

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 27 July 2017

Subject: Leisure & Community Services

Portfolio Holder: Councillor H Kane

Recommending:

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

Leisure Management

After a successful period of mobilisation, the Council's new Leisure Management Contractor, Places for People (PfP) took over the day to day management of the Council's 4 Leisure Centres on the 1st April 2017. The vast majority of the staff previously employed by SLM Leisure Management TUPE transferred across to PfP, and customers therefore have seen little change in personnel and a great deal of continuity of services was achieved.

Since they took over, PfP have introduced a new booking system, which despite some initial teething issues, is now proving very popular with customers. A focus on increased standards of cleanliness has been undertaken to bring the Centres to the high standards PfP have committed to in the Contract. Preparatory works have been undertaken to bring forward refurbishment and extensions to the Centres. The most significant are the new Health and Fitness Extension at Loughton Leisure Centre and the new Leisure Centre at Waltham Abbey. I am pleased to report that the new Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre at Hillhouse received full planning approval at this month's District Development Management Committee, with work scheduled to commence in early October.

Community Services

Community, Health and Wellbeing

Crucial Crew 2017: I was once again pleased to visit the Council's annual Crucial Crew event, which was held at Debden House in Loughton during a week in June, where our local primary school year 6 pupils took part in a range of interactive sessions to stimulate their awareness of staying safe, fit and healthy. This year, nearly 1,400 youngsters took part in Crucial Crew and were given advice on how to tackle or prevent the dangers they may encounter in everyday life, through participating in workshop scenario's focusing on;

- Road safety (Essex County Council)
- Vehicle blind spots (Sainsbury's)
- Building sites – dangers and hazards (Mears)
- Healthy relationships (Safer Places and Epping Forest District Council)
- Physical Activity (Epping Forest District Council)
- Bullying (Red Balloon Learner Centres)

- Internet safety (Essex Police)
- Healthy lifestyles (ACE – Anglian Community Enterprise)
- Ambulance (East of England Ambulance Service)
- Fire safety escape plans & smoke alarms (Essex County Fire & Rescue Service)

The new High Sheriff of Essex, Simon Hall, joined the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council at Crucial Crew and commented that he was hugely impressed by what was covered in such a short period and how impactful it is upon the children. He was also pleased to see the number of other organisations that work with us to deliver the scenario. As usual, feedback from pupils and schools has been extremely positive and it is an initiative that schools particularly value.

Cycling for Health: External funding has been secured to extend the Cycling for Health programme, which has enabled the provision of new sessions on Fridays, added to the existing Wednesday rides, through to Friday 29th September. The rides start at 10am from Gunpowder Park, Claytons Hill Car Park, Hooks Marsh Car Park or Lee Valley and are led by qualified and knowledgeable instructors. The rides take place on bridleways and walking paths so are generally traffic free and are between around 10 km and 15 km (6 to 10 miles) with a varying degree of difficulty. Bikes are available to loan and a diary of rides can be found in the Cycling for health leaflet available from Community, Health and Wellbeing.

Dementia Friends Awareness: To build upon the success of the Epping Forest Dementia Action Alliance, which has seen a range of dementia training provided by Community Services for people of all ages across the district, there will be a Dementia Friends information session for Members on Thursday 27th July 6.30pm – 7.30pm in the Council Chamber. This session, which will be approximately 45 minutes long, will be delivered by Tracy Schneider, who is an experienced trainer and is supported by the Alzheimer’s Society. It will be a very interesting session, where you will learn more about dementia, how you can help to create or support dementia friendly communities or indeed help support people who you know that are living with dementia.

Staff from Community, Health and Wellbeing, have now trained over 250 dementia friends across the district, including the fire crew at Epping Fire Station, Citizen Advice Bureau and Year 5 pupils at Upshire Primary School, and have worked in partnership with local libraries to provide public dementia friends sessions across the district during 2017. Sessions have already been held in Waltham Abbey, Loughton and Epping libraries and the remaining sessions are as follows;

- Chigwell Library, Tuesday 12th September, 2pm to 3pm.
- Debden Library, Thursday 21st September, 1.30pm to 2.30pm.
- Chipping Ongar Library, Tuesday 10th October, 10am to 11am.
- Buckhurst Hill Library, Thursday 2nd November 12.30pm
- Northweald Library, Thursday 7th December, 11am to 12noon

If Member colleagues are unable to attend the pre-Council information session, they are welcome to go along to their local library.

Summer Activities 2017: As usual, we will be providing a huge range of sporting and creative activities during the children’s summer holidays this year, for children of all ages, abilities and interests. Activities include multi-sport camps, play in the park, play in the forest, forest adventure, discover your inner artist, musical in 2 days, Go Wild:DIY grass heads, Be an Illustrator, How to Draw and lots more. We are also offering our increasingly popular Disability Inclusion Project activities for children and young people with Special Educational Needs.

Members should have received a copy of the Summer Activity Brochure 2017 via members mail, but if not, a copy can be obtained by contacting Ezra Folan on Extn. 4363.

Reality Roadshow: Our Community, Health & Wellbeing Team has, once again, completed the delivery of the Reality Roadshow programme, which is provided in every secondary school in the district, over the academic year. Over 1000 young people have participated this year, in this excellent initiative, which brings together a host of statutory and voluntary agencies, to deliver a full day of educational workshops to 14 year old pupils in the school based setting.

Every Reality Roadshow event is specifically tailored to address current and emerging issues identified by the respective school and the pupils themselves. Workshops include topics such as the consequences of crime, healthy relationships, drug awareness, internet safety, healthy lifestyle choices, sexual health, knife crime and gangs. Key messages are given in a clear and evidence based manner and serve to highlight the consequences of negative behaviours or poor choices. The programme promotes the opportunity for young people to make changes in their lives and to receive support and advice from the various agencies available locally.

Grant Aid : Since April this year, 11 groups have successfully applied and been awarded Grant Aid funding, totaling £29,667. Successful recipients include; Chigwell Tennis Club, Epping Foresters Cricket Club, Gardens of Hanbury Petanque Club, GROW Community Garden, Hastingwood Village Hall, 3rd Ongar Scouts, Roydon Tennis Club, The Roydon Society, WAY 2000 and Waltham Abbey Wood Craft Folk. The grants awarded will put to a wide range of uses including; counselling for young people, refurbishments and repairs, security fencing, polytunnels and camping equipment. If Members have any groups in their wards who need funding support for projects and activities that provide community benefit, we welcome new bids to the Grant Aid scheme.

MiLife Primary School Programme: Members will be aware of the fantastic MiLife Mental Health and Wellbeing programme that our Youth Council developed with officers and partners from the statutory and voluntary sector, and I am delighted to advise that this initiative has been a resounding success in every secondary school in the district. Not only has it had an impact on young people, but staff at local schools and other statutory and voluntary sector partners have highly praised the project, including the district's Early Help & Start Well Group (sub-group of the Health & Wellbeing Board), who identified that young children would also benefit significantly from support and early advice around mental and emotional health.

Our Community, Health & Wellbeing Team has therefore worked in collaboration with the Red Balloon Family (local Third Sector organization) to develop a new MiLife project specifically for primary schools, which will be delivered to Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 children. This will include a parental awareness session, followed by presentations for every year group and then classroom based activity workshops to consolidate the key messages with pupils in smaller groups. Teacher Resource Packs have also been developed in order that school staff may further support the educational messages around emotional literacy and wellbeing. To date, pilot days have been delivered at Limes Farm Infants School and Alderton Junior School and feedback has been resoundingly positive. A further six primaries will participate in the MiLife Primary project in the Autumn.

Epping Forest Youth Council

Speed Meeting: On 3rd July, I was very pleased to be invited to the special Speed Meeting event that our Youth Councillors organised, for our Chairman, Vice Chairman of Council, portfolio holders and senior officers, in order for them to get to know us and vice versa. We were given 5 minutes to meet and question each other on a rotational basis and were all asked to complete a score sheet to identify who we felt was friendliest and best communicator. The

Youth Cllr. winners on the night were Adam Freeman and Suzannah Halcrow, and the winning adults were Cllr. Will Breare-Hall and Cllr. Amy Beales. A short video of the event was produced on the night and this is available to view via the Council's website.

Youth Market: On Saturday 8th July, the Youth Council took part in the Epping Town Young Traders Market and Festival with a tombola stall, stocked with a range of prizes donated by generous local businesses. The aim of the tombola was to raise funds for the Youth Council's chosen charity – The Children's Society, which is a charity that runs local services, helping children and young people when they are at their most vulnerable, and have nowhere else to turn. After a wonderful team effort to collect prizes, prepare the stall and then encourage people to support the tombola the Youth Councillors raised an amazing £160 for the charity.

Youth Council Priorities: Each year, the Youth Council designs and delivers a project based on the concerns and priorities of the local young people they represent. Following consultation with their peers, the current Youth Council has identified the need for a youth drug awareness project. In order to inform this project, Youth Councillors have received training from the Essex Young Peoples Drug Advisory Service - surrounding drug and alcohol abuse and also new psychoactive substances (which were previously called Legal Highs). Essex Police have provided data in respect of young peoples' drug use in the Epping Forest area and the Youth Council has produced their own survey to collect data from their schools and local area. The group are now planning a poster and social media campaign called #DUDs (Dangerous Untested Drugs). The aims of the campaign will be:

- To raise awareness of the dangers and risks of drug taking, in particular in respect of psychoactive substances
- To highlight the current amount of drug use amongst our young people
- To sign post young people to support services

Museum, Heritage and Culture

I am delighted to advise Members, that from April to end of June 2017 over 8000 people have accessed the Museum Heritage and Culture Services, in person. We have also engaged with 114,314 people online and our volunteers worked a total of 841 volunteer hours for the service during this period.

Epping Forest District Museum (EFDM) and Lowewood Museum: In June, our District Museum received its final grant payment from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for its redevelopment project and the project was officially recorded as complete. A full evaluation report was submitted to the HLF we were congratulated on the report and excellent outcomes of the redevelopment of the museum and service in general. The HLF Senior Grants Officer reported how she was 'particularly impressed that volunteers contributed input valued at £131,000 and that 40 new volunteer recruits were now engaged in helping in a wider capacity.'

No Borders: The Arts Council funded No Borders project with Chelmsford Museum and Lowewood Museum continues to progress very well in supporting commercial, fundraising and audience development. Staff across the museum partnership have received retail and buying training and work on a new shop and coffee area for Lowewood will commence in early autumn. A new guidebook for both museums has also been commissioned.

The trustees for the Culture without Borders Development Trust are currently being recruited and several very strong candidates have already been interviewed. As soon as at least one

trustee has been appointed the Charity Commission registration will take place. There will be a second phase recruitment of trustees in the autumn.

An accessibility audit for the museums has also been undertaken, and short term measures from this will be acted on through the No Borders project. The project will also be hosting focus groups during the summer for improving access and engagement with BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) individuals. We are also working with Chelmsford through the No Borders partnership, to pioneer the 'Volunteer Makers' programme to develop & broaden volunteering opportunities within the service.

Exhibitions: On Friday 23 June the Museum opened its current exhibition Paths Unseen, which runs until 20th September. This exhibition and associated project has been funded by Arts Council England, supporting and showcasing the work of performance poet Keeley Mills and illustrator Jef Winter. Through this project, Keely and Jef undertook a number of community projects throughout the district including a partnership with Epping Forest College students to create new artworks, and workshops with local writers groups, families, young people and adults. A number of workshops and activities will continue to take place throughout the district over the autumn.

The museums are currently working on two projects in preparation for commemorating 100 years of the end of WW1 in 2018, including Lowewood Museum's HLF funded project "Stephen Warner: One Man's Journey Through War" and the SpradFest project, which explores the life of unofficial war artist and former resident of the district, Walter Spradbery.

Application for National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) Status: MHC was unfortunately unsuccessful with its application to become an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, losing out to the National Horseracing museum and others of a similar status. The application was however highly praised by the Arts Council, who have suggested that many of the projects identified in the business plan can be funded through their other programmes.

Community Engagement: On Thursday 22 June MHC hosted its annual youth and community showcase eNgage. This year the show was held at The Spotlight Theatre in Broxbourne and had an audience of over 350 and a cast of 170. The eNgage performance encouraged several communities to come together for an evening of dance, with performers ranging from 7 to 71 years of age of mixed abilities

Wed 3rd May saw the launch of 'Lets Get Growing', a partnership project with Community Health and Wellbeing aimed at developing community engagement through a weekly gardening club at EFDM. The club, has a long term aim of nurturing a sustainable, self-directed team of volunteers to care for the garden.

At the request of SHARE Museums East, MHCs Cultural Development officers delivered a half-day Creative Engagement training course at Chelmsford museum on Wednesday 24th May. The event was heavily over-subscribed, with 30 attendees (maximum capacity) and a waiting list. The aim of the training was to provide creative engagement tools for staff working in the care industry to improve the quality of life for those living with Dementia. The training drew on experience and outcomes from the 'Transitions' projects, run by EFDC and commissioned by Arts Council England and Essex County Council between 2012 and 2014. The course received 100% positive feedback from participants with repeated requests for further training of this kind.

Schools Engagement Programme: Over the last few months, a programme of history workshops using objects from the museum have been delivered to schools around the district and beyond and pupils from Year 6 at Leverton School in Waltham Abbey, additionally visited the Museum to explore the galleries. The museum education officer also supported the delivery of a new Gifted and Talented History Day for pupils in the District's Primary schools, in partnership with King Harold Academy. For the very young ones, the museum held its first workshop for nursery aged pupils, who were invited to explore an old fashioned washday through real historical objects, nursery rhymes and craft.

A new partnership project with Lea Valley Parks is also under development that will enable pupils to explore the remains of the medieval Abbey in the Abbey Gardens with Lea Valley Parks staff, then visit EFDM to investigate historical objects such as the Waltham Abbey Bible, and archaeological finds from the site itself.