

**CORPORATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

HELD: 4 DECEMBER 2014

Start: 7.30PM

Finish: 10.00pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Mrs Blake (Vice Chairman)

Ashcroft	Fillis
S Bailey	G Hodson
Mrs Baybutt	J Hodson
Delaney	L Hodson
Dereli	McKay
Devine	Mee
Dowling	Ms Melling
Mrs C Evans	O'Toole
Mrs R Evans	

Officers: Assistant Director Community Services (Mr D Tilleray)
Transformation Manager (Mr S Walsh)
Head of Leisure & Cultural Services (Mr J Nelson)
Technical Services Manager (Mr C Brady)
Partnership and Performance Officer (Ms A Grimes)
Graduate Trainee (Transformation) (Ms A Cleary)
Assistant Solicitor (Mrs T Sparrow)
Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer (Mrs C A Jackson)

In attendance:

Trustee, West Lancashire Community Leisure (WLCL) (Mrs J McNally)
Contracts Manager, WLCL (Mr M Snaylam)

26. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

27. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

In accordance with Council Procedure rule 4, Members noted the termination of membership of Councillors R Bailey, Mrs Marshall and Wright and the appointment of Councillors O'Toole, S Bailey and Dowling, for this meeting only, thereby giving effect to the wishes of the Political Groups.

28. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor S Bailey declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to item 10, A Market Strategy for Ormskirk Town Centre, in relation to references to Edge Hill University arising from her employment with that University.

30. DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of a Party Whip.

31. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Corporate and Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 23 October 2014 be received as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

32. WEST LANCASHIRE LEISURE (WLCL)/SERCO ANNUAL REPORT

Consideration was given to the presentation by Mark Snaylam, Contracts Manager of West Lancashire Community Leisure (WLCL) as contained on pages 209 to 217 of the Book of Reports.

Mrs J McNally, a Trustee of WLCL attended the meeting and Mr Snaylam acknowledged the good work undertaken by the Trust Members throughout the year.

In relation to operations, the Contracts Manager, referred to the following:

- 2013 Commitments – Increase patronage; growth in business; integration of Beacon Park golf centre into operations; increase swimming lesson usage; continuous improvement / development of staff; work undertaken with partners and community groups; offering more participation opportunities through Trust funding.
- Patronage/Income 2013 – increase patronage in wetside visits (7%); increase in income wetside (1%); decrease in dryside patronage (-2%) and dryside income decrease (-28%).
- Operational Highlights – increase in patronage year on year from 2004 (21%); community based special events (Chairman's Cup; Schools Triathlon; Cycling events); the GP Referral scheme; closer links with National Governing Bodies (Badminton England) and community groups.

In relation to engagement of the community events, the success of the GP referral scheme and Schools Triathlon, amongst others, were highlighted.

The review also highlighted the work undertaken at Beacon Park Golf Centre. However, it was reported that the national decline of golf across the UK was reflected in the reduction in people using the course. At the start of 2014 Members received a 25% discount on their golf contracts as a recompence for the shortened course, issues related to landfill works and the inclement weather that had caused the course to be closed at times.

References were also made to the opportunities and challenges that had or were being faced including: managing energy costs; works associated with Beacon Golf Centre; reduction in "dryside" users; increasing patronage with a downturn in the market; ensuring that the community that use the leisure facilities and the people that support them, realise their full potential.

The changes in relation to the leisure operations of Serco, announced in November, were highlighted as were the challenges, current arrangements and future opportunities. It was emphasised that it would be “business as usual” with the change only reflected in the business title and that the management and maintenance of assets would continue as before.

In conclusion of the review of the previous 12 months the way forward for the coming year was featured which included reference to: challenges to increase patronage and grow the business; managing the refurbishment works at Beacon Park (Golf Centre); further increasing swimming lesson usage (Nye Bevan and Park Pool); continuous improvement of facilities and development of staff; working with partners and community groups and offering more participation opportunities through Trust funding.

Comments and questions were raised in respect of the following:

- Beacon Golf Centre – decline locally and nationally of golf as a sport; raising the profile / increase community use; diversification; encouraging younger players to use the facilities (introduction of programme with local schools); renovation work; accessibility improvements.
- Food and Beverage – availability / variety of food and drink provision at Serco leisure facilities.
- Former Skelmersdale Sports Centre – decision related to closure.
- Energy Efficiencies – approaches; operational savings; up-grades / replacement of older, less efficient energy systems (Nye Bevan / Park Pool); interior changes.
- Leisure Provision – changes effected by announced Serco divestment in Leisure; guarantees related to leisure facilities during existing contract;
- Burscough Sports Centre – future arrangements of non-use/exterior areas.

The Contracts Manager of WLCL contributed to the discussion and responded to questions.

The Head of Leisure and Cultural Services, who attended the meeting, responded to questions and provided clarification on issues raised.

The Assistant Director Community Services made an undertaking to issue a press release on the leisure service operation.

On behalf of the Committee, the Vice Chairman thanked the representatives from the Leisure Trust for their attendance, the informative presentation and contribution to the discussion.

RESOLVED: That the representatives from the Leisure Trust be thanked for their presentation and attendance.

33. WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15

The following two items, as part of its Work Programme for 2014/15, were considered..

34. WELFARE REFORM REPORT

Consideration was given to the circulated briefing note of the Transformation Manager, as contained on pages 219 to 220 of the Book of Reports, that asked Members to consider a way forward, following a request from Council to establish an agenda item entitled 'Welfare Reform Report.'

The Transformation Manager attended the meeting, provided an overview and clarification on the current position as it affected Welfare Reform/Universal Credit, referring to details as set down in the briefing note. He made an undertaking to inform the Labour Group Leader of the outcome of the Committee's consideration of the request.

- RESOLVED
- A. That a Members' Update article is produced, not less than twice a year, on Welfare Reform with a focus on Universal Credit.
 - B. That an all Member presentation on the impact of Welfare Reform/Universal Credit within West Lancashire be arranged and delivered by the Director of Revenues and Benefits, BT Lancashire Service with input and attendance by a representative from the Department of Works & Pensions (DWP), early in the New Year.

35. A MARKET STRATEGY FOR ORMSKIRK TOWN CENTRE

Members considered the way forward relating to the review 'A Market Strategy for Ormskirk Town Centre' as a result of the indication, at the last meeting, that a few Members of the Committee would meet with the Chairman to discuss further lines of enquiry for the Review.

It was reported that various Members had met with the Chairman and had identified the following additional themes:

- The Market
- Car Parking
- The Environment and Special Features
- Leisure and the Night-Time Economy
- Technology and Marketing (including tourism)
- Contribution of the University (Edge Hill)

Further that the title of the review should be amended to 'A Market Town Strategy for Ormskirk'.

A discussion ensued on the merits/practicalities of undertaking a wider scoped review at this stage. Issues raised included:

- Timescales – impact on agreed timetable with Lancashire County Council (LCC) relating to the commencement of the scheduled improvement works in Moor Street and re-siting of the Market in the interim.
- Issues relating to the scope of the additional themes.

- Duplication of the scrutiny role of Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 'Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy' and scheduled to go out for consultation in the New Year, subject to agreement by Cabinet at its meeting 13 January 2015.

It was agreed that, subject to the proposed wider scope of the Review to include additional themes, that the current priority for the review be the work related to Ormskirk Market, as set down in the Project Plan, in order to bring forward recommendations on it following completion of the Moor Street improvement works.

A further discussion raised issues for consideration as part of the Moor Street work including:

- Re-siting of the Market whilst the Moor Street improvement works were taking place.
- Layout of the Market and stalls following completion of the scheduled work.
- Vehicle restrictions in the pedestrian area of the Town Centre – Traffic Orders; management (Market Days); enforcement; physical barriers (Moor Street; Aughton Street; Burscough Street; Church Street)
- Bringing forward ideas to increase footfall in the Town Centre.

The Technical Services Manager attended the meeting, provided an overview of the current position in relation to the Moor Street improvement works, responded to questions and provided clarification on issues raised, including those related to the current and future arrangements of Ormskirk Market.

The Assistant Director Community Services made an undertaking, in light of discussions, to make arrangements for the Project Plan to be further revised and brought to the Workshop session scheduled for January 2015.

RESOLVED: A That the Project Plan be agreed with further amendments to include:

- (i) Revision of the review title to 'A Market Town Strategy for Ormskirk'
- (ii) That 'The Market' be the priority theme going forward.
- (iii) That the revised Project Plan be further populated to include, for future consideration, the "bite-size" themes:
 - (a) Car Parking
 - (b) The Environment and Special Features
 - (c) Leisure and Night-Time Economy
 - (d) Technology and Marketing (including tourism)
 - (e) Contribution by Edge Hill University.
- (iv) That the date to consider the draft interim report be revised to meeting 5 (July 2015).

B That the date of the Workshop Session of 20 January 2015, for in-depth consideration of 'The Market', be confirmed.

C That feedback from the Workshop Session be considered at the 19 February 2015 meeting, to help inform the draft Interim Report.

(Note: Councillor Fillis asked that his abstention from voting on this item be noted.)