

COUNCIL
25 APRIL 2019

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.

Schemes of Work

2. Highway Maintenance Scheme due to start:-

Denmark Street and Wales St Back Lane – resurfacing

National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) Update

3. Yarm Road/McMullen Road roundabout – works are nearing completion with the final phase of surfacing programmed for completion in mid-May 2019.
4. Detailed design works are now complete on the proposed Lingfield Way/Yarm Road traffic signalled controlled junction and construction is programmed to start in May 2019. This scheme involves the widening of Lingfield Way to two lanes and the installation of a traffic signal control junction including pedestrian phases and the construction of a footway/cycleway on the east side of Lingfield Way.
5. Works are ongoing on the Highways England scheme to improve Morton Palms roundabout. This scheme involves the widening of the Yarm Road approach to form three lanes onto the A66 and the widening of the A67 approach onto the A66 to create an extended two lane approach to the roundabout. This scheme is programmed to be completed in May 2019. Two lanes of traffic will be maintained between Morton Palms and Morton Park roundabout whilst construction is ongoing. The junction will be resurfaced overnight as it will require the closure of the A66.
6. The new Symmetry Park road, linking Morton Way with Tornado Way, is currently under construction. This link road, which will open towards the end of July, runs parallel with the A66 and McMullen Road and will provide an alternative route to help traffic in the area.

A68 Darlington Farmers and Auction Mart Roundabout

7. A new roundabout is planned to provide access to the proposed relocation of the cattle market from the town centre to Humbleton Farm. Works on the roundabout are currently programmed to commence towards the end of April 2019.

Permit System to Manage and Coordinate Roadworks

8. Cabinet has approved the development of a Permit Scheme and the consultation on the proposed scheme to improve the management, coordination and operation of roadworks and to ensure the duties under the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA) and the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA) are fulfilled.

9. The Initial timescales posed by the Secretary of State for Councils to transition to a Permit System by 31 March 2019 were challenged by Council's across the Country; as such a revised transition date of January 2020 was agreed by the Secretary of State.
10. The Council is working collaboratively with North East and Tees Valley Authorities to develop a common scheme for efficiency and consistency across the region. Cabinet will provide an update once this work has concluded.

Local Transport Plan 2019-2020

11. Cabinet received an annual update on highways and transport from a national, regional and local perspective. It included performance, public satisfaction and reports on delivery in 2018/19; information on the development and consultation for the Tees Valley and Darlington transport plans. Cabinet gave consideration to the 2019/20 programme of schemes and agreed to the release of £0.866m Integrated Transport Block and £1.689m Highway Maintenance Funding (£1.398m plus £0.291m incentive funding) to deliver the 2019/20 transport programme.
12. Transport for the North (TFN), England's first Sub-National Transport Body, has consulted on a 30-year Strategic Transport Plan which details key strategic priorities for Darlington and the Tees Valley and is due for publication early in 2019. Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) is also developing a Statutory Local Transport Plan which will be consulted upon in spring/summer 2019. The Tees Valley Investment Plan was approved by TVCA Cabinet in January 2019 and identified £256.7m investment in transport over the next ten years and a £25m contribution has been committed by TVCA to lever national investment in the redevelopment programme relating to Darlington Station.
13. Cabinet agreed that the Pothole Fund monies (amount to be announced) awarded by the Department for Transport (DfT) be released.
14. Cabinet also agreed the release of £500k for maintenance of unclassified roads and £500k for bridge maintenance for each year, for both 2018/19 and 2019/20.
15. We also agreed to the submission of due diligence forms for the next tranche of TVCA Single Pot Sustainable Access to Employment funding for schemes on Allington Way and Victoria Road, and, if successful, that funding be released.
16. Cabinet also noted the delivery of transport schemes in 2018/19; current performance in relation to road safety, highway maintenance, network management and public satisfaction; and the timetable for consultation on the TVCA Strategic Transport Plan and the proposed framework for consultation on the Darlington Transport Plan.
17. I have delegated authority, along with the Director of Economic Growth, to agree bidding on external funding of £170k through the Rural Payments Agency for European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development to improve the route between the A66 and Middleton St George; and if successful, to release the funding.
18. These decisions will continue to assist the delivery of Darlington's Transport Strategy and delivery against the objectives set out in the Local Transport Plan to

maximise the opportunities to maintain the highway asset for the benefit of road users; address the deterioration in the unclassified road network and an increased bridge maintenance programme following a robust inspection regime of all structures; maximise potential for investment in Darlington and specifically supporting improved access to Darlington Station and sustainable travel to the Eastern Growth Zone; ensure that the Strategic Transport plans for the Tees Valley meet the economic aspirations of the Tees Valley Combined Authority and seek to maximise the benefits for Darlington residents, visitors and businesses; to enable local people, businesses and organisations to shape the Darlington Transport Plan; and to maximise the Council's opportunity to bid for external funds to deliver the Stockton and Darlington Railway walking and cycling route.

Bus Event

19. To celebrate the International Day of Happiness on 20 March, the Council and town centre businesses partnered with Arriva to provide a day of entertainment in the town centre. The event was to promote the vital role that Arriva plays in bringing customers into the town centre to access shops and services, and to thank bus passengers for their custom.
20. The event took place at Joseph Pease Place and there was free coffee and pizza on offer, as well as entertainment in the form of a roving street band, and prizes to be won which were donated by businesses in the town centre. Everyone that attended was given a goody bag with information on bus services, and promotions from town centre businesses. The Heart Radio Hit Squad was also out travelling on buses, giving out goody bags and prizes at random. A fun day was had by all that attended the event, and lots of donations were received for the King's Church Food Bank, which was the charity supported as part of the event.

Sports Development

Holiday Activity Project

21. This project was delivered by the Darlington Move More Team and the Martin Gray Football Academy targeting 40 pupils from Red Hall and Corporation Road School to offer them a holiday activity week with healthy food at the Dolphin Centre with a wide range of activities.
22. The main aims of the project were:
 - (a) Improving children's diet
 - (b) Increasing children's physical activity – children engaged more frequently in physical activity and children reported back they had enjoyed themselves
 - (c) Improving children's educational attainment and raising aspirations – children reported improvements in their education and learning
 - (d) Improving children's confidence and self-esteem
 - (e) Alleviating financial pressures and allowing our offer to be accessible to all, and most of all, the children have fun and enjoy the week
23. A town wide application has now been submitted to the Department for Education to roll this out to over 2000 pupils in Darlington for the summer of 2019.

Events Management

SG Petch 10k Launch – Saturday 2 March 2019

24. This year's 10k launch event held in Joseph Pease Place on 2 March also launched our new headline sponsor, SG Petch. This year marks the 32nd anniversary of the Darlington 10k which will take place on 11 August 2019. The event will also include the Family Fun Run and Junior 3k Race.

Chinese New Year Celebrations

25. On 2 February, residents in Darlington were invited to celebrate Chinese New Year and bring in the Year of the Pig in style with a traditional Lion Dance which was performed in Joseph Pease Place along with performances from St Mary's Cockerton CE Primary School.

Darlington Restaurant Week – 25 February to 3 March

26. The first ever Darlington Restaurant Week organised by the Council's Town Centre Partnership has been hailed a success, after diners made the most of the 'Two Courses for £10' offer and various competitions throughout the week. A total of 28 town centre restaurants and cafes signed up, with many of the establishments seeing significantly more diners than usual through their doors as a result of people taking advantage of the offer. Feedback from the restaurants involved has been very positive and the next restaurant week is already being planned for November 2019.

Darlington Hippodrome

27. Darlington Hippodrome and The Hullabaloo received the Selwyn Goldsmith Award for Universal Design at the Civic Trust Awards 2019 which were held at the Imperial War Museum in Manchester on 1 March 2019. The Award is presented to an exemplar project that demonstrates excellent universal design principles. The judges said: 'This development has resulted in high quality, successful regeneration which has overcome significant access obstacles in a well-loved building. This scheme has to be highly commended for outstanding creative design and the commitment to providing a high level of accessibility for all'.
28. The Hullabaloo has also won Best Family Venue 2019 at the Fantastic for Families Awards for its contribution to arts and culture for families during the last year. Voted for by a panel of expert judges from the creative sector, the Fantastic for Families Awards recognises the outstanding events that took place during 2018 and the exemplary family-friendly organisations and venues that welcomed families. Winners were announced at a ceremony in Liverpool on 11 February 2019.
29. The star of this year's pantomime has now been announced and Darlington is lucky to have secured Shirley Ballas, the chair of the judges' panel on Strictly Come Dancing and one of the recent team of celebrity climbers of Mount Kilimanjaro for Comic Relief. Further star cast is to be announced.
30. The Hippodrome was chosen as the venue on 22 March for this part of the region to host the launch of the new Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Strategic Framework.

The Theatre Director welcomed guests and showed a short film showcasing the Theatre and the contribution HLF made to its restoration.

31. A Place for Everyone is a Hippodrome campaign to raise funds for people on the edges of our community who might need support to access cultural experiences. Funding has been coming in from individuals, and corporate supporters, from Creative Darlington and the Council. A large donation of 13,000 dollars was made anonymously in the USA.

Visual Art

32. An exhibition of work from the Borough Art Collection is currently on display, the fifth exhibition drawn entirely (or in part) from work in the Borough Art collection since the gallery opened in May 2012. 'The Town's Collection – artwork drawn from your Borough Art Collection' ran until Thursday 21 March 2019 and attracted positive comments, for example: 'Thank you very much for such a talented and varied exhibition – what a legacy for Darlington people. Much appreciated.'
33. The 'Beyond Graduation' exhibition opened on 6 April 2019 and brings together work from graduates of the BA and MA Fine Art courses from Teesside University, from 2007 to 2018.
34. Creative Darlington offered budget support to an artist led proposal to develop a variety of printmaking activity working with communities and schools in Darlington and Darlington Library Service users, which has secured a grant offer from Arts Council England of approximately £15,000 to match the £3,000 budget offered by the Council. Adrian Moule delivered two printmaking sessions in the gallery at Crown Street Library in March to introduce the programme.
35. Creative Darlington participated in the selection process for the Dover Art Prize 2019, organised by County Durham Community Foundation, which awards funding to support artists' practice. The primary condition of the award is that any new practice is shared for the first time in Darlington Borough. Over 90 proposals were submitted for the Dover Art Prize 2019 and a winning artist has been selected. The winning artist (yet to be announced) plans to deliver a talk on their practice at Crown Street Library during Darlington Arts Festival 2019 and to share work in Darlington in 2021.
36. Creative Darlington worked with Lens Think to promote the 'Unseen Beautiful Darlington' call out for images in April 2019, which will be exhibited in the gallery at Crown Street Library in May 2019 as part of Local Heritage Month. The Unseen Beautiful invited people to take part in an Instagram campaign focusing on highlighting the beauty of Darlington. Those entering images will have the chance of having their photograph shown as part of a group exhibition in the gallery at Crown Street, as well as entry into a competition. The winner will be announced at the closing event on 29 May 2019 and will receive a day long photography workshop and the offer of an exhibition in the Town Hall exhibition space in Darlington.
37. The 'Places of Interest' exhibition of photographic prints, created by Year 1 photography students from Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College, was on display at the Darlington Town Hall exhibition space from 25 February to 19 April 2019.

Creative Darlington – Outreach and Arts Development Activity

38. Creative Darlington has offered budget support of £5,000 to ODDMANOUT conditional to its success in securing additional funding for a programme which has two aspects; the first, 'Launch' is a series of creative workshops, meetings and discussions with a community focus; and the second, 'The Foundry' is a new theatre training programme for emerging talent across the region. ODDMANOUT's proposal has secured an offer of support of £15,000 from Arts Council England and the programme is expected to run into 2019/20, and will also be supported by Darlington Hippodrome.

Heritage Track Programme

39. Ten days of participatory activity has now been delivered by Locomotive Rhythm. A new song generated through the programme was also shared through a BBC Tees Introducing broadcast on 24 November 2018 and was available on BBC iPlayer Radio for up to thirty days thereafter. Films of activity are accessible online and the programme is expected to contribute to the annual countdown event, at the Head of Steam in September 2019, to the bi-centenary of the first railway passenger journey on the Stockton and Darlington railway on Locomotion No 1.

Head of Steam

Schools

40. 255 school children visited the Head of Steam in February.

Volunteers

41. Head of Steam staff attended a volunteering fair at the Dolphin Centre on 7 February and have recently received new volunteers via Step Forward Tees Valley (an organisation that supports people back into work). 22 volunteers provide assistance on a regular basis.

Dementia Café and Community Work

42. The Dementia Café continues to have regular attendees and work has been undertaken with Age UK at Beaumont Street (including Age UK's Veteran Support Group) selling knitted poppies previously on display to commemorate the North Eastern Railwaymen who were killed in WW1.

Exhibitions

43. On 9 March, a new exhibition opened at the museum. 'A Year in the Making' showcases images of the local area by local photographer, Peter Giroux.

Events

44. During February half-term the museum held Animal Stories and Block Parties LEGO sessions for visitors.

Libraries

Darlington BookFest

45. Crown Street Library hosted Darlington BookFest from 4 to 9 March; the first book festival for children and families from Darlington Library.
46. In the lead up to the week-long festival, the library commissioned three different artists to work alongside school pupils to paint three individual book benches on themes influenced by public consultation. The benches, inspired by Julia Donaldson, Roald Dahl and traditional fairy tales were unveiled at the launch of BookFest by the Mayor.
47. Throughout the week the festival was attended by over 740 participants (and their families) across 23 public events, and in addition a further eight events were held as part of the schools programme. Events included author and illustrator talks, storytelling, performances, cupcake decorating, sewing workshops, gaming and stop animation, Lego parties, and a family friendly 60s rock gig.
48. During the week, eight different school classes attended our schools events with Author Peter Barron and Illustrators Jonathan Raiseborough and Garry Parsons.

Environmental Services

Tees Valley Waste Management Strategy

49. Members will be aware that approval was given to enter into consultation on the Joint Waste Management Strategy (JWMS). Following an eight-week consultation period which closed on 3 December 2018, Cabinet has approved the adoption of the JWMS for Tees Valley covering the period 2020 to 2035.
50. The Council is working with the Tees Valley Authorities to develop an outline business case for the options on the future of waste treatment/disposal post 2025 when the existing contractual arrangements come to an end.
51. The Council is working within its own premises to reduce single use plastics and will look at further opportunities to reduce waste and increase recycling.

Garden Waste Collection Service

52. The charged Garden Waste Collection Service commenced in April 2019. To date, 3,000 people have signed up for the service.

Grounds Maintenance

53. As the new growing season approaches, Officers are attempting to increase the provision of floral displays throughout the town. In particular, additional planting will be seen around the town centre, increasing the aesthetic appeal of the town centre, ensuring visitors and users have a good experience when shopping in Darlington.
54. Improvements to wildflower areas are also planned with additional areas being installed along the A68 (A1 to Faverdale). Bulbs have also been planted on Victoria Road and Feethams roundabout to provide further floral displays

throughout spring and early summer.

Winter Maintenance

55. The winter maintenance period comes to an end at the close of April this year and due to the reasonably mild winter, no significant issues have been experienced.

Northumbria in Bloom

56. In 2018, the town centre received a Silver Gilt in the 'Best Town Centre' category and Darlington will again be entering Northumbria in Bloom in this category. In addition to the town centre, we are also entering Eastbourne Park and Head of Steam in the 'Specials' category, as this category includes various other elements in the judging process, such as: heritage, partnership working, education etc., all elements that both Eastbourne Park and Head of Steam have examples of in abundance.

Councillor Nick Wallis
Cabinet Member with Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio