

ACTIVE BELFAST LIMITED BOARD

Tuesday, 21st March, 2017

MEETING OF ACTIVE BELFAST LIMITED BOARD

(Held in the Grove Wellbeing Centre)

Attendees

- Directors:** Mr. J. McGuigan (Chairperson)
Councillor Boyle
Councillor Corr
Councillor Long
Councillor Reynolds
Mr. P. Boyle
Mr. J. Higgins
Mr. M. Keenan (Unite the Union)
Mr. C. Kirkwood
Ms. K. McCullough
Mr. M. McGarrity
Mr. N. Mitchell
Mr. K. O'Doherty (NIPSA)
Mr. G. Walls and
Mr. C. Webster.
- Officers:** Mrs. R. Crozier, Assistant Director,
City and Neighbourhood Services;
Mr. N. Munnis, Partnership Manager; and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.
- GLL:** Mr. G. Kirk, Regional Director and
Mr. G. Holland, Partnership Manager.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Mr. R. Stewart.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 16th January were approved.

Matters Arising

Induction Training

The Board noted that the Partnership Manager was working with Pinsent Masons to identify a suitable date in April to provide induction/refresher training for Directors, details of which would be circulated.

Update on Performance and Contract Compliance

The Board noted comments by the Unite the Union representative that the pay proposals referred to within paragraph 3.3.3.3 of the report had been rejected by GLL staff and that the issue had yet to be resolved.

The Partnership Manager informed the Board that the financial data alluded to within paragraph 3.3.4.3 of the report was being collated and would be uploaded to Sharepoint in due course.

Noted.

Declarations of Interest

Mr. Mitchell declared an interest in that he was a volunteer coach with St. Brigid's GAC and a volunteer with the City of Belfast Swimming Club, which required discussions periodically with GLL around the use of Council facilities and resources.

GLL Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey

Mr. Holland submitted for the Board's consideration the following report:

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To confirm receipt and present the board with details of the 2016/17 Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) as required under contract Clause 38.3.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Board is requested to note receipt of the 2016/2017 CSS as evidence of compliance with Contract Clause 38.3.**
- 2.2 The Board is requested to consider the headline findings from the 2016/2017 CSS and the resulting 2016/2017 centre improvement action plans.**

3.0 Main Report

- 3.1 GLL conducted a comprehensive customer satisfaction survey throughout September 2016. The survey sought the views of centre users in relation to levels of satisfaction with the facilities and services provided.**
- 3.2 The survey was conducted at twelve of the fourteen leisure centres currently managed by GLL.**
- 3.3 Both Brook Activity Centre and Loughside Recreation Centre did not participate in the 2016/2017 CSS.**
- 3.4 The survey questionnaire was comprehensive and provided data on respondent demographics and their level of satisfaction with a wide range of facility and service measures.**

A copy of the full questionnaire has been circulated to the Board. The questionnaire comprised a total of 62 questions. 6 questions relating to respondent demographics and 56 directly related to satisfaction levels with specific service areas.

- 3.5 Response data was collated for each individual centre. A total of 942 responses were recorded across the service. The following table shows the response rates for each centre:

Centre	Respondents 2016
Andersonstown Leisure Centre	139
Avoniel Leisure Centre	125
Ballysillan Leisure Centre	64
Belvoir Activity Centre	33
Brooke Activity Centre	n/a
Falls Leisure Centre	90
Girdwood Community Hub	51
Grove Wellbeing Centre	152
Gym Connswater	68
Indoor Tennis Centre and Ozone Complex	35
Loughside Recreation Centre	n/a
Olympia Leisure Centre	75
Shankill Leisure Centre	55
Whiterock Leisure Centre	55
Total	942

- 3.6 Response rates were down by 181 between 2016/2017 (942) and 2015/2016 (1,123). This will be an area that will be focussed upon heavily during the 2017/2018 CSS.
- 3.7 For practical purposes Board members are presented with the headline service wide findings as follows:

DEMOGRAPHICS (Respondents)

Gender	Male (56%)	Female (44%)	
Age category	16-30 (16%)	31-60 (71%)	O 60 (13%)
Frequency of participation in 30 minutes of moderate exercise	<3 p/w (73%)	1-2 p/w (21%)	>1 p/w (7%)
Considered to have a health condition or disability	Yes (21%)	No (71%)	
Employment status	Employed (64%)	Unemployed (7%)	

