

**LEISURE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT MONITORING BOARD
MINUTES**

Date of Meeting: 29 August 2013
Location: Committee Room 1
Time: 7.00 pm
Attending:
Councillors: Mrs E Webster (Chair) (EW)
W Breare-Hall (WBH)
Gavin Chambers (GC)
Jon Whitehouse (JW)
Harvey Mann (HM)
EFDC Qasim Durrani, Assistant Director (QD)
A Clear (Manager responsible for monitoring the contract) (AC)
S Forster (Minutes)
SLM: K Bames (SLM Contract Manager) (KB)
L Woodford (Manager at Loughton Leisure Centre) (LW)

	Action
<p>1. Apologies for Absence – Duncan Jefford (SLM); Jade Blunnie (EFDC).</p> <p>2. Minutes of previous meeting 20 May 2013 – Accepted as a true record</p> <p>3. Matters Arising - P3 Loughton Swimming Club: AC has spoken to James Warwick, Sports Development Manager, who has agreed that the Club does not make best use of pool time. A head count is taken every half an hour for all lessons at LLC and LW has been monitoring the Club numbers. She reported that for June/July the average was 23 in the main pool (in 1½ hours) and 11 in the teaching pool, although some of the children may only be there for a short period depending on their lesson time. More accurate figures could be obtained from the Club itself.</p> <p>The next step is for SLM, if they wish to take some pool time back, to make a formal request to the Council to remove the Club from the Guaranteed Element of the contract. The Club would then be advised and a meeting arranged to discuss alternatives and hopefully to reach a compromise. However any adjustment is unlikely to take place until April next year when the timetables are rescheduled. KB confirmed that a formal request would be sent in the near future.</p> <p>P3 Fire dampers: EFDC funding could not be put in place until late June due to AC's leave commitments and the serious flood at the civic offices that Facilities Management (FM) had to deal with. SLM were then advised to complete the work and as LW reported their finance is now in place and the scope of works has been completed. A meeting with the contractor has been arranged for next week when the timing of the works will hopefully be agreed.</p> <p>The contractor has also advised that seven new dampers should be installed. FM have asked for more information as the fire regulations would have been complied with at the time of building. However, if they agree with the company's recommendations the funding will have to be found.</p> <p>P3 Asset Management: EW asked about the report on the Epping visit. AC will send a copy of the report to the Board although no major issues had been found. The next one is due in a few week' time.</p> <p>P4 C&C (iii): AC said that the child's mother wrote to complain that a thorough investigation had not been carried out as the H&S officer had only contacted the</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">AC</p>

pool and swimming teachers without speaking to the school or the parents. However AC had contacted the school and the teacher's version of events corresponded with all other statements. AC responded to the mother asking for a statement but has not received a reply.

P6 Tour de France: The route is likely to be via the Wake Arms, then Epping New Road to Walthamstow. SLM will mark the occasion in some way once further details are known.

4. **Financial appraisal of the contract**

AC: P1 shows the income for the first 3 months of the financial year and it has been a very good start, with all centres except Ongar way ahead of target. As can be seen in the bottom box Income Share for the three months is £1500, which is a better result for the first three months than in previous years.

Ps 2-5 give a breakdown of the figures by site. KB stated that budgets are on line, and SLM are pleased with the good start to the year.

P6 is the income by group for the Apr-Jun period compared to previous years. This shows a significant increase on last year's figures, a good result considering the current financial climate. In the bottom box it can be seen that the three main income earning areas of the contract are up by £40k, and these account for 68% of total income.

P7-10 show the annual income by site. Overall, all centres are up on the first quarter last year. Squash court usage in Epping (P7) has gone up and although this is not reflected in the figures there are now many DD members who can use the courts free of charge.

At Loughton (P8) swimming lesson income is up over £7k on the same period last year. JW asked about the new on-line cost codes, and KB told him this relates to the new Everyone Active on-line service. For an annual fee, or £2.99 per month DD, or each time they download, customers can receive training plans, videos etc., with no contract attached. No other leisure provider has introduced this concept and it has not shown on the report before.

At W/A (P10) swimming lesson income is up £9k, and one third of customers now pay by DD. Public swimming numbers generally, but especially for juniors since the slides were removed, have been going down year on year.

5. **Contract Monitoring**

Facility Management - P11 gives participation figures for the first quarter. Group exercise and casual fitness continue to show an improvement, and there has been a noticeable increase in GP referrals. AC will let the Board know by email where the referrals originated, as requested by EW. KB reported that all sites have made extra efforts in this regard. SLM have re-branded and produced new leaflets and posters which are left in surgeries etc.

Regarding the increase in squash court use at Epping, KB said that squash popularity tends to be cyclic and interest in the sport has recently been high. The Squash Club is improving; they contacted Squash England and a professional coach is now on site, giving opportunities for customers to have lessons.

Public swimming paid at the till continues to decline, but as DD members are entitled to free swims it is difficult to determine the true numbers.

P12 shows the overall membership for the district. DDs continue to rise while ordinary centre membership declines. Junior membership increased with the

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introduction of DD payments for swimming lessons as they include centre membership. Overall figures are similar to last year. In response to WBH's question KB said that the only way to determine where DD members are going is to survey the current customers, but it is not possible to get an accurate picture.

WBH also asked why the results for the last few months were so positive, and KB replied that it can only be due to good management and initiatives, and the marketing and branding. This contract, with smaller, community-based sites, always does well and staff have a nice relationship with their customers. AC added that when the contract was let all the contractors had commented on the quality of the centres, their good condition and the excellent staff, and some had dropped out because they could not improve them sufficiently to make taking the contract worthwhile.

JW enquired if other private gyms were showing similar results and KB replied that SLM regularly carry out competitive analyses. They visit or call other centres in the guise of prospective customers so that like-for-like comparisons can be made. In general private leisure providers do not offer the same value for money; SLM do not require a contract and they kept DD and annual membership at the same level this year whilst others went up by inflation.

(b) Health & Safety P13 gives details of the visits carried out in July. Only a few small items were identified which have all now been completed. The Council's H&S officer knows the sites well and is satisfied with the standards.

(c) Asset Management No visits were carried out since the last meeting and the next ones are scheduled for mid-September. EFDC have engaged a new contractor who is currently renewing the energy certificates. He is very keen to reduce the carbon footprint of the centres, and has already made several suggestions for improvement. He has requested more information from LLC as this is the worst scoring site.

The Council is responsible for the outside decoration of the centres and this is currently being carried out. Members of the Board were surprised to learn that the Epping car park is to be resurfaced and relined as the condition seems satisfactory, and this money could be better used elsewhere. AC will ask FM for a fuller explanation. SLM have provided FM with their planned maintenance programme for this year and this will be monitored on a regular basis.

(d) Performance Monitoring - The results of customer service standards visits are given on Ps 14-16. No issues were identified at Epping (always less of a problem without a pool), and only minor problems were found at Ongar and W/A, which were dealt with very quickly. Since the report was compiled most issues at Loughton (P14) have been addressed; repairs have largely been completed, cleansing is at a better standard with a new regime in place, and a service contract now ensures a quicker repair time of gym equipment. Some painting of the walls in the movement studio, damaged by sellotape, is still outstanding. HM asked about 'unable to check' in the report, and AC said that this refers to times when, for example, a man would not be able to access the ladies' changing room.

(e) Improvement/Default Notices - No variation orders have been issued. Most outstanding notices have been completed. The three remaining at Loughton are:

00253 – there is some dispute with the lift servicing company. LW raised the items picked up by Zurich with the contractor, who carried out the work and was paid. Zurich have since made a further inspection and report that the work was not completed. This is a minor issue has no effect on the safety of the lift;
00255 – Trend Control Services, who are responsible for the air handling, have

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yet to rectify the issues raised with them.
00260 – this refers to the re-painting and the carpets of the movement studio.
This will be completed after the school holidays;
LW reported that the hairdryers have been repaired, and as all dryers at the centre are now free to use and turn off when replaced in the holder the problem of them burning out has hopefully been resolved.

The fire dampers default notice will remain until completed. AC was pleased to note that the notices are all being dealt with at Loughton. More visits will take place in September.

6. Liaison Groups

A meeting was held at Epping in June, which was sparsely attended, and no issues were reported. WBH was present, but the time had been changed without his being informed. He asked about progress with his suggestion to schedule a year's dates in the calendar - this has been done by KB and she will email the timetable to him.

WAP's meeting was held in July, with Cllr Lea attending. The main issue identified by customers was cleanliness. A new scrubbing machine and wet vacuum cleaner has now been purchased and a programme of quarterly deep cleans initiated, which has resulted in a 20% improvement in the last survey.

The Loughton meeting was cancelled, and is now scheduled for 2 September at 7.15pm. No meeting has been held at Ongar.

7. Compliments and Complaints

None received by AC but a member of staff at Loughton has taken an issue to the Council's Environmental Health section for investigation. She asserts that she is suffering a number of medical problems as a result of the Trend air handling system not working efficiently. Several meetings have taken place between EH and SLM, which AC was not permitted to attend, and a series of tests have been carried out. EH are also looking into case studies to see if anything similar has occurred elsewhere. Although the investigation is not yet completed, there has been nothing so far to support the claims and no other customer or member of staff has complained of having the same symptoms. Unless the person concerned can provide firm medical evidence that the air handling system is the cause of her problems EH are unlikely to take this further.

HM asked if new members of staff are required to state their medical history and LW told him that all staff must complete a medical questionnaire. It is important to be aware of any pre-existing conditions as they may encounter problems in the various areas they are required to work in. HM also asked if a claim could be forthcoming, and KB replied that if the matter goes higher it will be taken to the HSE, and although a claim could result there does not appear to be any evidence of equipment malfunction.

8. Report from SLM

In a change to her usual verbal report, KB circulated colour copies of the contract review for September 2013. Points to note:

The second contract swimming gala was held at Loughton in July, with children from the current programmes at all sites competing. This was won by Loughton, taking the trophy from last year's winners, Ongar. The event was so successful and so well attended that the company has decided to extend it to a regional gala next year, probably to take place at Basildon, and it may well go national in future. The swimming managers in particular put in a lot of hard work and are to be thanked for this excellent achievement. Money was raised for the charity of the

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year, Ava's Pink Quest, which supports childrens' cancer and leukaemia groups.

Epping got through to the national Flame Award finals in July, which was won by Fareham. 6 Everyone Active sites were in the top 15 in the country, which is a good indication of the company's success.

Each year the sites link with the ASA to run the Swimathon Challenge, supported by Everyone Active, which raises funds for a nominated charity. Several thousands of pounds were raised over the 2 days of the event this year.

A successful open day took place on 27/28 July, when over 600 people came along to the centres to participate in activities free of charge. Another open day event is planned for 7/8 September.

All sites achieved 100% in the latest H&S assessments; these internal audits take place alongside AC's, but unlike his ad-hoc visits, SLM's are scheduled.

W/A and Ongar scored 'good' in the recent Quest assessments.

Everyone Active is the first large chain in the UK to launch a brand new short-burst fitness class called Tabata, and this will be available at Loughton from 7 September. The class is of 20 minutes duration, but the exercise itself only takes 4 minutes. It is a high intensity activity, apparently invented by a scientist, which has shown excellent results. It will appeal to anyone with limited time at the gym, and as the classes are so short, more can be put into the timetable which should help with the booking problems at LLC.

Finally, in answer to HM's query about provision for the disabled, KB said that there is a whole range of activities at the pools, where hoists are also provided. All gyms are accessible and some specific sessions are organised. Also the changing rooms and much of the equipment is designed for use by disabled people. The only exception is at Epping where the main hall is two floors down. KB to provide members of the Board with a comprehensive list of activities.

KB

9. Date of next meeting

11 November 2013, at the slightly later time of 7.15pm.