

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 29 June 2010

Subject: Leisure & Wellbeing

Portfolio Holder: Councillor B Rolfe

Recommending:

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

Leisure Facilities:

1. 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.
2. The negotiations with SLM on the future extension to the contract have continued and the proposals will be brought to Members at the July Cabinet Meeting. This includes their proposal to incorporate a larger Fitness Studio at Loughton Leisure Centre.
3. SLM have been authorised to undertake work to produce the necessary documentation for outline planning permission for the sports hall extension project at Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool.
4. In 2009/10 SLM overachieved against their tender income target and therefore the Council received an additional 23K of income share.
5. There is a SLM guaranteed capital investment of £250K over 3 sites, which will be undertaken in 2010/11 (Waltham Abbey pool, Ongar Leisure Centre and Loughton Leisure Centre). We are currently awaiting detailed plans from SLM
6. The catering and bar service at Epping Sports Centre has now re-opened. The operation is being run by a small company on behalf of SLM.
7. At present the Council has not received its grant of £39,000 from the DCMS, which forms the basis of the funding for the project for free swimming for the 60s and over. This is the same at all authorities and officers are in the process of contacting the relevant central government contacts to clarify the situation.

Community Services:

1. Community Services has been successful in securing £80,000 from Harlow Health Centres Trust to fund a brand new 'HealthWorks' project for young people

living in Waltham Abbey. HealthWorks is a new and innovative programme designed to engage and empower young people to live healthier and more positive lives and will include mentoring and training to enable them to be responsible for providing their own activities and events.

The £80,000 secured for the project covers two years of operation and will enable the part-time employment of a suitably experienced project manager and assistant. The project will take place in three key areas of Waltham Abbey, to include Ninefields, Roundhills and Waltham Abbey Town. If the pilot in Waltham is successful it is planned to provide similar schemes in other areas of the district.

2. The last of the play facilities funded by Big Lottery has now been completed in Abridge. This work sees the end of a two - year programme of new facilities for the district, which have been installed in Limes Farm, Chigwell; Hoe Lane and St Elizabeth's Close, Nazeing.

3. A new exhibition due to be displayed at the District Museum in July, is the first district event to achieve the 2012 Inspire Mark, in recognition of its contribution to the Cultural Olympiad. The exhibition entitled 'Sporting Heroes' is a joint collaboration between the Museum and the Council's Sports & Health Team and will see the display of a wide range of memorabilia from local sports clubs, along with World Championship medals and trophies won by sports champions from across Essex and the region. The exhibition opens for a private view on Friday 9th July and is then open to the public from Saturday 10th July.

4. The Council's Summer Holiday Activity Programme has now been distributed to local schools and information points across the district and includes hundred's of activities and events for children and young people throughout the summer. For a copy of the programme members should contact Community Services Admin. On Ext. 4561.

5. The Council's Arts Team have just completed a joint project with Voluntary Action Epping Forest, which was based at Woodredon House in Epping. The project involved the team's artists working with people of all ages and a wide range of disabilities, in creative writing and also involved young people from Loughton Youth Theatre. The project was designed to improve the quality of life of residents of Woodredon House during the residency and in the longer term, the legacy of this work will continue through delivery of similar work by staff from the home, which were trained and mentored by the Arts team as part of the project.