
OVERVIEW OF HEALTH & LEISURE PORTFOLIO

Purpose of the Report

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

Healthy Darlington

2. The *Healthy Darlington Themed Group* met on 17 March 2009. The group agreed the terms of reference, membership and links with other themed groups. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) was presented and discussed.
3. The *Healthy Darlington Delivery Plan* was endorsed by the Healthy Darlington Group. The meeting concluded with a presentation on tackling obesity through sports and leisure.
4. Membership of the themed group is drawn from the voluntary sector, Community Partnership, Mental Health Foundation Trust, Acute Foundation Trust, NHS Darlington, Public Health, Darlington Borough Council, elected members, Fire and Safety Service and the private sector.
5. The next Healthy Darlington Themed Group will meet on 10 June 2009.
6. Analysis has begun on the Health Profile 2009. The profile is produced annually by the Association of Public Health Observatories and funded by the Department of Health. The Health Profile will add to the JSNA and help Darlington Borough Council and NHS Darlington tackle health inequalities.

Public Protection Division

Primary Authority Scheme

7. From 6 April 2009 Part 2 of the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008 allows any business operating across council boundaries – regardless of its size – the statutory right to form a partnership with a single local authority in relation to regulatory compliance. The Primary Authority will provide robust and reliable advice that other councils must take into account when carrying out inspections or dealing with non-compliance. The aim is to make a fundamental shift in the nature of the relationship between the regulated and the regulator – bringing benefits to both parties. This change will necessitate changes to our enforcement practices and may generate workload should a business want Darlington Borough Council to be its Primary Authority.

NHS Darlington Funded Projects 2008/09

Promoting Food Safety

8. The aim is to improve access to information about the hygiene standards of Darlington food businesses for the benefit of consumers by promoting the existing Tees Valley Food Hygiene Award – 5 star rating scheme.
9. Provide access to premises ratings via a national website. A contractual agreement with Transparency Data, from 1 March 2009 for the website entry has now been put in place and this provides an improved website interface for members of the public. (Cost £4500 for 2 years).
10. Advertising of the Tees Valley Food Hygiene Award in the Council's A-Z directory (Cost £550).
11. Premises with good standards of hygiene are being given door stickers to display information, in addition to the certificate, at their entrance advertising if they are 3,4 or 5 star premises. All of the Town Centre businesses were give these in March to coincide with launch of Scores on the Doors website.
12. Support for premises with 2 star or less. Invitations have been sent to businesses with less than 2 stars awarded to attend one of three Safer Food Better Business training courses (Cost £900).
13. Purchase of 100 probe thermometers. Stocks of probe thermometers will be issues one free to premises with 2 stars or less or to any registered charity preparing ready to eat food that does not have an electronic probe thermometer (offer to all businesses at cost price £12 while stocks last) (Cost £1000).
14. Work has begun with NHS Darlington and others to develop a Healthy Eating award for delivery later in 2009.

Noise in the Hospitality/Entertainment Industry Project

15. An initiative is ongoing to raise awareness of new health and safety legislation relating to noise affecting workers in the hospitality industry. Presentations have been made to invited businesses. Noise monitoring equipment including personal dosimeters to assist employers carry out noise assessment. (Cost £8k). An audiologist has been employed to carry out measurement of hearing loss of workers and provide a report (Cost (£7000)).

The Environmental Damage (Prevention and Remediation) Regulations 2009

16. These regulations came into force in England in March 2009 implement EC Directive 2004/35/EC. They deal with environmental liability and the prevention and remedying of environmental damage involving protected species, natural habitats, sites of special scientific interest, water and land.
17. The Regulations are enforced by Councils as well as several other agencies. For certain economic activities, where there is an imminent risk of environmental damage, the operator must take steps to prevent it and if it has occurred must prevent further damage. Where damage has occurred the enforcing authority must assess the damage and identify remedial measures. It must then serve a remediation notice on the responsible operator specifying what remediation is required.

18. Councils will be primarily concerned with contaminated land issues as well as initial actions which need to be taken as regards pollution from sites permitted or registered by councils under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2007.
19. Enforcement Officers will be attending regional training events organised by LACORS using funding provided by Defra.

