

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (CUSTOMERS AND PARTNERSHIPS) held in Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 4th July 2019.

PRESENT: Councillor T D Alban – Chairman.  
Councillors R E Bellamy, S Bywater,  
S J Criswell, Mrs A Dickinson and  
K I Prentice.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors B S Banks, D A Giles, Mrs S Smith and Mrs J Tavener.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors J M Palmer and T D Sanderson.

### 15. MEMBERS

The Panel sent their best wishes to Councillors B S Banks and D A Giles.

It was noted that Mr D R Underwood has resigned as a District Councillor. The Panel thanked Mr Underwood for his input as a Member of the Panel and wished him well for the future.

### 16. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13th June 2019 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 17. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor T D Alban declared a non-statutory disclosable interest in relation to Minute Number 20 as his employer conducts business with North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust.

### 18. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Panel received and noted the current Notice of Key Executive Decisions (a copy of which has been appended in the Minute Book) which has been prepared by the Executive Leader for the period 1st July 2019 to 31st October 2019.

It was clarified by the Executive Councillor for Partnerships and

Well-Being that Cabinet will make a decision on Godmanchester Nursery on 18th July. If the decision is confirmed then the asset will be handed to Godmanchester Town Council on 1st October 2019.

It was confirmed that once the Grants Panel has met on 23rd July 2019 and decided how to allocate the Community Chest, the Executive Councillor of Partnerships and Well-Being will attend September's Panel meeting and give an update.

## **19. ONE LEISURE FACILITIES ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19**

With the aid of a report by the One Leisure Business and Operations Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the performance, work programmes and highlights of the One Leisure Facilities during 2018/19 was presented to the Panel.

In introducing the report the One Leisure Business and Operations Manager highlighted that One Leisure has delivered a surplus for the past five years but noted that 2014/15 surplus was higher than expected due to one-off income benefits.

Members were informed that One Leisure have performed well at the core activities of swimming and impressions but recognised there have been issues including delays with lease negotiations and the Burgess Hall. In addition to this, the refurbishment at One Leisure Huntingdon was delayed by six months and that during those six months another gym opened and acquired members who were then signed up into 12 month contracts. However, now those contracts are up, One Leisure is seeing an influx of new members.

The One Leisure Business and Operations Manager noted that, on average, in an area of Huntingdonshire's size, approximately 33% of the population would be defined as active. In contrast, One Leisure benefits 25% of the District's population which as a proportion of 33% is a significant amount.

It was noted that St Ivo School is reducing it's spend with One Leisure by £50k and that the Ernulf Academy is reducing it's spend by £10k. A Member questioned that, considering that school budgets are presently under greater pressure, is One Leisure at risk of further schools reducing or ceasing their spend. The One Leisure Business and Operations Manager confirmed that One Leisure is vulnerable to schools reducing or withdrawing their spend at facilities. It was noted that in some locations there are other schools who wish to pick up any space vacated by others. It was added that another risk is the time of day, as the schools use the facilities during the off-peak times. If they withdraw and a viable alternative is not sourced then the facilities are at risk of closure during those times of day. In

addition, it was noted that currently the contracts with schools were five years in length and that there is a risk that if a school was to withdraw then One Leisure would find it challenging to recoup the costs for the remainder of the contract. The Panel were disappointed that the budgets are being set with income which may not materialise. The Corporate Director – Services informed Members that the Annual Governance Statement stated that a key risk was the finances of the Council's strategic partners. The One Leisure Business and Operations Manager stated that St Ivo School have indicated that they will use the training shed on top of the £80k they have committed to spending on using One Leisure Facilities.

It was noted that two members of staff are no longer working at the Burgess Hall due to their performance. Members enquired further detail on the operation of the Burgess Hall and they were informed that the Burgess Hall had a manager which built up a varied entertainment programme but they left the organisation. Their replacement was professionally qualified but they did not have the wide variety of contacts or the personality and therefore bookings fell. Since then they have left and a new manager, who isn't professionally qualified, is in post and bookings are rising again. When questioned on whether personality is more important than professionalism, the One Leisure Business and Operations Manager stated that the first manager wasn't professionally qualified and made a success of the role. He added that he thought that having the right personality was important to the role, however recognised the need for professionalism and confirmed that the service are looking for a professional partner to enter into partnership with.

Clarification was given that hospitality means Café Zest, the outdoor centre bar facility and the catering at One Leisure sites. The Burgess Hall is the hall and the bar. A discussion ensued regarding the differing opening times of the Café Zests across the sites. It was noted that at Huntingdon there is a self-service coffee machine which can be manned by non-hospitality staff and therefore there is an option to open the café earlier. It was confirmed that investigations will be carried out as to the viability of installing similar machines at the other Café Zest sites.

A discussion ensued regarding access control, tailgaters and membership abuse. Members were informed that the barriers are to be moved at One Leisure St Ives and One Leisure St Neots. In respect to St Ives, the barrier will be moved back to allow more open access to the café and it is anticipated to be in place by early October. In respect to St Neots, the barrier will be designed to stop membership abuse, however the downfall is that people who wish to access the café have to go through the barrier, although to mitigate this café patrons will be encouraged to use the alternative entrance. Members were also informed that there is additional swipe access at the St Neots

sites in order to prevent tailgaters.

In response to the question is the service aware of what competing leisure facilities are doing, the One Leisure Business and Operations Manager confirmed that some Officers do conduct mystery shops of competing facilities and that their friends and colleagues with memberships of those facilities give valuable feedback. In addition, there are members, who take out memberships at each of the gyms on a cycle, and they do give One Leisure staff feedback on what the competitors are doing.

The Panel enquired about the cleaning contracts. The One Leisure Business and Operations Manager conceded there had been issues with the contact and as a result the contract is review on a monthly basis. In response to the question of when does the service cancel the contract, Members were informed that as the contract is a corporate contract then cancelling it is difficult. When the contract comes up for renewal, the service will look to procure specialist gym cleaners.

Attention turned to the maintenance arrangements of One Leisure. The service is reviewing the feasibility of hiring a shared maintenance operative (shared with Estates) for electrics, plumbing and general maintenance. It was noted that a contractor would still be required for the specialist gym equipment.

In response to a question on consistency, the One Leisure Business and Operations Manager stated that there has been some level of inconsistency at the sites and how they were developed. The Panel was informed that for the last three years the service hasn't had a business plan, but a business plan has been developed in order to have consistency.

A discussion ensued around engaging 13-17 year olds and the Courts for Kids scheme. The One Leisure Business and Operations Manager will consider the feasibility of extending the scheme outside of the holiday periods. Members were informed that sometimes, in order to make the scheme more successful, it is about getting the right people with the right personalities to engage with the hard to reach groups.

The One Leisure Business and Operations Manager is considering all opportunities to maximise the usage of St Ives outdoor. The service will continue to lobby Sport England and UK Athletics for funding to upgrade the facility. This is proving difficult as UK Athletics current strategic approach is to fund brand new facilities.

In concluding, the Panel have asked for the following comments to be forwarded onto Cabinet and that a response is expected:

- 1) The Panel notes the risk that school funding could decrease therefore affecting One Leisure's budget and requests that opportunities are sought other funding opportunities to replace any lost income.
- 2) Members suggest that legal and One Leisure to review existing agreements and look for opportunities to make them more robust.
- 3) The Panel instructs the Corporate Director – Services to discuss the One Leisure partnership agreements with the Head of Legal and then present a summary report to Overview and Scrutiny.
- 4) Members recommend that special consideration is given to the cleaning requirements of One Leisure facilities when considering the next cleaning contract.
- 5) The Panel recommends that consideration is given to employing a joint One Leisure and Estates maintenance operative.
- 6) Members note that next year the facilities and active lifestyles annual reports are to be combined and welcome that development.
- 7) The Panel recognises the role of One Leisure Member Champions and recommend their continuance.

