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**OVERVIEW OF HEALTH & LEISURE PORTFOLIO**

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**Purpose of the Report**

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the main areas of work under my Health and Leisure Portfolio were as follows:

**Healthy Darlington**

2. The Healthy Darlington Business Group met on 27 January 2010. The focus of the meeting was a review of progress to date on the Healthy Darlington Delivery Plan and the Local Area Agreement “refresh”.
3. The Healthy Darlington Business Group reviewed the stop smoking service data and noted that 59% of quitters were from Routine and Manual groups which contributes to “One Darlington: Narrowing the Gap”. The group were pleased to note progress and also reinforced the message that only a focus on prevention will reduce the numbers of young people from starting smoking.
4. The standing agenda item, “Responses to the impact of the economic downturn” generated a useful exchange of information including increases in claimants for Job Seekers Allowance, the impact on drugs and alcohol services, voluntary sector organisations.
5. The Healthy Darlington Themed group met on Wednesday, 10 February 2010 and focused on the impact of child poverty. Presentations included; an overview of the causes and patterns of child poverty, work of the Darlington Young Carers project and a DVD produced by the CAB on “Salon sessions”.
6. The Director of Public Health briefed the Healthy Darlington Themed Group on key messages from the 2008 General Lifestyle Survey and a report, “Tackling Health Inequalities in the North East” produced jointly by the Audit Commission and Deloitte.
7. The Healthy Darlington Themed group will take account of the recommendations in the above report and use them to review arrangements during 2010.

**Environmental Health**

**Unauthorised Encampment of Travellers on Adopted Highway**

8. On 3 February 2010 the Assistant Director of Highways and Engineering reported that six traveller caravans and associated vehicles were parked on the corner of the A66 roundabout on adopted highway alongside the Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor. Officers from the Environmental Health Section visited the location, spoke with the Travellers and carried out the necessary assessments. The specialist health visitors were provided with key

information about the visitors. The Ward Councillor and Cabinet Member were informed.

9. The travellers were informed that the location they had chosen was not one that could be tolerated by the Council's policy and that the legal process to evict them would start.
10. On 8 February 2010 after the travellers had failed to comply with the Direction Notice requiring them to move, an officer applied to the Magistrates Court for summonses to be issued to the travellers to attend a Court to consider the application for an eviction order. When the officer visited to serve the summonses three of the caravans had left. On the 9 February 2010 the remaining three caravans left. Some cleansing of the site was required once the travellers had left.

### **Trading Standards – Scamnesty Campaign**

11. During February, Trading Standards participated in a nationwide 'Scamnesty Campaign' organised by the Office of Fair Trading. The campaign aims to raise awareness of mass marketing scam mailings in the UK by asking people to stop and think about any unsolicited mailings received and drop them into designated 'Scamnesty Bins', located around Darlington. Last year the campaign revealed that the top five mass marketed scam mailings in the UK were: deceptive sweepstakes, misleading prize draws, fake clairvoyants/psychics, bogus foreign lotteries and miracle health cures.

### **Cultural Services**

12. Following a successful Customer Services Excellence (CSE) audit (formerly Charter Mark) carried out in November 2009, the Cultural Services Code of Service has been acknowledged within the report with compliance plus. This is the highest rating available to an organisation by the Government Standard, CSE. This rating recognises this piece of work as a good practice business model that could be adopted by other organisations and CSE intend to publish this success on the official website.

### **Sports Development**

#### **Four X Biking**

13. Go-Ride sessions have been successful in both Branksome and Carmel Schools with all sessions fully attended. A further 6-week session will commence Tuesday 23 February at Hurworth School, working in partnership with British Cycling. Haughton Education Village will have Go-Ride sessions within their school timetable for 6-weeks after Easter Holidays.
14. Go-Ride and Four X sessions are running every Saturday with full attendance, sessions have been arranged to take part at the bike track during the half term holiday with sessions being held for both the community and Locality C. (Education Village, Redhall, Gurney Pease, Springfield, Whinfield, St Bede's).

#### **Climbing/Walking**

15. Climbing sessions have been organised over half term for Teesdale Leisure Centre along with trips on Saturday evening in partnership with Zone Active and the Youth Service.

16. Darlington doorstep walks are continuing to have 7 weekly walks, with more walks being added in the spring months including walks from doctors' surgeries.
17. Two staff are trained in Nordic Walking and have completed assessment and will be rolling out a programme of Nordic Walks targeting organisations and communities, also working alongside Darlington One Life, Weight no more, Stroke/Cardiac Rehab. Nordic Walking is a specific fitness technique based on ordinary walking and is one of the fastest growing fitness activities. Using poles to help propel the walker along means the upper body muscles are used as well as the legs.

### **Canoeing**

18. Six week canoeing sessions are taking place across four schools in Darlington; these sessions are looking to be extended with support from the School Sports Partnership. Further canoe sessions are organised for the February Half Term.

### **Sports Ability**

19. The Zone Active project has plans for a third programme for the Sports Ability Club to begin on 23 February 2010, the course will run for 10 weeks on a Tuesday evening from 4:00pm - 5:30pm at the Dolphin Centre, providing a range of activities for young people with sensory and physical impairments.

### **Street Soccer**

20. Six week skills programmes were delivered with great success in Alderman Leach, Branksome Comprehensive, Springfield and St Aidens as part of a PE curriculum or as an after school club last term. After a number of successful courses schools have asked the Sports Development team to deliver after school clubs again at Branksome Comprehensive and Alderman Leach along with new skills programmes at Gurney Pease and Corporation Road. There is also a very successful Saturday morning club at Darlington College.

### **Sports Unlimited**

21. The Zone Active (ZA) programme is delivering some Boxercise/Boxing sessions at Redhall Community Centre on a Wednesday evening. Initially targeting 11 - 18 year olds, the sessions became so popular that young people wanted to bring their parents along to take part in activity as a family. Working alongside the Redhall Youth Group, ZA will continue to fund the programme with Sports Unlimited funding due to expire at the end of January.

### **Easy Line**

22. Zone Active are 4 weeks into a 6 week pilot program for an Easy Line family gym based at the Dolphin Centre. Work is ongoing to facilitate the family programme of gym activities.

### **Dance Mat Update**

23. The first Darlington Secondary Schools Dance Mat Festival took place at Darlington Education Village on Wednesday 20 January. Following the event, the team hope to set up Darlington Dance Mat Club. Over 100 young people took part from 6 schools within Darlington and another event is due to take place in July 2010. The festivals will become apart of the Secondary events calendar.

## **PCT Swimming Action Plan Update**

24. In partnership with the Amateur Swimming Association the Sports Development Team have been successful in applying for external funding to offer free swimming lessons for adults over 60 and youngsters aged 11 – 16. The lessons will start in January at the Dolphin Centre, Hummersknott School and the Education. The lessons will be eight week sessions supported by swim teachers from the Dolphin Centre and will link closely with the GEM, One Life and Swimming Club sessions.

## **School Sports Partnership Coaches**

25. Darlington Sports Development Team will be supporting the new School Sports Coaching Plan with 11 new coaches being employed to work within the partnership and funded by the Youth Sports Trust, targeting various age groups from January 2010.
26. The current coaching programme benefits a wide range of pupils from the 5-16 age range. The programmes specifically target girls, Key Stage 1, Key Stage 4 boys and girls, disengaged and disaffected, disability groups as well as the more able young people. The theme running through all our programmes is the 'be healthy' strand of the Every Child Matters agenda and making choices for a healthy lifestyle. Coaches will start activity in Dance, Gymnastics, Rugby, Football, Cricket, Athletics, Golf, Kayaking and Multi Skills.

## **Sport Unlimited**

27. Darlington Sports Development Team has continued to deliver on a number of activities in the community as part of the Sport Unlimited Programme. Sessions include Street Cheer and Intro to Boxing at Skerne Park Community Centre, Basketball at the Education Village and Hurworth, Badminton at Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form and Longfield School and most notably Boxercise at Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form. The latter has been a real success with approximately 20 participants (majority female) engaging in the activity on a weekly basis. The activities above have played a key role in participants accessing 5 hours of sport and physical activity on a weekly basis.

## **Events**

### **Chinese New Year Celebration – The Market Square – 15 February 2010**

28. The Events Team, in partnership with Darlington Chinese Association delivered the second event to celebrate Chinese New Year, which for 2010 is Year of the Tiger. The event included a lion dance and performances of traditional Chinese music song and dance by pupils from Hummersknott School. Polam Hall School will also be present on the day with a display. There was also the opportunity to sample Chinese food and drink.

## **Pantomime**

29. Darlington Civic Theatre has delivered one of their most successful pantomimes since 2003. Aladdin, which ran at the theatre from 5 December 2009 to 17 January 2010, starred popular X Factor performer Chico alongside comedy duo The Grumbleweeds. The pantomime was enjoyed by 44,461 people, an increase of more than 2,100 people on the year before. Income from ticket sales increased by £65,700 relative to 2008/9.

Performances received fantastic feedback from patrons and rave reviews from local press.

### **Holocaust Memorial Day**

30. On Wednesday 27 January 2010 Darlington Arts Centre was the host of the annual Holocaust Memorial Day Ceremony, Marking the 65th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, Darlington Borough Council was approached to host the North East Regional event. The event was attended by 180 people who were welcomed by The Mayor. Students from QE VI Form College and St. Bede's R.C. Primary School performed two dance pieces. There was a dramatic representation by Windermere Productions.

### **Darlington Schools Partnership Dance Festival**

31. This event was held at the Arts Centre on Tuesday 2 February. 34 Darlington school groups took part, with total participants of approximately 500 young people, from all Key Stages.

### **ArtsSpark**

32. ArtsSpark Youth Theatre and Dance members took part in the Vibe Awards 2010, where all members received an award for their contribution to the Arts. The two oldest Youth Theatre groups alongside the Contemporary Dance group also performed at the event, the first time the Youth Theatre and Dance have performed together at the Vibe Awards.

### **Arts Engagement**

33. Darlington Arts Centre organised and presented the first Urban Splurge event of 2010 as part of its partnership work with Youth Services, to provide positive activities for young people on Friday and Saturday evenings. Two further Urban Splurge events have been programmed during February and March.
34. The Arts Team have worked closely with Locality Co-ordinators to identify need for Arts projects across Darlington and have set up after School Arts and Youth Theatre projects in three of Darlington's Primary Schools.

### **Arts Projects**

35. The 'Quakers' mural was created in partnership with North East Council for Addictions was unveiled at Darlington Football Stadium in early February with positive press coverage.
36. The Arts Team has provided support for High Coniscliffe Primary School and has set up an arts project which will include every child in the school. They will work through an enrichment week in February to create a textiles mural for their school. This is to ensure the children, staff and parents engage in creative activity.
37. The Arts Team, working with Independent Safeguarding Authority is working with St George's CE Aided Primary School, St Aidan's Academy and St George's Hospital to create a range of panels and mural with the theme of positive attitudes towards carers from children and vulnerable adults. This is a three month project, completing this March.
38. In partnership with Friends of North Lodge Park, a series of visual arts, music and film workshops are being planned. The participants will be school children and local residents

and a performance is planned for the opening of the refurbished bandstand in August 2010.

### **Visual and Public Arts**

39. The Myles Meehan Gallery hosted the Coney Island Angels exhibition by Randy Klein from Friday 18 December to Saturday 6 February. The exhibition received very positive feedback throughout its duration. The artist also gave a talk to the general public and led two days of education workshops with Cleveland College of Arts, the Open Arts Studio and the QE VI Form College. The workshops were fully booked, receiving excellent feedback.
40. Artist Yvonne Preston took inspiration from the above exhibition to lead education workshops for 90 children from Skerne Park Primary School. The children created their own sculptures and mobiles, which are now displayed at their school.
41. Darlington Arts Centre has commissioned film maker and photographer Magali Pettier to work with five local community arts groups to explore the dynamics of their group and how their engagement with the arts brings them together. The artist undertook a number of workshops with each group to capture their portraits, interviews and stories through photography film and text. The participating groups are Windermere Productions, Darlington Arts Centre R'n'B Club, Large Productions, Age Concern Darlington and Darlington Arts Centre Weaving Group. The project culminates in an exhibition, which will be held in the Myles Meehan Gallery, Darlington Arts Centre from Friday 12 February to Saturday 3 April. The project forms part of a programme of activities and events that supports Darlington Borough Council's National Indicator NI11 – Engagement in the Arts.
42. The Visual and Public Arts Officer worked with Groundwork and local residents from Pensbury Street to develop a new public artwork, which has now been installed at Pensbury Street public park. Artists Jill and Lee Brewster worked with local residents and children to develop designs for the new entrance feature, which takes the form of a stainless steel ring with resin flowers mounted at the top. The artists took inspiration from the children's designs, which were incorporated into the flowers.

### **Head of Steam**

43. The Edward Pease Memorial Room is scheduled to be complete and open to visitors from the end of February 2010.
44. The York Moors National Parks photo exhibition was extended until the end of January 2010.
45. A second exhibition called 2C is now installed in the Museum's second exhibition space. It displays the contrasting work of two local sculptors and will be on display until end of March 2010.
46. The Museum has over forty events, exhibition and lecture days planned for 2010.
47. The Museum continues to receive great support for local and regional schools. Over 250 children visited throughout January 2010.

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