

PARKWOOD LEISURE WORKING GROUP

Tuesday 3 December 2013

Present:-

Councillors Mitchell, Denham, Crow and Robson

Also Present

Leisure Facilities Manager, Events, Facilities and Markets Manager and Democratic Services Officer (Committees) (SLS)

Jeremy Wright and Bob Demott – Parkwood Leisure.

30

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received by Councillor Leadbetter and Darren Parrott.

31

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

Customer Comments

Steve Lyon circulated the data of customer comments made for each of the centres for September and October 2013 and had presented the detail in a new format which also included the response or action taken. The comments were categorised under the headings of maintenance, health and safety, cleaning, staff and also where a compliment had been recorded. It was noted that in October, one particular issue at the Riverside Leisure Centre relating to a sensor, in the steam room gave rise to a significant number of comments. Jeremy Wright advised that he had discussed the way forward with the maintenance contractor, and they were currently looking to install a guard around the sensor, the damage had been caused by wilful vandalism. He also responded to a Member's comment in relation to the way such information was communicated to customers, where they made every effort to ensure that all staff were kept updated, particularly reception staff as they were a critical point of contact.

Councillor Crow sought more detail on the maintenance regime. Jeremy Wright advised that they used suitably qualified engineers and worked closely with a number of local firms. They also had two members of staff who were able to carry out minor reactive maintenance. All management staff had been trained to deal with tasks such as pool water testing and to make minor calibration adjustments to equipment. Parkwood had recently revamped the Pyramids gym and the majority of the equipment was still under warranty, however all equipment had a minimum of an annual safety and maintenance check. Jeremy Wright said that the aim was to ensure that an engineer was called in as soon as any piece of equipment was broken and a report made within 24 hours. He would ensure more regular updates were made to ensure that both customers and staff were kept informed. It was agreed to provide additional statistics on the period of time taken to fix individual pieces of equipment.

A Member asked if the dates of the Customer Comments could be logged on the sheet so that a timeline of what period the comments were made in could be identified.

Customer Forums

Steve Lyon advised that customer focus meetings should contractually be held twice a year for each site, as they were an opportunity to voice any concerns, as well as comment on the positive aspects of the facilities. It was considered that more should be done to promote the forums, through word of mouth, Centre notice boards, but also the individual Centre's web site and Facebook page. Councillor Crow sought more information on a forum for swimming lessons at Northbrook Pool and suggested that sessions should be made more widely known possibly through the swimming teacher helping to promote. Jeremy Wright took note but added that the swimming coordinators were often able to resolve issues as they arose.

Councillor Mitchell suggested using email to contact patrons. Councillor Denham also suggested asking users how they wish to be communicated with. Jeremy Wright agreed to look into these suggestions. He reminded Members that on site customers could obviously speak to a member of staff as well as using the customer comment cards. Any comments left on the web site were continually monitored and the Site Manager was obliged to make a response within 24 hours. David Lewis suggested publicising the events in the Council's newspaper, the Citizen. Jeremy Wright agreed it was important to encourage a large attendance at the forums as the public's feedback and comments contributed to the future design of the service.

Jeremy Wright thanked Members for their comments.

32

FACILITY IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Members had a brief tour of the facility.

Bob Demott, Centre Manager at the Pyramids Swimming Centre made a short presentation to Members to advise of the progress they had made and hoped to make in the coming year. He advised that they were currently awaiting a Quest Assessor to reassess the improvements made against the initial audit in 2011.

He also provided the results of the annual Customer Survey at the Pyramids, monitoring customer satisfaction. The survey covered the following areas –

- General improvements
- Cleanliness
- Staffing
- Customer Satisfaction

Staffing and the quality of the service scored well, but it was acknowledged that the key area for general improvement was cleanliness. As part of a new regime to address this, the Duty Manager and staff now had specific cleaning jobs, with key areas checked a minimum of twice a day. It was acknowledged that the age of the building sometimes made the presentation of some areas of the Pyramids building more difficult to achieve. Members were reassured that cleaning was seen as a top priority and all cleaning schedules were continually reviewed.

Jeremy Wright also referred to the planned and reactive maintenance elements of the building, and detailed the planned annual maintenance regime of all equipment to meet the statutory requirements. Each Centre Manager also kept a summary record on site. Reactive maintenance was the responsibility of the Centre Manager who had to ensure that any repairs were prioritised to meet the necessary health and safety requirements and address any issues that could impact on customers. He responded to a number of minor maintenance issues that had been picked up

on the Members' tour including some cracked tiles on poolside, which he would investigate immediately and address. He advised that he was currently negotiating over replacement hinges for a number of faulty lockers, rather than the whole locker. David Lewis said that Parkwood also worked closely with Steve Lyon who had a role to inspect the Leisure Centres and identify hopefully anything that Parkwood may have missed. Steve Lyon advised that the City Council also monitored any incidents or accidents that occurred and these were passed on to the Council's own Health & Safety Officer for reviewing and auditing. Jeremy Wright advised that the appropriate maintenance of records was kept. All Duty Managers hold a four day first aid at Work qualification and other staff at the very least had a first response first aid qualification. It was an essential requirement to record any accidents appropriately and accurately.

Jeremy Wright referred to the importance of Communication and referred to a dedicated Parkwood and Pyramids web site and Facebook page. Staff remained the most important communication tool as they were often the first point of contact and it was important that they dealt with all of their customers in a consistent and professional manner. He referred to a new Customer Charter which was currently being considered for implementation and as part of this; the Pyramids Centre Manager and the Duty Manager's had an open door policy and actively communicated with customers.

Steve Lyon welcomed the additional opportunity for feedback which had addressed some of the concerns that the Service Improvement Plans had been too generic and not site specific. Councillor Mitchell welcomed more comments from the Centre Managers of the vision for their individual sites.

Members thanked both Jeremy Wright and Bob Demott for their presentation which had been very useful. Councillor Mitchell asked if a representative of Quest could be available for the meeting in February to report on the Pyramids and Riverside facilities.

33

FACILITY PROGRAMMES

Steve Lyon provided the background to the current Parkwood contract. He considered that with the possibility of another swimming pool coming on stream in the future, there was an opportunity to look at the current pool use in Exeter. It was to be hoped that a more complimentary programme with a wider use could be developed over time. It was noted that the Riverside Pool was predominantly used for casual swimming, Northbrook Pool was used by schools and the Pyramids were almost exclusively used by clubs after 7pm in the evening. It was suggested there may be an opportunity to create an alternative offering and enable greater club use at the Riverside and conversely more casual swimming at the Pyramids.

Jeremy Wright agreed to look at the more structured use of the Pyramids. It was possible some clubs may wish to move to the Riverside, but that would displace casual swimmers, where there are some 30,000 to 40,000 swims a month. Councillor Denham considered there may be an opportunity to use the systems thinking approach taken by the City Council and establish the level of demand in the evening sessions, particularly as leisure time was now being used in a variety of ways. David Lewis suggested one option would be to start to consider any new club approach could result in a trial use at the Riverside. Councillor Crow advised that she was personally involved in three swimming clubs in the city and there was still not enough pool time for such clubs. It should be acknowledged that some clubs may take a long time to relocate. Councillor Mitchell wanted to ensure that the ethos that swimming pools should be open to the general public and specific interest groups for the benefit of all.

Jeremy Wright advised that he was charged with the responsibility to maximise revenue, but he would work closely with the Council and consider all of the implications of any changes in the structure of either the Riverside or the Pyramids pools.

34

PROPOSED DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The following dates were agreed - (Meeting on Tuesdays at 10.00am).

- 25 February 2014 -Venue and Tour: Riverside Leisure Centre SIP
- 22 April 2014 -Venue and Tour: Isca Bowls & Bridge Centre SIP
- 17 June 2014 -Venue and Tour: Exeter Arena SIP(Meet Isca Centre)
- 9 September 2014 - Venue and Tour: Wonford Sports Centre/Northbrook Golf SIP
- 14 October 2014 -Venue and Tour: Clifton Hill Sports Centre SIP
- 9 December 2014 -Venue and Tour: Northbrook Swimming Pool SIP

(The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and closed at 12.10 pm)

Chair