



NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

SCRUTINY PANEL 3 – CUSTOMER SERVICES

21 MARCH 2012

BRIEFING NOTE

SITE VISIT – DANES CAMP LEISURE CENTRE

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On 8TH March 2012, representatives of this Scrutiny Panel, along with the Scrutiny Officer, attended a site visit to Danes Camp Leisure Centre to look at its customer services facilities.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Last year Northampton Leisure Trust took over the management of the Leisure Centres, which have charitable status and are not for profit organisations. The Trust does not own the facilities but manages them on a 15 year management contract. The Trust receives a management fee from Northampton Borough Council (NBC) that will reduce year on year until the balance becomes zero.
- 2.2 The Trilogy brand creates £2 million a year with 6,500 members. Standard membership is £29 per month, but concessionary rates are offered. Pay as you go swimming is £4 but is reduced to £2.70 if the customer has a leisure card which costs £14 annually.
- 2.3 A wide variety of leaflets are available in the reception area for customers that range from:

Fun Zone 2012 – Play schemes
Junior Active Membership
Forum Cinema
Holiday Programme – Easter 2012
Swimming Programme
Feedback form – Tell it like it is
Leisure Centre Customer Charter

Crèche

- 2.4 The Centre clearly displays the Customer Services Charter 2010, the mission statement being:

“To provide a quality, value for money leisure service that meets the needs and aspirations of the local community.”

- 2.5 The Trust Quest status and will be reassessed later this year. Previously the leisure centres have scored very highly but the system is changing this year to include mystery shopping that will call in to a leisure centre and ask for directions. This call equates to 20% of the score. Health and safety, training, marketing, website, procedures and policies will all be assessed.
- 2.6 Danes Camp Leisure Centre was the first centre to be credited with the Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) status.
- 2.7 Danes Camp offers free parking for its customers with a dedicated section for disabled parking. There is the provision of automatic doors and a lift to the fitness suite. Braille is used on the lockers, a hearing loop available in reception, specific changing rooms are dedicated for disabled people and the gym equipment is suitable for visual impairment.
- 2.8 Changing Places, a government initiative, has been implemented at the Centre. Which offers changing and toilet facilities outside the home. Individuals can use just these facilities which offer more than sport for the community. Full funding is provided for this.
- 2.9 Previously, Danes Camp was awarded Customer Services Accreditation but due to the cost it has been decided that it will not go for the accreditation this year. However, the Centre continues to follow the assessment used.
- 2.10 On a regular basis, Danes Camp shares details of its customer services as an example of best practice with various departments of NBC.
- 2.11 Danes Camp offers in housing catering for its customers, in addition to vending facilities. The other three centres provide vending machines.
- 2.12 The Centre offers a variety of sessions for its customers such as:
- Fifty plus swimming
 - Parent and Toddler Groups
- During the hours of 2-4pm, Monday to Friday, Children’s activities are offered
- 2.13 The Centre opens at 6.45am to 10.00pm.
- 2.14 A crèche is offered at a cost of £3.50 for one hour and £2 for half hour.
- 2.15 A quarterly Customer Forum meeting is held which is run by the Centre Manager. Representatives of the Forum speak on behalf of other customers.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The evidence gathered at the site visit to Danes Camp customer services facilities will help to inform the Review of Customer Services at Northampton Borough Council.
- 5.2 By offering a variety of ways for customers to access leisure, such as annual membership, concessions and pay as you go rates, all customers' needs are recognised.
- 5.3 A variety of fitness classes are offered for all ages.
- 5.4 The Centre provides for the needs of disabled customers.
- 5.5 The Customer Forum meeting ensures that customers' views are heard.
- 5.6 Signage around the Centre is very clear as it the information available for customers.

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Date: 12th March 2012