

Cabinet

12 June 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) Inward investment message taken to Westminster
 - (b) Year of Culture update
 - (c) Customer-focused digital services

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.

Inward investment message taken to Westminster



- 7 Influential figures from the county's business, culture and education sectors travelled to Westminster in April to deliver a coordinated message that Durham is a great place to live, work and invest.
- 8 The county's leaders demonstrated their passion for the area during the **This is Durham. Be Part of It** reception at the Houses of Parliament.
- 9 Hosted by Phil Wilson, MP for Sedgefield, and organised by the council, the event aimed to showcase all that the county has to offer, particularly for businesses and potential investors with speeches/presentations from Mr Wilson; Cllr Simon Henig, Leader of Durham County Council; Terry Collins, Chief Executive of Durham County Council; Anne-Isabelle Daulon, CEO of Eleven Arches; and Allan Cook MD of Arlington Estates.
- 10 Invited guests, including financiers, investors, property developers, MPs, members of the House of Lords, Government ministers and civil servants, also heard about the county's Powered by People initiative and #Durham19 Year of Culture.
- 11 Those in attendance included Greg Clark MP, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Jake Berry MP, Northern Powerhouse minister, and a wide variety of representatives from outside the county.
- 12 Local politicians who attended included Kevan Jones MP, Roberta Blackman-Woods MP, Grahame Morris MP, Helen Goodman MP and Sharon Hodgson MP.

- 13 The event also included exhibition stands from companies and organisations representing many of the county's success stories including The Auckland Project, Artichoke (Lumiere), Durham University, Hitachi with UTC South Durham, Durham City Incubator and Visit County Durham.
- 14 There was also a stand, Now is the Time, highlighting the county's current inward investment picture and the new Powered by People initiative.
- 15 County Durham is currently seeing significant investment, including £240 million on the Riverwalk and Milburngate developments in Durham City and £90 million by Glaxo Smith Kline in a manufacturing facility at Barnard Castle. An £11 million railway station is planned for Horden, while projects such as Genesis at Consett and DurhamGate at Spennymoor are regenerating former industrial areas.
- 16 The county also boasts five strategic development sites, some of which have already attracted national and internationally recognised companies. These sites include Aycliffe Business Park, home to the Hitachi rail facility and NETPark, where occupants include Kromek, CPI and Polyphotonix, as well as Jade Enterprise Park at Seaham, Integra 61 next to the A1(M) at Durham City and Aykley Heads within the city itself.
- 17 Durham has also benefitted from significant growth and investment in its cultural offer evidenced in the county's current Year of Culture campaign. An update on this can be found later in the report.
- 18 Work is now underway to follow up on contacts made during the reception and a two-year plan for Powered by People is currently in development with the aim to build on the momentum of the reception nationally and spread the message to more Durham businesses encouraging them to be involved in the initiative.

Year of Culture update

- 19 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.
- 20 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.

- 21 #Durham19 was launched at a celebration event in Durham Town Hall, where stakeholders were able to hear more about activities throughout the year and how, by combining our efforts, we can make the most of our Year of Culture locally, regionally and nationally.
- 22 #Durham19 was also showcased to a national audience as part of reception at the Houses of Parliament last month. The event was attended by many of our cultural partners including The Auckland Project, Eleven Arches (producer of Kynren) and Artichoke (producer of Lumiere), who all hosted exhibitions. Representatives from Raby Estates, National Science Museum, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), Visit England and Arts Council England were also in attendance.
- 23 Although in its early stages, #Durham19 has already been commended at national level by 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 the Team Durham attitude.
- 24 Visit County Durham was 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.
- 25 And there is still plenty more to come, with a packed events programme, featuring both the familiar and 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.
- 26 Since the last #Durham19 update to Cabinet in April, exhibitions have opened in Norman Cornish's hometown of Spennymoor and at the Mining Art Gallery in Bishop Auckland, marking the centenary of the internationally- recognised painter's birth. Celebratory activity continues throughout the year, including work at Beamish to rebuild Cornish's house as part of the museum's new 1950s town.
- 27 The weekend of 13 and 14 April saw the return of the ever-popular Bishop Auckland Food Festival. This year's line-up included MasterChef presenter Gregg Wallace, CBBC presenters Angellica Bell and Stefan Gates, Masterchef 2018 winner Kenny Tutt and restaurateur and

Coronation Street star Jenny McAlpine. The festival saw a record turnout of 30,000 plus over the two days.



