

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 3 November 2015

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

Inclusion Project - Children and Young People

I would like to share with Members, a compliment received by staff from our Community, Health and Wellbeing team. The comment is from a family who participate in our Inclusion Project for children and young people with additional needs, which has been externally funded over the last 3 years, with £154,000 from Essex County Council.

“The support received from Olivia and her team is great. At each event I've taken the children to they've been well managed, the children have had great fun and it's all been safe and so child focused. Olivia seems to be able to work with a team that not only understands our children and their complex needs but is able to get the best out of them too. As a foster carer I am limited to who I feel comfortable leaving my children with - I have had no such problem leaving the children with the disability inclusion team. I have two children with additional and special needs, as a family we often have a change around of children or ask for children to be added at last minute - this is never met with any problem, and we are able to enjoy the clubs as a family and our family dynamics often change. My child with his additional needs could only talk about the camp - we had many things booked in the six weeks holidays, but the camp where he has independence from me for two nights is all that he could talk about, he had great fun from the moment I dropped him off until the minute I picked him up - it is well managed and there is so much going on.

When observing the many different children in the groups, I wonder if we could somehow clone Olivia and her team - they keep the children occupied, safe and most of all keep them enjoying themselves and having the most fun they can have - each child is included and each 'need' is taken in to account - no one is left out - children are also taught so many different things while in these clubs - something that often their teachers at school cannot do - while it is a small club at times, our children need everything that the disability inclusion group offers them. I don't think I'd be as comfortable letting my children attend anywhere else. I give huge thanks to Olivia and her team for a job well done and only hope that they're around for the foreseeable future - thank you so much”.

Youth Council and Young people

I am pleased to advise Council, that The Youth Council has been awarded a special “Crystal Award” and a cheque for £1,500 from the Jack Petchey Foundation. This is for special recognition of its work in representing the district's 12,000 teenagers. In particular, the Youth

Council's anti-bullying campaign received specific praise and this project also secured the High Sherriff's Award of £1000 earlier in the year.

Youth Engagement Conference - Any councillors who visited the Civic Offices on 9th October, will have seen how busy and vibrant the building was, with over 90 young people from schools across the district participating in a Youth Engagement Conference. The event was facilitated by our Youth Council and provided an opportunity for our young people to learn all about local democracy and attend a range of other educational workshops. The highlight of the day was a debate about whether the young people think we should remain in the EU or leave and after an hour-long debate, which was webcast live, young delegates voted on the topic electronically. The result was that 75% wish to remain in the EU and Eleanor Laing praised the quality of the conference event and took a particular interest in the outcome of the debate itself.

Reality Roadshow - This excellent programme has commenced delivery at secondary schools in the district, starting with West Hatch School in Chigwell and Debden Park in Loughton. Since September, over 450 young people of 14 years old have participated in the project, which now includes a scenario relating to gang crime, which is gradually becoming a concern in Essex. Additional emphasis is also being placed on the risks of young people falling prey to Child Sexual Exploitation, with specific reference to the safe use of social media, along with the risks relating to 'Legal Highs'. The programme will be rolled out to other secondary schools in 2016.

Big Draw 2015 - Underwater Drawing Project

As part of the National Big Draw event 2015, our Museum, Heritage and Culture (MHC) team worked with Davenant School pupils in their school pool and Epping Forest College students at Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool in a series of underwater workshops that were recorded by film and photography. Other residents of the district were also able to get involved in the event, by taking part in a drop-in drawing event where they were able to draw underwater and be filmed and photographed in doing so. The resulting images are now in an exhibition at Loughton Arts Centre, running until 30 October. The exhibition will also be on display in 2016 at Epping Forest College, where college students will help to curate, publicise and document the show.

Boys Day of Dance - On 2 October, over 120 Year 7 boys at Roding Valley High School, Loughton, took part in a Day of Dance with the Council, where they experienced many different styles of dance including contemporary, street, stomp and breakdance. The event which focusses on a different school each year and aims to encourage positive activity by boys, culminated in a performance of each genre of dance at the end of the day and participants were also given the opportunity to a free trial at the Stadium Theatre Performing Arts School in Loughton the next day, which some of them willingly took up.

Headteacher James Luck said: "The students had a superb time and were really challenged in terms of their fitness levels and their concentration. The day was a great way to enrich their curricular experience. Hopefully many will take up the further opportunities in dance offered to them outside of school as a result."

Museum Youth Panel – Schools Out Exhibition

The Youth Panel that has been established at Lowewood Museum, curated and launched their own exhibition entitled 'Schools Out' in mid- October, which was attended by the Vice Chairman of Council. The aim of the Panel is to give young people the opportunity to learn new skills, meet new people and have a say in what the museum does. Their core role within the museum is to act as consultants on the museum's yearly programme; advising on the types of workshops and events Young People might like to attend and undertaking one project and associated event every year. the youth panel have received training on a variety

of different skills helping them to curate their first display, including collections care, marketing, graphic design, digital interactives, and text writing. There are plans for the scheme to be launched at the Epping Forest District Museum early in the New Year.

Older People

Winter Warmer Events - The Community, Health & Wellbeing Team is working in partnership with West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to facilitate a series of "Winter Warmer" events for older residents in the district. The events will be staged in Buckhurst Hill, Waltham Abbey and Epping and will include presentations from health partners, safety organisations and support groups, about how to stay warm and well during the winter months. There will also be a range of stalls providing information from other agencies and a seated exercise session. All participants will also receive a free lunch and refreshments. Members are asked to promote these excellent sessions to residents in their ward, as places must be booked in advance.

'Home-grown' exhibition – Our Museum, Heritage and Culture (MHC) team has been working with people living in the Council's Sheltered Housing in Loughton, as part of the national 'art@homes' initiative, providing a range of creative workshops for people of all abilities. The project was open to non-residents as well and at the end of the programme of work, which took place over several months, an exhibition was set up to showcase the many hidden talents of the participants including 'home-grown' crafts, and food produce from the Parsonage Court allotment.

EFDC Museum & Touring Exhibitions

Work by our main contractors Coniston Ltd, is still on going on the museum site and the building works are now entering their final phase. The works have recently been visited by the Leader of the Council and members to view progress. Currently we are anticipating the site being handed back to the Council on the 18th December and then following the installation of collections and new displays we are planning re-opening in late March. On the 22nd October a visit to site by Visit Essex and local news media will form part of the new marketing campaign.

As part of a two year touring exhibitions programme which has received £150,000 from Arts Council England and the Royal Opera House Bridges programme, MHC has produced a range of exhibitions which have now been booked by some 56 venues (2104-2018) across the East of England and beyond. These exhibitions are now being charged for to recipient venues bringing a useful income stream into the service

Leisure Management

On the 8 October 2015, the Cabinet agreed the Business Case and Procurement Strategy for the new Leisure Management Contract. The procurement will be undertaken by competitive dialogue and the Council will not only be seeking a significant reduction in management fees, but investment in new and improved facilities. We have decided to extend the current contract with SLM, for up to one year from the 3 January 2016, in order that the Council has sufficient time to appoint a new provider who can deliver the Corporate objectives outlined in the Council's Leisure and Cultural Strategy. The Portfolio Holder Advisory Group, that I have established, will continue to oversee the project. I will keep Council advised of progress.

Members, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of the officers from Community Services on the excellent work they undertake on behalf of the Council.