

## **Extract from the Scrutiny Committee minute 28/06/2012**

The cabinet member for economy, leisure and property, Councillor Elaine Ware, attended the committee to answer questions and to assist in the discussion of this item. Also present were Chris Webb, Facilities Development Officer (Leisure); Kate Arnold, Leisure Manager; and Adrian Bidwell, Head of Operations and Warren Higgins Deputy Contract Manager from SOLL Leisure: the contractor responsible for the Faringdon and Wantage leisure centres and for Tilsley Park.

The chairman invited Councillor Dudley Hoddinott to ask his question to SOLL Leisure about the level of membership at their facilities. Councillor Hoddinott was reassured that the company had increased its membership levels and was committed to continuing to do so.

The Scrutiny Committee considered the report of the head of economy, leisure and property and discussed it in detail, including asking questions directly of the representatives of SOLL Leisure and council officers.

The committee asked questions about key performance targets which were answered by the representatives of SOLL and council officers.

The committee felt that, as the modest targets for the current year had been significantly exceeded, next year's targets needed to be realistic but challenging. The committee wished to see the targets for the coming year. *(These to be circulated by officers).*

The committee was disappointed that no on-line surveys were completed by customers of SOLL Leisure and wished the company to repeat the exercise for 2012/13 using an incentive scheme to encourage a greater response level. SOLL Leisure agreed to consider this request.

The level of customer complaints had not historically been included in this report. The committee asked officers to include this information in future reports.

The committee was concerned that items which had not been completed in 2010/11 action plan should be moved on to the next action plan to ensure that they continued to be addressed. They also asked that the carbon variation document be included in the action plan. The officers agreed to do this.

The committee had concerns about the availability of car parking at Wantage. There was currently a flexible agreement in place with King Alfred's Academy School for additional evening parking when the car park was not in use by the school. Officers were also exploring a future possibility of additional parking, in conjunction with the academy and Wantage Town Football Club.

Gas and electricity consumption had decreased over the contract since 2006/7 by 39 per cent and 23 per cent respectively. The committee considered these figures to be commendable and was pleased to hear that

SOLL appeared to be committed to reducing both energy costs and their environmental footprint; however there was significant concern that SOLL was not currently prepared to sign up to a carbon variation document, the discussions about which had been ongoing since January 2011. The committee were concerned by the length of time taken to resolve negotiations over the variation document and encouraged SOLL Leisure to get the issue resolved as soon as possible.

SOLL Leisure expressed their desire to perform to an excellent standard in the coming year as they were mindful of the up coming renewal of the leisure contracts in the district and they wished to be well placed when these went out to tender.

The committee was pleased with the clarity of the report.

**RESOLVED: to**

- a) recommend the cabinet member for economy, leisure and property to award SOLL leisure an overall assessment rating of “good” for its management of the leisure contract for Faringdon and Wantage leisure centres and for Tilsley Park during 2011/12; *and*
- b) request that the committee members be sent details of the performance targets for 2012/13;
- c) request SOLL to repeat the on-line customer survey using an incentive scheme to encourage a greater response level;
- d) request SOLL to record the level of customer complaints in future, rather than just positive responses;
- e) request the officers to ensure that all uncompleted elements of the 2011/12 action plan are transferred to the 2012/13 action plan; *and*
- f) request SOLL to resolve negotiations over the carbon variation document and encourage SOLL Leisure to get the issue resolved as soon as possible.