Sports Development

Locality Cluster of Activities April 2009 - 2010

20. The locality working positive activities have been delivered for 2008/09 with the Sports Development Team delivering a comprehensive range of sport and physical activity sessions after school and in the community. Activities include Street Cheer, Table Tennis, Dance, Multi Activity, Football, Cricket, Trampolining Dance Mats, Gymnastics, Basketball and Biking. Over 500 young people have already been engaged with community clubs being set up at Mount Pleasant Children's Centre, Willow Road Community Centre, Skerne Park Children's Centre and Longfield School.
21. Plans are already underway for the 2009/10 programme for more positive activities and Children's Services have commissioned the Sports Development Team to deliver this element of the programme in all five localities. New activities include more holiday provision, sportsability clubs, more after school clubs in each locality, dodgeball tournaments and more community based clubs on the multi use games areas and the children's centres throughout Darlington.

Darlington Community Games and Tees Valley Youth Games 2009

22. In December 2008 Darlington Sports Development Team secured funding from Darlington Primary Care Trust to deliver the 2009 Darlington Community Games and to support the Tees Valley Sports Partnership Youth Games 2009. With the 2012 Olympics around the corner, the Community Games is now a part of the event schedule for Darlington School Sports Partnership and through the excellent partnership work created by the PE Coordinators, over 20 schools will compete in 5 sports. Over 120 hours of sports coaching will be delivered in schools by local clubs and the Sports Development Team leading up to the event and all participants are aged between 7 – 9 years old. The event will be held at Eastbourne Sports Complex on Thursday 9 July 2009.
23. The Tees Valley Partnership Youth Games will be aimed at 16 – 19 year olds and young participants from Darlington will compete against Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, Hartlepool and Stockton in various sports. Coaching will take place in community venues and colleges in Darlington in Netball, Basketball, Street Dance, Table Tennis and Rock It Ball leading up to the event and similar to the Community Games will be delivered by local sports clubs and the Sports Development Team. The event will be held at Eston Leisure Complex on Saturday 18 June 2009. The main aim of both games is to encourage the children/young adults on the day to join local sports clubs and to enjoy sport and physical activity.

Zone Active Project Co-ordinator Appointed

24. The Sports Development Team has appointed a Zone Active Coordinator who will look to roll out Zone Active to all communities within Darlington. Building on the good practice model from the previous project, an action plan has been developed and the Coordinator will be responsible for delivering projects that will engage various target groups including BME, Adults, Young People and the Middle Aged. The Coordinator will commence their new role in April 2009.

Darlington Playing Pitch and Facilities Strategy

25. 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.
26. 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.
27. A consultation event took place at the Dolphin Centre on Tuesday 24 February with local sports groups from local football, cricket, hockey, bowls, athletics, rugby clubs and many more representatives from the community attending. The feedback received was of great value to implementing the new strategy. PMP have now drafted a Playing Pitch and Facilities Strategy for Darlington, which will go out to public consultation with the network group on Tuesday 19 May at the Dolphin Centre.

Youth Crime Action Plan

28. In partnership with Darlington Youth Service the Sports Development Team delivered various activities on Friday and Saturday evenings to help tackle anti social behaviour with young people across Darlington. The following activities were delivered: Basketball tournaments at Eastbourne School and the Dolphin Centre, Street Cheer Clubs at the Arts Centre and Eastbourne Methodist Church and Dodgeball tournaments were also delivered at the Dolphin Centre. Over 150 young people took part in the programme and the Street Cheer sessions at the Arts Centre are continuing and more Dodgeball tournaments are going to take place through the locality forum funding.

Easter Programme of Activities

29. A comprehensive programme of Easter activities was delivered by the Sports Development Team as part of the Be Active Easter Programme. Weekly camps included Trampolining, Street Cheer, Gymnastics, Tennis, Bouldering, Diving, Swimming and Fundamentals. The camps were extremely successful and over 150 children took part. A full summer programme of activities is already planned for July.

Part Time Disability Football Development Officer

30. Darlington Sports Development Team is working alongside Darlington Football in the Community with a bid to appoint a part-time Disability Football Development Officer.

They will work on an increase in participation through football with hard to reach groups across Darlington and work in partnership with the Sports Development Team., Youth Service and Community Partnerships with various targeted project work. The bid has been submitted to the Football League and we will know if we have been successful by June 2009.

Primary School Festivals

31. The Sports Development Team delivered the Primary Schools Cross Country, Swimming Galas and Netball Festivals in February and March 2009 at Branksome Comprehensive School, Dolphin Centre and Longfield School. Six hundred youngsters took part in the four festivals and composite Darlington teams were picked to compete in the Tees Valley Inter Partnership festivals with team from Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, Hartlepool and Stockton.

