

Agenda Item No. 13

Notes of the Meeting of the Leisure Management Contract Working Party

Held on Wednesday 8 November 2017 at 4.00pm

In Committee Room Two, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney

PRESENT

Councillors: A C Beaney, Mrs L C Carter, J C Cooper, Mrs E H N Fenton and P D Kelland

Also in attendance: Mrs J C Baker

Officers: Diana Shelton, Martin Holland, Stuart Wilson and Paul Cracknell

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

It was **AGREED** that Mr A C Beaney be appointed Chairman of the Working Party for the remainder of the municipal year.

2. NOTES OF LAST MEETING

The notes of the last meeting were agreed as a correct record.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs L E C Little who was absent on official business.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

The Working Party gave consideration to the terms of reference and scope of the review having regard to the scrutiny toolkit/assessment criteria adopted by the Council on 22 October 2008.

Mr Beaney stressed that, in determining the scope of the review, it was important that the Working Party did not set out to duplicate work that was to be undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Ms Shelton reminded Members that the Working Party had previously identified cleanliness, communication and publicity as particular areas of concern and advised that measures to address these had been strengthened within the new leisure management contract.

The new contract incorporated a system of key performance indicators and monitoring arrangements backed up by sanctions where appropriate.

Ms Shelton advised that, whilst the new contract had not been in operation for long, a number of issues had been identified through the monitoring arrangements, default notices had been served and the matters addressed satisfactorily.

Mrs Carter suggested that the high rate of turnover amongst staff was an important issue as it could be detrimental to service delivery. Ms Shelton indicated that it was not the Council's role to manage the delivery of the service but to ensure that the outcomes required of the contract were delivered by GLL. Mrs Baker advised that regular meetings were held between GLL and Members and Officers of the Council at which areas of concern could be addressed.

Mrs Carter advised that local representatives often received complaints from the public regarding the leisure centres. Ms Shelton stressed that, if issues raised by residents directly with GLL were not satisfactorily addressed, they should be referred to the Officers responsible for monitoring the contract as they were unable to respond to issues unless they were made aware of them.

Mr Beaney asked what arrangements were in place to report on complaints received. In response, Ms Shelton advised that reports on performance indicators, including complaints, were submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and that representatives of GLL would meet with the Committee on an annual basis.

The Leisure Services Manager advised that GLL operated an on-line works management system that was accessible to the Council's Officers, enabling them to identify reported issues that had not been addressed within the appropriate timescales.

In response to questions from Mr Kelland, Ms Shelton advised that, whilst certain structural issues remained the responsibility of the Council, under the new contract GLL assumed responsibility (and associated risk) for the maintenance of buildings and equipment. She also explained that, whilst the Council had sought costings for the replacement of the Windrush Leisure Centre as part of the tender process, this did not form part of the current contract.

Mrs Carter suggested that, given the growth in population, the Windrush was no longer fit for purpose. Ms Shelton acknowledged the need to explore the possibility of providing a replacement and advised that this was included within the Council's facilities action plan. The plan identified future projects that it would be desirable to implement if and when resources allowed. Mr Beaney suggested that further discussion of this subject went beyond the remit of the Working Party.

Mrs Carter questioned the programme of activities put on by GLL at the leisure centres and, given the apparent demand, the absence of pilates sessions at Chipping Norton. Ms Shelton advised that there was a need to strike a balance between activities that generated income for the contractor and those providing a social benefit. She suggested that if GLL was made aware of the potential demand and could appoint a suitably qualified instructor they would be likely to run sessions.

Mr Beaney suggested that GLL should seek suggestions from residents as to what activities they would like to see run. In response, Ms Shelton indicated that they already sought suggestions from their customers and the Leisure Development

Officer advised that GLL now operated an interactive facebook site through which suggestions could be made. As the largest leisure services provider in the country, GLL remained innovative in its offer.

Mr Kelland enquired whether the joint use facilities in Eynsham were well utilised and Ms Shelton confirmed that all the centres were well used.

Mr Beaney suggested that it would be useful if the Working Party produced an information pack for Members advising them of the contract monitoring systems in place and providing appropriate contact details for their use. Officers agreed that this would be beneficial as it was important that they be advised of any issues in a timely fashion.

Mr Beaney provided details of a number of issues including the cleanliness of the pool and changing rooms at the Windrush, variation in the temperature of the pool and showers, cleanliness of the viewing area windows and the location of the data logger.

Mrs Baker acknowledged that these were relevant issues but suggested that they could be more effectively dealt with if they were passed to Officers directly.

Mr Beaney also noted that the Council's involvement did not feature prominently on the GLL website and expressed concern over a recent incident with health and safety implications that had taken place during a swimming gala. Ms Shelton stressed that there could be no justification where health and safety issues arose and any such instances should be addressed immediately.

Mr Beaney went on to suggest that representatives of the swimming club be invited to attend the next meeting of the Working Party. Officers advised that there should be a direct interface between the club and GLL and there should be no need for the Council to intervene unless there was a problem. Ms Shelton undertook to raise the issue with GLL and advise Members of the arrangements already in place.

Mr Beaney expressed some concern that the numbers of those swimming at the Windrush had fallen whilst they had increased in centres in neighbouring Districts. It was noted that, whilst there had been a reduction in the first quarter of the year, the position had now reversed. Mrs Carter expressed her concern over timetabling changes and the cancellation of swimming lessons at short notice. It was explained that the cancellations had been the result of recent difficulties in employing qualified swimming teachers.

It was **AGREED** that Officers would produce a draft information pack for consideration at the next meeting. In order to assist, Members were invited to provide details of any specific information that would be of interest.

5.1 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was **AGREED** that the next meeting of the Working Party would be held at 2:00pm on Wednesday 24 January 2018.

The meeting closed at 5:20pm