

**Minutes of: PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE (LEISURE)**

Date of Meeting: 19 November 2009

PRESENT: Councillor Sandiford (Chair)
Councillors L.Barnes, Cheetham (substituting for Thorne),
Crawforth, Lamb, and Stansfield.

IN ATTENDANCE: Phil Seddon, Head of Finance
Mike Riley, Communities Manager
Gina Fletcher, Service Development Officer - Culture
Carolyn Sharples, Acting Committee and Member
Services Manager
Martin Kay, Acting Chief Executive, Rossendale Leisure
Trust
Norman Hauserman, Chair, Rossendale Leisure Trust
David McHendry, Knight, Kavanagh and Page Consultants
(KPP)
Councillor Brian Essex, Portfolio Holder for Finance and
Resources
Councillor Jason Gledhill, Portfolio Holder for Leisure
Councillor Graham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and
Neighbourhoods
Councillors, A.Barnes, Morris and Robertson
Mr A.Leach, invitee

ALSO PRESENT: 9 members of the public
2 representatives of the press

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Neal, Thorne,
Bernard Divine, Co-opted Member and Ian Cameron, invitee.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved:

That the minutes of the last meeting held on 19th October 2009 be
approved as a correct record.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Lamb declared a personal interest as she was a member of the Bacup Leisure Hall Review Panel. Councillor Stansfield declared a personal interest as he was a member of the Pool Review Panel.

5. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to report.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions were raised.

7. PRESENTATION FROM KNIGHT, KAVANAGH AND PAGE (KKP) CONSULTANTS

Mr David McHendry, Principal Consultant at Knight, Kavanagh and Page delivered a presentation on the Leisure Review/Options Appraisal. He informed members about the range of facilities that should be included in the Council's leisure and culture portfolio in order to make it effective and sustainable. He detailed issues such as deprivation, health, and the reach of services, and also informed members of the results of the supply and demand analysis and also the key issues facing the Council for each of the leisure facilities.

Mr McHendry outlined the details of 3 possible options for the delivery of leisure facilities and informed of the recommendations of Knight, Kavanagh and Page on the range of facilities that should be included. This included:

- Closing Bacup Leisure Hall unless a suitable community alternative could be found.
- Rossendale Leisure Trust (RLT) to surrender lease on Ski Rossendale and work with the Council to procure a new partner.
- The Council should advertise the Ski Rossendale opportunity and detail the procurement process.
- Provide a swimming pool at Haslingden Sports Centre.
- Upgrade the pool and provide income generating facilities at Marl Pits to ensure financial viability.
- Continue to facilitate swimming in Whitworth through the revenue grant to Community Leisure Association of Whitworth (CLAW).

In addition to this there had been a management options appraisal and Mr McHendry detailed the assessment and proposed operational models

including: the current Trust(s) arrangements in terms of their impact, effectiveness and suitability as future delivery models; the range of alternative management options available (including an assessment of the strengths, weaknesses and financial implications of each), and benchmarking of the Council's current investment in leisure.

The Chair thanked Mr McHendry for giving the presentation and detailing the findings and recommendations of the report.

Members of the public and other elected members raised points and asked questions in relation to the following to which Mr McHendry responded:

- Keeping options open in relation to working with Trusts
- Achievements of Community Leisure Association in Whitworth (CLAW) and guidance over the management of the Riverside
- Balance of funding
- Enthusiasm of the Leisure Trust
- Perception of what people want in relation to leisure
- Consideration of a spa facility at Marl Pits
- Improved eating and drinking facilities at Marl Pits
- Exercise concessions for deprived people
- Looking at the pools in relation to age profiles and transport facilities
- Access to a copy of the presentation
- Focus on outdoor sports
- Number of facilities Rossendale Leisure Trust will have to manage?
- Changing rooms and track facilities
- Report availability
- Savings on VAT

Members of the committee asked questions and discussed the following:

- The facilities offered at Alder Grange Community and Technology School and Whitworth High School
- Why Fearn Community Sports College was not included as they offer leisure provision?
- Sauna suite at the Haslingden site
- Facilities useful for older people and the benefits
- Ensuring no facilities are lost
- Use of saunas for medical reasons

In response to questions raised Mr McHendry clarified that Fearn Community Sports College operated its own leisure facilities.

Resolved:

That the presentation be noted.

8. LEISURE PROCESS SUMMARY: ROSSENDALE LEISURE TRUST

Martin Kay, Acting Chief Executive of Rossendale Leisure Trust (RLT) updated members on the Leisure Process. He informed members that this year had been difficult for the Leisure Trust Board of Trustees and employees as 74% of all contracted staff were from Rossendale and had taken the criticism in February hard. He commended the staff and the Board for their diligence and support particularly after the sudden loss of the Chief Executive and with external pressures such as financial climate, increase in utility costs and competition.

The Leisure Review had opened up opportunities for the Leisure Trust to outline successes and areas for concern, in addition to working on improved communication particularly for elected members. The Leisure Trust continued to support the Council's targets in relation to leisure provision and also represented the Borough at appropriate forums. The Leisure Trust continued to benchmarking itself against other sector partners and challenge operations.

Haslingden Sports Centre had been recently reaccredited with Quest and both pools were still carrying the Aquamark Accreditation. He informed that they were continuing to work with the National Governing Bodies of Sport, Sport England, the Primary Care Trust and Lancashire Sport to improve funding support. The Leisure Trust would continue to work with its dedicated partners for the benefit of Rossendale and would welcome the Leisure Report when published. He thanked the Chair and the Overview and Scrutiny members for their professionalism throughout the process.

