

Dear Member

**COMMUNITY & LEISURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL - TUESDAY, 9TH FEBRUARY, 2021**

Please find attached the 'to follow' appendices 3a and 3b of Item 3 – 'Leisure Review – Preferred Bidder', which were unavailable when the agenda was despatched.

Yours sincerely

**Andy Rogers**  
**Committee Administrator**

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Changes/Benefits		
No.	Question	Answer
1	<p>Very interested and excited by the presentations. People who visit will be able to get hot and cold drinks when open. Could you tell me – when they ask me “what’s going to be so good about this new scheme” – give me three things that I can tell are very exciting. Then – how will you cope with the increase in numbers.</p>	<p>1) Community engagement with leisure: not just about having to come into the leisure centre but taking it beyond the 4 walls and engaging with people within the rural facilities. Some people don’t like coming to leisure centres so one thing we will be doing is taking leisure beyond the 4 walls.</p> <p>2) Exciting facilities: A lot of investment in all 5 facilities. We will utilise our best practice and knowledge e.g., something in Wrexham which might work really well in the New Forest. Knowledge and experience = new opportunities and programmes.</p> <p>3) Family: Getting people to utilise the facilities in terms of the family offering. We want to see lots of families and couples. We will use the natural landscape and engaging with families. One of these exciting activities is our Xplorer programme with British Orienteering. Where we offer affordable fitness and physical wellbeing by only asking for 50p or a £1 to take place in the activity. We see mental wellbeing just as important to physical activity and bring social cohesion.</p> <p>Increased Numbers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Projects in the past where we have done this, we have seen significant increases in gym memberships (up to 20 – 30%) and never been a problem to cope with extra demand.</li> <li>- If we need to change the programming to encapsulate the additional population then we will do that. That would be a case of working with the council to look at ways to develop and expand if we need to.</li> <li>- Good problem to have – to have such an active community and this means we are generating income.</li> </ul>

2	<p>What % increase in participation and sports do you anticipate in delivering as part of this arrangement?</p>	<p>Fitness: 12% increase in the first 4 years (going back to pre-covid levels). So we aim to raise it back up to 12% on top of pre-covid.</p> <p>Swimming: 20% increase on pre-Covid levels. Comes down to programming and where we can use best practice from our 100+ sites. This is about embracing what you already do, good practice, then adding to it we don't want to take anything away that is working already.</p> <p>Things like Active Lifestyles, Group Exercise programmes - we acknowledge there is already a significant profile of these, so we want to add rather than take away. This will be through discussions with management team, fitness managers etc. Another aspect we will be looking at is the investment, this will help increase participation, and draw more people to the facilities. Looking at the active communities we can go to outside of the leisure centres who may not want to go into the centres. So, this is also about us taking activity outside of the 4 walls and engaging people for example hiring halls from church group etc. Gives people opportunities to embrace their physical and mental wellbeing outside of the Leisure Centres.</p>
3	<p>1) What is the benefit of this arrangement to NFDC?</p> <p>2) What is the benefit of this to Freedom?</p>	<p>1) The vision for the council was to ensure there was a sustainable health and leisure service. This partnership provides a financial benefit of between £7m to £8m over the life of the contract, the original target was £4m. Freedom also bring their wealth of experience from their 101 sites, this will improve the service for the customers.</p> <p>2) It provides us sustainability as an organisation. Each partnership is time limited when they start – this is 11 year – we have to keep renewing existing partnerships but also keep growing for longevity. Adding volume increases our own economy of scale which allows us to achieve better procurement and utility rates. Advantageous to the staff team – more opportunities, training, and development. We only exist to improve lives through leisure – so what's in it for us is that we believe in what we do, so why wouldn't we want to deliver this service as widely as we can.</p>

	<p>3) You are all salaried so I am confused as to how NFDC can save money without getting rid of people</p> <p>4) I still am not clear on how the Council is saving money and Freedom are able to make money</p> <p>5) If I have further questions and want to make a comment how I do that?</p>	<p>3) NFDC save money by virtue of the management fee we have agreed with them. They are guaranteed to get that, so the question is how Freedom can do this at a more advantageous cost. The investment not only takes the facilities forward from an income point of view, but also “invest to save”, e.g. by reducing utilities cost.</p> <p>Also bringing a wealth of experience on how to run programmes and facilities with a support team solely focussed on leisure.</p> <p>Economies of scale, knowledge and experience, and investment. We’ve got 19 years of experience and the first 18 years have been unbroken record of generating an unbroken surplus, so we are very confident about the numbers we have put in.</p> <p>4) The report I referred to earlier is available and provides more detail on how we have evaluated and assessed the business case. There are several elements, Freedom’s expertise, their economies of scale, their investment all of this provides a financial return to the council as well as ensuring that a quality service is sustained going forward.</p> <p>5) Please use the <a href="mailto:leisure.review@nfdc.gov.uk">leisure.review@nfdc.gov.uk</a> email and we will respond promptly, otherwise you are able use the public participation scheme at the meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> February for Community and Leisure Panel and on the 17<sup>th</sup> February for Cabinet.</p>
4	<p>What improvements in service are you expecting? We are gym users and we have noticed there’s not a staff member in the gym for quite a lot of time now. We also notice some broken equipment that doesn’t get fixed quickly.</p>	<p>Everything is permanently under review. We made decisions about the gym staffing with a range of packages. All of these things are under review all of the time. We look forward to working with Freedom – we have knowledge of the forest, our customers and centres, but Freedom have much broader experience. By working together, we will have a much broader view and there is no doubt that they will bring improvements to the service and also to the centres. In terms of our council requirements. In our specification we have detailed maintenance targets and how quickly items should be fixed. We will also be monitoring these targets regularly.</p> <p>In terms of the equipment – the intention is to roll out equipment across all 5 sites and we always have a maintenance contract with the manufacturers so that gives us easy access to maintenance and also there are service level/response times agreed. Hopefully that will begin to take that forward.</p>

