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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:

**Background**

**Arts Centre Refurbishment**

2. The New look Arts Centre opened its doors on Monday 4 June following a £1m refurbishment. Hirers and tenants were invited to a special open evening for them. They were amongst the first customers to see the newly designed building.
3. Since work began last year, a new theatre space, The Studio, has been created together with new fully accessible ground floor dressing rooms. The foyer has been completely refurbished and renamed The Lounge, which provides a space for Arts Centre visitors to meet, relax and enjoy a range of food and drink. Other developments include a new community gallery, new toilets and wheelchair access to the Garden Bar.
4. The final part of the redevelopment will be the installation of a piece of public art by the renowned artist Angela Conner on the new outdoor plaza area. The piece is entitled "Threshold" and will be a moving water sculpture.

**Events**

**South Park Family Fun Day - Sunday 6 May 2007**

5. A Family Fun day managed by the Leisure and Art Events Team in partnership with South Park staff and Friends of South Park took place on Sunday 6 May 2007. The events attracted thousands of people throughout the day and were entertained by Street Theatre, Punch and Judy, climbing wall, fairground rides and bouncy castle, balloon modeller and historical talk from Chris Lloyd, Deputy Editor of The Northern Echo.
6. John Wade who sponsored the event also provided continuous entertainment throughout the day as well by bringing a selection of their trucks and heavy vehicles for the public to view and board.

## **World No Tobacco Day – Thursday, 31 May 2007**

7. Working in partnership with the Primary Care Trust, Darlington Partnership and the Leisure and Arts Events Team, an event was held on Thursday, 31 May 2007 in the performance space and throughout the Town Centre. The event incorporated a walkabout in the Pedestrian Heart Area to promote World No Tobacco Day. A street performer was dressed as the daisy mascot used to promote National No Smoking Day on 14 March 2007.

## **Arts Development**

### **Dance Workshops at the Arts Centre; “Dream it live it”**

8. From 8-12 May the Arts Centre delivered a series of workshops organised by Darien Wright (The Winner of BBC’s Dance Fever programme). Thirty young people participated in the project, which attracted an audience of over 200 people.

## **Extended Schools**

9. There are currently a variety of arts projects being developed in partnership with extended schools. These include a sculpture project at Carmel RC College, a textiles project at Carmel RC College and St Augustine’s RC primary school.
10. Hummersknott School & Language College together with its feeder schools, are working on sculpture and sound scape projects. These projects are being delivered in partnership with the Sage Gateshead and this will culminate in an exhibition of work to be held at Hummersknott School on 10-12 July 2007.

### **“Openart” Studio has been extended until June 2007**

11. The aim of the Openart Studio is to provide the environment and resources that enable people with established mental health needs to participate in creative and artistic activities. This is delivered in partnership with the One Life programme and Lifestyle on referral.
12. The three-month pilot has been extended until the end of September where the arts service will open the art studio to the community on a membership based principle. This means members of the public will be able to access the studio facilities on a drop in basis on Mondays.
13. The project has generated much local publicity and there have already been many positive articles in the local press in the last two months.

## **Visual Arts**

14. Michael Pinsky's “Life Pulse” was installed on Blackwellgate on 30 May 2007. Arts Council have agreed to fund a publicity leaflet for this contemporary artwork, which reads visitors heart rates and illuminates them.
15. The new Lounge Gallery has been created at Darlington Arts Centre as part of the refurbishment and will exhibit the work of community artists.

## **Community Sports/Sport Development**

16. The Extended Schools Programme within the Longfield School Cluster continues to deliver a diverse programme of activities for young people. During the Easter half term a range of performance camps were delivered in cricket, basketball and trampolining. A group of skiers and snowboarders were also given the opportunity to visit the Xscape Complex at Castleford.
17. In total the programme engaged more than 200 young people in sport and physical activity based courses during the half term vacation. A comprehensive programme is already scheduled for the summer holiday including basketball, cricket, trampolining, dance, table tennis, volleyball, gymnastics and tennis camps at Longfield School, Eastbourne Sports Complex, Darlington RA Cricket Club and the Dolphin Centre.
18. In Partnership with Darlington Railway Athletic Cricket Club, the Extended Schools Programme and Durham County Cricket Board over 50 children from across Darlington attended the Chance to Shine Cricket Scheme. Another session is planned in the summer with the aim of continuing to develop school-club links.
19. An extensive programme of Continued Professional Development courses were organised for teachers and adults other than teachers by the Sports Development Team in partnership with the Schools Sports Partnership. Over 100 teachers and adults other than teachers attended these courses.
20. Since attending the Step into Sport Conference in March 2007, 24 young volunteers have begun placements within local community clubs supported by dedicated mentors. Many of the young people have completed over 50 hours of volunteering.
21. Funding of £25,000 has been secured through Tees Valley Sport to appoint a part-time Community Sports Coach. They will deliver multi-skill and sports specific sessions as part of the Extended Schools Programme within Darlington.

## **Zone Active**

22. The Zone Active programme within three priority wards in Darlington (Eastbourne, Lascelles and Park East) has been recognised by Sport England as a model of good practice for community based engagement in physical activity. There are currently more than 250 Zone Active members participating in physical activity on a weekly basis.
23. The Sportsability club is due to restart to support young people with disabilities to participate in a variety of activities to develop skills and links with local sports clubs. This has been established in partnership with DAD (Darlington Association on Disability) and the Adult Social Services team within DBC.
24. Zone Active is currently working on a Men's Health project, in partnership with Darlington PCT. The project will provide advice and physical activity sessions to generate awareness.

25. All activities engage young people and adults within the Zone Active target areas using local facilities and Community based Coaches. The figures below illustrate the impact on participation that the project is having in the three-targeted areas.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Under 16's</b>	<b>Over 45's</b>	<b>Disability</b>	<b>Total of Males and Females</b>
<b>October-December</b>	983	950	1333	600	12 (approx)	1933
<b>January-March</b>	798	1287	997	1088	25 (Approx)	2085
<b>Total</b>	1781	2237	2330	1688	37	4018

26. There are seven Get Everybody Motivated (GEM) community classes running on a weekly basis with most attracting between 10-15 people each session. Sessions continue to run within sheltered accommodation and various residential homes, 24 GEM leaders have been trained since January, and work is underway to gain accreditation for the course. This will be equivalent to an NVQ (level 1 or 2 depending upon credits achieved). The GEM team are currently working with Darlington Primary Care Trust to develop a weight management programme for young people aged 8-11 years old, this programme will be piloted in September. The project will look to affect behavioural change in the whole family unit.

### **Leisure Facilities**

27. A comprehensive programme of customer service training has been developed and implemented for all staff across Leisure Services. This programme will engage more than 120 staff within the service and will be targeted around developing customer relationship management techniques and further developing service standards. This systematic approach to developing customer service skills will be extended throughout Leisure/Arts and will be reinforced with further structured sessions throughout the year and mainstreamed through the PDR process.
28. The £80,000 installation of the Climbing Boulder at Eastbourne Sports Complex, in partnership with Groundwork and Barclays Spaces for Sport is complete. The project also provides 18,000 of revenue funding over 3 years to develop community based Climbing initiatives and increase participation in this sport.
29. An extensive programme of Easter activities was delivered to promote community use of the Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA) at Carmel, Skerne Park (Coleridge Centre) and Alderman Leach Schools. There were a number of adult taster sessions provided including Netball, Cricket, Football and Hockey. Multi Activity Clubs for younger children were also planned to enable adults to participate in these activities. More than 100 young people and adults accessed the games areas throughout the Easter period and more activities are planned for the summer programme.

## **Marketing**

30. Audiences North East has recently conducted an independent survey of 10 arts organizations in the North East to assess their customer satisfaction and retention. Of the ten organisations, Darlington Civic Theatre achieved 3rd place and scored well compared against the regional benchmark. The overall benchmark is 31.3%. The Civic Theatre achieved 41%. The staff have been highly commended for the excellent work that they undertake.

## **Summer Repertory Season**

31. Darlington Civic Theatre is once again presenting the successful Summer Repertory Season. The Season starts on Tuesday, 12 June 2007 and consists of four plays produced by Ian Dickens Productions Ltd.

## **New Leisure & Arts Website**

32. The draft web proposal by Waterstons has been agreed and work will shortly be underway on the new Leisure and Arts Websites in conjunction with web designers. The new arts website will include new online ticketing for performances at both the Arts Centre and the Civic Theatre.

## **Civic Theatre Centenary Season**

33. To mark the Centenary of the Civic Theatre, a special “What’s On” brochure has been published for the Centenary Season. It is unique to the Civic Theatre and designed to help mark this special anniversary. It includes all the top class productions and special celebratory evenings which have been drawn together to ensure the Civic Theatre’s Centenary Season is a huge success and extremely popular with both performers and patrons. The brochure was launched week commencing 4 June 2007.

## **Sponsorship**

### **Mayor's Golf Day**

34. On Friday 1 June 2007 a successful day was held at Stressholme Golf Centre. The following companies supported the event through sponsorship: Ropers Caravans, Hayton & Lamb, Austin Sanders, The Northern Echo, The John Wade Group, Viviente and Bountiful Baskets. Alpha fm and The Northern Echo have jointly promoted the event.

### **Summer Rep Season**

35. Blackett, Hart & Pratt are the new sponsors this year for the summer repertory season at the Civic Theatre.

## **Darlington Railway Centre and Museum**

### **Refurbishment of Museum**

36. The 'Blue Peter' locomotive has been moved out of the Museum to a Preservation Society near Chesterfield. At the same time, the North Eastern Locomotive Group's P3 locomotive (No 2392) has been moved 'across the field' to their depot in the Hopetown carriage works building.
37. 'Locomotion' and 'Derwent' have been prepared by specialist staff for their relocation from the Museum platform onto the rails. This has involved the removal of parts of the locomotives mechanism as well as a general oiling and lubricating.
38. A 'Stakeholders' meeting was recently held at the Museum and attended by representatives of the Friends, the Museum Trust, the Darlington Archers, the A1 Trust, The Ken Hoole Trust, the Darlington Railway Preservation Society and the North Easter Railway Association. The Stakeholders 'Group' will be regularly updated as the redevelopment programme progresses. Steve Thompson, Assistant Director, Leisure and Arts, and I will also be joining the Stakeholder Group.
39. Work is now almost complete on the new roof over the museum and the contractors are currently working on the roof over the train shed (over the Darlington – Bishop Auckland Railway Line). Welsh slates have been used and, when complete, both roofs will look as they would have done when originally built.

### **Learning and Access**

40. Activities have been taking place in libraries to tie in with Museums and Galleries Month, Adult Learners Week and the Half Term Holidays. A session about tracing your railway ancestors had a good response with 34 participants in a 2 hour period.

### **Library Service**

41. We have been looking at performance figures and some highlights include:-
  - (a) Issues on the mobile library are up 34% from last year with, most notably, an increase of 126% in junior non-fiction issues and a 20% increase in junior membership.
  - (b) Delivery of Bookstart packs. Figures for 2006-07 show that 100% of children aged 0-12 months received a pack; 88% of children aged 18-30 months received a pack and 94% of children aged 3-4 years received a pack.
  - (c) In 2006-07 we delivered 37,500 hours of PC usage in the e-library.
42. We have had a number of very well attended events including a Patons and Baldwin exhibition which attracted over 200 former employees.
43. The repairs to Crown Street Library are still in progress and we have had to close the Centre for Local Studies for four weeks to allow the plasterwork to be repaired. Cockerton Library suffered some damage recently when thieves stripped half of the roof thinking it was copper (it is actually copper coated felt and has no scrap value).

44. The learning programmes in both libraries are going extremely well and we have installed additional computers at Cockerton to meet demand.
45. On Saturday 23rd June the severe weather caused flooding in the basement of the library. We had up to 1 metre of sewage which has resulted in extensive damage to the building and contents.
46. The extent of the problems are still being assessed but we now have a much clearer picture of what needs to be done. Unfortunately the parquet flooring has had to be removed, the kitchen has been gutted and we lost 9 boxes of books, 120 boxes of Book Start packs, all the Baby Rhyme Time instruments and the arts and crafts resources. We also had to dispose of desks, IT equipment including the servers, and other furniture due to contamination.
47. The library staff have been magnificent and if not for their quick thinking the loss of resources could have been much worse.

### **Engagements**

48. I have undertaken the following:-
  - 2 June - I visited the Arts Centre to view work prior to re-opening.
  - 6 June - Met staff and youth theatre group members at the Arts Centre.
  - 8 June - I visited the Eastbourne Boulder with Groundwork.
  - 10 June - I presented prizes at the Darlington Kurling Tournament at the Dolphin Centre.
  - 16 June - I took part in a hard hat tour of the Railway Museum to view progress on the refurbishment.

**Councillor Jenny Chapman**  
**Cabinet Member with Leisure Portfolio**