

CITY OF PLYMOUTH



Scrutiny Report Sports Inspection

Lifelong Learning Select Committee

February 2005

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Preface

**By Councillor Chris Mavin
Lead Member, Sports Review
Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee**



Plymouth City Council is committed to developing a flourishing, creative and cultural sector, which will contribute to the city becoming one of Europe's finest waterfront cities. Plymouth has the environment, people and potential to achieve this, but in recent years it has failed to effectively project itself. The Sport and Recreation Service has experienced similar problems but there has been a significant improvement in the past two years. There are now ambitious plans for leisure facility development including work with major sport and leisure partners in the city to improve quality provision.

On completion of the Best Value (re) Review of the Plymouth City Council Sport and Recreation Service, which was undertaken by the Audit Commission and published in May 2004, the City Council compiled a Post Inspection Action Plan in response to the recommendations contained within the Audit Commission report.

The Select Committee's objective was to examine highlighted areas of weakness and outstanding issues within the current provision of the Sport and Leisure Service and examined how effectively the City Council was improving service delivery against the recommendations contained within the Audit Commission Inspection Report

The Select Committee was asked to make recommendations for improved provision of service by reviewing the Post Inspection Action Plan. These recommendations are included within this report and focus on the implementation of a Strategic Business and Marketing plan and also future monitoring of the Sport and Recreation Service.

The Select Committee recognised and acknowledged that the Council already provides a fair one star service and that the Council has promising prospects for improvement.

I would like to thank all members, officers and witnesses who contributed and supported this select committee.

1.0 SUMMARY

The Select Committee considered the Post Inspection Action Plan for Sports and Recreation Service provision and expressed concern over the general lack of forward thinking and strategic planning.

2.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that –

- (1) Cabinet be recommended to adopt a detailed Post Inspection Action Plan which identifies the following key points –
 - lead officer
 - target start and end dates
 - progress to date
 - key milestones
 - outcomes

For the attention of: Cabinet

- (2) a Sports and Recreation Strategic Plan be submitted to Cabinet, no later than January 2005, in order that a prioritisation programme can be agreed, which would include the following major projects –
 - Central Park
 - Seaton Pool
 - Brickfields

For the attention of: Cabinet and Director for Lifelong Learning

- (3) a Business and Marketing Plan be in place by no later than 1st April 2005.

For the attention of: Cabinet

- (4) consideration be given to further Scrutiny of the Leisure Services Department and the Business and Marketing Plan.

For the attention of: Overview and Scrutiny Commission

- (5) a Partnership forum be established, with particular focus on integrating with schools, other public sector agencies, private and voluntary organisations to maximise leisure provision in the City.

For the attention of: Cabinet Member for Sports, Leisure and Culture

- (6) the Head of Community Leisure and Learning map against the DDA criteria all buildings within the department, which had been omitted from the DDA 1-5 Priority Site Inspection Lists, and bring this to the attention of the Head of Asset Management.

For the attention of: Director for Lifelong Learning

- (7) the current staff structure of the Sports and Recreations Department be reviewed.

For the attention of: Director for Lifelong Learning

- (8) 2nd and 3rd Tier Management within the Sports and Recreation Department identify areas for professional development in the context of customer requirements.

For the attention of: Director for Lifelong Learning

- (9) the Sports Development Unit be congratulated on their hard work in relation to the implementation on many successful projects.

For the attention of: Cabinet Member for Sports, Leisure and Culture

- (10) the Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel receive progress reports on a quarterly basis for the next 12 months.

For the attention of: Overview and Scrutiny Commission

3.0 INTRODUCTION

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel agreed at their meeting on 15 July, 2004 to undertake a review of the Sports Inspection. A Select Committee was appointed comprising of the following Members –

- Councillor Mavin (Lead Member)
- Councillor Mrs Nicholson
- Councillor Stevens
- Co-opted Representative Messr Medlin
- Co-opted Representative Messr Willis

3.1.2 The Select Committee met on sixteen occasions during September 2004 – January 2005.

3.2 Terms of Reference

3.2.1 It was agreed that the Select Committee had the following aims for the scrutiny review –

- to examine how effectively the City Council is improving service delivery in sports and recreation against the recommendations contained in the Audit Commission Inspection Report dated May 2004.
- as necessary, to assess how City Council services are corporately responding to the recommendations made in the report.
- to make recommendations where appropriate that can influence and lead to an improved level of service delivery to the residents of the City.

3.3 Scope of the Inquiry

3.3.1 In May 2004, the Audit Commission completed an inspection, under Section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999, of the Council's sports facilities. A report was compiled by the Commission, which focused on the following issues –

- how good is the service
- opportunity and accessibility
- cost-effectiveness and efficiency
- what are the prospects for improvement to the service

3.3.2 As part of their review, the Select Committee –

- held a number of evidence sessions;
- surveyed Plymouth residents via the Plymouth 'Points of View' Panel;
- carried out site visits to sports and recreational facilities with Plymouth;
- held a number of witness sessions.

4.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4.1 The Audit Commission Inspection Report

4.1.1 The inspection report concentrated on reviewing the current sports and recreations services provided by the Council. The findings showed the Council provided a 'fair' one-star service that had promising prospects for improvement. The following points were highlighted in the report as 'fair' –

- there was a fair range of facilities in the service;
- customer satisfaction among users was high;
- programmes of activities were developed in line with customer feedback;
- sports development work had raised the quality of sport and recreation in the community;
- the service was effectively targeting resources at those who had limited access to sporting opportunities;
- the service actively promotes opportunities for those with disabilities;
- the Council had set specific and challenging goals for the service to enhance facilities for the local community and increase levels of physical activity among young people;
- partners had been involved in the formation of the service's cultural priorities;
- the service was actively collecting information that will allow it to measure the impact of its work.

