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**OVERVIEW OF LEISURE AND LOCAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO**

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

**Head of Steam – Business Plan 2009 to 2014 and Collections Management Strategy 2012 to 2017**

2. Approval has been given to the Head of Steam's Business Plan and the Collections Management Strategy 2012 to 2017 which evidences how this Council manages the museum service so that the museum remains an accredited museum and entitled to future support from the Arts Council (Central Government Body).
3. This Museum will also be eligible for future funding from Renaissance, English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

**Markets**

4. An Action Group has been set up to focus on improvements within the Covered Market. Representatives on the group include senior officers of the Council, Markets staff, representatives from the traders and myself. The first meeting was held in May 2012 and a number of short-term actions were agreed, which are currently being progressed. These include:
  - (a) A deep clean of the market, alongside a review of the cleaning arrangements and working practices.
  - (b) Installation of Wi-Fi which will enable traders to install chip and pin technology allowing customers to use debit/credit cards.
  - (c) Investigation into the possibility of a Wi-Fi Café within the Market Hall.
  - (d) Review the programme of decoration, prioritising areas within the Market for immediate attention.
  - (e) Tying both the Indoor and Outdoor Markets in to appropriate events within the town centre.
5. The long-term aspiration still remains to refurbish the Indoor Market; however this can only take place when funding is available.

6. The Action Group will meet on a quarterly basis and I am keen to continue to monitor progress to ensure the Market continues to flourish.

### **National Market Day and Love Your Local Market**

7. This invitation has come as part of the Mary Portas Review and is programmed from 23 June to 8 July 2012 with the launch of National Market Day on Saturday 23 June 2012. As part of this initiative, the Council held an event on 8 July 2012 which focussed on getting new individuals involved in the market business. The Markets themselves provide an excellent opportunity for business incubation, providing that initial step on the ladder as well as the opportunity to expand existing business into new areas. The Markets Team are working closely with colleagues in Economic Regeneration and Business Engagement.

### **Cultural Services**

#### **Family Initiative Supporting Children's Health (FISCH)**

8. The FISCH Programme is delivering to four schools this term; St John's, St Augustine's, Northwood and High Coniscliffe. Retention of participants at these sessions is being carefully monitored. Exit routes are being promoted through sign posting to club links, facilities and sports development sessions.

### **Fitbug**

9. The deadline for this campaign was 3 February 2012. We offered 200 free Fitbugs and memberships. Over 150 people signed up and collected bugs. We are monitoring three groups in Darlington, which are Darlington Residents, Fit Mammals (in partnership with Groundwork) and a Health Trainer Referral Group (in partnership with the NHS health trainer team). Organised sessions are in the planning process to engage the Fitbug users and motivate people to use them more and increase their steps. These sessions are in the consultation period.

### **Cycle: In Darlington**

10. The Cycle: In Darlington programme has been launched in partnership with Local Motion. The project has started with weekly rides leaving from Eastbourne Sports Complex. The programme has been promoted by the Council's communications channels including social media and within the "Pedal Power" brochure.
11. Cycle: In Darlington offers rides lasting between 1-2 hours to help people build their fitness. Trained staff lead the groups within the local area and help build their confidence, fitness and bike handling skills. Additional rides can and have been set up with community organisations, education centres and businesses. Most recently a number of rides have been lead for Darlington College and their pupils with good feedback from staff and tutors.

### **Disability Cycling**

12. Disability Cycle sessions have commenced at Eastbourne Sports Complex. The 10-week block sessions have initially been set up with the Education Village to access Gateway

Wheeler's array of specialised cycles for all abilities. The children have really enjoyed the sessions; the aim is to set up a session on a weekend or evening on a continual basis.

## **Sportivate**

13. 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.
14. 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. Activities have already been delivered in Darlington at local clubs and community based venues, these have included Orienteering, Zumba, Volleyball, Swimming, Hockey, Boys Dance, Squash and Basketball. Currently Darlington has retained 140 young people from 14 – 25 and have nearly reached their year 1 target of 175 of retaining the participants for the 6 week programme of activity.
15. The Sports Development Team has been successful in gaining £5000 for delivering new community based activity in year 2. The bids include Skate Klub, Street Swords, Squash, Zumba, Boxercise, Cycling, Dance, Badminton, Cricket and Table Tennis.