28 There was more on the menu for food lovers this month with the inaugural Seaham Food Festival on Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 June. The line-up featured celebrity chefs John Torode and Phil Vickery.

29 The second Durham Adventure Festival attracted thousands of people to the city centre for three action-packed days of talks, film screenings and more at the end of April. Legendary climber Sir Chris Bonington head-lined a packed programme that also included adventurer and Thai cave rescuer Jason Mallinson and Olympic rower Helen Glover. Throughout the weekend, visitors could also enjoy a range of activities taking place at Durham's own Base Camp at Gala Theatre and in Millennium Place.



30 The annual OVO Tour Series returned on Saturday May 18. Thousands of spectators turned out to watch the thrills of competitive cycling in Durham City.

- 31 Looking towards the summer, the Cricket World Cup (30 May to 14 July) is now underway with three sell-out matches being played at the Riverside Ground in Chester-le-Street. As well as the boost to the local economy the matches will bring, the world's third most popular sport will attract a huge international TV audience putting the county in the global spotlight.
- 32 Durham is a designated host city and will take part in city celebrations. Free to enter official fan zones designed to deliver an unforgettable fan experience are being set up in Durham City's Market Place and Millennium Place from 28 to 30 June. Tournament fixtures will be broadcast on a big screen alongside a range of cricketing activities, multi-cultural food, music and entertainment and the city's businesses can take advantage of the economic opportunities afforded by the extra footfall.
- 33 Other treats in store during the summer include the annual BRASS festival (12 to 21 July) and a new running festival (26 to 28 July), which will incorporate the annual Durham City Run and include a new family activity event headed-up by three-time London marathon winner Paula Radcliffe.
- 34 A new cycling event, which could see up to 15,000 participants and more than 40,000 visitors to the county, will also take place on 1 September. The Velo North provides a closed road ride of up to 100 miles for entrants. The event, which is forecast to boost the local economy by £2.7m, will also include community activities. More than 5,000 entries have already been received and a significant programme of resident and business engagement is now underway to ensure people living on or near the route get the most from the day and have any concerns regarding access addressed.
- 35 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. The five previous Lumiere events have attracted a combined total of more than 840,000 visitors and brought joint economic benefits of £28.7million. Artichoke artists have also worked with around 5,000 people of all ages across the county as well as nurturing local talent through the BRILLIANT commissioning programme.

Customer-focused digital services

- 36 We are one of around 150 local authorities to have signed up to the Local Digital Declaration. Signatories are local authorities and public sector organisations who have pledged to work together to improve digital services for the public, as part of an initiative led by the UK

Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Government Digital Service.

- 37 The signing of the declaration ensures that we work towards a number of principles, including designing services that best meet the needs of the public, challenging the technology market to offer flexible tools and services, protecting residents' privacy and security and delivering better value for money.



- 38 The increase in digital transactions helps us to do this as it provides new opportunities to gain insight and opinion about our service. By introducing feedback forms into each newly designed process we are able to collect people's views both on their experience of the digital request and also on how we provide our overall services.
- 39 Automated customer satisfaction surveys have so far been applied to 76 service requests out of the 125 currently available, which are issued to the customer via email upon closure. This process is currently generating around 500 responses a month, enabling us to create a much richer picture of people's experience of our services than was previously available through our traditional complaints and compliments systems.

- 40 This information along with online feedback, service performance information and compliance against Service Level Agreement (SLA) is visible in almost real time to managers through an interactive dashboard. This has significantly improved the knowledge available to service areas and enables managers to identify and proactively address any issues of service failure as well as recognise and reward good service.
- 41 To date, more than 87,000 customers have provided feedback regarding their online experience, with 81 per cent giving it a four or five star rating.
- 42 The council was also commended in the 2019 MJ Achievement Awards for its approach to digital transformation.



Background papers

- None

Other useful documents

Contact: Michelle Atkinson

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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.

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