

COUNCIL
30 JANUARY 2020

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 Improvement Schemes

2. Works on an improvement scheme to change the B6279 Tornado Way throughabout to a conventional roundabout has commenced. This is programmed for completion in April 2020.
3. 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.
4. An engagement exercise has begun to advise local residents of proposed changes on Victoria Road. The scheme which improves the public realm on the approach to Darlington Station is programmed to commence in March 2020 and be complete later in the summer.

Highway Maintenance Programme

5. Highway Maintenance Schemes complete:
 - (a) Micro-Asphalt Programme: Carriageway Surfacing – 103 sites (18.500km)
 - (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)

Transport Planning

6. The Department for Transport (DfT) has extended the Access Funding for a further year to enable the Let's Go Tees Valley travel behaviour change programme to continue. This will enable us to continue supporting people into employment; help people become more active through walking and cycling; reduce single occupancy car journeys; and work with businesses to implement travel plans to achieve their corporate social responsibility targets.
7. A bid has been submitted to the DfT for monies from the Local Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund. The bid is for £2.260m from DfT with a local contribution of £753k from Darlington's Local Transport Plan. The scheme is for full reconstruction on sections of the A68 in the rural section between the A6072 Swan House roundabout and the borough boundary, plus addressing other maintenance issues in some locations. Similar works are required on sections of the A68 in the urban area on West Auckland Road and Woodlands Road. In addition, it is

planned to improve flood resilience by improving gullies and drainage assets to manage surface water flooding and resurface the existing cycle route alongside West Auckland Road.

8. These works have been identified by the most recent asset management data. DfT intended to announce whether local authorities were successful by the end of December 2019. This is delayed until Ministerial appointments are announced following the General Election and expected early in the New Year.
9. An expression of interest has been submitted to the DfT's Local Pinch Point Fund to tackle congestion on the A68. The proposals include changes to a number of junctions; an upgrade to the Urban Traffic Management and Control system to better manage the flow of traffic, including priority for bus services; and provision of a new cycle route and better pedestrian crossing facilities. A decision will be taken by the Department in the summer, and successful authorities will be asked to develop a business case for funding in 2021/22 and 2022/23.

Proposed Waiting Restrictions McMullen Road Roundabout - Objections

10. Cabinet has considered an objection received to a proposal for waiting restrictions at McMullen Road/Yarm Road roundabout. Cabinet has agreed that the objection be set aside and authorised officers to proceed with the proposal to introduce a waiting restriction scheme.

Tees Valley Joint Waste Management Contract

11. Cabinet has agreed to adopt the Outline Business Case for the future treatment of municipal waste.
12. Cabinet has also agreed that the Council enter into the Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA) between the five Tees Valley Authorities in respect of the Tees Valley Municipal Residual Waste Treatment project, and that the Managing Director be authorised to approve the amendments to the IAA.
13. Cabinet has noted the financial commitment to Darlington's share of the procurement project costs of £1m and agreed that the funds be released subject to approval by full council as part of the 2020/21 Medium Term Financial Plan, to be applied to the Project in accordance with the IAA.
14. Cabinet has agreed that the Council enter into an agreement with the combined Authority to repay the £1m associated with the procurement over a 25-year period. I have delegated authority, along with the Assistant Director, Resources in consultation with the Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, Assistant Director Law and Governance to agree the final details of the agreement.
15. I have delegated authority, along with the Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Assistant Director Resources, Assistant Director Law and Governance to accept any minor changes to the Outline Business Case, the IAA and the Terms of Reference of the Project Board if required.

Darlington Hippodrome

16. Christmas @ The Hipp took place on Saturday 7 December 2019. This free event ran between 10.00am to 3.00pm and included Christmas stalls, live music performed by 'Something Blue', wreath making workshops, tree decorating workshops, craft tables and a Santa's grotto. This family friendly event was well attended and received fantastic feedback from customers. The event took advantage of a 'no panto' Saturday and provided great footfall around the building with many people purchasing pantomime tickets.
17. Pantomime at the Hipp Exhibition, running from December 2019 to February 2020 in the Catherine Cookson Heritage Gallery, showcases items from our archive and shares the theatre's pantomime story. Featuring posters, photos and programmes from the last 100 years, the exhibition was created with the support of a dedicated team of Darlington Culture archive volunteers.
18. Jack and The Beanstalk, Darlington Hippodrome's annual pantomime opened on Friday 6 December 2019. Starring Shirley Ballas and George Sampson, the show had great reviews and a large number of full houses, entertaining families until 5 January 2020.

