



NOTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
PARTNERSHIP DELIVERY GROUP
WEDNESDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2010

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Pavilion Road, West Bridgford

PRESENT:

Councillors N C Lawrence (Chairman), R L Butler, L B Cooper, B G Dale, Mrs C E M Jeffreys, R M Jones, B A Nicholls, Mrs M Stockwood, T Vennett-Smith

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor J A Stockwood
Ms T Danks Assistant Regional Director, Parkwood Leisure Ltd
Mr J Palfrey Contract Manager for Rushcliffe, Parkwood Leisure Ltd

OFFICERS PRESENT:

D Athwal	First Lets Project Leader
C Bullett	Deputy Chief Executive (CB)
N Carter	Partnerships and Projects Manager
D Dwyer	Strategic Housing Manager
B Knowles	Leisure Contracts Manager
D Mitchell	Head of Partnerships and Performance
V Nightingale	Senior Member Support Officer

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

There were no apologies for absence

13. Declarations of Interest

There were none declared.

14. Notes of the Previous Meeting

The notes of the meeting held on Tuesday 14 September 2010 were accepted as a true record.

Members felt that it had been a very productive meeting and had given Members a good insight into Spirita's work.

In respect of the action points

- a) Members were informed that there would be a draft of the Greater Nottinghamshire housing needs in the next few months and a briefing note would follow.
- b) Following the information already sent Members felt that there needed to be a wider presentation of the information. The Deputy Chief Executive (CB) stated that the reports could be included in Members' Matters.

- c) Members were informed that Nottinghamshire County Council were not stopping the handyman service but would be delivering it via a different method.

15. **Leisure Centre Contract – Annual Report by Parkwood Leisure**

The Head of Partnerships and Performance stated that this was the third review. He stated that there was a high level of governance in place, including quarterly Board meetings involving the Cabinet portfolio holder, Councillor Fearon. He stated that the annual review took on board both the quarterly monthly inspection information. Compliance with the contract was only 0.25% below the standard of 70% which was a measure in line with the Quest standard.

Mr Palfrey gave a presentation outlining the company's operation of the leisure contract, which had commenced in August 2007. He explained some of the highlights of the year, including successful visits from Quest, increase in visitor and expression member numbers, refurbishment of gyms, successful Investors in People accreditation. He informed Members of the successful introduction of free swimming for the over 60's, free swimming lessons and the implementation of the Aiming High project, which was aimed at bringing leisure to people with disabilities. Other highlights included partnership working with the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and the Primary Care Trust, completion of year one of the modern apprenticeship scheme and a successfully delivered children's holiday programme.

With regard to customer satisfaction, Mr Palfrey explained the many methods customers can give feedback, including comment forms, annual user and non user surveys, manager question times and user group forums. He pointed out that cleaning was an issue at the older sites that was being constantly reviewed, also additional cleaning staff would be recruited where necessary.

In respect of improvements, Parkwood would be concentrating on further partnership work, the development of the Modern Apprenticeship and the Advanced Apprenticeship, introduce a Graduate Training scheme, develop the on line booking system and develop the customer/club forums and the Managers' question time. One key point was the company's commitment to reduce carbon usage by installing new technology, completing energy surveys and audits, raising staff awareness of energy management and obtaining ISO 14001 through external auditing.

Following a question, Mr Palfrey explained that the funding had now been withdrawn for the free over 60's swimming, however more swimming lessons had been introduced for that age range and Parkwood were considering how these could be subsidised.

Members queried the GP referral scheme and were informed that Parkwood worked with the City Hospital, activities were offered for a variety of conditions and the trainers were working to identify rehabilitation training. More classes were being held following user feedback. Councillor Lawrence stated that it was very beneficial to have a member of staff who could conduct a thorough assessment.

In respect of private centres, Mr Palfrey explained that usage was growing at the council owned centres as, nationally, people were leaving private centres. He stated that the membership fees were very competitive, however a range of budget gyms would soon be opening in Nottinghamshire and Parkwood would be considering their affect on the market. They were keen to build on any opportunities.

Following a question, Members were informed that outdoor usage was steady, however, there were issues with the joint use sites as school use did not always complement the normal use. In respect of the joint use sites there were issues surrounding litter, vandalism and damage. Cleanliness was also a challenge especially as these sites were particularly old. In particular high level cleaning equipment had been purchased and a good relationship had been developed with the schools to address the issues such as mud on the stairs.

Councillor Jones congratulated Parkwood on the cleanliness of the poolside at Rushcliffe Leisure Centre, however, he felt that there should be better signage and staff should enforce the overshoe policy. He asked how the usage figures were calculated as there were many entrances to the centre. He was informed that all users were monitored by a variety of means and that the company were trying to address the issue of the various entrances.

In respect of the Aiming High project Members were informed that this had been launched in March 2010 it was aimed at giving the person a leisure opportunity whilst giving the support helper a rest. There had been 17 participants on the first programme and 12 were signed up to the second. Staff were working closely with the Nottinghamshire County Council's Sports Development Officer and Ash Lea School.

With regard to areas that required improvement, Mr Palfrey explained that the phone system at Rushcliffe Leisure Centre needed upgrading and a procurement process had been implemented.

Members queried why attendance at the Family Night at Rushcliffe Leisure Centre had declined. Members felt that it was vital to encourage family use. Mr Palfrey explained that the figures were disappointing and the session was being repackaged and marketed. The Leisure Contracts Manager explained that the national trend for group activities was declining. Keeping fit and sport was becoming an individual activity. Parkwood had introduced junior pump sessions which allowed teenagers access to the gym and also triathlon was becoming more popular. Members supported Parkwood's initiative to revamp the session.

Members asked if Parkwood was satisfied with the capital improvements made by the Borough Council. Mr Palfrey stated that there was a very good relationship between Parkwood and the Borough Council. In respect of Bingham and Rushcliffe Leisure Centres these buildings were over 40 years old and also Nottinghamshire County Council was involved in the partnership. He stated that there was an agreed programme of repairs and maintenance and work was carried out with the minimal disruption to users.

Members asked about the apprenticeship programme. The Group was informed that the company had started working with South Nottinghamshire College and had recruited three apprentices from last year's programme. This year four had been taken on with an extra three through the partnership with the Amateur Swimming Association. It was felt that this programme benefited people as gaining experience was always difficult. After the first programme Parkwood had made an additional vacancy and now there was an advanced apprenticeship programme to further assist people. Staff were also widening their training courses to involve more people than just staff. The Leisure Contracts Manager explained that one of the topics discussed at district meetings was how to get national governing bodies to run courses that were affordable.

Following a question Mr Palfrey explained that each centre had individual activity programmes and the joint use sites were restricted on what could be offered. Staff did consider how the successes from one centre could be transferred to other centres. Over the wider Parkwood division, staff could identify the new national trends and introduce new activities into the centres, these included sway dance, yoga and pilates.

In respect of combined heat and power Mr Palfrey explained that the payback was too long as any capital investment needed to have a 1-2 year payback. However, the company did consider all devices that would have a positive impact on CO² reductions. Each site had a unique plant operation.

With regard to complaints about Rushcliffe Leisure Centre Mr Palfrey stated that staff were trying to encourage people to use the Manager's question time. Councillor Jones stated that he also encouraged people to use the various methods of feedback, however he was often told that people's comments were not recorded.

Following a statement, the Leisure Contracts Manager explained that Sport England had conducted two national surveys over the last five years and Rushcliffe was the third highest nationally for participation with 27% of people doing the daily recommended activity.

The Head of Partnerships and Performance summarised that the Council had entered into a partnership with Parkwood Leisure as they had the commercial knowledge and a strong relationship had then developed.

The Group AGREED that the performance of Parkwood Leisure over the past year be acknowledged, in particular their work to improve activities and access issues for people with a disability.

16. **Annual Review of First Lets and Options for the Future**

The Strategic Housing Manager informed Members that the First Lets scheme had been in operation since 2007 and had been run in partnership with Broxtowe and Gedling Borough Councils. The aim of the scheme was to prevent homelessness, reduce the use of temporary accommodation and increase the use and quality of the private rented sector. The scheme assisted people on low incomes or in receipt of benefits to overcome obstacles to renting a home from the private sector. It was a website based scheme and

vetted both landlords and tenants. In Rushcliffe the scheme faced several challenges especially the high rent prices and high demand for properties in the area. There had been 39 tenancy lets in Rushcliffe and although the outcomes were not as high as had been envisaged, performance had increased over the last few months. There were two key strands to the project, the good tenant referencing service and the inspection of properties to bring them up to the Decent Homes Standard. The Council was committed to the scheme until March 2011 but the other two partners had stated they wanted to merge the First Lets project with the Choice Based Lettings scheme, which included social rented housing. Members were asked if they would support this action, to carry on with the project or to cease the scheme altogether.

Members agreed that this scheme was important when people, through no fault of their own, found themselves without a home. It was also acknowledged that resources were being challenged at the moment.

