

Cabinet

3 April 2019

Council Activity Report

Ordinary Decision



Report of Corporate Management Team

Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of Transformation and Partnerships

Councillor Simon Henig, Leader of the Council

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide an update on work to support some of the council's key priorities.

Executive summary

- 2 The report provides an update on progress towards delivering some of the council's key priorities.
- 3 This month's report covers:
 - (a) Winter maintenance
 - (b) Clean Durham
 - (c) Year of Culture
 - (d) Holocaust Memorial Day

Recommendation

- 4 Cabinet is recommended to note the contents of this update.

Background

- 5 The council undertakes a great deal of work across the county.
- 6 This report offers an overview of some key projects.

Winter maintenance

- 7 As the local highway authority, we have a statutory duty to deliver a winter maintenance programme which ensures that road-users are not endangered by snow or ice so far as is reasonably possible. The service we provide involves precautionary salting; the continuation of salting following the formation of ice; clearance of ice and snow; dealing with sustained severe weather conditions; and the provision of salt and grit bins.



- 8 Several gritters were replaced in anticipation for this year's winter weather, with four new power gritters and 23 new trailer gritters now among the authority's 76-strong fleet of gritting vehicles and snow blowers. Salt stocks were increased to 42,000 tonnes in preparation for the 2018-19 winter maintenance season, mitigating the risk of any shortage in supplies.
- 9 During the winter months, our fleet treated more than 1,700km of priority one roads during normal winter conditions. This represented 45 per cent of the road network, one of the highest proportions in the UK. At times of prolonged severe winter weather such as extended freezing

conditions or where snow is expected to settle for a period exceeding 24 hours, a secondary network of priority two routes is also treated when resources are available.

- 10 Information regarding gritting in County Durham is communicated through our corporate website and social media accounts. Live updates are posted on Facebook and Twitter at regular intervals during adverse weather and for the first time, messages were accompanied by video footage taken from 360 degree cameras from our power gritters. Gritter updates using the hashtag #TwitterGritterNE were the most viewed tweets on the council's Twitter page for the month of January (one message on 18 January 2019 was viewed 7,757 times).
- 11 Utilising 'TrackYou', a tracking system fitted to our entire winter maintenance fleet, visitors to our corporate website can see where routes have been, or are planned to be, treated. Information is also provided on our corporate website and social media accounts in relation to any disruptions to services caused by severe winter weather including closures of individual schools, household waste and recycling centres and major roads.

Clean Durham



- 12 With the arrival of spring the council's work to ensure our communities look their best steps up a gear. Efforts are centred around our Clean Durham campaign.

- 13 We provide a range of services to help to keep the county safe and clean, including street cleaning, parks and ground maintenance, refuse and recycling, waste collections, operation of waste transfer stations, pest control, civic pride, dog control, neighbourhood wardens and measures to tackle anti-social behaviour and unauthorised encampments.
- 14 In addition, like many local authorities we encourage our communities to take an active role in keeping their areas clean and green. And we also work to tackle environmental issues such as litter, flytipping, dog fouling and graffiti, which are a financial and reputational burden on the council, through education and enforcement.
- 15 This work includes running a number of campaigns throughout the year such as the Big Spring Clean, In Bloom and Operation Spruce Up as well as initiatives to combat littering and flytipping.
- 16 Operation Spruce Up sees teams from across the council working to brighten up a chosen community each month. Since the scheme started in 2016, more than 30 towns and villages in County Durham have been supported with activities including cleansing of road channels, gullies and weeding; litter clearance; removal of graffiti; replacing of shrub beds and the repair and painting of street furniture.
- 17 Through the scheme, we also work with schools to deliver educational programmes. So far, more than 4,000 children and young people have been involved in activities such as helping to plant bulbs, collecting litter and designing posters to encourage people to dispose of their rubbish responsibly. Operations this year included Newton Aycliffe in March and Wolsingham in April 2019.
- 18 Working with Darlington Borough Council and LitterFree Durham and Darlington, our Big Spring Clean campaign aims to inspire residents, community groups, schools and businesses to give their area a spring clean or take part in a litter pick. Last year saw 3,041 volunteers take part in 204 litter picks across County Durham, collecting 3,021 bags of rubbish.
- 19 This year's campaign, which runs until Tuesday, 9 April, was launched during a special event at Locomotion in Shildon, during which 42 volunteers collected 86 bags of rubbish between Newton Aycliffe and Shildon.

