
OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND LEISURE PORTFOLIO

Purpose of Report

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

World Class Commissioning

2. Commissioners of health and health care hosted a stakeholder event on 15 September 2008, where a wide range of Darlington representatives discussed the proposed key outcomes which the NHS will use to measure health improvement for local people over the next five years.

Healthy Darlington (Themed Group of the Darlington Partnership)

3. The Healthy Darlington Delivery Plan is in development. The Healthy Darlington Business group met at the end of September and agreed the performance management system which will be used to measure progress.
4. A meeting of the full Healthy Darlington Themed Group will take place on 4 December 2008.

Fuel Poverty

5. The Fuel Poverty Action Group met for the second time in October. Progress on the work to date will be reported to the Older People's Partnership Board on 31 October 2008 by Age Concern Darlington on behalf of the full group.

Tackling Health Inequalities

6. Darlington Primary Care Trust and Darlington Borough Council have agreed a joint programme of work to accelerate an improvement in health in key areas including obesity, alcohol, smoking, mental health and sexual health. The programmes will contribute to delivering the Healthy Darlington section of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Sports Development

Sports Unlimited (Formerly Extending Activities)

7. The implementation of the Government funded Sports Unlimited scheme is underway with a diverse range of activities proving a success with young people across the borough. There are 16 individual sessions that will be delivered between September and December 2008, 12 sessions have already started including Trampolining, Dance Mats, B Boys (Boys Dancing

session) and skate school. The activities are aiming to engage young people in five hours of sport and physical activity every week. Strong links with local community providers are in place to monitor retention and facilitate the sustainability of these sessions.

Darlington Community Sports Network

Portfolio Projects

8. Funding from Sport England is now being used to deliver three community-based sports projects. Co-ordinators have been appointed for the Outdoor Activity and Club and Equity posts and deliver of the projects is underway with action plans monitored through the CSN (Community Sports Network). The GEM (Get Everybody Motivated) project will commence in November and will expand on the original GEM project that was an integral element of the Zone Active Project.

Junior One Life

9. There will be two Junior One Life Programmes commencing one in January 2009 and another in April 2009. This health improvement programme will run in two localities of the borough. Due to current obesity statistics in these localities Junior One Life will be used as a programme to support in the promotion of healthy lifestyles and family change. Funding has been secured for this partnership work with Darlington PCT through the extended services programme.

Employee Health and Well Being

10. As part of the Investors in Health initiative the Sports Development Team are working with Darlington Primary Care Trust to support in increasing awareness of the benefits of Sport and Physical Activity among local businesses. Seven businesses have signed up to the draft Darlington Investors in Health Foundation Award, which supports workplaces to become healthier and more aware of the well being of their staff. Sports Development provided demonstration at the recent launch event highlighting the impact small changes can have on the well being of their staff.

Inclusive Health Check

11. English Federation for Disability Sport has allocated Darlington £3,000 to support two clubs to improve accessibility for the community. The allocated funding can be used to train staff, support marketing and promotion and develop the infrastructure of the club to become more inclusive. The process will take place over the next 12 months and initially will target Darlington Amateur Swimming Club and Darlington Table Tennis Club.

Age Concern-Fit as a Fiddle Programme

12. Age Concern in partnership with the Sports Development Team have implemented their Fit as a Fiddle campaign with a healthy lifestyles programme and a Pilate's class. Both have run for six weeks and proved a success among participants. The Pilates class is now going to continue and is divided into two sessions due to the demand in numbers. These sessions are also creating effective links to other community-based programmes including the GEM scheme.

Locality A (Branksome) Activities

13. Following the recent Locality Workshops, in partnership with all the head teachers from the primary schools and the secondary school in locality A, a comprehensive programme of activities has been rolled out in partnership with Darlington Sports Development Team. These activities include: Dance Mats, Triathlon, Trampolining, Basketball and Street Dance. Transport is being made available to reduce the barriers for participation and over 100 children have already benefited from the programme.

Longfield Extended Schools Update

14. The £90k Big Lottery Funded programme has now been completed, however, four community based sports clubs have been made sustainable following the success of the scheme. Partnership work with the Locality B (Longfield) Co-ordinator has enabled the continuation of the Gymnastics Club, two Trampolining sessions, Triathlon Club and the Table Tennis Club.

Darlington Swimming Club achieve Club Accreditation

15. In partnership with the Amateur Swimming Association, Darlington Sports Development Team and Tees Valley Sport, Darlington Amateur Swimming Club has achieved Swim 21 accreditation. This has followed months of hard work by members of the committee and the head coach. This will ensure that the club is equitable, has a development plan and will benefit from funding support from the ASA and Tees Valley Sport.

Events

Sherwood's Darlington 10k Road Run and Fun Run – Sunday 10 August 2008

16. Darlington's 10k road run, sponsored by Sherwood's Darlington, celebrated its 21st year in style with a record entry. 1,128 runners participated in the event and joined in with the celebrations.

Darlington by the Sea – Thursday 28 August 2008

17. Darlington By the Sea was held on Thursday 28 August in the Market Square, hundreds of young children and families turned up to enjoy a day of building sandcastles in our biggest beach ever, whilst enjoying family entertainment throughout the day.

Tour of Britain's 6th Stage Start – Friday 12 September 2008

18. Darlington hosted the Cycling Tour of Britain's 6th stage start on Friday 12 September 2008, which departed from West Row in the town centre. Setting the riders on their way 500 local school children supported their chosen teams by waving their hand-made flags and shakers at the start line. Darlington beat off competition from other Tees Valley authorities to be the host venue to the tour. The Tour organisers said it was the most enthusiastic welcome they had received at any start events particularly from the young people who added colour and noise to the event.

Rhythm and Blues – Sunday 21 September 2008

19. The annual Rhythm and Blues event was held in the Market Square and surrounding pubs on Sunday 21 September 2008. Headlining the event was Dr. Feelgood, supported by Otis Grand Band and The Smokin' Spitfires.

Darlington Food Festival – Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 October 2008

20. Darlington's first ever Food Festival was held on Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 October 2008 to coincide with British Food fortnight. Large marquees were erected in the Market Square to accommodate the demo-kitchen, stall holders selling local produce and the young people's kitchen. Music, street theatre and children's entertainment was provided throughout the weekend to compliment the food element. Feedback from visitors and stallholders was excellent and work is underway to evaluate the possibilities of staging this event in 2009.

Visual Arts

21. The 'Friends of the Civic Theatre' commissioned and funded a fantastic new artwork, 'Cornucopian Vision' by Jane Charles, to celebrate the theatre's Centenary. This work was unveiled at the start of the autumn season and was inspired by the magic, spirit and enjoyment of the theatre. It features six cages, which hold 420 hand blown ruby and clear glass balls and each cage has copper horns on each end formed and beaten by hand.
22. The exhibition 'Tense' by Judith Tucker was shown in the Myles Meehan Gallery Friday 8 August to Saturday 27 September 2008. It featured two series of work: one of monochrome drawings, the other, a parallel series of paintings employing a strategic use of iridescent pigments. Through exploring the spaces of lido architecture in relation to the forest, this body of work interrogates the uncanny in both architecture and landscape. The exhibition attracted 4,839 visitors.
23. Free education workshops were held in the Myles Meehan Gallery based around the exhibition Tense by Judith Tucker and in The Lounge Gallery based around the exhibition Enchanted Lands by Lisa Nicholson for the Arts Centre's Open Day on Saturday 13 September. The public were given the opportunity to work with professional artists to create their own collages, drawings and paintings taking inspiration from the exhibitions.
24. As part of The Big Draw, a national campaign to celebrate and encourage drawing, the Arts Centre has ran education workshops with local schools based around the current exhibition 'Third Space' by Stephen Newby, which features blown steel sculptures. There has also been two days of free drop in education sessions open to the general public on Saturday 18 and Saturday 24 October as part of The Big Draw.

Performing Arts

Cinema Development Scheme

25. Darlington Arts Centre has been chosen as one of five North East venues to be part of a Cinema Development Scheme funded by Northern Film and Media. The scheme is designed to help independent cinemas to invest in the business and development skills they need to be more successful in the future.

The North East Theatre Consortium

26. Darlington Arts Centre has become a member of the 'The North East Theatre Consortium', which aims to develop a new way of producing and touring new plays by emerging writers from the North East of England. Together with New Writing North, Queen's Hall Hexham and the Custom's House South Shields, a three year programme has been developed, which aims to produce and tour one new play a year, supported by development work with writers and bespoke programmes of work with venues to ensure we are continuing to find top quality writers whose work warrants a full professional production and that venues continue to develop audiences for new writing.

Youth Theatre

27. ArtsSpark is working with Houghton Education Village to lead on the development of a group of young Arts and Culture Ambassadors, across all seven secondary schools in Darlington. Two young people will be chosen from each secondary school to undertake a year-long programme that will provide them with the skills and experience they need to develop as young arts leaders and to raise awareness of opportunities for other young people to participate in arts and cultural activities within their local community.

Arts Development

Diversity

Osibisa - Arts Centre Theatre 3 October 2008

28. Darlington Arts Centre with Darlington District West Indian Association presented Osibisa (The Godfathers of World Music) at the Arts Centre. This is part of the ongoing work with diverse communities. There was a high attendance of people from the West Indian community with key individuals from the community introducing the band and meeting and greeting audience as they arrived at the Arts Centre. The event was completely sold out and planning is underway for further work in 2009.

Looked After Children Project

29. The "...and we say nonsense?" is a project that has been delivered at the Arts Centre from January to September 2008 by engaging Looked after children in the performing arts. Taking place every Saturday 25 young people have contributed to the making of a film animation piece, which will be premiered in an event at the Arts Centre on 22 October 2008. The project was funded by children's services and managed by the Arts development team in partnership with Tees Valley Arts.
30. Qdos Pantomimes is the largest pantomime producer in the world and will stage 21 productions throughout the UK including Darlington Civic Theatre's pantomime. Following last year's record-breaking success of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, this year's pantomime at Darlington Civic Theatre is already proving to be a real box office smash-hit. Jack and the Beanstalk runs at Darlington's Civic Theatre from Saturday 6 December 2008 to Sunday 18 January 2009.

Head of Steam - Darlington's Railway Museum

31. Head of Steam has achieved Accreditation with the Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) Council. Accreditation is a review of standards in relation to Governance, Customer Services, User Facilities and Collection Management to ensure that we were performing in accordance to MLA policy. Accreditation means Head of Steam remains a Registered Museum and is eligible for future public funding, particularly if we wish to proceed with a Phase 2 HLF application to redevelop the rest of the Museum site.
32. The MLA has provided grant funding to further develop the Head of Steam business plan in conjunction with private consultants. This new business plan will balance the needs of the local community (through the SCS) and the desire to turn the Museum into a popular visitor destination.
33. Renaissance in the regions has awarded the Head of Steam £12,000 to purchase new Temporary Exhibition cases. A new exhibition area will be set up in the Museum's Waiting Room on the station platform and we are planning our first exhibition to be centred around the Tubwell Row Museum collection in time for the tenth anniversary of the closure of the Museum in 1999.

Darlington Borough Council's Fireworks Safety Talks

34. Cultural Services and representatives from the Police and Fire Brigade are currently working in partnership to deliver safety talks to over 4,500 primary schools throughout the borough. Over 20 schools will be visited during the week long programme and every child in school will receive both a talk and supporting literature which highlights both firework safety and also promotes Darlington Borough Council's Fireworks Spectacular on Saturday 1 November 2008.

Register Office

35. I was delighted as the Cabinet Portfolio holder, be part of the first Citizenship Ceremony to be held in the Community at Hummersknott School and Language College on 14 October 2008. The ceremony rounded off a day of Local Democracy Week activities for Year 10 pupils who all attended the Ceremony. Citizenship ceremonies undertaken by the Register Office are a legal requirement for all new UK citizens and aim to welcome participants into their new community. The ceremony welcomed Darlington's new citizens from India, Iraq, South Africa, Barbados, Morocco, Russia and Bangladesh.
36. The Home Office's Identity and Passport Service (previously General Register Office) has recently undertaken a technical inspection of the Register Office and concluded that a good standard of technical registration service is being delivered within Darlington.
37. The inspector commented "the development of Darlington registration service in a short period of time be relatively new staff is commendable. Initiatives include extended opening hours, online payments and enhanced ceremonies. Partnership working has been developed by offering birth registration appointments at the hospital and Newcastle Probate Service provides an outreach service from Darlington Register Office. The Superintendent is the chair of the North East "Networks" regional registration training group. In delivering improved registration services an excellent team ethos operates. Staff are trained to be multi-skilled and have sufficient opportunity to perform a range of registration duties to

enable them to maintain their knowledge and skill levels.”

Trading Standards Work

Electric Blanket Testing

38. Every year a two day event is held in conjunction with Age Concern to warn people of the dangers of using old electric blankets and allow residents to have theirs checked, free of charge by a qualified engineer. On average one third of those checked are condemned and destroyed. This year the campaign was carried out on 12 and 13 November at Age Concern, Bradbury Street West, Darlington.

Holiday Scams

39. During May 2008 the NETSA Consumer Advice Group, in partnership with the Office of Fair Trading, held an event at Durham Tees Valley Airport with the aim of raising awareness amongst travellers of holiday club scams operating on the continent. Darlington Trading Standards staff was available to give general and specific advice for those travelling abroad. The events were so popular with holidaymakers that a further event was carried out on 13 November 2008. These events are designed to coincide with a national campaign specifically focusing on holiday clubs operating in Spain.

Gym Membership ‘Scam’

40. One of the major recent success stories from the Fair Trading Advice Section has been the publicity and action surrounding a company that was sending out ‘Congratulations’ notices claiming that the number on the slip had drawn a gift from a local business and giving the total value of the gifts at £32,500. What was on offer, in fact was free membership to a gym, which did have some monetary value but was dependant on the consumer signing a two year finance agreement at a total cost of just under £400. Following issue of a press release around 100 people contacted the Department for advice. It seemed the majority did not realise they were signing a two year credit agreement and after consulting the Office of Fair Trading, it could be shown that vital pre-contract information was either not given or provided after the contract had been signed. After taking this matter up with the company in October they have now agreed to reimburse those people who think they were misinformed.

National Consumer Week

41. Every Year in conjunction with The Trading Standards Institute a topic is used as a focal point for a National Consumer Week, which results in co-ordinated events up and down the country. This year the theme is ‘Be a Savvy Shopper this Christmas’ and as part of that campaign a market stall was used on 17 November 2008 to show examples of counterfeit and unsafe products while informing shoppers on how to avoid such items along with more general shoppers rights advice on the run up to Christmas.

Age Restricted Sales

42. Information from Consumers along with that from other enforcement agencies is used to provide a yearly rolling programme of test purchases for the sale of those products which have by law a minimum age for supply. The end of October saw Trading Standards

concentrate on the sale of fireworks.

Non Food Sampling

43. The start of November also saw the testing of toys/non toys in run up to Christmas. This is important to ensure that any products found to be dangerous can be dealt with and if necessary withdrawn from sale prior to being given as presents. In past years this action has resulted in dangerous toys and other goods being withdrawn from sale or seized.

Trading Standards Service Plan Summary

44. For the first time Trading Standards have published a Service Plan Summary. It was felt that as part of the development of the section it would be of benefit to provide an easily read document showing the work done by Trading Standards over the last financial year. The document will be made available to all members to show how trading standards were improving the everyday life of Darlington residents and will also be put on the website.

Environmental Health

45. On 9 September 2008, Cabinet approved the release of DEFRA funding to carry out site investigation works at four former landfill sites within the borough. This work is being carried out in accordance with the Council's Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy. The site investigation work at the former Summerhouse and Shearwater Landfill sites has now been completed, although gas monitoring will continue at both sites until April 2009. The Communication Strategy developed by Environmental Health and the Communications Unit to inform and reassure residents and interested parties within the site investigation areas was successful and a good response was received. Councillors Ian and Lynne Haszeldine also helped with resident liaison at the former Shearwater Landfill site and organised a residents meeting which was well attended. The Council is expecting to receive a final report including all the results of the gas monitoring, groundwater and soil sampling in Spring 2009. The site investigation works at the former Highside and Skipbridge landfill sites will commence at the beginning of 2009.

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