

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**LEISURE and ARTS ADVISORY BOARD**

**12 March 2014**

**Report of the Director of Street Scene & Leisure**

**Part 1- Public**

**Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)**

**1 LEISURE FACILITIES – LEISURE TRUST UPDATE**

**Summary**

**This report updates Members on the management and operation of the Council's leisure facilities through the agreement with the Tonbridge and Malling Leisure Trust. The report presents the Trust's Annual Service Delivery Plan, results from recent mystery shopper visits and updates on the refurbishment of Tonbridge Swimming Pool.**

**1.1 Background**

1.1.1 Members will be aware from my report to this Board on 9 December 2013 that a new Leisure Trust has been operating independently from the Council since 1 November 2013 managing the Council's main leisure facilities.

1.1.2 Regular communication between the Council and the Trust has taken place since the transfer, supported by set monthly meetings and a more formal quarterly meeting. The Trust supplies the Council with a set of monitoring reports and Key Performance Indicators, as detailed in the Management Agreement and the Annual Service Delivery Plan.

**1.2 Annual Service Delivery Plan**

1.2.1 The first Annual Service Delivery Plan (**Annex 1**) produced by the Trust covers a period of 17 months in line with its first two trading years.

1.2.2 The Plan has been produced as a response to Agreed Service Outputs that have been identified and agreed through Schedule 1 to the Management Agreement. The Trust has developed its headline priorities within its Five Year Business Plan, which was approved as Schedule 6 to the Management Agreement and these are reflected in the Annual Service Delivery Plan.

1.2.3 A number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been set to measure outcomes against each aim and are detailed within the Plan together with Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound (SMART) targets.

### **1.3 Performance to Date**

- 1.3.1 Since 1 November 2013 the Trust has performed well. It has established its new Head Office at Martin Square, Larkfield and has appointed into a new position of Group Operations Manager to oversee the day to day running of the centres. Trading has been good and I will update Members at the meeting on the most up to date financial position against profile.
- 1.3.2 The Trust is working with the Council on the approved Capital Plan schemes at Larkfield Leisure Centre (Upgrade of Health Suite and Energy Saving Measures) and a report will be presented to the next meeting of this Board. The potential introduction of an ultra violet disinfection system at Larkfield Leisure Centre is also currently being evaluated in liaison with the Trust.
- 1.3.3 The levels of overall customer satisfaction and cleanliness recorded through the Viewpoint system at the leisure centres met the required target of 80%. Customer comment cards have not highlighted any serious complaints.
- 1.3.4 It is clearly early days in the life of the Trust, and the settling in period has not been assisted by the closure of Tonbridge Pool due to flooding. Despite this, the Trust has started well and a more detailed analysis of performance against agreed service outputs will be reported to the next meeting of this Board.

### **1.4 Mystery Shopper Visits**

- 1.4.1 Members may be aware that over the last few years mystery shopper visits have been undertaken at the Council's main leisure facilities. The Trust is committed to undertaking two visits per site annually as an Agreed Service Outcome measure for Customer Satisfaction.
- 1.4.2 The visits are undertaken by Right Directions Ltd ,as the Company's report format is closely allied to the Quest award criteria.
- 1.4.3 The mystery shopper rates the facility against a range of criteria including cleanliness, housekeeping, maintenance, customer care and supervision.
- 1.4.4 The accepted "pass mark" for the mystery visits is 60%, and this has become recognised across the leisure industry as an acceptable standard. However, in recognition of the desire to continuously improve our services a performance target of 82% has been set for the indoor leisure facilities and 75% for Poulton Wood Golf Centre.
- 1.4.5 The scores for each facility are listed below:

Facility	Score (%)
Larkfield Leisure Centre	83
Angel Centre	86
Tonbridge Pool	90
Poult Wood Golf Centre	81
Average	85

- 1.4.6 Members will note that the pass mark of 60% was achieved for all visits, and the overall average for all the facilities was 85%.
- 1.4.7 By using Right Directions Ltd the Trust can compare performance against overall Quest Award ratings. The current Quest database of all registered sites shows:
- the 'pass mark' is 60%
  - the industry mean is 73%
  - the upper quartile score is 80%
- 1.4.8 Members may recall that, whilst Poult Wood Golf Centre is measured against the same criteria as the indoor sites, the criteria is designed for leisure centres and adapted for the Golf Centre. In some areas this makes the scoring more challenging and therefore makes the latest level of scoring for the Centre especially pleasing, with all four sites scores in the upper quartile.
- 1.4.9 Copies of the full reports will be available on the evening and by request, detailing feedback on key strengths and areas for improvement for each site.

## **1.5 Tonbridge Swimming Pool**

- 1.5.1 At midday on Christmas Eve the staff at Tonbridge Pool were advised by the Police to evacuate the facility following notification from the Environment Agency that the Leigh Barrier needed to release water at a greater frequency. Prior to this notification, water was already up against the flood wall and gates protecting the front of the building. Within just half an hour the water was two feet in depth against the outside of the flood wall. Before the pool was evacuated the flood defences constructed after the flood in 2000 were secured including the closure of all the flood gates around the building.
- 1.5.2 In 2000 the flood resulted in water levels of over two feet throughout the building and a closure of 14 weeks. Despite the flood in 2013 being more severe than 2000, the building only flooded to the level of 3-4 inches, with the exception of the plant room, which is located below ground level.
- 1.5.3 Every effort is being made in close liaison with the Council's Insurers and the Leisure Trust to re-open the facility as soon as possible and it is hoped that it will fully re-open in mid-March.

**1.6** Staff and contractors have been busy since before the New Year cleaning and sanitising the facilities from top to bottom. The pools and plant room have been drained and flood recovery experts have visited the site with Environmental Health Officers to advise on the cleaning requirements.

**1.7** All the major plant and equipment damaged by the flooding has been assessed by various technical contractors and orders have been placed for all major items. A programme of replacement and repair work has commenced and staff from the Council, the Leisure Trust and all relevant parties are meeting to assess progress on a weekly basis.

1.7.1 The cost of the reinstatement is being met in full by the Council's Insurers. The loss of income resulting from the closure will be met by the Insurers representing the Leisure Trust.

1.7.2 Whilst it is clear that the flood defences assisted greatly in protecting the pool, further consideration is being given to additional modifications in case of future flood. Meetings have taken place with the Council's Insurers and it has already been agreed that a number of items of plant will be raised to a higher level within the plant room.

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

1.8.1 The Transfer to the Leisure Trust has made a significant contribution to the savings to be identified and implemented as part of the 2014/15 budget cycle.

1.8.2 The cost of undertaking the mystery shopper visits are met by the Leisure Trust.

1.8.3 A £100 excess is payable in relation to the Council's insurance to cover reinstatement works for Tonbridge Swimming Pool, with the exception of instances of betterment which are being met through the Council's Buildings Repairs Expenditure Plan.

## **1.9 Risk Assessment**

1.9.1 Risk assessment issues related to the establishment of the new Trust were considered in the report to the December 2012 meeting of this Board.

1.9.2 Reinstatement works for Tonbridge Swimming pool are being risk assessed individually and additional hazards that the works and flood have created are being monitored and assessed regularly to ensure control measures are effective.

## **1.10 Equality Impact Assessment**

1.10.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report.

## **1.11 Policy Considerations**

1.11.1 Asset Management, Community, Healthy Lifestyles, Young People.

## 1.12 Recommendations

1.12.1 It is **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that:

- 1) the Tonbridge & Malling Leisure Trust Annual Service Delivery Plan 1 November 2013 to 31 March 2015 be approved;
- 2) the results of the mystery shopper reports for all sites be noted; and
- 3) the progress and work to reinstate Tonbridge Swimming Pool in liaison with the Council's insurers and the Leisure Trust continue, with the facility reopening to the public in mid March 2014.

The Director of Street Scene & Leisure confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

contact: Stephen Gregg

Nil

Robert Styles  
Director of Street Scene & Leisure

Maria Heslop  
Cabinet Member for Leisure, Youth and Arts

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	No	
c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		

*In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.*