Following a question, officers explained that the rent deposit scheme was a cashless bond which guaranteed the landlord £500 towards damage or rent arrears in the first six months. This was used to build trust between the landlord and tenant and to overcome landlords' perceptions of tenants on benefits. At present all eligible applicants for the rent deposit scheme had to undertake a credit referencing check as part of the Good Tenants Initiative, however, if the range of initiatives currently offered ceased, including the Good Tenants Scheme, this might increase the risk of the bond being called upon.

The Group were informed that ten cases of homelessness had been prevented by this scheme, which according to government figures ought to have saved £34,460. However, this was one of a number of other initiatives the Council operated which had successfully prevented 193 homelessness cases.

Members queried if other local authorities operated a Choice Based Lettings scheme with additional facilities for private tenancies. Officers advised that some benchmarking of Choice Based Lettings had already been undertaken, however, Officers agreed to undertake further investigations in relation to advertising private rented properties.

In relation to the number of successful lets which had been achieved in all three Boroughs it was noted that Rushcliffe had the lowest and Members wondered why this might be. Officers informed the Group that the project leader worked across all three boroughs to implement an overarching action plan for the project which ensured actions such as training in the Housing Options Teams and Customer Service Centres were carried out consistently. However, the First Lets Project Leader stated that the housing markets were different in each area and that a degree of flexibility was required in implementing actions to enable partners to provide a more bespoke service to take account of the different factors

Following a question, officers stated that at the beginning it was envisaged that larger numbers of people would be helped and officers had hoped for better outcomes, however, the scheme had had a positive impact on the people who had used the scheme. Financially it had cost £1,350 per person whereas other methods cost approximately £540, and it needed to be considered in

conjunction with the other methods used. Both Gedling and Broxtowe Borough Councils felt that the move to Choice Based Lettings offered authorities an opportunity to link the two systems.

Members felt that the only possible option was to merge the two systems but they felt that officers should attempt to retain some degree of vetting as part of First Lets, especially as the current economic climate could cause more cases. Also the change in the Government's restrictions on housing benefits could have an impact. It was hoped that the merged systems would become more resident focussed and offer a single path towards housing from either private or registered social landlords. The Group acknowledged that if the other two districts pulled out the cost would be too excessive for Rushcliffe to carry on.

It is AGREED that the Group

- a) Had considered the work undertaken by the First Lets scheme since 2007.
- b) Supported the merging of First Lets and Choice Based Lettings, but requested officers to retain as much vetting within the system as was practical.

17. Rolling 2 Year Work Programme

The Group considered its work programme and decided to remove the Police Partnership from its agenda for January as a Member Group was considering the issue. Also on that agenda was the review of the Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club and when compared to the scrutiny matrix this issue did not merit scrutiny. It had been acknowledged at a recent meeting of the Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice Chairmen that there would have to be flexibility in the work programmes to allow for items to be included following the budget workshops.

Members queried which group considered health issues, officers stated that public health would come under the remit of Nottinghamshire County Council. Also in the Community Shaping Team officers worked in partnership on many issues such as quitting smoking, obesity. With regard to the work of the Environmental Health section Members needed to consider if there was a concern or poor performance. If Members wanted further information this could be dealt with in a different method.

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm.

Action Sheet**PARTNERSHIP DELIVERY GROUP - WEDNESDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2010**

Minute Number	Actions	Officer Responsible
14. Notes of the Previous Meeting	Officers to provide a briefing note following the production of a draft of the Greater Nottinghamshire housing needs.	Strategic Housing Manager
15. Leisure Centre Contract – Annual Report by Parkwood Leisure	<p>Parkwood Management agreed to encourage their staff to be extra vigilant and to challenge customers regarding the wearing of overshoes whilst poolside.</p> <p>Parkwood agreed to provide the attendance figures for the aiming high initiative by the next meeting of the Group</p> <p>Parkwood agreed to investigate the viability of repackaging family night at Rushcliffe LC by April 2011.</p>	Parkwood Leisure Ltd
16. Annual Review of First Lets and Options for the Future	<p>Officers agreed to undertake further investigations in relation to advertising private rented properties in conjunction with the Choice Based Lettings scheme.</p> <p>Officers to investigate the potential of including the Good Tenant's Scheme within Choice Based Lettings.</p>	<p>Strategic Housing Manager</p> <p>Strategic Housing Manager</p>
17. Rolling 2 Year Work Programme	To remove the Police Partnership and the review of the Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club from the January agenda a	Partnerships and Projects Manager