
OVERVIEW OF LEISURE PORTFOLIO

Purpose of Report

1. During the last eight-week cycle the following were the main areas of work under my Leisure Portfolio.

Community Events

Street Art

2. As part of the Events Strategy for Darlington, the newly formed Events Unit have been working on the implementation of the events calendar to deliver a range of diverse cultural performances to the Darlington's community.
3. The Street Art programme commenced on Saturday 27 May 2006. The programme will run until 2 September 2006 with regular performances of street theatre, music, dance and mime from locations within the Pedestrian Heart. Performances commence at 11.00 am -2.30 pm with addition performances on Thursdays during the summer school holiday.

Bands in the Park

4. Bands in the Park programme will take place in the newly refurbished bandstand in the South Park each Sunday from 25 June 2006 to 27 August 2006 between 3.00 pm - 5.00 pm Performances from the Cockerton Silver Band, River City Jazz men, Durham County Youth Big Band, Barnard Castle Band have been confirmed.

Tempest

5. In partnership with Cleveland Theatre Company an open-air promenade performance of Shakespeare's 'The Tempest' was staged in the newly restored South Park in June 2006. The production was heavily subscribed to including a lot of young people from local schools.

Race For Life Event

6. In partnership with Cancer Research the Council hosted Race For Life on Sunday 11 June 2006 in the South Park. The event attracted a record entry of 4000 women raising money for Cancer Research.

The Great North Walk

7. The Great North Walk is being held in Darlington on Sunday, 23 July 2006. The 9.5 mile course starts and ends in Springfield Park. Organisers confirm there is a 3 mile “wheels friendly” route available for participants.

London 2012 Road Show

8. Leisure Services have been working in partnership with Sport England and One NorthEast to bring the London 2012 Road show to Darlington on 21 July 2006. This nationwide tour will begin the countdown to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Games and ensure that local communities and businesses are informed about the preparations for the Games. Also, it will remind businesses about the economic opportunities that are presented by the Games and send out a strong message about sport and the huge inspiration the Games will be to local communities.
9. A Cabinet Minister and British Olympic Gold medallist will be part of the delegation that visits Darlington in July. The event will be held in the market square with a range of sport and physical activity demonstrations. The young people involved also represented Darlington in the Tees Valley Youth Games and are members of the ‘Get Everybody Motivated’ GEM programme.

Dolphin Centre

Dolphin Centre Refurbishment

10. A third of the Dolphin Centre refurbishment programme has been completed. The new administrative accommodation on the second floor of the building is completed with staff working in the newly refurbished area. A large element of the demolition work has been completed including the removal of the original staircase in the centre of the building. The work to reconfigure the wet changing provision is on target for completion by August 2006. The Darlington Association on Disability Service is now operating within its new premises and the shop unit has now been vacated to enable the refurbishment of this area.
11. The Dolphin Refurbishment Communications Strategy continues to ensure that customers, partners and stakeholders are kept informed on progress. A series of short web-casts have been commissioned through a local production company that will be displayed on the DBC website to keep customers updated on the construction work within the Centre. The first film in this series is now available on the Dolphin Refurbishment pages within www.darlington.gov.uk.

Sports Development

12. Darlington’s Community Sports Network, led by Leisure Services, has developed the first draft of Darlington’s Sport and Physical Activity Strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to facilitate a cohesive approach to sport and physical activity development in Darlington. In line with Sport England’s strategic vision, the key aims will be to increase participation in sport and physical activity across Darlington.

13. The Community Sports Network engages a cross section of partners from different sectors including representatives from the PCT, Sport England, the LSP, Tees Valley Sport, Education and the voluntary sector.
14. It is anticipated that a second draft strategy will be produced early July following feedback from all partners. As a result of the development of the Community Sports Network, a funding application worth £55,000 over three years has been provisionally accepted by Sport England for a full time Physical Activity Development Officer (subject to final approval by North East Sports Board, July 2006). This post will deliver on key outcomes of the Sport and Physical Activity Development Strategy.

GP Referral Scheme

15. A comprehensive review of Darlington's GP Referral scheme has enabled some major developments for the scope of this service. Leisure Services have received £30K of additional funding to support a new 'Lifestyles Co-ordinator' that will develop a broader menu of services in partnership with local GPs for patients.

Community Sports

Darlington hosts the Tees Valley Sport Partnership Youth Games 2006

16. More than seven hundred young people participated in the Tees Valley Youth Games that were hosted in Darlington on Sunday, 18 June 2006. This is the first time the games have been hosted in Darlington and the event was an extremely successful opportunity for young people, volunteers and local clubs. The events were held at the Education Village, Eastbourne Sports Complex and the Dolphin Centre.

Zone Active

17. The Zone Active Project, launched in May 2005, aims to increase the number of people participating in sport and physical activity across the Lascelles, Park East and Eastbourne wards of Darlington.
18. Four 'Get Everyone Motivated' (GEM) classes continue to run successfully at the Dolphin Centre, Eastbourne Sports Complex, Maidendale House and Clifton Road Community Centre in the Park East Ward. There are now thirty-five newly trained GEM Leaders who are delivering physical activity sessions within Darlington. A comprehensive programme of summer vacation activities has been developed and will be available throughout the school holiday period and will include activities such as trampoline, kwik cricket, tag rugby and basketball.

Breaking Barriers Project

19. The Sports Development team is continuing to develop the 'Breaking Barriers Project' in partnership with Darlington and District Youth and Community Association (DDYCA). This project was developed in recognition of the lack of activities for young people in some parts of the town, and aims to use sport and physical activity as a way of engaging young people in constructive pursuits. Elements of the projects are now well established at Longfield, Red Hall, Middleton St George and Branksome. Early indications are that the evaluation and secondary consultation process have led to positive outcomes for the young people involved. All four areas will continue to operate over the summer vacation and provision is also being made to deliver activity days in the areas in conjunction with DBC Youth Workers.

Visual Arts

World Summit Meeting

20. Delegates from the World Summit on Arts & Culture visited Darlington's West Park as part of their North East tour on 18 June 2006.

Morton Palms

21. City & Northern are in the process of commissioning John Atkin to produce a second sculpture for Morton Palms.

Myles Meehan Gallery

22. Video Installation artist Anton Hecht worked with a poet and choreographer on a new multimedia piece for the gallery, which captures the essence of the town in visuals and text. The work was filmed in and around Darlington and includes groups of local residents forming words from a specially commissioned poem for the town. The exhibition includes a large projection with accompanying computer prints.

Pedestrian Heart

23. Lead Artist Dr Michael Pinsky continues to work with the design team on the "Life Pulse" sculpture, the water cascade, chronological lighting and the Christmas lights. Poet, Jacob Polley has been commissioned to write poetry that will be incorporated into the floor scope of the new scheme.

North Lodge Park

24. Visual artist Andrew McKeown has installed his metal leaves embedded into the grass in the park with lead poet Maureen Almond's poetic text. Maureen has completed an 18-month residency and worked with local people and children in the North Lodge Park area. A poetry anthology and a public art leaflet are being produced. The launch is now planned for later in the year.

Faverdale East Business Park

25. Arts Services has commissioned visual artist Cath Campbell and poet Bill Herbert to write an arts strategy for the developers at Faverdale East to help the commissioning of public art as the Business Park develops.

Skerne Park Community School

26. Glass designer Sue Woolhouse has been commissioned to design and fabricate twelve windows for the front and entrance of the new Skerne Park Community School. It is envisaged that the new windows will be installed early July 2006.

Sponsorship and Marketing

Pantomime Launch

27. The Marketing Team held this year's pantomime launch on 12 June 2006 at Walworth Castle Hotel. In attendance were stars from the cast, The Krankies and Denise Welch. The Civic Theatre will stage Cinderella from Friday, 8 December 2006 until Sunday, 21 January 2007.

The Mayor's Charity Golf Day

28. The Mayor's Charity Golf Day took place in June at Stressholme Golf Course where a record number of teams took part. The main sponsor was Ropers Leisure with supporting sponsorship from Alpha fm, The Northern Echo, Hayton & Lamb, Promovere, John Wade Group, Bountiful Baskets, Viviente, Titleist and Ping.

Skerningham

29. Arts Services has secured design stage funding for artist Carl von Weiler to propose designs for way markers and a resting place for the new young parkland on the edge of Darlington.

Development Funding

30. Key news for this period is that the Museum has been offered a grant of £498,500 by the Heritage Lottery Fund, to support refurbishment of the station building and displays. Along with £400,000 from the Northern Rock Foundation, £191,000 from English Heritage, £150,000 from the Railway Heritage Trust this is now sufficient to enable a start to be made subject to Cabinet approval for the project.

Events

31. Over the late May Bank Holiday weekend, the Museum held a series of Works Open Days. Nearly a thousand people visited over three days, and the event received excellent publicity and reporting, in advance and afterwards, including a double-page spread in "Steam Railway" magazine. On 18-19 June, the Museum held its first vintage vehicle event for many years, attracting around 500 visitors.

32. On 8-9 July, Thomas the Tank Engine, the Troublesome Trucks and Devious Diesel visit North Road. Preparations are now in hand for what is generally the year's biggest event.

Northumbria in Bloom and Green Flag Award

33. Preparations have been taking place during late June and early July to ensure that floral displays throughout the town are at their peak for Northumbria in Bloom judging, which will take place on Tuesday 25 July 2006. The competition is not just about excellent floral displays but also community engagement, overall cleanliness, biodiversity and use of resources including recycling.
34. Judging also took place on 8 June 2006 at South Park, which has been entered for the green Flag Award. The judges were extremely impressed with the facility and the knowledge of the gardening staff on site. The results for the award are expected to be announced at some point mid to late July 2006.

Study Centre and Collections

35. The Museum continues to receive very interesting donations from the public, including a collection of photographs showing a very personal view of work for the Cleveland Bridge company, as they were taken by a worker between 1938 and 1946. Another interesting donation is a rather unusual British Railways Eastern Region shunter's pole, which has been identified as being intended for use with chaldron wagons. It is now on show. Several new displays have been created, with good feedback from donors and visitors. The repackaging project for the engineering drawings and plans in the collection using archival tubes purchased last financial year with grant money, is going very well, and volunteer help continues to be much appreciated.

Councillor Lee Vasey
Cabinet Member with Leisure Portfolio