

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 23 July 2024
Subject: Community, Health & Wellbeing Portfolio
Portfolio Holder: Cllr Kaz Rizvi

Recommending:

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

Funding success - Oakwood Hill and Limes Farm place-based project work

EFDC has been awarded £238,000 Public Health Accelerator Funding from Essex County Council to support the Communities Directorate's place-based approach to tackling health inequalities. The funding has enabled EFDC to recruit two new Community Engagement Officers specifically for the Oakwood Hill area of Loughton and the Limes Farm area of Chigwell. The Officers are responsible for the coordination and development of a wide range of partnership projects to improve the health and wellbeing of residents in the area. The funding will also enable the continuation of the project already taking place in Ninefields, Waltham Abbey.

The Community Development & Wellbeing Team recently consulted with the Oakwood Hill community in partnership with Restore who facilitate the Oakwood Hill Community Hub, and wider partners. Further consultation days are planned during July.

The aim of the project is to replicate the work undertaken on Ninefields in Waltham Abbey including the setup of youth clubs, provision of diversionary activities, community cafes, Social/Warm Spaces, bereavement cafes, training and skills programmes and educational roadshows in schools addressing current issues.

The University of Essex will be involved in the evaluation of the entire two-year programme.

Active Essex Active Network Funding

The Council has received £10,000 of Active Network funding. The Spend Plan focusses on the communities of Limes Farm, Oakwood Hill/Debden and Ninefields and the projects that will develop across the areas include; boxing sessions to act as diversionary activity for young people reducing anti-social behaviour, Ladies Dance and Dine sessions increasing physical activity and social opportunities for women and girls; SEN Fitness to increase participation opportunities for neurodiverse young people; Mental Health & Physical Activity Programmes in partnership with EPUT offering alternative therapy for those within the clinical mental health system; older peoples exercise programmes to offer a continuation session for the ICB funded Strength & Balance Programme; Basketball Club working with New City College's basketball programme to train students to run a programme for local young people; Disability Football

sessions for neurodiverse adults and a Youth Club Coach to support physical activity at youth clubs in the three areas.

Epping Forest Community Lottery

On 6 June EFDC launched the Epping Forest Community Lottery to local community and voluntary sector groups. The Epping Forest Community Lottery will enable local charities, organisations and groups to raise funds to support their good cause and will receive 50% from the tickets sold. Over 50 people representing local charities, schools, clubs and other community groups attended the launch event at the Civic Offices. The good causes were introduced to the Lottery by Phil Wright, General Manager of Gatherwell, the external management company EFDC is partnered with to facilitate the Community Lottery. A follow up virtual launch was also delivered on 28 June for those groups who couldn't attend the in-person event and to promote the Lottery wider.

Since the website went live, over 30 local good causes have already signed up. Ticket sales went live on 2 July and the first weekly draw is on 3 August where an additional prize draw will be introduced, with prizes donated by local businesses.

Epping Forest Youth Council (EFYC)

The Youth Council Induction programme runs from April – September. The intensive training for the 24 new Youth Councillors includes, how to be a good Youth Councillor, protocols, Safeguarding, how to represent the voter, professionalism, cyber security, chairing meetings, public speaking and presentation skills.

The Youth Councillors project for 2024/25 is to raise awareness of alcohol and substance misuse issues with young people. The first research stage is underway to educate and inform the Youth Councillors; to meet with key services and identify how best they can present their findings to partners and schools. The first workshop took place with the Amy Winehouse Foundation in June.

The Youth Council continue to work closely with the Jack Petchey Foundation (JPF) and have been successful in their funding applications for 2024. JPF award the EFYC £2,800 annually. In addition to the annual grant, they also provide £880 towards two educational projects, which will support the Youth Council to visit to the Houses of Parliament and the Ben Kinsella knife crime awareness exhibition, a total of £3680 for this financial year.

Secondary School Roadshows

The Broadcast Roadshow which addresses online safety was delivered to nine secondary schools during the spring term. The project cost £8,800 and was funded by the Local Community Fund. EFDC will be seeking further funding for 2024/2025 as it was very well received by teachers and pupils. A total of 2,174 pupils took part in the Roadshow. It was pitched at Year 9 pupils; however, this will be offered to Year 8 pupils moving forward as a preventative solution.

Stop and Think Roadshows are funded by the Community Safety Partnership, and address Stop and Search, Stop and Account and behaviours and attitudes when being stopped by the police. These will resume in seven schools from September 2024. The target age group is Years 7 – 8 pupils and the target number of pupils to receive the roadshow will be 1,240.

