

South Tyneside Council

Community Priorities Delivery Report 2022



South Tyneside Council

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**THIS IS
SOUTH
TYNESIDE**

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Foreword

In March 2021, South Tyneside Council articulated five community priorities that have provided a clear focus for activity and investment over the last year.

These priorities are in addition to the day to day work we undertake to keep South Tyneside a great place to live, invest and bring up families. Our priorities are to:

- Support our young people in need
- Support families and older or vulnerable people
- Create the conditions for economic recovery and investment
- Support our town centres, villages, retail, and hospitality
- Invest in our natural and built environment

We also set out a commitment to start an open dialogue with the residents and businesses of South Tyneside to continue to inform our priorities for the future.

As covid restrictions eased, we have reached out to more communities to find out what is most important, particularly as we moved into the much-needed recovery from the pandemic.

We have taken the first steps to bring about real change: making significant progress right across South Tyneside in improving facilities for children with special educational needs, bringing forward carbon cutting schemes, securing external funding for major infrastructure projects, and reshaping local funding to invest in local issues in neighbourhoods right across the Borough.

In the last year we have created a strong foundation to further build upon, listening to residents and delivering what is important to communities to bring about real change.

We have undertaken a residents' survey, business survey and Independent Economic Assessment and will use the Joint Strategic Needs and Assets Assessment to establish a solid evidence base to inform future priority planning.

This report provides residents and other stakeholders with information about the performance of South Tyneside Council against our five community priorities and highlights some of our achievements to date.

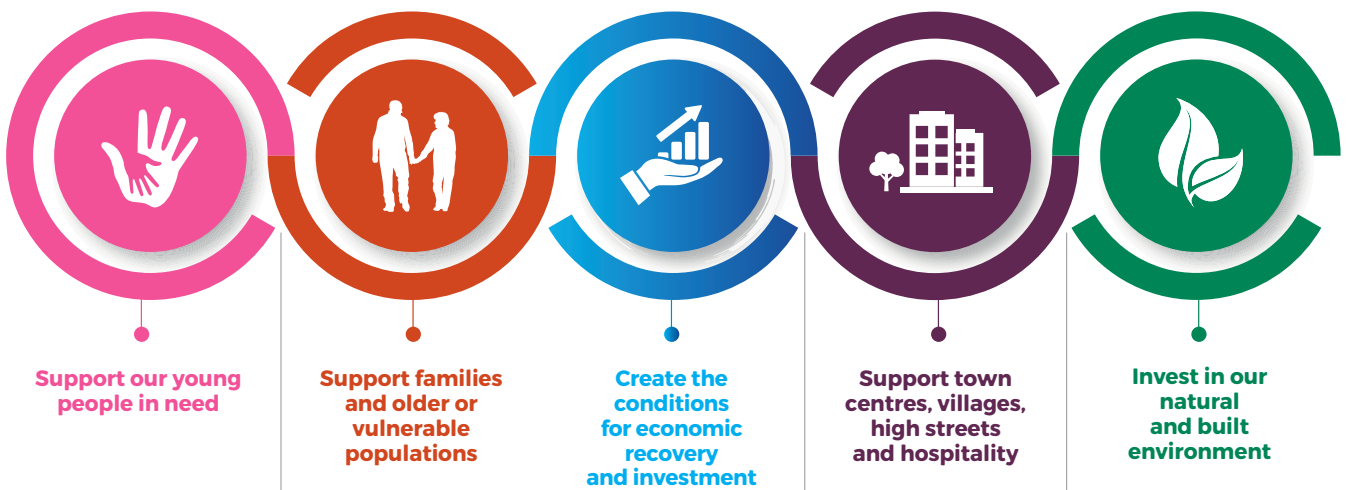


Cllr Tracey Dixon
Leader



Jonathan Tew
Chief Executive

South Tyneside Community Priorities



Support our young people in need



In line with the Council's priority to support young people in need, the Council has created additional places for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. Epinay school will move to the site of the former South Shields School site from September 2022. This will see an expansion of SEND places, meaning fewer pupils will have to leave South Tyneside for their education.

£600,000 has been invested in new specialist facilities for pupils at Bamburgh School in South Shields, which has enhanced teaching provision for young people with special educational needs.

The Council has further supported children with complex needs and their families by refurbishing Foxden, in Harton. The facility now boasts a state-of-the-art sensory room as well as a new kitchen and bathroom and has undergone complete redecoration. The facility provides short breaks to young people from across the Borough and allows them to try new experiences and celebrate their strengths in a safe environment.

We have also adopted the 'Mockingbird' model for sustainable foster care. This new approach has seen an increase in the retention of foster carers due to an 'extended family' structure, providing support for foster families. Children in South Tyneside have been provided with secure and stable families, and the breakdown of relationships has been avoided, meaning more of the Borough's children can grow up with the stability they deserve.





More than 4,500 children and young people took part in Council-backed Holiday Activity Fund clubs which have been made available for free to those aged between five and 16 who receive free school meals or whose families are experiencing financial hardship. This programme makes sure no child has to be hungry or bored in the school holidays and is another example of how we are meeting our priority to support young people in need.

More than 4,000 children and young people in South Tyneside have benefitted from laptops, tablets, and routers to the Internet to help with home schooling to make sure they weren't left behind when the country went into lockdown.

A careers audit has been undertaken across South Tyneside schools to help us understand careers advice gaps to inform our work in this area and support future generations into work.



Going forward, the Council has committed to investing in additional facilities to meet the gap in provision for children and young people with special educational needs. Work to recruit more in-house skilled foster carers continues, while a new children's home is in the early development stages, with initial funding already identified. Right across South Tyneside, a five-year replacement and upgrade programme will take place to provide new, accessible playground equipment for children and young people with physical disabilities. An economic Inclusion and Skills Plan is in development, with a renewed focus on careers to support our children and young people to be the best they can be.

The number of young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET) has fallen to rates lower than pre-pandemic level. More young people are choosing to stay in education, while apprenticeships are also starting to recover.

Support families and older or vulnerable populations



People tell us that when their health declines, they prefer to live at home for as long as they are able.

We have listened and aim to support more people to live independently by developing five new adult social care accommodation schemes right across South Tyneside. The schemes are in the early stages of development. Three schemes will support older people and two will support adults with complex needs. The Council's wider Adult Social Care Accommodation Strategy is focussed on continuing to support residents who need extra help to live independently in the community.

In South Tyneside, social care staff work with individuals identifying their strengths and the resources within the community to help them live better lives. By working more intensively with people and focusing on what is important to them, advice and support can be offered to maximise independence, focusing on their strengths and networks, and connecting them to their communities.

The Council's 'home-first' approach to adult social care means **we help people to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible.** We have repurposed empty flats at sheltered housing facility, Thomas Bell House, to accommodate people coming out of hospital who need additional support before returning home.

We also invested in Blenkinsop Court in South Shields to convert it into an interim Extra Care facility allowing more older people with a care need to retain their independence. This includes a 8 bedroom specialist dementia support, with a redesign of the interior of the properties and outdoor space/garden improvements.

Investment in 'Smart home' technology is being used to help people live safely and independently at home through the WIS wellbeing independence service. Assistive technology is key to maximising independence and promoting wellbeing while also supporting carers and families to continue their valued roles in supporting people.



In partnership with Age Concern Tyneside South, the Council is providing day opportunities for people with dementia. Following a social care assessment, staff from Age Concern will talk to people to identify their needs, interests and aspirations and help them access community support to promote independence and wellbeing. This will help people with dementia stay connected to their communities and reduce social isolation, whilst providing carers with a much-needed break from their caring role.

Day services for those living with more advanced dementia is now available every day. We are increasing our provision of day support at Haven Court with sessions operating seven days a week – an increase on the five days previously offered.

To help combat loneliness and isolation, new 'Happy to Chat' benches have been introduced right across South Tyneside. Around 40 public benches in the Borough's parks, open spaces, cemeteries, town centres and villages, are marked with signage that identifies them as a place for people to start conversations with each other.

South Tyneside is one of the best areas in the country for health checks for people with severe mental illness and learning disability, supporting around 2,000 people across South Tyneside. This helps identify any health-related needs quickly so that people get the right treatment and support before a condition gets worse.

A new partnership team to tackle incidences of domestic violence was introduced in November 2021. The new service works directly with parents and carers who have experienced abuse, improving the safety and wellbeing of children by reducing the incidents of abuse and working directly with perpetrators of abuse to help them change their behaviour.

Support to established Mutual Aid groups and Food Banks across South Tyneside has continued and a poverty commission is looking at the root cause of poverty in South Tyneside so we can tackle these issues going forward and help people avoid falling into poverty in the first place.

Unlike many other councils South Tyneside retains a local welfare scheme supporting those most in need at times of crisis. The Welfare Support Team has supported customers to access over £3.5 million in owed benefits and income since March 2021.

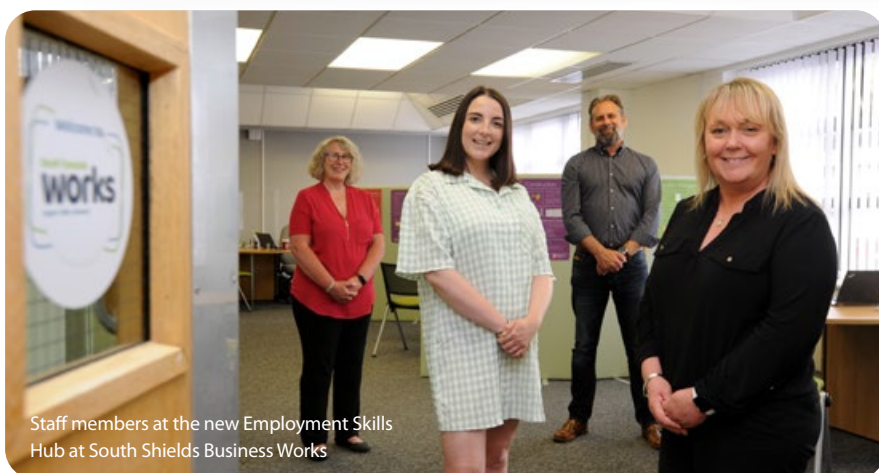
The Council distributed £600,000 to over 7,000 households with children through the Household Support Fund to help with the rising cost of living during the winter period and over 500 payments were made to support those facing financial hardship due to covid.

In the coming year the Council will provide a further £100 reduction in council tax to all working age households on low income which will be automatically added to their council tax bill. This is in addition to the council tax support scheme which helps 18,400 households a year.

New tenants have settled in to the first council homes to be built in South Tyneside for a decade. Newly constructed two-bedroomed properties at Henderson Road, South Shields are the first in a programme of 250 new homes for rent that the council will deliver over the next five years. South Tyneside Council will continue to invest in Council owned properties with a programme being developed which will see around £22 million pounds of further investment to ensure that our homes are safe, decent, and affordable for our tenants, whilst ensuring sustainability across the borough.

South Tyneside Homes recently won Best Fire Safety Innovation at the Housing Digital Awards for its work to enhance residents' safety in the Borough's high-rise blocks. 'TwinnedIt' technology has been implemented in our tower blocks. The software creates a 'digital twin' of the buildings and stores information such as construction details and materials all in one place. This data can then be shared with the emergency services, residents, and partners.

Create the conditions for economic recovery and investment



Staff members at the new Employment Skills Hub at South Shields Business Works



South Tyneside Council has developed an Economic Recovery Plan to help create future growth and prosperity, delivering 10,000 jobs to the region over the next five years.

