

SOUTH (INNER) AREA COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 8TH OCTOBER, 2008

PRESENT: Councillor A Gabriel in the Chair

Councillors J Blake, D Congreve,
D Coupar, P Davey, G Driver, M Iqbal and
A Ogilvie

32 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed all in attendance to the Special meeting of the South (Inner) Area Committee. At the invitation of the Chair, Members, officers, local residents and representatives introduced themselves.

33 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Gabriel declared a personal interest in agenda item 6, Consultation on the Draft Vision for Leisure Centres in Leeds, as a user of local leisure centre facilities (Minute No. 35 refers).

A further declaration of interest was made at a later point in the meeting (Minute No. 35 refers).

34 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was submitted by Councillor Nash.

35 Consultation on the Draft Vision for Leisure Centres in Leeds

The Director of City Development submitted a report, which provided Members with information in relation to the Draft Vision for Leisure Centres in Leeds. The information was presented to Executive Board on 2nd September, 2008 and was now subject to consultation. As part of the consultation process, Members of this Area Committee were asked to consider the draft proposals presented and provide feedback on the proposals that affected their area.

The following information was appended to the report:-

- Income and Expenditure Report – Leeds City Council Leisure Centres;
- Executive Board report of 2nd September, 2008 – 'A Draft Vision for Investment in Sport Centres in Leeds and Proposals for Future Provision for Public Consultation'; and
- Letter to stakeholders and feedback form.

The following officers attended the meeting and responded to Members' questions and comments:-

- Martin Farrington, Acting Chief Recreation Officer;
- Caroline Broadbent, Deputy Sports Operation Manager; and
- Nicky Liptrot, Swift Research, Wetherby.

Martin Farrington, Acting Chief Recreation Officer, presented the report and outlined some of the main challenges that the service faced.

These included:-

- The over supply of swimming facilities in Leeds.
- Financial pressures, including staffing costs and rising energy prices.
- The current condition of leisure centres and increased building maintenance costs.
- Concern regarding the location of various leisure centres.

The Area Committee was informed that public consultation was being undertaken and a report back to Executive Board would be submitted in December 2008 with final proposals for consideration.

The main areas of discussion were as follows:-

- Potential issues with concentrating provision at the John Charles Centre and Morley, particularly in terms of accessibility. One local resident pointed out that there were no local buses from Middleton to Morley, midweek after 6.30 pm, and no local buses on a Sunday.
- Local school children would need to be provided with transport to access John Charles. At present, school children were able to walk with teachers to South Leeds Sports Centre and Middleton Leisure Centre.
- Concern regarding how leisure centres were appraised.
- Concern that various groups and organisations had not been consulted. Proposals had not been widely publicised and ward Members had not been provided with an opportunity to inform the public.
- There was concern that timescales for the consultation process were unrealistic. It was noted that the final report would be considered by Executive Board on 3rd December, 2008.
- Concern that relevant officers were not in attendance at the consultation workshops and consultants were unable to answer specific questions. It was also felt that the feedback form could have been phrased better.
- It was pointed out that South Leeds Sports Centre was located in the middle of the Beeston Hill and Holbeck regeneration area. The loss of this amenity would have a negative effect on some of the new regeneration developments, for example, Tiger 11. In addition, part of the attraction for new businesses to locate in the former Hillside Primary School building, was the location of the leisure centre near-by. The same principle applied to the redevelopment of Shaftsbury House into the Greenhouse housing development. The Area Committee was

concerned that the loss of the leisure centre was reducing service provision and making the area less attractive for new and existing residents. It was agreed that Martin Farrington, Acting Chief Recreation Officer, would consult with the Middleton Regeneration Board and the Beeston Hill and Holbeck Regeneration Partnership Board on this issue.

- Members, local residents and representatives emphasised the importance of retaining Middleton Leisure Centre, particularly in terms of serving the needs of the local community. One Member highlighted that Middleton Leisure Centre was located on a main bus route.
- Reference was made to the housing estate development at Sharp Lane, which it was commented would bring an additional few thousand residents to the area in a few years time.
- It was felt that current provision at South Leeds Sports Centre and Middleton Leisure Centre was fit for purpose and met local needs.
- There was concern that provision at John Charles Sports Centre was unsuitable for a variety of different groups. Members were particularly concerned that many local people did not enjoy the competitive element at John Charles Sports Centre, and were not prepared to use it.
- Transferring provision would have a negative effect on the environment as local people would have further to travel.
- Marketing and publicity was an issue. It was felt that more could be done to promote the leisure centres and raise awareness.
- There was concern that the report did not refer to any specific implications for narrowing the gap, equality and diversity and community cohesion.
- Members discussed the increase in people using South Leeds Sports Centre, since its re-opening last year.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the proposals for consultation on the draft vision for the Council's Leisure Centres in the inner south area of Leeds be noted; and
- (2) That feedback and comments arising from the South Inner Area Committee on the proposals and information contained within the report and appendices, be included in the overall consultation and reported back to the Executive Board in December 2008.

(Councillor Congreve declared a personal interest in this item as a user of local leisure centre facilities).

(Councillor Ogilvie joined the meeting at 6.54 pm, during the consideration of this item).

36 Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting

Tuesday 11th November, 2008 at 6.30 pm
(Middleton Park Ward)
Manorfield Hall, Newhall Road, Leeds, LS10 3RR

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Tuesday, 11th November, 2008

(The meeting concluded at 8.27pm).