

DARLINGTON PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To update on the progress of Darlington Partnership.

Summary

2. Darlington Partnership continues to champion the sustainable community strategy One Darlington: Perfectly Placed. In furthering the strategies objectives it has ensured that the projects it has established have continued to deliver effectively.
3. The Partnership delivers a range of initiatives which contribute to building stronger communities in Darlington

Recommendation

4. It is recommended that Members receive this report for information.

**Seth Pearson
Partnership Director**

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report is for information and will have neither a positive or negative impact on Crime and Disorder
Health and Well Being	This report is for information and will have neither a positive or negative impact on Health and Well Being
Carbon Impact	This report is for information and will have neither a positive or negative impact on Carbon Impact
Diversity	This report is for information and will have neither a positive or negative impact on Diversity
Wards Affected	This report is for information and will have neither a positive or negative impact on specific Wards
Groups Affected	This report is for information and will have neither a positive or negative impact on Groups
Budget and Policy Framework	This report outlines how the Council discharges the core function outlined in its Corporate Plan to "Support strong partnerships to set a vision and direction for the Borough"
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This report outlines the primary means by which the Council engages with partners to deliver One Darlington : Perfectly Placed
Efficiency	The report highlights how other public agencies and other sectors are engaged to support the Council in addressing the needs of the residents of Darlington through agreed priorities.

MAIN REPORT

One Darlington: Perfectly Placed. - 'Fairer, Richer, Darlington'

1. Darlington Partnership continues to champion the sustainable community strategy One Darlington: Perfectly Placed. It agreed a charter, 'Fairer, Richer, Darlington' which aims to narrow the gap between those families who are struggling financially and the rest.
2. The approach is multifaceted, and has three, simultaneous work-streams be undertaken to improve residents' wellbeing over the short-, medium- and long-term:

a. Interventions to Ensure Families have the BASICS

Although raising incomes through sustainable employment (see c.) remains the best route out of poverty, there are a number of challenges facing families currently living in poverty in Darlington that need to be addressed in the short-term, such as the ongoing impacts of welfare reforms, the poverty premium and costs of necessities such as food and fuel.

b. Interventions to Boost Families' RESILIENCE

Where basic needs cannot be met, families need to be supported to become more resilient. It is recognised that boosting resilience in children and their parents is more likely to lead to positive outcomes in relating to education, employment and their ability to cope with future challenges, however, it is also important for professionals and organisations to change the way they work to allow them to better recognise the strengths of a child or their family.

c. Interventions to Tackle the CAUSES of Poverty

Well-paid and sustainable work remains the best way of increasing household incomes and moving families out of poverty. Darlington's economy needs to be one which can provide opportunities for local people to benefit from the growth across the borough. This very much aligns with recent national work on inclusive growth, defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as 'economic growth that creates opportunities for all segments of the population and distributes the dividends of increased prosperity, both in monetary and non-monetary terms, fairly across society'¹.

3. The aim of the approach is to add value to existing work by partners by identifying a small number of priorities which will make a significant impact on families and are not already being delivered.
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4. Steering groups are being established to take forward each work stream. The Centre for Local Economic Strategies has been appointed by the Council to take forward the Community Wealth Building element of the programme aimed at increasing the value of local public sector spend in Darlington

Initiatives:

Darlington Cares

5. Darlington Cares is an initiative established through Darlington Partnership which provides a means for Darlington's businesses to support the local community predominantly through employer supported volunteering.
6. It was launched in October 2012, by 5 local employers and now has a membership of 26. The initiative is self-funding with members contributing to its costs.
7. It focuses on the following objectives:
 - (a) Children with the best start in life.
 - (b) More people caring for our environment.
 - (c) Enough support for people when needed.
8. The initiative delivers a range of programmes from a 'busy readers' scheme supporting school children with their literacy skills, supporting the food bank and a wide range of environmental works.
9. In October 2017 with the support of CDCF, Darlington Cares reformed as it made plans for growth. The Partnership Director has also taken on responsibility of Director of Darlington Cares, a Programme Officer was appointed and PR consultants have been appointed under contract.
10. These arrangements which were trialled for 6 months in 2017 were continued during 2018.

New projects were developed to add to the existing programmes:

- a) Pick Pie and a Pint – has proved extremely popular. Every month a litter pick is held in the town centre followed by a pie and a pint (or soft drink and something healthy) in a local pub paid for by private sector sponsors. The events regularly attract over 50 participants whilst August's encouraged participants to bring their children and attracted 80 participants.
- b) The Great Parks Auction – Darlington Cares member companies bid thousands of hours of volunteering to secure their support for four of Darlington's parks. They then worked with the respective 'friends of' group to develop a schedule of

work. At the end of the summer the parks were then judged by Northumbria in Bloom.

Cummins pledged 465 hours to Eastbourne Park, EE donated 750 hours to The Denes, Darlington Building Society offered 500 hours to North Lodge Park and Capita volunteered 420 hours to Green Park.

Working with Darlington Borough Council, its parks rangers and the respective parks' Friends groups, the volunteers worked over the summer to improve the parks.

In all 921 volunteers donated 3,376 hours of their time – way in excess of the hours bid. The benefits of the initiative have been far wider than just the horticultural improvements, with far more local residents now able to enjoy the parks. I was delighted to be invited to pass on my congratulations to the participating companies.

The initiative has now been shortlisted as a finalist in the Community Engagement Award category of the Keep Britain Tidy Network Awards, with the winners to be announced at a special ceremony in Manchester on Wednesday 6 February 2019.

- c) The Big Community Challenge – Darlington Cares took on a major project renovating the overgrown pond and nature garden of St Mary's school Cockerton. Over a week in April dozens of volunteers brought the nature garden back into use for children many of whom are from deprived backgrounds.
- d) Homework Clubs – Is an initiative we are piloting in Longfield Secondary school. Volunteers are supporting around 25 yr.7 and yr. 8 students with their homework in a session directly after the school day. The feedback from the school is that benefit to the participants are multiple. Along with academic support and nutrition, because of the relaxed atmosphere the children are able to socialise with each other better. They are engaging well with the adults volunteers and engaging better with the school staff. Darlington Building Society is now sponsoring the scheme so it can not only continue through 2019 but homework clubs can be established in two addition schools.
- e) Period Poverty: with a growing understanding that some girls are missing school because they are unable to afford sanitary products, a campaign was launched which collected donated products which were then distributed through schools. The pilot scheme was successful and learning from this will inform the scheme as it goes forward.

Impact

11. In total Darlington Carers members delivered over 11,000 hours of volunteering during 2018. But more important to that achieved the following:

Education:

Busy Readers – over 4000 children got help with their reading

Homework Club – 90 children, fed and helped with their homework

Social Justice:

Food Parcels – helped deliver over 600 food parcels

Christmas appeal – Helping over 1000 families

Community centres & sheltered accommodation supported in numerous was
Period Poverty – helped over 1000 girls

Environment:

Bags of litter – over 600 bags collected

Kids in Cockerton – over 200 children given access to wildlife facility

Festival of Ingenuity

12. The Festival of Ingenuity in 2018 attracted an estimated an audience of 10,000 and over 600 school pupils took part in activities on Friday's school focused event. This year will be held on 12th & 13th July. The format will be similar to previous years with activities accessible to schools on the Friday whilst the Saturday includes activities and entertainment for families.

13. There will be a marquee on the town square showcasing Darlington's ingenious businesses and a family fun area on the Feetham's Podium level. The riverside park next to Bishopsgate House will have live music which will go on into early evening.

Best of Darlington

14. This year's Best of Darlington Awards ceremony will be held on June 14th..

Volunteer Fair

15. Following success of the previous Volunteer Fairs a further Fair was held on Thursday 7th February.

16. CDCF kindly sponsored the event which was held in the Dolphin Centre Sports Hall

17. The event was run in collaboration with Darlington Cares providing opportunity for joint promotion and to raise awareness and engagement with Voluntary Organisations. Over 60 voluntary sector organisations participated.