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**OVERVIEW OF HEALTH & LEISURE PORTFOLIO**

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**Purpose of the Report**

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

**Healthy Darlington**

2. The *Healthy Darlington Delivery Plan* continues to be implemented and monitored by the Healthy Darlington Group.
3. 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.
4. The Healthy Darlington Themed Group met on 10 June 2009 when the group attended the Big Drink Debate.
5. The Annual Report of the Director of Public Health will be presented widely across audiences in Darlington.

**Pandemic Influenza**

6. The Council has been planning to meet the challenges that we will face with the current Pandemic Influenza outbreak. A corporate plan identifies how we will prioritise service delivery and support key strategic partners. Recently a questionnaire went to all staff identifying skill sets, travel requirements, and ability and willingness to work flexibly, including in functions outside of their normal duties. This data is now being assessed to identify the Council's ability to redirect staff to support priority services both within the Council and in support of key partners.

**Service Development**

7. Cultural Services have been successful in securing Train to Gain funding through The Learning Skills Council to enable 30 employees from across the service to undertake an NVQ Level 2 in Customer Services.

## **Sports Development**

### **Locality Cluster of Activities April 2009 - 2010**

8. Sessions 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. Additional community sessions have also been established delivering an outcome of the Youth Crime Action Plan.

### **Darlington Community Games and Tees Valley Youth Games 2009**

9. 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 approaching, 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, 22 Darlington primary schools have signed up to compete in 6 sports.

### **Darlington Playing Pitch and Facilities Strategy**

10. 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.
11. 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.
12. A consultation event has taken place at the Dolphin Centre on Tuesday, 19 May 2009 with local clubs, coaches and teachers. All community groups provided constructive feedback on the draft documents and action plans will be finalised by the end of June. The draft strategies will be submitted to Scrutiny Committee and an implementation group has been established to start working towards the outcomes in the action plan.

### **Summer Programme of Activities**

13. A comprehensive programme of summer activities will be delivered by the Sports Development team as part of the 'Be Active' Summer Programme. Weekly camps will include Trampolining, Street Cheer, Gymnastics, Tennis, Bouldering, Diving, Swimming and Fundamentals. The sessions will be delivered at the Dolphin Centre, Eastbourne Sports Complex and various community venues.

### **Darlington Primary Care Trust Funding Children Centre Subsidised Swimming:**

14. Children Centres across Darlington are being supported to access swimming provision for families. This funding support has enabled more engagement in physical activity as well as continuation of existing swimming programmes.

## **Teen Card**

15. The Teen Card programme has been promoted extensively in partnership with Darlington Local Motion, Youth Services and Arriva Bus Company. The scheme has over 1000 cards in circulation and young people are getting subsidised travel and subsidised access to sport and leisure opportunities.

## **Easyline**

16. Mobile fitness equipment has been purchased and 15 staff members have been trained to be able to deliver sessions to the community. The programme will be developed to support young people to access a 'Youth Gym' and also health programmes including "Weight No More".

## **Sports Unlimited**

17. Year two plans of the project are currently being delivered with the aim of increasing the number of young people who are accessing a minimum of five hours high quality PE and Sport each week. Local community clubs, National Governing Bodies (NGBs), community projects and charities have all been involved in supporting the delivery of the programme.

## **Events**

### **The Big Bikeathon (in aid of Leukaemia Research Fund) - Sunday 3 May 2009**

18. Working in partnership with Leukaemia Research Fund and Rotary Club of Darlington, Cultural Services organised The Big Bikeathon on Sunday, 3 May 2009. The event, which was held around the pathways of South Park, attracted over 100 young cyclists aged from 3 years upwards and attracted valuable funds for Leukaemia Research Fund. Supporting entertainment was also provided which helped to create a carnival atmosphere all around the route.

### **The Round 50 Cycle Ride – Sunday, 7 June 2009**

19. The Round 50, the first in the popular series of tourist trial rides of the 2009 Pedal Power Cycling Festival, which is sponsored by NHS Darlington, was held on Sunday 7 June 2009. Despite the changeable weather the ride, which followed a circular route around Darlington and the surrounding area attracted a record entry of 132 cyclists.

### **Bands in the Park – Sunday, 7 June 2009 – Sunday, 26 July 2009 South Park**

20. A summer programme of 'Bands in the Park' has been organised by the Events team on a Sunday afternoon in June and July in the South Park Bandstand.

