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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.

**Capital Receipt from Sale of the Former Arts Centre Site**

2. Cabinet received an update on the recent consultation on how to maximise the community and arts benefit from disposal of the former Arts Centre site and gave approval to an application to the third round of Arts Council England's large scale capital programme to develop a small flagship theatre focused on performing arts for children and young people, but which is also available for other arts activities and the wider community; and that £600,000 of any capital receipt from the sale of the former Arts Centre site, be allocated, as match funding for this application.
3. The bid has now been submitted by Theatre Hullabaloo, working in partnership with the Council.
4. Approval was also given for the purchase of an 'option' agreement to enable the acquisition of a site adjacent to the Civic Theatre for the new venue, and it proceed to purchase should the Arts Council England application be successful; and should the bid be successful, a revenue subsidy for the new venue be made available, no greater than the existing Civic Theatre subsidy.
5. That the subsidy required for the proposed new venue be met by reallocating the current subsidy to the Civic Theatre, which would no longer be required at that stage, and would not require any additional budget commitment above the current MTFP.
6. The most popular option in the consultation was that the capital receipt from disposal of the former Arts Centre site should be used for capital costs to support building and /or redevelopment of new or existing venues. Survey results showed net agreement of 68.2 per cent from the Darlington for Culture respondents and 48.9 per cent from Darlington Citizen's Panel respondents for this option.

**Darlington Community Sport Activation Fund Bid**

7. Darlington Sports Development Team has been successful with an external funding community sport activation fund application for £147,000 to Sport England that will develop a three year Active Darlington programme. The three year project involves activities reflecting a broad range of sports for adults, offering informal opportunities which could lead to regular participation and multi-sport activities which provide people with a range of choices and opportunities to suit them. The sports will include Swimming, Netball, Golf, Indoor Cricket, Running, Orienteering, Rounder's,

Gymnastics, Cycling and Badminton. Various sessions have already started and 126 participants have been engaged to date.

### **Darlington Table Tennis Academy – County Durham Foundation Bid**

8. Darlington Sports Development Team has supported Darlington Table Tennis Academy with a successful £5000 funding application from the County Durham Foundation. The funding will be spent on eight new table tennis tables at the club and additional community based sessions organised throughout Darlington.

### **#TheZone**

9. The Darlington Sports Development Team launched a new Friday Night Youth Project on 17 January called #TheZone. The project will give young people aged 11-17 years the chance to go along to The Dolphin Centre to participate in a range of activities. #TheZone will also educate young people on the services available to them in the town by hosting stalls and talks from various local partners.

### **Tees Valley InSport Funding Application**

10. Darlington Sports Development is part of a consortium bid to Sport England's Inclusive Sport Fund with an application for £250,000. The project, if successful, will be delivered across the five Local Authorities in the Tees Valley Darlington, Hartlepool, Stockton, Redcar and Cleveland and Middlesbrough. The aim of the project is to increase the number of disabled people taking part in sport in the Tees Valley.
11. The project will provide high quality sporting opportunities in a variety of settings that are accessible for disabled people. The sessions will be delivered by four InSport Activators and two apprentices working in partnership with community disability organisations, local authorities, National Governing Bodies and appropriate local clubs.

### **Darlington Powerchair Football Club – Get Equipped Bid**

12. Darlington Sports Development Team has supported Darlington Powerchair Football Club with a funding application to the Sport England Get Equipped fund for £10,000. If successful the funding will be spent on two new powerchairs at the Club and additional equipment including balls, goals and bibs. The Club has only recently formed and they have had two taster sessions at the Dolphin Centre that were extremely successful engaging ten new participants. Since it became constituted and it is working in partnership with Durham FA to form a team to join the national powerchair football league.

### **Darlington Indoor Cricket League**

13. The first Darlington Adult Indoor Cricket has been a real success. The league has been taking place at Longfield Academy of Sport and is fully subscribed with teams from local clubs and community groups. The league has been supported by Durham County Cricket Board, Darlington Sports Development Team and the local

development group. The league has engaged 70 adults and junior versions of the format and another adult league was implemented in January 2014.

### **Sportivate**

14. Sportivate is a Lottery programme that gives 14 to 25 year olds access to six-week courses in a range of sports. The Darlington Sports Development team secured 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 end. Activities have already been delivered in Darlington at local clubs and community based venues, these have included Golf, Tae Kwondo, Zumba, Badminton, Football, Hockey, Netball, Rounders and Rugby Union. Currently Darlington have retained 105 young people beyond the programme from 14 – 25 age range.

