

## **PARKWOOD LEISURE WORKING GROUP**

Tuesday 10 February 2015

### **Present:-**

Councillors Denham, Henson, Morris and Robson

### **Also Present**

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

Jeremy Wright - Parkwood Leisure

Darren Parrott - Parkwood Leisure

Simeon Lewry – Parkwood Leisure

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### **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Colleen Tumelty (Parkwood Leisure).

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### **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 9 DECEMBER 2014**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2014 were agreed as a true record.

Minutes 73 – Councillor Henson commented on the availability of sponsorship. Jeremy Wright reiterated that generally there was no available sponsorship as being a commercial company opportunities were limited, though occasionally there was some targeted support from sports companies. Locally, Parkwood Leisure were also able to access funding from Active Devon.

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### **CUSTOMER FEEDBACK**

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

There had been 33 and 34 comments respectively in November and December 2014, with a continuing decreasing trend in comments despite the same comment mechanisms being in place. There was also an increase in letters of appreciation and compliments received. Jeremy Wright advised that he had discussed this trend with Steve Lyon, and the comments and customer survey had featured highly in the Quest Improvement Plan process. Steve Lyon confirmed that the mechanism was still there, but agreed that the comments were more positive.

### **Customer Comments**

A copy of the detailed customer comments was also circulated for the month of December 2014 and the format included the response or action taken, under categorised headings of maintenance, health and safety, cleaning and staff and where a compliment had been recorded. Steve Lyon also provided a comparison between 2013 and 2014.

Councillor Denham referred to the conflicting comments received for the level of pool temperature at the Riverside Leisure Centre. Steve Lyon responded stating that the pool temperature had been an issue in October and November 2014, as there had been five separate issues in relation to the plant on site. These had been rectified, but there was now an additional problem with the 'activator' effecting the air temperature of the pool hall, rather than the water temperature. It was important, but nevertheless it is difficult to find the correct balance to suit the majority of swimmers. Industry guidelines state pool water temperatures between 26 degrees for serious swimmers to 31 degrees for babies and young children. Parkwood Leisure try and maintain the temperature around 29 degrees as this provides a suitable balance for all. The small learner pools are maintained at around 31 degrees to accommodate babies and young children. Councillor Robson referred to the number of comments on the temperature of the sports hall and asked how that had been dealt with. Jeremy Wright referred to the age of the air handling units and to Parkwood's responsibility to repair such equipment, unless it became obsolete, when the City Council would replace. However, these units could still be repaired, but required specialist parts to be custom built and so they were largely in the hands of the contractors and their availability to schedule in this work.

David Lewis enquired about some of the comments made in relation to Northbrook Pool. Jeremy Wright stated that there had been an issue with the men's showers, which were gravity fed. A vital piece of equipment, designed to help with the force of the water had failed, and although it was replaced, the water pressure was still affected. They were in the process of installing booster pumps and it was anticipated that the water pressure would improve. The work would take place this week, but this would necessitate the water and shower being turned off, whilst that took place. They would be making every effort to keep the inconvenience to a minimum.

Councillor Morris enquired about the response time if equipment needed replacing and referred to the comments made regarding the spinning foot straps at the Riverside. Jeremy Wright stated that such issues should be brought to the staff attention for action but he acknowledged that the action was not completed with a complete explanation. Steve Lyon advised that it would be reported correctly next time.

Members noted the report.

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#### **FACILITY IMPROVEMENT PLANS**

Simeon Lewry, Centre Manager of the Riverside Leisure Centre provided an overview of the ongoing work in relation to Facility Improvement Planning for the Centre. He referred to the last assessment in December 2013, which had been rated as 'good', and to the Quest Directional Review which took place in December 2014. He also referred to Parkwood's regular use of a marketing and consumer research company, Pro-insight, who provided an independent and objective review of service encounters. They also focused on a wide range of communication methods including face to face, telephone and email enquiries. Simeon confirmed that Pro-insight's scoring for the Riverside Leisure Centre had risen from 14% in 2013 to 93.5%, which was a particularly high score. Members complimented staff on that attainment. Following a Member's enquiry, Simeon Lewry agreed to make a copy of the latest report available.

