

## ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Council  
**Date:** 5 October 2023  
**Subject:** Community & Wellbeing  
**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Smruti Patel

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### **Recommending:**

**That the report of the Community, Health & Wellbeing Portfolio Holder be noted.**

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### Funding Success for the Buddy Up Adult Inclusion Project

The Buddy Up Project continues to go from strength to strength. The Project is currently supporting over 50 adults across West Essex with additional needs, including learning disabilities and autism, to enable them to become more independent and live healthier, happier lives.

Following a bid to the National Lottery for Reaching Communities funding to continue this excellent work, the Council's Community & Wellbeing service area has received confirmation that it has been awarded the sum of £264,946. This will allow the Buddy Up Project to run for a further 3 years and also fund the appointment of an additional Officer to enable the provision to grow in capacity and to support more organisations to deliver an inclusive service.

### Strength and Balance – Falls Prevention Programme

The Community & Wellbeing service area has been jointly commissioned by Essex County Council and the Herts & West Essex ICB (Integrated Care Board) to deliver the Strength and Balance programme across West Essex for a further two years.

The service aims to reduce falls by increasing strength, mobility and independence in residents who are at risk of falling. The value of the contract over the next two years is £221,700, with EFDC being the lead authority in a facilitated partnership with Harlow Council and Uttlesford District Council.

In Epping Forest this highly effective service is delivered across the district in different locations in line with demand. The service offers 12 weeks of free activity, followed by onward signposting to wider services and support.

### Summer Holiday Programmes

The West Essex Inclusion Project once again delivered a highly successful Summer holiday activity programme for children and young people with a wide range of disabilities in the Epping Forest district. In total, 92 hours of activity was delivered over 6 weeks, and the programme saw 219 children from 70 different families attend. Evaluation and feedback was resoundingly positive and great fun was had by all!

The Community Development & Wellbeing Team successfully delivered Play in the Park outdoor sessions district-wide, Multi-Activity Day Camps and “Matilda: A Musical in Two-Days”. The core summer programme was given an overall rating of 4.8 out of 5 for quality by parents. Feedback received included comments such as ‘My girls absolutely loved Matilda in 2 days - best holiday club they’ve been to. The performance was just brilliant!’ and “‘Will (Fordham) and the team are incredible with the children. My son enjoyed every second, as did we. Thank you so much’.

Play in the Park ran for three weeks during August, offering thirty sessions funded by ten participating Town and Parish Councils. Over 459 children came along to PiP this year with the most well attended sessions being at Town Mead (Waltham Abbey), and Jessel Green (Loughton).

#### Ninefields (Robert Wood Johnson) Project

As part of the Council’s pace-based approach (Permanence and Care Excellence) to improving health and wellbeing in the Ninefields area, a consultation is currently being undertaken to gather first-hand insight into resident’s aspirations and goals specifically relating to employment, careers, and associated skills. The information gathered will be used to shape future work with local training providers to offer training courses and skills development programmes locally and on the Ninefields estate itself.

#### Public Health Accelerator Funding Expression of Interest submitted to Essex County Council

The Community & Wellbeing service area has developed and submitted a formal Expression of Interest to Essex County Council for funding in a bid to replicate its whole-systems approach work to tackling health inequalities in three further areas of the district.

It is anticipated that an invitation to submit a full application will be received in the Autumn.

#### Creativity and Sports Awards

The highly prestigious Creativity and Sports Awards for local young people launched in September. Nominations close in December with winners announced at the Civic Awards Ceremony in the Spring of 2024.

#### Youth Councillors speak at Youth Voice Conference

The Jack Petchey Foundation invited members of the Epping Forest Youth Council to speak at their annual Youth Voices conference in August. The Epping Forest Youth Council is widely recognised as a model of excellence nationally and projects such as MiLife and, most recently, work associated with the cost-of-living crisis are highlighted as flagship initiatives which have been developed by young people themselves for their peers.

#### Funding secured for youth work in Nazeing

As a direct result of one of the Council’s Community Champions raising concerns regarding an increase in anti-social behaviour in Nazeing, the Community Development & Wellbeing Team has been central in securing funding to enable the commissioning of partner agency, the Red Balloon Foundation, to delivery youth outreach sessions in the area. Red Balloon have

subsequently applied for wider funding to re-establish a permanent youth club based in St. Giles Church Hall.

#### Care To Move Project for older residents.

Funding totally £667 from the County 'Find Your Active' pot has been secured for a project called Care to Move, which has enabled innovative portable cycling pedals, which can be operated by hand or foot, to be purchased to encourage older residents to take part in fun physical activity sessions. Piloted at the Council's Pelly Court assisted living scheme, and soon to be rolled out to the Chapel Road scheme, Care to Move is helping to support residents to increase their physical activity levels whilst also improving mental health and building confidence. Residents have feedback that 'I think it has helped with my walking', 'I have enjoyed getting back on a bike!' and 'I have started to cycle for longer.'

#### Stay Safe & Well events.

Four Stay Safe & Well events for older residents have been organised for Winter 2023 and Spring 2024, funded by the Community Safety Partnership. Events will take place on 4 October in Debden, 19 October in Buckhurst Hill, 12 March in Ongar and 11 April in Sheering. Partner organisations will provide important information to local residents on the day, and activities will include seated exercise, presentations, a free lunch, information bag, School for Scammers performance and flu / Covid vaccinations (subject to availability) and health checks.

#### Dementia Friendly Communities

World Alzheimer's Month was in September and information was shared with the Council's Corporate Communications team regarding support available, which included a Dementia Friends Information session on 25th September. The Council's Dementia Action Officer is also working with colleagues from Corporate Communications to create a Dementia Information page for the website and has advised the Economic Development Team on a North Weald Dementia Sensory Garden proposal.

#### Multiply Project support funding.

The Community & Wellbeing directorate has received £10,000 to support Essex County Council with the successful roll out and delivery of the national Multiply (numeracy skills) Programme in the district. Staff will assist with the identification of appropriate venues to host community-based Multiply education sessions, liaise with tutors, support the uptake of courses through coordinated marketing and promotion and help target specific specialist groups or organisations in order that bespoke courses may be run as and where appropriate.

#### Epping Forest District Museum

The latest exhibition "Greater in Spirit, Larger in Outlook", opened on 23 September at the Museum. Epping Forest District Museum and Saffron Walden Museum received Arts Council National Lottery funding to work in partnership on world culture collections. The funding stream secured aims to ensure museums and their collections reflect the diversity of local communities and supports initiatives which work directly with cultural groups to tell their stories via objects in the collection.

The Museum Movers are back after their summer break and the class is continuing to grow as word spreads about what a supportive and welcoming group they are. Classes take place at Epping Forest District Museum at 10:30am every Friday with a professional dancer leading the sessions which are inspired by the Museum's collection. Every session ends with coffee and a chat, and members of the group now regularly meet up socially outside of the class.

#### Autumn What's on in Epping Forest Brochure

The Autumn edition of `What's on in Epping Forest` brochure is now available featuring upcoming Stay Safe & Well events, a Christmas Memory Train trip and the festive activity programme at Epping Forest District Museum.