Epping Forest Dementia Friendly Communities

Supported by the Council's Community Development & Wellbeing Team, Buckhurst Hill Parish Council, Loughton and Epping Town Councils and EFDC secured £21,724 funding from Essex County Council to create a Dementia Friendly Community Carers Project. The Project provides support and information to residents who are caring for loved ones living with dementia across the district and is project managed by the Team's Dementia Action Officer. The Project is funded until April 2025.

Part of the funding has been used to set up a new Carers Support Programme. The first group will be held at the Roding Valley Hall, Buckhurst Hill starting on 24th July 10am – 12pm. The group will run once a week for 4 weeks. Activities using music, dance and history will compliment these sessions. This is the start of a series of carers support programmes that will run across 8 different areas of the district.

Over 80 people attended the Epping Forest dementia fair on Saturday 11 May at St John's Church, Epping. This has been an annual event since 2022 and has evolved each year. It purposefully links in with Dementia Action Week. A flyer was created with a list of dementia friendly groups that took place during that week and advertised as part of the awareness raising campaign.

Due to the generous donations from local organisations and independent sponsors a Summer Memory Train took place on 10 July for 80 passengers to enjoy a fun and safe day out for carers and their loved ones, working in partnership with Epping Ongar Railway. Funding from the Dementia Friendly Community Carers project will enable a Christmas Memory Train to take place. These events have been running biannually since 2022.

Let's Get Together Group

After the successful pilot of the Let's Get Together weekly sessions in the Epping Community Hub at the Civic Offices, the Community Development & Wellbeing Team are rolling out the model in other locations across the district. It is not uncommon for older people and adults to feel isolated, depressed, anxious, or lonely. These feelings can take a toll on mental health and overall wellbeing, however, there is hope and healing to be found in the simple act of connecting with others through group activities.

One such avenue for socialising and breaking the barriers of isolation is through these weekly group meetings that offer opportunities to engage in various activities such as playing board games, creating arts and crafts and sharing hobbies. These sessions provide a safe and welcoming environment for individuals to come together, meet like-minded people and form meaningful connections. The benefits of participating in such groups are plentiful and can have a profound impact on the mental and emotional health of those who attend.

Care To Move Project

This ongoing project to encourage older people to take part in, and increase, their physical activity is expanding across the district. Static cycling equipment has been provided to an older peoples' social group run by a Community Champion in Chigwell. Over the period of the project the following Independent Living Schemes have signed up to run the project; Pelly Court, Epping, Chapel Rd, Epping, and Hyde Mead Nazeing and 31 residents have taken part to date.

One of the participants, Ted, who uses the equipment at Chapel Rd said; "Access to an exercise bike has been a great asset to my wellbeing and assists me to exercise my legs and back muscles since I am not able to walk or run for any distance these days."

Stay Safe and Well Events

Stay Safe & Well events for older residents have been delivered in Ongar and Sheering. Across the two events 110 members of the community attended with over 20 partner organisations contributing including Essex Police, the East of England Ambulance Service and NHS colleagues. Health checks were carried out by the Terrence Higgins Trust and Essex Wellbeing Service at the events. The next events will take place in Roydon on 29 October and Theydon Bois on 30 October where flu jabs will also be available.

Epping Forest Community Champions

The Community Development & Wellbeing Team continues to support and work alongside its fantastic 27 Community Champions. The Community Champions currently provide over 90 volunteering hours per week. Champions facilitate regular activities such as coffee mornings, community pantries, bereavement cafes and Food Bank volunteering. The Buckhurst Hill and Limes Farm Community Pantries have received a further £2,500 each from Essex County Council for food supplies.

Community Champions recently attended First Aid Training. Champions also received training on how to use Frontline, the on-line activity and service referral website and App. Professionals from the Tiegr Company came and spoke at one of the meetings about the Multiply Maths Project and how the Community Champions can deliver this with their groups.

One of the Waltham Abbey Community Champions has started supporting the Ninefields Youth Group once a month. Waltham Abbey has six Community Champions, and a separate group has been set up to deliver community projects, specifically in their area. A first scoping meeting was held in June and a big litter pick of the area has been arranged. Waltham Abbey Fire Station has been identified as a potential venue for 'Community Catch Up' sessions. A meeting with New City College has taken place to discuss training opportunities for the Ninefields Estate.

The Uphire Community Train Project

Uphire Primary School, supported by the Community Development & Wellbeing Team, has secured £22,700 of funding from the Qualis Community Fund, Community Safety Partnership, Public Health Community Grants and PFCC, for the refurbishment of the train carriage that is located within its grounds. Once complete, the train carriage will be used as a community space out of school hours, as well as the school being able to make use of it for their pupils during the school day.