- 20 We also promote the creation of greener spaces in our county by supporting the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) 'In Bloom' competitions – something we have done for the past 40 years. This helps to deliver campaigns that enhance the attractiveness of our towns and villages whilst also achieving official horticultural recognition from awarding body organisations.
- 21 Furthermore, we currently support and deliver Beautiful Durham, a free-to-enter gardening event open to residents and organisations in Durham City and surrounding villages; as well as Chester's Best, a free competition encouraging residents and organisations in Chester-le-Street to create and celebrate a more attractive environment; and Northumbria and Britain In Bloom, the regional and national horticultural competitions.
- 22 Following Durham City's success in the 'Best Small City' category of Britain In Bloom in October 2018, the city will now compete in the prestigious Champion of Champions category in 2019.
- 23 Last year saw the launch of two campaigns promoting anti-litter messages. Litter Heroes, launched in November 2018 with a film starring primary schoolchildren dressed as superheroes, encourages residents, workers and visitors to our county to put their waste in bins or take it home. This was followed in December 2018 with an alternative litter-based take on the 12 Days of Christmas. Both videos have been viewed more than 20,000 times.

Year of Culture update

- 24 County Durham has seen continued growth and investment in cultural, sporting and heritage activity during the past few years thanks to support from the county council and its partners.
- 25 This year sees the results of this sustained investment with an unprecedented year of openings, activities, festivals, events and anniversaries. Designated as the county's Year of Culture, and badged as #Durham19, 2019 sees a year-long marketing campaign delivered by Visit County Durham, Durham County Council, County Durham Cultural Partnership and partners from across the county.
- 26 #Durham19 was launched at the very end of last year on 29 December with a supplement in The Times, a public website (www.thisisdurham.com/19) and a corporate website (www.visitcountydurham.org/durham19). The first event of the year, Durham Vocal Festival, which ran from 25 January to 9 February, saw Durham reverberating with the sound of world class vocal performances taking place at 14 venues around the county including the Cathedral and Gala Theatre. More than 3,500 of our children and young people got involved,

many of whom took part in activities linked to the 66 schools which participated in a variety of events and activities.



- 27 During February, more than 3,400 people visited Durham Town Hall and 1,400 visited Clayport Library as part of the city's Chinese New Year celebrations. Towards the end of the month, the annual Fire and Ice festival took place in the city, with intricate sculptures of heroes and villains including Maleficent, Darth Vader and Ant and Dec dotted around the city. A spectacular ice sculpture of Grace Darling brought Durham to the nation's attention when it was featured in The Times on Saturday 23 February.
- 28 And there is still plenty more to come, with a packed programme featuring the familiar and the new lined up for the rest of the year. Highlights include Cricket World Cup fixtures in June and July at Chester-le-Street, the tenth anniversary edition of Lumiere in November and completion of The Auckland Project's multi-million pound redevelopment of Auckland Castle. Events in Norman Cornish's hometown of Spennymoor and elsewhere in the county will mark what would have been the artist's 100th birthday, while work continues at Beamish to rebuild Cornish's house as part of the museum's new 1950s town.
- 29 Next weekend (13 and 14 April) sees the return of the ever-popular Bishop Auckland Food Festival on 13 and 14 April, with the line-up including MasterChef presenter Gregg Wallace, Cbeebies presenters Angellica Bell and Stefan Gates, Kenny Tutt (Masterchef winner 2018) and Jenny McAlpine (Fizz in Coronation Street). Last year, more than 27,000 people visited BAFF – its biggest crowd ever. And there's more on the menu for food lovers this year with the inaugural Seaham Food Festival in June.

- 30 The second Durham Adventure Festival also takes place this month at Gala Theatre. Legendary climber Sir Chris Bonington will head-up a programme that also includes the likes of adventurer Jason Mallinson, a cave diver who was involved in last year's heroic Thai cave rescue.
- 31 Other treats in store include a new running festival, which will incorporate the annual Durham City Run and will include a family activity event headed-up by three-time London marathon winner Paula Radcliffe.
- 32 A new cycling event, which could see up to 15,000 participants and more than 40,000 visitors to the county, has also been approved. The Velo North provides a closed road ride of up to 100 miles for entrants and will take place on 1 September. The event, which is forecast to boost the local economy by £2.7m, will also include community activities. A significant number of entries have already been received. Event organisers are hoping to brief members about the plans and the route.
- 33 Although in its early stages, #Durham19 has already been commended at national level by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), VisitBritain and the England and Wales Cricket Board for combining sport and culture and using events as a driver for visitors. They also commended the level of stakeholder engagement across the county and 'Team Durham' attitude.
- 34 Meanwhile, Visit County Durham was been invited to present its approach and #Durham19 at a Cricket World Cup Host City and Destination Management Organisation meeting at The Guildhall, London in recognition of its success in making the most of the opportunities presented by the international profile of the Cricket World Cup. The meeting was attended by representatives from DCMS, VisitBritain and cities around the UK.
- 35 However, Durham19 is not just about promoting the county to visitors, we want to involve the community as much as possible and, by the end of 2019, we want every resident to have had the chance to participate in our Year of Culture.
- 36 For example, the Apollo Pavilion at Peterlee will celebrate its 50th anniversary this year with a series of activities directly involving the local community. Celebrations kicked off in spectacular fashion at the end of March with a light installation presented in partnership with Artichoke. German artists/architects Mader Wiermann were commissioned to present the installation that reflected the Brutalist architecture of the structure and also its links to the Moon landings.
- 37 #Durham19 was officially launched with a celebration event at Durham Town Hall, where stakeholders were able to hear more about more about activities throughout the year and how by combining efforts we can make the most of our Year of Culture locally, regionally and nationally. AAPs are also hosting

afternoon teas in their local communities to spread the word and encourage residents to get involved.

