

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

LEISURE and ARTS ADVISORY BOARD

14 January 2008

Report of the Chief Leisure Officer

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 LEISURE FACILITIES – FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Summary

Management information summaries for Larkfield Leisure Centre, Angel Centre, Tonbridge Swimming Pool, Poulton Wood Golf Centre, Tonbridge Castle/Customer Services, Tonbridge Cemetery and Poulton Wood Grounds Maintenance are shown at [Annexes 1 – 7].

1.1 Larkfield Leisure Centre

1.1.1 The Board will note at [Annex 1] that this contract is currently above profile by £27,000. Expenditure is below profile by £8,000 despite a small overspend in staffing related to superannuation costs and the return after maternity leave of the Marketing Manager. Income, which is £19,000 above profile, has been supported by a loss of income claim associated with the extensive capital development work at Larkfield. It has been difficult to assess the true levels of business due to these works, however, fitness income appears to have remained buoyant whilst actual swimming is almost 10% below profile.

1.2 Angel Centre

1.2.1 The Board will note at [Annex 2] that this contract is currently just above profile. Expenditure is below profile by just under £16,000 with savings in staffing and a number of other areas. Income is below profile by just over £15,000. Whilst coaching courses, dance studio and the sports hall are performing well, Lifestyles health and fitness and outdoor pitch bookings are below profile.

1.3 Tonbridge Swimming Pool

1.3.1 The Board will note at [Annex 3] that this contract is currently below profile by £47,000. Expenditure is above profile by nearly £12,000, with overspends on staffing and utilities offset in part by savings in supplies and services. Income has been badly affected by the poor summer and casual swimming is nearly £20,000 below profile which has a consequent impact on the net profit in catering which is a further £10,000 below expectation. Conversely, the health suite and exercise classes are performing well. The Leisure Contracts Manager (LCM) is confident

that stable winter attendances and tight expenditure control will ensure this contract returns towards profile over the last five months of the financial year.

1.4 Poult Wood Golf Centre

1.4.1 Members will note from **[Annex 4]** that income levels over the first eight months of the financial year have been adversely affected by poor weather, particularly during the 2007 summer months when the majority of income is taken. In addition, independent research has highlighted that there has been a downturn in golf usage nationally and in particular in the South East. This reflects the current economic climate, with people having less disposable income available to spend on leisure pursuits. The Golf Centre has been extensively advertised in golf publications and the local media, with a number of promotions aimed at generating new business and rewarding customer loyalty. A marketing strategy for 2008/09 is being prepared in conjunction with the Golf Professional.

1.5 Tonbridge Castle/Customer Services

1.5.1 The Board will note at **[Annex 5]** that the Tonbridge office services have continued to be well used by residents and visitors alike. The Gatehouse attraction continues to perform well. A new guide book has been produced and is now on sale in the office. Copies for Members will be available at the meeting.

1.5.2 As we move into the winter months the balance of customers has shifted to more "council services" rather than tourism related enquiries. Members will be aware that the Customer Services team at the Castle now handle a wide range of face-to-face enquiries on behalf of the Council including benefits, council tax, waste services, planning and concessionary travel in addition to the Gatehouse and tourism enquiries. The establishment of this new approach to customer services has involved a significant training and development programme, which is ongoing. The potential redevelopment of the office accommodation is still outstanding and will be the subject of future reports to the relevant Advisory Boards.

1.6 Tonbridge Cemetery

1.6.1 Members will note from **[Annex 6]** that the overall income from Tonbridge Cemetery is currently slightly below profile. Whilst the majority of individual services provided are on profile, the first eight months of the current financial year has seen a reduction in the estimated leases for Columbaria Vaults/Plaques.

1.7 Poult Wood Grounds Maintenance

1.7.1 The Board will note at **[Annex 7]** that this contract is currently above profile by £7,000. This is primarily due to savings in staffing brought about by difficulties in recruitment. The vacant Greenkeeper position will be re-advertised in the New Year.

1.8 Legal Implications

1.8.1 None.

1.9 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.9.1 Collectively, the facilities covered by this report generate income and expenditure in excess of £4.5m per annum.

1.10 Risk Assessment

1.10.1 Taking into account the levels of income and expenditure involved, it is essential that the financial performance of the facilities are closely monitored, and any issues are identified and addressed at an early stage. Any significant variations in financial performance could have a major impact on the Council's revenue budget.

Background papers:

Nil

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