

OVERVIEW OF LEISURE AND LOCAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work undertaken under the Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio :-

Cultural Services

PCT Partnership

2. The Sports Development Team has agreed a funding package of £100,000 from the PCT to deliver a broad range of community based physical activity and health interventions over the next 12 months. This will include programmes of work around reducing maternal obesity, community - based health services and extension of the Teen Card scheme to facilitate discounted access to physical activity provision.

MEND

3. The Sports Development Team has also secured funding through the Big Lottery Fund and in partnership with Durham County Council to train in and deliver a national programme called MEND – Mind, Exercise, Nutrition ...Do it!
4. Eight families are currently enrolled on the active, fun-based course which improves health, fitness and wellbeing for children aged 7-13 and their families. It was developed by experts at London's Great Ormond Street Hospital and the Institute of Child Health to help children become healthier, fitter and more self-confident.
5. As well as showing that an active lifestyle can be fun, the programme helps families learn to cut fat and sugar in their diet, how to read labels, control portion sizes, set goals and rewards, tell the difference between hunger and cravings and increase their self-confidence. Activities on the MEND Programme include games, nutrition sessions, a supermarket tour, a recipe-tasting evening and fun group activities.

Summer Outreach Programme

6. There is a comprehensive programme of Leisure and Arts activities available for young people during the School Summer vacation 2011. The diversity and volume of provision has been possible thanks to extensive partnership working with Schools, Community Clubs, Groundwork and PCT. Information is now being distributed to the general public, schools and clubs, is available in public buildings and accessible through the following web link <http://www.darlington.gov.uk/Leisure/dolphin/dolphin.htm>.

Zone Active

7. This community - based physical activity programme has developed further since January 2011. From 1 January to 25 May 2011 the Zone Active Project engaged with 370 participants between the ages of 4 and 72 with a total throughput of 1,412. The project delivered 156 group work sessions across 20 schemes of work.

Sports Ability

8. The Sports Ability Club delivers a range of sporting activities to disabled children between the ages of 8 and 16 over a 10-week period. Wave 5 of the Sports Ability Club began on 8 March 2011 and finished on 17 May 2011 at the Dolphin Centre. Ten participants enjoyed a variety of activities and were encouraged to plan their own sessions. The existing funding stream for this programme has now expired and the team are reviewing options to try and sustain this provision in the future.

Street Soccer

9. The Zone Active project has developed strong Street Soccer links with the local schools in Darlington. Six-week skills programmes have been delivered in Longfield (x 2), Mount Pleasant and St Aidan's twice as part of a PE curriculum or offered as an after school club.
10. Zone Active continues to run a weekly Zone Active Street Soccer Club at Eastbourne Gym as an exit route for the school programmes, the club attracts around 12 members on a weekly basis.

Community Games 2011

11. Preparations for the Community Games 2011 are well under way. This year will see 27 primary schools take part in the games on 14 July 2011. Sport Development's pool of coaches will go into the schools to coach over 1500 children in their respective activity and decide on the team to represent the school.

Family Initiative Supporting Children's Health (FISCH)

12. The FISCH programme received excellent feedback from all schools engaged in the programme from January – March 2011. Engagement figures saw 38 per cent of all pupils on the programme attend the after school club sessions. 52 per cent of the identified children in need of support also participated in the after school clubs.
13. FISCH is currently delivering in four schools this term: Heathfield Primary, Holy Family Primary, Mount Pleasant Primary and Harrowgate Hill Primary. Initial attendance figures of the after school clubs are promising. Exit routes into existing activities and clubs will be promoted during the course of the programme.

Darlington Doorstep Walks

14. The Darlington Doorstep Walks programme is currently offering a total of 12 walks in the Town, two of which are exclusive to partner organisations such as Reflections and West Park Hospital. Age UK Walks are seeing an increase in participation after recent promotion

in the local press. Nordic walking is continuing strongly, with three of the five walks regularly close to capacity.

Events

Grant Funding

15. The Events team led a collaborative project involving several independent Dance Schools within the Town to secure £10, 000 funding from the Arts Council to deliver Darlington's Dance Festival in July 2011.

