
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.

Dolphin Centre Refurbishment

2. The Dolphin Centre refurbishment scheme commenced in February 2006. The £5m project will provide a family orientated, contemporary leisure facility for the one million visitors who use the Centre every year.

A comprehensive communications strategy is in place to ensure that all users and partners are fully updated with progress. The Darlington Borough Council website provides the community with up to date information on progress and plans, information on how to make comment, and information on the availability of additional information. Also a dedicated refurbishment hotline and email address has been set up to enable customers to keep up to date with progress.

Leisure managers have worked alongside over 50 clubs and societies based at the centre to ensure that alternative accommodation is available through the duration of the project.

Inclusion

Sportsability Club

3. Funding has been secured to enable the continued provision of the Sportsability Club until March 2008.
4. The club is an introductory level multi-activity club for disabled young people, where there are opportunities to try out a range of sports and physical activities. The club aims to provide support to enable young people to access mainstream activity where appropriate. The guiding principles of the Sportsability Club are to boost confidence and to provide fun and physical exercise.

Youth Assembly

5. Young people from Darlington have been involved in an event coordinated by the North East Regional Youth Assembly, named Bus Buddies. The project enabled young people from across the region to prepare a DVD on transport issues from a young person's perspective. The young people involved have been able to share findings of the project at a recent Transport Users Forum.

The Westside Project

6. 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.
7. Leisure Services have been coordinating the project since the beginning of January 2006, and have worked to diversify the range of activities available whilst maintaining attendance figures. Many new workshops and activities have been introduced since January, which includes a number of sports, health and beauty workshops and dance classes.

Sports Development

Sport and Physical Activity Strategy

8. The Sports and Physical Activity Strategy is now at a first stage. A Steering Group has been formed with representatives from the LSP, PCT, Education, Tees Valley Sport, Youth Service, DAD and volunteers from local sports clubs.
9. It is intended that the group will review progress on this at the next meeting on the 23 February 2006. The full draft strategy will be completed for 1 April 2006.

Community Sports

10. The Community Sports Coach has been delivering a comprehensive programme of community coaching to local schools, sports clubs, Leisure facilities, community groups and also a group of looked after children.
11. 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.

Darlington Dragons Basketball Club

12. Following the installation of a new basketball provision in the Dolphin Centre Main Sports Hall, a new junior basketball club has been developed. Basketball has been a sport in demand for some time in the town. As a result, the average attendance at the club is 40 young people after only a few weeks of operation.

13. The coaches and volunteers of the club are being supported by the Sports Development Team to develop a constitution and apply for external funding to support the running of the club.

Adult Obesity Strategy

14. In partnership with the PCT, Leisure Services are working on the implementation of the local Adult Obesity Strategy Action Plan. Progress against the Obesity Strategy Action Plan is reported directly to HISIG (Health Improvement and Social Inclusion Group). As a result of this, the Head of Leisure and the Head of Health Improvement from Darlington PCT will meet with the LSP Board to discuss communications linked to broader positive health messages.

Breaking Barriers Project

15. In partnership with the Sports Development Team, the Darlington and District Youth and Community Association (DDYCA) have secured three years of funding to allow a team of sports coaches, youth workers and Peer Mentors to work with young people between the ages of 11-25 years to engage them in a variety of multi-activity sessions.
16. These activities will include, sports sessions, arts activities, multi-activity sessions, and chill out sessions. These sessions will begin in the following areas where a lack of young people's provision was highlighted: Harrogate Hill Primary School, Branksome School, Middleton St George Community Centre and the sessions will be open to all young people and will initially be free of charge.

Sponsorship

17. Bussey and Armstrong have agreed to a further 12-month sponsorship of the roundabout on Coniscliffe and Carmel Road. Gallerina have agreed to a further 12-month sponsorship of the Duke Street Roundabout.
18. John Wade Haulage, Simon Ruck, Todds Highway Maintenance, Hayton & Lamb Ltd and Pennine Contracts have continued to sponsor driving bays at Stressholme Golf Course
19. Manse Mastedor, Jewsons Ltd, Noble Self Drive, Pro-Truck Commercial Services Ltd, Symphony Group have continued to sponsor "Golf Tees" at Stressholme Golf Course.
20. Latimer Hinks have confirmed continuation of their corporate membership at the Civic Theatre for the next year.
21. Highland Spring have confirmed they will sponsor the Sherwoods Darlington 10K Road Race by supplying (in kind) 5,000 bottles of 300ml natural still spring water.

Performing Arts

22. Our Performing Arts Division have successfully secured funding of £5,000 from Arts & Business.
23. The money is to be used to fund a drama project with a group of young carers from Darlington. The drama project will involve the carers working alongside ‘Kaos’ – a professional theatre company based in London. This project will result in a performed theatre piece at Darlington Arts Centre in June and July this year.

South Park

24. Phase 1 is now substantially complete with the final work to the east entrance gates, having been completed in late February.
25. Phase 2 is also substantially complete with only minor snagging works to several areas to conclude, as follows:
 - Rose Garden – new boundary fencing to complete.
 - Lake – marginal planting to the perimeter of the lake.
 - Café – still to be commissioned.
 - Signage – All delivered leaving only the exact locations to be determined in site.
26. These outstanding items are to be completed within the next week or so.

Darlington Railway Museum

Interactive

27. Two new interactive displays have recently been installed on the ‘lawn’ opposite the Museum main entrance; these displays outline different jobs on the railway (e.g. signalman, ganger) and some of the equipment and tools that would have been used and clothing that would have been worn whilst doing these jobs.

School Visits

28. Over 300 children visited the Museum in January and February, including parties of Russian and Korean children on exchange visits, as well as a number of groups attending “Railway Workshops”. The Museums Time Trackers event recommences in March (a “living history” project in which actors play the parts of railwaymen or railway passengers from Victorian times) and several bookings have already been taken for this event.

Model Plough

29. A model John Fowler agricultural plough made by apprentices at the Cleveland Bridge Co in 1988, has recently been transferred from the Museums collection to South Park for display. Before being transferred to the museum, this model was previously on display in Crown Street Library.

Oral History Project

30. The museum oral history project started last November and since Christmas 6 group meetings have been held involving some 20-30 former railway workers, mainly from the former North Road works and Robert Stephenson & Hawthorns but also with one or two from Stooperdale Boiler shop. The next stage in the project will be to start interviews on a one to one basis and, when completed, the information and recollections obtained will be made available for the Museum archive collections and for use in schools. So far few women workers have been located from the various Darlington railway industries but the project team are hoping to rectify this as the project develops.

Recent Acquisitions

31. Several items have been donated to the Museum in recent weeks including a number of trophies from the London and North Eastern Railway Tees-side area Motor Club, as well as a number of photographs and memorabilia about "Locomotion". A few local railway history books have been donated for use in the study centre.

Temporary Documentation Assistant

32. Kay Ingleby started in the above post in mid February and will be working at the museum until the end of June. This post has been funded by 'Renaissance In The Regions' and whilst at Darlington Kay will be updating records onto the Museum's computer system as well as categorizing maps, plans and other archive materials.

Railway Children

33. Over the weekend of 18-19 February over 800 people visited the Museum to attend the 'Railway Children' event the centrepiece of which was an exhibition of artwork produced by children from over 20 local schools. In addition, there was a drama performance by some of the local children, a face painter, a storyteller, kite making, actors and a miniature railway ride. The event was held as part of the 'one book for Darlington' initiative.

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