

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY LEISURE SERVICES
TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

Tuesday, 10 October 2006

PRESENT: Councillor Brendan Glynane (Chair)
Councillor Brandon Eldred
Councillor Arthur McCutcheon
Councillor Andrew Simpson
Dr Mike Gillespie, University of Northampton, Co-optee

Thomas Hall Corporate Manager
Ian Redfern Leisure Services Manager
Tracy Tiff Scrutiny Officer

1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

The Chair welcomed Dr Mike Gillespie, representing the University of Northampton, as a co-opted member to this Task and Finish Group.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2006

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2006 were agreed.

3. TO APPROVE THE SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

The Task and Finish Group discussed the scope and the review and made comment and amendment.

T Tiff advised the Group that M Burrows was no longer the Chief Executive of Northants PCT, and Gill Scoular, Acting Chief Executive, had been contacted asking if she, or a member of her team, would like to be co-opted to this Task and Finish Group. As yet a response had not been received. It was noted that the new Chief Executive of Northants PCT was due to take up post early in November.

AGREED: **That the Scope of the Review, as amended, as attached at Annex 1 be approved.**

4. OFFICER'S REPORT - BASELINE DATA

I Redfern, Leisure Services Manager, referred to the information that had been circulated with the agenda:-

- Leisure Services Aims
- NBC Leisure Services Annual Report 2005-06
- Leisure Cards sold during the last year (various statistics)
- Sales of Leisure Cards by month by Centre
- Attendance Figures 2003-2006 at the three Centres
- Leisure Centres Service Plan 2006/2007

The Group heard that Leisure Services had been restructured four years

ago following a best value review. It had been assessed as a good but expensive service. I Redfern had investigated why it was deemed an expensive service and had benchmarked against Local Authorities who's leisure services were cheaper. He had ascertained that their Leisure Services was cheaper than NBC but did not include central costs of £400,000. If this had been taken into account, NBC's Leisure Service would have been on par with the others.

I Redfern advised that the performance of leisure had improved year on year. For the last 2 ½ years he had focussed on the Corporate Plan and had created an equilibrium of offering a balanced programme in conjunction with health issues. NBC's main partner is Northants PCT.

The Council has three leisure centres – Mounts Baths, Danes Camp and Lings Forum and the Sports Development Unit that creates a link with the community and the leisure centres.

NBC's Leisure Services mission statement details *“To provide a high quality, value for money Leisure Service that meets the needs and aspirations of the local community”*.

A national telephone survey was carried out that had looked at participation levels regarding moderate physical activity. The questions that were asked were not sports specific. The full findings are due to be published in November 2006. The Government has an initiative to increase public participation in moderate physical activity. The Government has set a target of 100,000 people per week participating in exercise over the next ten years. (Increase participation by 1% until 2010). Northampton is just below the national average of approximately 18.9% of people currently regularly exercising.

The Local Area Agreement has an aspiration to increase participation to tackle issues such as obesity in children but this is not as yet measured. It would be a huge task to form a team to monitor public participation at the Leisure Centres, however, some Universities do take on such tasks. M Gillespie confirmed that the University of Northampton has the capacity to carry out such a task and on a local level the project would be manageable.

I Redfern advised that NBC leisure services dovetailed with N-Sport and also worked with East Midlands Sport. It was suggested that a representative of N-Sport be invited to attend a future meeting. The sports development team comprises five posts, of which two are funded. The team is delivering to more deprived wards and is having a lot of success, for example, it has worked well in Thorpeland and Kingsheath, assisting in improved health through leisure and sport.

Leisure Services provides a comprehensive Summer activity programme, making use of the borough's parks and open spaces. A free service is provided to 7,000 children over the summer period, which is funded by the Council.

The Group was referred to the Leisure Service Aims. Regarding improved health it was noted that individuals are referred for a 12-week health programme by the GP, if the GP feels that they will benefit from a course

of activity. The 12-week health programme comprises a guided induction and a monitored exercise programme. A health survey is undertaken and the doctor informs the leisure manager of the individual's capabilities. Often individuals continue to exercise regularly after the 12-week programme. If individuals to continue to use the health centres they are offered a discount to join. The Group requested that the percentage of individuals who continue to use the health centres after the initial 12-week programme (GP referral) be provided to the next meeting. Northants PCT provides £7,000 funding per year to the Council to administer the scheme. The Group requested that data on GP referrals be provided to the next meeting. Overstone Park Health Club, privately run organisation, will take GP referrals and invoice the individual direct.

The Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Group is a new initiative and I Redfern is not aware of any other Local Authority that is offering such a scheme.

The Council's Leisure Service's Body 4Life (Children and Obesity) Initiative has won an award. They are structured groups run by the School Health Advisors. The whole family is encouraged to attend. Each session consists of one hour physical exercise and one hour's education. Measurements are taken at the beginning of the 12-week programme and again at the end. This Initiative is seen as an example of best practice. Initially, each group comprised 20 children but it was felt that this was too large and it was reduced to 14 (plus parents). Three groups per year are taken, which coincides with school term time. The current group is the 9th intake. Northants PCT provides £6,000 funding per year and NBC provides the facility, staff and motivators such as t-shirts and water bottles. The biggest weakness is not having the resources to call the children back in six months time to see if the life change is continuing.

