SOUTH HOLLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of: Rob Walker, Executive Director Place
To: Performance Monitoring Panel – 7 November 2017

(Author: Emily Holmes Communities Manager)

Subject: Swimming Pool and Leisure Facilities Contract Task Group – update on progress of recommendations

Purpose: To provide Members with an update on the recommendations

Recommendation(s):

1) That the content of the report be noted
2) That further updates are provided to the Performance Monitoring Panel in six months’ time

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 In November 2016, the recommendations from the Final Report of the Swimming Pool and Leisure Facilities Contract Task Group were approved by the Cabinet. On 16 May 2017 an update on the six recommendations was given to the Performance Monitoring Panel with a report progress thus far.

1.2 Progress updates were given on;

- the implementation of weekly monitoring inspections taking place across the site to focus on cleanliness and maintenance
- the production of written guidance for site inspections
- default notice templates available
- the development of a contract manual to assist with clear guidance for contract monitoring
- detail of five Improvement Required Notices issued, written response from the contractor to address the areas of concern and subsequent re-inspection
- a number of improvements implemented by the contractor including; the appointment of a dedicated cleaner for peak times at the pool; additional support to implement remedial maintenance work; completion of changing room floor replacements; introduction of new cleaning chemicals across the facilities; staff training, staff restructure to cover peak time and to oversee daily operations at the site.

1.3 Monthly contract meetings continue to take place which review significant areas across the contract: including; health and safety, customer feedback, quality management, programme delivery and development, staffing, training, safeguarding, performance and corrective action. This is a further opportunity for additional site checks.
1.4 The site visits continue to take place weekly to maintain the improved standards. Since the May update, 3 Default notices have been issued. Two were issued in July and one in August. Defaults were issued for:

- Failure to maintain adequate staff levels within the facility
- Staff only areas not locked and accessible to members of the public
- Failure to make the Facility available to the public according to the agreed opening hours

1.5 Feedback continues to be important to measure the impact of changes made. The feedback and comments log is reviewed and addressed. In Quarter 2 there were 55 comments, 6 negative about cleanliness or maintenance and 15 negative regarding programming. Programming comments concerned the timing of Aquafit classes in the holidays, inflatable sessions during the holiday period and the trial of a third lane in the early morning swim sessions that gained mixed reviews. 34 positive comments included customer service, cleanliness, programming, the health check engagement day, charity bike ride and the 1Life Festival.

1.6 Customer feedback is valuable and the variety of ways of getting in touch will be further promoted. In addition, officers and contractor will continue to develop ways to provide feedback and customer engagement. The contractor undertakes regular user forums to further consult with both customers and clubs. Comments on the day included positive feedback on the new men’s flooring at the pool and frustration at customers not wearing blue overshoes which continues to be addressed. Feedback was also received about the lack of availability of the learner pool due to the swimming club meet and positive feedback on two newly qualified fitness instructors. Comments were also received about the closure due to the electrical upgrade works and positive feedback on cover class instructors. The next Meet the Manager day will take place in November.

1.7 Visitor figures are monitored. At the Castle Pool during May, June and July there was an increase of over 5,000 visits in comparison to same months in 2016. Swim school visits are higher than 2016 for this period and children’s parties at the Peele Leisure Centre are significantly higher than last year. Attendance at the 50+ club activities has declined and this is being addressed by developing other activities as part of the offer, including walking football to generate new interest.

1.8 There have been no recent press enquiries or social media activity regarding shortfalls in service provision or standards that would be addressed the management of the contract. There have been positive articles in the local press regarding funds raised for Wheelpower from staff completing the London 100 mile cycle event and customers and staff taking part in a 60 mile cycle ride between the Castle Sports Complex, Peele Leisure Centre and Boston facility.

1.9 Since the last update in May the contract management arrangements have been consistently applied. There is a robust monitoring process in place and clear audit trails. Default Notices have been served and the contract has been proactively managed to improve the service. Results have been positive so far and the new contract monitoring measures will continue. The focus will remain on performance monitoring of the contract and service provided.

2.0 OPTIONS

2.1 Do nothing.
2.2 Note the contents of the report.

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

3.1 It is recommended that the contents of this report are noted and that members of the Performance Monitoring Panel have assurance that the management of the leisure contract has been strengthened and that we are starting to see improvement in the quality of service provided.

4.0 EXPECTED BENEFITS

4.1 The measures put in place following the Task Group will;

i. Lead to an increase in customer satisfaction, a decrease in complaints and concerns raised and an improvement in service standards.

ii. Improve evidencing and performance management of the contract with effective reporting.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Contracts

5.1.1 Contract Management procedures have been clarified and improved working practices implemented. Sanctions on the contract have been and will continue to be used robustly where necessary.

5.1.2 The Contract Management Manual recommended through the audit process has been developed.

5.2 Corporate Priorities

5.2.1 The provision of a Leisure offer contributes to the Council’s Corporate priorities of:

- To develop safer, stronger, healthier and more independent communities while protecting the most vulnerable
- To have pride in South Holland by supporting the district and residents to develop and thrive
- To encourage the local economy to be vibrant with continued growth.

The improved contract monitoring arrangements in place supports the provision of the right services, at the right time and in the right way.

5.3 Crime and Disorder

5.3.1 There are no implications from this report.

5.4 Equality and Diversity / Human Rights

5.4.1 There are no implications from this report.

5.5 Financial

5.5.1 Three Default Notices have been issued with a financial penalty of £100 each.
5.6 **Health & Wellbeing**

5.6.1 There are no implications from this report.

5.7 **Reputation**

5.7.1 The service delivered through the Leisure Contract will continue to be robustly monitored, to resolve issues quickly, make necessary improvements and address contract compliance issues with appropriate sanctions. This is important for both the reputation of the Council and the contractor and there is commitment from both organisations to maintain the improvements made to date and continue to make progress.

5.8 **Risk Management**

5.8.1 The centres are well used and at peak times, particularly at the pool, there is heavy traffic through the facility and the changing areas. These peak times are when customer concerns about cleanliness are likely to be raised. To mitigate against this and maintain the appropriate standards, the additional cleaning resources are deployed during these times.

5.8.2 Health and Safety is an area that is monitored through the monthly contract meetings and updated in between meetings when necessary. The contractor’s statutory compliance report which documents important checks including; boiler servicing, emergency lighting, air handling, fire alarms, disabled access equipment, water quality and asbestos have been reviewed in the monthly contract meeting and shared with the Council’s Health and Safety Advisor.

5.9 **Staffing**

5.9.1 Additional resources and officer time have been allocated to undertake the weekly unannounced site inspections. A rota and schedule of inspections in place.

5.9.2 Staffing levels for the contractor at the pool were reviewed as part of the improvement work and more resources have been allocated to the swimming pool including an additional Duty Manager post and dedicated cleaner post.

5.9.3 Default notices were served when there was failure to maintain adequate staffing levels and this has been addressed.

5.10 **Stakeholders / Consultation / Timescales**

5.10.1 Stakeholder and user feedback is important to help monitor the quality of provision, the comments log is reviewed on a fortnightly basis.

5.10.2 The meet the manager sessions provide useful feedback from users which can be addressed.

6.0 **WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED**

6.1 Services are provided for all those living, working or visiting the district.

7.0 **ACRONYMS**

7.1 None.
Background papers:
- Final Report of the Swimming Pool and Leisure Facilities Contract
- Task Group
- Minutes of the Performance Monitoring Panel

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Key Decision: No
Exempt Decision: No

This report refers to a Discretionary Service

Appendices attached to this report:
- Appendix A Leisure Centre Task Group Update