

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

**Committee:** Cabinet **Date:** 27 July 2010

**Subject:** Leisure & Wellbeing Portfolio **Item:** 6(g)

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Brian Rolfe

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### **Recommending:**

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

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#### **1. Woodredon House Arts Project**

An outdoor music and theatre event was held at Woodredon House, Epping in early July, as a culmination of a 12 week project involving residents with learning difficulties and children from Loughton Youth Theatre. The event featured a play that was developed by the children and young people using the words of residents and a range of props and sets made by all participants.

The theme of the project and play was based on the residents' 'favourite places' in their care home and gardens, and included recording their memories of life before Woodredon. The Council's community artists also worked with residents to develop a range of arts installations that were displayed in their favourite places around the house & gardens and in the home.

The event was attended by parents of children from the Youth Theatre and residents' family members and was an excellent demonstration of the improvement of quality of life for people that generally live very much in isolation.

#### **2. Aiming High For Disabled Children**

Sports development has been successful in securing £10,000 government funding towards provision of special trampolining sessions for children with disabilities. The funding is part of the Aiming High For Disabled Children programme that is a new ring fenced national funding programme.

The funding will enable children and young people with a range of learning and physical disabilities to take part in supported trampolining sessions and part of the funding will be used to purchase a hoist to assist the less able.

#### **3. Summer Holiday Programme**

Community Services are offering over 100 x holiday activities with over 3500 x places for children and young people during the forthcoming summer holidays, with many of these sessions already three quarters full. Opportunities range from puppetry shows and 'Rumble in the Jungle' for young children, to playschemes and trampolining for 5

– 11's and a range of activities for the 11+ including dancing schools, mountain biking and freestyle football skills.

The programme is provided at a wide range of venues across the district and includes 'open access and drop in' activities including 'Play in the Park', where Play Rangers visit over 10 rural locations with a van of equipment and organise children's park games.

#### **4. Performance Reward Grant Cut backs**

Epping Forest Children's Partnership which is chaired by the Council is currently looking at ways to try and support local voluntary groups, following an announcement by Essex County Council that it will be withdrawing funding from a range of local projects for children and young people.

The projects which have been in operation for up to a year, were funded through Performance Reward Grant allocated to Local Strategic Partnerships via Essex County Council and range from counselling support for children and families, to positive activity provision in a range of locations across the district. The projects are currently under threat of losing 50% of their allocated funding and the impact on some of the users of these services will be very significant.

Officers are currently working hard to reduce the potential reductions in funding for Epping Forest, that have arisen due to 50% reductions being faced by Essex County Council through government cuts in funding grants.