

Scrutiny Report – Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL)

July 2022

1. GLLs vision is:

“To empower local communities to achieve better quality of life”

2. Our aim is to increase participation in leisure, sport and culture to improve health and social wellbeing outcomes through the promotion, provision and delivery of quality facilities and services.
3. Better is the customer-facing brand from GLL, a not-for-profit Charitable Social Enterprise committed to delivering a better quality of fitness and leisure, libraries and performing arts facilities for everyone. We are committed to providing access to great community facilities. We manage over 258 facilities in England and Wales. We add social value by working for the benefit of everyone; the public, the communities they work in, the environment, their staff and their partners.
4. The GLL contract with City of York Council operates under a Design, Build, Operate and Maintain contract (DBOM), which started in December 2017 for 13 years. This enables us to run the following leisure centres in York: Burnholme Sports Centre, Energise Leisure Centre, Yearsley Pool and York Stadium Leisure Complex.
5. During the Covid19 pandemic GLL was nationally seen at the forefront of getting the leisure industry approved to reopen with close working relationships with UK Active, local authorities and the Health and Safety Executive. The measures put in place gave reassurance to the customers in the centres.
6. In the year from April 2021 – March 2022 the four leisure centres had a total patronage of 606,347 people. We also welcomed 53 clubs to the facilities who used our facilities for a total 5,642 hours.
7. Significant investment occurred with regard to technology during the pandemic; this allowed the enhancement of the Better UK app which enabled users to book sessions/activities online and complete virtual workouts at home. The continued use of the app has empowered our customers to book sessions like swimming at the time they like. GLL also transferred its entire front of house booking system to a new system that it now partly owns, as it was deemed that off the shelf bookings systems were no longer compatible to the growing needs of the leisure industry. Continuous updates are

occurring and it is envisaged the system will be fully complete next year to the high levels that GLL is requiring.

8. Capital investment into the centres along with ongoing maintenance ensures that all of the facilities are maintained to a high standard. In 2021/22 £206,466 was invested into centres of which £63,900 was into the stadium. It is planned for 2022/23 that this will increase to £314,451 with £96,000 being reinvested into the stadium to enhance operations and customer experience.

Burnholme Sports Centre

9. In January 2020 GLL took over the operation of Burnholme Sports Centre from the City of York Council, Sport and Active Leisure department following a £1.2 million capital investment. Unfortunately, the centre then closed on March 20th 2020 due to the Covid19 pandemic.
10. The centre was designed to be cashless in order to keep staffing levels down to enable for it to be affordable to City of York Council and GLL. The centre now has a good base of Health and Fitness memberships, along with a growing Healthwise programme that integrates with the NHS outpatient physiotherapy departments and CYC Health Trainers at the centre.
11. The sports centre has now become a hub for the community working in partnership with local organisations such as Explore, Tang Hall Smart, Choose2Youth and York Down Syndrome Football.
12. The Better Gymnastics programme launched in April 2021 at Burnholme Sports Centre following 3 earlier delays associated with the pandemic. With support from partner British Gymnastics, the facility has seen steady growth of the programme and now has additional qualified instructors who are actively promoting the scheme with increased capacities.
13. GLL approached a number of health services over the past 12 months to offer its facilities to assist with colocation of services for the local community. This enabled the centre to become a Covid19 vaccination centre, from October 2021 the centre hosted twice weekly vaccination session providing booster vaccinations. By January the partnership had enabled over 10,000 vaccinations for local residents, as well as a regular service for blood taking. We are also now working with the York Teaching Hospital on relocating outpatient services such as physiotherapy i.e. Musculoskeletal (MSK).

Energise Leisure Centre

14. Partnership work at Energise Leisure Centre with York High School (YHS) continues to develop to ensure that the pupils at the school are accessing their PE curriculum space when required at the highest possible standard. This is monitored through the termly school liaison committee with a Ward Councillor, Executive Member for Leisure as well as representatives from CYC, GLL and YHS.
15. The centre has recently had an investment of £85k in the reception area which saw the reception desk removed and the reception area opened up, and the introduction of access control gates that enhances the security of the centre for staff, public and revenue protection. A staff member is still available to assist with enquires and take card payments and bookings.
16. A further planned investment in the fitness suite will see the expansion of the indoor cycling studio to increase the number and replace with new Technogym bikes along with the addition of extra equipment to be utilised by the Healthwise team.
17. Better Swim School was relaunched in September 2020, with disability specific lessons returning in April 2021 complimented by an increase in Level Water funding providing 1:1 swimming lessons for disabled children.
18. With our commitment to lowering our carbon footprint GLL invested in pool covers for the main pool and small pool, new controls for variable speed drives, along with LED lighting in reception, concourse and changing rooms. In the summer of 2022, the lights in the pool hall and fitness suite will also be changed to LED lighting.

