

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 27 September 2016

Subject: Leisure & Community Services

Portfolio Holder: Councillor H Kane

Recommending:

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

Community Services

External Funding Success

I would like to start my report this evening, by announcing a huge success for our Museums, Heritage and Culture Service, in securing £273,000 from Arts Council England (ACE) for a project called 'No Borders', which will see work delivered across Epping Forest, Broxbourne and Chelmsford Museums. The funding is from the National Resilience Fund for Museums and we are one of only two museums in Essex among the 94 nationally to have received an award, the other area being the Museum of Power an independent museum, which has received £60,000.

As part of the funding bid, the Council agreed to invest £20,000 from the Invest to Save Fund and Broxbourne and Chelmsford Council have committed £10,000 each and a high level of staff and management time, including a part time management secondment to support the project.

There are three main areas of the project which include;

- creation, development and implementation of a commercial approach to operation of the three Museums including retail, catering, events and exhibitions;
- development of two Development Trusts (one for Epping Forest & Broxbourne and a separate one for Chelmsford), to operate alongside the management of the museums and enable access to wider funding opportunities); and,
- public engagement to develop new audiences and attract underrepresented groups.

Some of the funding will be used to employ three fixed term post for an 18 month period, which will include a Commercial Manager, Fundraising Manager and Public Engagement Officer to lead on the work and share skills and expertise with existing museum staff. EFDC is the lead partner in the project and will be responsible for managing and directing the work of the new staff, which in terms of time allocation, will be divided approximately 50% to EF and 25% each to Broxbourne and Chelmsford.

The funding period runs from 1st October 2016 to March 31st 2018 and officers are already in the process of recruitment, to enable a swift start.

This another massive achievement for Community Services, when there is significantly less funding available and is due to, the success of the redevelopment of our Museum in Sun

Street; evidence of innovative partnership working and the expertise of our staff in developing and writing funding applications.

Summer Activity Programme 2016:

Once again, the Council's Community Services Team organised and delivered a very successful summer holiday activities programme for children, young people and families.

This year, over 2,500 people participated in the extensive range of activities on offer, which included physical and mental health improvement related activities, such as; multi-sport days, soccer tots, mountain biking, Play in the Park and Play in the Forest sessions and dance programmes. The various creative activities on offer included; "Discover Your Inner Artist", "Goldilocks and the Three Bears Plus" and "Frogs, Snails and Teddy Bear Tales" productions, along with "How to...Draw", "How to Paint", "Be an Animator" and "Be a Textile Artist" workshops. In addition, Museum family fun days and sessions were available such as; "Make a Mini Museum" and Toy Car Print making and drop-in sessions.

The ever successful Inclusion Programme, which was recently extended by further funding from Essex County Council, offered opportunities for children with additional needs to 'own a pony' (groom and ride) for a day, activity days at Sun Trap Centre, trampolining sessions, 'Dance like a dinosaur' fun sessions and two nights' camping (away from their parents).

Over 250 youngsters took part in the multi-sport days which have replaced summer playschemes (due to lack of take-up) and these offered a chance for 6 -14 year olds to take part in fun filled activities including: Football, Netball, Tag Rugby, Athletics, Handball, Dodgeball, Boxercise, Tennis, Zumba and Street Dance. The Council also worked in partnership with Colebrook Royals Football Club to deliver the football and multi-sport camps at Grange Farm in Chigwell.

The Play in the Park sessions, which are designed to provide opportunities for families on a restricted budget were very popular again this year, with over 1,200 children attending throughout the summer. These two-hour 'open sessions' are provided free of charge to children and families, with a re-charge of £65 being covered by participating Parish and Town Councils across the district. These contributions are matched by 3 members of staff and a van full of sports and play equipment, which is taken to designated locations across the district, which this year included; Abridge, Buckhurst Hill, Epping, Loughton, North Weald, Ongar and Waltham Abbey.

Museums, Heritage and Culture

Since the reopening of the Epping Forest District Museum in March, around 9,000 people have visited the new museum and the new facility has drawn universal positive public praise. The project has so far been shortlisted for two awards; by the architect's Journal and the Chartered Institute of Building and is recognised as one of the most innovative designs in the East region.

Public engagement of the services and particularly online and social media continues to grow and so far, since March this year, there have been over 270,000 interactions with services provided by Museum, Heritage and Culture have been recorded.

In the last few weeks, the museum has also received notification from the National Museums' Security Officer, that our new building meets the requirements for us loan items from the National Museums, which is a very exciting prospect. This has already allowed the museum to secure display of an important medieval manuscript from the British Library, as

part of a special exhibition celebrating the reign of King Harold II. The Vita Haroldi is a 14th century manuscript, once part of the monastic library at Waltham Abbey and this will be the first time it has been seen in the district, in 500 years.

Over the summer period, the newly refurbished museum was buzzing with new and returning visitors to join various activities including the drop-in family art and craft sessions and a range of other cultural activities. These activities offered a range of options for families and young people to engage with the collections and help generate new income for the service.

Drop-in art and craft activities for families took place on Tuesday afternoons at the Museum with an average of 50 children attending each week. Family activities also took place at Lowewood Museum in Hoddesdon on Thursday afternoons, with an average of 30 children attending each week.

Both Epping Forest and Lowewood museums held a Family Fun Day on Saturday 6 August and over 200 people visited each museum, to enjoy a range of activities including puppet shows and willow weaving in Waltham Abbey and African drumming and mask making at Lowewood.

This year's summer cultural programme which ranged from theatre shows to dance, drawing and painting workshops successfully attracted over 300 people children and their families. Particular highlights included the new workshops of 'Discover your Inner Artist' in which participants tried their hands at many different art forms in one day, resulting in them achieving a Discovery Arts Award at the end of the session. At 'Be an Animator' participants spent the day making their own clay models and stories to turn into a short animated film. A full workshop of 30 children worked very hard in 'Musical in a Day' to learn and perform three songs from hit West End musical *Matilda* as well as the choreography and two scenes. In 'Be a Textile Artist', participants got to experiment with printing on to fabric, applique and designing their own patterns taking inspiration from the museum's collections.

Over 150 people came to watch the two theatre shows that were staged this year. Freehand Theatre returned with *Frogs, Snails and Teddy Bear Tales* and the audience brought along their teddy bears to enjoy the show too and were wowed by a season changing washing line and a monster picnic basket. More bears visited the district with Booster Cushion Theatre's wacky production of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears Plus*. All told through a giant book and physical humour, the show was a hit with all ages.

Leisure and Cultural Strategy – The Portfolio Holder Advisory Group on the preparation of the Leisure and Cultural Strategy, is due to consider the draft Strategy on the 2 October. The Strategy will also address the level of provision of future leisure facilities provided by the District Council, and the best means of procuring their management.