The Borough's claimant count is already down by 31% from the height of the pandemic in September 2020 and, at the time of publication, at 6.5% it is almost back to pre-pandemic levels. The wider measure of employment at time of publication (70.9%) is both above the regional average for the first time since 2015 and South Tyneside's highest rate since 2015.

The Council is creating the conditions for recovery and investment by establishing 'South Tyneside Works' to help people into jobs. This employment and skills centre brings together key organisations to deliver a wealth of support to help residents into sustained employment. At the time of publication, the careers hub has engaged with 183 people, 90 of whom have gone on to secure employment. We held a 'Next Steps' Careers Fair last October, which was attended by 730 young people.

The Council's skills commission has mapped out the existing level of support and resources available to school leavers and made a number of recommendations aimed at enhancing that provision to nurture a well-qualified, adaptable workforce to unlock the full potential of opportunities being created in the regional economy.

We are working with partners to establish South Tyneside as a world leader in the green economy, creating future investment opportunities.



Supported by South Tyneside Council in partnership with Sunderland City Council, Envision-AESC, which already operates Europe's first Gigafactory in Sunderland, is investing £450m to build its second Gigafactory on the International Advanced Manufacturing Park (IAMP).

Dogger Bank will be the world's largest wind farm located 130km off the North East Coast and will be capable of powering 6million British homes.

Each turbine can provide enough clean energy to power 16,000 British households and save the equivalent of 9,000 vehicle emissions each year. Its Operations and Maintenance Base, situated at Port of Tyne, will create 200 jobs, and create significant supply chain opportunities.

Located just a few miles from the O&M Base is our recently completed Manufacturing Zone within Jarrow Business Centre. The bespoke space can accommodate six high growth SME businesses in the advanced manufacturing and offshore supply chain sectors.

To ensure the Borough's future workforce is equipped with the skills and training needed to capitalise on these burgeoning green industries, **the Council continues to work hand-in-hand with schools, further education providers and employers.** An initial investment of £150,000 was awarded from the Dogger Bank Skills and Community Fund to support Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths (STEM) careers and aspirations of young people. All eight secondary schools in South Tyneside will have the chance to increase and expand their current STEM provision. The programme in South Tyneside will focus on the primary to secondary school transition, with specialist training provided to enhance the skills and experience of teachers. The funding will also be used to enhance careers services for school leavers.

South Tyneside, together with regional partners in Sunderland and the North of Tyne Combined Authority, has **secured a share of a £4 million Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Accelerator (DCIA) fund.** The project aims to simplify local authority processes, and help telecommunications providers speed up their deployment of digital infrastructure. It aligns with South Tyneside's Digital Connectivity Strategy which aims for South Tyneside to fully exploit the economic, social, environmental, and cultural potential of comprehensive deployment of open access, gigabit-capable, full fibre infrastructure throughout the borough by 2025. It supports the Council's community priority to create the conditions for economic recovery and investment, creating a highly attractive commercial environment for businesses, supporting engaged and skilled residents, informed and healthy communities all set in smart integrated places.



During the pandemic, the Council has distributed £52m in government grants to local businesses to help support the economy, increase investment, and create the conditions for growth.

A Dedicated Business Hub has also been established to help businesses through Covid19 and the EU Transition, with regular newsletters sent to local firms. The Council's first ever borough-wide survey of businesses has also been completed, which attracted 400 responses.



To boost local economic activity, cut carbon emissions, and enhance civic pride for the benefit of the whole Borough, the South Tyneside Pledge was launched in the New Year with nearly 90 organisations already signed up. By signing up to nine commitments, both public and private sector organisations are pledging to take steps to bring about positive change, for example by recruiting local people, spending with local businesses, working with local schools, and encouraging local volunteering.

Responses from the first ever Borough-wide business survey will enable the Council to understand more about the impact of Covid and Brexit on local firms, and crucially, how the Council can better support the business community. The Independent Economic Assessment will help the Council understand key strengths, weaknesses and which sectors they should focus on. This will inform future opportunities to stimulate the economy and growth in the Borough.

Support town centres, villages, high streets and hospitality



A new town centre, villages and high street recovery and improvement team has been created to support retailers, hospitality, and their customers. This includes Business and Community Support Officers (BCSOs) who provide direct engagement and face to face support to hundreds of businesses across the borough.

A dedicated support centre for the Borough's small business community has been established in the heart of South Shields. Business & IP Centre (BIPC) Local in The Word provides expert advice to companies across the North East, and anyone looking to set up their own enterprise, with free access to on-site business databases as well as the latest marketing research information and resources, provided by the British Library.

The Council distributed a range of grants to support businesses through the pandemic and into recovery including a Shop Front Improvement Grant Scheme to support businesses in South Tyneside by making shop front improvements to their commercial premises within the borough as well as 'wet led pub' hardship and hospitality and leisure grants. Over £52 million has been distributed to date.

The Council's Licensing Team issued **more than 30 temporary pavement licences** to businesses across the Borough, enabling premises to create an outdoor space for customers in time to reopen as restrictions changed during the pandemic.

To support the hospitality sector, the Council launched the 'Going out, out in South Tyneside' campaign, encouraging people to support local businesses and introducing outdoor marketing materials in the towns of Hebburn, Jarrow and South Shields to reinforce the message of shopping local.

Parking in Council-owned car parks in South Shields town centre was free of charge to support the recovery of local businesses as we moved to Step 3 of the pandemic recovery programme. Free parking was repeated over the Christmas period to further support businesses and traders.

English Tourism Week gave an opportunity to showcase South Tyneside as a traditional UK destination and promote our hospitality, rich heritage, and natural beauty. We also encouraged local people to take advantage of, and support, all the wonderful tourism and hospitality businesses right here on their doorstep.

2021 saw an extended free, family-friendly cultural events programme right across South Tyneside including summer park events, new special Markets like 'Stay Shop Play', 'Feast' and a specialist Christmas market, in addition to the traditional fireworks and Christmas event programme.

The 'Love Exploring' app was launched in South Tyneside with trails for people to enjoy across the borough as well as augmented reality games. The Love Exploring app aims to bring places to life using the technology that people carry in their pockets. Guided trails to various locations in South Tyneside tells users more about history, public art, and places of interest along the way.

South Tyneside has been named as an Arts Council 'Priority Place'. Being a Priority Place can unlock much-needed investment and support and will go a long way in helping the Borough to recover following the pandemic. It will also enable the Council to improve and showcase our cultural offer to wider audiences, giving more people the opportunity to enjoy inspiring high-quality cultural experiences that make a positive difference to their lives.

Progress on South Shields Riverside and further town centre improvements for residents and visitors alike support town centre retail and hospitality.

A 4.5-hectare section of the 10.5-hectare site was awarded Enterprise Zone status after a successful bid supported by the Local Enterprise Partnership

In addition to the Christmas Wonderland events and activities, the Council invested in a range of extra new light installations, helping more areas of the Borough's towns and villages. The new lighting features were installed in addition to the Borough's existing displays, helping to ensure that the Borough was well lit over the festive period, bringing welcome cheer for residents and businesses after a difficult period.

An ambitious £200m masterplan to transform disused docks and brownfield land at Holborn into a bustling location for living, working, culture and entertainment will further strengthen the link to the town centre. Planning permission has been granted for Phase 1 and Outline for phases 2 and 3, funding has been secured, with works started on site in January 2022. The area has been largely derelict for many years and this mixed-use development will transform disused, industrial land into a desirable location for businesses, residents and visitors, as well as creating hundreds of new jobs. This development will further strengthen the link between the riverside and the town centre.



Holborn Site

The Council has been hugely successful in securing funding to support the Holborn project, £9.4million from the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for the delivery of a future phase of office accommodation and £1.85m from the Brownfield Land Release Fund to decontaminate the land.

Almost £6million has been secured from Future High Streets Fund to deliver around 184 homes in walking distance of South Shields town centre. Some dilapidated properties will be demolished and where viable, vacant buildings will be refurbished and brought back into use. Funding is being used to acquire land and properties and for demolitions at a number of locations. The high street that is centred solely around traditional retail is a thing of the past. Covid has accelerated by a decade the challenges and struggles town centres were already facing. Increasing the residential population will mean increased footfall - more people spending time and money there, using services and supporting businesses to create a sustainable future.

Planning is underway to aim to relocate South Tyneside College to South Shields town centre, to form a modern campus and public realm with connected green spaces designed to meet the needs of all residents as well as complementing the visitor experience to the town. If viable, this scheme would drive significant footfall and local spend throughout South Shields, linking to The Word, Customs House and wider Town Centre and would benefit from excellent public transport links, including the recently completed transport interchange. This transformational project would further complement and diversify the town centre away from traditional retail and boost footfall with over 9,000 students. Accommodation would support food, beverage, and leisure businesses beyond the regular 9am-5pm college day, boosting the night-time economy.

Invest in our natural and built environment



An artist's impression of Hebburn Minewater energy centre



The council has pledged to take all necessary steps to make the Council carbon neutral by 2030. It also set a three-year target to cut carbon emissions by 4,285 tonnes by March 2023 and is already two thirds of the way to achieving this figure.

South Tyneside Council is investing millions into renewable energy and has three ground-breaking schemes on site or in development across the borough – one in each town. The Viking Energy Network in Jarrow, Hebburn Minewater Scheme and Holborn district heating scheme in South Shields. Together they aim to save over 4,000 tonnes of carbon per year.

The Council attracted £8million of external funding and has completed 26 decarbonisation schemes which will collectively save 4475 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent a year. The schemes have included replacing gas boilers with energy-efficient heat pumps, converting existing lighting to LED, installing roof-mounted solar PV panels, and building fabric improvements. Emissions from civic buildings, leisure facilities and street lighting account for 71 per cent of the Council's total emissions - an area that the Council has been prioritising. A large proportion of the funding has also been used on enabling works for the ground-breaking Holborn Renewable Energy Network in South Shields, including drilling of boreholes, construction of wells and testing of the minewater.

All South Tyneside schools have been provided with a climate change toolkit to help school staff educate the Borough's next generation about environmental issues. It contains practical advice and guidance all in one place to teach children about the causes of climate change and the actions that can be taken to create a more sustainable future. A business toolkit is under development.

A South Tyneside Council-led regional partnership called 'Stronger Shores' has secured £6.4million to pilot a scheme to test marine habitats for their coastal protection properties along the northeast coastline. The new approaches will involve restoring sub-tidal habitats, such as kelp beds, oyster reefs and sea grass. This builds on £13million of investment into flood alleviation projects over the last 10 years.

The Council hosted a programme of events and activities for the community, businesses, and schools to tie in with COP-26 – the UN's 26th annual climate change conference. It focused on actions the Council is taking to meet its ambitious carbon reduction targets, as well as how residents and businesses can play their part in tackling climate change.

South Tyneside Council has made a commitment to planting 3,000 trees a year. 3,825 trees will have been planted in South Tyneside by March 2022.

The Council has come together with authorities across the region to create a new Community Forest for the North East. The initiative aims to plant up to 500 hectares of trees by 2025, with a long-term goal to increase canopy cover to 30 per cent by 2050 – almost double the current national average.

Hebburn Riverside partnership has created additional mudflat and saltmarsh along the banks of the Tyne which are very rare habitats that capture and store large amounts of carbon preventing it from entering the atmosphere and contributing to climate change. The site will be able to capture one tonne of carbon per year.

South Tyneside Council has become the first local authority in the north of England to declare an urgent need for ocean recovery. The 'Motion for the Ocean' commits the Council to consider ocean recovery in its decision and policy making, to help improve the way marine environments are used and managed, to rally support for local people to act as marine citizens and to lobby Central Government for change at national level.

Ten new 7kw charging posts for plug-in vehicles have been installed in locations around the Borough, taking the total to 55 electric charging points. The new points have all been sited in residential areas, particularly where off-street parking is not available, championing a carbon neutral future for the whole borough. By providing facilities like this for the community we can help residents and businesses reduce their carbon footprint too.

South Tyneside Council is driving forward its plans for a greener Borough by introducing electric vans to its fleet. This will help reduce fuel consumption and carbon emissions and improve air quality. 11 new vans are being introduced in addition to the five already in use and two Nissan Leaf cars, bringing the electric fleet to 18.

People's local surroundings are important to them and that is why the council has increased its footpaths and highways improvement budget by a quarter of million to £5.25m in 2022/23. The Council continues the flags to flexible programme which is substantially improving the condition of footpaths right across South Tyneside.

The Council launched a new booking system for the recycling village with residents able to pre-book their visit to the site on Middlefields Industrial Estate up to two weeks in advance. The scheme is achieving what is set out to do; preventing the lengthy queues, which were not only causing frustration for users but creating traffic delays on our road network and problems for other businesses on the industrial estate.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Tracey Dixon has signed the UK 100 pledge - joining forces with political Leaders across the country in the fight against climate change. UK100 brings together local authorities to share knowledge, collaborate, and petition the UK government with their collective power.





South Tyneside Council has worked with its partners to restore the historic North Marine Park in South Shields back to its original Victorian glory. The £3.2m project – supported with £2.4m from The National Lottery Heritage Fund – has involved reinstating some of the site’s original features as well as introducing new elements like the new Roman and maritime-themed children’s play area and adult fitness trim trail. The park is now safeguarded and accessible to local communities and visitors. South Shields’ North Marine Park with its fantastic facilities is a great example of how the projects we support bring communities and outdoor spaces together through heritage.

South Marine Park, West Park in South Shields, West Park in Jarrow have retained the sought-after Green Flag Award again this year. Readhead Park in South Shields has been awarded a prestigious Green Flag for the first time.

Major refurbishments have been carried out on the Albert Road and Kirkstone Avenue bridges, both in Jarrow. Routine structural inspections identified the need for the bridges to undergo essential maintenance to ensure their long-term safety and both have undergone strengthening and repair works. Work to replace the old arched Mill Dene View footbridge over the River Don were completed in 2021 after its closure in 2019. The timber bridge – spanning 13.5 metres – had been in place since 1989 and forms part of the footpath network alongside the river between Hill Park Road and Ecgrid Terrace. A new bridge of similar appearance, but re-designed to help prevent similar problems in future, has been created on the site. The Monkton Terrace footbridges provide a pedestrian route over the railway line and are separate structures to the road bridge itself. The route is heavily used and provides access to the Jarrow Shopping Centre, access to local schools and services as well as connecting local communities. Works are underway and could take up to 12 months to complete. Having a safe and efficient highways and infrastructure network is vital to help keep our businesses and communities connected.

Improvements to South Tyneside’s crematorium, to pay respects and support bereaved families started on site Jan 2022. Works will continue throughout the year and are due to be completed in Autumn 2022

The Council has also invested in new litter bins and our street cleansing budgets have been maintained. Our street cleansing teams work extremely hard to keep South Tyneside clean and tidy, encouraging people to take pride in their local area, to put their litter in the bins provided or take it home, to dispose of their waste responsibly and to clean up after their pets.

A study carried out in 2019 highlighted that parts of the A183 Coast Road in South Shields are likely to be compromised in the future, because of ongoing erosion of the cliff face and cave formations. The council is to reposition the highway between the Lime Kilns and the caravan site, near Marsden Grotto. This will move the road away from the clifftop at the tightest point, while the existing road would be returned to grassland. It is expected that this realignment would extend the lifespan of the coastal route by around 50 years. A longer-term option will be explored once the new road is in place.

