
OVERVIEW OF LEISURE PORTFOLIO

Purpose of Report

1. During the last eight-week cycle the following were the main areas of work under my Leisure Portfolio.

Young People's Provision – *Be Active*

2. The Summer *Be Active* programme has been an outstanding success with a wide range of activities and courses booked. Wide ranges of voluntary and charitable partners have also contributed in kind or in resourcing some aspects of the programme. A review will take place to see how the scheme can be developed for future vacation periods and to secure additional resourcing beyond Leisure and Arts to support such cross partner working.
3. The programme included the inaugural launch of the 'TRUCK' mobile skateboard resource. This innovative project, funded by New Opportunities Fund, is the outcome of the ongoing research by the town's RAMPS Team, who have continued to shape the delivery of the service. This initiative is recognised nationally with Sport England using the project as part of a promotional video, which took place at the Street Games Day at the end of the holiday.

Sport and Arts for Regeneration

4. The 'Be Active' programme included a new street games project, which uses sport and arts to target those young people who do not normally choose to take part. The Police and Community Wardens were asked to signpost young people to get involved with graffiti workshops and 'Hoop Dreams', a Middlesbrough based national league basketball squad. Street games are recognised by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister as an excellent tool to engage disengaged young people. The work culminated in a street games event at Eastbourne Complex.
5. To compliment the refurbishment of North Lodge Park, a partnership has been developed between the Arts and New Writing North to enable the recruitment of a Writer in Residence to work with the community. Workshops, events and exhibitions are planned, with the creation of a new publication of writing and photographic work. The writing created would be incorporated into the Park as site-specific art work. The project was launched at North Lodge Park's 101st birthday in July.
6. Over the next eighteen months the project aims to use the focus of the Park to develop creative writing skills, generate exciting opportunities and strengthen community ownership of the Park.

7. The Refurbishment and Arts Project is funded by New Opportunities Fund, Transforming Your Space Programme and Darlington Borough Council.

Promoting Inclusion

8. Monica Sowerby joins Leisure and Arts in a one-year position as Inclusion Co-ordinator. Monica has extensive experience in Social Services and specifically working with people with disabilities and has a personal interest in health and fitness. Initial programme work includes an audit of current provision and consultation with a wide range of disability groups to establishing their wishes for improvements to Leisure and Arts services.

Civic Theatre

9. The Civic Theatre programme was extended over the summer period this year with performances entertaining audiences throughout July and August. Ticket sales remained buoyant for this period with particular highlights including Crazy For You and the ever popular Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. The new autumn season has been launched.

New Sponsorship - Morton Palms

10. The developer of the Tees Valley's prestigious new office development has agreed a three-year deal with Darlington Borough Council to sponsor one of the town's busiest roundabouts. City & Northern, which is developing the Morton Palms Business Park in partnership with One NorthEast and Darlington Borough Council, is sponsoring the roundabout that the development shares with Morton Park.
11. Work will soon begin on transforming the roundabout's grass and foliage into a stunning floral display, which will be personalised for Morton Palms with a raised flowerbed depicting the business park's logo.

Sports and Physical Activity Development

12. The final phase of the Zone Active application has been submitted. DDYCA are lead organisation closely supported by Darlington Borough Council. If successful, the application will support a three-year project in raising physical activity levels across Lascelles, Park East and Eastbourne wards. The £180,000 potential grant from Sport England, has been matched by in-kind support and cash amounts increasing resources to over £250,000 so far. This project is seen as a pilot in encouraging wards to work together in sharing resources and ideas in promoting physical activity.
13. The first fully funded Multi-Activity Coach has started within Leisure. Part-funded by Sport England for three years, with match funding utilised from the Council's Pump Priming Grant for Public Service Agreements, the Coach will work to improve standards of coaching and the number of qualified coaches in both facilities and the community. The work will support the efforts to increase physical activity beyond the school day to reach our current PSA target.

Developing School Sport Facilities

14. Planning permission for eight of the Lottery Funded (New Opportunities Fund) new PE and sport facilities located in schools have been approved. Approval has also been gained for the revenue grant, which accompanies the projects. The Council is awaiting a final decision on the capital stage 2 development plans.

Eastbourne Sports Complex

15. The athletics season at Eastbourne Sports Complex reached its conclusion with the last meeting on 6 August. This has been a successful season with the venue hosting fifteen events (compared to six last year) and welcoming athletes, coaches and clubs from all over the country. Feedback has been very good helping to further establish the site as a sub regional athletics venue.
16. The Blitz Bus is now well established at Eastbourne Sports Complex on a Friday evening. Different activities are programmed on a weekly basis with tennis being the most popular over the summer period. Approximately thirty young people are attending on a regular basis and work is ongoing with young peoples groups to further develop this project.

Dolphin Centre

17. Eighteen new Tomahawk spinning cycles have now been installed at the Dolphin Centre and classes continue to be well attended.

Outdoor Events

18. The annual 10km Road Run took place in the town on Sunday 8 August. Runners from across the region competed in the event, which was sponsored by Sherwoods and was held in association with the Northern Echo, Highland Spring and Alpha Radio. Nearly 1200 runners entered. The winner of the men's race was Mike Scott from Carlisle, who made his visit to compete in Darlington after seeing the event advertised on the Internet. Proceeds from the road run were donated to St Teresa's Hospice.

Darlington Railway Centre and Museum

19. Events

Throughout weekends in August heritage Bus trips were provided to visitors to the Museum and as part of the annual Heritage Open Day (HOD) scheme in September. DRCM hosted a number of HOD pre-booked visits by members of the public on 11th and 12th Sept, the event may be repeated next year. Another popular steam weekend took place on 28th and 29th August and will be repeated at the end of September.

20. Renaissance in the Regions – Tees Valley Hub

As part of the Access project, the Museum has carried out a survey of museum visitors to gain their views and identify visitor profiles. The Museum is benefiting from a £15,000 grant to put on drama activities to interpret the collection. In the near future we hope to host a Documentation Assistant from Renaissance funds to assist with cataloguing the collection digitally and migrating edited data to a single point of access internet server based at the Dorman Museum in Middlesbrough. The project hopes to advertise these posts by the end of October.

21. Heritage Lottery Fund

The Conservation Plan has been produced in draft form and recommends various works and ways forward for the development of the Museum. A gazetteer to assist with the interpretation of the site will also be produced shortly.

The production of Access and Audience Development plans for the Museum, another requirement of the HLF application process, are in the latter stages of development.

22. Collections

The Agreement giving joint ownership of the John Mallon Collection (photographic and archival collection) to the North Eastern Railway Association and Darlington Railway Museum was finally signed in August. Work on cataloguing this collection can now be started.

The second of the two new computers for the Study Centre has now been connected and both computers are now linked to the network. The MODES collections database is now accessible via both these machines and updating continues.

During September items were collected from Locomotion: The National Railway Museum at Shildon. These items were originally from the John Sinclair Railway Museum and Durham Museum's Education Service and included framed paintings and diagrams, posters, booklets and posters. They will be added to our permanent collection and some items will be used within the Education Department.

Donations received during September included a Clocking-in machine from North Road Shops, various British Rail uniforms (1980s), a BR Guard hand lamp, a collection of leaflets/booklets relating to the Superannuation Fund (BR) and a hand operated bench drill – believed to have been used at the North Road Locomotive Works.

23. Education

The Summer Train Tribe took place between 16th and 20th August and Time Trackers events were held on the 11th and 12th of September.

Other ad-hoc craft activities also took place during the summer holidays. Plays and drama productions were undertaken by Pluto Theatre Group and Visitation Productions as part of the Renaissance in the Regions drama project, to encourage new audiences into museums. The themes for the productions were based on 'A day in the life of...' featuring a Victorian school mistress, an engine fireman and an Irish navy and the production was named 'Three tales of trains gone by'.

24. Blaze

The Museum was proud to host a two year Opera Project in conjunction with Northern Stage and Creative Partnerships in July. The project involved children from schools throughout the Tees Valley including Haughton School performing in a specially commissioned opera about the railways past, present and future. There were five shows running from Tuesday 27th July until Saturday July 31st with most of the performances being fully booked. In addition to the performances, the University of Teesside designed and installed visual and interactive virtual reality displays which were placed throughout the Museum. The installation of such unique displays encouraged the opera goers to visit the Museum during the interval thus increasing the footfall and opening the Museum up to a whole new audience.

**Councillor Lee Vasey
Cabinet Member with Leisure Portfolio**