NBC is the market leaders for the GP referral scheme, Body 4 Life (Children and Obesity) and the Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Initiatives. Leisure Services will publish a paper on Body 4 Life. It was noted that obesity in the young is a growing problem and is costing the National Health Service around £1.6 million per year, this is estimated to increase to £3.6 billion by 2010. The GP referral scheme is a national scheme and will continue to evolve.

The Group was advised that 75 exercise classes are offered over the three gyms.

Lings Forum no longer receives £143,000 of funding from NCC as Lings Academy no longer uses the facility during school hours as it has its own facility. Therefore, a new scheme that operates during the day has been introduced – Over 50's days. Individuals can attend Lings Forum on a Friday, attend the exercise classes, gym, pool and play bowls etc. Lunch is provided and a film showing at the Lings Cinema is included. Cost for the day is £7.50. When capacity has been reached for the Friday it is hoped that there will be a reserve list to hold the event on another day each week too.

Attendance statistics at the three health centres were circulated. It was noted that the Leisure Card is valid for 12 months. Retention rate is good and it is seen as value for money. Purchase of the Leisure Card reduces

the fee to use leisure facilities. The cost of the Leisure Card per year is:-

- Students and Senior Citizens £6
- Adults £12
- Family (two adults and three Children) £24

The national retention rate for gym attendance is three months, the retention rate to NBC's leisure centres is currently seven months. Direct debit income is very good, for example, currently, Danes Camp takes between £17,000 and £18,000 income in direct debit gym membership per month. The Authority still offers the 'play and pay' scheme.

The Group asked whether the following statistics could be provided to the next meeting:-

- Renewal rate of the Leisure Card
- How often an individual with a Leisure Card frequents the centres

The costs of the service was reported:-

- Income from the three centres is around £2.240m
- Expenditure equates to £3.4 m
- Subsidy is around £1.2m

A breakdown of costs will be provided to the next meeting. Benchmarking with other Local Authorities would be available through Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE). The Group suggested that it would be beneficial to look at the family groups, their subsidy and participation groups.

Danes Camp Leisure Centre has been designated and awarded the Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) regarding access to people with disabilities. The Centre has appropriate equipment and swimming pool, parking bays, signage, changing rooms, lifts, and lockers for disabled needs. The Group requested statistical data of disabled users at Danes Camp. There is IFI accredited equipment in all three leisure centres and statistical data would be obtained.

I Redfern confirmed that he could provide up to date income details for the three centres. Individuals are leaving privately run gyms and joining NBC's Leisure Centres, this could be due to the cost of membership, the range of classes and the installation of the new gym equipment. No discount is given to long-standing members but corporate membership is offered. Customer Surveys and Exit Surveys are carried out and regular Customer Forums meetings are held. These details would be emailed to the Group.

Membership Advisors would be piloted for a three-month trial. There would be a team at each site. Best practice visits were taking place in this respect to:-

- Salford
- Newark and Sherwood
- Bury St Edmunds

Leisure Services supports and develops local communities by positively directing energies into sport and recreation and reducing crime and disorder. There are a few partnership arrangements in place such as the sponsoring of six top athletes from the Trampolining Club. The athletes can use the gym free of charge. I Redfern advised that there is a need for a 25-metre competition swimming pool. The town has a very good swimming club but there is not the provision of a proper training pool for their use. The Group felt there was a need to inform the public of such initiatives. Lottery funding might be available for publicity. I Redfern advised that TV screens are in situ in the leisure centres detailing ongoing initiatives.

I Redfern advised that an aim of Leisure Service was to encourage participation in sport and physical activity by under-represented groups, including women and girls, people with disabilities and minority ethnic groups through the promotion of the Leisure Card, by Sports Development promoting International Women's Day and Danes Camp Leisure Centre being designated and awarded the Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) giving access to people with disabilities.

I Redfern emphasised that customer focus was the centre of leisure services. There are dedicated noticeboards at each site detailing existing surveys, minutes of the quarterly customer forums and the action plans. TILLI (tell us how it is) forms are available at each site and on line. The Customer Forums are attended by individuals in the 30-40 age bracket. It is hoped that a Young People's Forum will be introduced shortly.

Details of the economic and efficient service aim were given. I Redfern referred to the growth agenda, advising that he would be meeting shortly with Mick Lorkins, Regeneration Manager. M Lorkins is matching new builds against the number of facilities that the borough currently has, for example, how many 25 metre swimming pools does the borough have against every 1,000 population. It was suggested that M Lorkins, Regeneration Manager, be requested to attend the next meeting.

Leisure Services partners were noted as:-

- Northants PCT
- GP Referrals
- Body 4 Life
- COPD
- N-Sport
- NBC Sports Development
- NBC Internal Departments
- NCC
- Schools
- Age Concern
- Food 4 Thought
- Local Sports Clubs
- Local Area Agreement (LAA)

The Chair advised that currently 11.5 million people in the UK were over 50 years of age and this was set to rise to 16 million over the next ten

years. I Redfern confirmed that Age Concern marketed a lot of Leisure Services initiatives and was able to reach groups that NBC might not be able to access.