Simeon referred to the latest Directional Review from Quest, and the retention achievement of their 'good' score. They had made a number of improvements in the Centre over the last 12 months including the gym, including mini-fitness challenges which could be completed. An existing member of staff had been

employed in the key role of Sales and Fitness Manager. All staff continued to work to provide an excellent front of house service and also the retention of customers. He advised Members that as part of the Directional Review process, the Riverside Leisure Centre had been awarded an outstanding score of 96%, following a recent Quest mystery visit which included using all of the facilities. Simeon outlined another major change which included a revamp of the cafe - the Cafe Vita Brand had been renamed and redecorated including the provision of new furniture, and staff had received additional training focusing on customer service, food safety, allergy awareness as well as health and safety. There had already seen an increase in the footfall and it was felt the investment had been justified. A Member asked what food rating the cafe held and Simeon confirmed it was a 5 rating.

Simeon provided an update on the in-house human focus training programme introduced for staff. The module topics ranged from a general induction through to customer service, health and safety and Parkwood had recently introduced an environmental awareness module. Staff at the Riverside had completed 845 individual modules with staff typically taking 5/6 modules and Duty Managers 10 to 12 modules. Councillor Morris sought further information on the checks made to ensure the modules were completed appropriately. Darren Parrot added that these modules did not replace the face to face training, but reinforced all that staff had learnt. Simeon advised that this training was carried out during the shift, and staff saw this as a positive benefit to their job. Induction training was carried out on-line prior to commencement of employment and then assessed and reinforced on commencement. On-going training was also undertaken on-line either at home or on dedicated PC's within the facilities, staff received certificates upon satisfactory completion of the modules that they could retain for future employment purposes as evidence of achievement.

A number of challenges still remained and that was in part due to the age of the building. They had experienced a challenging three or four months with issues relating to the air handling units as discussed in the customer comments section, which was compounded by the seasonally cold outside air temperature which all had an impact on the pool hall temperature. He hoped that they were now better at informing the public; initiatives included a morning team huddle prior to a shift commencement, as well as a new information board in the office.

Members thanked Simeon for a comprehensive report and for the valuable contribution both he and his staff made.

Members made a tour of the facility after the meeting.

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### **FACILITY PROGRAMMES**

Steve Lyon referred to the survey of the approach on individual sites to casual use of the facilities circulated at the last meeting. Although Parkwood Leisure had inherited some historical use, every effort was made to keep the balance of 60% casual free availability at peak time, although there were some occasions when this was exceeded. Parkwood had been working to encourage some movement in club use to the mutual benefit of clubs and casual swimmers, freeing up some capacity, particularly at the Pyramids where there had been a heavy use by clubs in the evenings. A more equitable balance had been achieved by transferring some club time to the Riverside Leisure Centre.

Members noted the report and that a further report would only be made when any issues arose.

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**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

David Lewis asked Members to advise him if there was any particular aspect of Parkwood Leisure's activities that they would like further information on. It was acknowledged that the meetings were very useful to both the City Council and also Parkwood.

Steve Lyon confirmed that a Members' Briefing had been arranged to brief Members on all aspects of the Parkwood contract. This would take place for City Councillors on 25<sup>th</sup> February in the Civic Centre.

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**DATE OF NEXT AND 2015 MEETINGS**

Members noted the following dates to meet at the venue at 10.00am

14 April 2015 -	Isca Bowls and Bridge Centre
23 June 2015 -	Exeter Arena
8 September 2015 -	Wonford Sports Centre/ Northbrook Golf Course
13 October 2015 -	Clifton Hill Sports Centre/Pyramids Swimming Pool
15 December 2015 -	Northbrook Swimming Pool

(The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and closed at 11.20 am)

Chair