St George's Day Celebrations –Saturday 23 April 2011

16. A toast to St George was organised at the market cross that was attended by the Mayor, Town Crier and Darlington's very own Dragon, which handed out red roses donated by Flowers by Nattress to the general public. Flags were also flown from the Town Clock and the Town Hall.

Darlington Football Club Celebrations for FA Trophy - 11 May 2011

17. Around 5000 people attended an event in Darlington's Market Square to celebrate Darlington's FA Trophy win at Wembley on Saturday 7 May 2011.
18. Tfm's Scott Makin provided fun and games on the stage before a short address by the Mayor and sponsors, Teesside University. Following the speeches, the players took to the stage to show off their trophy and thank the fans for their support.

Green Fair – South Park – 15 May 2011

19. I joined the thousands of people attending this year's Green Fair held on Sunday 15 May 2011 in Darlington's South Park. This year's event was organised in partnership with the Sustainable Development Team, Waste Minimisation, Recycling team, Events team and Countryside team.
20. There were many stalls providing advice on recycling, renewable energy and sustainable transport as well as an afternoon of family entertainment, including a chain saw sculpture, birds of prey, kite flying displays and friends of South Park.

Vintage Vehicle Rally – Sunday 22 May 2011

21. The Vintage Rally, which was jointly organised by the Northern Bygone Society and Cultural Services and held at the Head of Steam, was heralded a great success despite mixed weather throughout the day. Around 1200 visitors attended the event to marvel at more than 140 vintage vehicles from across the North East and Yorkshire. Children's entertainment was also provided throughout the day in the museum and main field.

Darlington Civic Theatre

22. At the end of March 2011, the Civic Theatre presented a new adaptation of 'Goodnight Mr Tom' by Michelle Magorian. This is the first touring drama produced by the Children's Touring Partnership, of which we are a founding partner. The partnership is a collaboration

between several number one theatres that have a particular commitment to theatre for young audiences. It was extremely well received and was enjoyed by audiences of all ages but was particularly well attended by schools with 24 school parties attending the schools matinees. The production was accompanied by a high quality education programme, which included an education resource pack, page to stage workshops and post show talk. Six boys from the Arts Centre's ArtsSpark Youth Theatre had the opportunity to appear in the production when it was in Darlington, alongside the professional cast.

23. In week commencing 16 May 2011, 'Calendar Girls' came to the Civic Theatre and it has been the most successful drama ever presented at the theatre, with 6,644 tickets sold at a value of £158,926.

Darlington Arts Centre

Arts Enquiry Process

24. The Arts Enquiry process is approaching its conclusion following a wide ranging examination of the options for developing a future sustainable Arts sector within Darlington. A draft vision has been developed alongside a diverse range of Arts stakeholders from within the Town plus external organisations including the Arts Council. The vision is as follows :-

Darlington will be a place where art happens, where the arts matter and where the arts and creativity are central to Darlington's future identity and economic success.

This vision will be progressed through four ways of working. We will :-

- (a) INSPIRE people to engage with and enjoy the arts through opportunities to experience as audience and to participate in work that demonstrates the best of which we are capable.
 - (b) GROW and retain audiences, talent, enthusiasm, creativity and production in Darlington.
 - (c) CELEBRATE together by attracting, producing and programming high quality arts activity.
 - (d) Achieve excellence and a UNIQUE dimension within our arts culture for which Darlington is recognised and respected regionally, nationally and internationally.
25. Arts governance and building options are being finalised alongside a range of stakeholders to be considered by the final Enquiry Group meeting in July 2011. To help take forward the process, I attended the meeting of the Arts Enquiry Group held on 7th June 2011 at Lingfield Point, and also attended the "Taking PART" (sic) consultation in the Dolphin Centre on 4th July 2011.

Arts Spark

26. Boys from ArtsSpark Youth Theatre were selected to take part in Goodnight Mr Tom at Darlington Civic Theatre, where they worked alongside theatre professionals for a week during the performances.

27. Young people from ArtsSpark's Senior Youth Theatre Group performed Stay Brave Brian Gravy to their families and friends in April 2011. They also performed the piece at the Regional Youth Theatre Festival in January 2011.
28. As part of ongoing partnership work with the National Association of Youth Theatre, Arts Centre staff attended and contributed to a national conference on Youth Theatre development and delivery across the Country.
29. Staff from Darlington Arts Centre in partnership with Theatre Hullabaloo took part in a training session delivered by Arts Award, in order to take part in the National Pilot for Arts Award 7-11.

Arts Engagement

30. Young people undertaking the Creative Media Diploma at Darlington's Education Village met with staff from Darlington Arts Centre during March 2011 and had a tour of the building to find out about programming a theatre event and how to put together a performance.
31. The Arts Centre delivered a workshop in partnership with Children's Services staff as part of the Level 1 NVQ Qualification 'Introduction to working with children and young people'. The session was designed to give participants an understanding of how the arts can be used as a tool when working with children and young people.

Arts Award

32. All of the Bronze Award students who were awaiting moderation results successfully achieved their Bronze Award passes; the team are continuing to work with students at Bronze, Silver and Gold Levels.

Visual Arts

33. Myles Meehan Gallery attracted 28,433 visitors during 2010/11.
34. As part of ongoing initiatives to widen access, young people were invited to work on a project to curate an exhibition of artworks from Darlington Borough Art Collection. The young people had the opportunity to work with regional artists, undertake gallery visits and respond creatively to the Collection. The resulting exhibition was displayed at the Myles Meehan Gallery and the Centre for Local Studies, Darlington Library during Friday 25 March - Saturday 21 May 2011, attracting over 5,000 visitors.
35. Queen Elizabeth College held a very successful exhibition of Students Art Foundation work in the glass corridor; the second instalment of their exhibition, this time focusing on media based work, is currently on show.
36. During the Easter holidays a very well attended family drop in workshop was held in Myles Meehan Gallery. This style of informal workshop based on the current exhibition is set to run again during the May half term.

Public Art

37. Planning permission has been granted for a new public artwork at Parkside housing estate. Artist John Neilson has been selected to create a carved stone sculpture featuring carved lettering based on historic place names from a five mile radius of the site. The artwork is expected to be installed in the Autumn.

ANEC Cultural Task & Finish Group

38. The Association of North East Councils (ANEC) is currently undertaking a task and finish exercise to see how the arts in the North East can best respond to the very difficult environment we are now facing. By the time of the Council meeting on 21st July 2011, I will have attended meetings in Gateshead, Middlesbrough and Ashington. The initiative is supported by Councils throughout the North East, and seems to be making good progress.

Openart Studio

39. Openart Studio began in January 2009 as a partnership between Darlington Borough Council, the PCT and NHS Durham and Darlington. The aim was to provide a social prescription project for adults' mental wellbeing using arts as a focus. The project was originally funded to run as a pilot for one year. However, after consistently exceeding Service Level Agreement targets, further funding was provided by the PCT to continue the project until March 2012.
40. Running throughout the year on Mondays and Fridays at Darlington Arts Centre, Openart Studio offers people the opportunity to socialise, develop and learn new art and craft skills. Many are referred from health and social care professionals, others self refer due to isolation issues, whilst some are from the general community of Darlington. In doing so, the project aims to reduce prescribed medication in some cases, whilst providing a safe and encouraging atmosphere that may mean others do not need the support of GPs and other health service providers.

Head of Steam

41. The Darlington Rail Trail has now been designed and is ready for production and installation. This is a nine panel interpretation of the exterior of the museum site. Its primary purpose is to engage our customers throughout the whole site and to add better value to their visit.
42. The exhibition 'Trenches and Trinkets' took place in the temporary exhibition gallery and explored Darlington Crested China from the Great War period alongside events that shook the world. I attended the opening of the exhibition "Art of Robert Stephenson" on 7th July 2011, and would recommend anyone interested in the railways or the history of our town to go along and see it for themselves – it is well worth it!
43. The museum staff and the Chairman of the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust, Mr Mark Allatt are co-writing a new temporary exhibition called 'The Tornado Story'. This will be the first exhibition written about Tornado - the first mainline steam locomotive to be built in Britain since the 1960's.

