the refurbishment of the Crown Street building and to refresh the internal design and service standards.
3. A consultation on the internal redesign and service standards for the Crown Street Library will take place to help inform the final decisions and the space earmarked for a relocated central library service at the Dolphin Centre and Bennet House will be released for other uses; and a quick picks library service point at the Dolphin Centre, will be developed.
4. It was noted that the Library Service Plan would need to be amended and updated to take account of the above proposals and that a revised Plan will be presented to Cabinet Members in early 2019.

**Tees Valley Waste Management Strategy**

5. Approval was given to enter into consultation on the Joint Waste Management Strategy (JWMS) and the future of waste treatment/disposal for the Tees Valley.
6. The existing JWMS for the Tees Valley covers the period up to 2025 and it has been agreed that the new refreshed JWMS will cover the period from 2020 to 2035.
7. Public consultation commenced on 1 October 2018 for eight weeks and there will also be a stakeholder session organised for interested organisations within the waste industry; and feedback from the public across the Tees Valley and Industry will inform the final JWMS.

**Proposed Waiting Restrictions on Alderman Best Way – Objections**

8. Cabinet gave consideration to two objections that had been received to the proposals to implement no waiting restrictions on Alderman Best Way at Morton Palms and agreed to set aside those objections.
9. On-street parking on Alderman Best Way has been an issue for a number of years and Morton Palms is a comparatively modern office development and off street car

parking associated with the offices is not sufficient to accommodate all of the staff and operational vehicles leading to a situation where staff and businesses rely on Alderman Best Way for parking.

10. Implementing the no waiting restriction is aimed at improving the flow of traffic and reducing the potential for road traffic accidents.

### **Christmas Parking Offer**

11. A seasonal parking offer at Christmas was approved to support local retail trade and encourage both existing and new customers to shop in Darlington.
12. The offer for all off-street short and long stay car parks to be free after 3.00pm began on 22 November for the Christmas Lights Switch and will end on 2 January 2019.

### **Schemes of Work**

13. Highways Maintenance Scheme complete:  
Lynton Gardens: Carriageway Reconstruction and Resurfacing.
14. Highway Maintenance Scheme ongoing:  
100 plus sites throughout the Borough: Carriageway Micro Asphaltting.  
Asphaltting complete, road marking installation ongoing.
15. Highway Maintenance Scheme due to start:  
B6280 Carmel Road North/B6279 Staindrop Road Roundabout – Carriageway Resurfacing.

### **Highway Schemes**

#### **Church Row**

16. There has been an increase in traffic passing alongside the market square area on Church Row outside St Cuthbert's Church. This is a result of the development of Feethams Leisure Park and the new bus stops outside of the Town Hall. This can occasionally cause some conflict in particular between buses, coaches and delivery vehicles. The existing footway is along the church yard boundary but many pedestrians are walking in the road as it is a more direct route. This is a road safety concern. In addition, the existing cobbled surface is suffering significant damage from road traffic and the effects of bad weather.
17. The scheme which is now substantially complete was designed to provide additional road space for vehicles, improved pedestrian facilities and address the deteriorating condition of the road surface.

#### **NPIF Yarm Road/McMullen Road Roundabout**

18. Works are currently ongoing on the Yarm Road/McMullen Road roundabout. The works comprise the creation of two lane approaches on four of the arms of the

roundabout and widening of the circulatory lanes. This is to address specific access issues relating to the development of Ingenium Parc, as well as pressures from development within the wider Eastern Growth Zone. Works on the roundabout are programmed to be complete by the end of March 2019.

## **Transport**

19. **Car sharing** - The Sustainable Transport Team has worked with EE to set up a car share scheme. EE has employed additional staff at its Yarm Road site, which has resulted in huge pressures on the car park. Therefore, EE has allocated a specific car park with priority parking and security staff to police the car share bays. The Council handles the administrative side and the allocation of permits. The scheme launched in September and during the first month 144 staff registered. Of these, 52 people car shared and they averaged 11 days car sharing during the month, resulting in 26 less cars on site on these dates. Promotion is ongoing and it is hoped to further expand the scheme.
20. **Cycling** - The Shining Example campaign went live on 23 October. A video was produced to highlight the importance of using bike lights at night, a legal requirement. A launch event was held at Chemoxy in Middlesbrough with employees and the Police. There was coverage on BBC Radio Tees and the video was played during two Middlesbrough Football matches at the Riverside Stadium. The video was pushed out on multiple channels and people encouraged to watch the video and enter a competition, which closes on 7 December. Early indications that the video is being watched are very encouraging.
21. Students in two schools in the Tees Valley are working on a related project to encourage their peers to cycle safely. Smooth FM are working with the students to develop their ideas. The materials that they produce will then be shared to secondary schools across the Tees Valley.
22. **Walking** – October was Walk to School month for local primary schools. Materials that were produced for the 2017 campaign have been re-used, including radio adverts and posters. A photo competition has been run to encourage children and the adults that walk them to school to notice what is going on around them.

## **Sports Development**

### **Middleton Rangers Creating Space Aviva Application**

23. Middleton Rangers FC Girls section continue to grow year on year from having one girls team five seasons ago, to six teams this season. Women and girls participation has been at the forefront of the club development plan, which intends to expand the teams and the number of women and girls playing the game in the next five years. The club has applied for a 'Creating Space' grant of £5,000 in partnership with Eastbourne Sports Complex, to support improving the quality of the playing pitches and to add an additional pitch on site. A decision will be made in December 2018 if the bid is successful.

## **Darlington Move More Team Engagement**

24. The Team continues to deliver on various projects engaging new participants to participate in sport and physical activity. The Team engaged 369 participants during the reporting period, delivering 353 sessions with 60 per cent female participants and 40 per cent male and 88 per cent of all participants sustaining their activity at the sessions.

## **Darlington Hippodrome**

### **Aladdin**

25. Stars from the cast of Aladdin were at Darlington Hippodrome on 10 October for the official launch of the 2018/19 Pantomime. The launch coincided with Rock of Ages week on tour in Darlington which also stars local artiste Zoe Birkett.

## **Engagement at the Hippodrome**

26. This Autumn the Theatre has launched a new and improved audio description service for members of our audience with visual impairments, which includes a touch tour of the stage prior to the show. Following feedback from customers the service is now offered at a matinee, rather than an evening performance.
27. Two new courses began in October as part of the Theatre's heritage activities. 'Pepi's People' is a course for people over 55 which blends practical activities with theatre theory and is sold out this term. 'A Brief History of Theatre' is led by Laurence Sach and features group discussions about a variety of plays throughout the ages.
28. Darlington College has located its performing arts course in the Theatre for two days each week in term time which is a good opportunity for students to get more involved with the Theatre and visiting companies.
29. Volunteer ambassadors from Darlington Culture Volunteers have been helping to promote the Touring Consortium Theatre Company production of Dracula which began at the Hippodrome on 6 November. They were able to visit Nottingham Theatre Royal to see the show in advance of its visit to Darlington and to meet with the cast and company.
30. During half term the Theatre organised family ghost tours which were proving very popular. There was also music in the Hippo Lounge.

## **Theatres Trust Conference 2018**

31. The Theatre Director and the Executive Director of Theatre Hullabaloo were invited to speak at the national conference of the Theatres Trust at the Lyric in Hammersmith, London, which this year had the theme: Adapt and Thrive. They were asked to speak about financial resilience and how this was demonstrated in recent developments in the arts in Darlington, particularly focussing on Creative Darlington and the restoration of the Hippodrome and also to talk about the

innovative operational model which underpins The Hullabaloo.

## **Public Art**

32. The Community Arts Project exhibition opened in Crown Street Library gallery space on 18 October 2018 and will run until 6 December 2018, with Darlington Society of Arts scheduled to exhibit from 8 December 2018 to 31 January 2019. Janet Melody's 'Natural Transitions' exhibition was on display at Darlington Town Hall exhibition space from 17 September until 26 October 2018.

## **The Last Train Home Music and Comedy Festival**

33. The Last Train Home music and comedy festival, organised by Darlington based Tracks with support from various parties including Arts Council England and Darlington Borough Council's strategic arts budget, was held on 22 September 2018 in venues located in close proximity to Darlington's Bank Top Station. The ticketed festival ran between 2.00 pm and 10.30 pm with over 50 performances across six venues, and stages curated by Tracks, NARC Magazine and Hilarity Bites.
34. Tracks also programmed a series of 'GET Informed' Sessions led by music industry experts at Hash Bar and Kitchen in Darlington, which took place during September and October 2018. The sessions covered getting press, getting gigs, getting heard and getting out there, and offered support to young musicians eager to develop their practice from a Darlington base.

