
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

Dolphin Centre

2. Since the re-launch of the Dolphin Centre Soft Play Facility in July 2011, over 21,000 people have visited the facility. This is an increase of 9,000 visits on the corresponding period in 2010. The operations, product and pricing were comprehensively challenged and generated an additional £30,000 in income in its first 3 months.

Sports Development

Eastbourne Sports Complex

3. Ongoing partnership work with Darlington based Sports Clubs has extended the offer at Eastbourne Sports Complex significantly in recent months. Darlington Mowden Park, Darlington Triathlon Club, Middleton Rangers and Darlington All Stars all now hold weekly club sessions on the site. This is in addition to Darlington Harriers, Darlington Hockey Club, Gateway Wheelers Disability Cycling Club, Darlington Cleveland Bridge FC and the Hundens Green Association, who all have their base at Eastbourne.
4. A grant of £5,000 has been secured from the English Federation of Disability Sport to help develop Eastbourne as a hub for disability sport in the south of the region. The work will be developed in partnership with Tees Valley Sport to help improve access to sport.

Summer Outreach Programme

5. This summer the Darlington Sports Development Team in partnership with local clubs, Darlington Youth Service, Arts Team, Dolphin Centre and Eastbourne Sports Complex organised its most successful ever Be Active summer programme. This has been a culmination of the work carried out in previous years in partnership with Darlington Children's Services locality teams and the Darlington Schools Sports Partnership helping to increase the positive activity offer to all children across the town of Darlington.
6. The summer programme engaged 862 young people with a throughput of 4297 facilitated by 413 hours of delivery by casual sports coaches. The programme engaged a 50% split of males and females across a diverse range of age groups.

Family Initiative Supporting Children's Health (FISCH)

7. The Autumn FISCH Programme is well under way and currently in four schools: Gurney Pease Primary, Firth Moor, Beaumont Hill Primary and Hurworth Primary. All schools, apart from Beaumont Hill Primary, have taken the offer of an after school club, which has attracted strong participation levels. The programme is currently in Week 4 of 10 and exit routes into clubs and activities will be promoted in the coming weeks.

Mind, Exercise, Nutrition, Do it! (MEND)

8. A pilot of the MEND programme ran from May to August 2011 at the Dolphin Centre, funded through partnership with Durham County Council via the Big Lottery Fund.
9. MEND is a 10-week evidence-based behaviour change programme for families with children 7-13 years who are identified as being overweight for their height. Six families engaged in and completed the programme, which included swimming and activity sessions, nutritional guidance, motivational discussions, games, quizzes and a trip to Sainsbury's to learn about label reading.
10. Impressive results for the participating children showed an overall reduction of Body Mass Index (BMI) and waist circumference, an increase in exercise each week and a lot less time spent watching TV and in front of the computer. Children also demonstrated an increase in self-confidence and improvements in eating habits and nutritional intake. In light of these results, a request has been made to NHS commissioners to roll out further programmes.

Cycle:In Darlington

11. Sports Development has recently received funding to organise and deliver a cycling project in the town and surrounding areas. The project will provide local cycle rides with qualified leaders that will aid people to get back into cycling.

GEM – Get Everybody Motivated

12. GEM sessions have resumed once a fortnight for U3A (University of the 3rd Age) with a positive response from participants who have missed the sessions over the summer months. Budget and funding cutbacks have impacted on the number of GEM sessions running in the town. There are currently four additional community GEM sessions every week with enough participants to self-fund the sessions.

School Games Update

13. Darlington Sports Development Team is hosting the new role of Partnership Manager working on the new School Games Pathway for 2011 – 2013. The role is in partnership with Longfield Academy of Sport and will work on developing competitive sport within schools for pupils from 5 to 16 years old. The Partnership Manager has acquired funding from all primary and secondary schools within Darlington to deliver a sports competition framework across Darlington in 2011/12.

Sportivate Programme

14. Sportivate is a Lottery programme that gives 14 to 25 year olds access to six-week courses in a range of sports including judo, golf, tennis, wakeboarding, athletics, and parkour or free running. The Darlington Sports Development team secured £7,000 of funding to deliver the programme locally.
15. The programme is aimed at those who are not currently choosing to take part in sport in their own time, or are doing so for a very limited amount of time, and will support them to continue playing sport in their community after the six weeks is up. During the six weeks a participant may work towards an event or personal challenge. Activities have already started in Darlington at clubs and community based venues, these included Orienteering, Zumba, Volleyball, Swimming, Hockey, Boys Dance, Squash and Basketball.

