

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

meeting date: 7 SEPTEMBER 2010
title: FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS AT LONGRIDGE GYM
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Agenda Item No. 9

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To advise Committee about levels of usage at Longridge Gym.
- 1.2 To propose changes to the opening of the Gym at weekends.
To advise committee of a request by Longridge Social Enterprise (LSEC) to operate the Gym as part of their expansion plans for service provision in Longridge.
- 1.3 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities
 - Council Ambitions – The contents of this report contribute to the Council's ambitions for making peoples lives safer and healthier.
 - Community Objectives – Access for all, community cohesion, community safety and improving the health and well-being of local people.
 - Corporate Priorities – Ensuring services are accessible to all.
 - Other Considerations – None.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The gym facility has been available from the extension to Longridge Civic Hall since October 2008 when it was relocated from Longridge High School.
- 2.2 The usage and income has increased slightly since operating from the Civic Hall, but the pattern of users still indicates that people prefer to visit the facility during weekday evenings rather than at weekends.
- 2.3 The number of visits at weekends is comparatively lower than during week days.

Despite specific promotional efforts to increase usage including extending free admission on Sundays during October 2009, the number of attendances doubled over that month compared with the previous months. However, since then the fee was reduced to half the normal price and over a five month period of monitoring; the attendances returned to a similar level of usage prior to the reduction of the admission fee.

3 ISSUES

- 3.1 Given the apparent lack of demand for the fitness room at weekends, the continuation of opening the facility to members of the public even for the six hours (10 – 4 each day) as is currently the availability, is questionable from a service sufficiency perspective.
- 3.2 There are two members of staff - Community Activity Officer (full time) and Community Activity Attendant (part time) who cover some weekend opening times as part of their structured working rota requirements along with casual cover support. Over a typical month the staffing costs alone; (comprising of a combination of these different roles, amounts to over £500 or £6,000 per year. There will also be utility and general day to day operational costs as well. The income generated from users of the Gym over the last 3 years are;-
October 2008 to March 2009 = £1,375
April 2009- March 2010 = £ 1,650
April 2010- July 2010 = £ 574
Total = £3,599
This represents a considerable subsidy in operating the Gym at weekends.
- 3.3 Before deciding upon action to reduce the availability of the gym at weekends, it is proposed to undertake customer research in order to identify user preferences for attending the facility according to specific times and for either Saturday or Sunday. It may also serve to identify if any service programming change may attract more attendances at weekends.
- 3.4 The options available identified at this time include;
- Closure of the Gym over one or both days of the weekend
- Altering any opening times to reflect user preference for opening earlier.
It is anticipated that customer feedback obtained through a customer questionnaire to be undertaken throughout October will substantiate the above and or serve to identify other options.
- 3.5 The presence of gym staff is advantageous to the operation of the main Civic Hall building due to the current undertaking of administrative support to hirers of the main hall. For example gym staff; currently provide in-kind assistance with the operation of car boots on Sundays and any special events that may have been received by LSEC over weekends whilst the gym is open to members of the public.
- 3.6 There are perceived financial and operational advantages to combining staffing presence which satisfy the programming requirements of the entire site and the full potential can only be determined through careful examination of how the currently separate service functions of the gym and Civic Hall could be joined up into a more satisfactory situation for both RVBC and LSEC.
LSEC are shortly to commence management functions associated with the new station buildings development and this will include the employment of staff. They have requested that given the advantages of utilising staffing hours more effectively in delivering the Station Buildings and Main Civic Hall; that RVBC considers transferring the delivery of the Gym facility to LSEC.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – None at this point but it is envisaged that there will be as a consequence of options identified at a later stage when further information has been collected and reported to you.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – None
- Political – None
- Reputation – None

5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

5.1 Notes the content of this report.

5.2 Endorse the proposal to undertake customer research into identification of preference for opening hours of the Gym at weekends.

5.3 Agree to consider the proposal that the Gym and Main Hall facilities be managed by LSEC and to a working group being formed to investigate the financial and service delivery implications.



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