
OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND LEISURE PORTFOLIO

Purpose of the Report

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

Healthy Darlington (Themed Group of the Darlington Partnership)

2. A meeting of the full Healthy Darlington Themed Group was to take place on 4 December 2008, due to bad weather it has been re-arranged to take place early January 2009.
3. The Healthy Darlington Delivery Plan is in development. The Healthy Darlington Business group met in December 2008 and agreed the performance management system which will be used to measure progress.

Fuel Poverty

4. The Fuel Poverty Action Group met in December 2008. A further progress report on the work to date will be reported to the Older People's Partnership Board in January 2009 by Age Concern Darlington on behalf of the full group.

Tackling Health Inequalities

5. 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.
6. A stakeholder event was held on 7 November 2008 to commence the development of a Darlington Promoting Physical Activity, Preventing Obesity Strategy for Children and Young People.

Sports Development

Locality 'A' Cluster of Activities

7. An additional range of activities aimed at reducing obesity and improving health are going to be available to people living in Darlington. Between now and March 2009 £43,000 is to be invested through the Extended Services model providing a range of activities and sports in community settings. The types of activities to be provided will vary according to the needs of locality workshops, which are made up of residents and representatives from various organisations, including the Council, Youth Service, Police and NHS Darlington, in five areas of the Borough.
8. A diverse range of interventions have been developed alongside Children's Services within all of the locality areas including dance mat sessions, family activities, as well as breakfast and after school clubs, and the 'Junior One Life' clubs. Junior One Life is a 6 – 12 week physical activity and weight management programme for parents and children (8-11 yrs).
9. A 'rural issues' working group has been established to further develop provision in the villages of Localities D and E (these include Hurworth, Middleton St George, Bishopton and Sadberge as well as Heighington and High Coniscliffe). As well as holiday and after school clubs, there will be free transport to enable young people in rural areas to access the activities in town. The group is planning to run a road show to visit rural areas to consult with children and families and to provide information on services.

NHS Darlington partnership

10. Over 60's residents within Darlington will be able to benefit from subsidised swimming from April 2009 under a Government funded 2 year pilot scheme. Darlington not participate in the under 16's scheme but will also offer a whole range of targeted interventions aimed at providing a support framework for residents to enable them to become more physically active. This programme will include:
 - (a) A Tees Valley Youth Olympics every year up to 2012
 - (b) Subsidised travel to sporting facilities
 - (c) Community-based physical activity programmes throughout Darlington
 - (d) New sporting equipment and facilities in community venues
 - (e) Young people's allotments
 - (f) Dance mats in all secondary schools
 - (g) The Darlington Family Walk
 - (h) Development of the Darlington Food Festival

Darlington Playing Pitch and Facilities Strategy

11. Darlington Borough Council are working in partnership with Sport England and leisure specialists PMP to undertake a sports and physical activities facility strategy and playing pitch strategy for Darlington.

12. The main aims of the strategy are to:
 - (a) Assist the Council in meeting the demand for playing pitches and sports facilities and to secure, as appropriate, external funding for improvements.
 - (b) Support the development of community sport and physical activity in Darlington.
 - (c) Provide information to inform decisions and determine future development proposals.
13. Consultation will take place with local sports clubs/organisations, national governing bodies, key pitch providers, local schools and neighbouring local authorities and in addition there will be a quality assessment of all sports facilities and pitches throughout Darlington. The Strategy will be in place by April 2009.

Sports Unlimited

14. The Sports Unlimited programme has delivered a variety of sport/physical activity sessions across Darlington for a period of 10 weeks. During this period there has been a key focus on retaining the young people for 80% of the sessions delivered. Data is being collected to identify which sessions have been a success; coaches are now working hard to support the young people to access sustainable provision.
15. Sports Unlimited is a three year project aimed at increasing the number of young people who access a minimum of 5 hours sport every week. The Darlington Sports Development Team have worked alongside TFM Radio to conduct some qualitative and quantitative consultation in the format of a 'A Question of Sport' event engaging 40 young people to take part in a discussion group and also an online questionnaire has been developed and the TFM street team will be promoting to young people across Darlington.

Junior One Life

16. The next Junior One Life programme will start in January 2009. Recruitment for the programme is underway, working with School Nurses, GP's, Practice Nurses and the CAMHS team for referrals. The programme will run at The Education Village and include 12 weeks of education and practical sessions.

Community Sports Network

17. Darlington Community Sports Network is currently being redeveloped. Tees Valley Sport has provided funding for Helme Park Consultants to facilitate workshops with each CSN sub group (Adults and Elderly People, Children and Young People and Club, Coach, Volunteer Development). The outcomes of the workshops will support in redeveloping the CSN action plan and driving forward the priorities for Sport and Physical Activity in Darlington. The main CSN board will take part in a facilitate workshop in the New Year to finalise the direction of the Network.

Level 2 Award in Community Sports Leadership

18. The Level 2 Award in Community Sports Leadership was delivered to twenty-three candidates (16 years and over) from various backgrounds. The course took place at Harrowgate Hill Primary School and all candidates successfully completed 7 of the 8 units that were delivered during the tutor led sessions. Unit 8 involves candidates delivering a minimum of 10 voluntary hours in a community club, school or group setting before being assessed by the tutor. At present four of the 23 candidates are due to be assessed and the remaining candidates will follow this procedure in the New Year.

Darlington Doorstep Walks

19. The Outdoor Activity Project is re-launching Darlington Doorstep Walks in Partnership with Darlington PCT, the Countryside Team and Natural England. Volunteer Walk Leaders are currently being recruited and plans are being developed to give residents and community groups the opportunity to take part in regular walks at all levels. As part of the Outdoor Activity project a Volunteer Walk Leaders Course will be held to increase the opportunities for individuals and groups to lead local walks.

West Park Bike Track Development

20. Taster sessions have been running to give individuals the opportunity to try a new discipline of cycling. The sessions were aimed at over 16's to support in the development of fundamental cycling skills and technique required to cycle on the West Park Bike Track. Sessions have engaged a number of keen participants and coaching sessions and consultation will continue to run on and off the track to support in the use of this provision.

Eastbourne Climbing Boulder Development

21. Taster sessions have been running to give individuals an induction to climbing. Sessions have engaged groups from organisations such as GOLD and the 700 Club. Community sessions have also run promoting the climbing provision that is available in Darlington. Community sessions will be piloted again during better conditions.

Events

Annual Mayors Ball 2008

22. This years Ball took the theme 'An Evening at Ascot'. All aspects of the event tied into this theme including a race night and auction that contributed to raising £5,000 for the Mayor's charitable fund. The response and feedback from those who attended has been excellent and planning for next year is due to start this month. Staff at the Dolphin Centre are to be congratulated on doing an excellent job.

Little Horrors – Halloween Fun Day – Sunday 2 November 2008

23. The Halloween fun day, which was held on Sunday 2 November 2008 at the Head of Steam, attracted over 700 visitors to a spooky family fun day; many children attended in fancy dress and took part in spooky crafts and enjoyed the magician, face painting, guided tours and mini train rides.

Darlington's spectacular Fireworks Display – Saturday 1 November 2008

24. The Council's annual fireworks spectacular event was held in the South Park on Saturday 1 November 2008. Additional entertainment was provided in the main field before the giant bonfire was lit at 7.00pm and the fireworks at 7.30pm.
25. As part of the build up to the fireworks events, safety talks were given in local schools by officers from the police, fire services and cultural services. This year 22 separate talks were given to over 4,500 primary school children informing them of the fireworks safety code and to encourage them to attend an organised display.
26. Despite the persistent rainfall that fell during the Friday evening and Saturday people still attended in their thousands to see the Giant Bonfire set alight with the Guy Fawkes made by the McNay Street Children's centre and fireworks display set to music. It has been estimated that 30,000 people attended.

Christmas Light Switch on – Sunday 23 November 2008

27. The Christmas light switch on event was held on Sunday 23 November 2008, a week later than previous years, in the Market Square. The event, which had been sponsored and promoted by Alpha Radio, provided an hour and a half of continuous entertainment to the thousands of people attending the event.
28. The audience witnessed fantastic performances from local talent before the local school finalists of the Carol for Darlington took to the stage to perform their winning Carols. Santa appeared in magical style before the two stars from this year's pantomime switched the lights on before a fireworks finale.

ArtsSpark at Darlington Arts Centre

29. ArtsSpark is working alongside Darlington Education Village and has launched the Arts and Culture Ambassadors Scheme, to develop a group of young Arts and Culture Ambassadors across all seven secondary schools in Darlington. Two young people have been 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.
30. ArtsSpark is working in partnership with Youth Services to help provide positive activities for young people on Friday and Saturday evenings as part of the governments Youth Crime Action Plan. The plans are to provide positive activities such as Break and Street Dance workshops as well as a band night for young people at the Arts Centre.
31. Young people who attend ArtsSpark Youth Theatre groups have been working on performances this term inspired by the new artwork commissioned for the Studio Gallery, leading to the Studio Theatre. The artwork is inspired by stories and storytelling to remind young people who use the Studio that stories are at the heart of theatre making. The groups will be performing their work at the launch of the Artwork this December.

Threshold: The Touring Consortium

32. Darlington Civic Theatre is a founding member of The Touring Consortium, a group of large-scale theatres, which includes, Birmingham Rep, Wolverhampton Grand, The Marlow Theatre, Canterbury, Wycombe Swan, Cardiff New and Nottingham Theatre Royal. The Consortium has been successful in applying for a prestigious National Touring Contract from Arts Council England, which will enable them to create at least four productions to tour nationally in the years 2009/10 and 2010/11. These tours will have high production values and will be accompanied by innovative outreach programmes. This will support the Civic Theatre's ambitions to include more challenging work in its programme and will also raise the profile of the theatre nationally. The Touring Consortium has also made a successful bid to become a hub organisation for the See a Voice Project, which is a national scheme to provide quality assisted performances and increase attendance levels by deaf, hard of hearing, blind and partially sighted people.

Take Off 2009, Monday 10 – Wednesday 14 November 2008

33. In partnership with CTC Theatre Company the Arts Centre hosted Take Off Festival of Theatre for Young Audiences. This year the Festival included two days focusing on work for Early Years, co-ordinated by the Small Size network. This was followed by Next Generation Conference, which addressed issues facing professional theatre for young audiences over the next 5-10 years. Productions featured in the delegate programme included work from companies from all over the UK, as well as Helios Theatre from Hamm in Germany and Theatre de la Guimbarde from Belgium. Delegates were drawn from the UK and from as far a field as Japan and Australia.

Visual and Public Art

34. Stephen's Newby's exhibition 'Third Space' was held in the Myles Meehan Gallery from Friday 3rd October - Saturday 22nd November 2008, featuring blown steel sculptures. Stephen gave a talk about his work to the Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College on Friday 3 October 2008.
35. Darlington Society of Arts held their annual exhibition in the Lounge Gallery and Glass Corridor Gallery from Thursday 30th October – Friday 28th November 2008 featuring a wide range of artworks, in medium, style and subject matter.
36. The Myles Meehan Gallery has celebrated its 25th Birthday in November. Workshops were held with schoolchildren on Friday 21 November at the Arts Centre to celebrate this based on the 'Third Space' exhibition.
37. A fantastic new mural by illustrator Jasmine Mercer has been installed in the Studio Gallery at Darlington Arts Centre. The mural takes inspiration from the theme of storytelling and the artist worked with local school children to develop some of the characters in her design.

Openart Studio

38. Darlington Openart Studio originally opened its doors as a Pilot Project managed by Darlington Arts Development in January 2006. The pilot project had 361 attendances from 63 members and was programmed on 23 days between 15 January 2007 and 24 September 2007. Two years later, the Arts Development Team have secured £60,000 funding from Darlington Primary Care Trust and will be opening its doors once again on 5 December 2008. From 16 January 2009 the studio will be open every Friday from 10.00am – 4.30pm.

Steam Shed Christmas performance at the Education Village

39. Over the summer 2008 the Arts Development Team have worked in partnership with the Education Village to develop and implement a plan to minimise the impact of staff leaving Steam Shed by recruiting new staff members to ensure that the Autumn term of workshops is delivered and Steam Shed participants are able to perform their two performances of the Christmas show which took place successfully on 27 and 28 November 2008.

International Day

40. The Arts Development Team supported the International Day at the Forum on the 16 November 2008 by providing workshops in Watercolour and African Drumming and assisting on the day.

Elimination of domestic violence towards women

41. The Arts Development Team assisted in the Elimination of Domestic Violence towards Women event on 22 November 2008 and provided an arts workshop on site in the market square.

Head of Steam - Darlington's Railway Museum

42. The refurbishment of Head of Steam - Darlington Railway Museum has won a national award. The £1.7m project was awarded the Network Rail Partnership Award at the National Railway Heritage Awards. The awards, held in London, recognise the restoration and up-keep of the country's railway heritage. Head of Steam, which reopened in April after months of work, won the award for best jointly funded project. The refurbishment modernised the museum's displays, incorporating interactive technology with historic artefacts.
43. As well as being renamed and rehousing old exhibits, the Railway Museum has a café, temporary exhibition rooms, a children's play area and activity room.
44. The redevelopment was funded by European Regional Development Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage, Northern Rock Foundation, Railway Heritage Trust, Museums and Libraries Archives North-East and the Council.

45. The final tranche of grant funding from Heritage Lottery Fund has been released to enable further investment in the visitor experience at Head of Steam including:
- (a) New track lighting will be installed in the new Temporary Exhibition space and a PA system installed on the platform so that sounds of the railways can be played, again enhancing the visitor experience.
 - (b) New costumes are to be produced for our actors and volunteers. A Victorian Station Masters frockcoat and Ticket Collectors tunic will help bring an authentic look to the platform.
 - (c) Orientation panels, vinyl screen printed banners and welcome signs are to be produced for the Museum main entrance to give a warm and friendly feel to the customer experience.
 - (d) A new guidebook is to be produced to orientate our customers around the displays.
 - (e) Two computer pods are to be developed and modified to enhance the visitor experience. The pods will house films showing the redevelopment of the Museum.

Register Office

46. The Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College hosted our second Citizenship Ceremony in the Community on 15th December, 2008. Along with the Mayor and other Civic dignitaries, I was delighted to welcome the sixteen Citizens, including five children, from China, Thailand, India, South Africa, Lebanon and Iraq have made their homes in Darlington.
47. I would like to congratulate all staff at the Register Office on their success in the Council's Four Star Awards - Best of the Best Awards which were held on 20th November at the Dolphin Centre. The Register Office won the Excellence in Customer Service Award. The Team were recognised for their 'can do' approach and for their excellence in Customer Service in all aspects of the diverse services they provide.

Service Development

48. Following the successful retention of the Customer Service Excellence standard a Service Development Programme has now launched across Culture with a series of training sessions focusing on further developing levels of Customer Service. The objective of the programme is to align service standards within Culture across facilities and outreach services and facilitate consistent delivery.
49. The first step has been to identify a standard and ensure that it reflects key drivers such as Customer Service Excellence, Leading Edge and Lloyds registered quality assurance then translate this into a 'Code of Service' that is simple and easy for all frontline staff to work with.

50. The Cultural Services approach to customer service has been developed to ensure consistency and continual development of the service with processes in place to respond to customer needs. A Service Focus Group is being established to help facilitate this and will be comprised of delivery level team members from across Culture who will carry out service improvement activities and will bring the expertise from the front line to ensure that improvements are shaped by customers.
51. The programme heavily focuses on our Management teams coaching their teams on a daily basis, carrying out observations, giving feedback and motivating and inspiring their teams consistently. An acknowledgment scheme will be developed that identifies our service heroes and will feed into the corporate 4 star awards.

Trading Standards

52. During National Consumer Week in November 2008, Darlington Trading Standards promoted the “Be a Savvy Shopper this Christmas” with a stall on Darlington’s Outdoor Market. Trading Standards staff gave practical advice on buying safe Christmas presents and on their consumer rights. A range of dangerous goods and counterfeit items were displayed to show what to avoid.
53. Two further events on the Outdoor Market were planned for 11 and 15 December 2008 to promote the “Be a Savvy Shopper this Christmas” theme.
54. A successful case was concluded in November 2008 when a car dealer was convicted of offences under the Trade Descriptions Act. The dealer had been selling cars with false odometer readings and service histories.

Environmental Health

55. The Progress Report 2008 on Air Quality in the Tees Valley 2004-2007 has been approved by Defra. Darlington Borough Council has fixed air monitoring stations at Cockerton Bridge and St Cuthbert’s Way which measure nitrogen dioxide and PM10. Road traffic is the main source of nitrogen dioxide and PM10 pollution within Darlington. The results from the air monitoring stations are compared against the objectives of the National Air Quality Strategy and have shown no exceedances.

Councillor Andrew Scott
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Health and Leisure