

Report to the Council

Subject: Leisure & Community Services

Date: 22 February 2018

Portfolio Holder: Councillor H Kane

Recommending:

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

Community, Health and Wellbeing

Health & Wellbeing

Following a range of consultation with key stakeholders, I am delighted to advise Members that we now have an Epping Forest District Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2028. The strategy was signed off by the Health & Wellbeing Board in January and will be officially launched at a stakeholder event on Wednesday 28th March, along with the new Essex –wide “LiveWell in the Epping Forest District” brand and associated website.

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy was developed by the Council over the period of three months, in collaboration with partners including the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group, Essex County Council Public Health Team and a wide range of local health providers. Signed off by the Leader of Council, the vision underpinning the strategy is for the ‘*Epping Forest District to have a culture and environment that promotes and supports good health and wellbeing for everyone*’.

Aligned with the strategy is a partnership action plan that will be reviewed annually by the EF Health and Wellbeing Board, which sets out the key objectives of the three, multi-agency thematic groups of “Early Help & StartWell”, “Be Well, StayWell & WorkWell” and “AgeWell”. These groups will be responsible for facilitating the delivery of health improvement initiatives for children, young people and adults of all ages and abilities within the district.

“Livewell” Branding

In order to support local health and wellbeing agendas, every local authority in Essex has signed up to the “LiveWell” brand and associated website platform. The Essex website, which is funded via Public Health (Essex) was launched in January and I’m delighted to that the “LiveWell in the Epping Forest District” brand will be formally launched, alongside the strategy. Residents will be able to access information relating to a plethora of local health and wellbeing activities and events via the website, therefore encouraging people to become more active and engaged in their local communities.

Livewell Child Project

As part of the overall campaign, we have a Livewell Child Project, which is due to be delivered in two local primary schools starting after the February half term. The aim of the project is to help children learn about what constitutes a healthy lifestyle through a 20 week course that will cover topics such as food label reading, portion sizes, healthy choices and physical activity. The project will be launched at each school with a breakfast forum involving the parents and will end

with an assembly developed by the children themselves and presented to their parents and their school. The first schools to receive Livewell Child are HillHouse Primary School in Waltham Abbey starting on the 20th February and Thomas Willingale School in Loughton starting on the 26th February. Ongar Primary School is expected to confirm its involvement in the project shortly.

MiLife Adolescent Mental Health and Wellbeing Project nominated for national award

Another excellent piece of news, which covers both my Portfolio and Safer, Greener and Transport is that our Epping Forest Youth Council MiLife Project has been announced as a finalist at this year's High Sheriffs **National Crimebeat Awards**, on 18th April 2018. A team consisting of officers, youth councillors and our voluntary sector partner Red Balloon Company, will have the opportunity to deliver a presentation about the work they have been developing through the MiLife project. The project was nominated by Mr Simon Hall MBE, in his capacity as this year's High Sheriff following him being given a presentation about MiLife, during his district wide visit. The effects of mental health problems within society are well documented within the media and the MiLife project aims to build a positive approach, build resilience and remove the stigma surrounding it. To be a finalist at this prestigious ceremony is a fine accolade for the Epping Forest Youth Council and Epping Forest District Council.

Epping Forest Youth Council elections

Election time is upon us for the next cohort of Epping Forest Youth Councillors, with elections taking place between 5th & 23rd of March. Our officers have been visiting local secondary schools to promote the benefits of becoming an Epping Forest Youth Councillor and nominations closed on Friday 16th February. Once again, there will be 25 seats available to our young people. These 25 seats are made up of 2 candidates from each school within the district, plus 2 from Epping Forest College and 5 independent seats. The Community Health & Wellbeing team is supported by Democratic Services to ensure that our young people experience democracy as if they were voting in district or national elections.

Our Youth Councillors continue to support and represent their peers and once again tackle the issues facing them. Notable projects over the last two years have included the very successful MiLife project and their anti-drugs project, which involved them litter picking 'Legal High' drug capsules in play parks and will see anti-drugs posters displayed on local buses.

Grant Aid

The allocation of the Council's Grant Aid scheme funding has now been completed for this financial year. Over 2017/18, we received 38 applications for Grant Aid funding for a wide variety of projects and in total, £83,450 was awarded to the successful groups. The Grant Aid scheme aims to fund projects that address the needs, aspirations and issues of the people of our community and make a real difference for residents. The groups in receipt of funding cover a wide section of the district and an equally wide range of services and equipment. Successful groups include sports clubs, village halls, youth groups, churches and water rescue services. The groups have used the funding for a variety of items including playground equipment, repairs, radios, defibrillators, sports equipment, counselling services, tents, gardening equipment and much more.

New Strength and Balance Classes

To meet the needs of our ageing population and those leading more sedentary lifestyles, a series of new strength and balance classes are being delivered throughout the district, to help people improve their balance and co-ordination. The classes aim to help increase strength, mobility and flexibility as well as improving people's posture and stamina, which all helps to

prevent falls and resulting fractures. We currently have classes in Buckhurst Hill, Epping, Loughton, Ongar and Waltham Abbey for people of all ages and abilities, which are delivered by our experienced and qualified instructors.

February Half Term Holiday Activities

The half term holiday programme proved to be hugely popular and successful with two multi-sport days in Epping and Waltham Abbey with over 60 young people attending. There was also a sold out Valentine's cake decorating workshop for young people and the ever popular play in the forest. Easter, May Half-term and summer holiday programmes are all in advanced planning stages and further details about Easter will be made available to the public shortly.