Yearsley Pool

19. A staged reopening of Yearsley Pool took place during the Covid19 pandemic, this allowed us to gradually return staff from furlough whilst maintaining service to the customers.
20. A formal pool programme review took place in line with the DBOM contract due to the opening of York Stadium Leisure Complex, this review allowed a significant programme change which enabled the pool to become a specialised club swimming pool on an evening. This gave the many clubs stability on the long course training that is essential for competitions, and also allows Energise Leisure Centre and York Leisure Centre to maintain additional public swimming session.

21. Recent investment into the centre life cycle maintenance including pool filter media change, new pumps and probes along with a new Building Management System (BMS) has ensured that Yearsley Pool is being maintained in line with the contract.
22. GLL is also investing resource into further carbon reducing measures with full length pool covers that can be placed on the pool overnight which will reduce gas and electrical consumption.
23. In partnership with Refugee Action York, we have supported a group of female refugees with access to swimming lessons; many of which have adverse experiences to water. We are currently running female only swimming lessons at Yearsley Swimming Pool, with juniors incorporating into general swimming lessons. The feedback has been increasingly positive with many of the participants stating they enjoy the sessions.

York Leisure Centre

24. York Leisure Centre is part of the York Stadium Leisure Complex which successfully opened in December 2020. Due to the pandemic some services could not open due to the restrictions imposed by central government however the sports hall became a Covid19 testing station for the residents of York in partnership with City of York Council, and football and rugby games were permitted to be played behind closed doors.
25. The residents of York are now enjoying the investment into the complex that enables the people in the north of York and beyond to enjoy the services of the centre including the swimming pools, fitness suite, Clip n Climb and large sports hall with spectators seating.
26. GLL is the landlord to the tenants below and ensures that all key stakeholders have a venue that can showcase their organisations but also to the city of York and further afield. The complex consists of the following organisations:
 - Better York Leisure Centre (GLL)
 - York Against Cancer (YAC)
 - Little Gym
 - York City Knights (YCK)
 - York City Football Club (YCFC)
 - York Stadium Management Company (SMC)
 - York Explore and Archives
 - Little Yorkshire Coffee Company
 - NHS York and Scarborough Teaching Hospital

27. York Leisure Centre along with the other centres in York was recently inspected under the Sport England's continuous improvement scheme called Quest. It successfully gained a Very Good rating which permits further progression when it gets reassessed in 2023.
28. The membership base for health and fitness and swimming lessons continues to grow and its carefully balanced pool programme works in partnership with the other Better centres to ensure public swimming is facilitated across the city.
29. SWIMBiES launched at York Leisure Centre and later extended to Energise LC. Our SWIMBiES programme takes babies from three months old to age three, preparing them for the next stage of their learn to swim journey allowing parent bonding with babies while exercising gently in the water, improving coordination, developing muscles strength and motor skills from an early age.
30. The new play park was opened in April 2022 which is the external junior offer instead of the high ropes and also includes an external workout area that can also be used by the community.

LNER Community Stadium

31. The LNER Community Stadium is managed by the York Stadium Management Company (SMC) who is a sub subsidiary of York City Football Club on behalf of GLL.
32. The stadium officially opened in May 2021 with the focus on delivering 4 key areas for users of the stadium (being the licensed clubs and other third-party hosts):
 - Match day operations
 - Ticketing
 - Facility maintenance
 - Corporate services (i.e. finance, legal, IT, marketing etc.) to support the above operations
33. Initial capacity was limited to 2,000 by the City of York's Licensing Officer due to delays in embedding the required licensing criteria; however, this was subsequently increased to 4,000 in August 2021 and then to unrestricted capacity (8,510) in September 2021.
34. Since opening in May 2021 a total of 59 fixtures have been held at the stadium up until March 2022:

- York City Football Club (YCFC) - 29
- York City Knights (YCK) - 15
- SMC – 15 (for Leeds United, Leeds United U23s and Hull City U23s)

35. The number of tickets sold for the above fixtures from May 2021 – March 2022 totalled: 107,330:

- YCFC – 78,430
- YCK – 24,839
- SMC – 4,061

36. In September 2021, SMC instigated a robust turnaround and performance improvement plan which has been successfully delivered. This involved:

- The appointment of a General Manager with credentials that combine business transformation and executive leadership of elite sports clubs.
- The appointment of an experienced Stadium Manager & Ground Safety Officer (from Hull City) and an Operations Manager.
- Setting out a detailed Action Plan across all 4 key operating areas that was presented to City of York Council and closely monitored by GLL

37. As at 31 March 2022, the SMC was fully compliant with its Match Day Agreement obligations and continues to work positively and constructively with GLL, City of York Council and the licensed clubs to deliver continual improvement initiatives.

38. The SMC's planned initiatives continue to be aligned to the overall vision of becoming the Region's Leading Community Sports Stadium by way of:

- The ultimate seamless ticketing journey.
- An outstanding stadium experience (for spectators and user clubs, working towards 'UEFA-standard' infrastructure).
- The highest standards of operational compliance, and
- A regional and national awareness building campaign alongside key strategic partners to capture future events from high profile clubs and governing bodies.

39. The following provides an update on progress/initiatives since that will continue into 2022/23:

- Ticketing & Customer Experience.
- The ticketing system has been upgraded to the fully integrated 2022 version with ongoing improvements being made based on user feedback and ongoing training – benchmarking against Premier League football clubs using the identical system.

- Investment into a ticket office 'hatch', and potentially also mobile kiosks to provide additional support and guidance to spectators in their ticketing journey, particularly for match day purchases. Investment in mobile ticket booths was put on hold until the IT / ticket system upgrade was completed and the effectiveness of the hatch monitored. It is extremely likely that the mobile booths will be required should crowds consistently exceed 5,000.
- Additional way finder signage around the stadium to assist supporters and minimise turnstile congestion.
- Transfer of current IT network to SMC bespoke, protected VPN network securely. This has allowed all SMC operations (such as CCTV, ticket office, phones etc.) to stand alone.

40. SMC continues with a transition towards using its own/preferred stewards (increasing loyalty, competence & reducing cost to users) and cleaning staff, as casual employees – mitigating exposure to third party providers'.

41. Ongoing feedback and support from the Sports Safety Advisory Group continues to be extremely positive, notwithstanding recent incidents (i.e. pitch invasions), with the SMC taking a proactive stance on public safety measures generally (e.g. improved signage, risk categorization of matches, introduction of stadium-wide allocated seating only and discussions regarding safe standing seats)

42. Investment in pitch quality/rating equipment to support maintenance and advocate quality settings (fit to hold up to 3 matches per week). The pitch renovation during June/July to comply with pitch warranty took place as planned.

43. Further stadium improvements have either been completed or are being sought to enhance the stadium operations and match day experience including:

- Investment in stadium-wide TV connectivity for greater match day experience duly completed, with access to Sky TV now in place.
- Shared investment in a new scoreboard continues to be explored between SMC and the licensed clubs.
- Investment in upgrade review to current floodlight lux planned once pitch renovations complete.
- Investment in external TV showcasing at turnstiles planned – allowing external messaging at entrances by SMC on ticket use, warnings, ground regulations, next events etc.

- Work on a 4th changing room will shortly commence, meeting the requirements in hosting RLWC21 and without which the opportunity to host elite and community events in future may be adversely affected
44. The creation of a stadium user group is planned – bringing together representatives from different demographics within the supporter base of both licensed clubs to (i) understand the operation of the SMC generally and (ii) provide direct feedback for continual improvement.
 45. A visibility and awareness building campaign continues to be developed that includes strategic alliances with broader community and regional partners, with the ultimate aim of attracting recurring stadium users (already approached by NFL, England FA, England RFU, World Strongest Man whilst contractual terms for the hosting of RLWC2021 have been agreed.
 46. Enhancement website functionality and communications, including drone footage and 360 coverage of the stadium's design and configuration – enhancing the customer journey.
 47. Venue Hire Agreements have been secured to host Leeds United pre-season first team friendly in July with also the renewal of use by Leeds United U23s for 6-8 matches. Hull City U23s agreement for 2021/22 is to be replaced by Sheffield United's U23s during 2022/23.
 48. A 'soft' internal audit approach has been set out with GLL to demonstrate ongoing compliance with FMA and MDAs
 49. Given the capture of data that has become possible over the last 12 months, SMC will be able to define operational KPI's to (i) observe outcomes, (ii) monitor performance improvements and (iii) implement appropriate actions, as necessary.
 50. The accumulation of an appropriate level of financial reserves to be held by the SMC at any time will be defined. Currently, the SMC remains in the final stages of embedding the implementation phase of initiatives since the stadium opened and all monies generated continue to be invested in stadium improvements.
 51. The aspirational quality standards of the SMC are aligned to UEFA ground criteria and best practice operations at Premier League football clubs and Super League rugby league clubs.

52. The SMC in partnership with GLL are working with all stakeholders including First Buses to ensure a cohesive travel plan is in place and to encourage the use of buses to and from the city centre.

Healthwise

53. The York Partnership has a dedicated Health Manager to assist in the delivery of the Community, Healthwise and Physical Activity Plan in partnership with the York Physical Activity and Sport Strategy 2020-2030.

54. Healthwise is a physical activity referral scheme dedicated to keeping individuals fit and healthy, whether living with a health condition or looking for support and guidance. Healthwise York work with local GP's, Physiotherapists and other health professionals (HCP's) that represent the key stakeholders for the programme

55. Physical activity plays an essential role in preventing and managing a wide range of health conditions. At GLL we offer Physical Activity Referral Schemes (PARS) at our leisure centres across York. GP's and other Health professionals can refer their patients to our low-cost programmes to help improve, manage or prevent health conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma, arthritis, overweight/obesity, cancer, cardiac, depression or anxiety, osteoporosis among other conditions.

56. The York Healthwise Manager sits on the Public Health Healthy Weight Steering Group for York which is working towards a healthier city for our residents. As part of the tier service for obesity the Better centres' across York provide facility space and equipment for partners such as the Health Trainers in Public Health who provide a Tier 1 service and the Tier 3 NHS bariatric service. Together with the added tier 2 service that Healthwise deliver all three services work in partnership to provide a complete service that is aimed to reduce obesity in our city.

57. At Energise Leisure Centre, Burnholme Sports Centre and York Leisure centres the Healthwise team is working in partnership with the City of York Health Trainers. Working towards decreasing health inequalities and the wider determinants of health.

58. Tier 2 weight management programmes (wmp) are delivered throughout the York centres: Energise Leisure Centre, York Leisure and Burnholme Sports Centre. The Healthwise team are currently on 9, 10 & 11 WMP cohorts since April 2021. Securing a total funding of 58K through Public Health England.

59. Burnholme Sports Centre has formed a close relationship with the NHS MSK physio team who have delivered sessions from the centre twice a week pre and post lock down with an additional day from July 2022. Healthwise and the MSK service work in collaboration to provide continuation of service - patients can be referred to the Healthwise team for the 12 week intervention to continue managing their condition once discharged from Physiotherapy. This has a huge impact on cost savings for both primary and secondary care and with the wider determinants of health for the city in general.
60. Every year, more and more people are receiving successful cancer treatment. Many people affected by cancer want to make positive changes in their lives. Taking steps to be physically active as part of a healthier lifestyle can be part of this. Our Cancer rehabilitation programme at York Leisure Centre is dedicated to helping cancer survivors get more physically active and support cancer survivors take steps to make any healthy lifestyle changes that they may want to make. We work in partnership with York Against Cancer and acknowledge their support for cancer patients living with and beyond cancer.
61. The Healthwise classes are designed to help patients develop the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to improve their health and wellbeing. Our principal objectives are to deliver programmes that are designed to improve people's health and reduce health inequalities particularly in deprived areas. We aim to promote physical and mental wellbeing and to increase participation through engaging residents who have long term conditions in regular physical activity to help them manage or improve their condition. Healthwise classes have over 30 specialist classes that are outlined below to help patient referrals achieve this goal:
62. Our Cardiac rehabilitation programme at Energise Leisure Centre is designed for those who may have had a cardiac event and have been referred either from their GP or from a Phase 3 team at the local hospital. The programme safely explores the benefits of physical activity and provides individuals with the tools to develop the lifestyle behaviours needed for a smoother recovery, including healthy eating habits and stress management techniques.
63. The specialist Aqua Health sessions held at Energise Leisure Centre, York Leisure Centre and Yearsley pool are delivered by a Healthwise facilitator who is a trained Sport England instructor that has created a unique programme for patients to exercise safely in the water with a personalised activity programme. This is unlike any other class we deliver where the patients have an experience of a gym workout but in water.

