

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**LEISURE and ARTS ADVISORY BOARD**

**17 September 2012**

**Report of the Management Team**

**Part 1- Public**

**Matters for Information**

**1 LEISURE FACILITIES REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT OPTIONS**

**Summary**

**This report draws Members' attention to a review of management options for the future delivery of the Council's leisure facilities. A presentation will be made at the meeting by the consultant appointed by the Council to assist with the review.**

**1.1 Background**

1.1.1 A key priority for the Council is "the continued delivery of priority services and a financially viable Council".

1.1.2 This Council has a strong tradition of providing high quality leisure facilities to its residents and visitors to the Borough. Service delivery is guided by the Council's Leisure & Arts Strategy 2008-13, which closely links to a number of the Council's key corporate priorities, particularly those relating to young people, healthy living and reduction in crime and disorder.

1.1.3 The Council currently manages its three main indoor leisure facilities in-house through its Leisure Services Business Unit. The Business Unit operates in accordance with an annual Business Plan, and sits within Leisure Services. At Poult Wood Golf Centre the grounds maintenance contract is managed by the Business Unit with the rest of the facility managed through contracts with private sector operators.

1.1.4 A number of alternative management options for the future delivery of the Council's leisure facilities exist, which can be summarised as follows:

- Retain in-house management
- Establish a new not for profit distributing organisation (more commonly known as a Leisure Trust)
- Use an existing not for profit distributing organisation established to operate another Council's facilities.

- Use a hybrid trust not for profit organisation established by a leisure management contractor to operate facilities
- Use a private sector commercial leisure management contractor

## **1.2 Review of Options**

- 1.2.1 Due to the complex nature of the review and the need to ensure all aspects of possible options are fully understood and addressed an external consultant has been appointed to assist the Council. The brief provided to the consultant stressed that the review should reflect the Council has, and wishes to retain, a strong commitment to the delivery of its leisure facilities.
- 1.2.2 The objective of the review is to provide a detailed overview of the management options outlined at paragraph 1.1.4. For each option, the consultant has been asked to outline the financial and quality implications, the operational advantages/disadvantages, an analysis of risk, the management arrangements between the Council and the operator, the level of control resting with the Council, the impact on staff, current Government policy and timescales/resources required to move to an alternative option.
- 1.2.3 It has been stressed that the context for the review is the objective to retain a strong commitment to the delivery of leisure facilities in the Borough and the efficient quality standards that have generally been achieved. Consequently, for each option there will be an assessment of both the financial and service quality implications.
- 1.2.4 RPT Consulting has been appointed to assist the Council with the review, and the Company's Managing Director, Robin Thompson, will attend the meeting of the Board and present the initial findings of the review.

## **1.3 Legal Implications**

- 1.3.1 Legal implications associated with each of the potential management options will be considered within the review.

## **1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

- 1.4.1 In light of the Council's overall financial position it is important that the Council reviews delivery options for a number of the services it provides, in order to ensure that value for money is being achieved. The cost of the consultancy support is £9,750, which is being met from the earmarked 'Invest to Save' reserve.

## **1.5 Risk Assessment**

- 1.5.1 Risk analysis is one of the key issues being reviewed within each of the potential management options.

## **1.6 Policy Considerations**

1.6.1 Asset Management, Community, Healthy Lifestyles, Human Resources.

Background papers:

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Nil

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