

Extract from Scrutiny minutes from 25 July 2013 regarding Soll Leisure

Sc.13 Leisure Contract Monitoring

Elaine Ware, Cabinet member for Leisure Services; Chris Tyson, Head of Economy, Leisure and Property; Chris Webb, Facilities Leisure Officer; together with Adrian Bidwell and Warren Higgins from SOLL, the leisure contractor came to the table to introduce the report of the Head of Economy, Leisure and Property and to assist the discussion.

The following points were made during the presentation and discussion of the report.

- The incentive scheme attached to online surveys, which was agreed to last year, had not been done. However, SOLL had now recruited a new marketing manager and this would be done in the coming year.
- Car parking at Wantage Town Football Club. This issue is still outstanding from last year, but SOLL are awaiting the outcome of discussions between the football club and King Alfred's School. In the mean time there will be temporary evening parking at King Alfred's available in the next couple of weeks on the tennis courts.
- The carbon variation document, raised in last year's minutes has not been achieved because the finance was not available by the time that SOLL had agreed to sign up to document.
- SOLL and the council had reduced energy usage in the managed centres in the last five years by 25 percent.
- The committee requested that officers revisit the question of funding for carbon reduction programme: to take away from tonight and provide a written answer.
- KPT 5 on page 17 of the report is poor because the number of new memberships is poor, but member attrition rates are also lower, meaning that total numbers of members are up.
- KPTs 5 and 7 are included because the contract specification includes a community based ethos and is interested in the number and type of customers.
- SOLL have employed someone to go into doctors surgeries to stimulate referrals from surgeries to leisure centres.
- The committee recommended that, in future, KPT5 measures the numbers of members and not the numbers of memberships sold as the memberships may vary in length.*

**It has subsequently been established that this recommendation cannot be complied with as it would mean putting commercially sensitive information into the public arena*

Contractor feedback.

SOLL expressed their concerns about the methodology used in the assessment and feel that they should have been told earlier in the year if there were problems as they meet often with officers.

Further committee discussion

- There has clearly been miscommunication between SOLL and the council regarding expectations, this needs to be addressed through the next year and procedures need to be in place to address these issues. This report related to the year 2012/13 and both parties considered that there were improvements on these issues in the current operational year.
- Every meeting between the council and SOLL should consider these issues and assess them on a regular basis so that the assessment is not a surprise at the end of the year.
- It was suggested that there should be an interim review mid way through the current year.
- It was suggested that the Cabinet member should monitor the ongoing situation and consider bringing back to the Scrutiny committee part way through the year.
- SOLL were asked to respond to the Scrutiny committee on the benefits which they offered to loyalty card holders in local areas: eg Faringdon.

RESOLVED

To recommend to the Cabinet member that the contractor's performance was good and improving.