

Report to the Council

Subject: Leisure and Young People

Date: 28 June 2007

Portfolio Holder: Councillor M Cohen

Item: 7 (h)

Recommending:

That the report of the Portfolio Holder be noted.

1. In line with the recommendations of the Task and Finish Panel on Young People's Issues, who were keen to actively involve Young People in Citizenship and the Democratic process, the Leisure Services Young Person's Officer, in liaison with our Secondary Schools, has been developing proposals for the establishment of a new Youth Council for the District.

2. There is currently no formal mechanism that enables the Council to engage directly with the young people of the District on a truly representative basis. The role of the Youth Council in this respect could be to act as an advisory body to the Council, responding to consultation in relation to specific issues of concern to young people in the area, seeking their views or opinions as well as allowing young people to influence the Council's policies and service delivery process. It is hoped to finalise the arrangements for the new Youth Council with our partners, towards the end of June.

3. With respect to services for younger children, I can report that after a period of consultation, a new draft "Play Strategy" for the District has been produced. Prepared in line with guidance from "Play England", the Strategy has been developed by the multi-agency Epping Forest Play Partnership. The proposed strategy contains an audit of 'play opportunities' for children across the District, identifying gaps in provision and priorities for improvement. If the Strategy is formally endorsed by the Council in September, it is the intention to submit a Funding Application to the National Lottery Big Lottery Fund for £246,000 for Grant Aid to deliver new and improved facilities.

4. North Weald Airfield is delighted to be hosting for the fourth successive year, Cancer Research UK's "Run for Life" on Wednesday 11th July 2007. Building on previous years' success, it is anticipated that approaching 5000 women will run the 5 kilometres course around the Airfield seeking to beat the total of some £200,000 raised last year for breast cancer research. Members are welcome to come and support the event, further details of which can be obtained from Leisure Services, Sports Development Team.