

Minutes of the meeting of the **DOVER LEISURE CENTRE PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Thursday, 8 March 2018 at 4.45 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor T J Bartlett

Councillors: P M Beresford  
N J Collor  
P Walker  
Mr P Ward

Also present: Mr G Thomason (GT3 Architects)  
Mr R Thompson (Hadron Consulting)

Officers: Director of Environment and Corporate Assets  
Principal Infrastructure and Delivery Officer  
Principal Leisure Officer  
Democratic Services Officer

49 APOLOGIES

It was noted that Councillor M D Conolly had sent an apology for absence.

50 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that no substitute members had been appointed.

51 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that there were no declarations of interest.

52 MINUTES

The notes of the meeting of the Group held on 11 January 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

53 LEISURE OPERATOR CONTRACT

The Principal Leisure Officer (PLO) advised that the 12-year management contract with Places for People (PFP) had now been signed. This set out, amongst other things, the scope and standard of the services to be provided, the obligations of PFP in respect of service delivery and asset maintenance, the Council's controls over certain user prices, and the remedies available to the Council in the event of poor performance and breaches of agreement. Whilst the agreement was based on a standard Sport England template, it had been tailored to include provision for the operation of the existing leisure centre for a 10-month interim period.

The PLO clarified that monthly meetings would be held with PFP for the first ten months of the contract from 1 April. Once the new centre was open, monthly meetings would be held for 5/6 months, with the frequency of meetings to be agreed thereafter. PFP had suggested that a partnership board should be established, meeting twice a year and including Members and members of Corporate Management Team. This would be a vehicle for Members and the Council's senior

management to monitor the contract. Councillor P Walker stated his wish that members of the Project Advisory Group and regular users of the facility would be included in the membership of the board, arguing that including the latter would ensure that customers' views would reach the top level of PFP's management. The Director of Environment and Corporate Assets (DECA) advised that it was likely that PFP would set up a user panel, and including users on the partnership board could therefore lead to duplication.

It was agreed that Officers would discuss the composition of a partnership board with PFP, and include it as an item for further discussion at the next meeting.

#### 54 HANDOVER OF DOVER LEISURE CENTRE

The PLO advised that staff training on the new IT system was underway. Communications had also gone out to customers and a room set up at the existing centre to answer any queries. Clubs had also all been contacted. Details were being finalised but the existing centre would close early to the public on 31 March. One outstanding issue to be resolved was the sharing of membership data between the two operators. Current advice was that data protection regulations required Your Leisure to obtain permission from customers in order to pass their details on to PFP. There were concerns that there would be a significant drop in membership due to the lack of response from some customers. However, measures were being taken to increase the response rate.

Members were informed that some fees at the existing centre would be reduced from 1 April. For example, the monthly membership rate had been reduced from £39 to £29 for new and existing customers. Swimming only membership had been reduced from £26 to £19.99 and annual membership for new members would be 12 months for the price of 10 (currently 12 for 11). A new range of membership options and prices would be introduced when the new centre opened for business. The café at the existing centre was to close but hot drinks would be available at reception and from a vending machine.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

#### 55 CONSTRUCTION

Mr Richard Thompson advised that a number of changes requested by the operator had been agreed by the Council, and these would be beneficial to the overall design of the building. Most significantly, these included drowning protection measures for the pools and an amended café area layout.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

#### 56 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Mr Gary Thomason advised that there was nothing to report.

#### 57 PROGRAMME

A programme summary was circulated to the Group. Mr Thompson advised that the official completion date of the new centre would be 21 January 2019. It was possible that there would need to be a re-sequencing of works in the pool hall to reflect the addition of drowning protection measures. Mr Thomason advised that, whilst there was a suggestion that these could add three weeks to the construction

programme for the pool, experience indicated that they could be achieved within the existing programme.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

58 PLANNING

The Principal Infrastructure and Delivery Officer (PIDO) reported that there would be no difficulty in meeting the four planning conditions requested by Southern Water. A final report on archaeology was awaited. Efforts were being made to persuade Kent County Council to adopt the access road (which would be constructed to an adoptable standard) but progress on this matter had been slow. Mr Thompson advised that there were five pre-occupation conditions, including works to the Tesco roundabout, a travel plan and a landscape management plan.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

59 NAMING OF ACCESS ROAD

The PLO reported the outcome of an informal exercise with local primary school children who had been tasked with suggesting names for the new access road. Members particularly liked 'Fitness Fields' but recognised that this might have to be combined with 'Fitness Way' in order to be acceptable to the Post Office. It was agreed that both students should be rewarded for their suggestions.

It was agreed that 'Fitness Fields' was the preferred name.

60 COMMUNICATIONS

The PLO advised Members that thought needed to be given as to whether a celebrity, a sporting local person or school representatives should be engaged for the opening ceremony. Celebrities' fees could run into several thousand pounds and a decision would need to be made at the next meeting.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

61 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members noted that the next meeting would be held on 7 June and thereafter in the middle of September (probably the 13<sup>th</sup>), November and January 2019.

62 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that the items involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

63 CLIENT PROGRESS REPORT

Mr Thompson presented a client progress report prepared by BAM Ltd.

It was agreed that the report be noted.

64 RISKS

A risks summary was circulated to Members. Mr Thompson advised that all the changes to the design of the building had been agreed and instructed and this risk would therefore fall away. The road access had now been designed and it was anticipated that costs would be available for the next meeting. Planning risks were reducing as conditions were being discharged, including the surface water strategy to use deep bored soakaways which had now been approved. The finalisation of the procurement of the pool tiling package remained outstanding due to the lack of specialist companies in the area. However, it was anticipated that this would be resolved before the next meeting. A solution had been agreed with Southern Water for the discharge of foul water which would be dealt with under the building contract, and the necessary approvals resolved with Southern Water and the Planning Officer.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

65 PROJECT COSTS

Mr Thompson reported that there had been no change in official project costs since the last meeting. The PIDO advised that PFP would meet half the additional costs of installing the drowning protection system. There would also, potentially, be compensation costs associated with the membership database issue, but this matter was to be further explored. The DECA clarified that, whilst construction costs had increased as a result of changes made, these were contained within the budget approved by Cabinet as a result of financial contributions received from PFP.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

The meeting ended at 6.05 pm.