

Agenda Item No. 10

Notes of the Meeting of the Leisure Management Contract Working Party

Held on Wednesday 24 January 2018 at 2.00pm

In Room G24, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney

PRESENT

Councillors: A C Beaney, (Chairman) Mrs L C Carter and J C Cooper

Also in attendance: Mrs J C Baker

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

1. NOTES OF LAST MEETING

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

Mr Beaney made reference to his suggestion that representatives of the swimming club be invited to meet with the Working Party. Officers reiterated that there should be a direct interface between the club and GLL and that the club should raise any issues with GLL in the first instance. Mr Beaney suggested that the Working Party could meet with representatives of both parties but was advised that this was not an appropriate role for the Working Party.

Mr Holland advised Members that, following the last meeting, he had attended one of the scheduled meetings between the Centre Manager and the Chairman of the Swimming Club to discuss their concerns. He confirmed that he had provided the Chairman with his contact details and would continue to monitor the issues that had been raised.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs L E C Little and D S T Enright.

3. DRAFT INFORMATION SHEET

The Working Party gave consideration to the draft Information Sheet produced as requested at the last meeting.

Mr Beaney noted that no contact details had been provided in relation to the Artificial Turf Pitches or the Woodstock swimming pool. It was explained that these were operated as satellite sites by the main centres and it was **AGREED** that this information would be added to the information sheet.

Ms Shelton emphasised that, in the first instance, Members receiving complaints from residents ought not to contact GLL directly, but advise the complainant to take the matter up with the relevant centre manager.

In the event that the complaint was not resolved, Members should contact the Council's Leisure Services Team. It was **AGREED** that this would be clarified in the information sheet.

Mr Beaney questioned whether complaints were followed up and Ms Shelton advised that GLL operated a complaints monitoring system which was accessible to the Council's Officers. He questioned whether the complaints card system operated effectively and Ms Shelton reiterated that, should they become aware of any residents failing to receive a response, Members should refer the matter to the Leisure Services Team.

Mr Beaney asked whether it was possible to track complaints cards. Ms Shelton advised that there was also an on-line system and Mr Wilson advised that paper based complaints represented by far the minority. He indicated that complaints submitted electronically could be tracked through the email thread and advised that GLL had adopted a standard whereby complaints were acknowledged in three days with a full response being provided in seven.

Ms Shelton reiterated that complaints should be dealt with through GLL's internal process in the first instance and referred to the Council's Officers in the event that no response had been received within these timescales.

Mrs Baker advised that Officers could track complaints through GLL's on-line system and that performance in dealing with complaints, together with customer feedback, was reviewed as part of the regular operations meetings.

Ms Shelton advised that it was for GLL as the contractor to operate its complaints system but important for the Council to have access to the data in order to identify any particular trends.

Mr Beaney made reference to the Quest reports which were to be considered by the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee later that week. He advised that he generally received positive feedback regarding GLL's staff with complaints relating to the condition of the buildings and questioned whether these issues were being addressed.

Officers advised that procedures were in place to monitor and identify issues and to take up any concerns with GLL. Where particular issues were not addressed, the contract allowed for financial penalties and this provision had been invoked on one occasion when equipment at the Café in the Windrush Leisure Centre had not been replaced within the relevant timeframe.

Mr Wilson advised Members that the Council had just been notified that the most recent Quest report received by the Windrush had been the second best in the UK. A rating of 'Very Good' placed it within the top 20% of facilities in the Country.

Mr Beaney expressed his concern over the condition of the changing rooms in Witney as the smell of urine was regularly discernible. It was explained that, despite a regular cleaning regime, the presence of under-floor heating made this a particularly difficult problem to resolve. However GLL was aware of the issue and was deploying measures to tackle the problem.

Mrs Carter suggested that GLL's pay levels made it difficult for the Company to retain good staff and questioned whether the Council could call for an increase. In response, Ms Shelton advised that, as the service had been contracted out, it was for GLL, not the Council, to set rates of pay. She stressed that West Oxfordshire received a good level of service in comparison to other local authorities and operated a far more proactive monitoring regime.

Mrs Baker advised that there had been a marked improvement since the new contract came into operation and stressed that it was essential that Members advised the Council's Officers of any drop in standards. Communication between GLL and its staff had improved as had that between the Company and the Council.

Mrs Carter agreed that there was much to be positive about but that the Windrush Leisure Centre was small for the catchment area that it served. She questioned whether the requirement for centre membership for those undertaking swimming lessons was a way in which GLL boosted membership figures. Mr Wilson advised that membership categories were broken down in monitoring performance indicators and that membership offered access outside of lessons at no additional cost.

Mrs Carter indicated that facilities at the Chipping Norton Leisure Centre were generally good but advised that there were a few minor issues such as a defective lock on one of the changing room doors. Mr Wilson advised that, whilst not a reason to delay necessary repairs, there was a programme in place for the refurbishment of the changing rooms. Mr Holland reiterated that, should such issues remain unresolved, Members should contact the Leisure Services Team. However, he confirmed that the Council could not get directly involved in staffing matters.

(Following the meeting, Officers advised the Centre Manager of the defective changing room door lock and this has now been repaired).

It was **AGREED** that a flow chart be included in the information sheet to illustrate the appropriate route by which issues should be raised. Mr Beaney questioned whether details of the facilities available at each site should be included in the information sheet but it was acknowledged that this information was provided on the website.

Mr Cooper sought clarification of the role of the Advisory Board and it was explained that this formed part of the contract monitoring process. Mrs Baker advised that Officers met with representatives of GLL for monthly operations meetings and she and Officers met with GLL on a regular basis to discuss contract performance.

The Advisory Board was comprised of GLL's Partnership Manager and Regional Director, the Cabinet Member and Strategic Director together with the appropriate Heads of Service and met as required to consider strategic issues or any unresolved operational matters. There were also provisions to call an emergency meeting of the Board if necessary.

4. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members considered whether it was necessary to schedule a further meeting. It was acknowledged that the Working Party had been established to consider arrangements for the new leisure management contract. Since this was complete it was **AGREED** that the Working Party would be held in abeyance but that further meetings could be arranged to address specific issues on a 'task and finish' basis should the need arise

The meeting closed at 2:40pm