

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 20 April 2010

Subject: Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Brian Rolfe

Item: 6(h)

Recommending:

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

SLM Contract

Negotiations have commenced with SLM, the Council's Leisure Services provider regarding an extension to their existing contract which expires in January 2013, with an option to extend for a further 3 years. Members will recall that this exercise is tied in with the discussions with SLM regarding the provision and operation of a new sports hall at Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool and the recent decisions of Council to approve capital funding at Loughton and Ongar in order to reduce overall revenue spend through the contract management fee. I will be seeking Members' views on any changes they may wish to see such as opening hours and bank holiday closures.

District Museum

Extended funding has recently been secured from Heritage Lottery Fund and Renaissance in the Regions for 2010/11, to continue the post of Exhibitions Asst. which supports the production of a Touring Exhibitions programme. This will enable a further series of exhibitions to be produced for display at the Museum and then toured across Essex and the East Region.

Recent monitoring of the Museum Service has identified a range of increases in visitor and participant activity including a 35% increase in workshops for schools; more applications for 'Loan Boxes' and greater numbers attending activity workshops based at the Museum.

Community Development

£50,000 has recently been secured from Big Lottery as part of its Play Builder's Fund, for provision of a new skateboarding facility in Town Mead Waltham Abbey. This funding is being part matched by Waltham Abbey Town Council.

Sports Development

A special trampolining project for children with additional needs funded through £27,000 from ECC Local Priority Fund, has been highlighted as a model of best practise in West Essex. The project which is provided by Sports Development takes place at Epping Sports Centre and is designed especially to improve self esteem and confidence amongst children referred through schools. Early feedback from schools

and families highlights significant improvement in children's attainment and confidence in general.

Community Arts

The Arts Council has recently agreed to the development of a new £15,000 project for the district, which will see the enhancement of creative skills amongst local youth activity providers and voluntary groups, for the benefit of people of all ages in local communities.

Youth Council

A very successful Youth Conference was hosted by Epping Forest Youth Councillors in March, which was attended by 80 year 10 pupils representing all secondary schools across the district. The event included discussion groups to allow participants to put forward their views on local priorities for young people and a mass debate on whether the voting age should be lowered to 16 years.