
BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW PANEL 3

**Held on Tuesday, 11 September 2007 at 10.00 am in
Swaffham Assembly Rooms, The Market Place, Swaffham**

PRESENT

Mr R.G. Kybird (Chairman)	Mr R. Kemp
Mrs S.R. Howard-Alpe (Vice-Chairman)	Mr B. Rose
Mr G.P. Balaam	Mr F.J. Sharpe
Mr P.J. Duigan	Mr M. Spencer
Mrs D.K.R. Irving	

In Attendance

Sian Harland	- Senior Committee Officer
Ray Johnson	- Acting Operations Manager (Commercial Services)
Joe Liggett	- Senior Leisure Manager
Stephen McGrath	- Principal Committee Officer
Riana Rudland	- Sports Development Officer

Action By

38/07 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

39/07 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Mr J. P. Labourchere.

40/07 OPERATION OF LEISURE FACILITIES AT DEREHAM AND THETFORD

The Leisure Services Manager introduced the report which provided an update on the operation of the Dereham and Thetford Leisure Centres from April 2007. The report provided an overview of usage and demand together with a summary of issues concerning residual design.

With regard to the height of the fencing at the Multi-Use Games Area this had been found to be inadequate with balls being inadvertently being kicked into neighbouring properties. However, the costs associated with replacing the fencing would lie with Parkwood Leisure and this issue was currently being discussed.

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There had been some instances at Dereham Leisure Centre of children sustaining minor cuts and abrasions to their feet. As a consequence the teaching pool had been drained and a detailed inspection undertaken. It was found that whilst the tiles were the correct specification they may have been too abrasive and action was undertaken to sand them down. This work was undertaken over a two week period during August. During this time the temperature in the main pool was increased and the shallow end used as an alternative to the teaching pool. As other Councils had encountered similar problems the issue would be reported to professional bodies such as the Institute of Sport and Recreation Management in order to ensure that future problems could be avoided.

The competition timing system at Dereham Leisure Centre had caused some concern with regard to the location of the socket plugs. The suppliers of the system were currently investigating various options relating to redesigning the plugs and a form of cover for the system.

There had been some demand for a sauna to be provided at Dereham Leisure Centre. Whilst this was a low priority Parkwood Leisure had agreed to consider a proposal after the first year of operation subject to continuing demand.

In response to Members' queries the Leisure Services Manager in conjunction with the Sports Development Officer provided the following information:-

- The temperatures at the pools in Thetford and Dereham were set by health and safety legislation. As Dereham Pool was a regional competition pool this was set lower than normal pools. It was understood that the pool temperatures could not be set to please everybody.
- Leisure Cards were launched on the 10 May 2007 and had been successful. At present card were offered at a lower cost for people receiving disability benefit or income support. Parkwood Leisure ran the scheme and would not be offering the cards to people receiving other forms of benefit such as Working Tax Credits at this time.
- With regard to the bowls facilities at Dereham and Thetford the uptake at Thetford had increased with youth sessions being programmed. The role of the club was vital to provide a central platform but there needed to be an understanding that there was an element of open access with pay and play sessions. It was felt that the rules at Thetford Bowling Club were quite rigid with strict dress codes which may not be suitable for younger players.

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- At present the parent to child ratio for the pool was set at one parent to one child under five and one parent to two children who were between five and eight. This meant that if parents had more than two children under the age of five they were unable to go swimming as a family. To assist families with young children a scheme was currently being considered which involved a basic swim test for children under five. If the child passed this test they would be given a certificate which the parents would produce which would exempt the child from the parent to child ratio.
- It was understood that certain schools were using the pool at Swanton Morley. This may have been as a result of child protection issues at Dereham Leisure Centre. However, signs were now displayed warning that no photographs could be taken and section of the changing rooms had been cordoned off for school parties. Further to this the reception area was monitored by CCTV. All the schools within the catchment area were pre-allocated swimming lesson slots but it was entirely up to the school if they wished to use the pool.
- The admission figures had varied considerably at the Leisure Centres between May and June as many schools were provided with free swim vouchers and this was during the school holidays.
- It was expected that the Best Value Performance Indicators would improve considerably with the completion of the new leisure facilities.
- The Camp Adventure Holiday Play Schemes had been very successful both in Dereham and in Theftford and attendance had been good in Swaffham. However, take-up had been poor in Attleborough and the scheme was being changed to concentrate on specialist sports rather than a general play scheme to encourage attendance. It was noted that the rural play schemes had been very successful and an extra five sports sessions had been provided. Although most of the village halls had been very helpful some village halls had not been as co-operative. In response to a Members' concerns regarding the Camp Adventure Scheme at Swaffham the Sports Development Officer stated that she would investigate the concern with Parkwood Leisure and respond to the Member.

**Riana
Rudland**

Members agreed that the Sports Development Officer together with the Arts Development Officer had improved the availability of arts and sporting facilities within Breckland. It was suggested that the Overview and Scrutiny Commission should recommend to Cabinet that the service term of the Arts Development Officer should be extended.

RECOMMEND that the Overview and Scrutiny Commission recommend to Cabinet that the service term of the post of Arts Development Officer be extended.

Action By

RESOLVED that

- (1) the actions taken in relation to the leisure facilities be noted;
and
- (2) the provision of the Summer Play Schemes, especially in the rural communities, be commended.

41/07 UPDATED ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Acting Operations Manager (Commercial Services)/Asset Manager presented the Asset Management Plan which had been re-drafted and was currently being used as a working document to assist with non operational property.

The main appendix to the Asset Management Plan identified the District Valuers valuation of the estate, the rental income per annum and identified the level of maintenance.

There has, in the past, been a presumption that if the units were let on full repairing insuring terms, then the tenant was responsible for maintenance in every case. This may not be correct on the smaller units which were let on 'easy in, easy out' terms where, in the majority of Breckland's units, they have had at least five or six tenants over a twenty five year period, it would seem unreasonable to expect the current tenant to pay for the replacement of the roof or to re-asphalt the yard or carry out substantial repairs. It was not unreasonable to expect tenants in our larger units on 25 year leases to carry out these works.

The Asset Section, together with the Legal Section, had been negotiating new terms for the lease renewals and insist that new short term leases include a charge to cover the repairs of major items. A charge of 20p per square foot will bring in £100,000 per annum. So far most tenants have agreed to this amendment and with new leases it would not be an option.

In 2006/07 the Council made available a rolling £100,000 for capital works to the older industrial units. The proposal above should not necessitate the need for the Council to have this rolling programme of £100,000 as the money would come from the maintenance charge levied on the tenants. Members were assured that this money would be ring fenced and only used for the maintenance of the industrial units.

In response to queries regarding rent free inducements for larger companies the Asset Manager stated that as 99% of the commercial property was let this would not be considered as an option. All companies regardless of their size would be given equal status and be charged the set rental rates.

All tenants were circulated with all the commercial properties on the market including those owned by private companies as the Council would rather keep businesses within Breckland regardless of whether they were renting private or Council owned units.

Action By

Further to this the Asset Team had been approached to consider providing an industrial unit management service for private companies who owned units but did not want to manage them. This would be provide additional income to the Council and was a future viable option.

Members noted the progress made with regard to the Asset Management Plan and agreed that an updated report be provided once the Asset Manager had returned to his post.

RESOLVED that a further updated report be provided once the Asset Manager had returned to his post.

42/07 WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman wished to congratulate the Housing Team on becoming Homelessness Regional Champions.

Members were reminded that the next meeting would begin at 9.30 am with a site visit to the Healthy Living Centre at Thetford with the business of the meeting commencing at 10.15 am at the Town Council Chamber, Thetford.

As there was a shortage of parking at the Health Living Centre Members were advised to park at the Sports Centre and walk to the Health Living Centre.

It was understood that parking at the Healthy Living Centre had been agreed under the greener parking initiative which should encourage people to use alternative forms of transport to travel to the Centre other than the car. However, it had become apparent that maybe this initiative was not suitable for the facility and this should be investigated.

RESOLVED that the issue of the green parking at the Healthy Living Centre be investigated.

**Mark
Broughton**

43/07 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Policy Development and Review Panel 3 would be held on Tuesday, 16 October 2007 at 9.30 am with a site visit to the Health Living Centre with the meeting commencing at 10.15 am at the Town Council Chamber, Thetford.

The meeting closed at 11.15 am

CHAIRMAN