Norman Hauserman, the Chair of Rossendale Leisure Trust also thanked the Chair and Committee for the opportunity to get the message across about the good work that was being done. The Leisure Trust would continue to support the Council as well as the community.

Members of the committee commented on the following:

- Improved communication and keeping members informed
- The amount of other activities going on
- Importance of health particularly in deprived areas
- Social aspect of sports facilities
- Improving mental health

Martin Kay also informed members of initiatives to use the natural environment, for example, walking initiatives. He also informed the committee that the Leisure Trust would continue to keep members updated with information on leisure provision.

Resolved:

That the update be noted.

9. LEISURE REVIEW UPDATE

On behalf of Councillor Gledhill, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, the Communities Manager thanked the Committee for undertaking the scrutiny review of leisure and thanked them for their diligence. He updated the Committee on additional actions completed since the last meeting and information from the latest meetings of the Leisure Hall Review Panel and the Pool Review Panel.

The Communities Manager informed that the Pool Review Panel had proposed some recommendations that they would like Cabinet to consider. These were to:

- Outline specifications for a new pool
- Continue to meet and oversee developments
- Keep Haslingden Pool open until a new pool was ready
- To keep Marl Pits swimming pool open
- To keep a health suite facility

In relation to Bacup Leisure Hall the Communities Manager informed the Committee that 3 expressions of interest had been received and that the Leisure Hall Review Panel had met to assess them according to the evaluation criteria which was as follows:

- Deliverability
- Timescale
- Sustainability
- Finance and funding implications on the Public Purse
- Community, Social and Economic Benefits
- Strategic relevance to the Council's priorities

The assessment of the expressions of interest would inform the Panel's recommendations to Cabinet in December and it was hoped that by the end of November all parties concerned would be contacted regarding their proposals.

In relation to Ski Rossendale the Communities Manager informed that they had received 3 submissions regarding exploring private investment following the issue of the Prior Information Notices (PIN). Members would be considering entering a dialogue to identify an optimum bid.

Councillor Gledhill thanked the Committee and KKP for their work and for the reports that they would be bringing to Cabinet in December. He informed the meeting that they needed to look at priorities and in order to meet funding constraints they would have to make sure that any plans identified actions for short, medium and long term, and ensure that plans were open to scrutiny. He also welcomed the comments from the Leisure Trust regarding working more closely together.

Members of the public and other elected members raised points and asked questions in relation to the following to which the Communities Manager responded:

- Availability of recommendations from the different review groups
- Specifications for a new pool
- Expressions of interest for Bacup Leisure Hall
- Commercial aspect and impact on community focus
- CLAW, RLT and the Council working in collaboration
- Publication of the presentation and report
- Consultations and options
- Opportunities to review or revisit expressions of interest in Bacup Leisure Hall

The Communities Manager clarified the process for the publication of Cabinet reports. The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Leisure recognised the importance of making information available to the public at the earliest opportunity and were aiming for reports to be published on the web site on 26th November. The Communities Manager also recognised the importance of having continued consultations to inform the planning process, particularly long term plans.

Councillor Graham thanked the Pool Review panel for their work and requested that the Panel continued to meet to oversee the process.

Members of the committee commented on the following:

- Value for money – public money
- Start taking action
- Loss of facilities
- Community interest

Resolved:

That the update be noted.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Committee noted the information and updates from the Communities Manager, the Leisure Trust and KKP and asked the Committee to consider any recommendations they would like to make in their final report to Cabinet.

Members of the Committee discussed the following:

- Options presented and budget implications
- RLT, CLAW and the Council working more closely
- Optimum service

- Joint delivery plan
- Improved health and well being – sporting and outdoor activity
- Culture and Leisure
- Quality and accessibility
- Value for money from investments made
- Local people and future consultation
- Continuing scrutinising leisure – set into Performance Scrutiny Committee Work Plan
- Inviting CLAW and RLT at least twice a year to update Performance Scrutiny Committee
- Monitoring progress of CLAW and RLT together
- Monitor work plan, development plan and service level agreements
- Draft plans of what new proposed pools may look like
- Timescales for sketches/plans
- Ensuring the 2 review groups continue till projects are complete
- Updates from finance on monthly monitoring meetings
- Inviting the elected members on the Leisure Trust to report back to Committee as invitees
- Consultation and information

Resolved:

1. That the committee recommends Cabinet to take the options presented by Knight, Kavanagh and Page Consultants into consideration as part of the final Leisure Report, and assess these alongside any budget implications.
2. That Rossendale Borough Council, Rossendale Leisure Trust and Community Leisure Association of Whitworth work together on a joint development plan and Service Level Agreements to achieve a shared vision of improving health and wellbeing by:
 - Increasing participation in Cultural activities including sport and leisure.
 - Providing high quality and accessible facilities.
 - Ensuring value for money from the investment made in achieving this vision.
 - That a development plan is produced in conjunction with interested parties' particularly local people.
3. That as part of the work programme, Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee continue to receive updates following Full Council's recommendations on 25th February 2010. Including:
 - Monitor any revised funding and legal agreement agreed with Rossendale Leisure Trust and CLAW.

- Work programmes emerging from the Council decisions on 25th February 2010.
- Monitor the Development Plan and Service Level Agreements.
- Continue to receive reports from the Pool Review Panel and Leisure Hall Review Panel until the projects are complete.

The Chair thanked everyone for their participation at the meeting including the officers and the Leisure Trust for their hard work. She informed everyone that a full scrutiny report detailing the work of the Committee would be presented as part of the Cabinet report in December, and she expressed her thanks to the Committee.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.

Signed
(Chair)

Date.....