## **20. ONE LEISURE ACTIVE LIFESTYLES ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19**

With the aid of a report by the Sports Development Manager and the Active Lifestyles and Health Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the performance, work programmes and highlights of the One Leisure Active Lifestyles Team during 2018/19 was presented to the Panel.

The Active Lifestyles and Health Manager informed Members that the service is a cost to the Council; however Officers are continuously looking at ways to reduce the cost. The Executive Councillor for Partnerships and Well-being added that during 2018/19 Active Lifestyles have increased the number of participants and, at the same time, reduced the cost to the Council.

A Member commented that GPs are more frequently prescribing social prescription and could the service look to the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for funding. In response, Members were informed that it is difficult to get funding from the CCG and that the CCG have their own ideas on what schemes they are willing to fund but added that Officers will welcome any influence Members may have.

Following a query, it was clarified that where reserves were used that was for Section 106 money used for the maintenance of the 3G pitch at St Neots Town Football Club as part of the

original Section 106 agreement. Due to accounting reasons, the money had to be recorded as part of the Active Lifestyles budget and makes the financial position worse than what it is, although the spend was netted off as neutral.

The Panel was informed that Quarter 1 forecasts for each One Leisure facility are up on budget targets. In respect to Active Lifestyles, some challenging income targets have been set this year and the team will do everything they can to meet them (Q1 forecast is 1% over budget). Members were reminded that decisions are made in year by partners that affect income streams of One Leisure and Active Lifestyles.

It was noted that attendance figures for the Long Term Health Conditions, Disabled People and the Miscellaneous Category are down. Members were informed that in 2016/17 there was an over reporting of Long Term Health Conditions participants due to a technical error. In respect to disabled participants, the fall has been as a result of a care home stated that they no longer could afford the Active Lifestyles programme. In respect to Miscellaneous participants the increase is due to the Lets Get Moving Physical Activity Project. It does not fit in the traditional categories. From 2019 the activities will be categorised differently.

A Member noted that value for money element of the customer survey had decreased and asked for reasons. In response it was confirmed that it was as a result of fees going up or being charged for the first time. However, it was noted that fees are still competitive and that receiving 95% for value for money is very good.

Following a question of engaging with parish councils, the Panel was informed that the service has previously attended the parish council forum and has sent out case studies to the parish councils. Active Lifestyles have eight parish councils signed up for summer activities.

In response to a query about Active Lifestyles engagement with development, the Sports Development Manager confirmed that a large amount of his time is spent on planning applications. The service has had input with Alconbury Weald, Wyton and the idea of Active Travel. Although having an effective input is very challenging as there are lots of other priorities for planners to consider.

The Panel welcomed the contribution that Active lifestyles is making and recommends that the Task and Finish Group on Lifelong Health looks at some of the elements in more detail.

*(At 8.35pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor S J Criswell left the meeting and did not return.)*

**21. REPRESENTATIVES ON EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS - ANNUAL UPDATE REPORT 2018/19**

With the aid of a report by the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the annual update of representatives on external organisations was presented to the Panel.

In introducing the report, it was noted that the idea for the report came about as a result of the Council's Peer Review. As before then, there was no formal reporting of the representatives on external organisations.

Councillor Bywater informed the Panel that, in his experience, Internal Drainage Boards do value the input of District Councillors.

The Panel commended those representatives who provided written updates. In addition, the Panel continues to support the ethos that if an urgent and important matter, which affects the District Council, arises that representatives report the matter to Overview and Scrutiny at the earliest convenience.

*(At 9.12pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillors J M Palmer and T D Sanderson left the meeting and did not return.)*

**22. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

With the aid of a report by the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme was presented to the Panel.

Chairman