

**Environment and Sustainable  
Communities Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee**



**15 January 2019**

**Stockton to Darlington Railway Bicentenary Celebrations**

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**Joint report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of Transformation and Partnership and Ian Thompson, Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services**

**Electoral division(s) affected:**

Countywide

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To provide Members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (ESC OSC) with an update on the programme of celebrations for the Stockton and Darlington Railway Bicentenary prior to a presentation by the Head of Culture and Sport, Regeneration and Local Services.

**Executive summary**

- 2 At the meeting of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 13 July 2018 members agreed the committee's work programme for 2018/19 which included an overview of the proposed arrangements to celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Stockton and Darlington Railway.
- 3 Arrangements have been made for this item of business to be considered at the meeting scheduled for the 15 January 2018. The meeting will be held at Locomotion at Shildon and due to the cross cutting nature of this agenda item members of the Economy and Enterprise OSC have been invited to attend the meeting.
- 4 It is proposed that a progress update providing detail on the further development of arrangements to celebrate the bicentenary is included in the committee's 2019/2020 work programme together with a tour of Locomotion.

5 Arrangements have been made for Steve Howell, Head of Culture and Sport, Regeneration and Local Services to attend the meeting and deliver a presentation covering the following areas:

- Governance and Approach
- Conservation and Management projects
- Heritage Attraction developments
- Festival and Events
- Cross-cutting initiatives
- Next steps

A copy of the presentation is attached as appendix 2.

### **Recommendations**

- 6 That the Environment and Sustainable OSC and the Economy and Enterprise OSC consider and comment on the information provided in this report and presentation provided at the meeting.
- 7 That the Environment and Sustainable Communities OSC includes in its work programme for 2019/2020 a special meeting to be held at Locomotion to receive a report and presentation detailing progress made together with a tour of Locomotion.

### **Background**

- 8 The 27 September 1825 saw the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway with 2025 being the 200<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of this momentous occasion it offers an exciting opportunity for the region and the United Kingdom as a whole to celebrate this world changing event.
- 9 Durham County Council, Darlington Borough Council, and Stockton Borough Council (the three Local Authority areas in which the Stockton and Darlington rail track enters) along with representatives from the National Railway Museum and the Friends of Darlington to Stockton Railway have committed to working together to plan activities and events to mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway.

### **Progress to date**

- 10 During 2014 and 2015 the four Local Authorities, namely the Tees Valley Combined Authority, Durham County Council, Stockton

Borough Council and Darlington Borough Council worked together to form a coordinated approach to making more of the region's rail heritage.

- 11 The Councils have forged a strong partnership with other interested stakeholders to deliver an ambitious programme associated with the Stockton and Darlington Railway story and culminating in the celebration of that story in 2025, its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- 12 The Rail Heritage 2025 Board was formally established in early 2018 and gained recognition for its ambition by successfully applying for Heritage Action Zone status from Historic England. For the sake of clarity the programme developed by the board is known as the Heritage Action Zone programme even though there are elements of that programme outside the core interests of Historic England, running up to 2025
- 13 This report explains the main highlights of those achievements, what the programme is for the next 24 months covering the financial years 2018/19 and 2019/2020 and considers what the longer term commitments may look like up to 2025.
- 14 The report explains the role of the Rail Heritage 2025 Board that has been established with other partners, its governance arrangements and high level programme.

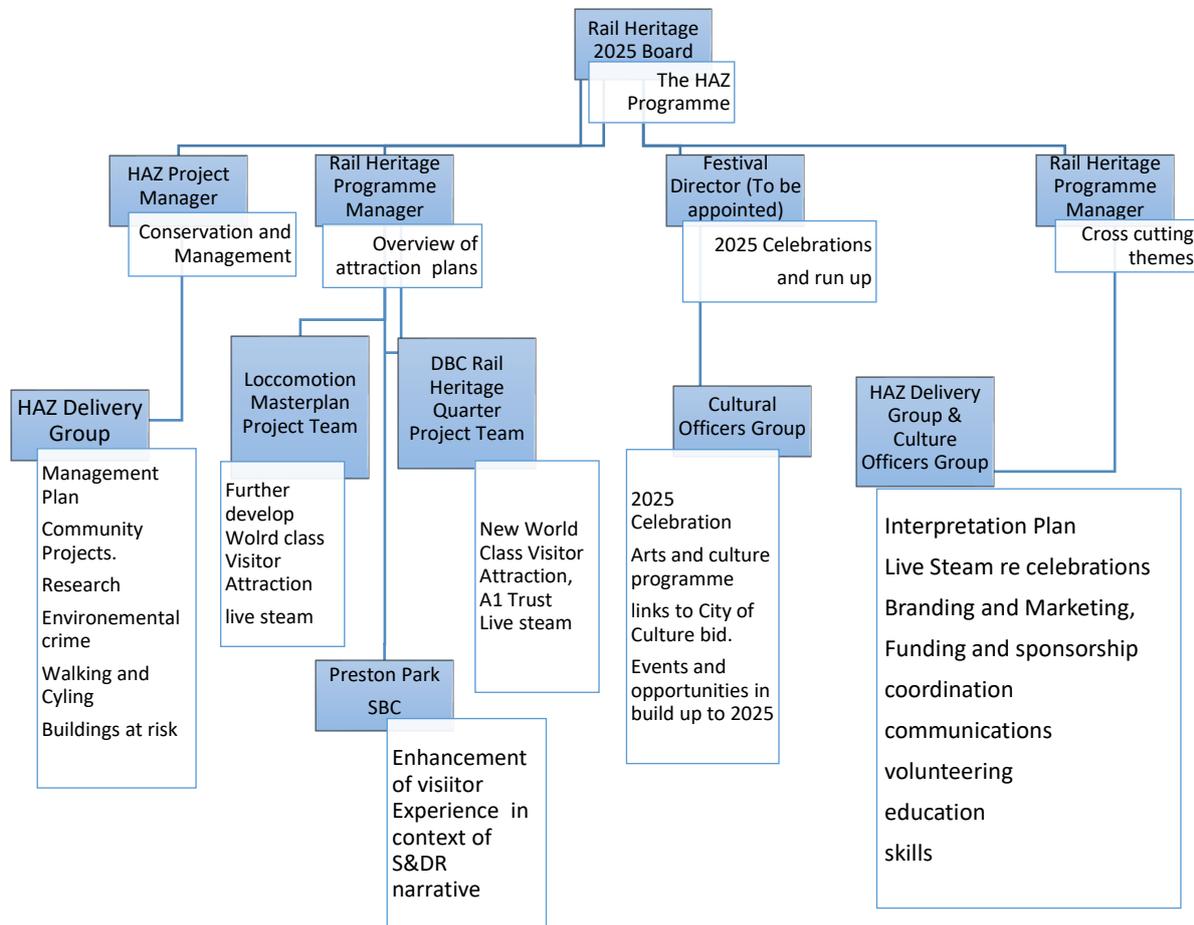
### **The Rail Heritage 2025 Board**

- 15 Significant progress has been made in forming a strong partnership to take the rail heritage and tourism agenda forward. There is strong political support at all of the Local Authorities and a Rail Heritage 2025 Board has been established to oversee the development and execution of tasks.
- 16 Representation at the Board is by Portfolio Holder and Directors / Assistant Directors of the authorities and supported by officers of the TVCA. Importantly the Board includes organisations important in influencing the development and delivery of the programme. The Board has representatives from the following organisations:
  - (a) The A1 Locomotive Trust
  - (b) The Bishop Line
  - (c) Friends of Stockton and Darlington Railway
  - (d) Historic England
  - (e) Hitachi

- (f) LNER
  - (g) Network Rail
  - (h) Northern Rail
  - (i) Science Museum Group (National Railway Museum)
  - (j) Tees Valley Combined Authority
  - (k) Stockton Borough Council
  - (l) Durham County Council
  - (m) Darlington Borough Council
- 17 The Board has agreed a vision and a programme of work that consists of some 43 projects. It has also achieved Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) status for the S&DR in May 2018 that brings advantages in terms of national recognition and credibility from Historic England. A summary of the HAZ Programme will be given in the presentation.
- 18 The HAZ Programme is organised into four work streams. These are:
- (a) Conservation and Management projects
  - (b) Heritage Attraction developments
  - (c) Festival and Events
  - (d) Cross-cutting initiatives
- 19 The governance framework for these work-streams is shown below in figure 1. The Governance organigram illustrates the scope of the programme and its ambition but also the interconnectivity and relationships between the work-streams. The shaded boxes indicate the “who” and the unshaded boxes the work areas, “the what”.
- 20 Members will note that resources have been put in place with support from all of the partners making contributions. In particular TVCA have appointed two officers that are currently focusing on this agenda and have borne the full costs for these posts to date, however, DCC will be contributing from 2019. The Programme Manager is now taking responsibility for the overall coordination of the HAZ Programme and is assisted by a Project Manager, seconded from Darlington, focusing on the cross cutting theme.
- 21 The HAZ Project Manager is in post and is 90% funded by Historic England up to April 2023.