Head of Steam

19. The museum has been awarded £36,900 from Arts Council England's National Lottery Project Grant to fund a project that will engage with internationally renowned artist and founder of the Artificial Limb Project, Sophie De Oliveira Barata and a disability group formed of members of the Cleveland Limbless Association and BLESMA (British Limbless Ex-Servicemen's Association). Sophie will collaborate with our group, creating a prosthetic and have the group influence a railway themed design. The prosthetic will be the centrepiece of an exhibition and will then be accessioned into the museum's collection – making Head of Steam the second museum in the country to have one of Sophie's designs after the National Museum of Scotland.
20. The museum's next exhibition is 'Off the Rails' which runs until Sunday 3 March 2020. The exhibition is a small personal view, in and around trains, by local artist Bill Oakley.

Crown Street Library

21. On Saturday 14 December 2019, Crown Street Library hosted the Darlington Choral Society, who kindly provided a festive rendition of carols. Local Artists provided a Christmas crafts workshop for adults, there were crafts for children and a Christmas themed Lego session. The Friends of the Library served up coffee and mince pies for everyone.
22. During the week commencing 16 December 2019, parties for pre-school children were held at Crown Street and Cockerton Libraries, with a visit from Santa.
23. During January, a display in the Centre for Local Studies marked the 150th anniversary of The Northern Echo.

Creative Darlington

24. Bridging the Gap exhibition by textiles artist Helen Winthorpe-Kendrick was on display in the Gallery at Crown Street Library from Saturday 2 November 2019 until 9 January 2020, followed by an exhibition by Darlington Society of Arts from Saturday 11 January 2020.
25. The Trace Lines creative programme, focused on printmaking and exploring the heritage of Crown Street Library, offered free participatory sessions in a 'pop up'/temporary space within the Cornmill Centre in Darlington during December and January.
26. The Town Hall Exhibition Space hosted Can I call it Art?, an exhibition of photography and painting by Neil McKee, from Monday 25 November 2019 to Friday 17 January 2020.
27. In 2019/20 Creative Darlington has supported Orchestras Live, alongside Darlington Hippodrome and Durham Music Service, enabling professional musicians from ensembles including London Mozart Players and the Hallé Orchestra (who performed at Darlington Hippodrome on 9 January 2020) to work with pupils in Darlington schools in advance of performing at Darlington Hippodrome.

Ice Sculpture Trail Event – Saturday 7 December

28. The Ice Sculptures returned to Darlington for a second year on Saturday 7 December 2019. We had significant success utilising social media to reach members of the public with one post gaining over 106,000 views, and thousands of visitors on the day.

Christmas Markets – Thursday 5 to Saturday 7 December

29. Thousands of visitors attended this year's Christmas Market which was held in the Market Square and organised by Market Asset Management with support from the Council's Town Centre Events Team. Numerous Christmas-themed stalls were located inside a marquee with food and drink stalls and family entertainment around the perimeter.

Environmental Services

30. At the recent Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) Performance Networks Awards, Darlington was awarded the Most Improved Cemetery and Crematorium Service Award and we were also a Finalist in the Most Improved Refuse/Recycling Service category. The awards are given as a result of data each local authority forwards to APSE, who then benchmark and determine the best service provider in the respective service areas.
31. The Grounds Maintenance winter programme is in full swing with the vast majority of hedges already now cut back and work is ongoing to Council-owned bushes and shrubs across the Borough. In addition, weather allowing, the path edging programme is ongoing around various Wards within the Borough.

32. As a result of the long, wet autumn period, leaf-fall from trees occurred over a much longer period of time rather than the short drop experienced when frosts occur. As a result, the Street Cleansing service have continually been removing accumulations of leaves from hardstanding areas (Council policy is to only remove leaves from hardstanding areas).
33. The Winter Maintenance season started in October and to date no issues have been experienced with the milder, wetter winter period so far.

Councillor Mrs Heather Scott OBE
Leader of the Council