### **Playing Pitch Strategy and Sport and Physical Activity Facilities Strategy**

16. The development of the 2013 Making and Growing Places Development Plan Document requires the completion of a new Playing Pitch Strategy and Sport and Physical Activity Facility strategy for Darlington. Sport England's document, 'Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance: An approach to developing and delivering a playing pitch strategy', details the 5 stages of the process that the Council is required to go through, and this process has begun in earnest. The timescale for the development of the new strategy from inception to completion is approximately 12 months.

### **Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Consultation**

17. The Darlington public is being given the opportunity to tell the Council what it thinks about proposals around sport and physical activity prior to consideration by Cabinet. The last year has seen detailed consultation with partners to support the development of the draft Sport and Physical Activity strategy. The strategy sets out Darlington's 15 year Ambitions and five year Outcomes, and is supported by an Action Plan which identifies 12 Priority Actions to be implemented over the next two years. It also reflects on the emerging issues and proposed changes in resources and funding.

### **TAG Rugby**

18. The School Sport Partnership has run a programme of TAG Rugby for year 5/6 comprising three cluster competitions and finals at Darlington Rugby Football Club at Blackwell Meadows. This programme has engaged 230 children overall and resulted in Hurworth representing Darlington in the Tees Valley Finals in early November.

### **Key Stage 3 and 4 Badminton - 4 and 11 November 2013**

19. Very successful events at the Dolphin Centre with teams from six schools: the Education Village, Hummersknott, Longfield, Carmel, Polam Hall and St Aidan's. 60

participants took part across the two events and the winners; Hummersknott Boys teams and St Aidan's and Polam Hall girls teams will represent Darlington in the County Finals in January.

## **Sports Hall Athletics Programme**

### **Primary**

20. This programme consisted of three primary cluster events involving 20 schools. The winners and runner ups from each of these clusters were then invited to the Darlington Town final all at the Dolphin Centre involving a total of six schools. Abbey and St Bede's represented Darlington in the county finals on 16 January 2014.

### **Primary Cross Country - 28 November 2013**

21. 485 Primary aged participants from 20 schools took part in this popular event on a glorious day at Eastbourne Sports Complex. The top ten performers from each of the six races have been selected to be part of the Darlington team in the county event in March 2014 and training sessions will be organised for the New Year leading up to this event.

## **Darlington School Sport Partnership Leadership Academy**

22. The School Sport Partnership delivered a very successful Leadership Academy on 25 November 2013 at Education Village with 47 Year 9 students in attendance, from Darlington School of Maths and Science, Polam Hall, Education Village, Hurworth and Carmel. The young leaders gained valuable skills from lead coaches recruited by Darlington Borough Council's Sports Development. The young leaders will be deployed in the future School Games programme assisting at events and festivals throughout the year both in Darlington and the wider Tees Valley/County events

## **Healthy Lifestyle Clubs**

23. As part of the new Ofsted criteria for School inspection Schools are asked about their provision for Healthy Lifestyles. The School Sport Partnership is establishing 12 clubs in primary schools across the town targeting non-sporty children, those lacking confidence in Physical Education and those not supporting a healthy weight. Eight of these clubs started after the October half term and the feedback from schools and coaches delivering the sessions has been fantastic. The remaining four clubs will be established in the New Year.

## **Foundations Group**

24. Sports Development have been running some activity taster sessions at a Council day care facility for adults with learning and physical disabilities. The sessions have included aerobics/dance, table tennis, table cricket and boccia. Feedback so far from the participants and the support workers has been very positive. We will continue to work with the group in the New Year to support them to access funding to expand the offer. They have also been part of our consultation for a bid to Sport

England for the Inclusive Sport Fund for the Tees Valley, and if we are successful there will be greater opportunities to develop sport for the group in the future.

## **Dolphin Centre**

25. The Centre hosted the prestigious 'Local Heroes' Sports Awards in December. Over 450 guests packed the Main Sports Hall for a glittering presentation evening recognising everything that is special about 'grassroots' sport in the North East. The event was sponsored by the Northern Echo and a whole range of other businesses and attended by sports stars from across the region. Talks are underway to bring the event back to the Dolphin Centre again for 2014.
26. The Dolphin Centre Gym was among six sites shortlisted for the UK Gym of the year 2013 through the National Fitness awards (NFA's). The nomination recognised the business transformation that has occurred over the last 12 months at the Dolphin Gym which has doubled the number of members on site. Every public and private sector leisure facility in the UK is eligible for nomination through the NFA's which reflects the considerable achievement in reaching the shortlisting stage.

