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**OVERVIEW OF LEISURE PORTFOLIO**

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**Purpose of Report**

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

**Inclusion**

**Youth Strategy Development**

2. A Youth Strategy Consultation event took place on 3 December 2005 at the Dolphin Centre. The event was attended by 99 children and young people aged between 8 – 19 years old who took part in a range of arts/crafts and sports activities. The young people were asked to express their views on a number of issues associated with the Government objectives outlined within the ‘Every Child Matters’ strategy

**Community Events**

**Festival of Fire**

3. DBC worked in partnership with Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council, Stockton Borough Council and TFM/Magic 1170 to stage a “regional event” – the Festival of Fireworks event. The event was held in the South Park on Saturday, 5 November 2005.

**Christmas Light Extravaganza**

4. The Christmas Lights event for 2005 took place in the town centre on Sunday, 20 November 2005. Alpha FM provided two-week on-air campaign to publicise the event and provided staging, lighting and a team of presenters. Northern Aviation provided a helicopter to transport Santa Claus into Darlington and ‘S’ Class Executive Travel provided an ‘S’ Class Mercedes. Junior Beauty and The Beast prizewinners won the opportunity to switch on the Christmas lights with the stars of this year’s pantomime the Grumbleweeds and Santa.

**Eastbourne Sports Complex**

5. A £20,000 investment has been made to revitalise the Astro Turf at Eastbourne Sports Complex and the work has now been completed. To further encourage a diverse range of participation the JEAP (Junior Elite Athlete Scheme) is being re-introduced and a Ladies’ Football League will be introduced in January 2006.

## **Sports Development**

### **Big Lottery Fund PE and Sport Programme – New School Facilities**

6. This capital project has delivered new outdoor PE and sport facilities at eight schools and also at the High Force Centre, Teasdale. The final project forms part of the redevelopment at Skerne Park Primary School and will commence this year. The Sports Development Team is supporting some of these schools to open the new facilities for community use.

### **Sport and Physical Activity Strategy**

7. As a result of a clear directive from Sport England, the present Sport and Recreation Strategy will be revised to form a new Sport and Physical Activity Strategy. This new directive from Sport England is aimed at extending the scope to encourage a greater level of community and grass roots involvement in key sport and physical activity decisions.
8. A Steering Group has been established with representation from the LSP, PCT, Education, Tees Valley Sport, Youth Service, D.A.D. and volunteers from local sports clubs. The group has started the consultation process within this piece of work and has established a target date for the completion of the first draft of the strategy of 1 April 2006.

### **Community Sports Coach**

9. A new Community Sports Coach has been appointed to the Sports Development team, whose role is to support school and community sport. This post is part funded by Sport England through the Tees Valley Sport Partnership, and aims to increase physical activity levels of young people, and to encourage and support young people into local sports clubs.

### **Zone Active**

10. Zone Active is a physical activity project aimed at increasing levels of sport and physical activity in those three specific wards. It is led by the residents on an ongoing consultation basis and includes a low level exercise class, after school clubs and multi activity clubs. Since the Zone Active project began in April 2005, in the wards of Lascelles, Park East and Eastbourne, there are now 135 Zone Active Members. The number of participants in each activity in the first six months of the project has totalled 488. One of the newest initiatives to begin is the expansion of the Get Everyone Motivated (GEM) scheme. These classes will begin at the Dolphin Centre and Eastbourne in 2006.

### **The Westside Project**

11. The Westside Project was originally a sixteen-week pilot scheme aimed at young people aged between 11-18 who either attended Branksome Comprehensive School or lived in the local area. The project (in the form of a 'rave' and other activities such as the mobile climbing wall) is held every Friday night at the school and is supervised by the local Police, Uniformed Wardens and local volunteers.

12. The project has resulted in a recognised 40% decrease in anti-social behaviour in this area. Although there was commitment from partners for the pilot period, it was identified that to continue the project and build on the success of the pilot scheme, Leisure Services would need to provide a project management support role, which is now being managed by Leisure Services.

### **Adult Obesity Strategy**

13. In partnership with the PCT, Leisure Services are leading on the implementation of the local Adult Obesity Strategy Action Plan. Areas of work include: the development of a 'Healthy Darlington' communications strategy, development of additional food co-ops, the development of BMI (Body Mass Index) and waist circumference measurement training.

### **Arts Development Team**

14. The Arts Service worked with 30 Year 4 children at Heighington CE Primary School during December as part of the rural villages community outreach making Christmas decorations. The children were able to develop their communication skills, artistic ability and team working skills.

### **Visual Arts**

#### **Faverdale East Business Park**

15. Visual Artist, Cath Campbell and poet Bill Herbert were commissioned to write an Arts Strategy for the developers at Faverdale East to help the commissioning of public art as the Business Park develops. The first commission is with Argos, the arts strategy artists are in the research phase of this commission. The interim meeting is due to take place 16 December 2005

#### **Pedestrian Heart**

16. Leading Artist, Dr Michael Pinsky continues to work with the design team commissioned on the Pedestrian Heart Project. Poet, Jacob Polley has been commissioned to write text/poetry that will be incorporated into the landscape of the new scheme.

#### **Civic Theatre**

17. The 2005 pantomime commenced on 9 December 2005 starring family favourites the Grumbleweeds, Big Brother winner Anthony Hutton and Darlington's Zoe Birkett. Anthony visited the Cornmill Centre signing autographs and had photos taken to promote this year's panto. A satellite Box Office has been set up in the Cornmill Centre this year which has been a huge success encouraging many first time visits to the theatre.

## **Sponsorship and Marketing**

18. Since the new Tees Valley theatre and arts communication magazine, "What's On" was launched in September 2005, theatre ticket bookings from Direct Mail alone has increased by £55k. The Marketing Team are in the process of fine-tuning the process and envisage an increase in sales through targeted Direct Mail activity for the next year.
19. Cleveland Bridge has confirmed a further 12 months sponsorship of the St Cuthbert's Roundabout.
20. The Sponsorship Team are meeting with high profiled companies to discussion who will be sponsoring Darlington 2006 Road Race.

## **Northumbria in Bloom Competition**

21. A recent presentation was made to all concerned, following the success of Darlington achieving the award for Best Small City in the Northumbria in Bloom Competition. This included the town's roundabout sponsors and staff. Councillor Stella Robson, The Worshipful Mayor, thanked sponsors for their continued support.

## **South Park**

22. The majority of the work included within Phase 1 is now complete. The only exception is the installation of the East entrance gates, which will now be completed at the end of Phase 2.
23. Many elements of the project are now complete, the only exceptions being:
  - Rose Garden – New boundary fencing to complete in January 2006
  - Bandstand – Work completed but still to be commissioned
  - Footpath – 70% of the footpaths are complete to date, the remaining footpaths are to be completed in January 2006
  - Lake – Handrail to boardwalk is still to complete, together with the marginal planting to the perimeter of the lake.
  - Café – Substantially complete with only the flooring and Decorations to complete
  - Grotto Garden – Fibre Dec coverings still to complete and water feature to commission
  - Signage - Delivery of bespoke signage expected in January 2006 with installation in January /February 2006
24. The new book called "A Walk in the Park" was published in late November. Written by Chris Lloyd who is a local historian and Deputy Editor of The Northern Echo it has been jointly published by The Northern Echo and Darlington Borough Council. Written as a trail around the park the book charts the extensive history of South Park. A percentage of the money raised in the sales of the book will fund a new historical sign in the park.

25. A new short film on DVD, showing the progress of the restoration project, was sent to all schools during October. The aim is to provide a visual resource that will encourage teachers and children to send in ideas as to the sorts of things they would like to see run from the new Education Centre - now called "Outside In". The response so far has been excellent and many additional DVDs have been requested.
26. "Outside In" (New Teaching Block Element A1) will also soon be getting some artistic attention from two local artists who will be painting giant murals on the walls that reflect the diversity of wildlife in and around South Park. Local school children will be involved in this in late January 2006.
27. The overall project is expected to be completed in January/February 2006, weather permitting.

## **Darlington Railway Centre and Museum**

### ***Events***

28. "Santa at the Station" took place over the first three weekends in December. This year, the operation was indoors, with a miniature railway individually transporting children the length of the building for their visits to Santa. Over the six days, 703 children visited Santa, an increase of 14% over the previous year; overall numbers, at 1471, were up by 8.8%.

### ***Education***

29. Over 1,100 schoolchildren visited the museum during the autumn term. Museum staff are currently working with the Library Service on "One Book for Darlington", a literacy development project due to take place in January and February and based around The Railway Children. The project will conclude with a celebration event at the museum over the weekend of 18-19 February.

### ***Study Centre and Collections***

30. The museum continues to receive interesting and worthwhile donations from members of the public. A recent picture story in the Echo featured some recent donations and has generated a number of further offers. Another story the same day sought to promote use of the Study Centre by local residents against the background of two grants totalling £4,000, recently awarded to help improve the storage of plans and drawings.

### ***Volunteers***

31. The museum's volunteer workforce continues to grow and to diversify in terms of its interests and mix. Detailed planning for an Oral History Project is currently in progress. This project is being run jointly between the Tees Valley Hub and the Friends and will record the memories of people and their families, who worked at North Road Shops, the Stivvies, Faverdale and at the Stooperdale Offices.

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