



ALTON & DISTRICT SPORTS COUNCIL

CHAIR Joe Walters chair@altondsc.org	VICE-CHAIR Brian Scowcroft vicechair@altondsc.org	TREASURER Sylvia Comber treasurer@altondsc.org	SECRETARY Position vacant
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Minutes for First Briefing on the Alton Sports Centre
Closed meeting between Alton & District Sports Council and Councillor
Dean Phillips (Portfolio Holder for Alton) representing ATC and East Hants
District Council (EHDC).

7:30pm Friday 24th February 2017
at Chawton Park Indoor Bowling Club

Present (see attached list)

1. Welcome and thanks:

Joe Walters welcomed members of the A&DSC and Cllr Dean Phillips to the meeting. He offered the following thanks:
Brian Scowcroft for the successful Alton & District Council Sports Awards
Sylvia Comber for her work on the finances
Joanna Foley and Peter Dilloway for their work on the new website which is due to go live very soon

2. Briefing from Cllr Dean Phillips:

At the full council meeting yesterday the preferred provider Sport Leisure Management were appointed to take over management of the Alton Sports Centre from 01/04/17. It is a 20 year contract to manage the current facilities until the new centre is open in Autumn 2019 and they will then manage the new facility. The contract also includes a new Sports Centre at Bordon/Whitehill and the upgrade of the Taro Centre at Petersfield. SLM are a leading leisure provider nationally with 144 Sports Centres nationally working in partnership with 42 local councils.

The vision for the new Sports Centre has not been clear or transparent for at least the last decade and dialogue with EHDC and SLM is crucial to ensure needs are met.

It has been agreed that the facilities provided in Alton will be 'no worse than now' and could include:

- 2 squash courts
- a 150 station gym
- a destination spa (joint venture between EHDC/SLM)
- dedicated learner pool
- climbing wall
- ample storage for gymnastic equipment (has been noted in other places so SLM are aware)
- 5 outdoor pitches (astroturf)

Current pricing will be maintained (April increase already in place with DCL) New prices will be competitive. A liaison officer has been appointed (Sean Herdman-Grant) to negotiate with SLM on behalf of EHDC. EHDC will be providing 'pop-up' communication stations in all three venues to allow consultation with the community and would give due consideration to the planned redevelopment of Butts Bridge to minimise the impact of disruption on residents.

3. Questions from the floor:

What is the council's commitment to public health England's remit to promote youngsters' engagement in sport and to encourage life long participation? The provision of a 6-lane pool does not appear to fulfil that commitment and may not be inclusive.

Cllr referred the questioner to Ingrid Thomas the Portfolio Holder for Welfare but added that there is cross border usage with the Hart & Rushmoor facility which had an 8 lane pool that could be booked for District

tournaments. This was deemed inadequate for current training needs as the waiting list is already significant and the swimming club have had to move their training to Petersfield in order to continue. Cllr Phillips reiterated that individual sports need to raise their concerns with the Sean and reminded the floor that SLM have been appointed to service the needs of the community.

Does the outline plan provide real or folding squash courts? Current provision has 4 squash courts that are already shared with other sports.

Cllr Phillips explained that national trends in sport have been considered and things such as spinning will not be catered for permanently. It was stated that squash is one of the fastest growing sports nationally and as such should have more than 4 courts. Folding courts would not be adequate.

Will dance be catered for in the plan? Despite being a significant private user of the Sports Centre they were not included in any consultation or invited to the meeting. Their current usage is for 4 rooms (2 dance studios and 2 squash courts) all day Saturday and every evening and this is not meeting demand.

Cllr Phillips made a note to feed this information back to the council as he was unaware of the club's use of the Sports Centre,

How will SLM make their profit from users? Will fees be capped? Will the council support the community financially?

Cllr Phillips said that SLM will be increasing user participation by 80% within the first 6 years. The current facility is very expensive to run/maintain. New technologies and methods would decrease running costs and make better use of the space. EHDC will want to make sure that it the sports centre is competitive with other providers so market forces will come into place for fees. The growth of Alton over time is known and predicted and SLM are fully aware of this. The contract is for 20 years.

What is our lobbying position?

A&DSC as the inclusive and representative body will lobby on behalf of Alton & District.

Individual sports also need to brief Sean on their needs/position and should be backed up with statistical evidence as far as possible.

The Health and Fun club is limited by the facilities currently available to them partly due to the ageing population of Alton. Like for like provision would not be satisfactory.

The current centre has significant waste of space (plant room, roof space etc) The new centre would be more efficient.

A number of sports that were catered for have left because of lack of satisfactory provision. Can they still be considered in the consultation process? (reference was made to the following sports: Judo pulled out after 38 years due to inadequate storage and subsequent damage of the mats; Archery were forced to leave as the projectile room was converted to a gym; Netball need courts; Cricket need nets for practice.

Cllr Phillips encouraged all to contact Sean. Statistics of need will be essential to ensure provision. The astroturf and the car park will be the last facilities to be completed. A good question to ask the provider would be their strategy for solving the problem of usable space for a range of sports.

How long is the consultation period?

As long as is necessary but the sports centre is needed as soon as possible.

4. Conclusion:

At the end of the meeting it was agreed that Joe would meet with Sean as soon as possible to agree a way forward for A&DSC and Sean's e-mail address would be shared for individual clubs to put their case. A statement for the press would be circulated prior to sending to The Alton Herald.

Meeting closed at 9:20pm

Original Signed
JH Walters
Chair