- 38 The year culminates with the tenth anniversary edition of Lumiere, the UK's largest light festival which will bring together favourite installations from past festivals along with some brand new ones. Together the five previous Lumiere events have attracted more than 840,000 visitors and brought joint economic benefits of £28.7million. Artichoke artists have worked with around 5,000 people of all ages across the county as well as nurturing local talent through the BRILLIANT commissioning programme. So far there have been 18 BRILLIANT commissions, with some of the artists involved going on to successful careers, such as Stuart Langley who exhibited as a BRILLIANT artist at Lumiere 2013 with his Stained Glass Cars installation. Stuart's installations have since been exhibited at festivals from Brussels to Singapore, and across the UK. His stained glass cars piece recently featured in The Guardian after being recommissioned for Coastival in Scarborough.

Holocaust Memorial Day

- 39 Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) is the international day of remembrance for the victims of the Holocaust and subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. It takes place on 27 January each year and marks the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in 1945.
- 40 Promoted and supported by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, the aim of the day is to educate, commemorate and prompt action against discrimination and hatred in our communities today.
- 41 The council has commemorated Holocaust Memorial Day for a number of years, predominately through an event organised with schools in partnership with Durham Cathedral. The Gypsy Roma Traveller service has also held awareness events for our staff and members. Last year the council organised an exhibition at Durham Town Hall for the public.
- 42 The theme for 2019 was 'torn from home' and asked people to reflect on what happens when individuals, families and communities are driven out of, or wrenched from their homes, because of persecution or the threat of genocide. It also looked at the continuing difficulties survivors face as they try to find and build new homes when the genocide is over.
- 43 Activities included a three-week exhibition at Bishop Auckland Town Hall, which included real life stories from the Holocaust; information on the Porrajmos, which translates to 'the Devouring', the term used to describe the Nazi genocide of Europe's Roma and Sinti population; information on genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Dafur; and the Memorial Day Trust and Durham Light Infantry archives.

- 44 On the afternoon of Friday 25 January there was a special service for schools at Durham Cathedral. The event included a number of workshops focusing on subjects including: Gypsy Roma Traveller racism, hate crime, homophobia now and during WW2, stereotypes and the Holocaust and Rwanda and LGBT as well as the Porrajmos exhibition. There was also a talk by Holocaust survivor, Eva Clarke.
- 45 About 200 students from Durham Federation, Greenfield, The Hermitage, Wellfield, St Leonards, Tanfield, King James, North Durham Academy, and Hummersknott attended, along with 20 trainee teachers from Shotton and Durham SCITTs.
- 46 Over the weekend of Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 January there were also a number of events in Bishop Auckland, including dance performances by King James 1 Academy, a presentation on hate crime by students from The Hermitage Academy, and a talk by guest speaker Holocaust survivor Eva Clarke. Artwork was produced by local schools King James 1 Academy and St Anne's primary school. Durham Town Hall was also lit up purple, symbolising the colours of the Holocaust Memorial Trust.
- 47 St Anne's Church, Bishop Auckland Market Place was open for contemplation and prayer on the Saturday and there was a Holocaust Memorial Service on the Sunday. St Johns RC secondary school assisted with providing items and images to facilitate contemplation and prayer.



- 48 Clayport Library in Durham featured a display including books by local resident, Sylvia Hurst, who came to Durham on the Kinder transporten. There were similar displays at libraries in Barnard Castle, Bishop Auckland, Chester-Le-Street, Crook, Consett, Newton Aycliffe, Seaham, Spennymoor and Stanley. Artwork and real life stories were on display in County Hall.
- 49 The event and exhibition at Bishop Auckland Town Hall was well attended with 200 members of the public pre-booking tickets. The Lord Lieutenant, Chairman of Durham County Council, elected members and the Mayor of Bishop Auckland all attended. A number of local schools were involved in the event.
- 50 At St Anne's church, 45 people attended the Open Day for Reflection and Prayer and 90 people attended the HMD Commemoration Service, including members of the Darlington Hebrew Congregation Reform Synagogue.
- 51 Both events received extensive media coverage including an item on Tyne Tees on Friday 25 January, which focused on the Cathedral service and Eva's story. On Sunday 27 January, a BBC news item featured on BBC Look North, which reported on HMD events from around the region with the focus on the event at Bishop Auckland Town Hall and an interview with Eva Clarke.

Background papers

- None

Other useful documents

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable.

Finance

Not applicable.

Consultation

Not applicable.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable.

Human Rights

Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable.

Staffing

Not applicable.

Accommodation

Not applicable.

Risk

Not applicable.

Procurement

Not applicable.