NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY LEISURE SERVICES TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Tuesday, 12 September 2006

PRESENT: Councillor Glynane (Chair); Councillors McCutcheon and Simpson

ALSO PRESENT:
Thomas Hall   - Corporate Manager, Citizen Engagement
Margaret Martin   - Consortium

1.   APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Ian Redfern (Leisure Manager).

2.   ELECTION OF THE CHAIR OF THE LEISURE SERVICES TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Councillor McCutcheon proposed Councillor Glynane as Chair of this group. Councillor Simpson seconded the proposal.

Agreed: That Councillor Glynane would be Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Leisure Service Task and Finish Group.

3.   INTRODUCTIONS

Councillor Glynane welcomed everyone to the first meeting of this group stating that the Government was encouraging leisure activities as part of 'living healthily' agenda. Overview and Scrutiny had agreed to review leisure services in Northampton and asked the Group how they wanted to carry out the review. He suggested they could look at the three leisure centres that the Council provided.

Councillor Simpson referred to the Leisure Scrutiny Reviews of three other Councils, stating that they were all very different to each other however Rydedale District Council was the closest match to this Council.

Councillor McCutcheon commented that it would be better to focus on current services.

M Martin commented that it would be beneficial to incorporate the review and recommendations in line with the Councils Improvement Plan and Corporate Priorities.

T Hall, Corporate Manager for Citizen Engagement responded that the group needed to identify the purpose of the review and what they were looking to achieve. In relation to Improvement Plans and Corporate Priorities it was the general view that the NBC leisure service was working reasonably well and therefore there was little reference in them regarding leisure related service. He commented that the Group needed to give consideration to financial costs and whether any recommendation they made would provide value for money. It was up to the group to decide how they wanted to approach the work.

The Group discussed ways of approaching this piece of work i.e. whether they needed to look at it from the 'healthy living' angle or whether they needed to review the existing leisure services provided by the Council.

T Hall commented that it was also important to recognise those who did not use the service. The Group needed to be clear about their desired outcomes and what they would be focusing on i.e. Customer Needs, Health Agenda, Social Inclusion etc. He added that if the Group decided to develop anything in particular, they might want to review the service to see if it was providing 'Value for Money'.

Councillor Simpson commented that this group might need to consider bringing on board more Councillors to enable them to carry out an in-depth piece of work. Once the scoping exercise was completed the Group discussed the possibility of opening it wider to external organisations that might want to get involved.

T Hall commented that the Group might need to begin with:
1. Reviewing the objectives of the service
2. Reviewing the extent to which the service delivered those objectives
3. Whether it provided value for money

4. SCOPING EXERCISE

The Group carried out the scoping exercise and made the following comments.

Purpose / Objectives of the Review

The Group agreed with the suggestion made by T Hall earlier and commented that they should initially begin their focus by:
1. Reviewing the objectives of the service
2. Reviewing the extent to which the service delivered those objectives
3. Reviewing if the service provided is 'value for money'.

Outcomes Required
The Group agreed that they would like to develop a fit for purpose strategy/policy on Leisure Services. Also depending on the information they collect they could decide on which angle to focus on.

Information Required
The Group agreed that they needed information on the service users, such as a satisfaction survey results, information on gender, age range etc. to help identify if the services is fulfilling customer needs and those groups that do not use the service.

They needed to investigate whether the Council had an existing strategy/policy on leisure services, whether they had any Action or Business Plans, and links to the Local Area Agreement. They needed financial information such as the cost of the current service etc.

Methods used to Gather Information
In relation to Customer information, they needed to gather any existing information available on the three centres. They could also do a customer survey to gather additional information.

It was suggested that using Forums to gather information might be useful. The Group noted that the Youth Forum was due to carry out a survey regarding the facilities that young

people might want in their area as part of the money they were receiving from central government for local Youth Projects.

The Group suggested that they could contact external organisations to get information. The County Council Health Scrutiny and Northampton PCT could be approached to get information on general health of the people in the Northampton. They suggested that the research department at Northampton University could also be approached to gather data. It was noted that Northampton University had a Professor specialised in teaching leisure and health related subjects.

Co-Option to the Review Committee
Councillor McCutcheon commented that he would informally speak to M Burrows, Chief Executive Northampton PCT and the Professor at Northampton University inviting someone from their teams to be involved with this Group. The Group agreed that a formal letter inviting them should also be sent.

Suggestion of involving NCC Portfolio Holders, Sports Leaders, someone from Mental Health was also made. It was noted that benefits of leisure activities were strongly being linked to Mental Health problems.

Action: **T Tiff and Councillor Glynane to send a letter to M Burrows (Chief Executive, Northampton PCT) and the relevant Professor from Northampton University inviting someone from their team to be involved with this Group.**

Evidence gathering and Timetable

T Hall commented that the group needed to ensure that focus was given to their objectives. He added that there was a danger that collecting different information could side track the focus. They needed to be clear about their objectives.

Councillor Simpson commented that currently the key was to gather information, which would help identify achievable outcomes.

The Group noted the future meeting dates of this Group and agreed that January 2007 seemed a reasonable timescale to conclude this task.

They agreed that the next meeting would focus on Evidence collection to carry out gap analysis. They suggested that Ian Redfern should be invited to the next meeting of this Group.

T Hall agreed that he would liaise with Ian Redfern to gather information and circulate it to the Group.

Action: **T Hall and I Redfern to gather relevant information and circulate it to the Group.**

Responsible Officers
It was noted that T Hall, Corporate Manager for Citizen Engagement would be the lead officer responsible. They agreed that Ian Redfern should also be added as a contact officer however, his attendance would not be required at every group meeting.

Resources and Budget
Councillor Glynane commented that he understood that they had some money available, however he was unsure of the exact figures. T Tiff would have a better understanding. T Hall commented that as customer surveys were already planned there would possibly be money available for that, however if the group was planning to site visits they might have some financial constraints, as the costs could be significant.

Final report presented by
The Group agreed that they expected the final report to be presented at some time in January 2007.

Final report submitted to
The Group agreed that the final report would be submitted to Cabinet.

Monitoring procedure
The Group commented that the monitoring procedures depended on outcomes and processes of implementations.

5.   SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Group was **on 10th October 2006** at 6pm in the Jeffery Room.

Future meetings:
8 November 2006 – Holding Room
6 December 2006 – Godwin Room
8 January 2007 – Jeffery Room

The meeting concluded at 19:15