
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 the Portfolio Holder for Health and Leisure.

Head of Steam – Darlington Railway Museum

2. The Portfolio Holder officially reopened Head of Steam – Darlington Railway Museum on Friday 4 April 2008, following a major refurbishment in 2007-2008, other guests included funding partners, site tenants, and press.
3. Head of Steam opened its doors to the public on Saturday 5 April 2008 following the £1.7million refurbishment project. To celebrate the opening of the museum an excellent entertainment programme was put together for people of all ages to enjoy. Music was provided by Rhythm Kings; Cockerton Brass Band; Buccherini Strings; North Tyne Steel Band and 10th Avenue Street Band.
4. Other entertainment was provided by Aerial Street Theatre – Hang; South Durham Dog Agility; Street Theatre; balloon modellers; stilt walkers; face painting, and children’s workshops. The opening launch weekend was a great success with visitors totalling 4,600 in attendance over the weekend.
5. Building on the initial success of the opening weekend, visitor numbers during the second week of the school holidays have remained high and total 1,358. Following the pricing review and the subsequent introduction of family annual memberships, sales of these have been proportionately high totalling 124 in the same period. The total number of visitors to the museum during the first three weeks has been 7,935.
6. The new Head of Steam offer has been updated to include audio-visual presentations and interactive displays to bring the past to life. The focus has been to increase the amount of interaction available within the museum, as well as offering the opportunity of frequent visits through a calendar of interactive events, children’s activity rooms and a new café with outdoor dining space.

Events in Joseph Pease Place and Pedestrian Heart – Saturday, 12 April and Saturday, 19 April 2008

7. As part of the Street Art programme, the Darlington Operatic Society promoted their performance ‘Barnum’ which was held at the Civic Theatre in Joseph Pease Place on Saturday, 12 April 2008. The performances included basic circus skills workshops and stilt walking.

8. The Rowan Pipes and Drums performed in the Town Centre on Saturday, 19 April 2008 in their new costumes funded by busking in the Town Centre last Year.
9. The Stockton Morrison performed in the Town Centre on Saturday, 26 April 2008 to entertain shoppers.

Darlington Civic Theatre

10. The Civic Theatre hosted the production week and the opening of UK Productions' Beauty and the Beast prior to an extensive UK tour; 5,170 people saw the production while it was in Darlington.

ArtsSpark Update

11. The Big Dance project proposal that was submitted to the Arts Council by Debbie Waistell, our Contemporary Dance Leader, supported by Darlington Arts Centre was successful in its bid for funding. Work has already started in the planning and development of the project, which will culminate in an outdoor performance on the Plaza outside of Darlington Arts Centre by young people from across Darlington.
12. The spring term for ArtsSpark Youth Theatre culminated in performances by all five youth theatre groups, involving young people aged 5-18 from across Darlington and the surrounding area. All of the performances took place in the Studio Theatre, which is a dedicated performance and workshop space for children and young people.
13. ArtsSpark Youth Theatre and dance groups are continuing to expand in numbers, attracting more young people each week. Two of the youth theatre groups are now full to capacity, as well as our new contemporary dance class for 7-11 year olds. This is mainly due to the new marketing initiatives for ArtsSpark, and the improved structure of the classes.
14. Our 11-16 Contemporary Dance group have been invited to perform a dance piece that they have created this term at the Arc in Stockton on May 10, to support Northern Youth Dance Company's 'No Frontiers' performance.

Darlington Arts Centre

15. NAYT (National Association of Youth Theatres) Conference "Raising the Game" - Thursday 6 – Saturday 8 March 2008.

Darlington Arts Centre hosted the 2008 NAYT Conference, addressing the needs of youth theatre development, quality of process and product and how to promote inclusion. Raising the Game is a professional development and networking event for Youth Theatre leaders that gives the opportunity to meet fellow professionals in a highly supportive environment. 120 delegates from across the United Kingdom attended the events.

Heathfield Primary School

16. Following a successful bid for Awards for All, artists in banner making, textiles, ceramics and stained glass are taking short residencies at the school from January to July 2008. Each child will be given the opportunity to participate in an art form and this will culminate in an end of year performance and display.

Hummersknott School and Language College

17. Working with the Head of Art, progress is being made with encouraging students from Year 9 to work towards Arts Award Bronze. This is an accredited course, which offers young people the opportunity to explore and expand their knowledge from a variety of artforms. There are currently 15 students actively involved and E&O is supporting the staff and pupils. They aim to achieve the required standards by July 2008.

Visual Arts

18. The Myles Meehan Gallery has attracted 28,352 visitors over the last year, which is more than double last year's figures.
19. The new Lounge Gallery, developed as part of the Arts Centre's refurbishment, has held eight exhibitions of local artists work since opening in July last year. The current exhibition, entitled *Exhibition of Watercolours* is by Mr M K Kelkar, who lives in India, and was introduced to the Lounge Gallery by his Son and Daughter-in-law who are residents of Darlington. Mr Kelkar has travelled to many places in India and captures in his paintings the landscapes and people in these places through the transparent medium of watercolours. The changing colours of landscapes inspired him to travel to various places so he could paint the subjects from life.

Sponsorship

20. Following their very successful seasonal sponsorship of the Civic Theatre, Blakett, Hart and Pratt (BHP Law) has agreed to become the principal sponsor for the coming year. To coincide with some re-branding and expansion, the company sees this as an ideal opportunity to raise its profile in the town through as large an audience as possible. They will sponsor the summer and autumn/winter 2008 and spring 2009 seasons, with a view to extending sponsorship at the end of that period.

Trampoline Club

21. Darlington Trampoline Club has begun to deliver sessions. The Club has been a result of young people identifying that they wanted more opportunity to try Trampolining; therefore, they applied to the DOSH fund to buy Trampolines. The TAG (Trampoline Action Group), which is the steering group for the club have met on a regular basis to support in the marketing of the club and making decisions on what sessions will be delivered. Existing programmes are already fully booked and the interest in the club has been immense.

Goalball Club

22. In partnership with British Blind Sport and Darlington Social Club for the Blind and Visually Impaired, a new Goalball Club will commence at Abbey Road School on Monday 21 April. The Club will be inclusive for all age groups and be the first ever Goalball Club in Darlington.

Polish Rugby Sessions

23. In partnership with Tees Valley Sport, local rugby clubs and the Community Partnerships, taster sessions are to be provided for the Polish community in local clubs to encourage more adults into the sport of Rugby.

Hundens Bowls Association

24. Since becoming Cabinet Member for Health and Leisure, The Portfolio Holder has held a number of meetings with the Association, which have included members of the other bowls clubs around the town. There is also regular liaison between bowls clubs representatives and officers regarding technical matters on green keeping and the like, which have been found to be very useful.
25. After concerns were raised recently, particularly regarding the bowling green at Eastbourne Park, The Portfolio Holder has held another meeting with the club, together with officers from leisure and Street Scene. It was agreed by the bowlers that the green here is bowling magnificently, but there are some problems with discoloured grass and bare patches. Investigations are now proceeding.

Health

Zone Active

26. Zone Active has now finished as an Active England Project; however, many aspects of the programme will continue through sustainable opportunities. The project has attracted over 3000 members within the three years of activities and there has been a throughput of over 18,000. The project has engaged a range of ages and abilities within the wards of Eastbourne, Park East and Lascelles and many activities will continue with the support of partnership organisations such as schools, Darlington Borough Council Sports Development Team and community groups.
27. Zone Active has also provided opportunity for coaches and volunteers, which has led to many individuals accessing coaching qualifications and gaining employed work. There have been 112 employed coaches during Zone Active and among these coaches they have gained 202 qualifications.

Get Everybody Motivated (GEM) Classes

28. GEM Classes continue to run within Darlington and the project will continue to develop and move forward with the support of the Community Investment Fund (CIF) received through the Community Sport Network (CSN) devolved funding applications. GEM is expanding to provide a more diverse range of activities for older adults including Kurling, Bowls and Golf.

Extended Schools

29. Extended school activities continue to provide a diverse programme of activities for children and young people attending Longfield, Harrowgate Hill, North Road and Corporation Road Schools. Activities that have run are skiing, climbing, white water rafting and more traditional sports for example volleyball, netball and tag rugby.

30. Through consultation and successful holiday programmes the extended school programme has established sustainable Sports clubs in Trampolining, Outdoor activities, Table Tennis, and Gymnastics. With approximately 250 attending on a weekly basis the programme is delivering to a variety of children and young people. Regular consultation has ensured that the activities provided have met the needs of all those involved.

Inclusive Adults Programme

31. Darlington Sports Development Team has teamed up with Adult Services and is providing ‘taster’ sessions for adults that are inclusive for all. Sessions will be delivered on walking, swimming and Thai Chi and these will be at community venues within the town. Transport will be provided and we are hoping to ensure the sessions become sustainable and to plan more activity in the future.

Darlington Community Games

32. Over 20 schools across Darlington will compete in this year’s Community Games participating in football, tag rugby, tennis, athletics and cricket. Schools will receive three-weeks coaching after school to train the teams for the event. These coaching sessions have already been arranged with the schools and are to be delivered by local club coaches and National Governing Bodies in partnership with Darlington Sports Development Team and the School Sports Partnership.

Darlington Community Sports Network (CSN)

33. Through the CSN the Sports Development Team have secured £184,600 Sport England Community Investment Funding for three new members of staff. They will work on the delivery of the CSN Action Plan and priorities will be working to target adults, BME Communities and Hard to Reach Groups on various projects.

Dance Mats

34. Darlington Borough Council has been successful in securing £20,000 funding from Darlington Primary Care Trust for new Dance Mats at Darlington Education Village. Working in partnership with the Schools Sports Partnership. The mats will look to engage 11-16 year old girls in Sport and Physical Activity and Community classes and a club will start through a development plan in May.

Public Health

35. Following numerous complaints about unauthorised access, vandalism and theft regularly taking place at this vacant site, The Portfolio Holder called a meeting of Ward Councillors, Senior Officers and partner agencies. This was held on 18 May 2008 and followed a meeting held the previous day between Senior Offices and the property owners.
36. As a consequence of these meetings, joint working has reduced vandalism and related problems and the owner is now in the process of constructing a secure perimeter fence around the site. The situation is being monitored by Public Protection and should the owner fail to respond to Statutory Notices that have already been served, action will be taken in default.

37. In fulfilling the Portfolio role, The Portfolio Holder has held meetings with members of staff at the PCT, including the Locality Director for Public Health.
38. The Portfolio Holder has held a useful briefing session with PCT staff responsible for the delivery of targets on sexual health and smoking cessation. The Portfolio Holder is currently following up a number of action points arising from this meeting with Cabinet colleagues.
39. Health improvement was a key area of enquiry during the JAR and CPA inspection. Information was provided in focus groups and interviews about the range of opportunities and programmes in Darlington to improve health.
40. Throughout March 2008 consultation on “All Our Futures - A Strategy for Later Life in Darlington “continued via GOLD members. The strategy was launched at the Talking Together event on 22 April 2008 although the Action Plan will be the subject of further consultation.
41. The Healthier Communities Block of the LAA continues to target health improvement activity in priority wards. Programmes are reporting as on track to meet 2009 targets, including smoking cessation (increasing focus on pregnant smokers), immunisations, community food and health and breast feeding.
42. There is increasing interest at national, regional and local levels about the extent and impact of alcohol misuse. Darlington DAAT is leading, with partners, the review of the Darlington Alcohol Strategy and develop revised Action Plans, these was consulted upon and brought to the Darlington Partnership.

Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Health and Leisure