

Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny Panel**
Date: **23 January 2020**
Title: **Leisure Contract – Task and Finish Group
Concluding Report**
Portfolio Area: **Customer First / Commercial Services**

Wards Affected: **All**

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Overview and Scrutiny

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken:
Immediately

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Recommendations:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Panel note the contents of the review and the recommendations arising of the Task and Finish Group.

1 Executive summary

- 1.1 The aim of the review is to focus on the relationship between Fusion Lifestyle and its local communities in South Hams. In so doing, the Review will specifically focus on the delivery of Fusion's key objectives and consequent outcomes before the organisation provides its annual report.

2 Background

- 2.1 At its meeting on 5 September 2019, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel established a Leisure Task and Finish Group (comprising of Cllrs Smerdon, Abbott, O'Callaghan, Reeve and Sweett) to undertake a review of the relationship between Fusion and our local

communities, with a concluding report being presented to the Committee meeting on 23 January 2020 (Minute *O&S 23 refers).

2.2 This report will focus on the following outcomes:

- Centre experience – including accessibility/parking;
- User experience;
- Impact of cashless;
- Community engagement;
- Communication;
- Links to health;
- How are Fusion adapting to climate change; and
- Delivery against outcomes.

2.3 The key outcomes set in the leisure contract as key performance indicators which Fusion will deliver through its plans and targets, include:

- A more active district – through increased leisure centre usage and overall levels of physical activity.
- Promoting community development – increase in use by target groups.
- Improving health and wellbeing by increased use of exercise referral schemes, targeted health programmes.
- Quality of Services – through maintaining and improving Quest scores, increased User satisfaction levels.
- Sustainability/ Environmental improvements – through reduced CO2 emissions, reduced energy use and decrease in waste.

2.4 The contract includes the lease of the facilities to Fusion on a full repairing basis, removing previous historical complexities of shared maintenance responsibilities.

3 Outcomes/outputs

3.1 Task and Finish Members highlighted the need to review how the operation of cashless across the centres had gone and its impact, customer satisfaction and issues around cleanliness and maintenance.

3.2 Group members carried out their own visits to each of the Centres, gathered feedback from centre users and groups.

3.3 Customer Experience:

- i) Dartmouth – users found the centre clean, easy to park and quieter compared to the other centres. The new swimming pool is very customer friendly and still in good condition.

- ii) Ivybridge – during the refurbishment works, swimming pool and shower temperatures had suffered poorly and recent air handling problems in changing rooms. Previous Feel Good Factory Gym users felt the new gym did not cater for their needs with less equipment available. A regular user still had concerns over going cashless and that the existing old indoor pool would be neglected when the new pool opens. New squash courts and gym kit had very positive feedback.
- iii) Kingsbridge – cleanliness in existing wet side changing rooms was a big concern, more cleaning was required. Overall the wet side changing looking grubby and tired compared to the new and improved dry side facilities.
- iv) Totnes – overall the centre is old, looks dated and is in need of major refurbishment. It is a popular community facility, especially the youth nights on Fridays which are well received by the young people attending. More activities for young people needed.

3.4 Centre Visits and Group Member Observations:

- i) Dartmouth – plenty of parking available, centre clean and tidy, staff very helpful and friendly. Though, finding qualified staff/instructors is a challenge. The dry side changing rooms are looking tired even though the College are not using the Centre as they previously did. The rugby club make good use of the changing rooms at the back with easy access to the pitches. No café available, just vending machines.
- ii) Ivybridge – Main car park nearby to Centre with good disabled access. Though, by mid-morning on visit, main car park was full. Entrance was clean and welcoming, staff friendly and helpful. Changing rooms and toilets were clean on visit. The Centre has undergone a significant refurbishment with only the new indoor swimming pool to be finished the end of December.
- iii) Kingsbridge – nice open and welcoming reception area, though there is a leaky pipe over the front entrance canopy. The bowls corridor was looking tired and some of the noticeboards needed updated. The pool side changing rooms are very well used and need upgrading. The new soft play, café and gym kit looked good.
- iv) Totnes – entrance and reception is small and unwelcoming, the Centre sign at the front has not been replaced. Overall the Centre requires a much needed significant refurbishment with a new café and crèche facility. No pricing information available at the Centre. More work needed on recycling and better separation of waste. Also for solar panels to be installed, include as part of the refurbishment.

3.5 Impact of Cashless: This had gone well and Members were pleased to hear the positive feedback from Fusion on how users were being helped and given support to continuing using the facilities. However

there could still be individuals and minority groups not able to use the Centres and a flexible approach was required to provide support.

- 3.6 Fusion have responsibility for delivering Sports and Community Development (SCD) across both areas, working with key local partners – Active Devon, clubs and schools. Through this work, significant community engagement takes place which is highlighted in the SCD plan and reporting.
- 3.7 Exercise referral schemes, part of the Social Prescribing Initiative, have developed good links with local Primary Care Networks. Existing schemes take place at Ivybridge and Quayside, Totnes has restarted and a new scheme in Dartmouth will launch in the New Year.
- 3.8 Climate Change and Environmental Management is a key concern for this Council through its own Emergency Action Plan to this agenda. As well more work is needed to improve recycling and have better waste management across the leisure centres.
- 3.9 Car parking was an issue for customers using the Centres at certain times. The provision of parking permits was being considered as part of a wider Council review and work with Town Councils.

4 Options available and consideration of risk – future recommendations;

- 4.1 Fusion Lifestyle to give assurance and confirm that all maintenance and cleanliness levels will be carried out to the required standards of the service specification. Concern expressed that existing centre staff had to carry out cleaning whilst undertaking their main roles. Specialist cleaning services to be implemented across all centres.
- 4.2 Centre Managers are given appropriate management support and have the necessary systems and processes in place to carry out their roles and services. For Fusion to develop a comprehensive staff training programme with a focus on retaining and improving current skills and qualifications.
- 4.3 Climate change and environmental management improvements are implemented by Fusion, such as the provision of energy efficient plant and the installation of renewable energy generation systems. Also that improved recycling is developed and for links with respective Town Councils be progressed. The overall carbon footprint of both centres are measured, monitored and actions to reduce are implemented to link with the work of this Council.
- 4.4 Whilst going cashless seems to have gone well across both centres, Fusion is requested to keep records of customers trying to use cash or having difficulties paying cashless, so future monitoring can be established.

- 4.5 The risks associated with the ongoing operation of the contract, have been minimised through the use of Sport England Standard contracts and outcomes, promoting best practice.

5 Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	Leisure is a discretionary service. The management of the council's leisure centres are agreed in a formal contract agreement with appropriate reporting structures.
Financial	Y	The investment borrowing and contract payments were approved as part of the contract award.
Risk	Y	Mitigated through the formal procurement process and the business case appraisal.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity	Y	All leisure centres remain open and have activities open for all sections of the community
Safeguarding	Y	Relevant policies and practices in place through the contract.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	N	
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	Y	Improved through better facilities and part of service delivery.
Other implications		none

Supporting Information

Background Papers:

Fusion Annual Report 2018

Leisure Task and Finish group – Terms of Reference, Centre Visits, Customer Surveys