## **Outdoor Events**

### **Remembrance Day – 10 November 2013**

27. A strong public gathering came out in support of Remembrance Sunday. As in previous years the Events Team planned and delivered the Traffic Management of road closures and diversions, also offering assistance around the Cenotaph during the Service.

### **Reindeer Parade –1 December 2013**

28. The ever popular reindeer parade drew large crowds on a Sunday morning. The event, funded by the Cornmill Shopping Centre, was heralded a huge success. Over 4,000 people lined the parade route around the town which started and finished in the Cornmill Shopping Centre. The events team worked in partnership with the Cornmill, delivering the traffic management aspect of the event.

### **Darlington Christmas Light Switch On – Thursday 28 November 2013**

29. The Christmas Lights switch on was held on 28 November in the Market Square. Several thousand people attended the event. Entertainment included local dance groups performing, Mowden School singing Christmas carols (winner of previous Schools Carol competition perform at the following year's light switch on). DO Society performed, Dale Alley (previous X Factor contestant) sang and other guests included local sporting heroes. Santa arrived in style in a vintage vehicle along with Pantomime star Paul Chuckle to switch the lights on. The evening ended with a fireworks display right after the lights Switch on.

## **Creative Darlington Activity Report - Audience development**

30. A new What's On in Darlington website developed by the Northern Echo with support from Distinct Darlington, Creative Darlington, Darlington Partnership, Darlington Borough Council Leisure Services and assistance from Darlington for Culture and The Forum, has been launched. It is hoped the What's On mechanism may secure in the region of 500,000 visits per month and be an excellent and cost effective resource for residents, visitors and organisations wishing to promote their activity. Creative Darlington's work and remit, alongside that of other supporters, will be promoted within the site.

## **Creative Darlington – Maximising Strategic Arts Assets**

31. In 2013/14 Creative Darlington has supported options appraisal work for Theatre Hullabaloo's company development (Roger Lancaster Associates) and subsequent work (Roger Lancaster Associates, Pam Bone, Thinking Practice) to support the preferred option (remaining in Darlington with 50 per cent use of a new small theatre space), to prepare and submit an application to Arts Council England's Strategic Capital Programme Round 3 and to enhance Theatre Hullabaloo's resilience. The result of the application to Arts Council England is anticipated in July 2014.
32. Creative Darlington has offered Humantics CIC financial support for time limited business development work which will include introducing new systems to improve cashflow and enhance business operation. Acumen Trust has started to work with them Humantics CIC to progress this activity and will report back to Creative Darlington.

## **Creative Darlington – Developing Finance for the Arts**

33. Applications have been received and assessed and awards offered by Creative Darlington to Anton Hecht, blimey! and Debbie Waistell for activity in Darlington. Anton Hecht has used anticipated Creative Darlington support to secure Grants for the arts awards, while other applicants have secured additional finance through the Tees Valley Visual Arts Network and from Tees Valley Dance. Other applications are pending – including anticipated applications from organisations which are seeking to secure finance through sponsorship and philanthropy.
34. Anton started his film making activity in Darlington commencing 2 December 2013 inviting visitors to Darlington indoor market to dance the tango, with the aid of professional dancers. The project was positively received and secured coverage on BBC Radio Tees and in the Northern Echo. Darlington based OddManOut Theatre were offered modest support to pilot the developing finance for arts activity scheme and secured a Grant for the arts award of over £10,000 which recently enabled it to tour its new hard production 'Weather to Fly' across the North East, including the Jabberwocky Market in Darlington, the Arc in Stockton, Queens Hall Arts Centre in Hexham and Live Theatre in Newcastle.

## **Festivals 2014**

35. Darlington Jazz Festival: Jazz North has identified a budget focused on bringing jazz to new audiences, which will support Darlington Jazz Festival activity in late April 2014 at the Head of Steam as an entry to Darlington Arts Festival. Jazz North is also considering applying to Creative Darlington's Developing Arts Finance Programme and the PRS Foundation to build its budget for Darlington activity (which may include commissioning new work).
36. Following the success of the first Darlington Arts Festival, supported by Creative Darlington in May 2013, Darlington for Culture is planning Darlington Arts Festival 2014. Creative Darlington has allocated support to the marketing of the festival and infrastructure costs in staging an arts and crafts market within the programme.
37. The Council has received an evaluation report on the Festival of Thrift 2013 showing the event, which received support from the Creative Darlington budget, alongside other private and public finance and significant voluntary support, attracted in the region of 27,000 visits and significant positive media coverage. The programme was positively received (25 per cent of survey respondents rating the programme good and 70 per cent of survey respondents rating the event excellent). Approximately 85 per cent of the respondents agreed that The Festival of Thrift portrayed Darlington in a positive light. Creative Darlington attended a meeting with Festival of Thrift partners and Arts Council England in December 2013 to discuss future development of the Festival of Thrift. Arts Council England supported the Festival of Thrift in 2013 via Grants for the arts award and commented positively on the first festival. Discussions have commenced on securing funding for a 2014 Festival of Thrift on 27-28 September 2014.2

## **The Jabberwocky Market – Luxi**

38. Luxi staged the first Jabberwocky Market programme in Darlington in October 2013, including performances and activity in a number of Darlington venues including Darlington Indoor Market, Hummersknott School, The Forum, Voodoo Café and the Quaker Meeting House. Luxi generated an evaluation of the October programme which included 56 performances of 21 different shows, 4 workshops for groups of young people with special educational needs and 2 workshops for professional performers and which attracted media and press coverage including BBC Radio Tees, the Northern Echo and the Crack magazine. Luxi have met with Battersea Arts Centre to consider learning points from the first tour and further Jabberwocky Market activity is scheduled to take place in Darlington from 5 – 18 May and 2 – 5 October 2014.

## **Crown Street Art Gallery**

39. Crown Street Art Gallery hosted Darlington based artist Julie Macbean's 'Start of the Line' exhibition from 26 October to 28 November 2013, showcasing new work from her residency at the Darlington campus of Teesside University. The exhibition was positively received and generated a number of sales. The current exhibition 'Northern Grit' by Pat Maycroft runs from Saturday 30 November 2013 to Thursday 9 January 2014 and has been accompanied by a Gallery based poetry reading

event on 2 December 2013 by Vane Women, who generated poems displayed in the exhibition informed by Pat's photographs.

## **Civic Theatre**

40. The first production in an Arts Council funded partnership with the Touring Consortium Theatre Company (TCTC), *To Sir with Love* took place at the Civic Theatre week commencing 11 November 2013. A number of innovative audience development activities took place in the lead up to and during the run with the aim of building new audiences. The theatre and the TCTC worked with a number of ambassadors including volunteers from Darlington for Culture and from the theatre's ArtsSpark Youth Theatre to promote the production to first time attendees. This proved very successful. The ambassadors also helped with feedback and evaluation with audiences during the week.
41. The Civic Theatre's pantomime *Aladdin* opened on Saturday 7 December with very good sales for the run, £91k up on the opening day last year. During half term, workshops with an *Aladdin* theme took place at the theatre and were sold out. Members of the cast of *Aladdin* switched on the Christmas lights in the town centre and have been involved in a number of public appearances to promote the pantomime. The Chuckle brothers have been confirmed to lead next year's pantomime too, which is to be *Chuckles of Oz*. The box office has already taken advanced sales of £39k for the 2014/15 Pantomime.

## **Libraries**

### **Events and Activities**

42. Cockerton Library has hosted a large number of events in the last three months – covering everything from traffic consultations, through school visits to Age UK and Healthwatch events. Crown Street offered 'My Granny is a Pirate', an enormously successful theatre event for children, whilst GEM sessions and Bookstart Baby rhyme times continue to be very popular. The service hosts 12 reading groups every month and provides books to 21 more who meet elsewhere.

## **Markets**

### **Stop Start Tango in Darlington's Market**

43. On Thursday 5 December, Darlington Indoor Market was transformed into an interactive Tango Dance as part of the Tango Art Film Project. Artist Anton Hecht and Creative Darlington offered visitors the opportunity to drop in and help make a short film for digital distribution, while having fun.



44. Participants were invited to be the Tango partner of a dancer from 'the D project' moving around the market. Each member of the public was shown how to do a few moves, just three or four that lasted a couple of seconds, and was filmed with the dancer. People were filmed sequentially one after another with the dancer unable to move the next few steps until another partner is found. In the final film, the dancer dances through the market square with all the different partners popping in and out of shot for a few seconds each.
45. Anton has a track record of developing innovative arts projects in unusual settings, including bus stops and Newcastle's Grainger Market. More locally he created a Trolley Dance video with members of GOLD in the Market Square in 2008. This video went viral and has been seen by over 85,000 people.
46. Creative Darlington has helped Anton and other artists to secure grants from the Arts Council England to develop new work in Darlington, alongside supporting artists and arts organisations to finance their activities through sponsorship, fundraising and philanthropy.

## **Head of Steam Museum**

### **Schools**

47. This Making a Mark project with local authority and independent museum partners in the Tees Valley is helping to develop relationships with non-visiting schools and new areas of work – around the local area, local heroes and a sense of local pride in the students. We also have a national museum partner, the National Portrait Gallery, who offer training and advice and will provide exhibitions on loan next year. The exhibition for Head of Steam will be on display in November and December 2014.

### **Volunteers**

48. Museum volunteers have given 156 hours of their time during October and November on a variety of tasks including event support and tours, collections cataloguing and creation of temporary displays.

### **Tees Valley WW1**

49. A broad range of projects are underway through Head of Steam as part of the Tees Valley WW1 programme. The Exhibitions Panel has chosen Janvs to design and create the touring exhibition for the Tees Valley World War I project. With over 25 years of experience, Janvs is one of the longest established designers of award-winning museums, galleries and visitor attractions in the UK. The exhibition will be exhibited at different venues in Darlington during August 2014 and January/February 2015.

### **Events**

50. The 'Little Boo' Halloween event (with special appearance from Scooby Doo) was a big success with over 1,200 visitors to the museum.

51. 'Santa at the Station' looks to be a success again this year. More than 120 children visited Santa on the first event day (8 December) with further dates (14, 15 & 21).

## **Environmental Services**

### **Refuse Collection**

52. Additional resources were allocated to refuse and recycling collections over the busy Christmas period.
53. Cabinet approved the final scheme for the introduction of revised weekly refuse/recycling collection service known as Alternate Weekly Collection (AWC) service for recycling and residual waste across the Borough following consultation.

### **Street Cleansing**

54. Members will be aware that due to recent efficiencies the Council's mechanical sweeping stock was reduced by 33%. In this regard, six precinct sweepers have now been reduced to four and whilst routes have been amended to minimise the impact of this reduction, there may be an increase in the amount of litter throughout the Borough.

### **Grounds Maintenance**

55. All planned winter works for grounds maintenance such as shrub and tree reduction work are progressing as planned.

### **Environmental Crime**

56. Members will be aware that fly tipping is an issue which is often raised by members of the public. The team are looking at ways to catch fly tippers and a new initiative involving additional signage in fly tipping hot spots which negates the need for Magistrates approval for cameras is to be introduced shortly. It is hoped that this initiative will reduce the amount of fly tipping experienced in the Borough.

### **Nursery**

57. The Council entered into a new contract with a new provider for the procurement of plants and nursery services. This has enabled the Council to increase the amount of contracts it has with other local and parish councils, subsequently bringing more income into the service.

### **Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority**

58. During December, four of the nine Fire Brigades' Union strikes took place. Resilience plans across County Durham and Darlington worked well and the Service was able to provide people with a professional emergency response working at approximately 60 per cent of its full capacity.
59. Throughout the month the Service continued to increase the levels of community safety advice released through the media, social media, business briefings and via

the corporate website. It is believed that the regularity and consistency of the messages put out to warn and inform people ahead of each period of strike action has helped to keep the numbers of incidents occurring on strike days comparatively low.

60. Work continues on the establishment of the Community Interest Company (CIC). A programme was discussed in December and full launch of the company is planned for April 2014.
61. Presentation of the annual long service awards took place on 9 December 2013. 28 members County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service staff received long service and good conduct medals in a variety of categories during an event held at Durham's Town Hall.

### **Darlington Fire Station Performance December 2013**

62. Primary Fires (fires that result in a financial loss to the owner e.g. house fires, vehicle fires) reduced from 17 in December 2012 to 13 in December 2013. Home fire safety remains one area of high priority for the station and home fire safety checks continue to be the focus of community safety activity.
63. Darlington Fire Station staff visited more than 200 homes in December to fit smoke detectors and give home fire safety advice. The station has incorporated the referral and recruitment forms for the 'Good Friends Scheme' in Darlington into the home fire safety packs; this means that during these home visits the Service can also gauge whether the occupier could benefit from the scheme, or be a potential volunteer.
64. Secondary Fires (nuisance fires, e.g. rubbish, grass) have reduced from 29 in December 2012 to 14 in December 2013. This reduction can be attributed to the efforts of the fire crews and partner organisations; in particular the police beat teams and the local authority, by conducting 'environmental visual audits' within the Ward areas of Darlington. These audits help to identify and remove the risks of nuisance fires and other types of anti-social behaviour.
65. During December Darlington Station responded to 10 road traffic collisions. This is an increase of three compared to December 2012, however looking at the targets for the station, Darlington is performing well in all aspects.

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