

COUNTY COUNCIL

20 FEBRUARY 2019

QUESTIONS FROM AREA ACTION PARTNERSHIPS

Teesdale AAP

TAP would like to acknowledge the work that DCC has put into identifying the unique needs of rural communities through the County Durham Plan and Council Vision consultations. TAP feels that both documents will hopefully provide DCC and its partners with a clear vision when shaping the future of County Durham. With this in mind, TAP would like to ask the following question:

Would DCC also consider developing bespoke rural development plans, for communities like Teesdale, to further underpin economic and social regeneration? The TAP Board feel that local development plans would place even more emphasis on rural proofing the needs of communities like Teesdale, and ultimately support the work of DCC and its partners.

Response

I would like to thank Teesdale AAP for the question and for your recognition of the efforts the council has put into its work on the County Durham Plan and the new Vision.

The council recognises the challenges and opportunities facing our rural communities. As you will be aware we are working with a number of these rural communities to help them prepare neighbourhood plans which when complete, will form part of the statutory development for these areas. As part of the preparation of the neighbourhood plan, we would always encourage the use of rural proofing and as much as possible, for communities to join together in preparing their plans. A masterplan or plans that cover rural areas may also be something that the council may consider as part of its approach to the new enhanced Towns and Villages programme.

Neighbourhood plans, which form part of the statutory development plan, give communities the opportunity to set out proposals such as:

- developing a shared vision for their neighbourhood;
- choosing where new homes, shops, offices, and other development should be built;
- identifying and protecting local green spaces; and
- having a say on what new buildings should look like

The county council can help groups, including through officer support and technical advice and we recommend that groups get advice at the earliest possible stage of their neighbourhood plan development.

Mid Durham AAP

As an Area Action Partnership we welcome that this year (2019) is being recognised as County Durham's Year of Culture. We also welcome and recognise all the fabulous cultural, sporting and heritage related planned events and activities that will be developed, supported and enhanced this year.

Within Mid Durham we have a number of 'heritage, cultural and environmental assets' such as Ushaw (formerly Ushaw College), Brancepeth Castle, Longovicium in Lanchester, we also on our north western border include an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

In what ways can we expect a focus on, or support for, these assets within our AAP area in order that they can maximise their exposure and involvement in this unique year of culture in County Durham.

Response

Firstly, I would like to thank Mid Durham AAP for the question. Festivals and events have an important role to play in delivering the corporate approach to culture-led regeneration. They help to place and position County Durham positively, whilst attracting investment, extending engagement in community life and volunteering, and supporting skills and health by engaging more people in culture and sport.

2019 sees a range of new cultural events, openings and anniversaries in the County which will build on the continued growth in cultural activity in recent years through the County Council and wider partners. This year, it is planned to recognise this with a year of activities, festivals, events and anniversaries, in a designated 2019 Year of Culture, which will include a number of events within the Mid-Durham Area, particularly around Ushaw College and Brancepeth Castle. The wider community are also encouraged to participate in the Year of Culture by adding activities and events and all activities will be supported by the campaign.

Co-ordinated by a steering group, with membership from elected members representing AAPs, DCC officers and other key partners, the year will bring together events across the County under an umbrella brand developed by Visit County Durham.

Work is now progressing to create special offers linked to key events and to encourage all events to link to the brand through #Durham19. Organisations/events can now sign-up to receive regular updates, promotion is being undertaken by Visit County Durham to encourage engagement and promotional tools are also in development, including an online #Durham19 toolkit and event submission forms. These tools will be instrumental in developing a wider listing of community events.

Any community based organisations who would like to get involved are asked to contact their AAP representative to discuss how they can be part of the Year of Culture.