Qualis are also supporting the project with architect drawings, project management and materials. The school received Opening Schools Facilities Funding to make the site secure for community use, without a caretaker being needed on site. The Ninefields Youth Club are eagerly waiting to relocate to the carriage which will provide a safe venue with extra facilities and use of the playground. The Essex Family & Wellbeing Service is keen to have a School Nurse drop-in, health visitor and pop-up weigh station once the carriage is up and running. Additionally, EFDC and community organisations will be able to use the carriage for groups and activities to improve the health and wellbeing of the community.

Swap to Stop

The Swap to Stop campaign is designed to add value and increase access and provision to those communities that may not access usual stop smoking services (homelessness clients, social housing tenants, routine, and manual workers and those who do not engage with public sector services). To achieve this, EFDC will work with a wide range of statutory and third sector organisations, for example, Foodbank, Citizens Advice, Places Leisure, Housing Services and other community groups. Using the Make Every Contact Count model, partner organisations will provide the initial intervention and support residents to quit smoking with vaping kits. They will then onward refer to Provide for full behaviour change support.

Working with Provide, EFDC will be hosting an introduction meeting with various partners to establish their willingness to be part of a funding bid. This forms part of the Government's plan to become a smoke free generation by 2030 and the funding is offered by the Office for Health Improvement & Disparities.

Buddy Up Project

The Buddy Up Project continues to make significant strides in fostering community access for adults with learning disabilities and autism. Continued collaboration with Employ-Ability to support individuals in developing employment skills to secure a job is going well, the project is actively helping individuals secure or update their library cards enabling access to resources and activities that encourage social interaction, a number of participants are being supported to become more comfortable with using public transport and accessing local shops. To date the project has received 40 referrals from the Epping Forest district.

Strength & Balance Project

The "Social Active Strong" strength and balance service in Epping Forest has expanded further across the district, in order to deliver the service to more residents and to keep up with the ever-increasing number of referrals being received. There are now two weekly sessions running in both Loughton and Buckhurst Hill, these areas received the highest number of referrals for the current groups. These sessions are in addition to the classes being run in Waltham Abbey, Ongar, Chigwell and Epping.

Excellent links have been established with the Places Leisure teams across the district and there are now weekly "Social Active" classes being run at Loughton Leisure Centre, Epping Sports Centre and Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre, meaning that that SAS participants can be signposted into the Centres activities following completion of their 12-week course. This represents a great milestone for the service, as residents can now continue their progress with their mobility, decreasing their risk of falls, reducing social isolation and improving both physical and mental health for this demographic within the district.

To date 390 referrals have been received for Epping Forest, with 70% of referrals taking up a place on the course. There has been a 94% improvement in participant's Timed Up & Go test scores (TUG) from start of the course to when they complete and 79% reporting a reduced fear of falling.

Ford RideLondon-Essex Community Activation and Event Day

The strategic aims of bringing Ford RideLondon to Essex for a third year was to involve and activate communities through the event, creating a fantastic vehicle to encourage participation in sport and physical activity in the district, benefitting the health of residents and the local environment. The focus across the wider RideLondon cycle route, including the Epping Forest district, was around school, community and business activation. The Council's Community Development & Wellbeing Team facilitated a number of co-ordination meetings with RideLondon's organisers; London Marathon Events and Active Essex and led on plans to deliver a community fete celebration for local residents and visitors in Epping.

In the lead up to the main event the CDW Team delivered an array of activities to build interest ahead of the mass participation ride itself, including community rides, fully inclusive cycling sessions; a project targeting older adults in Independent Living Schemes; cycling themed Play in the Park sessions for families during the Easter school holidays and a visit from the Essex County Council Dr Bike Team who provided free cycle health checks. A children's colouring competition to win a bike at the Epping Community Fete was also organised and business bursaries were awarded to successful applicants via the Ford RideLondon-Essex Activation Cycle Grant scheme.

The Ford RideLondon-Essex100 mass-participation ride passed through Epping Town on Sunday 26 May 2024 with approximately 25,000 riders taking part. On event day, the overall objective was to increase the volume of new and returning visitors to the town and district, with a focus on promoting health and wellbeing activities, and engaging cyclists, spectators and other visitors throughout the morning. Approximately 1,000 people engaged with the event day activities in Epping, many of whom came to support the cyclists, watch the event and spend time with friends and family at the Community Fete. The Fete included community stalls, a children's activity area, choirs and performances, bike maintenance stands and "Come & Try" physical activity opportunities for all ages.