
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. Leisure and Arts staff have continued to focus on summer activities for young people's provision. This work has culminated in a co-ordinated programme between Leisure, Arts, Youth Service and Community Safety Partnership called 'Be Active'.
3. Voluntary and charitable partners have also contributed in kind or in resourcing some aspects of the services. The information will be distributed to every household in Darlington in the Town Crier. The programme includes activities, which target the older young person on an evening and weekend including Youth Discos and outdoor adventure sessions.
4. Of particular significance is 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.

Sport and Arts for Regeneration

5. The 'Be Active' programme will launch 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 will be 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 will culminate in a street games event this summer, followed by young people being able to attend a regional event in Durham.
6. Arts projects to accompany the refurbishment of North Lodge Park continue. The physical refurbishment funded under Transforming Your Space has been accompanied by workshops, exhibitions and events for local people to include their poetry within the fabric of the development.

7. On the 18 June an open day was held at the West Park Development to celebrate the achievement of a gold award for 'Sensitivity in Regeneration' at this year's Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors Renaissance Awards for the North East. The arts aspect of the development was viewed positively.

Promoting Inclusion

8. Leisure and Arts have supported the Learning Disability Service celebrate Learning Disability Week with a range of taster sessions throughout the Council's venues from gym workouts, bowls and art classes to a disco. A number of adults are already attending inclusive swimming sessions and Pulse Suite 3.
9. This practical work has been accompanied by strategic involvement of Darlington Advocacy and members from the Learning Disability Partnership Board. They will assist in the selection and recruitment of the Leisure Services new Inclusion Co-ordinator. The successful candidate is due to take up the position in September.

Summer Repertory Season

10. The fifth Repertory Season at the Civic Theatre got underway on 15 June with Noel Coward's sophisticated comedy Blithe Spirit. The Sponsorship Team have secured a sponsor (Barker & Stonehouse) for the entire season.

New Sponsorship

11. A sponsorship package with Sherwoods (Vauxhall) in support of the Darlington 10km road run and a 12-month sponsorship with the company Coolermedia for Stressholme Golf Centre have been secured. Three further deals have been secured for the town's flagship roundabouts.

Arts Development

12. Throughout June the Myles Meehan Gallery hosted an exhibition of work by Darlington Sixth Form art students. The exhibition represents an example of the successful partnership being forged between the College and the Arts Centre. The College are very proud of the fact that this year every student has secured a place at an art college.
13. This year's Community Carnival 'Myths and Legends' has involved a diverse range of individuals and groups, making it a truly inclusive, community event. Two new artists were engaged to work in conjunction with the Community Arts Officer and local groups.

Sports and Physical Activity Development

14. A Zone Active application to Sport England has been successful in reaching the second stage. Only 20 applications in the North have achieved this status. The application will look at raising the sports and physical activity levels of three wards, Lascelles Park, Park East and Eastbourne. An estimated £180,000 across three years will support work in the neighbourhoods.

15. On Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 June, Darlington took part in the Tees Valley Partnership Youth Games. The Youth Games provides the opportunity for 250 young people of Darlington to compete against Stockton, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland in a multi-sports olympic style competition.
16. Teams included a girls football, netball, tennis, hockey, rugby league, tag rugby, gymnastics, orienteering, basketball, cricket, table tennis, swimming, athletics, volleyball, moderate learning disabilities netball and moderate learning disabilities football teams. The team members were selected from a range of school, club and development squads. The squads received a first place in netball, a number of second places and specifically a wealth of Fair Play Awards.

Developing School Sport Facilities

17. The New Opportunities Fund has approved the town's first PE and sport development at Alderman Leach School. The newly built school will receive a multi-use games area and a support package from Leisure and Arts to help the school develop the project in its first two years. Planning permission for seven other projects has now also been achieved.

Eastbourne Sports Complex

18. On 22 May, the official opening of the Community Pavilion took place at Eastbourne Sports Complex. The Mayor of Darlington, Councillor Roderick Francis, officially opened this new £80,000 community resource. Darlington Harriers, Darlington Hockey Club, Hundens Green Association and other community groups will use the pavilion for meetings, workshops and coaching seminars.
19. Staff from Eastbourne Sports Complex have worked in partnership with the DDYCA to bring the Blitz Bus to the site throughout the summer period. The Bus will visit Eastbourne every Friday 7.00pm-9.00pm. Young people will have access to activities within the Bus, the all-weather surface and Pulse Suite 3 each week. The Complex staff will introduce a guest sport each week using the local sports clubs that are based at the Complex.

Outdoor Events

20. This year's outdoor event programme began with the Darlington Big Bikeathon on 2 May at South Park. The event is organised with the Council's Countryside Section and welcomes a large number of families. The event raised funds for Leukaemia Research.
21. The Race For Life, in aid of Cancer Research UK took place on Sunday 20 June at South Park and was a great success attracting almost 2300 participants. Since the inaugural event in 2002, the Race For Life has doubled its number of entrants and this year is expected to raise in the region of £80,000 for Cancer Research UK. The unique events welcomes grandmas, mums and children to take part together and undoubtedly encourage an active lifestyle.

Indoor Events

22. The Dolphin Centre has hosted high profile events including Last Night of the Proms and Northern Sinfonia. The BBC used the Dolphin Centre as their venue to broadcast 'Question Time' on 3 June. The production was extremely successful, therefore ensuring that the Dolphin Centre will be considered as a venue for future BBC outside broadcasts

Darlington Railway Centre and Museum

23. **Events** – The Museum held a new event 'Driver for a Fiver' on Fathers Day. This event included a trip in the engine cabin with the engine driver whilst the family travelled in the brake van. This was a successful joint event between the Darlington Railway Preservation Society and Darlington Railway Centre and Museum and it is hoped to be repeated.
24. **Blaze** - The Museum is proud to be hosting a two year Opera Project in conjunction with Northern Stage and Creative Partnerships in July. The project involves children from schools throughout Tees Valley including Haughton School, performing in a specially commissioned opera about the railways past, present and future. The shows start on Tuesday 27 July until Saturday 31 July 2004.
25. **Renaissance in the Regions** - The Museum will be benefiting from the Museums Hub, via the Renaissance Project, via a grant for £15,000. This grant will be used to provide drama productions throughout the summer months to encourage visitors to come to the museum.
26. **Heritage Lottery Fund** - The recently commissioned Conservation Plan which is required as part of the HLF application, is running to schedule. The issues highlighted by the Feasibility Study appear to be resolved from the plan's findings.
27. The HLF have approved the Project Planning Grant application for £25,000 to cover the cost of producing Access and Audience Development plans for the museum, another requirement of the HLF application process.
28. **Collections** - To protect some of the collections from further water damage, items have been removed from the North Wall. These items have been moved into storage and one or two items will be repositioned on the wall in an area where water does not presently come through.
29. The new 'Locomotion' and 'Derwent' panels have now been displayed in the vicinity of the engines and the Stephenson panels have been repositioned around 'Locomotion'. Unfortunately this area is presently suffering from the intake of water and therefore the Stephenson panels have needed to be reduced in number.
30. Little Giant has been removed from the museum and its owner now has the engine on loan at The National Railway Museum.

31. Work has started on re-inputting information onto the MODES database. This work has started with the object locations of the North Eastern Railway Association catalogue. This is an ongoing process. An audit of the stores and display areas has been started. This will be used to update the MODES database on present item locations and to comply with the internal audit and with the Museums, Libraries and Archives Registration.
32. **Education** - School bookings remain buoyant. At this early stage it is forecasted that the PI will be surpassed. This is due to existing programmes such as Time Trackers and Train Tribe. In addition, three new projects will be started imminently, namely:
- Tissue of lives – a joint project with Beamish museum
The not so Great Train Robbery – a new maths resource will be available from Sept
Blaze – Opera project happening for a week in July which will include educational visits to the museum.
33. Two projects over the last two/three years have generated significant usage and more importantly were of high educational value. To continue these projects over a further three year period will cost about £25,000. Unfortunately funding cannot be guaranteed at this stage; Train Tribe funding ceases this summer and Time Trackers funding ends March 2005.

Councillor Lee Vasey
Cabinet Member with Leisure Portfolio