

Report to the Council

Subject: Leisure & Wellbeing Portfolio

Date: 17 December 2013

Portfolio Holder: Councillor E Webster

Recommending:

That the report of the Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder be noted.

Leisure

The timings and route of the Tour de France have now been confirmed. Le Tour will be passing through our District on Monday 7 July 2014, as part of the third stage which starts in Cambridge and ends at Buckingham Palace. This will be a very significant event, and will require at least the same detailed consideration as that given to the Olympic Torch Relay in 2012. The County Council has established a Steering Group and the Deputy Chief Executive is establishing a District officer working group to oversee matters within the District and to feed into the County Steering Group. I will keep Members informed as more details emerge.

At the recent Amateur Swimming Association Swimtastic awards, SLM were awarded the Facility Operator of the Year award. Also, one of the swimmers from Loughton Leisure Centre, fourteen-year-old Piers Bloomfield who suffers from quadriplegic cerebral palsy won silver in the disability swimmer of the year award. Congratulations go to both Piers & SLM for their awards.

The leisure centres continue to perform well financially and should they maintain their current levels of income, the Council would receive a share of the above target income.

Leisure & Cultural Strategy

Having now received the nominations from all groups, the initial meeting of the Portfolio Advisory Group for the production of the new Leisure and Cultural Strategy is due to take place on the 13 January 2014. Officers have been undertaking a significant amount of preparatory work in gathering evidence for the review, mapping the Council's and other providers' current opportunities. The initial meeting will present an overview of the issues to be considered and scope the focus. It is my intention to arrange a tour of all the Council's Leisure Centres, the Museum and other community facilities, as I believe it is important for the advisory group to have the opportunity to see facilities being used and to consider the customer experience. Consultation will be given by the group to the most appropriate form and level of public consultation, to shape their recommendations.

Health & Wellbeing

The West Essex Wellbeing Committee has now met on two occasions. Members will recall that Councillor Chambers has reported back to Full Council on the initial meeting. The emerging Health and Wellbeing Strategy being co-ordinated by the Committee will be an important strategic document for the District Council's Leisure and Cultural Strategy as it is through participation in Sports, Arts and other recreational activities that many of the health improvement aspirations of the Wellbeing Strategy could be achieved.

Community Services

Reality Roadshow: A really successful Reality Roadshow event was organised at West Hatch School on 13th November, by Community Services in support of the Community Safety Partnership. Nearly 200 Year 9 pupils (aged 14 years) participated in the range of interactive scenarios which included healthy living and personal safety, along with exploring the consequences of committing crime or anti-social behaviour.

Limes Centre, Chigwell: A range of new initiatives and events have been successfully launched at the Council's flagship community centre, including a Community Café and dedicated Youth Café which opened in November and a special evening of pampering and wellbeing for mums and nans on the estate, which was organised by the "Friends of The Limes Centre" group, as their first event in support of the local community.

Tree Planting at Holy Cross School, Waltham Abbey: I was really pleased to be able to attend a special tree planting event at Holy Cross Infants School, where Community Services helped pupils plant a variety of 30 trees in the grounds of their school as part of an environmental project. The trees were supplied free of charge by the Woodland Trust and it is hoped that similar projects will be supported in a number of other primary schools across the district.

Countdown to Commonwealth Games: Community Services have successfully secured £11,400 from Active Essex to deliver running, cycling, disability, get back into sport and a satellite sports clubs initiative in order to increase local participation in sport and physical activity over the next 12 months. The initiatives will involve working with local schools, sports clubs and community groups throughout the District.

Get Back into Netball: Ladies of all ages have the opportunity to get back into netball through a newly-formed Epping Upper Clapton Netball Club which is supported by the Council and funding from Active Essex. The club is looking for local people to join them in their new venture of developing a fun and friendly netball club on the Rugby Club site in Thornwood. The club trains every Tuesday from 8.00pm–9.00pm at Roding Valley High School and will transfer to Thornwood when a netball court has been established at the club. Over the first three weeks, numbers have gradually increased to around 30 ladies per session.

Disability Inclusion Project: This excellent project which is funded for two years through Essex County Council has already attracted over 300 disabled children and young people to a range of exciting sports activities. In addition to the summer programme that was offered, a regular programme is provided each week which includes dodgeball, trampolining, yoga, boccia, swimming and horse riding. To celebrate the success of the project with all participants and their families, Community Services has arranged a special Christmas party on Friday 13th December 4.30pm – 6.30pm at Waltham Abbey Town Hall.

'Our Lopping Festival': This special festival which took place in November at the historic Lopping Hall, Loughton, was extremely successful and met its aims in terms of raising the profile of the Hall as a community asset. Over 500 local people participated in the varied programme of events which were organised in conjunction with a range of partners including Epping Forest College students. Around half of those who visited had never been to Lopping Hall before and learnt about the history of this excellent community facility.

'Transitions': Community Services Arts, have just successfully secured funding from Essex County Council to deliver a special training programme for artists wishing to work in care homes and with those living with dementia. The training builds on the work that

has been delivered in local care homes which aims to ensure best practice and quality of life in residential settings. The training will be provided free of charge and is being run in Epping in January.

Local Children's Choirs: Funding has been secured from Essex Music Schools to work with several local primary schools in the district to develop community choirs and singing groups. The first school will join the project in January and others will be added to the project as it develops. All pupils involved will have a chance to perform to the public in an ensemble in 2014.

Museum enters a new phase: As members are aware, the district Museum closed its doors to the public on Friday 1st November, as the first stage in an exciting process of redevelopment and expansion. Although the public will not be able to access the museum building during the period of works, a full museum service will continue to be provided across the district and further afield, through a comprehensive programme of education sessions, touring displays and events. In addition, Lowewood Museum in Hoddesdon, which is managed by EFDC on behalf of Broxbourne Borough Council, will be open to all Epping Forest residents to explore some of Hertfordshire's history and exhibitions from our own district too.

Whilst work on the redevelopment is currently underway which includes procurement of professional services, staff at the museum are also working on the renewal paperwork for Museum Accreditation under a national scheme administered by the Arts Council. The accreditation needs to be upheld during the closure period, as it covers all aspects of the museum service and acknowledges the museum as a fit and proper institution.