## **Head of Steam**

21. Planning for Meet the Romans Day (Sunday, 19 July 2009) is almost complete with all re-enactors booked and loans from Bowes Museum in place. The County Archaeologist is booked for tours of Piercebridge Roman Fort and activities planned. The education programme for local schools will focus on Roman workshops prior to the end of this academic year.

## **Arts Centre & Civic Theatre**

### **Marketing**

22. In May Darlington Civic Theatre and Arts Centre launched a new e-newsletter, which will enable people to receive a whole host of special offers, competitions, news updates, seasonal brochures and much more, direct to their inbox. The e-newsletter will be a fortnightly update for fans of theatre and the arts, and will include information about upcoming shows and events at both the Civic Theatre and Arts Centre.

### **Arts Development**

23. Early in May the Arts Centre presented four new plays by InterACT the region's theatre training ensemble. The plays, which were all presented over lunchtimes, were well received by a diverse audience which included performing arts students.
24. Queen Bee. The Arts Centre has been working in partnership with New Writing North, Queens Hall Hexham and Customs House South Shields to commission and produce a new contemporary thriller by regional playwright Margaret Wilkinson. The production was premiered in the region and has toured nationally. It has been very well received by audiences and critics alike.
25. The Summer season at Darlington Civic Theatre was launched by the Shaolin Warriors who appeared in Joseph Pease Place on Sunday, 26 April 2009 and at a sell-out performance at the Civic Theatre. The season has got off to a good start with the Solid Silver 60s show drawing an audience of 1,229, Chuckle Trek was attended by 1,545 people and the weeklong performance of Dinnerladies was attended by 3,132 people.

### **ArtsSpark**

26. Darlington Arts Centre hosted the National Association of Youth Theatre's annual conference, Raising the Game, a national training event for Youth Theatre leaders from all over the country in April, over three days. ArtsSpark Youth Theatre Leaders took part in numerous workshops and staff development opportunities throughout the conference.
27. Darlington Arts Centre has been selected by the National Association of Youth Theatre (NAYT) to become the region's Associate Venue for NAYT, working in partnership to lead the way for Youth Theatre delivery and training for the whole of the North East region. This exciting opportunity will allow us to access training from the Central School of Speech and Drama, one of London's top drama Schools.
28. Darlington Young Arts Ambassadors alongside young people from Youth Service's ReView Team worked together in a consultation event ran by Audiences North East, to find out how young people aged 13-19 access the Arts and Culture. All of the young people involved in the workshop came up with some fantastic ideas and feedback to inform the future work of Audiences North East, the region's audience development agency.

### **Arts Development**

29. Darlington Openart Studio ran a stall and a taster open day as part of Vane House's Vision Solutions Service Users Products Exhibition on the 16 April in the East Hall, Darlington Arts Centre. This was very well attended with regular attendees participating alongside

professional and service user representatives from a range of local charities and public health organisation. These included Blindlife in Durham, Affinity Health, Darlington PCT, and Darlington District Nurse, Blind Life.

30. 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.
31. Working in partnership with Youth Services, Arts Development have provided creative activities for young people attending youth clubs based in Firthmoor, Hurworth, Eastbourne, Middleton-St-George and Lascelles. The programme has been ongoing since the end of March delivering activities to young people who would not normally access this kind of opportunity. The programme offers opportunities in term time, during holiday time, weekends and on some occasions at the weekend. There are over a hundred workshops programmed between the end of March and the end of July, including Graffiti, Dance, Arts and Crafts and Jewellery making.

#### **Visual and Public Art**

32. The Myles Meehan Gallery attracted over 29,000 visitors in 2008-2009.
33. A gallery talk was held for the public based around the new exhibition A Short Grand Tour by Professor Simon Olding and Jim Hunter. The exhibition has received very positive feedback and it runs until Saturday 4 July.
34. The Public Catalogue Foundation is currently cataloguing all of the oils and acrylic in publicly owned collection in the UK. A catalogue is produced for each county and the Foundation have just launched their County Durham Catalogue that features all of the oils and acrylics from Darlington Borough Collection significantly improving public access to the collection.

**Councillor S Harker**  
**Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Health and Leisure**