

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**LEISURE and ARTS ADVISORY BOARD**

**17 March 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 £2,500. Expenditure is above profile by £7,000 primarily as a result of a small overspend in staffing related to superannuation costs and the return after maternity leave of the Marketing Manager. Income, which is £10,000 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 and sports hall income appears to have remained buoyant whilst casual swimming is almost 10% below profile. Course income and Larkabout are also above profile and show significant growth from the previous year.

**1.2 Angel Centre**

1.2.1 The Board will note at **[Annex 2]** that this contract is currently marginally above profile. Expenditure is below profile by £22,200 with savings in staffing and a number of other areas. Income is below profile by a similar sum. Whilst coaching courses, dance studio and the sports hall are performing well, Lifestyles health and fitness and meeting room income 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 £32,400. This is a significant improvement upon the last report to this Board and the Leisure Contracts Manager remains positive about this contract reaching break-even by the year end. Expenditure is above profile by nearly £10,000, 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 £30,000 below profile which has a consequent impact on the net profit in catering which is a further £11,000 below expectation. Conversely the health suite, courses and exercise classes are performing well.

#### **1.4 Poult Wood Golf Centre**

- 1.4.1 Members will have noted from the last report to this Board on 14 January 2008 that income has been severely affected by the poor summer of 2007. The same pattern has continued for December 2007 and January 2008. However, I can advise Members that, at the time of writing, February income looks very promising due to the fine weather. A voucher booklet is being prepared in conjunction with the Golf Professional and PAR4 Catering, containing offers throughout the summer. Some of the initiatives include two players playing for the price of one; group golf lessons; driving range offers and tasty specials in the Clubhouse. In April, there is to be a Special Taster Weekend for golf, including a Trick Shot Show, and squash coaches from Poult Wood Squash Club will be on hand to give tuition. Other initiatives include a new Poult Wood leaflet and course planner.

#### **1.5 Tonbridge Castle/Customer Services**

- 1.5.1 The Customer Services staff at Tonbridge Castle continue to deliver a wide range of services on behalf of the Council. In addition to the operation of the Gatehouse attraction, the wedding bookings and tourist information, the team continue to provide a planning viewing service, concessionary travel permits, parking, payments and general council enquiries. The team now also provide the face-to-face element of council tax and housing benefits services. This has been a focus of training and development of staff over recent months and has proved very effective. The re-introduction of the Housing Services to the Council will include delivery at the Tonbridge area office. Whilst this will be supported by the location of Housing staff at the Castle, there is further training required for the Customer Services team which is ongoing.
- 1.5.2 The Gatehouse attraction continues to trade well for casual visitors and educational groups. Interest in weddings for 2009 is now growing and continues to be strong.

#### **1.6 Tonbridge Cemetery**

- 1.6.1 Members will note from **[Annex 6]** that the overall income from Tonbridge Cemetery is currently below profile. This is reflective of a reduction in the estimated leases for Columbaria Vaults/Plaques and a fall in the predicted Interments and their associated Chapel use. Whilst the purchase of graves and memorial permits remain on profile, this budget will need to be carefully monitored over the coming months.

#### **1.7 Poult Wood Grounds Maintenance**

1.7.1 The Board will note at **[Annex 7]** that this contract is above profile by £8,200. This remains due, primarily, to staff savings brought about by recruitment difficulties. The Leisure Contracts Manager is happy to report this problem now appears resolved.

## **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

contact: Robert Styles  
Martin Guyton  
Julie Beilby

Robert Styles  
Chief Leisure Officer