Transport Programme-Teen Card

32. A programme to support young people to access subsidised travel is being launched across the Borough. Young People aged 11-19 years will have the opportunity to apply for a Teen Card. This will allow travel on all Arriva buses for 50p at off peak times. Through additional funding from Darlington Primary Care Trust, young people are being offered a 50% subsidy on various activities at the Dolphin Centre including Gym, Swimming and Exercise Classes. Also free access to Basketball, Street Cheer, Trampoline and Gymnastic Clubs. The project has started and working in partnership with Click and Local Motion a promotional tour has happened in all secondary schools and colleges. There are currently 600 young people already signed up to the teen card.

Targeted Swimming Action Plan

33. A comprehensive action plan has been developed and delivery started to increase participation in swimming/aquatic activity. Diving and Swimming Camps have successfully been run across the half term and Easter holidays supporting young people to then access the Darlington Amateur Swimming Club.
34. Activities will run across all swimming pools in Darlington and will engage non swimmers through to competitive swimmers within the Darlington Triathlon Club. Other activities being finalised and marketed are swimability, sing a song sessions, water polo, adult learn to swim, swimming for health and fitness and women only sessions.

Sports Unlimited

35. The programme has completed delivery of year one and planning for year two has been completed. Although retention targets for year one were not achieve, there has been a huge impact on retaining young people in physical activity within all sessions. Year two activities will be predominantly delivered by external providers to ensure diversity of activity and increased club links. Providers include local sports clubs, voluntary sector organisation and NGB's. Activities have been determined as a result of the Young People's consultation conducted in partnership with TFM radio. These include Golf, Basketball, Rugby, Street Cheer, Boxing, Tennis, Football, Netball, Cricket, Diving and Swimming.

FISCH (Family Initiative Supporting Children's Health)

36. The Physical Activity Officer to lead on the Physical Activity elements of the FISCH programme has been appointed and will begin induction during May. The implementation of the programme will ensure an opportunity for prevention and intervention of childhood obesity by providing positive physical activity experiences and education about why to adopt a healthy lifestyle. The programme will target Year 4 and 5 pupils and programmes will run for 10 weeks, this will include one hour of activity during curriculum time above and beyond PE sessions and also one hour out of curriculum time. Two schools have confirmed their desire to engage in the programme and further promotion is being completed to create awareness about the programme in hope of targeting a large percentage of schools during the first year of delivery.

Junior One Life

37. The next Junior One Life Programme is starting 29 April 2009 at the Education Village and 8 families have been recruited to take part in the 12 week programme which is designed as an intervention for children who are overweight or obese and their families. The Junior One Life will provide an exit route for young people from the FISCH programme in the long term and also allows self referral, referrals from health professionals, teachers, social workers and other professionals working with children and young people. The programme is for young people aged 7-11 year olds and who fit within a specific centile bracket.

Adult Trampolining

38. Adult Trampolining sessions continue to run at the Dolphin Centre on a Tuesday evening from 6.15pm to 7.45pm. The club consistently has in excess of 10 members with new participants joining on a weekly basis.

Volunteers Network

39. A volunteers network has been created using students from Darlington College. Over 50 young people attended a meeting at the college and the Club & Equity Development Officer identified a procedure which involved students going into the community and delivering hours in return for funding to attend coaching courses through the Workforce Development Fund. This process will be rolled out to Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form and also Carmel Sixth Form and it is hoped over 100 young people will be part of the scheme by June 2009.

Club Development

40. The Club & Equity Development Officer is continuing to work with Darlington Harriers and Athletics Club on their Clubmark interest and this will be driven forward over the next couple of months. Darlington Cricket Club will also be supported towards accreditation after showing an interest.

Darlington Doorstep Walks

41. Darlington Doorstep Walks is going from strength to strength with currently having 183 members and 35 walk leaders, 22 of which are within specific organisations around Darlington that the scheme is support in leading walks for their service users.

42. The Outdoor Activity Coordinator held the first voluntary walk leaders course since the cascade training, 10 people were trained all of whom will be supporting health walks in Darlington immediately. Another course is due to take place in May for a local Mental Health Hospital who are looking to hold health walks for their service users concentrating on separate men and women walks.
43. Prambles Walks started with 12 people already accessing these walks in two Children Centres in Darlington, more Prambles starting in April. First Parent and Child walk was organised and 13 adults and 13 children accessing this walk.
44. West Park Hospital walks launch week commencing 20 April with 5 walks running that weekly, with the view to run three walks every week there after with varying abilities. Two walks are also being ran in partnership with the PCT during walk the way to work week.

West Park Bike Track

45. Andrew Samanjoul has now taken part in the BMX Level 2 pilot scheme and this is looking to be rolled out in the UK by May, once this has been rolled out Marie Brown will be accessing this course. Both Andy and Marie have accessed a Disability Workshop ran via British cycling, with the look to develop sessions in Darlington for this specific group. Saturday sessions have been a great success with 10 participants taking part on a weekly basis and more people becoming interested. We will be looking to re start these sessions in April with beginner and advanced sessions.
46. 4X Biking now have 68 members and this will look to increase over the Summer period. The OAC is in talks with local schools, Longfield and Haughton in regards to looking for GO-Ride status and starting a club in Darlington, including all sub disciplines of cycling: 4X, Mountain Biking, Road Cycling and making use of the Velodrome due to be built at Longfield School.

Eastbourne Climbing Boulder

47. An Easter Programme has been put together to increase participation and awareness of the Climbing Boulder, with 4 new participants being involved in these sessions. A range of taster sessions have been arranged on the Boulder for various organisations within Darlington to increase participation.
48. Also an after school club is being set up for a 6 week period for 5 Primary Schools in Darlington, each school will be able to have 12 pupils accessing these sessions, with the view to them being involved and competing at the Community Games. The Climbing Boulder will also be open the afternoon of the Community Games to gage interest of use.
49. A community session is due to be advertised for a 3 week period starting 5 May to again look to increase awareness of Climbing in Darlington. Two Rock Antics trips have been arranged for Thursday 14 and Saturday 30 May, both of these will allow 12 people to access climbing in a different environment.

Service Development

50. Following the launch of the Code of Service in December 2008, the Service Focus Group for Cultural Services is now in full operation and is already producing a high volume of

service improvement suggestions that have come from staff and customers.

51. A Service Improvement Log has been designed that tracks progress on improvement proposals and allows success to be reported on. These improvements have been reported in Management Development sessions that took place in March where Cultural Services Managers were asked to review service development and the Code of Service. These sessions also focused on developing coaching skills in managers so that they can effectively motivate and lead their teams on customer service delivery. This service development training has been introduced to Cultural Services to develop the workforce to achieve and maximize on the commercial opportunities available by aligning customer service delivery and promoting sales through customer service delivery.

Service Heroes Acknowledgement Scheme

52. As part of the service development programme, teams and individuals across Cultural Services have been acknowledged for their contribution to customer service. Successful nominees were awarded a certificate of achievement and will now receive automatic nomination to the Community Services Four Star Awards. Thirty Cultural Services employees were acknowledged under the categories set out by the Corporate Four Star Awards.
53. The Reporter has been designed to give feedback on service development within Cultural services and also lets teams know what to expect over the next few months. Service Heroes are also highlighted in this publication.

Centralised Bookings

54. All conference and banqueting bookings in Cultural Services are now taken by the Occasions Team based at the Dolphin Centre. Not only does this improve customer service delivery but also provides an opportunity to direct and retain business across the facilities. To support this, a new Occasions brochure has been launched which contains information on Occasions venues, menus and the different types of special and business Occasions that Cultural Services can cater for.

Events

Dolphin Centre

55. The Dolphin Centre events programme continues to be very busy and has attracted some major events over the last couple of months. This has included the North East Regional Brass Band Competition, Joe Calzaghe Sportsman's Dinner and a massive Wedding Exhibition that experienced a footfall of around 1000 customers, which gave Cultural Services the opportunity to launch its Occasions brand.

Head of Steam First Birthday – Sunday 5 April 2009

56. Celebrating a year since the reopening of Head of Steam, the first birthday event was a tremendous success with over 2000 visitors enjoying a family day out.
57. The event offered free entry into the museum with additional activities including a treasure hunt, live music, street theatre, children's entertainment, arts and crafts and a chance to visit

the new exhibition 'Everything but the Bear, memories of Tubwell Row museum'.

58. It was noted from a questionnaire that many people attending the event had travelled from the Tees Valley area and had not been to the museum previously and that they thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

Green Fair – Sunday 19 April 2009

59. Working in partnership with Countryside, Groundwork, Sustainable Development and Recycling teams, Cultural services organised the new look Green Fair, which was held in South Park on Sunday 19 April.
60. The event, which attracted thousands of people to celebrate the local countryside, also provided free advice on energy saving initiatives, fair-trade, recycling, countryside events and wild spaces. Information was also available on Friends of the Earth, Friends of South Park, wildlife trusts and local food produce.
61. Complementing the stalls, entertainment was provided throughout the afternoon, including the Birds of Prey, recycling fashion show, Thai Chi demonstrations, woodcarving and a chain saw sculpture.

Head of Steam – Darlington's Railway Museum

62. Visitor figures for 2008/9 were over 30,000 people. The Museum featured on Tyne Tees News and as a result, Easter has been extremely busy with above 120 visitors per day. The Museum has also featured in a Visit Tees Valley DVD along with other museums in the area. The total number of educational visits for 2008/9 was 3326.
63. The Café Summer Menu is now in operation, offering customers a wider choice of food.
64. The new Head of Steam Curator Leona White, is now in post and the opening times for the Ken Hoole Study Centre have been increased to provide better access for researchers.
65. New Conference Facilities at Head of Steam are now up and running and are attracting a great deal of interest, due to the good location and easy access and parking. New exterior lamps have also been installed and paid for through the Heritage Lottery Fund.
66. A new play area for children has opened and is proving popular. The Toy Library 'Stay and Play' is also using Head of Steam facilities and attracting new customers.
67. A link has been created between the museum and Darlington's Sikh Temple and guided tours have taken place for visiting Sikh Priests from India.
68. A Tubwell Row exhibition 'Everything but the Bear' was installed in April and will continue through to December 2009 and is already attracting new and repeat visitors.
69. Working in conjunction with the Arts Centre, Head of Steam is utilising space in the Victorian Toilets to display students' contemporary art.

Arts Centre & Civic Theatre

70. The Arts Centre presented The Spring Thing Folk Festival from 11 –15 March, in partnership with Darlington Folk Club. This five-day festival celebrates the best of folk music and dance with a special emphasis on family activities. As well as the programme of events within the venue, there were also dance displays in the Town Centre.
71. With support from the Arts Centre, Queen Elizabeth VIth Form College presented ‘The English Language Conference’, on 26 March, featuring keynote speaker Professor David Crystal, one of the world’s foremost language experts. The conference was attended by 320 students.
72. The Associated Board High Scorers Concert was held at Darlington Arts Centre on 28 February, featuring performances from young people who have achieved exceptionally high marks in their Associated Board exams.
73. The Civic Theatre has had a particularly successful year in 2008/9, both artistically and in terms of audience figures. Attendances rose from 159,240 in 2007/8 to 174,658 in 2008/9. Highlights included All the Fun of the Fair, which was seen by 4,879 people, Blood Brothers, which was seen by 5,577 people and Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat which was seen by a record breaking 9,357 people. One night shows continue to attract high audience figures, with shows such as One Night of Queen, Barbara Dickson, Spirit of the Dance, Ken Dodd and the Viennese Spectacular all attracting audiences in excess of 80% capacity.
74. The Arts Centre has also had a very successful year with ticketed attendances rising from 26,359 in 2007/8 to 30,690 in 2008/9. Highlights have been, sold out shows including comedy from Rhod Gilbert; Jason Manfred and Ed Byrne and concerts from artists such as Paul Jones with Digby Fairweather, Andy Fairweather Low, Osibisa and the London Community Gospel Choir. Thought provoking drama continues to feature strongly in the programme including The Lady of Burma , The Lost South, Spoonface Steinberg and My Grandfather’s Great War. Over 40 performances of theatre for young audiences were presented in the Studio theatre and many were sold out.

Visual & Public Art

75. The Acquisition, Loan and Disposal Policy for Darlington Borough Art Collection has been approved and accepted.
76. Three days of education workshops were held in March with George Dent Nursery based around the Journey's End exhibition by Nick Banks and Brian Ord, receiving very positive feedback.

Arts Development

77. Adult spring courses programmed at the Arts Centre between January and March were well received with good take up. The summer term is due to commence in April and the enrolments are currently encouragingly high.
78. Easter workshops were held for children aged 4 – 16 years at Darlington Arts Centre. Children participated in creative activities with professional artists in areas of music, portrait painting, ceramics and puppetry. All activities were well attended throughout the holiday.

