

ETWALL LEISURE CENTRE JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

19th January 2004

PRESENT:-

Representatives of South Derbyshire District Council

Labour Group

Councillor Shepherd.

Conservative Group

Councillors Mrs. Hood and Lemmon.

Officers

K. Stackhouse, C. Mason and S. Wright.

Representatives of Etwall John Port School

Officer

F. Briggs.

Representatives of Derbyshire County Council

Councillors Mrs. Littlejohn and Routledge.

Community Group Representatives

Mrs. Bussell and Mrs. Wedgebury.

EL/16. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillor Lauro (Chair), Councillor Pabla, I. Reid and P. Spencer (South Derbyshire District Council), C. Clemens (Vice-Chair), M. Crane and G. Cole (Etwall John Port School).

EL/17. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

In the absence of both the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Joint Management Committee, it was agreed that County Councillor Routledge be appointed Chair for the Meeting.

EL/18. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 13th October 2003 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

EL/19. **MATTERS ARISING**

Mrs Wedgebury raised the issue of the recent press reports relating to the future of the Centre. Mr. Mason emphasised that the press, as part of the democratic process, received copies of agendas prior to them being discussed by Members. The press reports had emerged from items on that evening's agenda, which would be discussed in greater detail during the course of the Meeting.

EL/20. **REPORTS OF MEMBERS**

Councillor Routledge took the opportunity to praise John Port School for the involvement of their pupils at a recent Christmas Music Gala that he had attended.

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

EL/21. **USAGE INFORMATION**

A report was submitted which identified public usage of the swimming pool, squash courts and tennis courts for the financial years 1998/99 to date, together with comparative monthly usage figures. A further annexe gave a detailed comparison of those using the facilities for the periods October to December 2002 and 2003. Nationally, there was a general decline in public swimming, but it was noted that children's swimming admissions at the Leisure Centre were currently on the increase.

The Leisure Centre Manager provided information on a promotion linked to National Cycle Week. The promotion would take place during the week commencing 13th June 2004 and a half price swim would be offered to all customers who arrived by bicycle.

In a discussion on improving young peoples' use of the Facility, Councillor Routledge raised the issue of possible involvement in the County Council's b line gold card initiative. He agreed to pass current information on this scheme to the Leisure Centre Manager.

RESOLVED:-

That the Usage Information report be noted.

EL/22. **DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1995**

The Committee was reminded of the phased introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995. Its purpose was reported together with a definition of disability for the purposes of the Act. Part 3 of the Act sought to ensure that disabled people were not treated less favourably when accessing services, goods or facilities. By 1st October 2004, anyone providing a service, goods or facilities must reasonably remove, alter or avoid any physical barrier that prevented access or made it unreasonably difficult for a disabled person to access services, goods and facilities available or offered to others.

To give a better understanding of requirements under this legislation, the Council had commissioned specialist consultants to undertake a detailed audit of all public buildings. The facilities at the Etwall Leisure Centre had been included within the audit. The priority categorisations used within the consultant's report had been appended and it was confirmed that identified costs were approximate and based on the information available at the time of the audit. The documents included a summary of the work identified by the consultants, with costings and priority levels. £60,000 was required to provide lifts to enable people with disabilities to be moved between floors of the two buildings. A great deal of the work identified as "Priority A" related to approaches to the site. Work would need to be co-ordinated with actions that the School and local education authority were undertaking to address related outcomes from their own audits.

In terms of delivering the work identified in the audit, a key issue was the concept of reasonableness. A specific example referred to the reasonableness of undertaking works to the squash courts to enable disabled persons to participate or spectate. In strict accordance with the requirements of the legislation, full access should be provided to the facility. It was recommended that all work identified as Priority A be undertaken as soon as practically possible.

Under the current management agreement, the District Council had responsibility for funding the works at the squash courts. There needed to be some discussion about the scope of work that lay beyond the management area of both the swimming pool and the squash courts. For the works relating to the swimming pool, 60% of the costs would be funded by the South Derbyshire District Council and 40% by the Derbyshire County Council.

Prior to the meeting the County Council had provided copies of an audit they had undertaken which did not correspond completely with the work identified in the SDDC audit. The County Council had also placed a different interpretation on the requirements of the Act. It was therefore acknowledged that there was a need for Officers from the District and County Councils and the John Port School to liaise, prior to reporting back to the JMC with an agreed strategy.

RESOLVED:-

That liaison takes place between the County Council, School & SDDC to produce a jointly agreed strategy for the delivery of the requirements of the DDA 1995. The outcome of this to be reported to a future meeting of the JMC for their approval.

EL/23. **PROVISION OF NEW FACILITIES - REVIEW**

The Committee considered a position statement which sought to review activity over the past twelve months and to raise issues for discussion. To date, all partners had agreed that the existing project should be retained until all other options had been explored. It was considered that these options had been explored and it was time to re-evaluate what the Committee was trying to achieve. This was a particular issue for the Community Group, which had supported the project loyally to date without a clear understanding of if and when its efforts would be rewarded.

Since the failure of the Lottery Bid, it had been hoped that an opportunity would arise to allow the full project to be funded. Realistically, evidence indicated that no such opportunities would arise in the near future. The JMC was in a position where it needed to revisit plans for new facilities at the John Port School site. The Community Group's position was appreciated. It was made clear that in the circumstances the Group could, if it wished, consider options for allocating the money raised by the community on enhancements to the existing facility.

The partners represented at the meeting confirmed their commitment to providing new facilities at the John Port School site, albeit on a reduced scale. Councillor Shepherd enquired about the level of funding that was already committed to the project. Mr. Mason responded that this was in the region of £600,000, but that this was on the basis of the original £3.7m project rather than a lesser scheme. There was therefore a need for Officers to get together to produce possible options for the way forward. These could then be considered at

a future meeting of the JMC. Councillor Shepherd suggested a special Meeting because of the importance of the subject or certainly a Meeting when there was no other business on the agenda.

RESOLVED:-

That the Joint Management Committee remains fully committed to providing new leisure facilities at the John Port School site and that Officers provide possible options for the way forward, prior to their full consideration at a future special Meeting of the Committee.

EL/24. **REVENUE ESTIMATES 2003/04 AND 2004/05**

The Joint Management Committee was asked to consider the Leisure Centre's probable outturn for 2003/04, the base budget for 2004/05 and the proposed level of fees and charges for 2004/05. The probable estimate for 2003/04 showed total net expenditure of £170,840, which was an increase of approximately £2,700 over the original cash limit estimate. However, the overall position was actually better, as approximately £16,400 was previously brought forward from 2002/03 underspend. This was to supplement repairs and maintenance in 2003/04 and to help cover a potential loss of income from closing the pool during the summer months. These issues had effectively been accommodated and the account had continued to benefit from savings on energy costs. Consequently, contributions from constituent partners would be lower than estimated.

The cash limit estimate for 2004/05 showed a further reduction of approximately £20,000. This was due mainly to the ongoing reduction in energy costs together with income being raised back to levels based on a full year's operation. The Committee was also asked to consider the level of fees and charges proposed for 2004/05.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the proposed estimates of income and expenditure for 2003/04 and 2004/05 be approved.***
- (2) That the proposed fees and charges for 2004/05 be approved.***

W. ROUTLEDGE

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 6:30 p.m.