Environmental Services

Winter Maintenance

44. Despite last winter seemingly lasting an eternity, staff throughout the period remained committed to the service and no highways on the prescribed network for gritting were closed for ice, frost or snow. This past winter season exhibited spectacular contrasts starting with one of the coldest Decembers on record and finishing with one of the warmest Aprils ever recorded; the second half of the winter as a whole being unrecognizable when compared with the first as extreme cold gave way to impressive warmth. The peak of activity was undertaken in December with road temperatures below zero almost every night in the month with routes treated on 71 occasions, using 2,862 tonnes in December alone.
45. Difficulty was experienced for the second year running in procuring additional rock salt and as a result, an order was made for imported salt on behalf of all the north east Councils. This salt subsequently arrived as did other sporadic deliveries and with the mild end to the winter, allowed for sufficient rock salt to be available at any time. Rock salt deliveries have already commenced for the forthcoming winter period and the Council will have in the region of 6,000 tonnes available at the commencement of the 2011/12 winter period.

Street Scene/Parks & Open Spaces

46. I attended a meeting of the Green Spaces Forum in the South Park Meeting Room on 6th July 2011. The Forum provides a very useful network for the various Friends groups around the Borough committed to their own green spaces. The focus of this meeting was the proposed green space strategy for the Borough – a number of important points were made.
47. On 14th July 2011, I will have met the Northumbria in Bloom judging panel in South Park. Despite the heaviest financial pressure, Street Scene continue to deliver excellence in the parks and gardens around the town.

Recycling

48. In the 2010/11 financial year, the Council continued to improve its recycling performance. Collections from kerbside resulted in 2,927 tonnes of paper/card being collected and a further 1,409 tonnes of glass. The Household Waste Recycling Centre cumulatively received 12,601 tonnes of recycling material with the largest amounts being 3,756 for green waste and 2,096 tonnes for timber. Along with other materials recycled in Vicarage Road Depot, this ensured that the Council's recycling performance for 2010/11 was 42 per cent.

Darlington and District Fire Authority

49. By the time of the Council meeting on 21st July 2011, I will have attended 2 full meetings of the Fire Authority, and also a meeting of its Performance Review Committee. I also served as a delegate from the Fire Authority to the Local Government Association Conference in June.

Groundwork North East

50. As Portfolio Holder, I sit on the Board of Groundwork North East, and attended its meeting on 15th June 2011. As many council members who know it will testify, Groundwork is committed to developing projects from the bottom up, and has an impressive list of diverse activities across the region.
51. We spent a good deal of time on 15th June 2011 discussing Groundwork's proposed involvement in the Government's Work Programme scheme, which it is claimed will assist people to move from a reliance on Job Seekers' Allowance to work. Although Groundwork North East is not bidding for contracts in Darlington or the Tees Valley area, it seems certain that it will figure heavily in the delivery of the programme around County Durham and Tyne and Wear.
52. In County Durham they will be an 'end to end' provider for AVANTA to the value of about £1.5 million per year for 5 years seeing an estimated 1357 client per year.
53. In Tyne and Wear they will be a 'Routeways' provider for Ingeus Delloitte to the value of about £250k per year, with approximately 200 clients.
54. They will also deliver Mandatory Work Activity for Ingeus Delloitte in Tyne and Wear where they are the sole provider of work placements to those client who haven't shown the 'focus' required for the work programme.
55. This is a controversial scheme, with many concerned about the impact on the most vulnerable. I will keep Council updated on the progress of the scheme via Groundwork North East's involvement.

Business Improvement District (BID) Project

56. The Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio includes the operation of the indoor and outdoor markets, and as such I am sitting on the newly-constituted Task Group together with Cllr. McEwan, which will have met on 20th July 2011.
57. The Task Group's role is oversee and support the development of the Darlington Business Improvement District. Its aim is to define and agree the 'BID Proposal' with Town Centre businesses, ensuring that service areas provide by the council and other public agencies area identified and base-lined. The outcome could be a ring-fenced levy of town centre businesses, if approved via a referendum, to support business-led improvements to Darlington town centre.

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