It was noted that the Leisure Services Aims had not been formally approved by Cabinet and it was suggested that a potential recommendation of this Group could be to recommend the approval of the Aims.

The NBC Leisure Services Annual Report 2005-06 details a lot of information regarding achievements and gives a break down of each site. All three sites are accredited to the leisure charter marker and have now moved onto acquiring Quest Accreditation, which is the highest standard for quality in the leisure industry. There will be a two-day audit at each site plus a mystery visit. Mounts Baths was audited on 28 and 29 September 2006 and passed with a rate of upper 60/lower 70%. Lings Forum will be audited on 9 and 10 November and Danes Camp during January 2007.

AGREED:

- (1) That a representative of N-Sport be invited to attend a future meeting.**
- (2) That the percentage of individuals who continue to use the health centres after the initial 12-week programme (GP referral) be provided to the next meeting.**
- (3) That data on GP referrals be provided to the next meeting.**
- (4) That the following statistics could be provided to the next meeting:-**
 - **Renewal rate of the Leisure Card**
 - **How often an individual with a Leisure Card frequents the centres**
- (5) That a breakdown of costs to the service (including income details) be provided to the next meeting.**
- (6) That the APSE family groups, their subsidy and participation groups be investigated and reported to the next meeting.**
- (7) That statistical data of disabled users at Danes Camp be provided to the next meeting.**
- (8) That statistical data regarding the IFI accredited equipment in all three leisure centres be provided to the next meeting.**
- (9) That Customer Surveys and Exit Surveys Customer Forums meeting minutes be emailed to the Group.**
- (10) That M Lorkins, Regeneration Manager, be requested to attend the next meeting**
- (11) That a potential recommendation of the final report could include that the Leisure Services Aims be recommended for approval.**

5. VISIT TO BEST PRACTICE LOCAL AUTHORITY - DISCUSSION

The Group suggested that there was need to locate a Local Authority of similar size to NBC so that it could be bench marked. It was suggested that the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) detailed Family Groups and these would be looked at to determine an Authority of similar size. Desktop research would be undertaken and reported to a future meeting.

I Redfern suggested a possible visit to Hertsmere Council. A list of possible best practice Authorities to be visited would be emailed to the Group for comment. A list of potential questions to be put to the Council to be visited would also be emailed to the Group for its consideration and comment.

6. DEFINE QUESTIONS FOR WITNESS EVIDENCE (PORTFOLIO HOLDER)

Consideration of this item was deferred to the next meeting. The Portfolio Holder would be requested to attend the meeting on 6 December 2006.

7. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

The schedule of meetings was noted:-

8 November 2006
6 December 2006
8 January 2007

All meetings would commence at 6pm and be held at the Guildhall.

The meeting concluded at 8:15 pm

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

LEISURE SERVICES TASK AND FINISH GROUP

1. Purpose/Objectives of the Review

- To review the objectives of the Service
- To review the extent to which the Service meets these objectives
- To review whether the Service provides 'value for money'.

2. Outcomes Required

- To make recommendations to support the development of a clear and appropriately resourced Leisure Services Policy/Strategy

3. Information Required

- User satisfaction survey results
- Existing Leisure Services Policy/Strategy
- Leisure Services Action/Business Plan
- Financial information such as the cost of the service

4. Format of Information

- Officer reports/presentations
- Baseline data
- Best practice external to Northampton; e.g. Visits to other Local Authorities
- Witness interview with the Portfolio Holder
- Customer Survey
- Young People's Survey.
- Information on the general health of the citizens of Northampton

5. Methods Used to Gather Information

- Minutes of the meetings
- Desktop research
- Customers views on leisure services
- Young people's views on leisure services – Youth Forum to be asked to carry out the survey
- Evidence from Northamptonshire County Council's Healthier Communities Scrutiny Committee
- Evidence from Northampton PCT

- Evidence from an expert - Fellow researcher at Northampton University
- Evidence from the Portfolio Holder

6. Co-Options to the Review Committee

M Burrows, Chief Executive Northampton PCT and the Health Professor at Northampton University to be asked to become a co-optee of this Task and Finish Group.

7. Evidence gathering Timetable

September 2006 to January 2007

| | |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| 12 September | Scope the review |
| 10 October | Evidence gathering |
| 8 November | Evidence gathering |
| 6 December | Evidence gathering |
| 8 January 2007 | Finalise Chair's report |

8. Responsible Officers

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|--------------|-------------|
| Lead Officer | Thomas Hall |
| Co-ordinator | Tracy Tiff |

9. Resources and Budgets

I Redfern, Leisure Services Manager, to provide support and advice.

Possible expert evidence and research.

10. Final report resented by:

Completed by 8 January 2007. Presented by the Chair of the Task and Finish Group to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then to Cabinet.

11. Monitoring procedure:

Review the impact of the report after six months (July/August 2007)