

**Community, Leisure and Environment Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Thursday, 24th March, 2011.**

**Present:-** Councillors A Wright (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), Chohan, M S Mann and Shine

**Apologies for Absence:-** Councillor Bal, Abe, Bains and Sohal

**PART I**

**BOWLING AND TENNIS FACILITIES TOUR**

Prior to the start of the meeting Panel Members took a tour of the ten pin bowling facility and the new tennis courts. Members were given the opportunity to ask representatives of Slough Community Leisure questions about the facilities.

**79. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interests received.

**80. Minutes of the meeting held on 26th January 2011**

The minutes of the Joint Community, Leisure and Environment & Neighbourhoods and Renewal Scrutiny Panel held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2011 were approved as a correct record.

**81. Ten Pin and Tennis progress – to identify issues for future agenda item**

The Assistant Director, Learning and Cultural Engagement advised the Panel that this was an opportunity for Scrutiny Members to have a look around the new facilities and to raise any issues that they would wish to be included in the report which was due to be considered by the Scrutiny Panel in June. It was noted that at this point there would be six months worth of data available on the ten pin bowling offer. Members were asked to raise issues to be addressed at the next meeting, these included:-

- The Financial Viability of the Ten Pin Bowling Centre in relation to the £100k annual income projection when the Centre was approved.
- The overall publicity strategy for the Centre as it was noted that at present the majority of publicity was by word of mouth. A Member suggested it would be good for more Councillors to visit as it was a very smart, modern and well run facility. The Marketing plan was
- Members were keen to find out how the Ten Pin facility had been marketed and suggested that it would be good to market special promotions to youth groups. The Marketing plan was seen as key to improving the Centre's fortunes.

## Community, Leisure and Environment Scrutiny Panel - 24.03.11

- It was suggested that a cost comparison with other centres would be useful, especially with newly opened facilities. It was noted that it was originally intended that ten pin would be an income generating arm of Slough Community Leisure. In order to finance other initiatives such as free swimming.
- Members asked for details of the bar and cafe prices to be highlighted in the report, as it was implied that this may attract people into the Centre.
- A Member suggested that it would be useful if the report contained information on the profiles of users including the age groups and different communities using the centre.

**Resolved** – That a report be brought to the first meeting of the proposed joint scrutiny panel including those issues detailed above.

### 82. New Library and Cultural Centre

The Panel received a presentation which included details on the progress of the new central library and cultural centre. The new Centre was designed to improve access to library, learning, cultural and democratic e presentation included information about community participation in the project. Focus groups and workshops were asked for input into which services they wanted included in the new centre and the way in which they wanted these services provided. Focus groups were held with people who fell into a number of different categories including young people, high engaging adults, low/no engaging adults and older people. The Panel was requested to advise on the plans for further public engagement. The consultation had taken place over a two month period with one hour long focus groups and three hour long workshops in order to get an in-depth picture of how the public may use facilities. In the subsequent discussion Members raised a number of queries including:-

- The overall message from the community consultation was that the centre needed to have a stronger emphasis on fun. A Member asked what was meant by the term 'fun'. The Assistant Director advised that people wanted a facility that there was a sense of excitement about going to, where you go to enjoy yourself and the overall way in how the facility was presented.
- A Member asked about the range of learning facilities provided. It was noted that there would be formal classrooms, an IT suite, a 'wet room' for craft sessions and children's activities, the main library and arts facilities. The Centre would bring together services provided at the Thomas Grey Centre, library and the West Wing.
- In response to a question it was noted that the staff who would work in the new building and provide the courses were already in place. The new centre would provide a mixture of free and differently priced courses, for example new migrant course were funded on a free to use basis but interest courses would be charged for. Learning would be focused on employability.
- The cultural offer would mainly be focused on local interest groups and the Council would be engaging with these. The Panel was advised that there would be a community arts programme and also mixed usage with some professional programming and also use by local groups and

## Community, Leisure and Environment Scrutiny Panel - 24.03.11

schools. The Council would be building up interest in the programme between now and 2013 in order to ensure that the facility would feel alive with activity.

- It was noted that with regarding the provision of democratic space in the facility the young people's group suggested a space that could be opened up to public debate.
- Many of the issues raised by the groups overlapped with each other. Overall people wanted to be involved with the development of the centre but it was understood that there would be some limitations on this. It was noted that promotion was very important to ensure that people felt valued and consulted and consequently proud of the new facility.
- A Member asked how the groups consulted were selected. The Assistant Director advised that this had been done by external experts in research using a specific sampling methodology to ensure a mix of those involved and not involved with existing provision.
- It was proposed that an Advisory Board would be established to run the centre which would contain a cross section of people and be able to engage the wider public. Members agreed that in principle these proposals seemed right but it was difficult to see how a larger number of people could be engaged and linked with the running of the centre. Members suggested that Slough look at how other local authorities were running learning and cultural provision. Overall the Panel agreed that the views expressed in the public engagement broadly met the needs of the design proposal.
- The Panel felt that it was important that the Council could be in tune with what the public wanted in terms of democratic provision. The allocation of resources and provision of services should be in-line with what the public required but needed to be considered within the budgetary context.

### **Resolved: -**

- (a) That the progress made with the Library and Cultural Centre be noted.
- (b) That the principles for public engagement be endorsed and it be noted that there may be future issues regarding accountability and engagement of the wider public.

### **83. Forward Work Programme**

That the Forward Work Programme be noted.

### **84. Members Attendance Record**

That the Members' Attendance Record be noted.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 7.00 pm and closed at 8.20 pm)