

Loughton Leisure Centre Customer Forum - Monday 5th December 2016

Report by Councillor R Brookes

This meeting had a lower attendance than normal owing to a number of seasonal events but included two of the management team of Everyone Active, Peter Charman (EFDC), a representative from Epping Forest Swimming Club and several regular users.

Peter Charman spoke about the new contract takeover on 1st April, 2017. After a competitive tendering process a new company called Places for People would take over the running of all the Epping Forest Leisure Centres for twenty years. Some of the users were concerned about who would monitor the contract and whether the new company would be increasing prices. It was explained the Epping Forest District Council and Quest would monitor the contract and Places for People could not just put the prices up without consultation with the partnership monitoring board. Forum members asked when the extension to Loughton Leisure Centre would take place. It was explained that any extension would be subject to the usual planning application process. Places for People had also submitted plans for a new Waltham Abbey pool which is due to be opened in October, 2018. The award of the contract still has to be ratified at the full Council meeting on 20th December 2016.

The organiser of the petition for a reduction in parking charges for Centre members reported that she had gathered over a thousand signatures and it would be presented to Jackie Leither of Democratic Services later in the week.

Centre users raised a number of issues including the poolside showers being dirty on several occasions first thing in the morning for the Early Bird swimmers, lane management in the pool during adult swimming, a request for anti- bacterial wipes to be available in the gym as the spinning bikes are often very sweaty and not being cleaned in between classes. The Everyone Active staff explained that the showers are cleaned five times a week. They are not always cleaned between the pool closing in the evening and the centre opening in the morning. All staff had just had a big cleaning training session but the managers would follow up to check the showers were being thoroughly cleaned. One member commented that the male dry changing room had been much cleaner lately.

Epping Forest Swimming Club representative asked if there was any news on getting new starting blocks as the current ones were dangerous. Ian Ling responded that he had obtained various quotes as part of Everyone Active's bid and he wasn't sure what the new operators would be doing about purchasing them.

The date of the next forum was set for Monday 6 March at 7.00.pm.