

PARKWOOD LEISURE WORKING GROUP

Tuesday 22 July 2014

Present:-

Councillors Denham, Henson, and Robson

Also Present

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

Jeremy Wright and Colleen Tumelty, Parkwood Leisure

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CHAIR

Councillor Denham agreed to chair the meeting and advised that another Member would be sought from the Labour Group, with initial enquiries from the Scrutiny Committee Economy membership.

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APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Donovan.

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MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 22 APRIL 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2014 were agreed as true record.

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CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

Analysis of Customer Comments May 2013 to April 2014

Steve Lyon circulated an analysis of customer comments made for each of the centres for the period May 2013 to April 2014 that monitored the trend in the quantity of comments and the type of comment received.

Customer Comments

A copy of the detailed customer comments was also circulated for March and April 2014 and the format included the response or action taken, under categorised headings of maintenance, health and safety, cleaning and staff and also where a compliment had been recorded. Steve Lyon advised that there had been a reduced number of customer comments, despite the ways in which comments could be made, and anecdotally it appeared to be because users were more satisfied with the facilities. There were a total of 36 comments made in March, (57 for the corresponding period last year) and 24 and (52 respectively) for April. The type of comments and compliments were constructive with more and positive comments particularly in relation to cleaning issues. The report was on a site by site basis and a response was in most cases given immediately or on the same day. The Riverside Leisure Centre had the highest number of comments over the Exeter sites. The comments in March, mostly related to maintenance issues, and particularly in relation to the locker keys which was to be expected when the keys were constantly immersed in water. Councillor Denham welcomed the declining number of complaints and the established process in place to report. There had

been some concern as Members had received complaints and comments which did not appear to match Parkwood's experience.

Jeremy Wright responded to a Member comment on staff training, and referred to the training package which had been arranged as a response to the last customer survey carried out in 2013. Staff had been enrolled on a training and development package called 'human focus'. This on line training enabled all staff to participate and included a site specific section relating to policies and procedure. Parkwood staff had now completed over 5,500 separate training modules, including health and safety and customer care. All participants would receive a validated certificate of achievement.

Jeremy Wright referred to a number of previous incidents and also of anti-social behaviour in the area, which had at times, presented a difficult and challenging situation for Parkwood staff. Councillor Robson commented on the tragic death of a child at the Wonford Youth Centre. Councillor Denham stated that agencies and services had all worked to respond to the needs of the family and the matter had been investigated properly. There have been issues in the area for some time and prior to this, a request had been made for a multi-agency meeting with the Police, Devon County Council and Exeter City Council to look at ways to manage the growing level of anti-social activity particularly in the evenings. Councillor Denham would work to ensure that a meeting would take place as soon as possible. There were changes in local youth provision, which were likely to take effect with youth centres being closed by the end of August. It was noted that the Wonford Youth Centre building was owned by the City Council and it would be timely to have a meeting on specific and general issues resulting from its closure and how the vacant building would be managed.

Action – Dave Lewis to liaise with the Police and other partners to progress a meeting to discuss issues relating to anti social behaviour and also the future use of the Wonford Youth Centre building.

Jeremy Wright responded to a comment on the life expectancy of the equipment at the centres, stating that they were contractually obliged to replace the gym equipment every five years. They were due to replace equipment at the Riverside and Pyramids in the next contract year.(October – September). He also noted a comment from the Riverside Leisure Centre in relation to the number of lanes available for swimming and would continue to monitor.

Managers Weekly Meeting

It was noted that there were no longer Customer Forums as they had been poorly attended. A weekly meeting involving Managers had now been implemented. Colleen Tumelty advised that the change to the manager's weekly meetings had been very positive and often dealt with situations before they resulted in a complaint. Steve Lyon would include comments as they began to emerge.

FACILITY IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Prior to the meeting the Group visited the Exeter Arena to view the progress of the redevelopment and replacement of the athletics track and associated field event facilities. A note of the work undertaken was attached to these minutes.

Jeremy Wright provided a short presentation on the Exeter Arena. He detailed the progress they had made, and also anticipated making in the future, in relation to the Facility Improvement Plan which was based on the identified areas within the recent Quest report. The latest directional review assessment in 2013 had shown an

improvement from a satisfactory to good rating for all areas. There were still some areas for improvement and that detail will be used as well as the outcome of customer surveys carried out in August.

He provided an overview of the Facility Improvement Plan and outlined the areas that were doing well and also required some further improvement. The review had shown that there was an effective management and staff had a consistently good level of knowledge which they were happy to share. Staff were also keen to identify opportunities for further events and had developed a good relationship with local clubs and associations e.g. Exeter Harriers.

There were a number of areas for improvement -

- Some aspects of customer service had been a matter of concern, but this was being addressed by targeted training and development.
- An environmental management system was in place to track the site's carbon foot print and the aim to reduce utilities by 10%.
- The level of communication with event organisers after events and all organisers will be approached and a short questionnaire to improve communication significantly.
- There were a number of track improvements currently being carried out as well as addressing maintenance issues as part of the overall maintenance plan.

Following a mystery visit by Quest, a number of observations were made including the high standard of cleanliness, the effort to reduce the carbon footprint, comprehensive staff induction programme and the wow factor offered by staff in their community use. It was noted that the response to customer comments had also improved. The same visit highlighted a number of areas for improvement including the poor level of signage to the site, and there was an issue with the sat nav link, but in the case of the signage every effort would be made to contact the Devon County Council to try and resolve. A number of minor maintenance issues still to be resolved. Staff training would also be provided to ensure that all calls were answered properly and clearly, and sales opportunities were not missed during telephone calls.

To ensure that stock levels in vending machines were maintained.

(It was noted that a new machine had been installed and was being stocked up.)

Councillor Denham agreed to raise the lack of signage on Pinhoe Road and Beacon Lane with DCC highways. She also referred to an issue in relation to the directions on the web site to the Arena. Jeremy Wright would investigate this.

FACILITY PROGRAMMES

Steve Lyon updated Members on the facility programme in place at the Arena.

Jeremy Wright advised that the refurbishment of the Arena's athletics track and field event facilities was nearly complete. They had made a significant investment, with Parkwood spending around £18,000 on the improvements. The grandstand had also been redecorated and had now been completed as well as an upgrade to the High Jump beds, provision of additional equipment including Javelin's and replacement of a hammer cage net. Councillor Henson enquired if external funding for any of the equipment could be obtained. Steve Lyon advised that despite the obvious benefits, grant organisations were reluctant to give funding to commercial companies.

Parkwood had also carried out a training programme including the human focus training which the majority of staff had completed. This should address an apparent inability to follow through on sales, with a five steps sales process being introduced. There had been a number of internal audits using a cross section of staff to get a clear understanding of where further attention was needed. Management have been working hard to introduce a number of different processes which they hope will be picked up in the forthcoming directional review in September. Jeremy Wright advised that maintenance was a key issue and every site had overspent on maintenance.

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ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Facility Programmes

Jeremy Wright provided an update on the Exeter Swimming Club who have decided to permanently stay at the Riverside, however some clubs have expressed a wish to remain at the Pyramids and the facility programme will be adjusted accordingly. Steve Lyon said that a further review of the programme would be brought back to this Group including the impact on public lanes. It was noted that the Pyramids had recently undergone a redecoration programme which also included the redecoration of the female changing rooms. He also responded to a comment on Parkwood's other events and the recent performance by the Ukulele Orchestra at the Riverside. Dave Lewis advised that there it was possible to create seating for 1,200 people. This was an ideal venue despite the lack of parking in the immediate vicinity and limited staging and lighting, which had to be brought in at extra cost. He thanked the staff at the Riverside for their hard work and cooperation.

Members were advised that the Riverside had been evacuated due to a problem of fumes emanating from the lift shaft. This was not mechanical and was dealt with effectively. The fire service praised all of those involved for a speedy and safe response.

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DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Meeting Tuesday at 10.00am

- 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 12.30 pm)

Chair