## **Heritage Track Programme**

35. Locomotive Rhythm led a 'Red Hall Fun Run to Music' event, supported by Darlington Harriers, during September 2018 as part of the 'Heritage on Track' programme.
36. The Heritage on Track programme is expected to support activity up to September 2020, including school and community based activity focussing on the creative exploration of railway and local heritage, working in locations in close proximity to the track bed of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. Heritage on Track is part of the Tees Valley Great Place programme.

## **Head of Steam**

### **Exhibitions**

37. A new exhibition opened at the museum on 10 November to commemorate the end of the First World War and 100 years of the UK Parliamentary vote for some women and all men. The exhibition 'Vote100: Railways, Women and World War One' investigates whether women's work on the railways during World War I helped them to get the vote and if gaining the right to vote had an impact on women working on the railways.

## **Learning and Outreach**

38. During the period of 28 September to 19 November 2018, 678 children have worked with us. In addition, 25 active volunteers contributed over 130 hours during the period.

## **Events**

39. September was the Museum's railway month. On 30 September the Museum celebrated the 193 anniversary of the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway with a free family event. We welcomed over 1000 people to the event, which included a children's entertainer, face painting, mini train ride, live music and street performers.
40. On 28 October the Museum hosted its annual Halloween Fun Day. The fun family event featured a mini train ride, magician and spooky arts and crafts.
41. Fun family activities continued at the Museum during October Half Term, with Block Party sessions, 'Jay's Animal Encounters' and 'Acorn Antics'.

## **Environmental Services**

### **Winter Maintenance**

42. The 2018/19 Winter Maintenance Season commenced on 1 October with 4,500 tonne of rock salt in the salt barn at Lingfield Way, and staff and vehicles all available in readiness for any inclement weather.

### **Grounds Maintenance**

43. The 2018 growing season is now drawing to an end and throughout the period there were no issues in relation to grass cutting or floral displays. The only concern was wild flower areas, as these were planted immediately prior to the long dry period and therefore struggled to germinate. However, when the wildflower areas came into bloom they were excellent and have received positive feedback. Plans are underway to expand this scheme to other suitable areas across the Borough in 2019.

### **Rail Heritage and 2025**

44. Since my last report I can announce that TGA Consult Creative Consultancy (TGAC) have been appointed to develop the Interpretation Plan or 'Grand Narrative' for the Stockton and Darlington Railway story. This will set the framework for telling which story along the length of the line, how best to tell it and what will this mean for branding, promotion and information. TGAC will be carrying out engagement work with local communities and stakeholders in the coming months and have targeted completion of the work by the end of February 2019. TGAC is an interpretive planning consultancy, with more than 25 years' practise-based experience. It specialises in strategic interpretive planning, creative direction and practical, collaborative advice and support. Working with diverse clients, it

helps plan and develop the full potential of museums and visitor experiences, commercial exhibitions and events across the UK, Europe, the USA and the MENA region.

45. I can also announce that Master Planners and Business Planners have been appointed to develop the world class visitor attraction ambitions at North Road. Bauman Lyons Architects will lead a multi-disciplinary team of consultants to develop the Masterplan and business case influenced by the Interpretation Plan. They will be working in collaboration with TGAC during engagement processes and will look to complete their work by the end of April 2019.
46. Richard Starrs has also commenced employment on 15 October as the Heritage Action Zone Project Manager. He will be working across the whole of the Stockton and Darlington Railway geography whilst being hosted by this Council.
47. Place Scrutiny Committee received an update about progress on the Railway Town Theme of the Experience Darlington Strategy on 25 October and Cabinet is due to receive an update report in December.
48. Can I thank John Anderson for his work on the Rail Heritage and Visitor Economy agenda and wish him well for his retirement on 30 November 2018. Mike Crawshaw commenced his new role as Head of Culture and Heritage on 1 October and will now be leading on this agenda.

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