

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet **Date:** 1 November 2011
Subject: Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ricki Gadsby

Recommending:

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

Leisure/sports facilities

At Loughton Leisure Centre the air conditioning has been installed within the Octagon. There are however still problems with the pool-side showers but SLM are trying to resolve the issues with the sensor pads and the situation is being monitored to ensure that there are sufficient shower facilities available. The 2010/11 Income Share amount has finally been agreed and paid to the Council.

Olympic Games

In my last report I made mention of the arrangements for the Olympic Games "Look and Feel". I am pleased to be able to tell Members that the arrangements for dressing the area in the immediate vicinity of the White Water Centre are now well advanced with Waltham Abbey and the park and ride facility at North Weald receiving a substantial amount of funding via Broxbourne Borough Council for "Look and Feel" decoration. In order to enable all local councils to participate in the Olympic celebrations, they will be offered, subject to Cabinet approval on 24 October, the opportunity to buy "Look and Feel" decorations for their own areas, to be jointly funded on a £ for £ basis by this Council. I hope that some will feel able take up that opportunity.

Although not strictly part of my Portfolio, I will also mention parking issues which are directly related to the Olympic Games. Because these are intended to be the "greenest Games ever", people coming to watch the events at the White Water Centre will be discouraged from arriving in their private cars. When tickets are issued, the ticket holders will be advised of how to get to the venue by public transport and that if travel by car is essential, that the park and ride facilities should be used. Therefore, in order to ensure that venues and the local community are protected from parking pressures, additional controls will be in place for the five days of the events. Details of these controls are nearing completion and there will be a number of public events plus information provided to residents and business about what is proposed. As soon as details of those events are known I will inform Members via the Bulletin. This will be followed by the normal traffic regulation order process.

Community Services

The Limes Farm Centre – The newly refurbished and extended Community facility at Limes Farm, Chigwell is due to be handed over to the Council in early December. The two extensions to the building include an EFDC office that will accommodate Housing, Benefits and Community Services staff and a smaller activity hall that will be a youth base in the evenings and a venue for a range of sports classes and activity sessions during the daytime, for all ages.

In addition to services provided by the Council the new centre will be a 'one stop shop', where people from the estate and local area can access primary health care provision and the many family services offered by the Children's centre.

Plans are underway to provide a Festive Open Day in December, where people will have the opportunity to view the facilities and hear about the range of services on offer. Members are additionally welcome to view the spectacular new facilities on the Open Day which will be held on Weds 14 December between 3pm and 7pm.

Community Training Scheme - A well attended training event themed 'Create... a Better Neighbourhood' was recently delivered to local volunteers. The event aimed to encourage people to become actively involved in their community and to give them the confidence to put their ideas into action. The informal, friendly day was an opportunity for anyone interested in forming a new community group to find out how best to move forward, and provided helpful information and tips on topics such as publicity, key roles and responsibilities and financial management. Participants took away simple, but highly effective, tools and techniques that they could put into place straight away to set up projects and achieve successful outcomes.

Youth Council - Epping Forest Youth Councillors met with their counterparts in Harlow this month to share good practice and participate in an Essex County Council consultation exercise relating to service provision for children and young people.

The Big Draw - Arts provided a Big Draw activity for children at the recent Countrycare event, *Unto These Fields* on 1 October. Toddlers, children and families were invited to step into the cartoon world designed by EFDC artist Helen Palmer, and made of cardboard, and invited to colour it in.

Museum and Exhibitions

Epping Forest District Museum has launched a new exhibition celebrating the 30th anniversary of the opening of the Museum in Sun Street, Waltham Abbey. The exhibition was opened by the Chairman on 7 October and runs until 3 March 2012.

On 24 September as part of the 'I Love Music' exhibition the Museum acted as a venue for a performance by the Loughton band 'Reachback' and the Woodriven House choir. This was also linked to the screening of the Artibility project by EF Arts. The event was extremely well attended and appreciated by the audience on the day.

The District Museum was the starting point for the civic parade at the King Harold Day Community event in Waltham Abbey on 8 October. The event, which is supported by the Museum Service, continues to be well attended.

The Museum has been awarded a grant as part of the Effective Museums programme of £1500 towards improvements on the environmental monitoring

equipment used in the gallery. There were over 55 applications for funding of which 33 Museums (including Epping) were successful.