
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.

Proposed Residents Parking – Objections

2. Cabinet has considered the two objections received to a residents parking proposal in Mowden Terrace, Mowden Street and Westbrook Terrace and agreed to set it aside and authorise Officers to proceed with the proposal to introduce the residents parking and no waiting at any time as advertised.
3. Cabinet has also considered the objection received to a residents parking proposal in Cleveland Avenue and agreed to set it aside and authorise Officers to proceed with the proposal to introduce residents parking as advertised.

Schemes of Work

4. Highway Maintenance Schemes complete:-
 - (a) A6072 Redworth Phase 2: Carriageway Reconstruction and Resurfacing; and
 - (b) A167 Croft Road Phase 7: Carriageway Resurfacing.
5. Highway Maintenance Scheme due to start:-
 - (a) A68 West Auckland Road (John Fowler Way Junction): Carriageway Resurfacing
 - (b) Haughton Green/Stockton Road – A1150 Stockton Road Roundabout to Salters Lane North: Carriageway Resurfacing
 - (c) A67 High Coniscliffe, throughout 30mph zone: Carriageway Resurfacing
 - (d) Linton Gardens: Carriageway Reconstruction and Resurfacing
 - (e) Faverdale North to Faverdale West: Carriageway Resurfacing.

National Productivity Investment Fund

6. We were successful with a bid submitted to the Department for Transport to improve the highway infrastructure on the eastern side of the Town. A total of £4.8m will be invested. The first project is improvements to the Yarm Road/McMullen Road roundabout. Further phases include a signal controlled junction at Lingfield Way, improvements to the B6279 Haughton Road throughabout and development of a new industrial access road into Ingenium Parc to the south of Cummins. These improvements should be complemented by a new access road that is intended to be built to link B6279 Tornado Way (Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor (DETC)) with Morton Way at Morton Park. This forms

part of the DB Symmetry Link 66 development.

7. Works have commenced to improve Yarm Road/McMullen Road roundabout. The first phase of work involves the diversion of statutory undertakers equipment (gas, electrics, water, etc.) to enable the carriageway to be widened. The main phase of the work is programmed to commence this month and be complete by March 2019.

Hird Street Car Park

8. Work has been completed on the refurbishment of Hird Street car park. This has included the creation of a footpath between Hird Street and Parkgate; resurfacing and relining of the car park bays; and additional lighting.

TeesRider SmartZone Ticket

9. In June a campaign was launched to promote the TeesRider SmartZone ticket. This is a multi-operator bus ticket which covers all Arriva, Stagecoach and Go North East buses in Tees Valley (including the Darlington 'town zone'). It is currently available as a weekly or monthly ticket. Discussions are ongoing to further improve the ticket including a young person's discount, a day ticket, extending the scheme to smaller operators, and reviewing cross boundary travel into County Durham and North Yorkshire.

Anti-Social Behaviour and Restorative Justice

10. The Police, the Council's Anti-social Behaviour and Sustainable Transport Teams and Arriva have worked together to tackle the increase in anti-social behaviour on buses and in the town centre, causing damage to buses and bus shelters (and other property) as well as intimidating passengers, drivers and members of the public. Youths that have been caught have been cleaning bus shelters, including the removal of graffiti and this has received positive feedback from passengers and local residents. A reparation session is also being organised with Arriva, where young people will sit down with drivers to find out how their actions have affected drivers and other passengers.

Parkgate

11. Planning permission has been granted for the construction of a new walking and cycling bridge over Parkgate between Central Park and the Neasham Road access into the Rail Station. The bridge will be constructed off site and lifted into place by the end of the year. The Council has secured funding from Tees Valley Combined Authority for this project.

Walk to School

12. May was National Walking Month and the Let's Go Tees Valley team developed a campaign to encourage walking to school. Before Easter, Bauer Media worked with five schools across the Tees Valley to develop materials including sound recordings and pictures. These have then been used in a radio campaign and on-line to promote walking to school. A competition to win a set of bikes was run in

parallel and by mid-June over 700 entries had been received. This has successfully extended the reach of the Let's Go Tees Valley brand across the Tees Valley and amongst families.

Big Summer

13. The Big Summer campaign was launched on 28 June with the aim of getting more families across the Tees Valley out walking and riding their bikes. This is in conjunction with the active travel hubs which includes Bike Stop in Darlington, who deliver a programme of cycle rides, cycle maintenance courses and recycling of bikes. Bike Stop works in partnership with Groundwork to deliver a programme of walks. All of these programmes rely on volunteers.

Dolphin Centre Special Recognition Award

14. The Dolphin Centre gained special recognition in May for its pioneering academy that promotes staff excellence and entrepreneurship. The Centre was the first Local Authority organisation to become an Institute and Entrepreneurs (IOEE) Enterprise Academy in the UK and received an IOEE Special Recognition Award at the House of Commons. The accolade was presented as part of the Celebrating Enterprise Awards, hosted by IOEE and the Small Firms Enterprise Development Initiative. The Centre's Business Development Manager, Lisa Soderman, was also presented with the IOEE Entrepreneur of the Year Award, for leading the work to secure the Enterprise Academy status.

Red Hall Healthy New Towns Project

15. Groundwork has now completed its consultation work with over 100 residents at Red Hall responding on our new positive activity timetable. Activities will concentrate on working with families, especially mothers with young children, teenagers and older adults. Activities have included: Zumba, Family Archery, Yoga, Family Boxcercise, Outdoor Bootcamp, Fit Mamas, Tinybox and Tinykix. So far 167 residents from Red Hall have been engaged.

Best of Darlington Awards Evening

16. The Best of Darlington Awards Evening took place on 18 May at the Dolphin Centre and saw the number in attendance rise to 450 this year. The event ran smoothly with some great finalists and worthy winners. Entertainment was provided by Darlington Operatic Society.

All Square Event

17. Darlington Borough Council's Events Team facilitated the development of a new music event for the Town, delivered by external partners and with the aim of evolving into a yearly occurrence. The event ran over three days, offering a different concept on each day: multi-focussed bingo on Friday, tribute acts on Saturday and a dance music feel on Sunday. The event was a success and the Team plan to do it again next year.

Round 50 Cycle Ride

18. The first of the four tourist cycle rides took place on 3 June, with over 150 participants joining in on the second consecutive year for this particular ride.

Race for Life

19. In partnership with Cancer Research Race for Life, Darlington Borough Council's Events team offered support in the lead up to this national event; providing space for promotion in the Town, staffing on the day, traffic management and the venue for the event itself in South Park. Weather conditions were good and people came in their thousands to run and raise awareness.

Armed Forces Day

20. The raising of the flag took place in the Market Square, accompanied by a military parade from the Town Hall forecourt to the square, with schoolchildren and members of the public invited to attend.

Darlington Dance Festival

21. This year's Dance Festival was extended to a two-day event which took place on 19 and 20 May. It entertained the public throughout the Town Centre, whilst Darlington's dance schools performed in Joseph Pease Place to promote the 'Mass Dance in the Market Square' on the Sunday, which attracted approximately 700 participants. The theme 'Express Yourself for Mental Health' attracted performers from local dance schools, schools, mental health charities and members of the public, as well as professional dancers who contributed to the afternoon by delivering dance workshops and demonstrations. This year's event was the most successful to date, organised by Darlington Dance Festival Association with assistance from Darlington Borough Council's Events team.

Darlington Food and Drink Festival, 'Darlo Dines Out'

22. Market Asset Management (MAM) in partnership with the Town Centre Partnership and Events Team, held its first food festival over the May Bank Holiday weekend, 25 to 28 May. The event, which took place across the Market Square, Blackwellgate and West Row, was heralded a huge success, with traders and the general public revisiting the festival each to sample the food, demonstrations, cocktails, street theatre, face painting, children's entertainers and the "Perfect Sunday Roast, provided by the participating local businesses and Celebrity Chefs in attendance, including: BBC's Aasam Ahmad and Michelin award winning, Jean-Christophe Novelli.

Participation and Engagement

23. The Engagement Team is continuing a series of work experience placements for young people from local schools during which they will achieve their Arts Award. Amongst the young people taking part are students from Beaumont Hill School, who visit the Theatre regularly and took part in a 'Careers in the Arts' day on 7 June.
24. Young people from our senior youth theatre group performed 'Zero for the Young Dudes' in early May. They were able to stage the production in the Hullabaloo, which meant higher production values and a much more polished performance than could have been previously achieved in their former school hall base.
25. The Engagement Team has been working in partnership with the Talking Newspaper to improve awareness of the Theatre's access offer.
26. The Theatre partnered with the National Council of Women to present a one day conference to mark the centenary of votes for some women, in the Hullabaloo. The conference was attended by 150 people and the Mayor of Darlington, Councillor Veronica Copeland, was also in attendance. Young people from two Darlington primary schools also took part in craft and poetry sessions during the day.

Premieres

27. The Theatre hosted the national premiere of the production of '84 Charing Cross Road' in May, which starred the Hollywood actress, Stefanie Powers. We also opened the tour of Jane McDonald, with rehearsals taking place here, followed by the opening night which was sold out.

Pantomime

28. Further casting has been announced for this year's pantomime, 'Aladdin'. Zoe Birkett will be returning as Princess Jasmine, while the role of Abanazar will be played by Robin Askwith, alongside Eric Potts, who returns as director and dame, joined by Liam Mellor and celebrity dance star, Louie Spence.

Creative Darlington

29. Creative Darlington has supported the marketing and promotion of Darlington Arts Festival 2018, including the production of print and banners to promote their programme. The festival took place from 19 May to 3 June and is the sixth arts festival led by Darlington for Culture. The festival programme included general events, comedy, music and dance, theatre, film and literature events. Highlights included an event co-ordinated by the National Council of Women to mark the 100th anniversary of votes for some women and a Literary Day held at the Friends Meeting House.
30. As part of the festival, Creative Darlington supported seven events in the gallery space at Crown Street Library, including: performances of 'Great Expectations', by Hogarth Partnership; 'Under Milk Wood', by Green Theatre; and 'Night Mother', by

Applause Theatre. Also included was a reading of poems created by Vane Women, alongside a film commissioned by that group in the 'Tell Her Story' event.

31. Pell Ensemble is undertaking work with children, young people and members of the public in Darlington, around its new production, 'Upload Unplug', which explores gaming, technology and data through dance. Pell Ensemble has secured Grants for the Arts support to bring this activity to a variety of locations in the Tees Valley, including Darlington.

Visual Art

32. 2,201 visits were made to the Spring Exhibition by the Community Arts Project at Crown Street Library, which ran between 31 March and 17 May. Positive comments from visitors included, 'Wonderful use of vibrant colours and shapes' and 'Clever and inspirational'. The solo 'Different Facets' exhibition by Alison Hill, was showcased at Crown Street Library between 19 May and 5 July, followed by the 'Commonplace' exhibition, by Gilkes Street Artists – a Middlesbrough-based studio group – which will run until 27 August 2018.
33. A solo exhibition by Darlington based artist Adam Plumb, exploring the Tibetan art of Thangka, was on display at Darlington Town Hall until 6 July and has been promoted as part of Darlington Arts Festival 2018.

Outreach

34. A range of outreach activities took place during May and June, including a talk given at the WW1 in the Tees Valley Conference at Teesside University on 19 May, a stall at the National Council for Women event (in recognition of the suffrage centenary) at the Hullabaloo on 21 May, and a stall at a regional event for newly qualified teachers at Middlesbrough Football Club on 20 June.

Events

35. Over 1500 visitors attended the Vintage Vehicle Rally, along with 230 vehicles, including: commercial vehicles, motorbikes, pedal cycles and sand track bikes. The number of vehicles was the highest seen in the ten years since the event started.

Visitor Figures

36. During the month of May there were 5,306 visitors to the museum and over the period of April-May 2018 10,004 visitors attended; a 33 per cent increase on the same period last year.

Exhibitions

37. A new exhibition of railway posters opened at the museum on 19 May. Curated by a student from Northumbria University, the exhibition showcases posters from the museum's own collection, with the exhibition itself being the result of a cataloguing and storage project funded by the Small Grants Scheme, organised by Museum

Development North East.

Volunteers

38. The museum has 25 active volunteers who provide an average of 130 hours per month.

Dementia Cafe

39. The re-launched Dementia Café runs on the third Wednesday of every month and has regular attendees.

Libraries

40. Over 200 people visited the 'Memories of Whessoe' Open Day at the Centre for Local Studies, to celebrate Darlington's industrial heritage. The event showcased Darlington's archive of material, while employees of Whessoe past and present enjoyed looking at hundreds of photos of the works and its staff, as well as other items of interest. Positive feedback was widely received, with one visitor commenting, 'Has been well worth the trip', after travelling from Southport especially for the event.
41. The Library celebrated National Bookstart Week with an event in South Park aimed at children aged 0-five years. The Library worked in partnership with local businesses, South Park's café and the rangers, to promote the Library's summer activities and provide every child with a goody bag. Over 1,000 people attended.

Grounds Maintenance

42. Members will be aware that additional resources were allocated to the Grounds Maintenance Service to facilitate the cutting of grass, reducing from a 25/30 working day cycle to a 15 working day cycle. Grass cutting commenced later this year due to the inclement weather in late March/early April; however, despite the initial surge of growth, teams managed to achieve the 15 day cycle.

Street Cleansing

43. The additional resources that have been allocated to Street Cleansing to enhance the cleanliness of the Borough, following cuts the previous financial year, have now been implemented. It is envisaged that the additional resources will ensure that areas are cleaner; in particular the problem of waste deposited in rear lanes, which should be minimised.

Tree Planting

44. In recent years the Council, working with partners, schools, Friends Groups, residents and other organisations, planted in excess of 5,000 trees at different sites within the Borough. A significant number of the trees have come from The Woodland Trust who provide trees free of charge to community groups who then

take on responsibility for planting and looking after the area.

45. The offer for free trees from The Woodland Trust is still available and I would like any Friends Group or other community group, who believes there is an area of Council land that would benefit from tree planting, to make contact with me and working together we can assess the suitability of a site and work together in putting in an application for a tree pack. There are a variety of types of packs including different number of trees and species, from 30 trees up to 120, which would be enough to cover an area the size of a football pitch.

Town Centre Car Parking Charges

46. Car parking charges in the town centre have been reviewed in response to feedback and views from the public and traders.
47. To assist town centre trading, an offer of two hours free car parking will be introduced in the town centre car parks on the outside of the ring road; in addition East Street car park within the ring road will have an offer all day parking for £2.00.
48. On street car parking will not be changed and remains at 50 pence for 30 minutes up to a maximum of £2.00 for two hours with the exception of Grange Road and Northumberland Street which is £3.00 for a maximum of three hours.
49. The potential cost of the offer is £120,000 but this will depend on usage and other factors and this will be kept under review. The cost will be funded by the Town Centre Futures Fund.

Councillor Nick Wallis
Cabinet Member with Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio