

COUNCIL
23 MARCH 2023

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.

Climate Change

2. The highway maintenance team have been testing an innovative surfacing solution at Snipe Lane. The trial incorporated pellets made from plastic nappy fibres into the asphalt which was then used to surface the road. Nappies are a major source of waste plastic and can take hundreds of years to break down. The use of the pellets gives more options for end-of-life uses for the plastic in nappies, therefore it makes those products less environmentally damaging.
3. As part of a £2m project to install electric vehicle charging points across the Tees Valley, charge points have now been installed in car parks across Darlington. 50 kW and 22kW charge points have been installed at Abbots Yard with 22 kW charge points installed at Winston Street North, Commercial Street West, Park Place East and West, Kendrew Street and Feethams Multi Storey.
4. The Tees Valley Combined Authority are leading on work to develop a region wide electric vehicle charging strategy which will deliver a consistent approach to providing charging infrastructure, including on street provision.

Highway Maintenance Programme

5. The following Highway Maintenance schemes are ongoing:
 - (a) Lanethorpe Road / Burnside Road (Phase 1): Carriageway Reconstruction (0.340km)
6. The following Highway Maintenance Schemes are now completed:
 - (a) Greenhill Road, Heighington: Footway Refurbishment (0.302km)
 - (b) Pierremont Crescent West Back Lane: Carriageway Reconstruction (0.117km)
 - (c) Snipe Lane: Carriageway Reconstruction (0.335km)
7. The following Highway Maintenance Schemes are due to start:
 - (a) Shearwater Avenue: Footway Refurbishment (0.054km)
 - (b) Patching Prior to Micro-Asphalt Contract (18 sites)

Highway Improvement Schemes

Woodland Road (Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan - LCWIP)

8. The next phase of delivery is the Duke Street section which started on site on 26 February 2023. Work has been programmed into seven phases of work to minimise disruption to businesses. The work is programmed for ten months.
9. We will work with businesses to both inform them of the progress on the scheme and any works that directly affect access to their property. We will maintain access to businesses throughout the duration of the works.

Local Transport Plan

10. Cabinet approved the Local Transport Plan programme of works for 2023/24. This will see over £3m of Council investment in our transport network over the coming year. Over £2.1m of that funding will be invested in highway maintenance to improve the condition of our road network. £893k will be spent on network management, active and sustainable transport and speed management and road safety programmes. This investment will be complimented by significant investment in Darlington from TVCAs £310m City Region Sustainable Transport Fund that will see investment in Rail, Bus, Walking and Cycling projects.

Arriva

11. Tees Valley Combined Authority and the Council continue to push Arriva to improve operational performance in Darlington. Arriva now has a full complement of drivers to operate the current timetable, and whilst performance improved towards the end of 2022, we continue to monitor the situation and press for more improvements to be delivered.

Head of Steam

12. Throughout January the Head of Steam Museum team worked on emptying the museum of all the equipment, furniture and most importantly the museum's artefact and archive collections. On 31 January the keys to the museum building were handed to the contractor team to enable the redevelopment of the site to commence. The museum team will continue to deliver workshops, events and activities throughout 2023 at different venues throughout the town.

Hippodrome

13. Darlington Hippodrome has been successful in their application for a Changing Places Grant. The £28,000 grant will enable the Hippodrome to re-purpose an existing toilet and changing facility into a larger accessible toilet for people who cannot use standard accessible toilets, with equipment such as hoists, curtains, adult-sized changing benches, and space for carers. The work will be completed in 2024.

Town Centre Partnership and Events

14. Restaurant Week 20 to 26 February 2023, welcomed visitors to Darlington and attracted people to our hospitality venues. The promotional offer worked exceptionally well, and some restaurants extended their offer over a longer period to attract people from across the region to the town. Over 20 venues signed up to offer these fantastic deals, bringing in visitors to Darlington.
15. The 2023 events programme will offer exciting activities, events and animation, including some new cultural dates and engagement opportunities, the team are currently working on programming these various events which for 2023 will include more town-wide animation to encourage footfall to move around the town centre. We have also added a new Sustainability Event to this year's calendar.
16. Celebrations to mark the Coronation of King Charles III will be centred on Darlington's Market Square on Saturday 6 May. The occasion will be broadcast live on a big screen with a programme of entertainment and engagement activities to follow. A garden party style set up will enable our communities to get involved throughout the day.
17. Street parties will be enabled across the Town on Sunday 7 May. The 'Big Help Out' on Monday 8 May will also highlight the positive impact volunteering has on communities across the country.
18. Darlington will be at the centre of the Eurovision Song Contest celebrations in the Tees Valley from 10-13 May, with the Market Square hosting a 'BBC Outside' broadcast for the big occasion. An exciting community engagement programme and series of live broadcasts will happen across the week.

Councillor Andy Keir
Local Services Portfolio