CENTRE RELATED:

SAMPLE SATISFACTION SCORES

How would you rate the centre overall? Good/Excellent response		
Combined Service	Top 2 centre scores	Bottom 2 centre scores
All centres average (66%)	Belvoir (100%)	Olympia (64%)
	Gym Connswater (97%)	ITC Ozone (67%)

- An excellent performance from both Belvoir a local community activity centre and Gym Connswater
- It is important to note that these surveys were completed in September 2016 and the old Olympia closed to the public shortly afterwards, in December 2016

How would you rate the activities overall? Good/Excellent response		
Combined Service	Top 2 centre scores	Bottom 2 centre scores
All centres average (70%)	Gym Connswater (94%)	Ballysillan (56%)
	Girdwood (84%)	Shankill (62%)

- it is a clear highlight to see two new facilities receive such excellent feedback from their customers and testament to the overall programming at the centres to receive such a high score
- it is interesting to see Ballysillan and Shankill as two of the older centres with the lowest responses in terms of activities. A coordinated approach to review their programmes and improve their scores year on year will be undertaken

How would you rate the level of cleanliness overall? Good/Excellent response		
Combined Service	Top 2 centre scores	Bottom 2 centre scores
All centres average (78%)	Belvoir (98%)	Olympia (61%)
	Girdwood (89%)	Grove (63%)

- it is extremely positive to see Belvoir and Girdwood, both small and large facilities, in the top 2 for cleanliness across the city.

- the old Olympia closed shortly after the CSS was undertaken but a strong response to cleaning standards and their improvement has been seen at Grove since the production of the CSS.

How would you rate the centre staff overall? Good/Excellent response		
Combined Service	Top 2 centre scores	Bottom 2 centre scores
All centres average (85%)	Gym (99%) Connswater	Shankill (76%)
	Belvoir (94%)	ITC Ozone (77%)

- this result is a clear contrast between a new facility coming into operation at Better Gym Connswater and the ability for staff at Belvoir to adapt to be able to change and work positively and provide an excellent service to its customers
- GLL has operated additional customer service courses and has worked closely with staff within Shankill and ITC Ozone but this does not represent this score in terms of staff at both centres and does not clearly replicate the challenges we face at both centres in terms of flexibility and change.

How likely would you be to recommend the centre? Respondents rated on a scale of 1 – 10 with + or -. Excellent = +30 or above Good = +11 to +29 Satisfactory = 0 to +10 Poor = -1 to -20 Very Poor = -21 or below		
Combined Service	Top 2 centre scores	Bottom 2 centre scores
All centres average (-2%)	Belvoir (39%)	Grove (-38%)
	Girdwood (22%)	Olympia (-37%)

- both Belvoir and Girdwood have received good or excellent scores for recommendation of their centres from their customers.
- it will be very interesting to see the difference in score between both old and new Olympia Leisure Centre and one which I'm sure will change significantly based upon the feedback that has been received to date.

BELFAST PARTNERSHIP:

Summary Headlines

Area	Measure	2015 (Jan – Dec)	2016 (Jan – Dec)
Overall	How would you rate your overall experience	82%	81%
	How would you rate the centre overall	81%	81%
Staff	Being well presented, efficient & professional	85%	82%
	Answering the phone promptly	81%	80%
Information	Range of activities	80%	77%
	Opening hours	82%	79%

Outcome:

Excellent: 80%+
Good: 70% - 79%
Satisfactory: 60% - 69%
Poor: 40% - 59%
Very poor: Under 39%

Overall:

- The overall experience of our customers has dropped slightly by 1% the overall centre rating has remained the same year on year.
- An ongoing focus will be applied throughout 2017 to training of staff teams and service improvement.

Staff:

- Across the service there have been challenges over the last year in regards to staffing presentation and answering telephone calls, this has been addressed centre by centre, and is an ongoing challenge around flexibility of staff.
- GLL have operated training courses in customer services and actively challenge staff presentation within the centres and will continue to do so to improve this area of performance.

Information:

- Whilst the range of activities has shown a decline year on year GLL have actively introduced a number of new activities within the centres since this report was completed and are comfortable that this performance measure will improve in 2017.
 - A review of opening hours across all centres in the city has been undertaken and at a number of centres operating hours have been extended, which shows you there is extended opening hours city wide.
- 3.8 It is clear from the survey design and the report statistics that the process is comprehensive and robust. In relation to this particular CSS the following observations are presented for discussion:**
- 3.8.1 For future reports, it will be important to deliver an increased overall response rate with a prescribed minimum number of respondents for individual centres.**
- 3.8.2 The service wide averages indicate that GLL method statements and resourcing strategies are appropriate to drive real improvements in service delivery and customer satisfaction. This is supported by the excellent scores achieved by the top performing centres.**
- 3.8.3 Scores for bottom performing centres indicate an inconsistency in service standards and an opportunity to drive improvements.**
- 3.8.4 The individual centre CSS action plans developed by GLL go beyond contractual obligations and demonstrate a real commitment to listening to our customers and driving continuous improvement.**
- 3.9 The CSS is designed to be an integral part in the service continuous improvement plans. Particularly in pursuit of the key contract objective of a '5* service at 3* prices' it is important that the data collected through the CSS is both robust and relevant. The results should be accepted as providing evidence of opportunities for improvement in service and customer communications. Resulting from the survey GLL have developed bespoke centre improvement action plans focused on the CSS scores specific to each centre. The Partnership Manager is in receipt of all twelve centre action plans. An example action plan for Andersonstown Leisure Centres had been forwarded to the Board for information."**

Mr. Holland provided details around the format of the customer satisfaction survey and pointed out that the Brook Activity Centre and the Loughside Recreation Centre had

not been included within the survey, since the low footfall in those centres would have made it difficult to generate a meaningful number of respondents.

During discussion, the two Trades Union representatives on the Board identified a number of staffing issues, primarily in older centres, which had failed consistently to be addressed by GLL and highlighted the need, amongst other things, for a survey to be undertaken to provide staff with an opportunity to formalise those issues.

In response, Mr. Kirk informed the Board that GLL representatives met with staff on a regular basis and that they were fully aware of the issues and challenges to which the Trades Unions officials had referred.

The Assistant Director confirmed that she noted the concerns which had been raised by the Board and pointed out that, whilst staff were contracted to GLL and the issues which had been raised were operational matters and should be resolved between both parties, there was an onus on the Board to assure itself that staff were treated appropriately and that there was no impact upon GLL's ability to fulfil its contractual obligations to the Council.

The Board acknowledged receipt of GLL's Annual Customer Satisfaction for 2015/2016, together with the associated findings. The Board agreed that the Trades Union representatives should, within fifteen working days, submit to the Assistant Director a joint document, setting out in detail the staffing issues which they had alluded to and that it be forwarded immediately upon receipt to both the Board and to GLL. It was agreed further that GLL's response to the issues raised by the Trades Unions should be documented and circulated to the Board in advance of its next monthly meeting.

GLL Review of 2016

Mr. Kirk reminded the Board that GLL had, since January, 2015, been operating leisure centres across Belfast on behalf of the Council. He submitted for its consideration a document which reviewed GLL's achievements for 2016, under its four strategic elements of Better Business, Better Communities, Better People and Better Services and provided a comparison with the previous year. The review had included the following key points:

- the number of centres being managed by GLL had risen from 12 in 2015 to 14 in 2016;
- total memberships had risen from 8,452 to 16,515 between 2015 and 2016;
- 2,100 membership sales had been generated through online registration;
- 49% of customers had booked services, courses and classes using the online booking facility;
- the number of children who had enrolled in the Better Swim School had risen from 1,250 in 2015 to 2,750 in 2016;
- the GLL Foundation had supported 57 athletes;

- the MacMillan ‘Move More’ Cancer Programme had been launched in leisure centres; and
- 108 new staff had been appointed to permanent, temporary and seasonal posts.

In terms of 2017, Mr. Kirk confirmed that GLL was expecting to see further increases in activity through, for example, the opening of the new Olympia Leisure Centre, the introduction of new programmes and career opportunities and improved communication with customers and that it would continue to support its Sports Foundation and other initiatives and organisations.

After discussion, the Board noted the information which had been provided.

Synthetic Pitch Pricing Policy

The Partnership Manager submitted for the Board’s consideration the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update the Board on a decision taken by Council on 1st February, 2017 to reduce the hourly rate for Council operated synthetic pitches by 25%.**
- 1.2 To open discussion on the potential impact on synthetic pitches operated by GLL and to consider whether or not a change in the agreed 2017/2018 schedule of charges is required/appropriate.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Board considers the potential impact of a reduction in the hire charge for synthetic pitches**
- 2.2 That the Board reaches a decision in relation to the hourly rate for synthetic pitches operated by GLL for the 2017/2018 financial year.**

3.0 Main Report

- 3.1 Belfast City Council owns eleven full size synthetic pitches. Five are managed directly by the Council or through a variety of local partnership arrangements. Six are operated by GLL within the terms of the partnership contract agreement.**
- 3.2 In 2016/2017, it was agreed that pricing across the council operated and GLL operated synthetic pitches should be aligned and a hire charge of £82.00 per hour was set. At its meeting on 5th December 2016, the Board agreed the schedule of charges for 2017/2018, within which the hourly rate was retained at £82.00. The pricing proposal for 2017/2018 was adopted by the Council in January, 2017.**

- 3.3** A proposal was presented in October, 2016 through the Council's People and Communities Committee to reduce the hourly hire rate for Council operated synthetic pitches by 20%-25%. The proposal was further considered at a number of subsequent Committee meetings, which resulted in a decision to reduce the hourly rate by 25% being ratified by the Council on 1st February 2017. As it currently stands, this means that, from 1st April 2017, the hourly rate for Council operated pitches will be £61.50 and be £82.00 for GLL operated sites.
- 3.4** Belfast City Council's pricing policy includes a junior concession price set at 50% of the headline rate. As it currently stands, this means that, from 1st April 2017, the hourly rate for Council-operated pitches will be £61.50 for adults and £30.75 for juniors while GLL operated pitches will be charged at £82.00 for adults and £41.00 for juniors.
- 3.5** Based on the £82.00 headline rate, GLL has anticipated the overall income from synthetic pitches for the 2017/2018 financial year to be £233,000. If the 25% reduction was to be applied to the GLL operated pitches, the reduction in income based on existing booking levels would be approximately £58,250.
- 3.6** Possible impacts and points to consider include:
- 3.6.1** If the reduction is not applied, there may be a loss of income through loss of GLL bookings to less expensive Council operated sites.
- 3.6.2** If the reduction is not applied, it would mean that Council pricing across the city would no longer be consistent/aligned, resulting in some communities paying 25% more for the same service. This is likely to raise political, equality and good relations issues.
- 3.6.3** If the 25% reduction is applied, the loss of income (circa £52k) would impact on GLL's net operating deficit.
- 3.6.4** If the 25% reduction is applied, what opportunities exist to increase bookings at the reduced rate to offset the reduction in income per booking?
- 3.6.5** If the 25% reduction is applied and results in a loss of income for GLL, how will the reduction be funded?
- 3.6.6** Any change in pricing to be applied from 1st April 2017 will require time for internal GLL communication alongside reprogramming of the point of sale software. This would need to be in place before the end of March 2017.
- 3.7** GLL is aware of the Council's decision and the potential implications and will be in attendance to present its position."

The Partnership Manager provided an overview of the report and undertook to circulate to the Board details of the locations of the twelve full size synthetic pitches which were owned by the Council.

In response to a number of questions, the Assistant Director confirmed that the shortfall in income resulting from the Council's recent decision to reduce the hourly rate for the hire of synthetic pitches which it operated by 25% would be met from within existing Council budgets.

She added that, should the Board agree to a similar reduction for GLL operated synthetic pitches, the matter would need to be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, with a recommendation that it consider the financial impact of that decision upon GLL's overall operating position and potential funding options for covering the deficit.

During discussion, several Directors pointed out that the Board had, in 2015/2016, in establishing its pricing structure for the hire of synthetic pitches, agreed that it should be aligned to that of the Council. They suggested, therefore, that the Board should reduce the hourly rate for GLL operated pitches also by 25%, in order to maintain that position and in light of the potential political, equality and good relations implications referred to within the report.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Long,
Seconded by Mr. McGarrity,

That the Board agrees to maintain its current policy of aligning the hourly rate for the hire of synthetic pitches operated by GLL with those of the Council and, accordingly, agrees that the GLL rate be reduced also by 25%, that is, to £61.50 for adults and £30.75 for juniors.

Amendment

Moved by Mr. Higgins,

That the Board agrees to defer consideration of the matter until its next scheduled meeting on 20th April, to allow GLL to identify ways of offering additional enhancements to those customers hiring its synthetic pitches, with a view to minimising the financial impact, should a decision be taken to align hire charges with those of the Council.

As there was no seconder for the amendment, it was not put to the Board.

Accordingly, the Board agreed to adopt the proposal which had been moved by Councillor Long and seconded by Mr. McGarrity and noted that the decision would now be placed before the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

Update on the Aquatics Strategy

The Partnership Manager reminded the Board that it had, over a number of meetings, been advised of the progress being made towards the delivery of a Belfast-wide Aquatics Strategy.

He reported that the Aquatics Strategy Working Group, which had been tasked with developing the Strategy, would meet again on 30th March, by which time the vision statement and the strategic principles should be finalised for inclusion in the documents/presentations to be issued under the first round of stakeholder consultations. He provided an overview of the eight principles which the Working Group had agreed should underpin the Strategy and pointed out that those would be reviewed, once this phase of the consultation process had been concluded. It was the intention that the initial consultation and the collation of comments would be completed by the end of May and that it would be followed in July and in late August/early September by two further consultation exercises, with the final document being submitted to the Board in January, 2018 for approval.

The Board noted the information which had been provided.

Review of Active Belfast Limited Business Plan 2017 - 2020

The Board was reminded that, at its meeting on 5th December, it had agreed an outline plan for the formulation of the Active Belfast Limited business plan for 2017-2020. The Partnership Manager reported that the Working Group which had been established to oversee the development of the plan had met on a number of occasions since then in order to ensure that the final document could be presented to the Board for approval at this meeting.

He informed the Directors that the business plan had been developed in 3-4 stages and that it was based around seven key strategic priorities and an associated action plan, which focused upon delivering the outputs, as set out within the service specification and tri-partite partnership contract. Following each meeting of the Working Group, a draft plan had been circulated to all Board members for comment. He drew the Board's attention to a final draft of the document, a copy of which had recently been circulated, which contained a few minor changes from the previous version. He added that, should any further amendments be suggested, those would be incorporated into a revised document for final approval by the Board at its next scheduled meeting on 20th April and would be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee thereafter.

After discussion, the Board approved the Active Belfast Limited business plan for 2017-2020.

Equality and Diversity Policy Alignment

The Partnership Manager reminded the Board that, at its meeting on 16th January, it had agreed the following programme for the evaluation and reporting of key compliance and policy alignment assurance statements for six policy areas, with a view to ensuring that GLL's operating policies and procedures were aligned to those of the Council:

Quarterly Schedule	Policy and Operating Procedure	Pilot Timeframe
Quarter 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Safety (including Safeguarding) 	Q1 2017/2018
Quarter 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources • Belfast Brand Platform 	Q2 2017/2018
Quarter 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoU for Emergency Support • PSNI/BCC Protocol for Managing Public Safety 	Q3 2017/2018
Quarter 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality and Diversity 	Q4 2016/2017

He reported that an initial meeting had been held on 6th February between key officers from the Council and GLL to commence the work which would lead eventually to the preparation of a policy alignment assurance statement for Equality and Diversity. Overall, the meeting had been very positive, with discussions having focused primarily upon Section 75 strategies and staff training around equality and diversity awareness and operating procedures. Whilst it was apparent that the existing policies, operating practices and activity programming of both organisations were broadly aligned, two key areas had been identified where some background work and the exchange of material would be required. Those related to GLL equality and diversity staff training around the Section 75 legislative framework and evidence of activity programming service delivery models and output monitoring.

The Partnership Manager explained that it had been agreed that officers from the Council and from GLL should meet separately before the end of March to consider these two key areas. However, both groups were confident that the outcome would confirm a strong policy alignment at both a policy and an operational level. He added that it was envisaged that the Board would, at its meeting on 20th April, receive for its consideration a definitive policy alignment assurance statement for Equality and Diversity.

Noted.

Other Business

Olympia Leisure Centre

In response to a query from a Director, Mr. Kirk undertook to forward to the Board information on the pricing policy for the use of the spa facilities in the new Olympia Leisure Centre.

Grove Wellbeing Centre

At the conclusion of the meeting, several Directors undertook a tour of the facilities provided within the Grove Wellbeing Centre.

Date of Next Meeting

The Board noted that its next meeting would take place at 4.30 p.m. on Thursday, 20th April in the Lavery Room, City Hall.

Chairperson