## **Click To Do Summer Programme 2012**

16. The Sports Development team have been working in partnership with the Dolphin Centre, Eastbourne Sports Complex, Youth Service, Arts Centre, local clubs and community partners to plan the summer programme for 2012. The activities will include Street Swords, Tennis, Angling, Mini Soccer, Dance, Karate, Swimming and numerous other diverse activities.

## **One Big Event**

17. The One Big Event is an exciting and innovative day of activities and celebration in preparation for the 2012 Cultural Olympiad. This is part Darlington's contribution to a regional programme of activity. The event will centre on the iconic South Park and will be a celebration of the Cultural Olympiad with music, dance, the spoken and written word and physical activity culminating in a collaborative dance based around the Olympic rings. Schools from the surrounding area of South Park will attend the event.

## **Darlington School Games**

18. All Primary schools have been invited to take part in the Darlington School Games (previously known as the Community Games). There will be three weeks of coaching prior to the Games in two sports per school for Year 4 (or 3). The sports will be selected from Tag Rugby, Netball, Football, Cricket and Athletics. There will be additional opportunities for some schools to take part in Orienteering, Street Swords and Tri-golf. The opening ceremony of this high profile event will involve dance from the dance festival and musical performance, and a parade of flags.

## **Tees Valley School Games**

19. The Tees Valley School Games is taking place at a variety of venues across Stockton and Middlesbrough on 11 and 12 July 2012. There will be representative teams from Darlington in a variety of sports; primary, secondary and disability/inclusion. The swimming and athletics teams will be composite teams as we have previously had. All other events for primary will be schools teams: Year 5 Cricket, Tri-golf, Table Tennis.

### **School Games Website**

20. All schools have been encouraged to sign up to the School Games Website. This enables schools to be kept up to date with information and opportunities to get involved with the School Games leading up to the 2012 Olympics. Schools can also access useful resources etc. Register at [www.yourschoolgames.com](http://www.yourschoolgames.com)

### **Primary Change for Life Clubs**

21. All schools were asked if they would like to host one of the six Change for Life Clubs across the Borough. Six schools came forward; Dodmire, Skerne Park, Cockerton, St John's, Northwood, Springfield and Beaumont Hill and will receive a bag of equipment and £250 to support delivery. The training will be given this term.

### **Events**

#### **St George's Day Celebrations –23 April 2012**

22. A toast to St George was organised at the market cross which was attended by the Mayor and Escort of Darlington, along with the Town Crier, Councillor Roderick Francis (Citizen of the Year) and Peter Richardson (Young Citizen of the Year). Darlington Library's junior mascot Deefor the Dragon handed out red roses to the public donated by Flowers by Natrass.

#### **St Teresa's Midnight Walk –18 May 2012**

23. Following lengthy discussions with St Teresa's to consider moving the popular midnight walk back to the South Park from Croft Circuit it proved to be a tremendous success with over 200 women taking part in raising money for St Teresa's.

#### **Vintage Vehicle Rally –20 May 2012**

24. Another successful Vintage Vehicle Rally was held at the Head of Steam Museum on Sunday 20 May 2012. The event attracted 125 vintage and commercial vehicles from across the North East and Yorkshire regions and over 1000 visitors attended to enjoy a family day out.
25. Children's entertainment was also provided and entry into the museum was included as part of the admission charge.

#### **Green Fair – South Park – Sunday 27 May 2012**

26. Over the past few years the Green Fair has grown from a few stalls to one of Darlington's major events attracting around 5,000 people in Darlington's South Park. This year's event

was organised in partnership with the sustainable transport team, sustainable development team, waste minimisation, recycling team, events team and countryside team.

27. There were numerous 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.

### **Cycle in Darlington Pedal Power 2012 – The round 50 Mile Cycle ride 27 May 2012**

28. The first of Darlington's tourist trials, the round 50 mile cycle ride was held on 27 May 2012 and attracted over 140 participants, which was 30 per cent higher than last year's number of participants.
29. The finishing point for the ride was at the South Park to coincide with the Green Fair and proved to be successful for both events.

## **Civic Theatre**

### **Darlington Civic Theatre**

30. Sales for the new season at the Civic Theatre have got off to a brisk start with 3,524 people attending the Wizard of Oz over just two days. Young people from Darlington took part in preparatory workshops and the production itself, taking the role of Munchkins.
31. A Shakespeare's Globe production of Anne Boleyn was very well received. It was seen by 2,313 people and was accompanied by a very interesting post-show talk, as well as a captioned performance by Stage Text. The Civic Theatre together with a number of other theatres, are jointly applying to the ACE Strategic Touring Fund to tour a follow up production to Anne Boleyn, we will hear the outcome of this application later this year.
32. Yes Prime Minister came to Darlington on the final week of a national tour before going back into the West End and was seen by 2,558 people.
33. The Civic Theatre is part of the North-East Children's Theatre Consortium led by Theatre Hullabaloo and together the Consortium has been awarded £166,000 for the development of theatre programming for young audiences. Funding specifically allocated to Darlington Civic Theatre will help to support our continued small scale theatre offer.
34. The Civic Theatre was visited by a group of young people from the Education Village as part of the Young Inspectors Project. The Theatre Director and House Manager then visited them in school to answer questions and they have submitted a report with some useful recommendations about our young people's offer and our access arrangements. They are due to attend a matinee performance of Dancing Queen to see how the theatre operates during a performance.

### **Darlington Arts Centre**

35. Over the past six months, a comprehensive programme of consultation has been ongoing with Arts Centre tenants, clubs and organisations to ensure that they were relocated to alternative venues when the site closed on 7 July 2012. This programme is now almost

complete and the vast majority of Arts Centre based organisations have new alternative accommodation secured with only two clubs that are still considering options.

36. A new Community Art Gallery is now open at Crown Street Library and 'The Bridge' Centre for the Visual Arts will be open from mid July accommodating the Open Arts Studio, Darlington Media Group and the Community Arts Project. A number of organisations will go to new homes at Hummersknott School, Lingfield Point, the Forum and Community Centres. Darlington's Classical Music programme will move to the Central Hall where Darlington Piano Society and Darlington Music Society will be based. This will also be the home for Darlington RnB Club and New Orleans Jazz in future.
37. Despite the approaching Arts Centre closure, support for the programme has remained strong. Events are selling well and for example, An Evening with TV Presenter John Grundy has been sold out for several weeks. In April, Tim Emmett gave a fascinating talk on ice and rock climbing as part of the Royal Geographical Society lecture series. RGS has agreed to retain Darlington as one of its regional venues for their prestigious series and lectures will transfer to the Dolphin Centre Central Hall.

### **Arts Award**

38. All students having Arts Awards moderation in March successfully passed. We are continuing to support a group of Year 6 gifted and talented students at Mount Pleasant School in achieving their Bronze as well as a student who is now pursuing the Gold Award.

### **Arts in Education workshops**

39. Flying Cloud Theatre Company led workshops for 15-21 year olds and 55+ as part of their production development; these sessions were well attended and groups will be invited back to take part in a joint sharing when the company bring their show to the Arts Centre in June.
40. Working in conjunction with the Events team a series of Olympic Flag making workshops have taken place, providing schools with the opportunity to work with an artist to create flags and banners to represent their schools in advance of the Olympic torch relay passing through Darlington. A CPD workshop also took place as part of this programme in order to provide skills training for teaching staff who would not be having the artist in school.

### **ArtsSpark**

41. A number of young people from the Youth Theatre and Dance groups took part in a specially commissioned theatre and dance piece for Darlington Arts Centre over the Easter Holidays, called 'If These Walls Could Dance', which celebrates the legacy of Darlington Arts Centre.

### **Visual Arts**

#### **Myles Meehan Gallery**

42. HALFWAY TO PARADISE - The Birth of British Rock Photographs by Harry Hammond, A Touring Exhibition from the V&A Department of Theatre and Performance the Arts Centre was very excited to host this touring exhibition from the V&A from 6 April to 26

May 2012. The exhibition has received an overwhelming number of visitors, 5454, with a lot of positive comments being made regarding the quality of the work and the pleasure of seeing and hearing 'familiar' pop icons being exhibited in the Arts Centre.

43. Darlington Arts Centre provided a number of workshops over the Easter holidays for children and young people, led by professional artists from across the region, based around the Myles Meehan Gallery exhibition *The Birth of British Rock*. Workshops included print and bookmaking, and pop art.
44. The exhibition '28: A Celebration of the Myles Meehan Gallery' preview evening was held on 31 May 2012, and was the final preview held in the Myles Meehan Gallery.

### **Lounge Gallery**

45. The Community Art Project, 3 April to 12 May 2012, is an innovative and ground-breaking project that has been part of Darlington Borough Council's services for adults with learning disabilities since 2004. It evolved from an artist residency project that was initiated by Artists Agency (now Helix Arts) and the local NHS Trust.
46. The project provides an opportunity for adults with learning disabilities to try out various visual arts activities in a studio at Darlington Arts Centre with support and encouragement from a professional artist. The exhibition of work has once again proved hugely popular, generating a significant number of sales.

### **The Dover Prize 2012**

47. Darlington's Biennial Art Competition, 17 May 17 to 23 June 2012, the Dover Prize Exhibition once again received a large number of entries with 53 works displayed in the exhibition, representing a wide selection of art work being undertaken in Darlington and the surrounding area.
48. This year's winner, Carlton Jordan Piper is a student at the Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College and has recently accepted a place to study Fine Art and History of Art at Goldsmiths University. There were also several other prize winners and commendations from college students.
49. This year the exhibition is being held across two venues; the Lounge Gallery and the new Crown Street Gallery in the town's central library. Joining in with the Olympic celebration of achievement, this year's theme is 'Celebrate!'

### **Crown Street Art Gallery**

50. The Crown Street Art Gallery has now officially opened. With its first exhibition, *The Dover Prize*, opening to significant numbers it has so far received a warm reception. A call for exhibitions has now been circulated and a programme is being drawn up for the coming year with many Arts Centre-based groups keen to exhibit in the space.

### **Openart Studio**



51. Openart Studio is regularly receiving new referrals for daytime adults' sessions, the evening children, young people and family sessions and outreach opportunities.
52. Even with the uncertainty surrounding availability of a new venue, the members are fully confident in the future for Openart Studio. A focus group of participants are now actively involved in the progression of the project.
53. Over 18 sessions, there has been a total attendance of 438.
54. Following a recent visit from The Mayor, Councillor Lee Vasey, who sat for a portrait painting day, two portraits were presented to her on her subsequent visit in May 2012.
55. Secondary care providers are working with Openart Studio to provide pathways for clients in residential care to access opportunities independently.

### **Creative Darlington**

56. The Creative Darlington Board is beginning to meet and agree its focus of work.
57. Stephen Wiper has been appointed and will take up his post later in July. Stephen brings a wealth of experience to take this work forward with the Board.

### **Libraries**

#### **Cockerton Library**

58. The new opening hours at Cockerton Library began on 1 May 2012. Staffing is in place for all but one of the posts and the new hours are working well.

#### **Darlington Friends of Libraries and Volunteers**

59. The Volunteers event at Cockerton Library was a great success with more than a dozen people coming to talk to us about the opportunities available with the library service. Evolution worked with us to take peoples' details and we are now in the process of obtaining CRB disclosures for those who wanted to work with the service. Further volunteers are continuing to come forward and the service is working on procedures and the practicalities of managing what has certainly been an enthusiastic response from our community.

### **Local Studies**

60. The Centre for Local Studies hosted a book launch on 26 May 2012. The book by Jennifer Proctor is entitled "Faverdale, Darlington, Excavations at a major settlement in the northern frontier zone of Roman Britain". The archaeologists brought finds which could be handled and left a display in the Centre. Over 60 people attended the event, and there was a lot of interest in the finds and the book.
61. The 'Darlington, a Knitting Town' piece is now on display in the Centre for Local Studies and hundreds of people have been in to see it. This project was a great success, and the Museum and Local Studies are looking at a further project to build on the success, hoping to

incorporate it with a summer display in the art gallery and the summer reading challenge run for young people from the lending area.

## **Environmental Services**

### **Changes to Household Waste Recycling Centre**

62. Members will be aware that on 16 April 2012, restrictions in the types of waste received free of charge at the Household Waste Recycling Centre were implemented. A height barrier was also installed to alleviate the possibility of commercial-type vehicles illegally disposing of trade waste within the site. To date, the transition has gone smoothly with only a very small number of complaints received. The majority of complaints related to large 4 x 4/domestic vehicles and this issue has now been resolved by the issuing of an annual permit for owners of such vehicles, allowing them to gain access to the site at any time. We are actively monitoring fly tipping in the vicinity, however initial scrutiny would suggest that there has been no significant increase in the amount of fly tipping reported as a result of the changes to the Household Waste Recycling Centre.

### **Street Champions**

63. Members will recall the Street Champion project which commenced several years ago with a view to operating as an environmental neighbourhood watch type scheme. This project was very successful and has continued in operation since its inception, however it was felt of late to reinvigorate the scheme and as a result a get-together of all Street Champions was held and 25 Street Champions attended. The event was organised to allow the Street Champions to meet with officers of all the various sections involved in Environmental Services, whom they would contact with any issues they may have in their areas. This was deemed a great success and it is planned to repeat this event on a six-monthly basis with all 325 Street Champions invited.

### **Litter Free Durham and Darlington**

64. Litter Free Durham and Darlington took place this year from 16 April to 16 May 2012. As a result of the campaign, over 100 people took part in organised litter picks across the Borough with a total of 180 bags of litter collected by volunteers and disposed of by Street Scene.

### **River Cleanse**

65. Working with colleagues in the Environment Agency, a cleanse of the River Skerne was undertaken recently from Victoria Embankment to the fish lock at the rear of Halfords. Coordinated by the Recycling and Waste Minimisation Officer, work was completed in a day and resulted in over 10 tonnes of rubbish being removed from the river, including a dentist's chair and 50 tyres. A cleanse of the remainder of the River Skerne is due to be completed at the earliest opportunity, however due to significant rainfall experienced of late and the high level of the River Skerne, this cleanse may now not be undertaken until later in the summer.

### **Green Flag**

66. Judging for the prestigious Green Flag award has recently been undertaken in three locations across the Borough. South Park has received Green Flag accreditation for the past three years and judging has just recently been undertaken with the hope of accreditation

once again this coming season. Two new locations have also been entered this year; West Park and West Cemetery. Results of the judging will be known in July 2012 and it is hoped that the Borough will be able to boast three award-winning locations.

### **Countryside**

67. With funding obtained by the Friends of Geneva Wood with assistance from Cleveland Orienteering, a new orienteering course has been located at Geneva Wood Local Nature Reserve. Maps of the course will soon be available from the Friends or the Countryside Rangers and it is hoped that local schools and scout groups will be looking to make best use of this new facility.
68. The recently installed Wildlife Garden at Maidendale Local Nature Reserve has just received its latest feature, a set of artistically carved totem poles. The garden continues to thrive, designed as it is to allow a safe space for schools and local residents to assemble and relax whilst also providing education-based activities in a clearly defined, outdoor and bio diverse environment.

### **Jubilee Woods**

69. To celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, over 1,000 trees have been planted at ten separate locations across the Borough over the winter/spring period. The trees have been sourced from the Woodland Trust Jubilee Trees project and many of the planting sessions were carried with the help of local schools, Friends Groups and residents.

**Councillor Nick Wallis**  
**Cabinet Member with Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio**