

**COUNCIL
5 DECEMBER 2019**

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.

Highway Maintenance Programme

2. Highway Maintenance Schemes complete:
 - (a) B6280 Carmel Road North: Carriageway reconstruction (0.667 km)
 - (b) A167 North Road. Whessoe Road to Westmoreland Street: Carriageway retexturing (0.393 km)
 - (c) C40a Burtree Lane: Carriageway reconstruction (1.175 km)
 - (d) Unc. Abbey Road: Carriageway Reconstruction (0.125 km)
3. Highway Maintenance Schemes ongoing:
 - (a) Micro-Asphalt Programme: Carriageway Surfacing – 103 sites
 - (b) C39 School Aycliffe Lane. The Chestnuts to boundary (DCC): Carriageway reconstruction and resurfacing (1.100 km)
 - (c) A1150 Whinfield Road: Carriageway resurfacing (0.480 km)
 - (d) A6072 Main Road, Redworth: Carriageway reconstruction (0.587 km)
 - (e) C34a C38 Great Stainton to Bishopton: Carriageway reconstruction (2.750 km)

Highway Improvement Schemes

4. Works on an improvement scheme to change the B6279 Tornado Way thoroughabout to a conventional roundabout has commenced. This is programmed for completion in April 2020.
5. Lingfield Way/Yarm Road traffic signalled controlled junction is currently under construction and is programmed to be complete by the end of February 2020. This includes a new footway/cycleway on Lingfield Way.

Town Centre Car Parking

6. Cabinet considered car parking initiatives in the town centre to support the town centre economy and agreed to the introduction of a Free on Sunday initiative to be introduced from 1 November 2019 in all Council operated pay and display car parks, Feethams multi-storey and on-street pay and display parking bays. This initiative will run until 1 May 2020.
7. Cabinet also agreed that the parking offer introduced in June 2018 be continued to cover the same period as the Free on Sunday initiative and that the Free on Sunday initiative and parking offers be reviewed ahead of May 2020.

8. Cabinet has agreed that plans be developed to be consulted on to increase the parking spaces available in Duke Street and the Imperial Quarter areas.

Transport Awards

9. The Council was shortlisted for a National Transport Award in the 'Excellence in Technology' category. This was for an app that was developed by digital company Hush, also based in Darlington, to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of delivering personalised travel planning to households across the Tees Valley as part of the Let's Go Tees Valley travel behaviour change programme. The awards were presented on 31 October. Although the Council did not win, being shortlisted was a fantastic achievement in a tough category that was ultimately won by a consortium of Jacobs, Scotland TranServ, Transport Scotland and Sibbald for their 'Virtual Reality Roadworker' training package.
10. The Council and EE were shortlisted for a Modeshift National Sustainable Travel Award in the 'Best Sustainable Travel Initiative – Business' category. The submission was for a car sharing scheme at EE, which has seen benefits for employees, EE and the wider community. The scheme is now being developed further so that it can be automated and provided to other businesses. The awards were presented on 7 November and the EE Car Share scheme was 'highly commended'. The Head of Contact Centre Operations at EE attended the event and is determined to continue to work on the car share scheme and enter the awards again next year.

Darlington Crematorium Refurbishment

11. To ensure the cremation service meets today's requirements, Cabinet has approved the improvements to the Crematorium in accordance with Option 3, replacement of the existing cremators as well as redeveloping the existing chapel into a bereavement service officer and new chapel within West Cemetery on part of the land identified for future burials, and the release of capital funding of £4.5m.
12. Cabinet also approved the release of capital funding of £0.4m already approved in the Capital Programme for the laying out of West Cemetery.
13. Cabinet agreed to add the project for the new crematorium to the Annual Procurement Plan to be designated as a strategic contract and noted that works would be procured in accordance with the Council Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
14. Cabinet also agreed that authorisation be given to the Assistant Director, Law and Governance on behalf of the Council to complete the required deeds and contracts to deliver the works in accordance with the agreed option.

Darlington Hippodrome

15. An exhibition celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Darlington Embroiders' Guild was on display until the end of November and featured work accumulated over a twelve-month period by members of the Guild, who attended tours of Darlington Hippodrome to take inspiration from the story, characters and the building itself to each develop a piece of embroidery with a connection to the theatre.

16. Darlington Hippodrome was shortlisted for a Living North Award for 'Best Programme at a Venue 2019/2020'. Unfortunately, the Hippodrome was unsuccessful at the awards ceremony on 1 November 2019, however it was pleasing to make the shortlist.

Head of Steam

17. The museum has been awarded £1,000 from Tees Valley Museums Creative Case for Diversity Fund to work with the Darlington LGBTQ community and the local Quaker Meeting House to produce a piece of art that will be an integral part of a forthcoming exhibition.
18. The museum team hosted an exchange visit from the British Museum in October. The visit enabled staff to share skills and benefit from each other's experience and knowledge.
19. Over 700 people attended the 194th Stockton and Darlington Railway celebrations on 29 September.

Crown Street Library

20. Darlington Libraries Summer Reading Challenge saw an increase in uptake of 34 per cent on last year's figures, showing that more children continued to read for pleasure over the six-week break. Darlington Libraries are now on Instagram and having accrued over 350 followers, we hope to reach a younger demographic in Darlington to showcase what libraries can offer them.
21. In partnership with Tracks and Creative Darlington, the Library hosted 'HARK!', an evening of stories and music inspired by the past.
22. The Centre for Local Studies hosted an interactive 'Crime Day' with displays and stalls from Durham County Record Office, Head of Steam and Darlington Hippodrome. Those in attendance had the opportunity to explore records relating to their own family history.

Creative Darlington

23. Darlington based painter Colin Graham exhibited 'Colourscapes' in the gallery at Darlington Library from Saturday 7 September to Thursday 3 October and attracted 1,875 visits. The artist also held a talk and made sales during the exhibition.
24. Darlington MIND's Art and Creative Crafts group exhibited in the gallery at Crown Street Library during October to coincide with World Mental Health Day on Thursday 10 October.
25. The Town Hall Exhibition Space hosted 'Ephemeral Light', an exhibition by photographer Elaine Vizor, from Monday 19 August to Friday 4 October. Following this, a new exhibition was installed from Darlington Society of Arts, which was on display until Friday 22 November.

26. Creative Darlington supported three performances of a Stephenson and Pease production on Sunday 29 September, at the Head of Steam Museum. The performances formed part of the Head of Steam's Family Fun Day celebrating the 194th anniversary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. 702 people were involved in an audience and participant capacity on the day.

Environmental Services

27. Following the introduction of the Garden Waste Collection Service this year it has proved to be very successful, with 4,800 properties subscribed. As a result, the Council intend to offer this service again in Summer 2020.
28. Grass cutting and horticultural services throughout the Borough received many plaudits: in particular, floral displays throughout the town (wildflower and bedding plants) were well received. Further, the town was successful in winning the 'Best Town Centre' category in Northumbria in Bloom, which is a great testament to all those involved in making Darlington cleaner, safer and greener.

**Councillor Mrs Heather Scott OBE
Leader of the Council**