Disability Inclusion Project

Our very successful Disability Inclusion Project has recently passed a quality assessment carried out by Action for Children, who are the project funders. The project was praised and congratulated for the wide variety of activities offered to children and young people with disabilities and for the large number of families that take part and benefit from the project. Our February half term inclusion activities were all sold out and additional bounce and swim sessions were organised, to cope with the level of demand. As well as offering the regular holiday activity programme, sessions are provided during term-time, with a range of activities for children and young people with disabilities.

Museums, Heritage and Culture

No Borders - Arts Council England (ACE) Funded Project

Following the launch of the new cake and coffee area at Lowewood Museum – the service has seen a sharp rise in sales of beverages and shop items, with conversion rates (number of visitors who make a purchase) rising from an average of 10% to 50%. This has additionally been helped by the new purchasing regime, which has seen a wide range of new items purchased for sale in both EFDM and Lowewood Museum.

Culture without Borders Development Trust (ACE Funded)

We have now appointed 10 of a maximum 11 trustees for the Cultural Development Trust and an initial shadow board meeting was held in January, closely followed by two familiarization and induction events. The most recent board meeting was held on the 19th February 2018 and we are gradually identifying key skills and abilities of Trustees. I am pleased to advise that the Trust is registered with Companies House and the legal company acting for us in this project have submitted the trust for registration with the Charities Commission. We are anticipating that the trust will be fully launched by the end of March 2018.

New Museum Guidebook (ACE Funded)

An excellent addition to our museum shop items is soon to be a new Epping Forest District Museum Guidebook, which is currently out to print production. I am personally very excited about the guidebook, as it is taking the format of the story of the Epping Forest District through 30 of our museum objects and it explores the entire district via the museum's collections. It is a beautiful and very interesting publication and we hope that we will also be able to put it on sale at a range of other venues across the district.

A smaller guidebook is being produced for Lowewood Museum following a similar theme and this will also be funded through our grant from Arts Council England. Photography of the objects has just been completed for the Lowewood book and we hope that both books will be on sale in the next couple of months

Father Christmas and Christmas market events

Although it seems like a long time ago, I wanted to report back on the successes of the festive activities at the Museums as our numbers of attendees were higher than ever before.

Our ever popular Victorian Father Christmas attracted over 300 people to the museums on the two days and over 300 people engaged with our staff at the Christmas markets in Hoddesdon and Epping. In addition to the opportunity to visit Father Christmas, MHC also provided a range of craft activities at EFDM, and through the No Borders project, local restaurants were engaged in the provision of a mini cultural food festival in the Museum garden, where they offered taster menus, bringing the Community together to see how different cultures celebrate during this period.

Loughton Voluntary Care Older People's Dance Sessions

After a successful pilot project in 2017, the seated dance / exercise sessions have been relaunched at The Loughton Club on a Tuesday afternoon. These have been devised in partnership with Loughton Voluntary Care who fund the project to support the health and wellbeing of the older community in the Loughton area. Using a range of visual arts and dance and fitness techniques, the sessions provide local residents with the chance to express themselves through creativity whilst developing strength and stamina, a sense of wellbeing and social interaction. Each session is currently attended by 15-20 participants and the aim is to develop something in a similar strand at the District Museum.

First World War Projects – Stephen Warner

The deadline for the exhibition of the First World War project is now in sight and the outreach of the project has increased significantly, surpassing the outcomes initially set-out and agreed with our major funders, the Heritage Lottery. Volunteers have managed to contact descendants of the comrades who served with Stephen Warner that he mentions in his diaries. These individuals are based in Harrow, Middlesex and Spain and they have been willing to assist with the research, increasing our knowledge base for the exhibition and they have all mentioned an interest in visiting the exhibition. In addition, we have a small group of students based in Krakow, Poland who are volunteering remotely to plot the location of Stephen's time in the First World War, with quotes pinpointed online on a Google Map. Finally at Hertford Regional College (Ware campus) we are committed to producing a graphic novel with the Art and Design students, and we are now using the subject matter, quotes and material across the college to engage animation and print-making students as well. The story of Stephen Warner is known to a much wider audience and there will be more digital and visual output in the form of animation and artwork for the exhibition which will benefit the future interpretation and understanding of the First World War.

Business Planning

As part of the requirements for accreditation with Arts Council England, National Museums Accreditation scheme, we are required to produce a new five year business plan for MHC covering the period 2018 – 2023. With funding support from Share East we have been able to commission Anne Millman, a highly regarded museum planning specialist, to facilitate a number

of workshops including a very useful stakeholder event with a range of our partners and key users to help inform the business plan. It is anticipated that the new plan will also be helpful for our new development trust and will be useful in supporting applications to potential funding bodies.

Also as part of our business planning process, Museums, Heritage and Culture have been successful with an application to the Local Government Association (LGA) for them to undertake a peer review of the service. This is part of a scheme funded by Arts Council England.

Leisure Management Contract

Good progress continues to be made on the construction of the new Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre. The building is now watertight with the steelwork and cladding being erected from mid-December. Both pod tanks have passed their tests of water tightness and work is progressing on the internal layout. At present there are no significant cost issues ensuring that the new Leisure Centre is still programmed to be opened to the public in November 2018.

The new Movement Studio at Epping Sports Centre has been commissioned and along with the new Virtual Spin Studio is proving very popular. Work is ongoing to extend the Fitness Suite and a good deal of marketing and promotion actively is underway to ensure that as many people as possible benefit from the new facilities.