

SCRUTINY BOARD (CULTURE AND LEISURE)

MONDAY, 10TH MARCH, 2008

PRESENT: Councillor T Hanley in the Chair

Councillors B Atha, B Gettings, A Hussain,
B Jennings, G Kirkland, V Morgan and
L Mulherin

85 Late Items

Although there were no late items as such, an amended report to Item 10, Major Arts Organisations Grant Aid was tabled.

86 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations made at this stage of the meeting.

87 Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Barker, Rhodes-Clayton and Wilkinson.

88 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2008, be confirmed as a correct record.

89 Matters arising from the minutes

Minute No. 70 – Wharfemeadows Inquiry – Draft Report

Members expressed concern and extreme disappointment that a response had not been received from the Executive Board regarding the Board's unresolved recommendation relating to access to legal advice. It had been hoped to resolve this before the end of the current Municipal Year.

90 Executive Board Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Executive Board held on 8 February 2008 be noted.

91 New Leaf Leisure Centres PFI Project

The Director of City Development submitted a report which updated Members on the New Leaf Leisure Centres PFI Project.

The Chair welcomed the following to the meeting:

Minutes to approved at the meeting
held on Monday, 14th April, 2008

- Angela Lawson, Executive Project Manager
- Martin Farrington, Acting Chief Recreation Officer

It was reported that since the Board had last been briefed in November 2006, significant progress had been made. Approval had been gained from the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) for the outline business case and confirmation of £30 million PFI Credits to build two leisure centres had been received.

A key area of scrutiny interest was the consultation process. It was reported that there had been six weekly meetings of stakeholder groups from both the current facilities at Morley and Armley along with a specialist stakeholder group and consultation with schools.

Further issues reported included the following:

- Concept drawings of the new facilities had been drafted.
- Detailed planning applications would be submitted in April 2008.
- It was planned to close current facilities and commence works in August/September 2008 with an anticipated operational date of May/June 2010 for the new facilities.

In response to Members questions and comments, the following issues were discussed:

- Provision for users during closure of the leisure centres for rebuilding – it was reported that work was ongoing to consider appropriate locations during the rebuilding period. Meetings with stakeholder groups had already identified other suitable locations for some activities and other locations such as schools, community centres and surrounding leisure centres were being considered.
- Transport to some alternative locations would be free. Other groups who normally travelled longer distances to use current facilities would not receive free transport.
- In response to a question of potential restrictions for use imposed by the contractors, it was reported that the buildings were initially for community use and that there were options for increased opening hours. The centres would also be used as Emergency Rest Centres if needed.
- The centres would be maintained and cleaned by the contractors. The Council would be responsible for delivering sports and leisure programmes at the centres.
- Concern was expressed that the Scrutiny Board should have had more involvement in the consultation and regarding local concerns at the centre closures. It was reported that the stakeholder groups had not taken a negative view and agreed that it would be better to replace facilities on existing sites.

- The scheme was due to go to Executive Board for approval in May 2008.

RESOLVED – That the report, timescales for delivery of the project, consultation undertaken to date and proposed for the future be noted.

(Councillor Jennings joined the meeting at 10.15 a.m. during discussion of this item).

92 Roundhay Mansion

The Acting Chief Recreation Officer submitted a report which provided the Board with an update on the progress in the marketing of Roundhay Mansion.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Martin Farrington – Chief Recreation Officer
- Chris Gomersall – Head of Property Services

It was reported that Christie & Co had been appointed as a specialist agent to recruit interest in the restaurant and function facilities at the mansion. This had proved productive and over 200 requests for information on the premises had been received. There was a need to maintain a competitive interest in the premises and it was envisaged that interested parties would be asked to submit initial offers towards the end of March 2008.

In response to a question of why the mansion had been without restaurant facilities for so long, it was reported that this had been affected by issues such as the changes to the visitor centre and office accommodation. There had also been a previously unsuccessful marketing exercise.

RESOLVED – That the report and current progress with the marketing of Roundhay Mansion be noted.

93 Major Arts Organisations Grant Aid

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which outlined a formal delegated decision notification for Major Arts Organisations Grant Aid.

The Chair welcomed Catherine Blanshard, Chief Libraries, Arts and Heritage Officer to the meeting.

It was reported that the delegated decision notification had initially been withdrawn prior to the announcement of the Council's budget for 2008/09. There had also been delays to allow amendments to be made to the figures. The Board was given a brief overview of the process for awarding grants to organisations. It was agreed that the Board could be informed of how the grants are monitored and assessed.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the Board be updated on the assessments of Major Arts Organisations Grant Aid and monitoring of the grants.

(Councillors Atha and Gettings declared personal and prejudicial interests in this item due to their respective positions with the Northern Ballet and Leeds Grand Theatre Board. They both withdrew from the meeting during the discussion and voting on this item).

94 Middleton Park Equestrian Centre

It was reported that negotiations between the Council and Middleton Park Equestrian Centre were ongoing and it was felt that this item should be deferred until further conclusions had been reached.

RESOLVED – That the item be deferred to a future meeting of the Board.

95 Work Programme

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which detailed the Board's current work programme. Also attached to the report was a copy of the Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

Members attention was drawn to the issue of the Sports Trust. It was reported that at this stage, it was inappropriate to include this on the Board's next agenda, but there was a commitment for a report to be submitted to this Board before it was to be considered by the Executive Board. It was suggested that a Working Group be established to consider the Sports Trust.

Further issues discussed included the following:

- Disabled access at Leeds Grand Theatre.
- New Leaf Leisure Centres – Forward Plan and future consideration at Executive Board
- Wharfemeadows Inquiry – that the outstanding recommendation regarding access to legal advice, be raised at Executive Board at the earliest available opportunity.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That a meeting of the Sports Trust Working Group, available to all Members of the Board, be held on Monday, 7 April at 2.00 pm.
- (2) That the report be noted.

96 Date and Time of Next meeting

Monday, 14th April 2008 at 10.00 a.m. (Pre-meeting for all Members at 10.00 a.m.).