

**COUNCIL  
26 SEPTEMBER 2019**

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**OVERVIEW OF HOUSING, HEALTH AND PARTNERSHIPS PORTFOLIO**

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**Purpose of the Report**

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the main areas of work under my Housing, Health and Partnerships Portfolio were as follows:-

**Public Health**

2. The consultation for the re-procurement of the Substance Misuse Service has come to a close and work continues to develop the service specification. The tender documentation will be developed in time to meet the November deadline.
3. Earlier this week the 'Darlington Childhood Healthy Weight Plan' was launched at a workshop, where partners together developed actions to deliver the plan. Childhood excess weight and obesity are significant issues for children and the overall aim of the plan is for children to leave primary school with a healthy weight.

**Darlington Partnership**

4. The fourth Festival of Ingenuity held on 12 and 13 August was the most successful to date. The Festival has three objectives:-
  - (a) To raise the profile of Darlington as a centre for 'Ingenious' businesses (with a focus on engineering)
  - (b) To engage children and their parents in fun interactive activities with the aim of fostering a positive image of engineering as a career path
  - (c) To generate significant footfall in the Town Centre
5. This year's Festival was launched by the Tees Valley Mayor, Ben Houchen. Held over 2 days, Friday was dedicated to providing interactive workshops for primary aged year's 5 & 6 pupils and year 9 secondary pupils. Over 600 young people took part and there were 1,700 visitors to the exhibition marquee.
6. Saturday was a family focused Festival with entertainment and live music. Widely advertised it attracted 13,000 to the marquee and many more to the live music event. It is estimated that there were around 20,000 visitors in total. The event is greatly appreciated by local businesses with Cummins exhibiting a variety of vehicles and equipment powered by Cummins engines. A visioning session is being planned for October to involve stakeholders in what the event could become in future years.

## **Housing Services**

### **Darlington Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024**

7. Cabinet has approved the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024 which had been developed to satisfy the requirements of Section 1(1) of the Homelessness Act 2002.
8. The aim of the strategy is to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping, and five objectives have been identified to support the strategy.
9. An Action Plan is in place which sets out the key actions to deliver the objectives of the strategy and a new partnership group is to be established to oversee the delivery of the strategy.

### **Digital Tenancy**

10. Council Tenants are now able to choose a new digital option to manage their tenancy. Tenants have begun to sign up for the digital tenancy that allows them to manage various aspects of their tenancy at their own convenience 24 hours a day. This includes checking rent balances and reporting repairs. A programme of information and advertising is now underway to engage tenants to voluntarily sign up to this option.

### **100 Years of Council Housing**

11. July 2019 was the 100th anniversary of the Addison Act that introduced a national scheme for publicly funded housing for working people. This is widely seen as the start of Council Housing. Housing Staff set up a stand in the Customer contact centre and the Dolphin Centre to provide information on the history of Council Housing in Darlington and promote our housing stock including our new build programme.
12. The Council's next housing development on Lancaster Close off McMullen Road is nearing completion and responses to adverts have shown demand continues to be very strong. This development of 30 properties comprises of two bedroomed apartments as well as three and four bedroomed houses.

### **Red Hall**

13. The relationship with the Stockton International Riverside Festival (SIRF) has significantly benefited the area. Throughout the summer workshops have been run to learn circus skills and to play brass band instruments. Both workshops have proved to be very popular and resulted in children learning new skills as well as growing in confidence. Those who have participated were also given the opportunity to participate in the Hartlepool Sea Front Festival and the SIRF weekend in Stockton.

14. A Circus show at the Red Hall Community Centre also proved very popular. Several voluntary and statutory organisations attended taking the opportunity to provide information to the public including a focus on tackling anti-social behaviour. The Housing Community Fund supported a Battle Bus - a mobile games centre aimed at attracting older children to the event.

### **Havelock Centre**

15. The Havelock Summers Fayre supported by the Housing Community Fund was extremely well attended with approximately 250 people enjoying the stalls, games and live music.
16. Many groups meet regularly at the centre and almost all of them were there to showcase what they do. Officers answered lots of questions and gave out information about what happens at the Centre and also took on board ideas for new groups or events to happen in the future.

### **Windsor Court**

17. A 1940's themed event was also supported by the Housing Community Fund with songs of the era played, as well as, group singalongs, and a 1940s styled singer. Lots of people actively got involved with the theme by dressing up in WW2 clothing. Several stalls and activities were put in place and Housing Officers discussed with residents what they liked about the area, ideas for improvement and how they can have more of a say in the services currently provided.

### **Firthmoor Live**

18. Housing Officers attended the Firthmoor Live Australian themed summer event which included a music festival, games and stalls and a day full of entertainment. Those attending the event were given the opportunity to win a £20 love2shop voucher for giving their views on the area and a family ticket to the 2019 pantomime at the Hippodrome was also offered as a prize.

**Councillor L Tostevin**  
**Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Housing, Health and Partnerships**