

# ***Report to the Council***

**Subject: Leisure & Wellbeing Portfolio**

**Date: 23 April 2013**

**Portfolio Holder: Councillor Elizabeth Webster**

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**Recommending:**

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

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## **Leisure Services**

I am pleased to be able to inform Members that SLM Ltd, the leisure management company responsible for managing our leisure facilities has been successful in winning a number of leisure industry awards. The company has won the ASA (Amateur Swimming Association) Swimming Lesson Operator of the Year. They have also won two awards from the FIA (Fitness Industry Association) - Operator of the Year and the 'Spark of Innovation' award for their 'Everyone Active' interactive website.

This year has been a challenging one financially for SLM and indications are that the Epping contract will not achieve the levels of income required to allow the Council to receive a share of the above target income. This is the first year since the start of the contract that the Council has not benefited from this arrangement.

## **Community Services**

I am delighted to inform Members that the District Museum has been successful in securing the full Heritage Lottery Fund Grant of £1,650,000.00, to extend and completely redevelop the Museum in Sun Street, Waltham Abbey. Part of the funding will be used to purchase new accommodation in the first floor of the adjacent building above the library in order to house and provide storage display of the reserve collection which is currently stored at Langston Road depot and the rest of the funding will see the re-design of the existing museum space, development of new galleries and a community education space and will fund two new temporary staff posts.

In addition, we have just been notified of the success of a further bid to the Arts Council England for £143,000 which will enable the museum to develop a new two -year high quality temporary exhibitions programme tailored particularly at young audiences and showcasing the wealth of collections in the East of England. This will tour across small and medium-sized museums and galleries in the East. Local young people and communities will play an active role in helping to create some of the three themed exhibitions planned per year.

Other recent funding successes include:

- £20,000 from Active Essex and Sportiv8 which will see the development of a wide range of new sports activities and opportunities for local people
- £2,100 from Essex Music Schools towards development of primary school choirs
- £8,640 from Essex County Council Aiming High for Disabled children for installation of accessible play equipment at Colebrook Lane, Loughton

In late February, I was pleased to attend the 'Love Limes' first anniversary celebration of the Limes Centre, Chigwell, which attracted over 400 people including families, young and elderly people. Feedback from people attending was incredibly positive and it is

clear that the centre is proving to be a real asset to the local community. The new activities provided during the daytime and evenings are also attracting many newcomers to physical activity and improved health, including around 40 new participants of all ages to the evening Judo sessions and over 50 people involved in various fitness classes provided.

## **Health & Wellbeing**

Public health in England entered a new phase on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April with the statutory duty for improving health moving from the NHS to county councils, supported practically and professionally by a new body called Public Health England.

The mission of Public Health England is to work with national and local government, industry, academia, the voluntary and community sector and the NHS to protect and improve the nation's health and to address inequalities with a focus on the poorest and most poorly. It has five priorities namely:

- helping people to live longer by reducing preventable deaths associated with smoking, high blood pressure, obesity, insufficient exercise and alcohol.
- reducing the burden of disease in life by focusing on the conditions with the greatest impact: anxiety, depression, drug dependency and joint pain.
- protecting the country from infectious diseases and environmental dangers, including the growing problem of infections that resist treatment with antibiotics.
- supporting families to give children the best start in life, through working with health visitors, family nurse partnerships and the Troubled Families programme.
- improving health in the workplace by encouraging employers to support their staff in making healthier choices.

District councils will clearly have a significant role through many of the services they provide, such as environmental health, housing provision, leisure and planning. I will report back to Members on a regular basis as this new initiative develops further.