4.1.2 However, the inspection report highlighted the following areas of weakness –

- the majority of indoor facilities were dated and there were a number of areas of poor quality;
- there was a limited range of indoor facilities, which limited the service's ability to reach diverse groups within the community;
- disabled access to some facilities was limited;
- there was a lack of information available for the public on service standards or performance;
- arrangements for assessing the value for money of contact was weak;
- strategic plans lacked outcome.

4.1.3 Although the Council scored a 'fair' rating, the report highlighted that the service had promising prospects for improvements as follows –

- there were ambitious plans in place and commitment to providing a high quality sports and leisure facility at Central Park and significant resources had been identified to progress this project;
- staff had received customer care and awareness training to improve responsiveness to customer needs;
- the service was developing robust information on which future plans and strategies could be based to allow resources to be targeted on areas of need;
- an innovative approach to collecting public views on future projects had been developed allowing the Council to have up-to-date information on customer views;
- there were plans in place for the development of the specialist schools programme;

- the Council had addressed many of the recommendations made by the previous inspection;
- the Council was strengthening its corporate framework for service planning and performance management so that it supports improvement in services;
- the Council had introduced an appraisal scheme that links individual work programmes and performance to corporate objectives;
- there was now active and co-ordinated marketing of the facilities;
- there was effective partnership working, which increased the capacity of the service to deliver a wide range of sporting opportunities.

4.1.4 However, the report identified a number of outstanding issues –

- a decision had yet to be made on the future of the Mayflower Trust;
- in the absence of a decision relating to the provision of new facilities, only cosmetic improvement works had been carried out;
- the Council had been slow to address the replacement of Seaton Pool and its future remained uncertain;
- the Council had yet to clearly identify how the full cost of the Central Park project would be met.

4.1.5 Overall the inspection showed that overall the Council had greater involvement in Partnership working, but the performance indicators were currently not out-come based and limited in range.

4.1.6 The quality of facilities were variable and in some areas poor. The core of the Council's indoor facilities has had little investment over a long period of time and was not of modern standard. However, recent new facilities and a more focused approach to sport development had improved the quality of customer experience and increased opportunities for hard to reach groups. The service demonstrated an average performance when compared to similar councils.

4.1.7 The inspection report recommended several actions, which are highlighted at 4.2.4 of this report.

4.2 The Post Inspection Action Plan

4.2.1 The Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) had been written in response to the inspection report published in May 2004, as highlighted above. The PIAP would be implemented by the Department for Lifelong Learning in partnership with other City Council Departments and key stakeholders and would provide an effective framework for co-ordinating the full range of responses to be made, with particular focus on the recommendations highlighted in the Inspection Report.

4.2.2 The Department for Lifelong Learning welcomed the external scrutiny of the service and had accepted the content of the inspection report, which had enabled the authority to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses identified and re-focus the available resources to support further improvement. It was envisaged that the PIAP would provide an effective framework within which the sport and recreational services would continue to improve and develop.

4.2.3 The PIAP clearly identifies areas that require further improvement, these areas were also highlighted by the Inspection Team as areas of concern. Within the plan, milestones have been identified with specific target dates, but the Panel raised

concerns over the feasibility of achieving these targets as highlighted at 6.1 in this report.

4.2.4 The PIAP had been based on the recommendations made by the Inspection Team and incorporated into the action plan below –

Recommendation	Identified Action	Start Date	Target End Date
Ensure that services meet the needs of customers and promote access to the sports and recreation service:			
<p>1. Involving customers, partners and staff in the development, promotion and monitoring of service standards;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers to produce a draft set of service standards that are based on 'Quest'. • Officers to identify the best way of involving customers, partners and staff. • Agreed final draft with stakeholders. • Finalised version to be sent to the Sport, Leisure and Culture Cabinet Member for political approval and formal adoption of the recommended service standards. 	<p>Oct 04</p>	<p>Jan 05 Jan 05 Feb 05 Complete April 05</p>
<p>2. Reviewing the suitability of opening hours of facilities against customer needs and through a cost benefit analysis;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers to undertake cost benefit analysis and produce a report with recommendations. • The report to be offered to the Sport, Leisure and Culture Cabinet Member for political approval and adoption subject to consultation. • Undertake consultation on proposals. • Final approval. • Implementation 	<p>Jan 05 May 05 Nov 05</p>	<p>April 05 May 05 Sept 05 Oct 05 April 06</p>

3. Providing wider information on sports facilities and sports development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers to continue with work - ensuring that contemporary information (regarding the opportunities on offer at all PCC sports facilities) is made routinely available, both on the Council's website, and in brochure format (at each facility). 	March 04	Dec 04
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work to take place on the provision of a sports facility directory for the City. 	March 04	Dec 04
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within the wider marketing plan (to be developed by the Head of Community, Leisure and Learning), careful consideration be given to how further publicity of what is on offer at PCC facilities might be financed on a routine basis. 	October 04	January 05
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Marketing Plan for Sports Services. 	January 05	April 05

Develop a clear project plan for the delivery of Central Park facilities by:

4. Making clear links to the overall regeneration and redevelopment plans of the city;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central Park identified as priority in Corporate Plan 2004/7 		
5. Prioritising mix of facilities to be provided on site;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility to prioritise mix of facilities. Options to be identified within consultants report for consideration by members. 	May 04	Nov 04
6. Identifying and confirming funding sources;		May 04	Jan 05
7. Establishing links with the council's identified management option for its leisure facilities;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management arrangements to continue as present. Review to be undertaken 05/06 financial year once Central Park decision made. 	April 05	March 06
8. Setting clear milestones for delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early milestones set. Milestones to be set by Project Plan once scheme agreed. 	May 04	May 05

Determine a strategic approach to the future management of all leisure facilities and services by:			
9. Developing a planned approach to investment in, or refurbishment/ replacement of facilities;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers to complete production of the Plymouth Sports Facilities Strategy, and offer it to elected members of the council in draft format. Once approved, release the document as a public consultation draft and Plymouth Sports Forum. Edit as necessary and then submit the document to the Sport, Leisure and Culture Cabinet Member for final approval and adoption. 	Oct 04 Jan 05 Feb 05	Jan 05 March 05 April 05
10. Addressing the issues relating to access for people with a disability to existing and new build facilities;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DDA surveys undertaken at all facilities. The decisions on adoption to be made in light of those facilities that were likely to be refurbished/replaced within the near future, and those that are less likely to be changed. Works undertaken subject to budget. 	March 04 March 04 April 05	Jan 05 March 05 March 06
11. Determining the future of Seaton Pool;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers to undertake options appraisal in relation to the future of the Seaton swimming pool and include in draft Facility Strategy. Subsequently, Officers to make a formal recommendation to the Cabinet/Sport, Leisure and Culture Cabinet Member seeking council approval of the identified way forward. 	Nov 03	Jan 05 April 05
12. Establishing how the role of sports development can be integrated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, recommend a way forward that formally integrates the sports development activities of Plymouth Leisure, The Mayflower Trust, and Sport Plymouth. The proposed model to be submitted to the Sport, Leisure and Culture Cabinet Member for approval and formal council adoption. 	Oct 04	March 05 April 05
Review strategies and plans to ensure that:			
13. There is a focus on the achievement of outcomes for customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In relation to Audit Commission recommendations numbered 13. – 19. Inclusive, Officers to set aside time to 	Final stage started	Jan 05

and the local community;	<p>revisit each strategy, and work specifically on the identification of 'outcomes' and the production of summarised 'action plans' starting with the 'Sports Plan Review', and then the 'Plymouth Sports Facilities Strategy' respectively. Subsequently to work on the 'Plymouth Playing Pitch Strategy'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The action plans so produced to be included within the public consultation versions of the documents within their respective adoption and publication procedures. 	Oct 04	Jan to March 05
14. They have clear targets linked to the outcomes desired;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action plans to include clear targets linked to desired outcomes. Targets to be included in all documents. 	Oct 04	March 05
15. There is a clear prioritisation and a planned approach to improvement;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priorities to be identified in strategies and politically agreed. 	Oct 04	March 05
16. Strategies are developed with clear staff involvement;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve staff in the development and delivery of plans and strategies. Method to be identified. 	Oct 04	March 05
17. They reflect identified needs or gaps in provision;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All gaps/needs to be identified following on (13) above and consultation process. 	Oct 04	March 05
18. They address any relevant national guidance or priorities;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic links to be made to relevant guidance or priorities. 	Oct 04	Jan 05
19. And are in line with the decision on future management options - to provide one strategic vision of how leisure services will be provided in the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future delivery of leisure service to be reviewed 05/06 financial year as per (7). 	April 05	March 06

<p>20. Review grants and contracts to ensure that they are clearly linked to the achievement of corporate or service objectives:</p> <p>Develop information technology to:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JC/SS/Legal Services/AV to discuss and agree on new service level agreements between the Council and the Pavilions, and PCC and the Mayflower Trust. Subsequently the service level agreements, so produced, to be submitted to the Sport, Leisure and Culture Portfolio for formal council adoption prior to their implementation 	Jan 04	April 05 April 05
21. Enable the online booking of sports and recreation facilities;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This particular Audit Commission recommendation is not considered to be viable at this point in time and will not therefore be implemented. 	N/A	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • However, the situation will be the subject of periodic review. • The first review will be in one-year's time. 		Dec 05
<p>22. Investigate the potential for developing compatible IT systems that allow the integration of financial, performance management and facilities receipting systems to provide comprehensive management information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SS/AB/IT are currently implementing a new receipting system for Plymouth Leisure that will achieve what is recommended. 	Sept 04	March 05

<p>23. Ensure that processes and procedures are put in place to manage and structure the information provided to the cultural database in order to ensure the robust prioritisation of projects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch "Creative Plymouth". 		June 04
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Strategic Partnership Board. 		June 04
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key strategic projects to be delivered. 	Oct 04	March 05
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify how all Council departments can contribute to Creative Plymouth agenda. 	Oct 04	March 05

4.2.5 The Select Committee had concerns with the content of the PIAP, in particular –

- timescales
- officer capacity
- lack of strategic detail,
- lack of financial information to ascertain priorities and desired outcomes.

4.3 Oral and Written Evidence

4.3.1 The Select Committee held witness sessions during October, which included representatives from various organisations, as listed at Appendix 2-

4.3.2 The Select Committee reviewed varying documentation, which included –

- a Customer Satisfaction Survey carried out by the Leisure Services Department in June 2003, which was an integral part of the Best Value Review of Sports and Leisure Services, and concentrated on consultation with the users of swimming pools to examine their satisfaction levels with the current service provided. Plymouth Leisure was assisted by the University of Plymouth to carry out the market research at Central Park Leisure Pools, Seaton Pool, Plympton Pool and Mount Wise Open Air Pools;
- a Sports Participation and Awareness Survey, which was carried out in July 2003, sets out the findings of the third annual quantitative survey conducted

amongst year 9 pupils attending schools in Plymouth and collected data on sporting participation. The intention was that the survey would be repeated annually or biennially to assess progress made in the context of the key performance indications, in this instance a total of 2,249 questionnaires were completed, which provided baseline data for the City's Local Public Service Agreement;

- the Plymouth Points of View Panel, were surveyed in January 2003, which focused on understanding current attitudes towards cultural activities, their participation and how they believe Plymouth compares to others cities in its provision of cultural pursuits. The Panel's response rate was 77% (which totalled over 1000 respondents).

4.3 Site Visits

4.3.3 The Select Committee carried out site visits at the following locations –

- Brickfields
- Central Park
- Manadon
- Mayflower Sports Centre
- Seaton Pool

4.3.4 Members of the Select Committee visited various sites, as highlighted above, and from the buildings viewed and the information gained with respect to the sites not visited, the Committee Members were of the view that a significant number of buildings were in need of renovation and refurbishment.

4.3.5 The Business and Marketing Plan needs to determine the utilisation and breakdown levels of buildings in order to deliver the desired level of services. Investment in buildings should be prioritised against a clear set of criteria based on the Council's Corporate Plan and provide value for money. The service should exploit and maximise opportunities to realise capital value through disposal and re-investment to give better service outcomes. The Schools Organisation Plan should also be taken into account when looking at future leisure service provision within schools and communities.

5.0 FINDINGS

5.1 Needs of customers/promote access to services

5.1.1 The current Marketing Plan, which is focused mainly on swimming pools, was reviewed and it was concluded that the Plan required updating into a Strategic document based on the Corporate Plan 2004-07. The Select Committee identified that the Strategy should include all sports and leisure services and that the following actions would need to be taken prior to producing the strategy –

- advice from the Corporate Consultation Officer on the Council's corporate marketing policies;
- updating of the mission statement by setting marketing objectives and strategies in line with the current corporate issues;
- creation of a brand/identity to market the service.

5.1.2 Although the Members considered the information from the three surveys carried out in 2003, which comprised of Plymouth Points of View, Sports Participation/Awareness and the Customer Satisfaction Survey carried out by the Leisure Services Department, the Members felt that the Customer Satisfaction Survey was very limited, as it only focused on existing customers who used the swimming pool facilities. The consultation was over a one-week period, which again the Members felt was insufficient. It was felt that all sports and leisure services should be included in future consultation, with focus on non-users as well as existing customers. It was very clear that the current in-house consultation and survey methods needed to be vastly improved upon before further consultation was carried out.

5.2 Central Park/Brickfields

5.2.1 The Committee identified that the current plans for Central Park had yet to be fully worked up and a cost benefit analysis prepared. Although significant funding had been identified, which would enable a large percentage of the improvement plans to be implemented, they had concerns that, to date, a fully costed contingency plan with a phased programme for implementation of the whole Central Park Plan had yet to be drawn up, should the funding gap not be met. During the review the Committee was made aware that external consultants had been engaged to consider this matter and were due to produce a report in November.

5.2.2 During the site visit to Brickfields Members were informed that future provision for the site included a community sports hall, changing provision for outdoor sports and improvements to the athletics facility. The Members were also informed that detailed information on the future planning of Brickfields would be available in the future.

5.3 Future Strategic Management of Leisure Facilities

5.3.1 In recent years it has been recognised that nationally the direct delivery of every service provided by local authorities may no longer be the most appropriate model for successful innovation and the development of new projects. In many service areas there have been successful projects based on partnership working but it was established that although there were some examples of good practice, sports and leisure have been slower to develop in this respect and have therefore missed out on potential opportunities.

5.3.2 To continually increase and develop partnerships is key to providing a sustainable service, with resourcing for pump-priming of carefully selected projects, which could have the ability to deliver successful outcomes. This was a key area which must not be neglected and would benefit from a dedicated officer with the responsibility of ensuring opportunities are not missed in the future.

5.3.3 The Committee had concerns over the lack of management reporting lines and the lack of continuity at each leisure site, as it was clear that throughout this review the current staff structure did not suit the current demands on service provision. This was specifically highlighted at the site visits.

5.3.4 The Council was responsible for complying with the revised Code of Practice for the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA). The Act makes it unlawful for service providers, landlords and other persons to discriminate against disabled people in certain circumstances. The latest duty, which service providers must implement was as follows –

- from 1 October 2004 service providers may have to make other ‘reasonable adjustments’ in relation to the physical features of their premises to overcome physical barriers to access.

5.3.5 The Council, in response to the above duty, had established an Inspection Team, which carried out site inspections on all Council buildings and established a priority list ranging from 1 to 5, depending of the level of work required to comply with the DDA Act. The following table highlights the current status of some of the leisure buildings, which fall into categories 1, 3 and 5 –

<p>PRIORITY 1</p> <p>PREMISES LIKELY TO BE INCLUDED IN PARTNERSHIP OR PFI ARRANGEMENTS OR WHERE SURVEYS REQUIRED TO FACILITATE DISPOSALS AND PREMISES WHERE IMMINENT HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS APPLY</p>
<p>Plympton Pool Central Park Pool Mount Wise Pool Mayflower Centre Central Park Buildings at Brickfields,</p>
<p>PRIORITY 3</p> <p>BUILDINGS USED FOR NON STATUTORY PURPOSES BUT HAVING PUBLIC ACCESS OR USED AS STAFF ACCOMMODATION</p>
<p>30 No Pavilions, etc changing rooms in parks Plymouth Dome Mount Edgcumbe House Lower Lodge, Mount Edgcumbe Rame Visitors Centre Landing Stage, Mount Batten Radford Park 13 No Youth and Community Centres Smeaton’s Tower Folly and garden structures, Mount Edgcombe</p>
<p>PRIORITY 5</p> <p>MAYBE VACATED AND/OR DISPOSAL WITHOUT SURVEYS FEASIBLE</p>
<p>Former Changing Rooms, Stonehouse Arena Devonport Guildhall Mount Wise Community Centre Barn Park Changing Rooms St. Budeaux Bowling Green buildings</p>

5.3.6 It was made clear that the majority of the buildings, which provide leisure services to the public, required some structural building or general maintenance work to ensure the DDA 1995 Code of Practice was being adhered to. The Committee was also concerned that some of the leisure buildings had not had an inspection, such as Tinside Pool. During this review the Committee was informed that at the planning application stage of the refurbishment of Tinside Pool, the Council was advised that “the application should be refused on access grounds as the proposal does not provide access for all” and “the Council should look at its duties under the DDA Act 1995”. The Committee was concerned to hear that this advice was not followed and

the application was granted without any disabled access provision being included from the road/walkway level.

- 5.3.7 The Select Committee was informed by South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) of the ongoing issues in relation to the future of Seaton Pool, which had involved discussions with Council Officers for the previous 2 years, and to date, the matter remained unresolved. The Select Committee was informed that initially discussions focused on the concept of a substantial refurbishment of the existing facilities as well as the preferred option of relocating the pool on site. This option had now been discounted, this was largely due to the likely high cost of redevelopment of the site which would be necessary to comply with the SWRDA's vision for the site and also because the project had changed its focus from general business use, to medical treatment, research and development. In this regard the site was now viewed as a strategically important redevelopment opportunity.
- 5.3.8 A second option was then put to the Council Officers of a potential relocation site (part of the old officer's mess site) some time ago. This included an outline of cost for a new pool complex, both as a straight forward rental investment, procured by SWRDA's joint developer partner whereby the Council would take a leasehold interest in the new pool complex and rent the property, which would mean the opportunity of acquiring the freehold ownership after an initial 30 year rental term. Both options were subject to the Ministry of Defence granting consent to a proposed land swap (of the same land area as existing), which would involve waiving their rights on claw back, and also having no financial section 106 contributions from the planning process that would result from a pool's relocation. Discussions also included the pool closing. The Committee was concerned to hear that the SWRDA were still waiting for a response from the Council in relation to the suggested relocation or closure of the pool.
- 5.3.9 The SWRDA stated that they were willing to help PCC to relocate a swimming pool on the site, but that they would not be able to contribute financially to the project other than to facilitate a land swap. The Select Committee established that if the Council decided not to pursue the alternative site and therefore close the existing complex then the SWRDA would not be in a position to provide any financial assistance towards the cost of an off site facility.
- 5.3.10 The other and more pressing issue, which concerned the Select Committee, was the occupation of the existing building. The lease expired 12 months ago and as such, there was now an urgent need to put in place a licence for the Council to continue to occupy the site. The Committee was informed that the RDA had instructed their lawyers to draft a licence agreement to be actioned by the Council as soon as possible, as the Council were not entitled to occupy the building without a licence being entered into. This would enable the Council to allow continuation of the swimming pool, which would benefit the community, until the new location site was completed.

5.4 Review Strategies and Plans

- 5.4.1 The Select Committee was informed that a detailed Strategic Plan was currently being drafted with a completion date of December 2004. Although the Members were unable to view and comment upon the document they were informed that the completed plan would prioritise all current and future projects. A strategic flow chart was submitted and can be found at Appendix 3 of this report.

5.4.2 The Select Committee was informed by Plymouth University that they had previously offered £3 million in funding with regard to the Central Park project. To date no agreement had been finalised between Plymouth University and the Council and Members were concerned that the future of Central Park was unclear.

5.5 Corporate Objectives

5.5.1 The Director for Lifelong Learning informed the Select Committee that a discussion had taken place with the Cabinet Member for Sports, Leisure and Culture, which agreed to prioritise work against the Corporate Plan and to ensure that officers remain focused on the key objectives.

5.5.2 A resource issue has been highlighted repeatedly during this review and, whilst there was encouraging evidence that the Council was now committed to improving the sports and leisure service, the need for more funding was inescapable. Unless additional financial resources were forthcoming, progress towards realising all the targets set in the PIAP and Corporate Plan may be limited.

5.5.3 The budget for the Sport and Recreation Service has remained static for 2004/05, increasing only inline with inflation. The Pavilions, Theatre Royal and Tinside Pool utilise a large proportion of the budget, leaving limited resources to improve service delivery in other areas.

5.6 Prioritisation of projects

5.6.1 During this review it was clear that the Sports and Recreation Department was unclear on its key strategic projects and welcomed advice from the Select Committee on how best to spend officer time and resources. They felt they were being pulled from many different directions, which included Members' queries on projects that were not identified in the Corporate Plan. The Production of a Strategic Plan and a Business and Marketing Plan would be beneficial to the whole Department to ensure staff focused on the relevant issues.

5.6.2 During the review it was established that the Leisure Services Department was now linking up with the Public Health Development Unit (PHDU). One area, which had worked well was the recent production of the Sports Bug booklet, which had been completed with the involvement of PHDU. The Committee felt that the partnership between health and leisure had progressed, but that little action with measurable outcomes had been achieved to date.

5.7 Areas of Good Practice

5.7.1 It was clear during the review that one area, which had excelled in good practice, was the Sports Development Unit, which has a team of 7 dedicated members of staff. There was clear evidence that the main aims of the team were being achieved as follows –

- promote and encourage participation in sport throughout Plymouth by improving opportunities for people to take part;
- support structures necessary to allow people to progress and improve their performance;
- encourage proactive, equitable and accessible programmes designed to develop positive and sustained sporting habits amongst young people.

The Select Committee was pleased to be informed regarding some of the successful projects, which had been implemented by the Sports Development Unit, examples of which are listed below –

Local Public Service Agreement – the Sports Development Unit (SDU) is responsible for delivering one of the Council's 12 targets, which aims to:

- ❖ Increase the percentage of school children in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 at primary schools in Plymouth, who spend at least 2 hours each week on high quality PE and sport within and beyond the curriculum.
- ❖ Increase the number of adults participating in sport and physical activity at named sporting venues.

In order to reach the specific performance targets agreed, the SDU would work in partnership with the two school sports coordinator programmes, the City's sports and recreation facilities and the schools that have received new sports facilities through the NOF3 Physical Education and Sport funding.

Community Football Project – is a social inclusion football based project, which targets disaffected 8-18 year olds, primarily in the wards of Honicknowle, Budshead and Ham. The Sports Development Unit in partnership with Plymouth Argyle Football Club, Plymouth Parkway Football Club and the YMCA Kitto Centre would work together to initiate and empower local young people to participate. Activities would include after school clubs with study support elements, including numeracy and literacy, using football as a tool, as well as recreational, coaching and competitive opportunities linked to locally based football clubs.

Club Development Workshops – the SDU organised a variety of Sport England and Sports Coach UK workshops throughout the year to support local clubs and groups. There were 8 workshops arranged for next year, including 4 good practice and child protection workshops.

Co-ordination of School Fixtures – following the success of last year's pilot, secondary schools across Plymouth would continue to compete against each other in a number of different sports, which are organised by the SDU. Heads of Physical Education welcomed the centrally coordinated approach and were pleased with the competitive opportunities it provided for their pupils. This season's fixtures included badminton, basketball, football, hockey and netball and for the first time schools would be able to keep track of results on the PDU website.

Sports Club Directory – the SDU and the Plymouth Library, worked in partnership to produce an on-line sports club database. The database provides a comprehensive and user-friendly sports directory service. To date over 170 clubs had registered their details onto www.plymouthsports.info.

Club Accreditation – many National Governing Bodies (NGB's) of sport had introduced accreditation schemes that were tailored towards their own sporting requirements. The SDU offered guidance on these schemes and helped clubs to be recognised as following best practice. A local accreditation scheme had also been developed to encourage clubs to take the first steps towards NGB accreditation. The scheme is free and was aimed at raising awareness of the many well organised voluntary sports clubs in the City. During the first 3 months 5 sports clubs had achieved 'good practice' accreditation.

New Opportunities Fund 3 for PE and Sport – the Council, in partnership with schools and sporting organisations, had developed a programme of capital and revenue investment to enhance the sporting provision delivered on school sites. The facilities were located and managed at educational sites throughout the City (over 12 projects in total). Investment ranges from new synthetic turf pitches to new indoor sporting provision and water sports (i.e. outdoor education). Overall investment in the programme was in excess of £3m. It was intended that a revenue support programme would be provided for the majority of the projects, to support community access for the first two years. The revenue programme would be co-ordinated by the SDU.

Sports Bug – the SDU developed this annual event, which aimed to increase awareness of the opportunities available. This year a week-long programme of sporting activities (over 260 in total) was hosted by voluntary sports clubs and leisure facilities across the City. All activities during this week were offered free of charge to encourage people to take part. The event also created a significant partnership between the private sector facilities, voluntary clubs, the Plymouth Sports Forum, the Plymouth Health Development Unit and the Council. A review of the outcomes from this project would be collated and a feedback report produced in early January 05.

Local Exercise Action Pilot (LEAP) – was one of ten national pilots taking place to identify what physical activity interventions increased and sustained an active lifestyle. Plymouth's programme was based around a targeted free swimming programme for vulnerable and hard to reach young people aged between 13 and 14 years old. It was anticipated that in excess of 1,000 young people would have been referred/selected to the programme in the first 2 years. The programme was financially supported by the Department of Health and managed by the SDU in partnership with the Plymouth Primary Care Trust. The programme was being monitored and evaluated by Leeds Metropolitan University and additional research was being gathered locally by Plymouth University.

Nationally, it was hoped that the LEAP project would inform future Government policy on physical activity. The Plymouth programme was being held up as an exemplar by the Department of Health and may be highlighted as a case study in a forthcoming white paper by the Department of Health, to be published before Christmas.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Overall Conclusions

- 6.1.1 The Select Committee was disappointed in the time it took Officers to produce and submit the PIAP for Members consideration and were also disappointed that the comments of the panel were not fully implemented during this review.
- 6.1.2 Communication with various Partners to bring forward large developments such as Central Park, Brickfields and Seaton were ongoing, but the Committee was frustrated in their efforts to obtain the actual options and proposals for each site from the Leisure Services Officers, as there appeared to be no plans for any of the projects.
- 6.1.3 The review highlighted that Partnership working was extremely successful with regard to smaller projects, which were delivered across the City by the Sports Development Unit.
- 6.1.4 There was a lack of strategic awareness and understanding within the Sports and Recreation Department.

- 6.1.5 The existing Marketing Plan and consultation methods needed updating as current information was unsatisfactory to monitor and improve service provision.
- 6.1.6 The condition of a large percentage of leisure buildings was generally poor and in some cases were not that accessible to disabled people. Therefore this would not enable the Council to fully meet its duties under the DDA regulations. Disabled access remains an issue at some of the facilities and would continue to do so while decisions were made about whether these facilities would continue to remain in service or be replaced or refurbished.
- 6.1.7 The current locations of some of the sports facilities did not best serve all of the residents within the City, with the Mayflower Centre being the only major indoor facility within the City. Although some schools and college facilities were available, access to these sites was restricted to particular times of the day. As a result there were limited opportunities across the whole city to participate in indoor sports, in particular health and fitness related activities such as aerobics, weights and cardiovascular training.
- 6.1.8 Upon completion of this scrutiny review the Select Committee were asked to receive an up to date strategic document, highlighting issues raised by Members in relation to major sports and leisure projects within the city. Unfortunately the Select Committee felt this documentation fell short of their expectations and can be found at Appendix 4.

6.2 Progress on Implementation

- 6.2.1 It is clear that the review of the sport and leisure services has highlighted the need to evaluate the sustainability and value of services currently provided and the ongoing need to establish a range of affordable services, to meet the Council's community and corporate objectives, which would need to be incorporated into any plans and aspirations for future service development.

7.0 MONITORING

- 7.1. The Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel receive progress reports on a quarterly basis for the next 12 months.

8.0 LEAD MEMBER'S SUMMARY

- 8.1 The Lead Member, on behalf of the Select Committee, would like to –

- (1) Confirm that the topic of the Sports Inspection Review had been considered with conscientious and serious application;
- (2) Thank all officers and witnesses concerned for their contribution, enthusiasm and dedication to this Scrutiny Select Committee with particular thanks to James Coulton, Steve Snooks and Christine Crown for their support during the review.

Appendix 1 – Reference Materials

- (1) Audit Commission Sport and Recreations Sports Inspection Report (LLOSP 26 04/05)
- (2) Marketing Strategy (LLOSP 33 04/05)
- (3) Best Value Data (LLOSP 34 04/05)
- (4) Footfall Data (LLOSP 35 04/05)
- (5) Response to Best Value Data (LLOSP 39 04/05)
- (6) Consultation Exercise (LLOSP 40 04/05)
- (7) CD Rom - Consultation Data (LLOSP 41 04/05)
- (8) Site buildings data on specific site visits carried out (LLOSP 54 04/05)
- (9) Code of Practice – Disability Rights Commission (LLOSP 83 04/05)
- (10) Strategic influences in relation to the sports plan review (LLOSP 111 04/05)
- (11) Community sports facilities documentation (LLOSP 112 04/05)
- (12) Site Map of Seaton Business Park (LLOSP 113 04/05)
- (13) PIAP (LLSOP 116 04/05)
- (14) Strategic Update Report on major sports and leisure plans for the City (LLOSP 149 04/05)

Appendix 2 – Contributors

The Panel would like to express their sincere thanks to all those who provided information and advice:

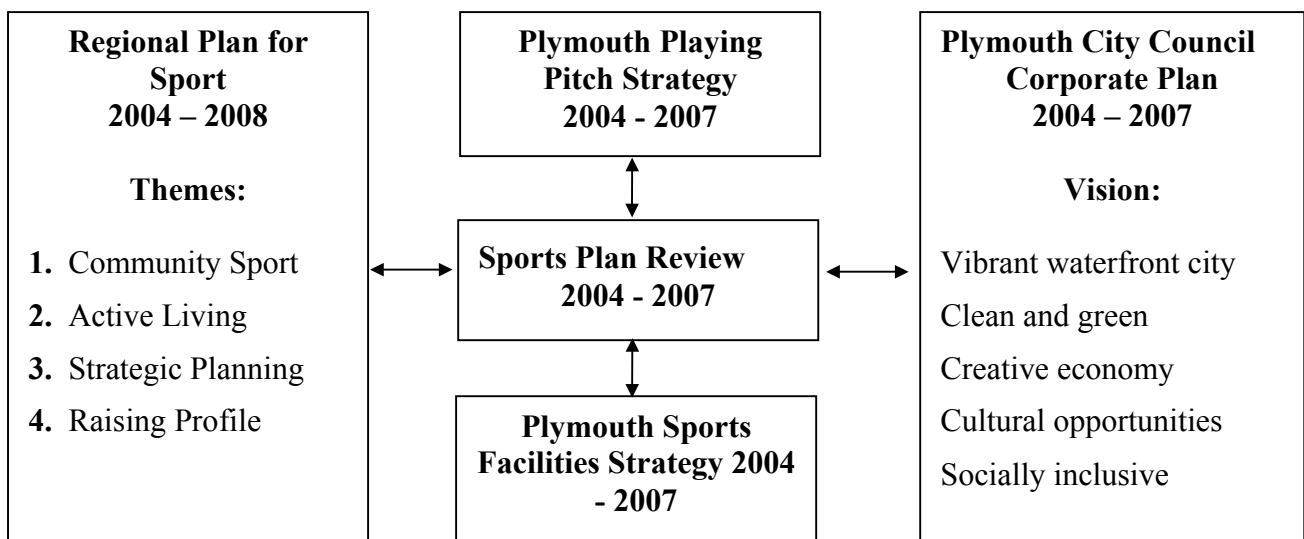
- Alison Bradley - Principal Leisure Facilities Manager
- James Coulton - Head of Lifelong Learning (Community Leisure and Learning)
- Caroline Dimond - Public Health Development Unit
- Gerry Glynn - Project Manager
- Steve O'Higgins - Regional Development Agency
- Bronwen Lacey - Director for Lifelong Learning
- Nigel Rowe - Plymouth Sports Forum
- Nick Smith – Access Officer
- Councillor Pete Smith - Cabinet Member for Sports, Leisure and Culture
- Steve Snooks - Community Leisure Manager
- Sandy Teske - Corporate Consultation Officer
- Robert Stannige - Plymouth University
- Richard Willoughby – Director of Strategic Projects

Appendix 3 – Strategic Flow Chart

Strategic Influences in relation to Sports Plan Review



	Policy	Influence
National	Central Government	Sport England
Regional	Sports Board	Sport England SW
Sub-regional	County Sports Partnership	Devon Recreation Officers Group
Local	City of Plymouth	Local Strategic Partnership
	Head of Community Leisure & Learning	Plymouth Sports Forum



Appendix 4 – Major Sports and Leisure Update Report

Report to Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee

Sports Review (Post Inspection Action Plan)

This is an update on current major projects within sports and leisure provision within the City.

1. Brickfields

The purpose of this report is to outline current development proposals for the Brickfields site. The site was acquired from the MoD in October 2000. The site at this time included the following:

- Three football pitches
- One rugby pitch
- Main pavilion, outbuildings and changing facilities
- 6-lane athletics tracking
- Car parking
- Two redgra pitches – provisionally used for hockey

Since October 2000 the following has been completed:

- Floodlit synthetic turf pitch
- Improvements to the athletics facility
- Relocation of Plymouth Albion from Beacon Park

Currently plans are being developed for:

- The provision of a quality Community Sports Hall
- Enhancement of 6-lane athletics facility (Floodlighting, resurfacing)
- Changing block for outdoor sports
- Improvement to car parking
- Purchase of remaining land (5 acres) from Ministry of Defence
- Electrical sub-station

- Floodlit rubber crumb pitch

Works to the 6-lane athletics track were the subject of a previous report and are scheduled for completion in June 2005.

Funding has been identified for this portfolio of projects from Sport England/New Opportunities Fund, Devonport Regeneration Company and Plymouth Primary Care Trust. The total cost for all works is estimated to be £4.165M .

A contribution towards design development costs to RIBA Stage D (Planning submission) has been granted by Sport England. DRC have now granted a further £91,424 towards this stage of design work together with £85,000 for the provision of an electrical substation on site to enable all works to progress on site.

Representatives from P.C.C., Plymouth Albion RFC, D.R.C., MoD and local sport groups have agreed that the preferred location for the sports hall is on part of the current Albion site. To facilitate this, necessary amendments to the lease in relation to PARFC and to the MoD transfer document have been sought. These amendments would also provide for the needs of PARFC in working towards premiership rugby in the future. Details of proposed changes have been the subject of a previous report to the cabinet member for Sport, Leisure and Culture.

2. Central Park

The ageing sports and leisure facilities, deteriorating paths, inadequate lighting etc contribute to an area which is looking jaded, with the notable exceptions of the new play park, and recent partially completed Plymouth Argyle stadium.

There are however significant cost implications of undertaking a replacement and refurbishment programme on this scale, and a report is being developed to set out a proposal for addressing many of the issues, as well as moving towards the replacement of the Pavilions. There is also, however, a considerable potential cost to the City Council, if nothing were to be done. It is estimated that basic repairs to the Mayflower Centre would cost £2m, with a full refurbishment to bring it up to contemporary standards costing £8m. The Central Park Pools would cost £3m to refurbish in addition.

Officers are working on a plan to replace these facilities, and link up with other agencies including Plymouth Argyle FC to create a hub of sporting, creative and educational activity unrivalled in the South West.

Officers have taken the view, following discussion with leading Members, that the option of pursuing a top quality sporting venue with international class facilities should be taken, rather than compromising on facilities, which do not befit the city or its place in the sub region.

The cost of providing a new 12 court sports hall, outdoor changing, indoor bowls, ice rink, fitness facilities, park improvements, 50m pool, new diving provision etc is estimated at being in excess of £30m.

The potential receipts for the sale of land for a tennis centre, for a mixed-use commercial/residential development (subject to planning), together with potential grants from Sport England, and financial assistance from other stakeholders have been identified as the means of funding. It is suggested that a phased approach should be taken to the sporting facilities replacement allowing funds to be drawn on as they become available.

The report and initial proposals are due in February 2005.

3. Seaton Pool

Seaton Pool was not incorporated into the list of priority sites with regard to condition and DDA survey work.

The issues surrounding the licence were brought to the attention of the Head of Asset Management at the end of December 2004. Therefore the issues surrounding licences and condition reports will be addressed.

Nalin Seneviratne
Head of Asset Management
12 January 2005