

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

**Subject: Leisure & Community Services**

**Date: February 2017**

**Portfolio Holder: Cllr Mrs Helen Kane**

**Item:**

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**Recommending: That the report of the Leisure and Community Services Portfolio Holder be noted.**

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### **Community Services**

I am pleased to report on a very wide range of activities, projects and initiatives delivered by our Community Services Team in recent months.

### **Community Health and Wellbeing**

#### **MiLife**

I was delighted to attend the pilot of this exciting new emotional and mental health and wellbeing project that was developed by our Youth Councillors, with the support of our staff and colleagues from the voluntary sector and Health. The project has now been delivered in St John's, Epping and Davenant School and the remaining five secondary schools are all now on board for the project to be delivered to their pupils.

I am delighted to advise Council that, following her attendance at a recent Youth Council meeting, the High Sheriff of Essex has recommended the MiLife project for a National Crimebeat Award, based on the success that the initiative is having on building confidence and resilience amongst our young people. In addition, the Council's clinical partner, the North East London NHS Foundation Trust (NELFT) has been so impressed with the project that they are in the process of creating a digital platform for the resources to be profiled universally. NELFT will arrange and produce the filming and development of the MiLife roadshow in digital format and host the associated videos on their 'My Mind' website.

These are both fantastic accolades for this innovative model of best practice, which was an initial idea from our last cohort of Youth Councillors.

#### **Dementia Friends Awareness Programme**

As part of our plans to address the needs of an ageing population following the study that we conducted in 2016, our teams are working hard to deliver Dementia Friends awareness events across the district, to a variety of groups and individuals. We now have a small cohort of staff within our Community, Health & Wellbeing Team that are trained in delivering 'Dementia Friends' and they have recently delivered sessions in Braeside School, Buckhurst Hill, at the Reuse Centre in Epping and at the Epping Forest District Museum in Waltham Abbey, signing up 176 new Dementia Friends. This work also forms part of the work linked to the District's Dementia Action Alliance.

#### **Food in School Holidays (FISH)**

To meet the increasing needs of some of our local families, we have been working in partnership with Loughton Food Bank and Spurgeons (Children's Centre operators) to facilitate the Food in School Holidays (FISH for short) initiative. This included provision of a hot Christmas lunch on 22<sup>nd</sup> December, for families identified as being in need, on the Limes Farm Estate. We prepared the lunch at The Limes Centre and each family also received a Christmas food parcel funded via the Winter Warmer Fund and a wrapped Christmas

present. Our Epping Forest project was one of only three FISH projects that took place nationally.

### **Epping Forest Digital Inclusion Project**

Following local community needs assessments, a Digital Inclusion programme is currently being piloted in three areas across the district; Chigwell, Ongar and Waltham Abbey. Funded via the Epping Forest Housing Providers Fund, the project offers residents free computer training, facilitating further access to services, jobs opportunities and money saving solutions. With many organisations and agencies now requiring residents to apply on line for their services, the project aims to up-skill families in order to enable them to complete online forms.

### **Museum Heritage and Culture**

**Arts Council England (ACE) Resilience 'No Borders 1' Project:** Work is well underway with the ACE Funded project to improve sustainability of our Museum, Heritage and Culture Services, with the £272,000 investment from ACE. No Borders, which is consortium project with Broxbourne and Chelmsford Councils, has two key priorities and these are to develop and improve commercial operations across the areas, and to establish two Development Trusts, which will operate in parallel to the operational management of the Museum facilities, in order to secure external funding that is not accessible by local authorities.

Winckworth Sherwood (WS), specialist Legal Consultants, have been appointed to undertake all of the preparation and legal work associated with the Trusts, and a Commercial Manager has been recruited, to produce and implement a five year commercial strategy for the Museums Services. Recruitment of a fundraising Manager, who will work with WS in setting up the trusts and developing a five year fundraising strategy, has now been commissioned to a specialist agency The Charity People, following difficulties in attracting candidates with the required level of knowledge and expertise.

The ACE funding has also enabled the appointment of an Engagement Officer, whose main focus will be to introduce new audiences to the Museums' services and particularly people who are currently under-represented.

**No Borders 2:** At the same of rolling out the ACE Resilience Project, the Museum, Heritage and Culture team has been extremely busy with colleagues from Chelmsford, in collating information and ideas for another Arts Council England funding opportunity, to become a National Portfolio Organisation. If successful, this will see the tripartite partnership awarded National Portfolio status, with an investment of around £250,000 in each of the four years from 2018 – 2022. The Business Plan that has been developed for the application contains work to build on the Resilience project which finishes at the end of March 2018 and a range of new initiatives to develop models of best practice in arts and museum services across the partnership and further afield. The final application was submitted in the first week of February and we will find out if we have been successful, in June. If so, we will need to submit our Business Plan in December.

**Pulham Exhibition:** Through our management of Lowewood Museum on behalf of Broxbourne Borough Council, we were successful in securing around £85,000 funding for a special exhibition on the Pulham's of Broxbourne 'Brox Rocks', which was launched on 3<sup>rd</sup> February. The exhibition displays some of the excellent stone work produced by this famous company and is very well worth visiting, along with the restored Pulham Monument in Broxbourne.

**Dance programme:** Over the last year, our Dance Engagement Officer has developed a fantastic schools assembly and after school programme, through delivering and training other staff to provide health and wellbeing dance sessions across our local schools and communities. Over 13,500 children have taken part in this exciting programme during the last 12 months, which has encouraged them to be more active and has helped to build confidence and self-esteem. We have also piloted a range of seated dance classes for older people and this has led to a demand for regular sessions, which will be held in Loughton and Waltham Abbey. It is planned to develop the programme even further if successful in attaining NPO status.

### **Leisure Management Contract**

Members will be aware that the new Leisure Management Contract to Places for People Leisure Management Ltd was awarded by Full Council in December 2016. The contract will deliver considerable revenue savings to the Council over the 20 year period and see the construction of a new Leisure Centre at Hillhouse, Waltham Abbey (subject to Planning) and refurbishments to the other Centres. The handover arrangements are underway with the outgoing contractor SLM, and Council Officers are working with the two Contractors to ensure that the transfer of management responsibilities is as smooth as possible.