

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES and HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

23 July 2019

Report of the Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 LEISURE TRUST UPDATE

Summary

This report reviews the recent performance of the Tonbridge and Malling Leisure Trust, updates on service provision and reports progress on the major capital plan scheme for Larkfield Leisure Centre, commencing later this year.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Members will be aware that the Tonbridge and Malling Leisure Trust (Trust) has been responsible for the management of the Council's leisure facilities since 1 November 2013. The Trust manages the Council's main leisure facilities that include the Angel Centre, Tonbridge, Larkfield Leisure Centre, Tonbridge Swimming Pool and Poult Wood Golf Centre.

1.1.2 Regular communication between the Council and the Trust has continued to take place since the transfer, supported by quarterly liaison meetings. The Trust supplies the Council with a set of monitoring reports and Key Performance Indicators, as detailed in the Management Agreement, with a key document being the Annual Service Delivery Plan. The Annual Service Delivery Plan incorporates the relevant Key Priorities of the Council.

1.2 Review of Performance

1.2.1 The latest Annual Service Delivery Plan updates on the fourth quarter and covers the period from 1 April 2018 to 30 March 2019 **[Annex 1]**. This is accompanied by the balanced scorecard of key performance indicators **[Annex 2]**.

1.2.2 Financially the Trust continues to perform well with total income for year end being 99.5% against profile and expenditure at 100%. Whilst fitness income was marginally below target for the full year at 94.5% the Trust has advised that this was as a result of a later than anticipated opening of Larkfield Leisure Centre's new studio and gym development.

1.2.3 Attendance across all sites remained strong in quarter 4 and cumulative attendances were up 12% or 137,000 visits against 2017/18.

- 1.2.4 Swimming income for the full year was marginally below profile at 99.2% with the exceptional summer leading to Tonbridge Swimming Pool being above profile and Larkfield Leisure Centre being slightly behind profile.
- 1.2.5 Courses income continued to perform well with increased capacity in the Swim School resulting in a near 10% increase on the income target with over 2,400 children attending each week.
- 1.2.6 Despite a national decline in golf, Poult Wood Golf Centre enjoyed another successful year with Membership continuing to grow and income only 0.7% below profile.
- 1.2.7 Customer feedback continued to be extremely positive with the Net promoter score of 55% and Viewpoint scores high across all sites and well above industry average of around 28%.
- 1.2.8 Overall, performance against Key Performance Indicators is positive with a year end total of 80% against a target of 75%.

1.3 Larkfield Leisure Centre – Ventilation Refurbishment, Boiler and Roof Replacement

- 1.3.1 The existing ventilation system and boilers serving the leisure pool hall were installed in 1991 and 1981 respectively. A number of operational issues have been brought to the Council's attention relating to their poor performance including poor environmental conditions, excess heat, undesirable smells and condensation leading to slips, trips and falls.
- 1.3.2 An external specialist has undertaken a review, concluding that both items of plant have come to the end of their effective life, and do not operate at current energy efficiency standards. Replacement will ensure that the Leisure Centre operates reliably and efficiently in the future and protects the Council against unforeseen Loss of Income claims from the Leisure Trust due to failure of this plant and centre closure.
- 1.3.3 Although it was hoped to carry out the replacement of the Leisure Pool barrel vault roof at a later date in the future, with the ventilation and boiler scheme being deferred, it was proposed that the roof scheme be brought forward so as to reduce the impact on the centre's operations. The revised approach of incorporating both projects avoids having two lengthy closures in the space of a few years, and thus reduces the overall impact of a loss of income claim from the Leisure Trust.
- 1.3.4 Following a report to Members of the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board on the 5 June 2019, it was recommended to Council that the proposed scheme outlined in the report to undertake a package of works to the ventilation, boilers, leisure pool hall roof and space frame at Larkfield Leisure Centre be approved.

- 1.3.5 The cost estimate provided by Kier for all the works (ventilation, boilers, roof and space frame) is £2.029m, with an indicative loss of income claim of £1.368m from the Leisure Trust.
- 1.3.6 The works are scheduled to commence early October 2019 for a period of approximately 36 weeks.
- 1.3.7 The Council has established a Project Group to deliver the scheme, (which includes representation from the Leisure Trust), meeting regularly to determine the best options moving forwards. This includes communication with customers of the Centre and ways to reduce disruption including submerged flooring to the fitness pool in order to facilitate the swim school programme from the teaching pool.
- 1.3.8 Considering the scale of the project and the impact this will have on visitors to the Centre, it is proposed that regular progress updates be brought to Members of this Board.

1.4 Service Updates

- 1.4.1 Members may also be interested to note that the Trust now operate the catering at Larkfield Leisure Centre directly in-house. This replicates service provision at Tonbridge Swimming Pool. The Trust believe this will enable them to provide a enhance level of service.
- 1.4.2 The Trust has also agreed to directly incorporate the successful Prima Stage School that operates at Larkfield Leisure Centre within its business. This will support the sustainability and development of the School.

1.5 Legal Implications

- 1.5.1 The management and development of facilities run by the Trust on the Council's behalf is in accordance with an approved Management Agreement.

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.6.1 The transfer to the Leisure Trust has made a significant contribution to the Council's savings, and further savings were made following the review of the Service Fee from the 1 April 2018. The financial performance of the Trust continues to be positive.

1.7 Risk Assessment

- 1.7.1 Health and safety arrangements are outlined in the Management Agreement with the Trust and are monitored through Key Performance Indicators. Regular site inspections are undertaken with spot checks and independent audits.

1.8 Policy Considerations

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

Background papers:
Nil

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