64. February 2022 the Healthwise team became Mental Health First Aiders, which has proven beneficial to the team whilst consulting with the patient referrals and to support colleagues within the York Partnership.
65. Between April 2021 and the end of March 2022 Healthwise received 635 referrals of which 483 started and 299 completed the scheme. Following completion of the programme we offer a discounted membership we currently have over 400 participants accessing this membership.

Community Sports

66. The York Partnership has a dedicated Community Sports Manager to assist in the delivery of the Community, Healthwise and Physical Activity Plan in partnership with the York Physical Activity and Sport Strategy 2020-2030.
67. The York Partnership successfully applied for funding to deliver physical activity interventions on behalf of York MIND. The programme included Aquatic Activity for Health, Nordic Walking, Walk to Jog and Climbing courses which were delivered in partnership with the Healthwise team allowing for signposting into the scheme sustaining the new activities.
68. Through an agreement with City of York Council, GLL have provided funded memberships for all Looked after children and care leavers with a registered CYC social worker. We offer a year funded membership or limited access to swimming lessons in an attempt to break down barriers to activity participation, with 38 individuals currently accessing this. In addition to this, GLL nationally have offered a funded membership to Ukrainian Refugees and in York we have 44 adults and juniors accessing this support.
69. In addition to current provision at the centres, the York Partnership has been in discussion with British Triathlon and England Netball to explore setting up Triathlon events and Netball sessions at Energise Leisure Centre and York Leisure Centre. These will initially take place as pilots to determine interest.
70. This year the GLL Sport Foundation is supporting 13 athletes across York, including Athletics, Taekwondo, Swimming, Wheelchair Basketball, Tennis and Ultimate Frisbee. This support includes 3 Achievement Memberships with a financial award and 10 Training Memberships totalling £6450.
71. York partnership sponsored three awards at the recent York Sport Awards in the Young Achievers Category; Young Female Sportsperson, Young Male

Sportsperson, and Young Disability Sportsperson all of which were presented by CEO Designate Peter Bunday. GLL has supported the York Sport Awards since 2018 and hope to continue to do so moving forwards. We also sponsored 3 awards at the York College REACH awards; this sponsorship begins the partnership between GLL and York College which will expand into apprenticeships, work placements and career support.

72. Blood donation sessions were hosted at York Leisure Centre and Burnholme Sports Centre throughout the year providing this lifesaving service in the heart of our local communities. Sessions are continuing with advanced bookings until November 2022.

73. Energise Leisure Centre partnered with the Thomas Pocklington Trust and the York Sight Loss Council to provide staff with additional training and develop promotional videos sampling best practice in supporting blind and partially sighted people. This has led to further engagement with York Sight Loss Council.

74. The York Partnership was approached by the disability group SENSes regarding the provision and hire available for disability groups. We are in discussions with SENSes and have had initial meetings with North Yorkshire Sport to support the provision.

75. The York Partnership will be involved in a number of community events this year including:

- Tang Hall Smart Community Sports Fair (Burnholme Sports Centre).
- Woodthorpe Festival.
- York Sight Loss Council Sports Taster Event (Energise Leisure Centre).
- North Yorkshire Sport Girls Wellbeing Event at Dalby Forest.
- Come and Try It events across the 4 centres.

76. The York Partnership will once again be supporting the York Older People's Assembly 50+ Festival in September with plans to host consultation with older age groups around their provision requests. This will ensure that any planned provision by the York Partnership will meet the group's needs and break down any barriers. We will also look to provide some sport taster sessions with a view to set up organised sessions.

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