Fitbug

16. A second Age UK group have just completed a three-month pedometer project to help them get more active and monitor their nutrition. Final results have not yet been collated but so far the feedback from the group has been very positive.
17. After a recent promotion in the Northern Echo Health Supplement and via DBC internal email, 100 people have volunteered to participate in the pedometer challenge. Bugs will be distributed and targets set in the next few weeks, and Fitbug will be challenging them to make small steps to improve their activity levels and nutrition over the next few months. Updates will be reported after 3 months to see how effective the project has been for this group.

Events

Sherwood's Chevrolet Darlington 10km Road Race – Sunday 14 August 2011

18. Just under 1500 participants took part in the Family Fun Run, 3km and the Sherwood's Chevrolet 10km on the above date. This included a record entry of 1290 in the 10km. Participants were cheered on by thousands of spectators both along the route and at the start and finish in the centre of town.
19. Sherwoods of Darlington were the headline sponsor for the 10th consecutive year and supporting sponsorship was also received from Highland Spring, Brooks Running, The Northern Echo and Alpha Radio. A free physiotherapy service was also provided for competitors by Foot Stop of Darlington.
20. The Council worked in partnership with Darlington Rotary Club in the organisation of the event.

Fancy a Dance – Wednesday 17 August 2011

21. Working in partnership with GOLD (Growing Older Living in Darlington), Cultural Services Events Team assisted in the organisation of the annual tea dance in the Market Square as part of the launch of this year's Summer Market Spectacular .

22. Hundreds of people flocked to the Market Square to enjoy a free cream tea supplied by various sponsors and danced the afternoon away to the Little Big Band on a warm summer's day. Entertainment was provided by the Red Hall Dance Company, GEM (Get Everyone Motivated), Age UK Sequence Dance Club and Line Dancers with information stalls provided by local groups and organisations. Alan Ross from Magic 1170 compared throughout the day.

Rhythm and Blues – Sunday 18 September 2011

23. The annual Rhythm and Blues event was held in the Market Square, surrounding pubs and the Dolphin Centre on 18 September 2011. The event was financed through income secured from private sector hires in Joseph Pease Place and further partnership working with Darlington RnB Club. This enabled provision of one main stage with a headline act and two supporting bands.
24. The Swinging Blue Genes was the headline band with The Producers Band and Little Stevie and the Business providing the support bands. Local pubs funded their own bands and this year there was an increase from five to eight pubs contributing towards the festival.
25. Despite the rain, thousands of people flocked to the Market Square for a free afternoon of musical entertainment as well as enjoying the local performers in the pubs.

Darlington by the Sea – Thursday 25 August 2011

26. Following the success of 2010, the Events Team managed to secure funding from sponsorship and funding to stage the popular Darlington by the Sea event, which returned to the Market Square and attracted several thousand people throughout the day.
27. A variety of attractions and activities all with a seaside and nautical theme provided entertainment for a largely family audience. Featured entertainment included street theatre, face painters, balloon modellers', Punch and Judy, fairground rides and themed craft activities. The biggest attraction however was the 32 tons of sand that made up the beach area.

Darlington Community Walk – Sunday 11 September 2011

28. Just over 80 people took part in this year's Community Walk supported by the PCT which followed the familiar route of Skerningham Wood and taking in the excellent countryside views. Those who participated in the walk had the option to pay extra for a Community Walk T Shirt, which proved popular.

Re Scheduled - Darlington Dance Festival – Monday 12 September 2011

29. Following the cancellation of the Dance School Dance Demonstrations in the Market Square on 17 July 2011 due to severe weather, the Events Team was able to reschedule them at the Civic Theatre on 12 September 2011.
30. Eleven local dance schools took part on the evening and performed their chosen dance performances in front of an audience of more than 700. Darrien Wright and Urban Kaos also performed during the evening.

31. Preparation is already underway for next year's festival in Darlington in partnership with Dance City, Newcastle that will help celebrate the 2012 Olympics.

TFM Spooky Spectacular – Friday 28 October 2011

32. Thousands of people attended Darlington's first ever music and fireworks event in South Park on Friday 28 October 2011.
33. Following the withdrawal of the Council's funding to stage an annual fireworks display the events team was approached by TFM to stage a Spooky Spectacular event working alongside an event Management Company. The event was to be different from the traditional bonfire and fireworks event as it had a musical focus with a fireworks finale.
34. The musical line up included Joe McEldery, Amelia Lily, a recent X Factor finalist, and headline act Tinchy Stryder, who put on a fantastic performance before a fireworks finale.