79. A number of post show talks were held to support performances at DAC in this period. These offer audiences the opportunity to speak with the performers, directors and/or writers of the show. The response from attendees has been consistently positive and there are plans to continue and increase these opportunities, which encourage audience engagement.
80. Working in partnership with Youth Services, Arts Development have provided creative activities for young people attending youth clubs based in Firthmoor, Hurworth, Eastbourne and Middleton-St-George. The attendance has been high and the enthusiasm from the participants has led to this partnership working being continued with more projects being proposed for the future.
81. Arts Development continues to support schools in their application to Arts Council England for Arts Mark status; this nationally recognised award is gained by schools demonstrating existing in-school and after-school cultural activities which support and enhance curricular subjects, giving students opportunities to explore broader creative experiences. Four schools in Darlington have been supported in the current round of applications, Beaumont Hill School and Springfield Primary School as part of the Education Village, Mowden Junior School and Alderman Leach primary School. The aim is that all schools Darlington will gain this award. Arts Development offers support by guiding the schools through the application process and advising on arts development within their school.
82. The Education & Outreach Officer has worked with Hummersknott Language College students towards the Arts Award Bronze; they gained their accredited certificates in February and are now working towards the Silver Award. Beaumont Hill College has requested support for their students to work towards this award.
83. Arts Development provided a professional artist to work with children from Whinfield Primary School, developing their year class subject of the Egyptians; the local artist developed their curricular work by showing them how pots and ceramics were made and decorated. This experience enriched other subject areas and the relationship has served to strengthen links with the school and arts providers.
84. As part of the Darlington Adult & Community Learning Group some of our students have gained an Adult Learners' Week Award and will attend a ceremony at the Town Hall in May to be presented with a certificate and gift voucher in recognition of their commitment and enthusiasm for learning. The Worshipful the Mayor of Darlington will conduct the presentations.
85. In collaboration with the Domestic Abuse Coordinator, a performance of 'Stand 'n' Tan' by Open Clasp Theatre Company was held at Darlington Arts Centre on 4 March to celebrate International Women's Day. Students from Darlington College of Technology, Hummersknott School & Language College and Youth Services Young Offenders groups attended and were extremely positive about this humorous yet thought-provoking drama. An interactive workshop followed, encouraging the young women to examine issues raised.

Diversity

86. In partnership with the Darlington and District West Indian Association the Arts Team have formed a programming steering group which meets several times a year to identify performers and shows that would be of interest to the members of DDWIA. Two events were programmed in February 2009.

87. On 5 February 2009 the London Community Gospel Choir gave a concert at the Arts Centre, which was very well attended by members of the Darlington West Indian Community. The concert attracted a full house with representatives from DDWIA introducing the LCGC and highlighting the positive relationship between the Arts Centre and the West Indian Community in this programming partnership.
88. As part of the partnership work between the Arts Team and the DDWIA, the Civic Theatre presented 'This is Soul' on 11 February 2009. This was the first time that many of the members of the Darlington West Indian community had attended the Civic Theatre.
89. Both events contributed to continuing the positive relationship between the Arts Team and the West Indian Community and further opportunities for collaborative working are planned.

Story Engine, Northern Screen Writers Conference

90. The Story Engine (The Northern Screen Writers Conference) was delivered by the Arts Centre on 26 and 27 February 2009. 100 delegates took part in various workshops and events including sessions by experienced and notable screenwriters from television and cinema, including James Moran the writer of Torchwood.
91. The highlight of the conference was a Q & A with Simon Beaufoy who wrote the screenplay for the film Slumdog Millionaire. Simon was awarded an Academy Award in Hollywood five days before attending the conference. His attendance attracted significant interest amongst the public and the media, including press, radio and television.
92. Evaluation of the event showed that 95% of respondents found the event inspiring. 100% found the workshops 'extremely useful'.
93. The conference was delivered in partnership with New Writing North and local writer Ian Fenton and funded by DBC and Northern Film and Media and New Writing North.

ArtsSpark – Young People's Theatre

94. Darlington Arts Centre and Civic Theatre launched the FREE Theatre initiative for young people under 26 and since the launch on 16 February 2009 over 170 free theatre tickets have been offered to young people. There are over 530 young people registered to receive free theatre tickets.
95. Darlington Arts Centre hosted another Urban Splurge Event on Friday 20 March, organised in partnership with Youth Services, to provide positive activities for young people on Friday and Saturday evenings as part of the Government's Youth Crime Action Plan. Various activities were organised for young people including a film programme, rapping workshops, Eco Bag Design workshops, Dance workshops and a DJ and chill out Lounge as well as the Forum's Newblood Live. The event was attended by over 160 young people aged 13-19.

Councillor Andrew Scott
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Health and Leisure