Richmondshire Leisure Trust (RLT) Maintaining Economic Viability

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Aims/Objectives of Presentation

- Career Background
- Background to current trends around leisure facility provision (personal view)
- Brief overview of leisure operating models
- RLT and its effectiveness as a local leisure operator serving the community, but is it economically viable?
- Challenge current thinking on leisure management models and the importance of ‘community’ within leisure facilities
Career Background

- Duty Manager
- Sport & Cultural Policy/Strategy
- Project Management
- General Manager
- Community Projects
- Sport/Play Development
- Leisure Contract Management
- Chair of Trustees
- Sport/Leisure Consultant
Leisure is a non statutory service (discretionary)
Pressure to cut leisure budgets to balance the books – maintaining statutory services
Politics
Contracting out/tendering leisure services
Creativity/Innovation
Leisure Management Models

- In–House
- Third Sector Social Enterprise (in–house or existing)
- Fully/Partially Externalised Service
- Joint Venture/Consortium
- Independent Voluntary Trust
- Worker Co–operatives
- Private Sector with Social Enterprise Model
- Private Sector Operator
- Mixed Economy/Hybrid Model
- Shared Service
- Teckle Exemption (new way of thinking)
Case Study – Richmondshire Leisure Trust (RLT)
Timeline of the Organisation Change (not all doom and gloom)

- 2005 – Transferred management of facilities to charitable trust
- 2008/2009 – Council austerity measures began to bite
- 2010 – Sports Development grant cut by 50%
- 2011 – takeover of Colburn Sports Centre & Liberty’s Fitness Centre
- December 2011 – Phase 1 cuts, staff restructure
- 2011/2012 – Core Council grant cut by 20%
- 2012/2013 – Core Council grant cut by 15%
- June 2012 – Phase 2 cuts
- 2013 – handed operation of school dual use facilities back to the school and pool café outsourced
- August 2012 to February 2013 – Operation of Richmond Tourist Information Centre
- April 2013 – Phase 3 cuts
- 2013/2014 – Five year funding agreement with Council
Future (& Current) Developments

- Banner sponsorship for businesses in the facilities
- Crazy Golf course
- Affordable Tourist Accommodation
- Outreach work with Hotels and B&B’s
- Golf Day/Business Networking
- Council Partnership Groups
- Community Events
Key Outcomes of RLT organisational change

- RLT Business plan matches council plan/funding agreement
- Staff have become more accountable
- Actually doing more with less
- Significantly improved community engagement
- Increasingly a sustainable model
Richmond Pool 35th Birthday Celebration

2011
Discussion Points/Thoughts

- Do council’s see leisure centres as provision of a service or a commercial machine?
- How does the public health agenda help to provide support & sustainability?
- Do different models work better in different geographic areas?
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