

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 4 November 2014

Subject: Leisure & Community Services

Portfolio Holder: Cllr H Kane

Recommending:

That the report of the Leisure and Community Services Portfolio Holder be noted.

Community Services

Police Crime Commissioner Funding: A grant of £7,160 has been awarded to Community Services, to develop positive relationships with young people, through provision of football and related activities for 11- 16's in Waltham Abbey and Limes Farm, Chigwell. It is hoped that the provision will divert young people away from anti-social behaviour and crime, help build respect and cohesion in the local community and help the participants to gain new skills and improve their wellbeing.

Funding for Trampolining sessions: Essex County Council's 'Short breaks Team' have awarded additional funding of over £1000, to Community Services in order to extend the number of trampolining sessions available for disabled children and young people in the district. This special programme which has been very successful in improving the coordination and confidence of participants currently has extensive waiting lists, but the additional funding will enable the provision of new sessions at Ongar Leisure Centre.

Youth Mountain Biking: The original young people's mountain biking club which meets every Saturday at High Beach in Loughton, continues to expand, with average attendances now around 35 each session. Due to the popularity of this sport which had a high profile at the Olympics in 2012, Community Services has also established four satellite mountain bike clubs that operate in local schools and as young people develop their skills, they are fed into the High Beach club to tackle the more advanced terrain.

'Active Boys': Focusing on the need to get more boys physically active the arts development department worked with Roding Valley School to deliver a Boys Day of Dance on 26th September. All 120 boys in years 7&8 participated in a day of dance and got to experience four different high energy dance forms.

Singing Project: A further three schools are due to start a free singing development project after half term. The project funded by the Essex Music Hub aims to strengthen music skills in teachers and pupils in primary schools in the district.

District Youth Conference: The Epping Forest Youth Council hosted a very successful Youth Conference on Tuesday 14th Oct to mark Local Democracy Week. 89 young people representing every secondary school in the district attended on the day. Delegates participated in facilitated workshops examining issues such as; stress, alcohol, drugs, employment & skills, volunteering and bullying. The young people were able to then question key service providers from a range of partner agencies in the afternoon. I was delighted to be invited on to the Panel, and joined Lindsay Whitehouse – Deputy Police and Crime

Commissioner for Essex, Michael O'Brien – Head of Commissioning Education & Lifelong Learning from Essex County, Chris Seward – Chair of the Secondary Schools Group and professionals in the field of alcohol and drugs, along with Leader, Councillor Chris Whitbread.

Our Epping Forest young people particularly highlighted the need for additional resources in respect of adolescent mental health and were keen to have more access to local volunteering opportunities. Following on from other partnership working with Epping Forest College, several of their photography students provided the photographic coverage for the event.

Young Citizen of the Year: The search is on for our Young Citizen of the Year and Members are urged to nominate worthy young people before the closing date of 28th November.

Community Cohesion: Proactive community development work continues to be rolled out in Waltham Abbey and from The Limes Centre in Chigwell. November will see the launch of a Good Neighbour Scheme in the Oakwood Hill and Shelley areas, which will encourage neighbours to get together and look out for each other as the nights draw in.

Museum Service: The Museum continues to provide a fantastic variety of opportunities for local people of all ages and abilities to access the rich history of our district and country. A WW1 Exhibition was launched at Lowewood Museum in Hoddesdon, which has been a great success and various family drop in sessions are being staged at venues across the district including the Waltham Abbey Library. The Museum display case and panels are proving to be popular in the Civic Offices Atrium and the Museum team continue to find new ways of engaging with their existing and new audiences.

The main building contract for the Museum is now well progressed and tenders for this will be submitted to the Council in November and I will be working with a panel consisting of officers, appointed project consultants and our project lead from the Heritage Lottery Fund, to assess the tenders. As the contract will be in excess of £1m, a report will then be submitted to Cabinet Committee to approve the award of Tender.

Leisure and Cultural Strategy: The Cabinet are due to consider the new Leisure and Cultural Strategy for the District on the 3 November, which will identify the future role and providers for the Council with respect to Leisure opportunities. The Strategy will also recommend the preferred procurement option for the new Leisure Management Contract due to commence in January 2016. I will be able to update Members on the Cabinet's consideration of these important issues.