
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.

Garden Waste Collection Service

2. Cabinet has given consideration to the introduction of an 'opt in' charged Garden Waste Collection Service for residents of the Borough and has agreed to a consultation exercise to gauge resident interest for the introduction of such a scheme.
3. Subject to enough residents wanting to participate in a Collection Service, it will be introduced from April 2019 on a fortnightly charged basis through to November 2019.
4. The proposed cost for the 'opt in' service will be £35 per year and the final decision to implement the service has been delegated to the Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with me as the portfolio holder.

Eastern Growth Zone Infrastructure Improvements

5. We have approved the release of £500,000 from the Economic Growth Investment Fund to contribute towards the delivery of the strategic access road between Yarm Road and Tornado Way.
6. The Eastern Growth Zone comprises some of Darlington's key existing and future employment sites and the link road will complement planned highway infrastructure investment to deliver wider transport and economic benefits to the surrounding area.

Well Managed Highway Infrastructure – A Code of Practice

7. Cabinet Members have noted the adoption of the principles set out in the Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice, the requirement to progress the specific recommendations and that operational highway assess management policies and procedures will be introduced or amended to reflect the new Code of Practice.
8. The Code of Practice replaces existing codes and promotes a risk based approach and also requires consideration of specific recommendations to be adopted when managing the Council's highway network.

9. Delegated authority has been given to the Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, or nominated officers, to develop, update, bring into operation and review the policies and procedures that following principles in the Code of Practice.

Church Row

10. There has been an increase in traffic passing alongside the market square area on Church Row outside St Cuthbert's Church. This is a result of the development of Feethams Leisure Park and the new bus stops outside of the Town Hall. This can occasionally cause some conflict in particular between buses, coaches and delivery vehicles. The existing footway is along the church yard boundary but many pedestrians are walking in the road as it is a more direct route. This is a road safety concern. In addition, the existing cobbled surface is suffering significant damage from road traffic and the effects of bad weather.
11. A scheme to remove the cobbles and widen the carriageway commenced mid-September and will be completed towards the end of November 2018. The road will be widened on the market square side to enable traffic to pass freely. A new footpath will be created on the church side of the road. The road surface will be reinstated with an asphalt material incorporating red chippings in order to provide a more even, hardwearing surface.

Schemes of Work

12. Highways Maintenance Schemes complete:

- (a) Faverdale North – Faverdale to Faverdale West: Carriageway Resurfacing;
- (b) A68 West Auckland Road (John Fowler Way Junction): Carriageway Resurfacing;
- (c) Haughton Green/Stockton Road – A1150 Stockton Road Roundabout to Salters Lane North: Carriageway Restructuring;
- (d) A67 High Coniscliffe, throughabout 30mph zone: Carriageway Resurfacing; and
- (e) West End, Hurworth – Carriageway Resurfacing.

13. Highway Maintenance Schemes ongoing:

- (a) 100 plus sites throughout the Borough: Carriageway Micro Asphaltting; and
- (b) Lynton Gardens: Carriageway Reconstruction and Resurfacing.

14. Highway Maintenance Scheme due to start:

B6280 Carmel Road North/B6279 Staindrop Road Roundabout – Carriageway Resurfacing.

Transport

15. **Town Centre** - A 20mph scheme has been introduced in the town centre, on all streets within the inner ring road. Signs clearly mark the beginning of the speed limit and variable messaging signs in five locations record and display the speeds of passing vehicles. This is to ensure that everyone can continue to enjoy a safe environment within the town centre. The speeds will be monitored and enforcement action from the Police requested as required.
16. **Parkgate Bridge** - Work has started on the preparations for the installation of Parkgate footbridge/cycle bridge, with the construction of the foundations on Adelaide Street and Central Park. The new bridge structure has been manufactured off site and will be transported and lifted into place at the end of October, with the new route opening in November.
17. **Bishop Line** - A new marketing campaign has been launched to promote the hourly, clock-face timetable for train services on the Bishop Line. Market research indicated that more people would use the rail service, more often, if it was both hourly (instead of every two hours during the day) and on a regular, easy to remember clock-face timetable (i.e. the same number of minutes past or to the hour). Reaction to the marketing campaign has been very favourable and use of the service has already increased.
18. **Respect Campaign** - Darlington Borough Council as part of Connect Tees Valley, is running an anti-social behaviour campaign around bus use. There will be a series of four themed posters/messages, the first of which 'It's a bus, not a playground' has been timed to coincide with the school holidays. The messaging will appear at town centre bus stops, on social media and on buses over the next year. The aim of the campaign is to encourage bus passengers to be considerate of others when travelling by bus, in order to ensure that everyone's journey is a good one.

Cultural Services

Active Darlington Project

19. The Project has engaged 2,948 participants to date over the last four years in a variety of informal sporting activities especially targeting the inactive participants and over 14 year olds. The project had 37,497 visits and 5,824 sessions delivered over the four years with 2,318 of the target project age group being over 14 years old. The demographic breakdowns were 55 per cent female, 45 per cent male and 10 per cent having a disability or from a BME background.
20. A new activity programme was launched in Red Hall in May to try and encourage Red Hall residents and people from the surrounding area to engage in physical activity. There are ten sessions being delivered, free of charge, to the participants, each week including Family Boxercise, Bootcamp, Zumba and Archery. The sessions are held in community spaces to remove any barriers when it comes to travel and are also during school time to eliminate any childcare issues. We

engaged with 90 residents from May to August and had 502 attendances.

Darlington Cycle and Castle Rides

21. The annual 70 mile ride held on 1 July 2018 and the Castle Ride held on 5 August 2018 saw over 200 cyclists participate during two very hot days.

Proms in the Park

22. A record-breaking crowd flocked to this year's Proms in the Park concert on 1 July and helped raise in excess of £1,200 for a soldiers' charity. Around 3,000 people of all ages gathered at the South Park bandstand for the annual event, which formed part of the Borough's celebrations to mark Reserves Day and Armed Forces Day (30 June). They brought along picnics and flags to join in the fun as they enjoyed an afternoon of free music and entertainment, which this year celebrated the 100th anniversary of the end of World War One and the centenary of the Royal Air Force.
23. It included music from The Royal Signals (Northern) Band, 102 Battalion Reme Pipes and Drums and Central and East Yorks Wing ATC Sector 1 Band with guest vocalist John Haigh. There were also performances from Mowden Junior School and Reid Street Primary School, representing Darlington Eurovision Junior Schools Choir, who sang songs from the show 'Oliver' and a 'Last Night Party' Colours and Standards ceremony.

Darlington Sherwoods Vauxhall 31st Anniversary 10K

24. The 31st anniversary of the Darlington 10K on 12 August saw over 1,900 finish one of the most prestigious 10K runs in the North East. The day was launched with the Family Fun Run which attracted families pushing young children in buggies and parents running alongside their children; this was followed by the Junior 3K which attracted over 150 participants making it a hugely successful event for the town.

Darlington Hippodrome

Summer Season

25. The season ended with a series of popular one night shows including Chris Ramsey, Last Night of the Proms and Whitney the Queen of the Night. July also saw several very successful community hires including Darlington Dance Festival, Joanne Banks School of Dance and the Melanie Edmenson School of Dance. All hirers were delighted with the improved facilities back stage for large companies with lots of young people, such as themselves.

Autumn What's On Brochure

26. The next What's On Brochure for the Hippodrome was published at the end of August and is sponsored by both Arriva and LNER. Shows include a number of prestigious West End transfers including Duet for One and The Simon and

Garfunkel Story. The autumn seasons begins with ballet LORENT's Rumpelstiltskin which features young dancers from St Bede's School and four dancers over the age of 70 from Darlington, dancing alongside the professional company. Following on is a co-production between Darlington Hippodrome and Wisecrack Productions of a new play The Great Joe Wilson which is set in Darlington and tells the story of a superstar of the music hall era. There is an accompanying exhibition in the Catherine Cookson Heritage Gallery which tells Joe Wilson's story set against the backdrop of the development of music hall and variety theatre nationally and in Darlington. Volunteers from Darlington Culture Volunteers helped to research the exhibition and also developed a music hall themed walking tour with the support of Chris Lloyd of The Northern Echo, which took place in early September.

27. Some large scale musicals are coming to Darlington, some of which could not have been presented in the old Civic Theatre. These include Rock of Ages, The Full Monty and Cilla the Musical. There are also some prestigious dramas including Dracula and Rain Man and a visit from The National Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company.

Classical Music at the Hippodrome

28. The Hippodrome is continuing to work in partnership with Orchestras Live and with the support of Creative Darlington and Durham and Darlington Music Hub, to present a vibrant high quality classical music programme with excellent outreach opportunities for young people. In early September the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment performed in Darlington with a curtain raiser by the Orchestra with students from Wyvern Academy and a special interactive concert performance of The Apple Tree for young people aged 2-5 years and their families in The Hullabaloo.

Darlington Culture Volunteers

29. On 5 September the Hippodrome held a volunteer celebration event to mark the achievements of Darlington Culture Volunteers since its inception. There are 67 active volunteers and January to June 2018 saw the completion of 2871 hours of volunteering, which is an average of 478 hours per month and a significant increase on 2017. Volunteers support not only the Theatre but also other arts and cultural events in Darlington.

Audience Participation and Engagement

30. The Hippodrome presented a series of engagement activities during August which included craft activities for adults and for young people, drama and dance workshops and live music in the Hippo Lounge on Saturday lunchtimes. The Theatre also launched a free family trail around the Theatre encouraging families to learn more about its history. Volunteers took part in a week of archiving activities led by the Theatre's Heritage Officer and there was also a drop in day for the public to come and see some of the interesting items in our collection.

31. On the last Friday of each month the Hippodrome is hosting Speakeasy with Mike McGrother, sponsored by Darlington Building Society, which is an afternoon of fun and music for older people at risk of loneliness and isolation.

Heritage on Track

32. Heritage on Track is a programme exploring and promoting creative engagement with the heritage of the Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR) and of communities around North Road, of Red Hall and in Middleton St George which are located in close proximity to the railway track bed. Heritage on Track is one component of the Tees Valley Combined Authority led Great Place Tees Valley programme, which has secured a Great Place programme award from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The programme will run until the end of September 2020. Heritage on Track activity has already been staged at Darlington primary schools, Corporation Road, Red Hall and Middleton St George, and lead artist for the programme, Graeme Robinson, led community based activity in Red Hall during the 2018 summer holiday period.

Visual Arts

33. The Dover Art Prize winners, Mally Mallinson and Shaun Doyle, have reached an agreement with Market Asset Management to exhibit new work supported by the award within Darlington Indoor Market. The work is informed by the heritage of the Bulmer stone in Darlington. The artists' work was displayed within the Indoor Market from 24 August, launched on 25 August and continued to be on display for a week, coming out of the market on 2 September 2018. The Dover Art Prize is a significant arts award managed by County Durham Community Foundation and over seventy proposals were submitted in consideration for the award, with Arts Council England, County Durham Community Foundation, Darlington Borough Council and Darlington Society of Arts representatives amongst the selection panel.
34. A new exhibition 'Images of Steam' of railway and landscape art by Stephen Bainbridge is currently on display in Crown Street Library (from 29 August to 16 October 2018). Stephen exhibited at Crown Street Library last year and has also worked at the Head of Steam Railway Museum. The exhibition coincides with the countdown to the bi-centenary of the first railway passenger journey on Locomotion No 1 on the Stockton and Darlington Railway on 27th September 1825.

Head of Steam

Volunteers

35. 25 Active volunteers provided 138.5 volunteer hours in July and 118 in August.

Exhibitions

36. A new exhibition opened at the museum from 14 July to 2 September. 'Fashion on a Plate: 1950s Contemporary Tableware' was a colourful exhibition that gave a taste of some of the modern and striking tableware produced during the 1950s.

Events

37. On 22 July the museum welcomed Chase from PAW Patrol for our family fun day. Over 2000 people attended the event.
38. The Head of Steam had a full summer holidays' programme with something every day during the week for families, including art inspired craft activities, That History Bloke, Crazy Creatures, Cool Science and Love Science workshops and Captain Raggy Beard!

Libraries

39. As a result of the changing town centre retail environment and the recent slight improvement of the council's financial position, Cabinet have reviewed the earlier decision to move the central library service from Crown Street to the Dolphin Centre and decided not to implement the relocation. Plans to refurbish Crown Street and to refresh and modernise the internal design and services standards are being developed. A consultation will take place in October and November about the internal redesign and service standards. There are also plans to introduce a limited library service, a 'quick picks and returns' scheme in the Dolphin Centre to complement the main central library at Crown Street and provide greater convenience for the public. The proposals will be considered by Place Scrutiny Committee and then return to Cabinet, before coming to Council in January 2019.
40. The national Summer Reading Challenge took place at Darlington Libraries with over 650 children signing up. The purpose of the Reading Challenge is to prevent the 'reading dip' which teachers often notice after the long summer holidays. By keeping children regularly reading for pleasure we produce better outcomes for children in Darlington. All 4-11 year olds who completed the challenge received a certificate and prizes, with the chance to win a class disco for their school.
41. The Libraries Summer Events Programme was the best yet with events for children from birth to 14 years of age. Over 1,000 children attended events ranging from a Comic Book Masterclass to Sensory sessions for babies.
42. During September, the Library has been participating in national Heritage Open Days with regular tours of Crown Street Library.

Environmental Services

Street Cleaning

43. Members will be aware that additional resources were allocated to street cleaning as part of the 2018/19 MTFP. The additional staff and vehicles are now in place and making an impact on the overall cleanliness across the Borough. In particular, the addition of a Team Leader focused on the town centre is starting to make a significant difference with the visible improvements clearly evident.

Grounds Maintenance

44. The additional resources allocated to grounds maintenance are also all in place ensuring that grass cutting is carried out on the 15 working day cycle. Alongside this, additional floral displays have been introduced across the town centre.
45. The Council also entered Northumbria in Bloom this year with judging taking place in April and July. At the time of writing the outcome of any judging is not known as results are expected on 26 September.

Reduction in Single Use Plastics

46. Following a motion placed at Council in July, officers have started to carry out an audit of single use plastics in the Council, looking at opportunities where these can be reduced or removed. Progress has already taken place with plastic straws being removed, plastic stirrers and single use plastic cups within the Dolphin Centre Gym.
47. I will be launching the Northumbria in Bloom Refill Campaign where the Council will be supporting and encouraging businesses in the town to offer free tap water to residents and visitors who bring along a reusable drinks bottle. This campaign has worked successfully in other towns in the North East and I am looking forward to launching the campaign within Darlington in the near future.

Rail Heritage and 2025

48. The Rail Heritage 2025 Board, that I attend, is progressing well with its Rail Heritage Programme. Milestones that have been achieved include:
- (a) Historic England has approved the resource of some £290,000 for the Heritage Action Zone Project Officer up to March 2024. The post will be hosted by Darlington but will be working across Durham and Stockton. . This post will focus primarily on the building conservation and management projects across the 26 miles of the S&DR.
 - (b) TVCA has appointed a Programme Manager to oversee the overall HAZ Programme. Work has been initially focusing on the Master Plan and Business Case Brief for the Regeneration of the North Road Area. The objective is to create a world class visitor attraction that will significantly boost visitor numbers, jobs and other opportunities in the Borough and the wider region. The procurement process for specialist advice has commenced and it is anticipated that the reports will be received in the spring of 2019.

- (c) An Interpretation Plan for the whole of the S&DR is being commissioned by TVCA on behalf of the Board. This will set the strategic narrative of the S&DR story and help inform audience development work, messaging, and the story to be told at different locations.
- (d) The vision includes creating a walking and cycling network that relates to the S&DR and connects into communities and other sites of interest along the way. Durham County Council has led the developed of a brief to investigate the options and deliverability of a cycling and walking network. TVCA is now commissioning that work.
- (e) Festivals and Events International have reported to the Board their recommendations for the 2025 rail festival and celebrations. Those recommendations included focusing the major set piece event in 2025 at North Road/Head of Steam. Officers from the four local authorities are currently reviewing the report and recommendations. Again officers are intending reporting to Cabinet in November 2018.
- (f) NGI has completed its report into tourism information recommendations. Officers are currently considering the recommendations and will report into Cabinet in November 2018.
- (g) Darlington has the privilege of hosting the annual birthday celebrations for the S&DR this year. The Council and the Friends of Stockton and Darlington Railway are hosting a dinner for distinguished guests who could be important in the development and delivery of our ambitions over the next seven years. The Head of Steam is hosting a family fun day on 30 September to mark the anniversary which is of course today, 27 September.

Councillor Nick Wallis
Cabinet Member with Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio