

Scrutiny Board (Health) – 22 March 2011

Dear Mr Courtney,

Thank you for your e-mail for my request for Scrutiny (Health), unfortunately due to work commitments I am unable to attend in person on the 22nd March, but would like to offer forward this written submission for the Boards consideration.

I would very much appreciate if this could be read out on the day the request is heard subject to the approval of the board.

Firstly you may be aware that I added my signature to a recent petition circulated in Garforth around the reduction in hours from April in relation to Garforth Squash and Leisure Centre. I understand this matter, and others is currently subject to further review and does not really form a basis of my request for Scrutiny. As a Bodyline member in a personal capacity and as Assistant Manager of a local Brain Injury Rehabilitation Unit, Daniel Yorath House, I am keen that this facility remains for the use of the community.

I have to say from the outset that, if managed properly, a community asset transfer could protect the centre from further local authority cuts so with this in mind I am agreeable to a CAT in principle.

That said the centre offers a whole range of health and wellbeing activities in the broadest sense. This includes one of the few remaining squash facilities in the city, a large and serviceable games hall, an excellent gym as well as other activities relating to health including nursery provision, carpet bowls and a host of other health, wellbeing and recreational activities.

The age range covers from pre-school nursery through to retirement, and I urge the board to undertake a piece of work that ensures any CAT contract between the council and a third party must be robust, indeed water tight, in delivering these services for the local community in perpetuity.

This will include scrutinising the contract and ensuring that it is fit for purpose. I am also keen to ensure that costs remain at a level that encourages public access and, ideally, begin to develop a whole new range of activities from the centre. Done properly a CAT could secure the future of the centre for generations and I reiterate I am broadly in favour of this approach, that said the delivery of health and wellbeing outcomes must remain at the top of the council's agenda whoever the third party may be. I also believe there has to be a continuing level of public involvement post any changes to ensure these key objectives are not only delivered but sustainable in the long term.

I hope the Board find my comments of use in framing the terms of reference for the inquiry.

Kind regards

Janette Walker