Darlington Civic Theatre

35. With support from the Theatre, Darlington Arts Academy delivered the showcase for their Summer Theatre School at the Civic Theatre on 6 August 2011. 60 young people were in the cast.
36. On 16 September 2011, Ray Quinn, Deena Payne and Emma Stephens, the stars of this year's pantomime Cinderella were in Darlington for the launch event. They attended a press event and also made a personal appearance in the Cornmill Shopping Centre, as well as visiting the OpenArt Studio at Darlington Arts Centre. Over 20,000 tickets have already been sold.

Darlington Arts Centre

37. Darlington for Culture (DfC) staged their Summer Fling at the Arts Centre in the week commencing 30 August 2011, with support and advice from the Arts Centre staff. Events included a books and writing day, an art installation by the Darlington based Blimey Artists Collective and an Art Fair. DfC are also hosting events in the Arts Centre on Monday and Tuesday evenings, including a new film club.
38. The annual Rhythm n Brews festival, which is a partnership between the Arts Centre, CAMRA and the R'n'B Club, was staged from 15 to 17 September 2011 with a free event in the Market Square on 18 September 2011. The event was very successful with attendances high throughout.

ArtsSpark

39. A new term of ArtsSpark Youth Theatre, Dance and Be Creative courses have begun at Darlington Arts centre with 164 enrolled for the term.
40. A new ArtsSpark Dance class has started at the Arts Centre called Intermix Dance, which provides a class exploring and combining contemporary and street dance styles. As part of the promotional activity for this new class a series of free taster sessions were delivered in secondary schools across Darlington

Visual Arts

Myles Meehan Gallery

41. Artist Mike Golding held his *Remembrance* exhibition in the Myles Meehan Gallery during 29 July to 24 September 2011. *Remembrance* involved local people including members from GOLD, students for the QE Sixth Form College and Council employees, asking them to describe friends and relatives who have died. Their memories were used to create visual portraits using E-Fit, forensic software used by police to produce images of witness statements and a sound work of their stories. The exhibition attracted 3,764 visitors.
42. Mike Golding also delivered a gallery talk to members of the public about the above exhibition and the accompanying workshops. This talk was very well attended with many of the participants of the project attending and sharing their experiences.

The Lounge Gallery

43. Local artist Jonathan Lancaster held his first solo exhibition, *The Beauty of Beasts*, in the Lounge Gallery from 12 July to 20 August 2011. The exhibition featured black and white pencil drawings of animals and it attracted very positive feedback with ten artworks out of fifteen being sold throughout the exhibition.
44. Phil Pook held his *On the Waterfront* exhibition in the Lounge Gallery from 23 August to 1 October 2011, displaying his photographs of landscapes and scenes depicting the celebration of water, its beauty and its interaction with light.

Public Art

45. A new mural has been commissioned for the Glass Corridor Gallery by artist Carl Rosati. A series of workshop were held with young people and their families to provide inspiration for and help to create the artwork. The mural depicts some of the arts and leisure activities that young people enjoy doing in their spare time.
46. Local artist Katie Bird has worked to restore the murals in the courtyard of Darlington Civic Theatre. The murals have been in situ for eleven years and the restoration had given them a new lease of life improving the view of the courtyard from the Civic Theatre.
47. Work in underway on the installation of the new entrances for the Denes. A series of major and minor entrances features were commissioned as part of the refurbishment of the Denes. Whilst all the Denes have a basic uniformed design, each Dene has its own individual design in the centre panel reflecting the names and use of that particular Dene.

The Borough Collection

48. The Visual and Public Arts Officer has been working with the Public Catalogue Foundation to increase access to the oils and acrylics in the Darlington Borough Art Collection, including adding all of Collection's oils and acrylics to be included online on the BBC's Your Paintings website.
49. The Public Catalogue Foundation has launched a new 'print on demand' service, so we are now able to offer prints of our artworks for sale. We will receive 50% of the sale price for

these prints and the Public Catalogue Foundation will cover all the costs from the other 50%. The Public Catalogue Foundation is planning a press launch in the near future, which will be followed up with a local press release to promote this new service.

Openart Studio

50. Openart Studio is running successfully with new people attending from primary, secondary and self referrals for the improvement of mental health and wellbeing.
51. Arts workshops were also provided for 'Markets Spectacular' and 'Darlington by the Sea' in August 2011, 'Darlington for Culture Arts Fair', 'Eid' Celebration and the 'Full of Life' event in September 2011, raising awareness for the project plus the new sessions for children, young people and families.
52. The attendance for the children, young people and families is excellent with some exciting work being accomplished. A number of young people are also working towards gaining Arts Award through Openart Studio.
53. Darlington Mayor, Councillor Lee Vasey and Councillor John Vasey visited Openart Studio in September 2011, meeting the participants and learning more about the positive effects arts and creativity can have on mental wellbeing.
54. Openart Studio is due to exhibit examples of work in the Lounge Gallery from November 2011 to January 2012. A calendar for 2012 is hoped to be produced for the opening on 11 November 2011.

Head of Steam

55. A new 'Rail Trail' has opened on the Museum site showcasing the heritage of the Goods Shed and A1 Trust, proving very popular with visitors.
56. The Tornado exhibition opened on 5 October 2011. The preview for the exhibition was well attended and the exhibition has been well received by the railway community and museum visitors from across the region. The History of North Road Station exhibition is also currently on display in the museum.
57. The museum has a number of events planned for October. The Autumn Festival will take place on 16 October 2011 and a Halloween Fun Day takes place on 30 October 2011.
58. The Ken Hoole Study Centre hosted a Railway Ancestors event at the Centre for Local Studies in September 2011. The drop-in session was well attended and has resulted in people from the event visiting the museum and study centre.
59. The Ken Hoole Study Centre was fortunate enough to receive a generous donation from the Ken Hoole Trust, which has enabled the museum to conserve, scan and rebind the North Eastern Railway 'Collieries, Works and Sidings' book (a much loved and well used railway book).
60. Bridges workshops for primary schools are fully booked for the week of the 17 October 2011, with almost 300 children due to take part. Summer holiday activities went very well, with a successful partnership with McNay Street Children's Centre to provide weekly

outdoor activities on the museum field.

Environmental Services

Grounds Maintenance

61. Now the grass cutting season has ended there have been no major problems reported throughout the summer period in relation to this service. In September 2011, Street Scene services commenced their winter pruning programme of all hedges and shrubs across the Borough, these being prioritised initially on the grounds of health and safety (e.g. sight lines) and it is anticipated that all areas will be completed within the winter period.
62. Members will be aware that Darlington won Northumbria in Bloom 'Best Small City' Category for the third year in a row and may also be aware that Darlington was runner up in the national Britain in Bloom Competition, receiving a Silver Award. As both of these entries are set against a climate of reduced spend in horticultural services and floral displays in particular, it is a testament to the teams involved that much recognition was forthcoming.
63. As Members will be aware, the Council are collecting leaves only from hard surfaces and leaving them in situ in large open spaces, including all parks. There is an opportunity here for Members to try to mobilise Friends Groups and community activists to get involved in clearing up leaves. Street Scene will be more than happy to remove the piles of leaves but unfortunately, following budget reductions agreed by Council in March 2011, do not have the resource to dedicate to this activity.

Winter Maintenance

64. Darlington Borough Council's winter maintenance season started on Monday 3 October 2011 and runs until 29 April 2012. Arrangements are in place to deal with any inclement weather the coming winter season can throw at us, with staff being on standby on a 24/7 basis. The Council's salt stock pile is also at its maximum with 6,000 tonnes of rock salt currently being stored at Vicarage Road.

Community Animal Welfare Footprints 2011 – Gold Stray Dog Footprint

65. The Street Scene Enforcement Team have been successful in achieving the Gold Stray Dog Footprint, part of the RSPCA's Community Animal Welfare Footprints 2011 (CAWF). This is the second successive year that the Team have achieved this award, which reflects the care shown by the service to the stray dogs in its care, from pick up, through kennelling and welfare, to successful return to owners or appropriate onward journey.

Commercial Services

Market Team of the Year Awards

66. Darlington's Market Team is celebrating after being awarded runner-up in the 'Market Team of the Year' category at the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) Annual Conference.
67. Despite being a small team of four officers, they deliver a high quality service to residents, visitors and traders. As well as the regular markets, the team helps deliver speciality events

such as the four-day Summer Market Spectacular. They also work with other groups such as Friends of the Earth and Darlington for Culture to ensure visitors can enjoy a range of different markets.

68. At the NABMA conference, Albert Nowicki, Senior Markets Officer was also awarded third place in the 'Market Officer of the Year' category. Albert is responsible for the successful Summer Market Spectacular as well as the day-to-day running of the markets.

Councillor Nick Wallis
Cabinet Member with Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio