

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

06 February 2006

Report of the Director of Leisure

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Council

1 LEISURE SERVICES BUSINESS UNIT (LSBU) – LARKFIELD LEISURE CENTRE (LLC) MANAGEMENT RESTRUCTURE

Summary

This report brings forward a proposal to restructure the management resources at Larkfield Leisure Centre in response to current vacancies and the market position. The report also seeks endorsement of urgent action taken following approval by Management Team towards filling two key posts.

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 This Committee will be aware of the earlier Leisure Best Value Review (BVR), which considered service delivery options related to the Council's indoor leisure facilities. The BVR Final Report recommended that the 'in-house' service delivery option be retained and the market position be monitored and reviewed in liaison with external consultants.
- 1.1.2 The Leisure Contracts Manager (LCM) is responsible for the LSBU service management team, including staff with cross contract responsibilities for finance and business, marketing, quality and technical management. This team also includes a General Manager based at each indoor leisure facility, and a copy of the staff structure is attached at **[Annex 1]**.
- 1.1.3 The current trading position of the LSBU is below profile and expected to result in a year end deficit of around £100,000 at current projection. This position is primarily as a consequence of the competition provided by the opening of David Lloyd Leisure at Kings Hill. The financial position was reported in detail at the last meeting of the Leisure Facilities, Culture and Youth Advisory Board on 9 January and Management Team is updated on a regular basis.
- 1.1.4 The LCM has prepared an action plan to address the financial position in future years and an urgent response is required to the current operational management vacancies at LLC, in order to resource properly the ongoing management of the facility and implement the action plan.

1.1.5 When benchmarked through the South East Leisure Centre Operators (SELCO) forum, the LSBU has previously demonstrated low management costs when measured as a percentage of overall staff costs.

1.2 LLC - Current Management Position

1.2.1 LLC is the Council's flagship leisure facility in the northern area of the Borough and ongoing capital investment has maintained and developed the facility to the highest standards. A quasi-commercial approach to management of the facility has been mirrored by strong customer relations and community focus.

1.2.2 The Centre attracts 750,000 visits annually, with a turnover in excess of £2.2m and currently employs 200 staff on a full and part-time basis. The most recent Quest assessment, the UK Quality Scheme for Sport and Leisure, placed LLC in the top eight assessed sites in the UK.

1.2.3 The current management structure at LLC is shown at **[Annex 2]**.

1.2.4 Due to various reasons a number of vacancies have occurred over the past few months as follows:

- General Manager
- Assistant Manager (Health & Fitness)
- Assistant Manager (Customer Services)

1.2.5 During the period from August 2005 the responsibilities of General Manager have been undertaken by the Leisure Contracts Manager, supported by the Finance and Business Manager. This has placed a significant burden upon senior LSBU staff, at a time when external competition and other factors have demanded close attention to strategic and business management.

1.3 Proposed Structure

1.3.1 The proposed way forward is shown at **[Annex 3]**. The higher grading of the General Manager post is mitigated by the lower grading proposed for the post of Administration Manager (ADM).

1.3.2 Whilst the structure appears to vary marginally from the existing arrangement, the job descriptions and person specification for the HFM and ADM posts have been revised to attract applicants with specific skills in these areas, rather than seeking more generally qualified candidates.

1.3.3 Whilst the GM and ADM posts need to be filled urgently, the post of HFM, is currently filled on a temporary basis, and will need to be reviewed by the new GM, taking into account the ongoing performance of the temporary postholder.

1.4 Interim Action

- 1.4.1 Following consideration of these proposals, Management Team agreed to place advertisements for the following two posts to ensure that current management vacancies can be filled as soon as possible, particularly in view of the need to implement measures in the action plan and maintain quality assurance in the context of direct competition.
- 1.4.2 General Manager (GM) – this post has been regraded to C20 (£34,000 - £36,000) in order to attract high calibre candidates. The scale has been determined following a recent terms and conditions survey conducted by SELCO and careful review of the scope of post. A draft job description is attached at **[Annex 4]**. The post has been advertised in the national trade press and interviews are scheduled for late February.
- 1.4.3 Administration Manager (ADM) – this post reports to the General Manager and will oversee the administration, reception and other front of house services at the Centre. A draft job description is attached at **[Annex 5]**. The post has been advertised locally in the press and interviews are also scheduled for late February.

1.5 Consultation

- 1.5.1 This report is brought forward following consultation with the Director of Finance, the Senior Personnel Officer, UNISON and the LSBU's service management team. Management Team endorses the proposals contained within the report.

1.6 Legal Implications

- 1.6.1 Nil

1.7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.7.1 The proposed restructure results in a very small additional cost (£90) and is, therefore, essentially at nil cost.

1.8 Risk Assessment

- 1.8.1 No related issues are identified in the LSBU risk register. There is, however, the risk of insufficient management resources leading to stress related absence amongst other staff; poor service design and delivery; and consequent business failure.

1.9 Recommendations

- 1.9.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that:
- 1) The revised structure shown at **[Annex 3]** be agreed;
 - 2) The post of General Manager be regraded to C20;

- 3) The posts of Assistant Manager be regraded to C16a;
- 4) The posts of Health & Fitness Manager be graded 16a and Administration Manager be regraded to C16 respectively; and
- 5) The action taken to date in advertising the posts of General Manager and Administration Manager be endorsed.

Background papers:

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Nil

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Director of Leisure