		In terms of staffing, we intend to work closely with the team through mobilisation and the months thereafter, and over time we may review decisions that have been made previously. As we mentioned, staff is very much part and parcel of the product, and so over a period of time that may well get us to a position of more staffing or visibility of staff on the gym floors. We will of course need to first understand local dynamics and what is/isn't working and take the service forward over a period of time.
5	Some contracts in other areas – we saw the delivery went down quite quickly and did not provide what they would have hoped for.	<p>We are very clear with our commitment to deliver a quality service and build on what you have at NFDC. We monitor contracts very closely and will know very quickly if we are not delivering; the specification is very clear about what is expected.</p> <p>There is still a responsibility with the local authority. Therefore, we have put finance aside each year for the upkeep of the building.</p>

<b>Programing</b>		
No.	Question	Answer
1	Les Mills – will this be in person or will it go virtual to save money? Licensing etc.	<p>We will continue to offer the live classes as we do in many of our other sites. I very much believe in delivery by staff on site. I think it's the staff that very much make that experience for our customers. There may be digital, but the primary means of delivery will be in person. That will help define the sector of operation we will be in.</p> <p>We view the staff as an asset, and we are here to support them rather than rip everything up and start again. Everything that's working we will protect and work with going forward. Over time we will want to provide experiences from elsewhere. It doesn't make sense for us to change things that work well.</p>
2	Working full time and trying to get back to classes is nigh on impossible and trying to book popular oversubscribed classes can be an issue. Would you consider classes in the centre but also online classes to attend in our own homes?	Hit nail on head for what is happening during covid. We are adamant that the right service for the majority is within the leisure centres – where we provide best service. We are looking at an alternative option that will provide at home classes via an app. It is not fully developed and approved yet the starting point is to make sure there is demand and we will meet the demand. Then we will look to launch it.

	Some of the classes are really geared towards younger element and doesn't seem to be a massive offering to those who can't undertake energetic exercise, will that be addressed?	We have looked at opportunities to apply an "Elevate Circuit" which is a circuit that is about body weight activity – not weights but still offer an intensive work out if you want one it's not necessarily more relaxed but you are controlling the exertion.
3	Pre-covid did you run any virtual classes e.g. not a live instructor.	<p>Yes, in some sites they had virtual offers such as virtual spinning. Largely a secondary element as by in large the in-person classes are more successful. But virtual helped deal with some capacity issues in the sites that used them it allowed us to put on additional classes throughout the day for those that did not get into the peak classes. Perhaps this may be an opportunity. It is very much a secondary offer, virtual better than nothing but it is a poor second place compared to having staff there.</p> <p>NFDC have moved some virtual spinning into New Milton for opportunity for more off-peak use.</p>
4	I represent the pony club and wish to know if, post-covid, our previous pool slots and special event bookings will be honoured?	Absolutely this is the sort of thing we would want to support. No reason we would not want this to happen. The expectation is that post Covid many of the original bookings can be accommodated. However, there is an expectation of the continuation of social distancing for some months going forward.
5	Group Exercise timetable. Will you add some extra classes at Ringwood. Studio only took 11 people (capacity) are you intending if the situation continues, will you add more classes.	We will need to look at demand and deliver to meet demand. Currently, we look at viability and getting the right balance between cost and attendance. School is a factor with being able to use the sports hall of which we try to use as much as possible currently due to the extra space it provides. Our Studio is limited to 9 and covid has stalled the new plan for January. Popular times will always be restricted, less popular times are not well attended but we will try and balance it.

6	<p>With regard to the proposed change of running for the NFDC leisure centres, my club has private hire pool sessions at both Ringwood and Totton. We have equipment (metal gullies use for Underwater Hockey) stored at both pools, what will happen to this from July 1<sup>st</sup>? Our preference is to keep storing the equipment as we hope to resume our sessions as soon as Covid permits. Can you confirm that storing of equipment post transition will be possible?</p>	<p>The arrangements for the club will carry on as normal after the changeover on 1<sup>st</sup> July.</p>
7	<p>You're saying the programming isn't changing and is going to stay. Technogym doing equipment. But who will provide classes – is it Les Mills? Will you keep virtual and the whole range of classes? Programming is quite a broad term – types and frequency of class.</p>	<p>Yes, going through that transfer process the programme that we'll look to establish will ideally be the pre-Covid programme, though it is possible/likely that in July there may still be increased restrictions. Over time that will develop, and change based on customer use and priorities as we go forward. Yes, we work with Les Mills in a number of our centres, and we also have virtual.</p>
8	<p>You were talking about protected elements – pricing, programming, ethos, strategic objectives. What do you mean by protected? What happens if everything does need to change?</p>	<p>Price for Life terms and conditions will stay as they are – you won't see any change to that if you have got that membership. It will continue as it would have if this had stayed in-house.</p> <p>Active Lifestyles, for example – we know this is a really important community programme and lots of work goes into setting this up and the pricing. What we wanted to do as part of the Specification is to be really clear – maybe more so for the areas that aren't income generating – we would want to protect this area.</p>



		<p>So, another example is pricing @ CPI. The specification and contract say that pricing can go up by the CPI. But there may be changes in the market and new things coming in. At that point there would be discussion with the Council reference the rationale for any changes above CPI. There is a contract and specification and we have made really detailed responses that show how we intend to deliver that which are appendices to the contract.</p> <p>More fundamental to that is that yes, the district council has this commitment in the contract, but if you look at Freedom as an organisation, it's core to what we do as well. We will be looking to be as inclusive as possible and making a real difference to the health and wellbeing (mental and physical) across the community. There is then also the commercial elements – we will do better where we can lift income, but the better and more successful we are at that, then the more we can reinvest, either physically in the facilities or in the delivery of the programmes and the services. All our active communities work is a result of the investment that we have made. Our objectives and aspirations are absolutely to provide the most inclusive service we can, and we will be monitored and measured against the priorities of the contracts.</p>
9	I really enjoy Yoga, will the classes increase?	Yoga classes have had to be reduced due to Covid – usually we would have 2 classes per week. If there is good demand, then they should indeed come back to the programme post Covid.

<b>Memberships</b>		
No.	Question	Answer
1	Shared membership for other facilities	We will have a membership approach in place e.g. if you go to other facilities then yes there will be opportunities to use your membership.
2	Will pricing for users increase under new arrangements, if not, for how long will prices be protected?	The contract and specification say pricing can be reviewed annually and may go up by CPI. Anything up to CPI is up to freedom. Anything over is a discussion with NFDC. Freedom will make a case for any increases over CPI. Income is a factor of price and volume, and we work hard on volume rather than price

	<p>Also, for 20 odd years, our group have had football booking on the ATP. last year we were stopped because we were not an affiliated sports club.</p>	<p>The football booking was paused due to covid restrictions and government guidelines stating that any sports groups must be an affiliated club to run. We will be following the government guidelines regarding covid 19 until restrictions are changed, but once the restrictions are lifted, we will welcome all clubs back.</p>
3	<p>I am hoping someone will be acting on behalf of all the loyal instructors and current members to advise CLEARLY how this will affect us all, and we will be provided with contact details to answer / reassure any queries BEFORE it is agreed.</p> <p>In particular, there are a large number who took advantage of the Price for Life when we joined in the late 1980s / 1990's and have been loyal members since then. (In the days when a crèche was run from New Milton Recreation Centre). Financially, how will this affect us?</p>	<p>Price for Life has been protected by the Council, and carries on as it has with the Council as long as customers meet the Price for Life terms and conditions. Therefore, there will be no change to the Price for Life membership you pay.</p>
4	<p>Are we aware if the new provider would honour the current 'Hampshire Talented Athlete' scheme?</p> <p>It's essential for me to access the centre when I can't get in my performance hub.</p>	<p>The Hampshire Talented Athlete Scheme has been protected and therefore will continue in its current form through Freedom Leisure.</p>

5	Will ' price for life' membership be honoured if Freedom Leisure take over.	Price for Life has been protected by the Council, and carries on as it has with the Council as long as customers meet the Price for Life terms and conditions. Your current price will be honoured in line with this.
6	Will the Leisure New Forest transfer outstanding payments for unused annual subs be transferable?	Yes, they are transferrable to Freedom.
7	I joined your presentation on Thursday for the New Milton centre. I found the presentation very informative and many of my questions were answered. I know you said our memberships for life would be honoured for the next few years. However, my daughter and myself have a joint membership in that category and I would like reassurance that this would be honoured as are the individual ones.	Yes – your joint membership price will be honoured in line with the Price for Life terms and conditions.
8	I'm confused re the commitment to retain 'price for life' yet let other prices be increased. So newer members are funding under payment by these longer serving members who enjoy price for life. Everyone should be able to pay the same - a simple democratic principle, and reductions should be based on need not length of membership.	<p>New Forest District Council have required us through the specification to maintain the price for life scheme.</p> <p>In general, we believe prices need to increase on an annual basis in order to cover the costs of delivering the service and there is protection within the contract that prices cannot be raised beyond CPI without approval from NFDC.</p> <p>We are keen for there to be appropriate concessionary schemes to encourage participation both from those that would struggle to be able to afford the substantive price and indeed for those with specific medical need. We will review the existing concessions with the Council during the early years of the contract.</p>

<b>Bookings</b>		
No.	Question	Answer
1	Freedom said that they would commit to existing bookings/keep existing bookings for at least the first 12 months. However, with covid they have changed – will we go back to pre-covid situation?	Yes, this will be the pre-Covid bookings. That's what is in the specification. That's what we want, we want to get back to as complete a level of participation as possible. Over time programmes will inevitably develop based upon demand and priorities.
2	<p>Will the booking system/app be updated? Pre-Covid we often had to book classes at midnight to get a place (at least for New Milton) This was even harder for daytime members as the app didn't start working until 9am.</p> <p>Will you be able to offer more classes to get around this problem? My real concern is over daytime people only being able to book using the app between 9 and 5pm 8 days in advance for daytime classes... where full membership people can book from midnight using the app.</p> <p>I appreciate popular classes get full quickly - I just want a level playing field on booking. I also know I can book via the web - but very early in the morning, it is much harder to do via the web page as text is tiny on a phone.</p>	There is clearly some work to do with the local management on how we can jointly improve the current issues around group exercise. We cannot guarantee that we can improve the situation due to certain limitations within the front of house system, but, with the number sites we operate, we believe there will be some improvements that can be made to ensure people can more easily book and gain access to classes. This will need to include a full review of current space and class timetables.

	I've been members of other gyms over the years, and this is the first time I have been penalised for being a day member for day classes.	
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<b>Demand and Availability</b>		
No.	Question	Answer
1	How do you plan to manage demand over the day... space etc.	If we are beginning to drive demand in what is already busy, we will need to look at opportunities for further development. Programming is one way we can control the demand and look at ways to encourage customers to use group exercise rather than the gym at peak times if there is space available, we can also look at pricing incentivisation among other option. We don't think that will be a significant difficulty.
2	<p>I re-joined Arnewood almost 12 years ago – initially under the GP referral scheme.</p> <p>1) Is this being maintained and contained?</p> <p>2) Benefit is we have to book gym sessions online – benefit is that we can see when it's quiet. Is this online booking function to be continued?</p>	<p>1) GP Referral – yes. In 1989 freedom put in the Oasis GP Referral scheme which was the first one within the country. We have a long history of health-related schemes and have this in our different sites. Health related schemes are part and parcel what we do, the GP referral scheme at the centres will be retained and it will be about whether there will be further enhancements on top of the existing provisions.</p> <p>2) Will have to feel our way through whether we keep the gym booking slots, we have had mixed views from customers. Positive for some, but for others requires a degree of forward planning. Will need to look at the best outcome for facilities/times of the day. This may mean some times of day are bookable and other times are not.</p> <p>But before making any decisions, we will need to speak to Joanne, Mark and Ross about what they feel is best for the business and customers in the Forest.</p>

3	<p>Increase membership over pre-covid levels. I've been a member for some time and attend a lot of classes. Pre covid the classes were very competitive to get into, so we had to wake up in the night to get booked in on some of them. Will they get even more competitive?</p>	<p>Starting point on 1<sup>st</sup> July won't be anywhere where it would have been pre-covid so initially there will be capacity.</p> <p>As you increase, this is where you start to review the programme and opportunities, e.g. there may be additional classes, wider range of classes.</p> <p>Can't give a fixed answer at this point but we will need to review that as we go forward with the local management team and make sure we are doing the best we can to get people more active.</p> <p>Our ambition and commitment are to get more people active, if its about high demand it's a good challenge to have. Making sure we are using facilities flexibly, signposting and encouraging people into the full range of facilities into the centre.</p> <p>I hear the problem and can't tell you we won't have capacity problems, but we will need to get there first and then look at the best way of managing it.</p>
4	<p>With Covid – will Freedom look at measures that haven't been in place so far e.g., providing online zoom classes etc that non-Council leisure centres have been doing? That has been sorely missed.</p> <p>Concerned about whether timetable will get back to pre covid – I have off peak membership and all of my classes were cancelled, with only 9am but not practical for me as I have commitments at that time.</p>	<p>In terms of future programming, it's absolutely what we would want to provide for the demand. As we come out of the other side of this issue, as demand picks up, then alongside management team we will look at the opportunities and what classes will be provided i.e., previous ones or new ones. As a customer facing organisation, we need to provide for its users. We can't be specific about specific classes but why wouldn't the classes come back if the demand is there.</p> <p>Online – looking at this at the moment so we may have something. In the longer term then the best solution for the services for the range of customers we want to get to is by and large in person delivery. But in the short term there may well be some augmentation.</p> <p>New Milton's main Studio is only big enough for 9 people due to covid, which makes classes not viable. We have had to use the sports hall for group exercise classes, but the school usually use this, so it has been tricky to get an hour during the day. We have just installed virtual in Studio 2 which will mean we can run classes more regularly to help. We can also utilise the hall during the summer holidays and hopefully come September restrictions will allow a more participants in smaller areas.</p>

	Will we have some facilities we can use if covid restrictions remain in place longer than July? And rollout of classes for those with off peak memberships after?	
5.	Are you keeping the no show charges?	This is in place in other sites – we won't come in and change it straight away but we will see if it works and is right.

<b>Freedom</b>		
No.	Question	Answer
1	GLL are an employee owned enterprise – have you ever considered this about Freedom in the past and might in the future?	GLL are a different organisation to us, they were set up as a worker co-op which suited their purposes. However, Freedom set up as an exempt charity and don't see significant additional merits moving to a different structure, this is entirely appropriate for us and there are lots of opportunities for staff to be represented and understood.
2	Have you got a list of where Freedom currently operate their sites?	We don't have a list we can share with you but if you go onto Freedom's website you can see we operate right across England and Wales. Most local of which are; Littlehampton in Bognor, Forest of Deane, Guildford, etc.
3	What were the winning criteria that enabled Freedom Leisure to secure the selected bidder status when compared with the other two contenders that made it to the BAFO stage?	The Evaluation Panel fully evaluated the two compliant bids. The outcome of this evaluation showed that Freedom Leisure scored the highest on both Cost and Quality.

4	<p>While I am happy with what looks like will be a seamless transfer, there was one comment that did raise concern to me.</p> <p>There was a comment from Freedom that they might consider doing outside 'Expeditions' for which they would charge a nominal fee, £1 or 50p was mentioned. I hope that NFDC will make sure that they do not use, or get the correct permissions, to use the New Forest for commercial gain. While I absolutely understand that we want as many as possible to get out an exercise, I know that commercial use of the Forest is not something that should be encouraged. If they do go ahead with the plan, I hope you will make sure they get the right education on how to treat the area with respect.</p>	<p>Thank you for your question. We are very aware of the natural beauty and landscape of the New Forest and we will ensure that all relevant permissions are sought before any activity takes place, we will be ensuring that we utilise the full knowledge of the transferring local team where activities are planned outside of the facilities. It should be noted that the Active Communities role is wholly concerned with increasing participation and allowing opportunities for those not within the leisure centres and therefore is not for commercial gain. Freedom Leisure operate venues and facilities within contracts located within areas of natural beauty in England and Wales and more specifically in the Forest of Dean, Derbyshire Dales and Powys which includes sites in the Brecon Beacons.</p>
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5	<p>Further to your recent emails, I and many others - nearly 2000, attended meetings over a year ago and voiced our opposition to this. Members of the customer focus group walked out of meetings and Liberal Democrat MPs have also voiced their concern and have now left the proceedings. Clearly this is going to happen whether the customer wants it or not. The new provider will have no accountability to the public. Not happy and there would appear to be no point in attending meetings since, as with the previous meetings, the decision will be made whether the customer wants it or not.</p>	<p>Thank you for your email.</p> <p>We would encourage you to attend one of the upcoming Customer Forums.</p> <p>I hope that these will help to reassure you of the level of accountability Freedom Leisure would have to the public.</p>
6	<p>Have you got protection should Freedom leisure get so large that they sell the company to a venture capital group or other public quoted company?</p>	<p>Freedom Leisure is a charity with a board of voluntary trustees and therefore there is no "equity" to be sold. Charity law puts an "asset lock" on all charities which means that the company could only be merged into another similar charity with the same objectives enshrined within its governing documents.</p>
7	<p>Audits – Will area managers also see customers?</p>	<p>There's a section in the audit for customer service. There is an online tool for measuring these things. The audit digs into some of that. It doesn't say specifically to go and talk to customers but inevitably we will talk to customers as walking around. Also, customers will come and talk to us, which is a great opportunity to get feedback.</p> <p>On some of the other audits like QUEST, there is a mystery visit and also, they take a sample of customers as part of the audit process.</p>

		Would say that overall, we would want to talk to our customers constantly anyway and build feedback into our plans.
8.	Rollout of looked-after children scheme. What are the plans with that?	Looked after children scheme is an example that we tend to take something from every contract. Got this from Arun which they have adopted and rolled out. Can take any form – look at where the priorities are, work with the bodies, and try to improve access for those children e.g., specific fitness sessions, after school clubs etc. It can take any form, but the objective is getting looked after children more active and discounted access. Great to engage with people we wouldn't usually be able to.

<b>Financial</b>		
No.	Question	Answer
1	<p>a) If the centres make a profit, will these be retained within New Forest?</p> <p>b) Will revenues cover all of the operating costs – how will they remain solvent.</p>	<p>a) Yes, we will be reporting this to the council via open quarterly accounts to show how we are performing. If we generate a surplus then there is a surplus share arrangement and certainly in year 1 the vast majority would go to the council, but later on it would even up a little more. I'll be making the case that any surpluses that would otherwise return to the Council could be reinvested in the services, but the council may have other priorities too.</p> <p>b) Yes, it's got to cover our costs. We have a really good track record of doing that. This is our 19<sup>th</sup> year of operation and generating surpluses, not huge surpluses as they are reinvested. We are confident in the numbers, well evidenced, well researched. This will require a change in performance which is about investment and releasing potential within the staff teams and via our support. Some financial responsibilities for the buildings sit with the council.</p> <p>The council have allocated £500K per year for the landlord responsibilities.</p>
2	Can you give the detail of the funding mechanics and how will surpluses be invested?	Freedom are taking the demand risk, surpluses will be reinvested into the facilities, but that's a discussion. We will have regular dialogue with NFDC about the financials and how we reinvest is a joint decision.

3	I understand that NFDC wants to save £1 million but wants to now give them £1.5 million in year 1. Why not wait for a year or two?	<p>The medium-term financial plan had to be changed after Covid and the service would need significant financial support in year 1. Up to 1.5m of that support is now being given to Freedom because they will also bring investment and expertise.</p> <p>COVID has been challenging and even more so now we need the expertise that Freedom will bring.</p>
4	I understand the Council are offloading the centres for financial reasons. If Freedom Leisure is non-profit, why and how will you be able to make it work when the Council can't?	<p>We bring a Leisure focus – do things in a slightly different way to the council. Inevitably financial pressure equals need to reduce expenditure for the council services, but in a commercial environment this would often lead us to driving income and participation/usage and making things work in that way. So, in terms of what's baked into our bid, it's year on year increases in participation, organic throughout but kick start due to a significant investment, in facilities, energy management, and then experience and specialisms. 23 partnerships, support function of experts, all supporting the performance. We are very confident about the financial projections.</p> <p>The vision is to sustain the service, so there is a financial element to enable that to happen. But what is in the contract and specification is also about delivering the service going forward. What has been evaluated is the Freedom bid compared to council inhouse position. We have found that what Freedom will offer is more sustainable. Absolutely we have tried to reduce cost and look at income, we are clear that having a partner who is leisure focussed and brings all their expertise can and will do it better than we can as a council.</p>
5	Surpluses – are they ringfenced?	<p>For each, we produce monthly and quarterly accounts which identify where we are performing in the contract.</p> <p>Each one has surplus share arrangements – we look to put them back into the facilities from our side, but the council may have broader priorities, but we would encourage them to put them back into the services.</p>

<b>Investment</b>		
No.	Question	Answer
1	You speak about adding softplay, hub and café areas. Will it be extension or using existing capacity.	No additional building outside of the 4 walls, it is about better utilisation of internal space.  We have produced a number of plans – we think there is capacity to put them into the sites, but we will need to work with the onsite teams to develop the finer details of how they are delivered.
2	If we are to save money on buildings, can we not use precious space for a café as we don't have a lot of room for fitness. Reviews on Freedom also demonstrate that people complain of cold showers etc	Dropping the temperature of showers and pools is not an organisational policy for Freedom and there are industry standards for pool and shower temperatures. Online complaints are indicative of a problem and there will, inevitably be problems from time to time for example broken boilers. There is no intention to make savings by reducing temperatures. There is an agreement with sport England to 2025 which mitigates against any major changes at Lymington in the next 4 years, the proposal is to utilise the existing space at Lymington, so no activity space should be lost we plan to install a coffee machine in the reception area.
3	Will new café facilities at Ringwood use local suppliers? We have a great network of wonderful Hampshire food producers. Costa, a national chain, was mentioned. Can you reassure us that New Forest leisure centres will be serving New Forest and Hampshire food and drink?	We will be using national suppliers in the general, but there will be opportunities to use local suppliers.
4.	Heard a lot about this being a partnership between the council and freedom.  Who is responsible for the upkeep of the fabric of the building? Are Freedom leasing the building from the council?	The Council is responsible for the fabric of the building and this will continue going forward. We undertook a full condition survey before we started the procurement process and the specification clearly details the council and freedom's responsibility as far as the building and the maintenance. Freedom will be leasing the buildings from the council

5.	Investment – can you confirm this isn't just facilities but also equipment?	Yes, can confirm this includes equipment. This is initial investment, but we would like to do much more over a period of time, which will mean operating cost effectively and generating a lot of income so we can consider how we reinvest back into the services. That's the starting point – the better we do, the more that we do.
6.	Hi just to say I really enjoyed tonight's meeting via teams, very informative. I may be being a bit premature here but if the equipment in the gym is being replaced will there be any opportunity to purchase any of the outgoing items, specifically studio bikes?	It is too early to know when any changes may take place. We are sure you will be made aware of any changes at the centre, please raise this with a shift manager at the time.
7.	Very informative meeting – just one question are freedom's looking into any equipment for rehabilitation i.e. anti-gravity treadmills as these allow people who have had joint replacements, achilles injuries, ankle sprains, arthritis, sports injuries etc to still be able to use the gym for body and mind	We have made a substantial allowance for new equipment across the early years of the contract but have not as yet concluded the specific detail of what will be most relevant. An anti-gravity treadmill is a very expensive item of equipment and whilst it may not have the broadest usage, we are aware that it is very useful from a rehabilitation perspective. We will consider this within our deliberations as to the optimum equipment schedule for the facilities.
8.	Equipment – when will this come in?	This will be phased in over a period of time but we will make sure we get the maximum out of the good existing equipment – we won't replace it for the sake of replacing it so it gets good use before we dispose of it.

<b>Staffing</b>		
No.	Question	Answer
1	Will new members of staff have access to the LGPS or will there be a new contract.	<p>Current staff transfer on their existing terms and conditions, but any new staff would go to the Freedom terms and conditions.</p> <p>New staff after the transfer on the 1<sup>st</sup> July cannot join as the LGPS is a closed scheme.</p> <p>There is a minimum rate per hour of £9.25 which would apply to all new staff.</p> <p>The way to deliver this service is to have a well-motivated workforce, well trained. No merit in looking to erode terms and conditions for the sake of it. Yes, there are financial pressures on the industry so there's always a balance. We are acutely aware that keeping staff on board and well rewarded is very important.</p> <p>It has been a difficult year and we are immensely proud of how the staff have reacted to the events.</p>
2	<p>a) Staff discounts – don't know if staff currently enjoy discounts but do you offer that and will you do so in the new forest?</p> <p>b) Staff/customers – will there be staff suggestion scheme and is there at other sites? Will customers have the ability to input their feedback?</p>	<p>a) Absolutely, we have a staff membership scheme across the business and encourage staff to use the facilities and work out alongside customers and experience the services from the customer point of view.</p> <p>There are also a broader range of staff discounts/staff benefits including access to reduced rates to supermarkets, holidays, cinemas etc.</p> <p>b) We use the whole range of suggestion schemes from staff and customers. They are both valued and useful to us. We will pick up what's currently in place and how well it's working, and to what extent we need to amend and evolve. Formal feedback is important but so are the informal systems, I expect the management, head office team and staff to be getting out and about to understand issues from the customers.</p>

Partnerships		
No.	Question	Answer
1	<p>Informative session. Great to hear about Sport England strategy. In final throws of putting our own strategy together as Energise Me and have done some consultation with inactive people for Hampshire and IOW. We have a workshop coming up shortly and would like your colleagues to join that call when it comes up.</p> <p>Would like an opportunity to speak to you 121 as we have been working to understand inactive audiences, many of which are in the New Forest.</p> <p>Question: You mentioned some of the CARDO work and how you've adjusted some of your services. Covid has had a massive impact including on bottom line, and you have mentioned relationships with other clients. What have you learned over the past 12 months and what implications may that have on this contract for the community you are going to be serving in the New Forest?</p> <p>We have a great amount of insight down at a local level – look forward to meeting up with you.</p>	<p>Very happy to take you up on the offer of a meeting and discussion, very pleased to do that. In terms of what have we learned:</p> <p>Everyone will have taken slightly different lessons/learnings, but one thing is the rural value of the service we operate. Knew some of that already, but the value for communities and individuals when isolated/with reduced social contract when we are relative social beings... it is essential to put a whole community around some of the services we offer, not just physical benefits for mental. Getting people back together e.g. in catering facilities after their activity is important. Reinforced that what we did is really important and we need to reactivate the whole services and not just the low hanging fruit. Gym, badminton is all important.</p> <p>Importance of our service and what we do going forward is more of a prevalent subject, getting coverage at a government level. Will also be about how we diversify slightly in terms of picking up more of the health agenda such as mental health which is now becoming more prevalent in society.</p> <p>Have also learned that our approach historically has been right in terms of our relationships and how we operate, and that has been echoed with the response from our partners. Have an appreciation for our style of management – sometimes a softer style (which we don't always like as a tag) and relationship building is more important than ever before.</p> <p>I sit on the UK Active council for young people and children. Increase in risk of obesity, especially younger people, is significant. Especially with school children at home rather than out an active. Challenge will be engaging with children and young people as they have experienced a lot of social isolation. Getting those children back out and moving will be a huge challenge. This will be a huge part of our reintroduction and how we engage with children digitally and physically around their physical activity.</p>

<b>Applemore</b>		
No.	Question	Answer
1	Applemore Early Years run a preschool in Applemore Health and Leisure. We are a nursery who started with 11 children a couple of years ago and heading to 60 or 70 families now. We are getting a good name within the local community and working with families to provide a very high-quality service. We want to make sure that this will be sustained, we complement the centre and continue to bring lots of families into the centre.	<p>We have worked with several preschools on our sites, within school sites and close to our sites. Will be a partnership and it makes sense for us to do so. We will ensure the preschool is one of the groups we will meet with prior to transfer to discuss how can we work together more.</p> <p>In other contracts we have had agreements with preschool to develop creche spaces and support our customers who would like that facility so parents can attend classes or other activities. Hopefully we can give each other more opportunities and support.</p>

<b>Lymington</b>		
No.	Question	Answer
1	Why does the adjacent school have so much power to inhibit development at Lymington? There are concerns that the schools will prevent development like the café, and this is the concern of about 25 current members.	We have a dual use agreement in place with Priestlands for some use of the centre. Any changes to the site need to be agreed with the school.
2	I live local to centre and over summer there were instances of antisocial behaviour i.e graffiti. What will happen with regards to security?	Yes, we had an incidence of graffiti. We do have an agreement with a security company, and they are linked to our alarms. We have also looked at linking the CCTV based with NFDC. We also noticed that antisocial behaviour was linked with the lights being off which we try to do to be 'greener', but we have looked at increasing the time that we leave lights on to improve security. Unfortunately, there is a public footpath and no gate leading to a local Tesco express store, and we cannot therefore make the car park secure.



		We will have some further discussions with the school regarding the security of the premises as we share the drive way and car park.
3	The hockey club have been using the facilities for many years however the ATP is now not suitable for the highest level within the club. Is anything being done about the condition of the ATP facilities?	NFDC have begun the process to replace the ATP. The specification for carpet replacement and lighting, goals etc is currently out for tender with bids expected mid-February. We hope work can be started ASAP, and we are looking forward to a pitch that can be used by all groups including clubs and the school. It is a high priority to get the ATP back to the best condition for play as soon as we can.

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## APPENDIX 3B: STAFF Q&As

<b>Staff Structures and Roles</b>		
No.	Question	Answer
1.	How do you envision the staff structure evolving?	<p>Nil change from 1<sup>st</sup> July. Will work out with the team what the medium/long term plan is. No preconceptions – no blueprint.</p> <p>We have different structures at different sites and will start from where you are. Maybe hours of operation may need to start earlier if there is demand in the future, which may impact on hours and resource required.</p>
2.	Where would you see the Shift Manager position in other structures you have?	We have various roles in various structures depending on the site/contract, we would need more information but typically it would be a 'Duty Manager.'
3.	Will you be keeping the same staff for marketing?	We use a combination of central and local staff for marketing. We will take on existing local marketing staff.
4.	Will you assess the current structures or roles? Are there any changes in the near future?	No – we do not have plans to change the structure from the start of the contract. There is no set template at our centres– will be on a bespoke manner. So will first need to understand the existing issues etc. and if there is a better solution going forward.
5.	Do you have back-office staff in centres?	Yes, we do have admin staff at centres, as you do, some processes will change as you change across to our systems.
6.	Is there going to be a centre manager per site or continue with existing structure. staff miss having a permanent centre manager on site	The current structure will remain as it is on 1 July, that is how we start. Once we understand how things work, we may review that, and may want to make some changes all based on delivering the service to our customers.
7.	Just need to know will we keep our jobs in the gym?	All staff including staff who work in the gym will transfer over to Freedom Leisure on their existing terms and conditions on the 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2021.

8.	In my role, I deal with a lot of the legal compliance testing issues withing the Leisure Centres (emergency lighting, Fire Doors, RCD checks, slips tests, Legionella prevention etc). Also, I have access, and use, the CAD 2019 program. What access to information will I have going forward?	There will be two roles within the council that will work on the leisure contract with Freedom and look after our responsibilities as the landlord. We will need to discuss the logistics of how Freedom Leisure intend to manage the compliance and what systems will need to be put in place in order for you to complete your role uninterrupted as there is some integration with NFDC data. Thank you for raising the issue and we shall ensure this is discussed further during the mobilisation period.
9.	Will we still receive support from ICT as they currently assist us with back-office tasks.	You will continue to receive ICT support from the central ICT team at Freedom Leisure.
10.	Will managers be more target/sales driven?	<p>There will be an element of upping the ante commercially. We want to exceed targets to invest more. We will put in more sales resource, but there will be more targets across the board – the whole range of activities. Most people working in Leisure like working to an objective. Don't be anxious – it will be an opportunity to demonstrate what you do well.</p> <p>In terms of Shift Managers, you will be accountable for delivery but sales is a specialist role. You deliver the outcomes, not necessarily the “doing”.</p>
11.	Where will the central team currently located at ATC be located	We will need to work through the working arrangements. Options could include working from home, or within the leisure centres – a less common option is to keep an office within the council offices.
12.	What will be your sales approach?	There is no one size fits all approach. You have 5 good sites, but we can do even better, including sales resource – we will put in whatever is appropriate. There will be training and upskilling too. We will be basing this on the leisure insight surveys to grow past the pre-covid levels.

<b>Staff Terms and Conditions</b>		
No.	Question	Answer
1.	Will we lose our length of continuous service by signing a new contract?	No, you will keep your continuous service. At the point of transfer, you will not have to sign a new contract you will simply transfer on your existing terms and conditions.
2.	How long does TUPE go on before you can change contracts and terms and conditions?	Your current terms and conditions transfer with you and can only be changed in consultation. We have no plans at present to make changes, but we will need to make changes and respond to the service over time the same as you do now.
3.	Will the minimum £9.25 per hour also apply for additional hours?	Yes, this minimum is the base for any hours worked for existing and new staff on the New Forest contract.
4.	What will TUPE arrangements be will we get information on TUPE	We will have meetings with staff and these can either be 1-2-1 or in small groups. We want to communicate in the best way we can. Some queries will be personal and so 1-2-1's can be arranged as necessary. Meetings will be with NFDC management and Freedom Leisure. We aim to provide staff with as much information as possible on an ongoing basis right up to transfer. After the transfer Freedom Leisure will continue to communicate with you. If employees wish we will deal with queries individually. Freedom keen to do 1 to 1 and group meetings whatever are appropriate.
5.	Staff would like more clarification on leave. Will there be any restrictions on how leave can be taken?	We will expect staff to take their leave in the year it applies, it is good for staff to have their leave, but there could be situations where staff may carry over some leave.
6.	Will we keep our extra 5 days for continuous service?	Yes, part of Terms and Conditions, so will transfer.
7.	What is your stance on casual contracts?	All current roles happening now need to happen going forward which would include casual staff for continuing delivery of service. For TUPE we looked back 12 weeks and identified the hours that were placed on the TUPE list.

8.	I understand that the current NFDC contracts will be honoured but will the staff still be able to pay into their Hampshire Local government pension when they are no longer employed by government? If this is not the case, I am presuming the LGPS will effectively become “paid up” whilst Freedom Leisure will engage their preferred provider.	There is a requirement within the contract for Freedom Leisure to obtain Admitted Body Status from the LGPS (Local Government Pension Scheme). This will provide all transferring staff with continued access to the Local Government Pension Scheme.
9.	Will the transition year affect how we can take annual leave during that year.	No, normal annual leave will remain in place
10.	Will my annual leave allowance remain the same,	Yes
11.	Will the holiday year still run from April to March each year,	All staff transfer with their current terms and conditions and this includes the holiday year. This is different to Freedom Leisure’s holiday year which runs from January to December, this may mean at some point in the future we may look to review this in order to have a consistent approach across the business, however, we would always consult with all of the staff teams before any decisions were taken.
12.	Will we still have access to an employee handbook, as we currently have access via Forestnet.	Whilst you will no longer have access to Forestnet, you will have full access to the Freedom Leisure Intranet documents. All staff and employee information are contained within the intranet as well as all health and safety and other documentation that you will need for your specific job role and operations of the facilities.
13.	Do you plan to harmonise any Terms and Conditions after TUPE?	No – we currently have 23 different sets of Terms and Conditions across the business and we are not looking to harmonise.
14.	Will there be a Uniform for staff – as a Group Exercise Instructor do you have the same uniform for gym, Personal Training and Group Exercise	Uniform provided for all staff. More relaxed about Group Exercise Instructors, so it's available if they want it. All others we insist on wearing of uniform.  Had a change of style prior to covid, new styles have gone down well, and we did consult with a good number of staff and we took on their feedback.

<b>Training, Qualifications and Progression</b>		
No.	Question	Answer
1.	What sort of training and progression is available for managers?	We have an internal training department that oversees all statutory training requirements. In addition, we have two management programmes that have been offered which focus on the level below General Manager for aspiring GM's and then a programme for GM's aspiring to be Area Managers. There is an open application process for these when new programmes are launched. We are very proud that the majority of our GM's and AM's have been promoted in to those positions over the years.
2.	Our training has often been on the job and not always via formal means. How will you approach this?	We have a mix of local and central run training along with continuous on the job training.
3.	NPLQ (National Pool Lifeguard Qualification) renewal is coming up – what will the procedure be?	As long as you are up to date with the training hours then all would renew as normal/with the trainer. Deadline has been extended also, due to Covid.
4.	What would the opportunities be for progression within each centre? E.g., for SLAs to Shift Managers and beyond. - done	The structure will transfer as it is – we have been clear that we will not change that structure, and we do not have a template structure – different at each partnership.  We will need to spend some more time speaking to Jo, Mark and Ross to see how it is working. But over a period there may well be opportunities for you.  As a large leisure focussed operation, there may well be opportunities for you beyond the new forest contract too.
5.	CARDO post. There will be other roles like that, that will be introduced. What other roles might these be?	Likely to introduce some sales posts, and as we go on there might be other roles that may be introduced. Also, kickstart for apprenticeships.
6.	How will lifeguarding work with the new operator e.g. Will we still follow basic Royal Life Saving Society guidelines on lifeguards? As some leisure facilities can be poor at lifeguarding.	Freedom do follow the Royal Life Saving Society guidelines and will look to come down with their existing Trainer Assessor's and complete competency assessments before the 1 <sup>st</sup> July.

		Freedom also confirmed they would use NFDC's existing Trainer Assessor's for training thereafter.
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<b>Programming/Memberships/Operations</b>		
No.	Question	Answer
1.	Existing memberships offers – will these all change on 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2021?	These will stay the same, and members may also access all 101 of our centres.
2.	What are your plans for fitness moving forward?	<p>Investment in facilities – gyms and in studios. We will continue to develop and support the existing programme. We want to provide an inclusive service to a wide demographic, e.g., some are older, and some will have health needs. Need good staff, as they are a lead part of the product.</p> <p>We recognise that NFDC have good/extensive group exercise. We will work with you on what to add or enhance. We know that some Les Mills virtual is offered but we will look at what other digital offering options these will be based on demand.</p>
3.	I teach yoga – will Freedom Leisure continue with this?	No change in programming from 1 <sup>st</sup> July, so Yoga will continue.
4.	Emergency Actions Plans and Standard Operating Procedures?	During the mobilisation period between now and July we will look over the operating procedures with the management team and ensure that we understand them and are happy with the processes put in place. We need to ensure we are comfortable with the existing processes before we gain responsibility on the 1 <sup>st</sup> July. After 1 <sup>st</sup> July we will look to review them and make some format changes along with any further improvements if we feel they are required.
5.	Do you follow British gymnastics and RLSS agenda?	<p>Gym and trampolining – keen to know where you are at the moment.</p> <p>Freedom operate to National Governing Bodies standards.</p> <p>We also operate to Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) standards.</p> <p>We follow RLSS standards and agenda</p> <p>As part of mobilisation, we will come down with some Trainer Assessors and complete competency tests on lifeguards, this is standard for mobilisation, not a reflection on NFDC at all.</p>



6.	What will the gymnastics or gym tots programme be like? For example, following British Gymnastics guidelines in running recreation including badge schemes and instructors.	Freedom is interested to know where you are in terms of British Gymnastics and trampolining and have a range of varieties across there centres. Here will be more discussions regarding this closer to mobilisation.
7.	You mentioned the management system for maintenance. What will happen with existing contractors, and with onsite maintenance?	We would not reduce on-site maintenance. As far as Contractors – ahead of transfer we will get a list from NFDC – some will be the same anyway, and then we will decide. We have some national contracts, but we also want local for quick response times etc.

<b>Investment</b>		
No.	Question	Answer
1.	What investment will there be in Lymington?	Swimming pool features, equipment, energy management. These are just our proposals – there may be other elements that come up through the 11 years. If there are issues/opportunities, we'll do this but we will need to deliver the income targets
2.	What will happen to the staff room, it looks like on the investment plans that this could change?	We will work with architects and with the team to figure out how it would work in reality. The plans will need tweaking once we are on site.
3.	I note the investment which will mean building work in centres. Will this mean temporary closures? What will happen to the staff during this time?	No full closures but there will be some partial. No plans to close. We have done far greater amounts of work in other sites and remained open. We may need to look at options such as reallocating gym into the Sports Hall during works. All but one of our previous contracts have been done whilst the buildings are in operation.
4.	What sort of features are you looking at adding to pools?	We work closely with Hippo leisure. We recognise that we can offer some children's integration panels for water confidence. possibly small slides depending on ensuring its does not compromise safety We have not got a fixed outcome, but financial provision made for water features so dependent on discussions to get the right outcome for each pool. Further site visits will help inform the right decisions to make pools more attractive

Freedom		
No.	Question	Answer
1.	I googled Freedom – staff reviews are negative regarding communication from management.	Communication is easy to comment on or criticise. We do pretty well across the board. One observation is that social media is associated with discontent. We have 4,500 staff – often you will get a number of staff who do not think it is a 100% utopia. Survey outputs are by and large very positive. But perhaps we can revisit this in 12 months - so that you can judge for yourselves.
2.	Can you give us insight into what is key to your success?	Engagement of people, getting them to deliver. We believe in what we say – local delivery, not one size fits all. Head office supports the staff – belief is key. Be bespoke. People have a passion for making a difference in people’s lives.
3.	What is your inclusivity of staff i.e., do you employ any staff with disabilities?	We have very clear Equality & Diversity as well as Disability Discrimination Policies that all levels of staff are required to comply with. We will always work with individuals to ensure they are able to fulfil their potential regardless of any disability.
4.	What is your process for customer feedback, and how do you like to take it forward as it can be emotive during a transfer?	Customer feedback – absolutely welcome feedback, our business only works if we deliver the service for customers. We have formal feedback (comments cards, net promotor score etc) and informal through staff. It is important this is captured to understand what that means for delivery of service.
5.	How do you communicate with the range of staff employed?	Payslips are now on an electronic portal, so we can share information via there, we find this has been an additional way of communicating with staff.