

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 the Executive Board's position regarding Recommendation 2 of the Board's Wharfemeadows Inquiry report (relating to public access to Counsel advice) had yet to be clarified. The Board noted that Executive Board minute 166 (from 8 February 2008) requested a further report from the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) in this regard, but it remained unclear when this would be considered. Members had hoped that the Executive Board's position would have been clarified and reported back to the Scrutiny Board before the end of the current Municipal Year.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Principal Scrutiny Adviser seek clarification on the likely timing of the Executive Board's consideration of a further report in relation to the availability of Counsel's advice to the public.

- (2) That a formal response addressing each of the recommendations set out in the Board's Wharfemeadows Inquiry report, be presented to the Scrutiny Board (Culture and Leisure), as soon as practicable.

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:

- 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 Morley leisure centre for rebuilding:
 - Work was ongoing to consider and finalise alternative provision and locations during the rebuilding period. Meetings with stakeholder groups had already identified other suitable locations with various schools, community centres and surrounding leisure centres all being considered.
 - Transport to some alternative locations would be free and some budget provision had been identified to cover such costs,

however it was further reported that access to free transport would be determined on a group-by-group basis and it was unlikely that all groups would be provided with 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 with opening hours from 7:30 am until 10:30/ 11:00 pm and that there would be options for increased opening hours, particularly in terms of licensing provision. The centres would also be available as Emergency Rest Centres if/ when needed.
- It was clarified that the centres would be built, maintained and cleaned by the contractors, with the Council retaining responsibility for delivering sports and leisure programmes at the centres.
- Concern was expressed that the Scrutiny Board should have had more general involvement in the project, and in particular advised of the feedback from the on-going consultation and any local concerns raised. It was reported that in general the outcomes from the stakeholder groups had been positive and the overall feedback had been that it would be better to replace facilities on existing sites.
- Approval for the Final Business case was due to be sought from Executive Board 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 following the publication of the Boards agenda, the delegated decision notification and associated report had subsequently been withdrawn and Members were provided with a revised draft report.

The Board was given a brief overview of the process for awarding grants to organisations and it was suggested that the Board could be provided with a future report that provided more detail on how the grant applications were made, assessed and monitored.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the Board receive a future report on the assessments of grant applications and subsequent monitoring arrangements.

(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 agreed that, as negotiations between the Council and Middleton Park Equestrian Centre were ongoing and at an advanced stage, this item should be deferred until such negotiations had been concluded.

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, the project lead officer felt 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 being considered by the Executive Board. It was suggested that a Working Group could be established to ascertain the current position regarding the proposed Sports Trust and provide an update at the next Board meeting.

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 the report be noted.

(2) That a Sports Trust Working Group be established to ascertain the current position regarding the proposed Sports Trust and that a progress update be provided at the next Board meeting.

(3) That the membership of the aforementioned Sports Trust Working Group include all Members of the Board.

(4) That the project lead officer be invited to attend the initial meeting of the group to be held on Monday, 7 April 2008 at 2.00 pm, to provide members with a full update on the current status, progress and development of the proposals.

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96 Date and Time of Next meeting

Monday, 14th April 2008 at 10.00 a.m. (Pre-meeting for all Members at 9:30 a.m.).