

Executive - 12 May 2004

Present: Councillor Williams (Chairman)
Councillors Bishop, Mrs Bradley, Mrs Bryant, Cavill, Edwards, Hall and Mrs Lewin-Harris

Officers: Mrs P James (Chief Executive), Mr P Weaver (Director of Community Services - Acting), Ms S Adam (Head of Finance), Ms J Dickinson (Head of Commercial Services), Mr C Brazier (Head of Housing), Mr R Warner (Head of Finance and Administration), Mr S Rutledge (Chief Architect) and Mr G P Dyke (Member Services Manager)

Also Present: Councillors Henley, Wedderkopp and Weston.

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm).

21. Apology

Councillor Garner.

22. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 7 April 2004 were taken as read and were signed, subject to the following amendment to Minute No 15, "Public Question Time":-

Add: "If it was decided to site it adjacent to the Sports Centre as previously, it had to be noted that the Sports Centre staff could not be responsible for security or monitoring its use and therefore this would be the responsibility of the Wellington Town Council."

23. Public Question Time

1. Councillor Henley, as a member of the public, referred to a letter sent by Councillor Mrs Bradley to the Wellington Town Council. The letter concerned the Wellington Skateboard Park and its location and it explained that the Town Council would be expected to monitor the site and be financially responsible for any problems. He stressed that this was a Borough Council facility and that the Town Council were not responsible for it. He asked what the way forward would be.

Councillor Williams replied that the officers had advised that this was not the best site for this facility and that its location in this vicinity might result in problems. The Town Council should therefore take responsibility as they were the ones insisting on siting it in this location.

Councillor Bradley referred to her letter to the Town Council which contained several options including a review of overall youth provision in Wellington.

She said that the choice was the Town Council's and she was waiting to hear from them.

2. Councillor Henley also asked Councillor Williams whether the review of public conveniences would be submitted to the appropriate Review Panel.

Councillor Edwards replied that the review was still continuing but that it was close to a conclusion. It was necessary to undertake more detailed research into the actual usage of facilities.

24. Contract Final Accounts

Submitted details of all relevant contract final accounts which were now reported on an annual basis. The accounts were those on which there was relevant information available, had been audited up to the end of the preceding financial year and had not previously been reported to members.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

25. Performance Monitoring of Contracts supervised by Deane Building Design Group

In accordance with the requirements of the Council's Standing Orders, submitted details of the progress of all works contracts in excess of Threshold 2 (£50,000) for those contracts supervised by Deane Building Design Group.

Following an amendment being made to Standing Orders in January 2004, this was the first report on the current performance of all Deane Building Design Contracts in excess of £50,000. It was intended to show whether individual projects were on programme, together with the current financial position. Reports were based on the relevant last financial statements and most recent valuations.

Further reports would be submitted to the Executive at future meetings.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

26. Leisure Services Strategic Review - Strand One

Submitted report which presented a financial analysis of the Leisure Service showing the net cost by facility and by service.

Consideration was given to a range of savings options which aimed to reduce the overall net cost of the Leisure Service. Consideration was also given to levels of savings which over a three year period would return the cost of providing the Leisure Service to its historic level in 2002/03 of in the region of £462,000.

Council, at its meeting on 22 December 2003, had deferred the decision to transfer its leisure services and facilities to Tone Leisure (South West) Limited for six months. One of the reasons for this decision related to the level of grant that the Trust would require to maintain the existing level of service, as well as launching and operating the new Wellsprings Leisure Centre. The cost of providing the Leisure Service

appeared to have risen significantly, increasing from £462,000 in 2002/03 to a projected cost of £821,000 in 2004/05. This was as a result of introducing a new facility to the portfolio, combined with external market factors such as increased private sector competition.

The first stage of the Leisure Service's Strategic Review now formed an important part of the Council's Financial Strategy which had previously been approved by the Executive and the Council in April 2004. Leisure was not a statutory responsibility and the Council needed to determine the level of leisure provision it felt was appropriate and how much it was willing to pay for that service. It was clear that the Council could not afford the current level of service in the long term.

The savings options contained within the report had been critically appraised by the Council's consultant, Mark Sutcliffe of Strategic Leisure Limited, and the shadow board of Tone Leisure had been consulted about the savings options. The report had also been submitted to the Health and Leisure Review Panel at its meeting on 29 April 2004 and the proposed Category One and Two savings had been recommended for approval by that Panel, provided that Sunday swimming pool opening hours at Wellington Sports Centre were reconsidered.

A number of costed options for significantly reducing the cost of leisure by 2006/2007 had been prepared. A summary of net cost by facility and service was submitted which included the Category One and Two savings that had been outlined in the report. The detailed savings shown demonstrated that a broad range of options had been considered.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) The financial analysis of the Leisure Service showing the net cost by facility and service be noted;
- (2) The acceptability rankings (Categories One, Two and Three) that had been allocated to each saving option be agreed;
- (3) The Category One and Two savings options reducing the net cost of the service over a three year period to £467,000 be agreed.

(The meeting ended at 7.12 pm).