22 Two delivery groups have been established under the board. The HAZ Delivery Group is focused on the physical assets of the S&DR, their conservation, the maintenance and management, the creation of assets for the visitor such as walking and cycling links whilst the Culture Officers group are focusing on the 2025 events. It should be noted that at this time no appointment has been made to a Festival Director as it is considered premature, however, resources from DCC and other partners has been used in commissioning the celebration business case.

**Fig 1 Rail Heritage 2025 Governance**



## **Progress on Cross Cutting Themes**

- 23 The Board is managing a number of cross cutting themes that impact on the whole of the S&DR offer that all partners have agreed to support. This includes considering progress made to date on these matters, any major activity over the next two years and any future resources required to execute those activities.

## **Progress on the S&DR Interpretation Plan**

- 24 The Board has commissioned an Interpretation Plan to be produced that will provide the framework for determining what the “grand narrative” should be, how to tell the stories of the S&DR, which story to tell where and how that might be told. This is a central and fundamental piece of work that will also provide the framework for the development of the tourism offer, branding and promotion. TVCA have commissioned TGCA to complete the work on behalf of the Board. That work should be completed in February 2019.

## **Progress on Branding, Marketing, Communications and Funding**

- 25 Work on branding is to follow from the Interpretation Plan and marketing is not likely to commence in earnest until the different S&DR visitor experience products have been developed and are in place. A range of itineraries for different target audiences will be developed that work both at regional and local destination scales.
- 26 The board has agreed a communication protocol that should help to shape key messages, responses to the press and conversations with potential key sponsors and funders. Again, until the evidence base is delivered in the form of the Grand Narrative, The Visitor Attraction Plans, the Conservation and Management Plan, the funding and sponsorship strategy is difficult to develop.

## **Progress on 2025 Bicentenary Celebrations**

- 27 The Board has also commissioned the development of a strategic framework for the 2025 Bicentenary celebrations. TVCA commissioned this work from Festival and Events International (FEI) and their report was received earlier this year.
- 28 FEI proposes that the core of the festival could be made up of the following activities:
- (a) STEAM Expo; the central celebration event is recommended to take place in either Darlington or Stockton. FEI preferred site is Darlington but further feasibility and logistical work needs to be done.

- (b) Along the Line; a coordinated programme of live steam journeys and attractions and events along key sites and tracks.
  - (c) Heritage commission; a heritage focused commission that will have ongoing life beyond the celebration as an educational resource.
  - (d) SMART programming; a co-ordination of key programming cultural partners and venues in the lead up to and during the celebration.
  - (e) Education and Skills; a specific strand that embeds learning in all aspects of the programme.
- 29 Whilst the Board has signed this work off as a framework there is still significant work needed to develop the products and activities.
- 30 It should also be noted that FEI recommends that to establish the bi-centenary celebration event as an iconic must-visit event, considerable investment in marketing over a sustained period, starting in 2022 will be required. This will build on the overall Marketing and Communication strategy for the larger S&DR Rail Heritage Project.
- 31 They advise the brand set up should begin in 2022. This would be to enable an initial launch announcement 3 years before the celebration around a strong central narrative that will provide the backbone of all strategy, programming, fund-raising, marketing and communications.
- 32 Significant activity in the development of the cultural programme – such as artists’ commissions should be timed to provide focus each September, establishing the anniversary date in people’s minds well in advance.
- 33 That does not mean that activity will not start until 2022 as other development work will progress through the Cultural Officers Group. It does mean that an appointment of a Festival Director or an organisation to lead on the festival can be procured with this timetable in mind.

### **Progress on Visitor Attractions**

- 34 The Board has recognised the overall potential to significantly boost the region as a visitor destination through the S&DR story. Nowhere else in the world can tell the story of where the modern rail system started that was transformational for the globe.
- 35 Creative use of the S&DR assets together with local business and communities can increase the value of that offer and reinforce pride of

place. One context emerging is the creation of a world class heritage attraction based on the development of honey pot sites along the S&DR that can operate at a strategic and local level and that are connected by internationally significant heritage and cycling and walking trails.

- 36 It is also worth underlining that the Board view all of the different components of the S&DR working to complement each other and add value to the whole offer. It is anxious to avoid competition or confusion between the various offers that might be created.
- 37 The three strategic honey pot sites are:
- (a) Locomotion Museum at Shildon where the Science Museum Group are looking to invest to improve its offer and a masterplan has been commissioned.
  - (b) Preston Park in Stockton through which the original track bed runs and which is already a significant asset for visitors and where a review of its offer is underway.
  - (c) North Road Darlington, where the intention is to create a world class visitor attraction around the collection of buildings and land associated with the Head of Steam Site and North Road Station. A Masterplan and Business Plan have been commissioned and consultants are anticipated to complete their work in May 2019.
- 38 Local honey pot sites are being explored along the route of the S&DR. These can include the various Railway Taverns which were effectively the first railway stations in the world. Brusselton Incline and the crossing point at Middleton St George are examples of opportunities for potential community led projects.
- 39 A walking and cycling audit is being procured to create a plan for a network of connected routes from Witton Park through to Stockton. It is intended that this would provide opportunities for people to access and enjoy the corridor through which the S&DR ran whilst connecting to places of interest whether that be rail or other heritage sites or sites of nature conservation interest. Equally the network should provide enhanced travel choices to access other destinations such as local services and employment sites.

### **Future Funding Commitments**

- 40 The Board are currently working to identify the likely shape of commitments over the period up to 2025 and in particular to ensure adequate funding is available over the next two years of the programme. In reality it is hoped that much of the costs can be

resourced from external funding bodies and organisations and the long term costs may represent an underwriting position.

- 41 Project Management resource needs to be maintained over the next two years in order to support the Board's activities. Over the period from 2018 to 2021 TVCA will be covering 54% of these costs, Historic England 27%, Darlington contributing just under 10% and Stockton and Durham each covering just less than 5%.

### **Next Steps**

- 42 There are a number of areas of work that the Board will be seeking to progress over the next 12 months namely:
- a) Agree the resource plan beyond 2019
  - b) Completion of the Interpretation Plan.
  - c) Work with Locomotion on Masterplan for site
  - d) Complete Masterplan for Rail Heritage Quarter Darlington.
  - e) Complete the Access Plan.
  - f) Commenced a number of community led projects
  - g) Commence work on the Management Plan.
  - h) Further develop the bicentenary framework in conjunction with 2025 City of Culture bid.
  - i) Improved communications and news about what is going on and where we are going.

### **Conclusion**

- 43 The programme is still very much in development and feasibility stages and whilst the broad shape and scope of the ambition is emerging it is important to ensure that development and feasibility work can continue and to form deliverable, sustainable and robust projects.
- 44 Overview and Scrutiny Members will be aware of work currently being undertaken and work planned for the bicentenary celebrations of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. It is suggested that the committee includes a further progress update in its 2019/2020 work programme together with a tour of the Locomotion site.

### **Background papers**

- S&D Railway Heritage Action Zone Delivery Plan: 2017

- The S&D Railway: Historic Environment Audit 2016
- S&D Railway Bi-centenary Celebration Event Business Case 2018 (FEI)

### **Other useful documents**

- None

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

Funding and contractual arrangements will need to be put in place for various elements of the programme. Intellectual property rights will be important to secure in terms of merchandising opportunities.

### **Finance**

Not applicable

### **Consultation**

Significant consultation has taken place during the production of the Economic Strategy, Experience Darlington Strategy, Town Centre and Town Centre Fringe Strategies. Further engagement and consultation is planned during the preparation of the Interpretation Plan, The RHQ Masterplan and Business Plan.

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

The programme and its projects will have regard to equalities considerations. In particular the programme will be conscious about the needs of international visitors.

### **Human Rights**

Not applicable

### **Crime and Disorder**

Not applicable

### **Staffing**

Not applicable

### **Accommodation**

Not applicable

### **Risk**

The programme is very ambitious and complex and therefore carries significant risks not all in the control of the Council.

The management of risk will be a key function of the Board as each of the partners can play a major role in removing or reducing risks.

Risk logs are being maintained both at a strategic level and at project level. Each of the authorities have put in place their own internal governance arrangements. The Managing Director chairs a Culture Group focused on the

delivery of the Experience Strategy and essentially operates a Darlington Board coordinating responses to the agenda. It is served by an Experience Darlington Officer group responsible for executing the actions and tasks. That is now chaired by the newly appointed Head of Culture and Heritage.

Members will note that there are significant gates to be negotiated before commitments are made. Most notably in regard to the RHQ where a compelling and Master Plan and Business case will be key to reducing risk and influencing the decision to proceed.

## **Procurement**

Procurement will be led by the lead organisation for any element of the programme and will be subject to their own procedures together with any public procurement requirements.