

Report to the Council

Subject: Leisure and Young People

Date: 24 April 2007

Portfolio Holder: Councillor C Whitbread

Item:

Recommending:

That the report of the Leisure and Young People Portfolio Holder be noted.

Building on the success of the European Jamboree, North Weald Airfield is yet again playing a crucial role in supporting the Scout World Jamboree in July of this year. The event, which will be attended by 70,000 Scouts from virtually every country in the world, is the biggest Youth Festival ever staged in Great Britain. Prior to transfer to Hylands Park, Chelmsford, the main event site, all the Scouts will register at North Weald Airfield. A huge logistic exercise, which the infrastructure of North Weald can accommodate. We are please to be involved in such a prestigious and worthwhile event.

Further to consideration by the Cabinet in November 2006, I am pleased to report on the positive initial meetings we have been holding with our Leisure Management Contractor, SLM regarding an extension to their three year contract for Epping Sports Centre, bringing the Centre in line with the timescale for the other three centres under contract. SLM are being encouraged to consider a lower management fee as well as additional investment to improve the facilities on offer. I look forward to reporting the outcome at a future meeting.

As Members may be aware we have embarked on the development of a new Playing Pitch Strategy for the District, in order to identify areas of need and enable us to target any additional external investment from sources such as the Football Foundation. Utilising a nationally accepted methodology developed by Sport England, we have had a good response to our initial consultation from Town/Parish Councils, Schools and Voluntary Sports Clubs.

Continuing on an open-spaces theme, I am pleased to advise that our new grounds maintenance management information technology system, called confirm, has been fully installed. Mapping details of all the open space, highways and housing land that Leisure Services currently maintains, the new system will greatly assist with producing speedy and accurate responses to grounds maintenance enquiries to residents across the District. A further phase of the system will also go live this year, with the inclusion of individual details of the 16,000 street trees in the District, again assisting their efficient maintenance.