

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 27 March 2012

Subject: Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ricki Gadsby

Recommending:

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

Leisure

The contract with SLM continues to work well and participation at the sports centres remains at reasonable levels despite the current economic circumstances. At the last Contract Monitoring Board concerns were raised around SLM's approach to maintenance at some of the centres and this is something that officers are keeping a very watch on.

Olympic Games

It is now just 122 days to the start of the Olympic Games on 27 of July and 102 days until the Olympic Torch comes to Waltham Abbey on the morning of 7 July. Preparations for both events are well advanced in respect of making sure that the Torch is able to pass safely through the district and that those who come to see it are able to be entertained both during the procession and after the Torch has moved on and out of the district. At the time of report preparation the route details remained confidential, but following national announcements on 19 March I am able to share with Council the details of the Torch route and the entertainment we are preparing for visitors to Waltham Abbey.

All of the arrangements for Olympic "Look and Feel" are now completed and we anticipate seeing the first installations in time for the Torch procession. Work on the local parking controls continues with information on the proposals now in the public domain. In essence there will be a residents' and business permit system in place which will operate between 1pm and 2pm on each of the 5 days of competition at the White Water Centre. Residents will be automatically sent permits and additional permits will be available for visitors etc. Businesses will also be able to apply. The key main roads to and from the venue will be strictly controlled. There will be rigorous enforcement through the one hour permitting period and on the main access roads. The whole regime is intended to ensure that the Games is a friendly neighbour and that residents and local businesses can get along with their lives and operations in the normal way.

Community Services

Limes Centre – Over 400 people attended the official opening of the Limes Centre, Chigwell which was also the launch a special Healthy Living Festival for Limes Farm. Choirs from the Limes Farm Infant and Junior schools entertained the crowds and local residents were able to meet staff who are based at the centre and find out about services available and enjoy a range of activities available there. The Chairman of Council, joined by two young professional footballers from Tottenham Hotspur Foundation unveiled a commemorative plaque which will be displayed in the foyer of the centre. The centre is now open for a range of activities which are proving very popular including the over 16's Boot Camp which is attracting a regular attendance of around 35 women and men each week.

Lowewood Museum

On 1 February, the Council entered into a five-year partnership agreement with Broxbourne Borough Council for the operation of Lowewood Museum, Hoddesdon. Broxbourne will continue to own and maintain the museum building, but Epping Forest District Museum staff will manage and operate the facility. As part of the new arrangement the hours of the District Museum have been changed to full day opening and this has been met with a very positive response from the public with numbers much increased from last year. A full programme of exhibitions will continue to be provided at the Museum in Sun Street and these will transfer to Lowewood at the end of each display period, where they will be added to with local history information from the Broxbourne collection.

Peelers' Progress - An Exhibition of policing the Epping Forest District (1840 - 1990)

On Saturday 24 March 2012 the District Museum opened its latest temporary exhibition 'Peelers' Progress', which provides a flavour of the lives of police men and women, with exhibits drawn from our extensive police archives.

External Funding Successes

I am delighted to report that the Council's Community Services has had a great amount of success with securing external funding over the last couple of months that will enable a range of new initiatives and projects to be provided. Over £25,000 has been secured from Awards for All to support the delivery of a range of sports and community activities; £5,000 from The Arts Council for Make a Move which is a Big Dance event involving 300 young people. A bid to Essex County Council will see £78,000 used for a special inclusion project for disabled children and young people and there is potential for us to secure a further £38,000 subject to success in the first two years. And finally, verbal notification has been given to the Council for funding for consolidation of a wellbeing project for older people, that amounts to in excess of £70,000.